



SMART MONEY

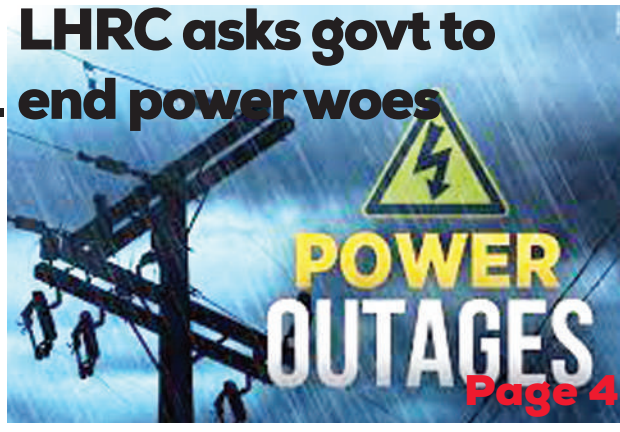
Bot seeking to contain inflation rate at 3.2 pc in H2, 2023/2024

'Removing trade barriers vital for boosting intra-EAC trade'

Mbingo resident wins 250m/- betting jackpot



Stamico, Shanti Gold seal pact worth 2.7bn/- Page 3



LHRC asks govt to end power woes Page 4



Women to support Samia's efforts in tourism Page 6

WB hails judicial access uplift

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE World Bank has applauded the ongoing citizen-centric judicial modernization and justice service delivery project, saying it is a model for the region and beyond.

Benjamin Mtesigwa, a senior governance specialist at the country office of the World Bank, made this remark at the Integrated Justice Centre (ICJ) in the capital yesterday, accompanying a staff team from World Bank headquarters who are on a week-long visit.

Expressing satisfaction with the progress in the project, he said the aim of the visit was to view the projects first hand, to see if there are challenges and find the way forward.

The World Bank remains committed to support the project, making it one of its kind in the region and beyond," he said of the project in 2015 when the Judiciary launched a five-year strategic plan for changes.

The project is meant to carry out changes by training officers while building facilities



Shaghembe Mipawa (gesturing), chief engineer with Mwadui Diamond Mine in Shinyanga Region, pictured yesterday briefing visiting members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy and Minerals on the new mud storage dam currently being used in diamond production activities after the previous one collapsed, causing harm to local residents. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

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Minister says land tenure uplift project simply unique

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE World Bank financed Land Tenure Improvement Project (LTIP) is the most important project in the land sector since independence, the sector minister has declared.

Jerry Silaa, the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister, made this remark yesterday when handing over 16 vehicles priced at 2bn/- intended to reduce car rental costs in supervising implementation of the project.

The project is expected to be a lasting solution to the country's land sector bottlenecks, by mapping out and planning the best use of land in cities and rural areas, while providing title deeds to land occupants, he said.

It is aimed at strengthening the national land administration system and improve tenure security especially for women landholders, he stated, noting that the five year project will cost \$150m (346bn/-) extended by the World Bank.

Handing over the vehicles to the project coordinators here yesterday, the minister said the 16 vehicles will facilitate speeding up implementation of the project, focused on improving land holding in urban and rural areas, instructing the project coordinator to properly utilise the vehicles to achieve intended goals.

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SPORTS Page 20



Simba jets out to Ivory Coast ahead of ASEC Mimosas tie

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Dabo calls for consistency as Azam aim to bridge gap in title race

Bamboo development strategy set in motion

By Getrude Mbago

THE government has launched the national bamboo development strategy and action plan (2023-2031) with a focus on stimulating sustainable management of bamboo resources.

Angellah Kairuki, the Natural Resources and Tourism minister, said at the launching event in Dar es Salaam yesterday, that the strategy and action plan will stimulate bamboo farming, utilising untapped potential of the specialised tree planting activity.

She said it will foster green industries and improve people's livelihoods, with the initiative developed to provide focus areas and guidance to solve challenges and highlight opportunities for the devel-

opment of a strong bamboo industry.

It is also meant to strengthen the production of high-value products and ecosystem services for accessing domestic, regional and international markets, she stated.

Demand was growing for bamboo products and services locally and in international markets, while existing potential in the bamboo farming remains largely untapped, the minister affirmed.

"Making the bamboo an engine of resilience and sustainable economy," the theme chosen for the launch, underscores that this initiative is widely meant to enable the public to take note of the potential in bamboo farming and processing.

The strategy also aligns with the National Development Vision 2025 and is associ-

ated with the third five-year development plan (2021/22 - 2025/26), tied with the theme of competitiveness and industrialization for human development, she said.

To achieve the vision all stakeholders need to work together to sustainably manage bamboo resources and promote bamboo industries by adequately implementing the strategy, she told the gathering.

"This is a very important opportunity for the private sector. It is our sincere hope that the strategy will address the challenges and accelerate growth of the industry to enable Tanzania to be one of the leading producers and suppliers of high-value bamboo products and services in the globe," she emphasised.

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'Africa set to grow faster during 2024'

By Guardian Reporter

AFRICA will account for eleven of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies in 2024, the African Development Bank Group has affirmed.

Bank Group president Dr Akinwumi Adesina makes this observation in the bank's latest macroeconomic performance and Outlook (MEO) of the continent released late last week.

Overall, real gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the continent is expected to average 3.8 per cent and 4.2 per cent in 2024 and 2025 respectively, the report indicates, pointing out that this is higher than the projected global averages of 2.9 per cent and 3.2 per cent.

The continent's growth is second-

fastest region after Asia, with the top 11 African countries projected to experience strong economic performance by the forecast listed as Niger (11.2pc), Senegal (8.2pc), Libya (7.9pc), Rwanda (7.2pc), Côte d'Ivoire (6.8pc), Ethiopia (6.7pc), Benin (6.4pc), Djibouti (6.2pc), Tanzania (6.1pc), Togo (6.0pc), and Uganda at 6.0pc.

"Despite the challenging global and regional economic environment, 15 African countries have posted output expansions of more than 5pc," the report affirms, calling for larger pools of financing and several policy interventions to further boost Africa's growth.

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Mobbare Matinyi (2nd-R), Information Services Director and Chief Government Spokesperson, presents a CRDB Bank Plc honorary award to Tanzanian journalism veteran Ndimara Tegambwage in Dar es Salaam yesterday in recognition of the contribution of the long-serving and highly regarded media consultant to the development of the country's media industry. This was at a "CRDB Bank Media Day" seminar for business and economic sub-sector stakeholders. Looking on (from-R) are CRDB Bank group CEO and managing director Abdulmajid Nsekela, CRDB Bank chief operations officer Bruce Mwile Mwasenga and CRDB Bank Foundation and communications executive director Tully Esther Mwambapa. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



Minister: Land tenure uplift project 'unique'

FROM PAGE 1

Anthony Sanga, the permanent secretary, said the 16 vehicles are part of a 59 vehicles consignment expected soon, placing the price of each vehicle at 129.9m/-. The vehicles will be dispatched to various supervising areas, he said.

LTIP project manager Joseph Shewio said that delivery of the vehicles will be a big relief in implementing the project, cutting down on car rental challenges.

He went over the project components as planning the use of land in each district, setting up 25 office buildings, straightening village boundaries, identifying cemetery areas and set out locations for other infrastructure.

"Through this project, everyone will have their own customary title deeds and it is given free of charge," he said, affirming that by this year's end 700 villages will

have been covered, while so far 540 villages have been reached.

There are also 660 parts of villages or settlements in 36 urban and rural district councils, with the project hiring 700 people from various regions so far, he said.

Officials say that historically the country has grappled with issues such as unclear land boundaries, lack of formal land titles and disputes over land occupancy entitlement.

These challenges are exacerbated in rural areas where customary land rights prevail, often without formal recognition, leaving communities vulnerable to land grabs and conflicts, they say.

Moreover, rapid urbanisation has put additional pressure on land resources, leading to increased land conflicts, insecure land tenure for urban poor and challenges in urban planning, officials assert.

'Africa set to grow faster during 2024'

FROM PAGE 1

The report on Africa's macroeconomic performance and outlook, a semi-annual publication released in the first and third quarters of each year, complements the African Economic Outlook (AEO), covering emerging policy issues.

The MEO report provides up-to-date evidence-based assessment of the continent's recent macroeconomic performance and short-to-medium-term outlook amid dynamic global economic developments, analysts assert.

The latest report urges cautious optimism given the challenges posed by global and regional risks, citing rising geopolitical tensions, increased regional conflicts and political instability. All of these could disrupt trade and investment flows, perpetuating inflationary pressures, the report warns.

Dr Adesina emphasised that fiscal deficits have improved with faster-than-expected recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic helping to shore up revenue.

"This has led to a stabilisation of the average fiscal deficit at 4.9pc in 2023, like 2022, but significantly less than the 6.9pc average fiscal deficit of 2020. The stabilisation is also due to the fiscal consolidation measures, especially in countries with elevated risks of debt distress," he further noted, cautioning that with the global economy mired in uncertainty, the fiscal positions of the African continent will continue to be vulnerable to global shocks.

The medium-term growth outlook is slowly improving, a pointer to the continued resilience of Africa's economies, the report asserts.

Prof. Kevin Urama, the bank's chief economist and vice president, said in presenting the key findings of the report that growth in Africa's top-performing economies has benefited from a range of factors.

These include declining commodity dependence through diversification, increasing strategic investment in key growth sectors, rising public and private consumption as well as positive developments in key export markets, he said.

"Africa's economic growth is projected to regain moderate strength as long as the global economy remains resilient, disinflation continues, investment in infrastructure projects remains buoyant, and progress is sustained on debt restructuring and fiscal consolidation," he emphasised.

Ambassador Albert Muchanga, head of economic development, trade, tourism, industry and minerals at the African Union Commission, said that the future of Africa rests on economic integration.

"Our small economies are not competitive in the global market. A healthy internal African trade market can ensure value-added and intra-African production of manufactured goods," he said.

The MEO forecast and recommendations will be made available to African heads of state, he said, asserting that the report will be useful when the African Union makes its proposals to the G20.

East Africa will continue to lead Africa's growth momentum with growth projected to rise to 5.1pc on average in 2024 and 5.7pc in 2025, supported by strong strategic investments to improve internal connectivity and deepen intra-regional trade, the report specified.



Africa's economic growth is projected to regain moderate strength as long as the global economy remains resilient, disinflation continues, investment in infrastructure



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister Jerry Silaa (R) pictured in Dodoma city yesterday handing over a motor vehicle to the Lands ministry's Permanent Secretary, Anthony Sanga, for the latter's official use. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

WB hails judicial access uplift project

FROM PAGE 1

in underserved areas, introducing technology to save time and money, he stated, elaborating that the project is designed to improve efficiency and transparency in accessing selected judicial services, to make them more citizen-centred.

The team will be visiting various areas to see how the project is being carried out in different judicial zones countrywide, he said, expressing gratitude to President Samia Suluhu Hassan on the issue.

He said the president was making efforts to ensure major reforms are carried out

in the judiciary, with Tanzania setting the pace for other countries in the region and beyond.

The UN official also applauded Chief Justice Prof Ibrahim Juma for his devotion to making the project a reality, while judiciary administrator Prof Elisante ole Gabriel told the team of the government's commitment to liaise with the World Bank up to completion of the projects.

Ongoing constructions of integrated justice centres in different regions is among components of the project, the administrator noted, underlining that the team was on a routine visit to inspect

implementation of the second phase of the project.

The various projects implemented by the judiciary with World Bank support are progressing well, both the physical infrastructure and in the quality of services provided to the public.

Dr Angelo Rumisha, the head of the judiciary delivery unit, explained that the project targets governance, organization as well as systems development.

This component aims to improve efficiency and modernize administration to diminish delays, backlogs and administrative bottleneck, he said, also pointing at strengthening

planning, human resources, simplifying governing rules and modernizing record keeping.

Still other areas are improving staff productivity, deconcentrating functions and leveraging technology for the introduction of electronic justice services, issuance of statistics and information to business stakeholders and the public. Another sphere is skills development, inspection and performance management for strengthening training and skills of judicial staff and other stakeholders, to kick-start the Directorate of Inspections.

It will proceed with judicial

performance monitoring via a robust mechanism for obtaining citizen feedback on court services, he declared.

The access to justice and securing public trust component will address these challenges by expanding avenues of accessing justice and promoting innovations that bring justice services closer to the people, he said.

"Since access to justice and justice reform is a long-term process, this component also seeks to facilitate the development of complementary programs in collaboration with other development partners," the senior administrator intoned.



Experts from Dar es Salaam's Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute and their colleagues from Arusha's AICC Hospital attend to people who showed up at a six-day free heart disease screening and treatment camp held in Arusha city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

Bamboo development strategy set in motion

FROM PAGE 1

The government will create an enabling environment for bamboo crop stakeholders to ensure that it enhances agro-sector productivity as a whole.

She asked the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) to ensure that quality commercial bamboo seeds are made available, while the Tanzania Forestry Research Institute (TAFORI) needs to conduct studies to identify suitable areas to grow bamboo.

Current data suggests that 12.5m hectares of degraded and deforested land can be restored by bamboo planting, with considerable ability to prevent soil erosion, she said.

The launch of the strategy is part of implementation of the National Forest Policy and its implementation strategy set for 2021-2031 which recognize bamboo as an important contributor to achieving forestry sectoral goals.

Dr Amani Ngusaru, the country director for the

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) hailed the government for the major reforms and transformation that has been made in the forest sector, restoring a breadth of the landscape.

Ambassador Ali Mchumo, the International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR) director general, said the organisation is committed to helping implementation of the strategy ensure that bamboo farming expands across the country, while remaining sustainable.



Rose Nashon (R), a small trader based at the Klabakari bus stand in Butiama District, airs her grievances to Mara regional commissioner Said Mtanda (L) on Sunday. The RC had just addressed a rally at the site. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Chadema 'all ready' to hold peaceful marches in Mbeya

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

NATIONAL leaders of the opposition-Chadema are today expected to lead people in Mbeya city in peaceful demonstrations meant to demand various legal reforms for fair elections.

The leaders who include Freeman Mbowe, the party's national chairman, national vice chairman, Tundu Lissu, Secretary General John Mnyika and zonal leaders will participate in the demonstrations which are part of its nationwide schedule.

Joseph Mwasote made the remarks yesterday here when unveiled the whole schedule and map of the demonstrations in the city and the rallies also to demand the resumption of the new constitution writing process.

He said the demonstration will commence early in the morning and there will be three roads where citizens will use walking up to 10km.

"There are some who will start from the Mbalizi area, others in Uyole and Chunya road walking to Ruanda Nzovwe grounds where the national leaders will address the public.

He said Mbowe and the secretary general will lead demonstrators from the Mbalizi area incorporating citizens from the regions of Songwe and Rukwa.

Whereas, Lissu will start at Uyole along with demonstrators from the regions of Iringa and Njombe.

"These demonstrations are not for Chadema members but all Tanzanians, we are only the organisers to enable people to gather and speak out their complaints to the government," he said.

Mwasote said the party has already got permission from the Police Force and two days ago they conducted a meeting with the Regional Police Commander (RPC) to speak on the map which will be used as well as receive guidelines.

When contacted, RPC Benjamin Kuzaga said didn't go into detail if the force had blessed the demonstrations.

"I am in the meeting, but we have already responded to Chadema on their request to conduct the demonstrations," RPC Kuzaga said.

Chadema started the nationwide demonstrations in Dar es Salaam late last month and then went to Mwanza last week and today in Mbeya city.

Stamico, Shanti Gold mine sign contract worth 2.7bn/-

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE State Mining Corporation (STAMICO) and Shanti Gold Mining Company have signed an agreement worth \$108million, equivalent to 2.7bn/- that will see the government agency carry out drilling operations for the company.

The six months agreement is aimed at helping drilling in mining research areas across the nation, starting with the central zone, specifically in Singida Region.

Speaking before the signing ceremony held in Dodoma, STAMICO's Director, Dr Venance

Mwase through the signing, the state agency is making in-roads in the central zone before signing another contract through Geita Greenfields Minerals Exploration Company Ltd.

"Let me assure Shanti Gold Mining Company and the government that our work will be executed with high quality and standards" said Dr Mwase.

Shanti Gold Mining Company's Chief Operations Officer, Eng Honest Mrema expressed trust in STAMICO's activities. He said while they started with a short time contract, there are plans to expand research drilling activities

in Singida Region since the state agency has shown readiness for further engagement.

He said if STAMICO will implement the agreement to the latter, his company might consider other agreements in the future. "This marks our first engagement, but if well implemented there will definitely be room for further contracts", he said.

The Officer added that there many good mining areas in Singida Region, expressing hope that the signed drilling agreement was just the beginning of cooperation between the two organizations.

According to Mrema, such continued efforts could help realize and surpass the government targets through STAMICO, of buying modern mining equipment and improving mining activities in the country.

"I would like to assure my director that we have big plans to improve the mining sector in the country and attain the government targets since the country has plenty of minerals" he said. Major operational reforms undertaken at STAMICO are among major reasons Tanzania is today reaping benefits from its abundant mineral resources.

JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA
MAHAKAMA YA TANZANIA
Katika Mahakama ya Mwanzo ya Wilaya ya TEMEKE
Kituo cha JUMUISHI Mkoa wa Dar es Salaam
Shauri la Madai/Ndoa Na. 1977/2023
Jina la Madai: PULKERIA MTAVANGU
Jina la Madai: FRANCIS GOWELE
KUTWA SHAURINI NDAIWA
(Kanuni ya 18 ya Kanuni za taratibu Madai katika Mahakama za Mwanzo)

Kwa: FRANCIS GOWELE
Kwa kuwa madai/wadai/ameleta/wameleta madai yake/yao kwamba TALAKA

Kwa hivyo unatakiwa kuhudhuria binafisi katika Mahakama hii tarehe 05/03/2024 saaasubuhi/mchana mbele ya Mhe. KINGU Hakimu Mkazi kwa majibu wa madai hayo na kwa kuwa siku hiyo ni siku ya kusikilizwa shauri hili ni lazima kuleta shahidi/mashahidi wako na vielezo vyote vinavyohusu shauri hili kwa ajili ya kujitetea.

ANGALIZO: Kama haotuhudhuria siku iliyotajwa hapo juu na kutibitika kuwa ulipokea hadi ya kutiwa shaurini, Mahakama inaweza kusikiliza shauri bila ya wewe kuwepo. Hadi hii imetolewa kwa Amri na Muhuri wa Mahakama leo tarehe 02 Mwezi 02 Mwaka 2024.

Logistics at Heart

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Position: Senior Declarations Officer
Reporting to: Sea Freight Manager
Location: Arusha (1)

1.0 Introduction
TAHAFresh Handling Ltd is premier logistics service provider in Tanzania. Established in 2008, TAHAFresh has become a one stop center for logistics service which are tailored to its customer's needs. The company has evolved from horticulture cargo handling to integrated logistics services covering airfreight and sea/ocean freight forwarding, trucking, customs clearing and forwarding as well as insurance. TAHAFresh is looking for a highly motivated and talented young personnel from all over Tanzania to join our team of experienced and motivated professionals in Arusha for the Senior Declarations Officer position. The incumbent candidate will be based in Arusha and will be responsible for the following;

2.0 Duties and Responsibilities

- Receive inquiries from customers and advise on document requirements for clearing consignments both, imports and exports. Informs / notifies the client of any changes with TRA systems and customs regulations.
- Overseeing Clearing and Forwarding process to ensure the clients goods get to them in a timely manner and communicate any obstacles in the clearing process to the client.
- Ensure that Accounts Department advice clients on the correct amount as per consignment by declaring and registering export entries on time.
- Ensure that there is close follow up of documentation for both import and export, to avoid late documentation charges or storage charges.
- Assist in negotiating rates and providing quotations to clients.
- Ensuring proper handling and storage of customers and company's documents such as certificates, PVoC, customs bonds and others.
- Follow up on correspondences between various statutory bodies and other bodies including TRA. Make sure that all taxes are payable to TRA.
- Ensure there is development of relationships with other industry players, customers and Government bodies.
- Provide leadership and supervision to the declarations, documentations, and clearing and forwarding team both in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. Foster a collaborative and high-performance work environment, ensuring team members are well-trained and motivated to meet

objectives.

- Identify opportunities for process improvement within customs declarations, client documentation, and clearing and forwarding operations by implementing efficient workflows and best practices.
- Identify training needs within the team, stay informed about industry trends/advancements and facilitate continuous professional development for the team
- Prepare daily progress report and submit to supervisor and the GM.
- Any other duty as assigned by supervisor.

3.0 Qualifications and Requirements

- A Degree or Diploma in Clearing & Forwarding from reputable training institution.
- Strong, attention to details, good analytical skills, ability to multi-task and high level of integrity, self-driven, innovative, problem solvers, willing to learn, good timekeeper.
- Computer literacy with excellent knowledge of MS Office.
- Excellent communication skills, Proficiency in spoken and written English and Swahili.
- Working experience (minimum 5years) in a similar assignment is an added advantage.
- Knowledge on TANCIS/SINGLE WINDOW is required. An understanding of ASCUDA is an added advantage.
- Good experience in Harmonized Commodity Descriptions and Coding system, as well as a strong ability to understand and align declarations with appropriate tariffs is required.
- An ability to respond to customs queries and advise the clients proper commercial terms to meet the customs value is required.
- Good knowledge of handling clearances procedures at all customs areas including EPZA and Transit cargoes.

4.0 How to Apply
Please submit your Cover letter describing your interest, CV with names and telephone contacts of at least three referees and copies of relevant certificates by EMAIL to:

**Human Resource Manager,
TAHAFresh Handling Limited,
Kanisa Road, House No. 5,
P. O. Box 16520, Arusha.
Submission Email: admin@tahafresh.co.tz
The application deadline is 02nd March, 2024 and ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES SHALL BE CONTACTED.**

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CONSULTANCY TO UNDERTAKE A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON POTENTIAL AREAS OF TOURISM ATTRACTION & COMMUNITY ECO-TOURISM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE RUMAKI SEASCAPE AREA

INTRODUCTION
The World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is an International Non-Governmental Organization that deals with conservation of nature through environmental management and conservation programmes. Its mission is to stop the degradation of Planet's natural environment and to build the future in which humans live in harmony with nature. WWF Tanzania Country Office (WWF TCO) through Marine Programme is currently implementing a project titled Funded by MACP4 (Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies). The project is operating in 6 districts namely: Kigamboni, Mafia, Kilwa, Kibiti, Mtwara Rural and Mkuranga. The area is endowed with several endemic plants, amphibians and invertebrates are found along these shores. The rare coconut crab is still found on many uninhabited islets in the area, while crocodiles and hippopotamus are abundant in the Rufiji Delta, with a few presents on Mafia Island. There are over 130 coastal bird species, including goliath herons, pink-backed pelicans and nesting crab plovers.

OBJECTIVES
The main objective is to undertake a feasibility study on potential areas of Tourism attraction and Community Eco-Tourism investment opportunities in the RUMAKI Seascape Area

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To identify existing tourism activities in the seascape, actors involved (state and non-state actors) and key roles played by actors including the coastal communities in respective area;
- Mapping out the existing tourism attraction sites and the new identified ones;
- Describe cultural value, historical significance, natural or built beauty, area offering leisure and amusement and services;
- Identify challenges and opportunities as well as current and future plans by government, private sectors and coastal communities;
- Recommend potential area for tourism investment modal for engaging the coastal communities (more details see the link for TORs)

EXPECTED OUTPUT AND DELIVERABLES:
Upon signing the contract, the consultant(s) are expected to deliver on the following:

- Inception Report: It should cover consultant's understanding of the TOR, the general approach to the assignment, the methodology (approach, teams, personnel, coordination) as well as a tentative work plan and budget.
- Draft Report: should cover all area provided in section 4 (see the link for TORs)
- Final Document and Submission:
- Raw data and secondary data submission
- At least 20 high resolution photographs from the field taken during the study

METHODOLOGY
The consultant(s) will employ various methods, including in-situ/field surveys, literature review, mapping, participant observation, interviews with community members and practitioners, among others. Additionally, the consultant will conduct stakeholder consultative meetings to solicit the opinions of community members and stakeholders concerning their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the subject matter.

HOW TO APPLY
All applicants should direct their soft copy of application to the procurement: e-mail at procurement@wwftz.org and or hard copy applications to the address indicated above. Deadline for submission is **Friday 08th March 2024** at 4PM EAT. Interested applicants may get the detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and specifications through the following websites: https://www.wwf.or.tz/jobs_and_opportunities/jobs/

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

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



Legal and Human Rights Centre executive director Dr Anna Henga (R) addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on the long-running country-wide power shedding, pleading with the government to take immediate remedial action. With her is Raymond Kanegene, a senior development and improvement programme officer with the centre. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

LHRC advises govt to look for better ways to end power woes

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

THE Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) has urged the government to come up with an immediate and permanent solution to end the on-going electricity shortage in the country as the situation has a big impact on human rights and economic development.

The centre wanted the Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO) to plan regular maintenance for power plants generation based on science and climate change.

Dr Anna Henga executive director for LHRC made the call in Dar es Salaam yesterday when briefing a news conference about the shortage of power and its relationship to human rights. "We want the government to take immediate actions to facilitate access to electricity. This is possible because we have witnessed for the last six years the country having reliable electricity," she noted.

Dr Henga explained that the centre has monitored and evaluated the state of power outage and its impact on human rights and economic effects, and thus decided to issue the statement to remind the government.

"We also recommend that TANESCO provide information without confusing people but also, the

government should increase investment by coming up with more power production sources that are not easily affected by climate change," Dr Henga said.

She said: "Power outages infringe various constitutional rights including articles 22 and 23 that specify the right to work and earn incomes, article 14 the right to life by obtaining good health and article 18 the right to receive and provide information."

The director also said that along with the government's efforts to address the power outage challenge, it is also ideal to set effective strategies to find a permanent solution to power shortages in the country.

She added that power outages have been recurring despite the abundance of various sources of production including natural gas produced in Mtwara and Lindi regions in Songosongo, Msimbati, Mnazi Bay and Madima.

"LHRC has given its recommendations to the government for the recurring power ration, which has caused great impact to citizens, especially in daily life activities such as production, business, health and education services," Dr Henga said.

In addition, Dr Henga said that there has been an increase in the cost of living due to citizens switching to alternative sources of power, including generators and solar which are costly.

Sea cucumbers now join the list of highly sought marine species

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Bagamoyo

AQUATIC invertebrates, precisely sea cucumbers, have just joined the list of highly trafficked wildlife species from Tanzania's marine ecosystem.

Allen Chad Mgaza is the Natural Resources Management Policy Lead of the USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili Project who points out that while Sea Cucumber trade is legal, harvesting wild invertebrates in Tanzania's waters is prohibited.

"The government wants people to establish seas cucumber farms but not to deplete the vital species

from the ocean," explained Mgaza while presenting a paper on wildlife trafficking to specialized writers on environment issues during the special Training Programme on Biodiversity Conservation organized by the Journalists' Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) with support from USAID.

According to Mgaza, when it comes to wildlife trafficking large and more popular species such as the elephant, lion and leopard get the most attention, though in the underground networks smaller specimens such as marine creatures seem to be topping the bill.

The expert reveals that Uganda is the leading hub of Sea Cucum-

ber trade despite the fact that it is a landlocked country, meaning the supply could be coming from its two neighbours along the Indian Ocean Coastline, Kenya and Tanzania.

Sea Cucumbers (*Stichopus japonicus*, *Holothurioidea*) have been discovered to be frozen, dried, salted or in brine, smoked and or cooked before being exported to overseas market with the hub for the trade being surprisingly in Uganda, a landlocked East African country.

The suppliers market their products with tantalizing promos: Packed with essential vitamins and minerals, sea cucumber is known

for its potential to support joint health, promote skin elasticity, and boost the immune system.

Sea Cucumbers are also believed to have anti-inflammatory properties and their consumption may even aid in digestion.

Sea cucumbers have been overfished in many areas for their prized medicinal and culinary properties, leading to a tremendous decline in their population.

A visit to fishermen in Bagamoyo however revealed that most of them do not exactly deal in the Aquatic invertebrates, but their counterparts in Zanzibar could be raking it rich through the endangered species.

"If you look around this fish market you cannot find any sea cucumbers, nobody here eats them," Salim Zenga, one of the boatmen in Bagamoyo stated, adding that the species could be popular in Zanzibar, due to the influx of foreign travellers there.

Sea cucumber known as 'Jongoo Bahari,' (Sea Millipedes) come in variety of species in Zanzibar include Myeupe, Tairi, Spinyo baba, Barangu, Nanas, Kijini, Dole, Barangu mwamba, Sankude, Tambi and Mbura.

According to the National Geographic there should be more than 1,000 species of sea cucumber swimming in the oceans

worldwide.

Sea cucumbers or Sandfish (Holothuroids) in general play important ecological roles in the ecosystem. One role is re-mineralising large quantities of organic nutrients through their feeding and burying activities, which increases the benthic productivity of coral reefs.

According to the report from the Sokoine University of Agriculture, the role of sea cucumbers in the dissolution of Calcium carbonate sediment provides an important source of alkalinity and may play a role in buffering ocean acidification at least at local scales on coral reefs.

Rwanda rejects US calls for withdrawal of missiles, troops from eastern Congo

KIGALI

AUTHORITIES in Rwanda on Monday rejected US calls for the withdrawal of troops and missile systems from eastern Congo, saying they are defending Rwandan territory as Congo carries out a "dramatic military build-up" near the border.

Rwanda's Foreign Ministry in a statement spoke of threats to Rwandan national security stemming from the presence in Congo of an armed group whose members include alleged perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.

The rebel group, known by its initials FDLR, "is fully integrated into" the Congolese army, the statement said.

Although Rwanda has long cited a threat posed by FDLR, authorities there had never admitted to a military presence in eastern Congo, whose authorities accuse the tiny central African country of actively supporting the violent armed group known

as M23.

The U.S. State Department in a statement Saturday criticized the worsening violence caused by M23, describing it as a "Rwanda-backed" armed group. That statement also urged Rwanda "to immediately withdraw all Rwanda Defense Force personnel from the (Congo) and remove its surface-to-air missile systems."

The U.S. statement represented "an abrupt shift in policy, or simply a lack of internal coordination," causing Rwanda to "question the ability of the United States to serve as a credible mediator" in Africa's Great Lakes region, the Rwandan Foreign Ministry said.

U.N. experts previously said they had "solid evidence" that members of Rwanda's armed forces were conducting operations there in support of M23.

M23's rebellion has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in Congo's North Kivu's province in recent

years.

Fighting near Goma, the region's largest city, has intensified in recent days as the rebels threatened to take over the metropolis. Residents of the nearby town of Sake have been fleeing fierce fighting between Congolese government troops and the group.

Many M23 fighters, including Congolese Tutsis, were once members of Congo's army. M23 is one of more than 100 armed groups active in eastern Congo, seeking a share of the region's gold and other resources as they carry out mass killings.

The rebel group rose to prominence just over a decade ago when its fighters seized Goma, which borders Rwanda. It derives its name from a March 23, 2009, peace deal it accuses the Congo government of not implementing. After being largely dormant for a decade, M23 resurfaced in late 2021 and has since captured wide parts of eastern Congo.



Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (Brela) acting director Isdro Nkindi makes a presentation at a "beneficial ownership" seminar for the agency's stakeholders held in Mbeya city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Govt invites Egyptian investors to build three berths at Dar port

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE government yesterday called on Egyptian investors to come and invest in constructing three berths (13, 14 and 15) at the port of Dar es Salaam to increase its handling capacity.

Prof Makame Mbarawa, the Minister for Transport said that yesterday in Dar es Salaam at a strategic meeting for Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation between Tanza-

nia and the Arab Republic of Egypt in the transport sector.

Prof Mbarawa said the aim of the meeting was to discuss mutual bilateral cooperation in the transport sector.

He said the meeting involved fourteen institutions in the Transport Ministry namely - Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA), Tanzania Railway Corporation (TRC), Tanzania and Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA).

Others were Tanzania Civil

Aviation Authority (TCAA) and the Tanzania Airport Authority (TAA) to mention the few experts and business community from Egypt.

He said Tanzania and Egypt need huge investment to develop their transport sector to enhance business for the benefit of other landlocked countries.

Prof Mbarawa said that despite development made at the Port of Dar es Salaam, investment in constructing new berths is still needed to re-

duce delaying vessels spent waiting to dock.

He said the exchange of best practices and capacity building will enrich the country's transport sector.

"Tanzania is modernising the port of Dar es Salaam. This will enable panamax vessels to dock and already one construction company from Egypt has shown interest," he said.

The minister said the meeting was an important platform to strengthen re-

lationships in the transport sector.

He mentioned other areas of investment such as Bagamoyo port in the Coast region, construction of a single terminal receiver dedicated for liquid products, construction of an oil jet at Tanga port and dry ports in Mwanza, Kigoma, Dar es Salaam and Coast region.

Other opportunities are construction of Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the construction of urban

railway (106kilometres) for commuter trains," he said.

"We are here to discuss avenues where investors from Egypt can explore the opportunities and invest in the transport sector. Our strategic partnership between the two countries will continue, promising more in future," he assured.

Egypt Minister for Transport Lieutenant General Kamel AlWazeer thanked Tanzania for long existing bilateral relationships in dif-

ferent areas including trans-

port. He said Tanzania needs huge investment in the transport sector to connect one country with others economically.

"Egypt is ready to do whatever is possible in the transport to connect land, air and water bodies with Tanzania," he assured.

He said the business exchange will further improve and promote business between the two countries.

Report sees Africa's agrifood sector as solution to youth unemployment

By Special Correspondent

A New report says Africa's agrifood sector – which involves the processing, packaging and selling of locally produced food – could be the key to boosting employment rates, income and food security on the continent.

Experts in agriculture, engineering, ecology, nutrition and food security unveiled the 140-page report in Uganda on Wednesday, looking at the challenges young Africans face and the education and skills needed for jobs in the agrifood sector.

Rhoda Tumusiime, a former commissioner for rural economy and agriculture at the African Union, is one of the experts. She said the food business could improve the lives of African youths.

"Food trade provides an opportunity for youth to create jobs for themselves in agribusiness and improve socioeconomic development," Tumusiime said. The investments in agro-processing and its links to production, marketing and trade "will become a core employment-generating sector in agrifood systems."

The report provided examples. In Zambia, for instance, authorities launched YAPASA, a project to increase income for rural youth.

The project in the central African country promoted collaboration among different actors in the agriculture sector – mainly small farmers – and better connections between small producers and larger agribusinesses.

Coordinating with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labor Organization and the Zambian government, YAPASA created 3,000 jobs and improved 5,000 youth-led rural enterprises.

The World Bank says Africa's combined food and beverage markets are forecast to be valued at \$1 trillion by 2030.

Ousmane Badiane, co-chair of the panel that released the report, said it's important to craft youth-oriented policies to improve the business environment.

"Making policies much more sensitive to the needs and the ambition of the youth is going to be important," Badiane said. "Creating that space for engagement with youth is going to be something extremely important to do. Sustaining all of that into a couple of decades to come will require being able to sustain growth in the context of a changing climate, not just in terms

of adaptation being resilient but also being able to find new ways of doing business."

According to the African Development Bank, 11 million youths join the job market each year, but only about 3 million formal jobs are created. In Africa, 120 million people between 15 and 35 are unemployed.

Dorothy Okello, a lecturer in engineering at Uganda's Makerere University, told VOA there is a need to connect opportunities in agriculture with students' educational backgrounds.

"Can we have, for example, Uberization, if I may use the word, of tractor services?" she asked, referring to an arrangement in which one tractor would be made available to a number of farmers. "How do we creatively use engineering to come up with solutions for that?" She also pointed to people with backgrounds in creative or industrial arts whose skills could be tapped to help producers enhance the appeal of their goods on the market.

Experts are calling on African governments to empower youth by addressing trade barriers, investing in technology, and involving youth in policy formulation and decision-making.



Second-hand clothes on open sale on the pavement of a Mbezi Mwisho section of Dar es Salaam's busy Morogoro Road, as captured yesterday, while the sites officially set aside for small traders stand all but abandoned. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

Fall armyworms destroy food crops in Kilindi

By Guardian Correspondent, Kilindi

At least 7,622 acres of food crops have been invaded by fall armyworms, wreaking havoc to many farmers in Kilindi District, Tanga Region.

According to the committee on economics, works and environment for Kilindi district, the move has also led to the outbreak of Neochetina weevils which have negative impacts to crops.

The committee's chairman, Abdalah Ndaro said when presenting the report that 16 wards have been affected by the outbreak and are at risk of facing food shortage.

He said in the second quarter, the district was also faced by invasive rats which were uprooting plants planted in farms which sparked fear among farmers in the area.

In addition, he said a total of 1704 hectares of corn were saved by destroying the rats, after the exercise was carried out in the eight attacked counties where the council through the agriculture department sent its experts early to control the situation.

Regarding the weap-

ons, Ndaro said that the Department of Agriculture has already started to deal with the problem, for experts to go to the areas affected by the invasion to see its extent and find so-

lutions. Agriculture Officer of the district council, Seif Sempanga, speaking of the effects that occurred, said that efforts have been made and that 7622 litres

of Profenofos 720EC/ Duduba 400EC/Banafos 720 have been requested from the Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority to control the insects.

rikolto

INVITATION FOR CONSULTANCY

A CONSULTANT NEEDED FOR THE TRAINING PROGRAM ON PARTICIPATORY FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS IN TANZANIA

Rikolto is an international non-governmental network organisation with over 40 years of experience in partnering with food system stakeholders in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. We work together with a variety of actors in the food system such as governments, research institutions, financial institutions, and farmers' organizations around one central question: 'What will we eat tomorrow?' By building bridges between these stakeholders, we aim to transform the food system together, unlocking access to healthy, safe, and nutritious (HSN) food for all while taking care of the environment and securing decent rural livelihoods. Working both in formal and informal sectors, our target beneficiaries include farmers, consumers, traders, and other value chain actors, with a focus on youth and women.

Rikolto and its partners are looking for a consultant to:

- Create guidelines and a training curriculum for Best Food Safety Practices for transporters, brokers, and middlemen in Arusha and Mbeya

- as part of the PFSS third cycle.
- Establish a database of transporters, middlemen, and brokers for fruits and vegetables in Arusha and Mbeya.
- Enhance market connections between transporters, middlemen, brokers, farmers, and market vendors.
- Conduct refresher training for farmers and market vendors' Trainers of Trainers (ToTs).
- Update the Chakula Bora Google map with newly engaged actors by the ToTs.
- Develop a proposal for expanding the PFSS model to other regions, specifically Iringa and Tanga.

For more information about the assignment please visit our Rikolto website on the below link,

Consultant needed to conduct a training program on Participatory Food Safety Systems (PFSS) pilots in Tanzania | Rikolto in East Africa

The deadline for application is 29th February 2024.



USAID Heshimu Bahari (Respect the Ocean) Project Request For Proposal Electronic Monitoring HO.PO.004

USAID Heshimu Bahari (Respect the Ocean) is a five-year (2022-2027) project financed by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International and partners. The goal of the project is to strengthen the enabling environment and science-driven framework for sustainable marine management areas (MMAs) and fisheries co-management in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, by Government, communities, and the private sector, through four integrated objectives:

1. Strengthening the enabling framework for a network of MMAs and fisheries replenishment zones (FRZs) to support biodiversity conservation, climate resilient communities, and sustainable wild-caught fisheries.
2. Community co-management of MMAs/wild-caught fisheries and climate resilience strengthened.
3. Private sector investment in MMAs and wild-caught fisheries expanded.
4. Integration of relevant science to MMA and fisheries policy and management improved.

Objectives.

To fill data gaps and inform fisheries management, the United Republic of Tanzania through the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA) will pilot Electronic Monitoring (EM)—the use of onboard video cameras, GPS, and sensors to automatically track and verify fishing activity onboard fishing vessels—to support sustainable fishing and transparency in industrial vessels fishing in its Exclusive Economic Zone.

An 18-month EM pilot project will be used to test and gather lessons learned for how an EM program could be designed to support potential 100% EM application in Tanzania's industrial vessels, including costs, training, and infrastructure. The EM pilot will help to test the following:

- Acceptability of the EM system by the fishing industry.
- Infrastructure requirements and technical capacity needs.
- Quantity and quality of collected information collected using EM system.

Chemonics International, acting for the USAID Heshimu Bahari, is soliciting proposals from eligible and responsible firms to carry out the following activities:

- The installation and maintenance of EM equipment that meet required Indian Ocean Tuna Commission EM Program Standards for three (3) vessels (with potential option for fourth vessel).
- The generation of raw EM data as well as annotated fishing trip data from the review of EM records.
- The production of analyzed EM trip reports and compliance notifications.
- Comparison of EM data with logbook and human observer data.
- Training of government agencies on data review processes.
- The storage of video and raw and analyzed EM data for at least 12 months from the date annotated.

Eligible Recipients:


By submitting an offer in response to the RFP, the offeror certifies that it and its principal officers are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. Government. Chemonics will not award a contract to any firm that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the U.S. Government.


Application and Submission Information.

Interested firms are invited to request the full RFP via email at HBAprocurement@HeshimuBahari.com.

The deadline for submitting a proposal is Monday, 4 March 2024 at 5:00 PM EAT. All interested firms must submit their proposals in electronic version to HBAprocurement@HeshimuBahari.com with subject clearly marked "Electronic Monitoring HO.PO.004".

Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate Chemonics or USAID to award a subcontract, nor does it commit Chemonics or USAID to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. Further, Chemonics reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received and reserves the right to ask for further clarifications from the offerors.





Advertisement


REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUL-RFQ-24-01-10 – Purchase of Atlas Copco GA 132A3 Compressor

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine ("the Company"), a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is ultimately owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, requests the submission of Quotes from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following:

Atlas Copco GA 132A3-A-7.5-50

Technical Specifications:	
Model	GA132A3
Model variant	Full Features
Cooling	Air cooled
Regulation	Elektronikon
Frequency	50 Hz
Electrical approval	IEC
Starter type	Star/Delta (Y/D)
Motor Type	WEG
Pressure vessel approval	CE
Supply voltage	400 V
Maximum working pressure	7.5 bar
Integrated dryer	YES
Free air delivery	428.9 Liters/Sec (908CFM)



Reference conditions	
Absolute inlet pressure	1 bar(a)
Relative humidity	0 %
Air inlet temperature	20 °C
Cooling air inlet temperature	20 °C

Performance data	
Maximum working pressure	
• Free air delivery	428.9 l/s
• Total electrical power input	154.7 kW
• Total specific energy requirements (SER)	360.6 J/l
Effective working pressure	
• Free air delivery	429.7 l/s
• Total electrical power input	152 kW
• Total specific energy requirements (SER)	353.7 J/l
Minimum effective working pressure	
• Free air delivery	437.3 l/s
• Total electrical power input	121.7 kW
• Total specific energy requirements (SER)	278.3 J/l

Integrated dryer data	
Integrated dryer data	ID440+
Refrigerant type	R410A
Amount of refrigerant	4.2 kg
Typical pressure dew point Remark: Depending on operating conditions. Please consult Atlas Copco for more details.	3 °C

Unit data*	
Compressed air temperature at outlet	22.2 °C
Mean sound pressure level*2	76 dB(A)
Typical oil content of compressed air	3 mg/m ³
Total electrical power input at unload	34.1 kW
Cooling air flow compressor	5 m ³ /s
Cooling air flow motor	
Cooling air flow dryer	2 m ³ /s
Oil capacity	110 l
Length	2900 mm
Width	1785 mm
Height	2020 mm
Net weight	3383 kg

Limitations	
Maximum effective working pressure	7.3 bar(g)
Minimum effective working pressure	3.5 bar(g)
Maximum ambient temperature	46 °C
Minimum ambient temperature	1 °C
Maximum cooling air temperature	46 °C
Minimum cooling air temperature	1 °C
Maximum altitude (above sea level)	1000 m

Installation connections	
Compressed air outlet	G3"
Condensate drain connections	G 1/2"
Electrical cable entry size	plate

Main drive motor	
Motor manufacturer	WEG
Motor nominal power	132 kW
Motor service factor	1.17
Motor efficiency class	IE4 -IEC 60034-30
Motor full load efficiency	96.2 %
Motor protection class	IP66

Electrical data	
Supply voltage	400 V
Supply frequency	50 Hz
Package current**	277.8 A
Starter type	Y-D (Star-Delta)
Starting current DOL	
Starting current YD	766.7 A
Electrical network	TT or TN network

Key documents

- Clear and detailed Quotation.
- Company registration documents, i.e., Certificate of incorporation, business license, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- BRELA detailed search document indicating Tanzanian ownership percentage, Tanzanian management and below management employment percentage to determine classification as an Indigenous Tanzanian Company as per the Local Content Regulation, 2018.
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of the dealership as required.
- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner.

Submission of Quotes

- Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com.

The reference "BUL-RFQ-24-01-10 – Purchase of Atlas Copco GA 132A3 Compressor" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit a quote through this advertisement. If you do not hear from us in 21 days after the deadline date, please consider your bid/quote unsuccessful.

Key dates:

- Last date to submit quotes: **27th February 2024**

North Mara Gold Mine Limited

Fertiliser firm urged to establish demonstration farms in Manyoni

By Guardian Correspondent, Manyoni

THE Dodoma-based Itracom Fertilizer Company has been urged to establish demonstration farms in Manyoni District, Singida Region to enable farmers to learn how to utilize its products correctly for increased yields.

The request was made by some councillors in the district council that the company which also produces Fomi fertiliser should see the importance of practically showing the farming how the fertiliser was good to boost harvests.

Speaking during the councillors' meeting at the weekend here, Simon Mapunda, Chairman of Manyoni District Council said Fomi fertiliser was popular among many farmers in the

region, but others do not follow the proper methods for using it due to a lack of information.

"It is good that you have already started demonstration farms because not all farmers know how to use fertiliser, but if you have one for each ward, you are going to help many people," he said.

Additionally, he said the company should conduct research on fertilizers that are appropriate for the cashew crops that have begun to be grown in the district.

Dr Kenneth Masuki, Deputy General Director of Intracom Fertilizers Limited said Singida is one of the most motivated regions to use fertiliser manufactured by the company's factory during the 2023/24 agricultural season.

Masuki said that, according to Tan-

zania Fertilizer Regulatory Authority (TFRA) records, farmers in the region acquired over 486 tonnes of fertilizer, 276 of which were sold to the Singida Municipal Council.

"A large amount of fertiliser seems to have been sold in Singida Municipal Council because there is a large warehouse to sell fertiliser where many farmers come to buy it," he said. He said the presence of an agency supplying the fertiliser to farmers on time has helped Mkalama District to use it effectively.

"Contrary to our expectations, Singida has done well in fertiliser, and for this, we are very grateful to the Regional Commissioner, Peter Serukamba, who has been emphasising the use of fertiliser," he said.



Akili Platform managing director Roghat Robert (2nd-R) and "ambassador" Pili Edward (2nd-L) pictured at the weekend presenting an assortment of items to Tabora Regional Referral Hospital's medical officer Edina Aswile (L) and matron Hawa Hassan. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

African Union bans donkey skin trade

By Victoria Gill

ANIMAL welfare charities have welcomed an Africa-wide ban on the controversial donkey skin trade.

It will make it illegal to slaughter donkeys for their skin in 55 countries across the continent.

Demand for the animals' skins is fuelled by the popularity of an ancient Chinese medicine called Ejiao, traditionally made from donkey hides.

African state leaders approved the ban at the conclusion of the African Union summit in Ethiopia on Sunday.

The charity, the Donkey Sanctuary, called the trade "brutal and unsustainable" and said it had decimated donkey populations around the world, particularly in Africa and South America.

Ejiao is believed by some to have anti-ageing and health benefits, although this is unproven. Chinese companies that make it used to use skins from donkeys sourced in China. But when the numbers of the animals in the country plummeted, they looked overseas.

"At first our governments saw this as an opportunity, and many legal slaughterhouses opened in Africa," explained Dr Solomon Onyango from the Donkey Sanctuary in Kenya.

"But, [here in Kenya], between 2016 and 2019, about half of our donkeys were killed for the trade," he said.

A donkey can mean the difference between a modest livelihood and destitution for many people in poor, rural communities

Dr Onyango said that the ban would "go a long way to safeguarding donkeys and the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on them".

About two-thirds of world's estimated population of 53 million donkeys are in Africa. People in the poorest, rural communities use them for transport and to carry water, food and other goods.

One recent study in Ethiopia - that set out to measure the economic value of donkeys - showed that owning one could mean the difference between destitution and a modest livelihood.

Raphael Kinoti, who is regional director of the animal welfare charity The Brooke in East Africa said this was a "terrific moment for communities in Africa who have benefitted from donkeys since time immemorial".

"Donkey slaughter for its skin has eroded livelihoods in Africa, robbing the continent of its culture, biodiversity and identity," he said.

"We urge all AU members to uphold the decision for the good of all."



About two-thirds of world's estimated population of 53 million donkeys are in Africa. People in the poorest, rural communities use them for transport and to carry water, food and other goods

Women to support Samia's efforts in promoting tourism

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA National Parks (TANAPA) is early next month expected to take more than 400 women to visit the Nyerere National Park to complement President Samia Suluhu Hassan's efforts in promoting tourism in the country.

Addressing reporters in Dar es Salaam yesterday, conservation commander in the southern zone, Steria Ndaga said the tour is also part of the commemoration of the International Women's Day.

She said the tourists will take a train under the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) from Dar es Salaam to the park enjoying the attractions on the road and at the park.

"The tour will be conducted on March 2, this year where celebrations will commence in Dar es Salaam and end at the Nyerere National Park," she said.

"Another objective is to encourage Tanzanians to see the importance of tourism and various opportunities in the national parks, as we know that women are higher in number than men, so if we use this opportunity well, we will greatly contribute to the promotion of local tourism backing efforts of President Samia," she explained.

She said that the cost for the travel is 200,000/- which incorporates both transport and the park's touring expenses.

Ndaga said that a lot of investments have been done to improve touring in the attraction in the southern circuit where she encouraged Tanzanians to visit Mikumi, Ruaha, Katavi and Kitulo parks to witness the difference.

She said TANAPA expects to get 400 women on the tour and that efforts are going on to encourage more to join the journey.

Judita Ligenzi, one of the drivers of TAZARA trains encouraged women to utilise the rare opportunity to enjoy the country's attractions as well as support the government efforts to promote tourism.

"We will ensure that the tour is safe and lovely, this a very rare opportunity that women need to seize," she said.

Peace deal and elections top agenda on visit by UN envoy in South Sudan

JUBA

JEAN-Pierre Lacroix, the head of UN peacekeeping arrived yesterday in South Sudan to assess progress made on the peace process and preparations underway for the upcoming elections scheduled for December, the country's first since independence.

In Juba, he is expected to hold meetings with leaders of the Transitional Government of National Unity, civil society representatives, and other key stakeholders involved in the peace process.

Lacroix is accompanied by Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.

Lacroix said: "This is an important time for South Sudan. There are challenges and there are also expectations on many fronts, and I

think it's also an expression of solidarity from the UN as a whole."

For his part, the Head of the UN Peacekeeping mission here, Nicholas Haysom, said, "this is an opportunity for the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations to see one of the bigger and more effective missions; for us to introduce him to the challenges we face and the difficulties and what we're doing to overcome those. But he also has an interest in Abyei and the conflict in Warrap between the Ngok (Dinka) and Twic (Dinka)."

Lacroix added, "it's clear that the region is facing many challenges. Of course, the hostilities in Sudan are having an impact on South Sudan itself. There are other challenges—like you mentioned—Abyei; and I believe other phenomena like the impact of climate change are also affecting this country. They have an

impact on the civilian population."

Lacroix and Tetteh will also visit the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and engage with the Juba-appointed Chief Administrator, Khartoum-appointed administration officials, traditional leaders as well as women's groups and civil society representatives.

They will also use the visit to assess the prevailing situation in Southern Abyei following the increase in intercommunal violence that we have seen, as well as the peacekeeping mission's continuing efforts to protect civilians and do whatever they can to de-escalate those intercommunal tensions.

Lacroix will also interact with civilian and uniformed peacekeeping personnel in South Sudan and Abyei and thank them for their dedication and service in a very challenging environment



Deputy Prime Minister and Energy minister Dr Doto Biteko exchanges greetings with government and other officials shortly after jetting into Songwe Airport yesterday at the start of an official tour of Mbeya Region. Photo: DPMO

Odinga announces candidacy for chairmanship of AU commission

NAIROBI

RENOWNED Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga has officially announced his candidacy for the Chairperson position of the African Union Commission (AUC), setting the stage for a potentially historic leadership bid.

In a press briefing, Odinga declared his readiness to contest for the influential role, highlighting his extensive consultations with allies before making the decision.

"If the leadership of Africa desires my services, I am prepared and offer myself to serve this continent. I am ready to pursue the chairmanship of the African Union," affirmed Odinga.

Expressing concern over the "brain drain" phenomenon, Odinga voiced his discontent with the plight of African youth forced to seek opportunities abroad due to challenging economic conditions. He pledged to leverage his leadership to transform Africa's fortunes and position the continent as an economic powerhouse.

"As a Pan-Africanist, I firmly believe that Africa should aspire for more. We deserve better," Odinga asserted. "We must reverse this trend and harness all our resources for the accelerated socio-economic growth of our continent."

Citing his tenure as the AU special envoy for infrastructure development in Africa from 2018 to 2023, Odinga emphasized his qualifications for the position, noting his comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic landscape across the continent.

"This role provided me with a unique advantage to gain insights into every African country. I am confident that by collaborating with these nations, we can uplift Africa," Odinga remarked.

Odinga revealed that he has engaged with former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, present at the address, to rally leaders across the continent and garner support for his candidacy.

In endorsing Odinga's bid, Obasanjo emphasized the significance of having an East African leader assume the AUC chairperson mantle, signalling a potential shift in regional representation within the AU leadership.

The AUC chairperson position is set to become vacant next year, with the incumbent, Chad's Moussa Faki, concluding his two-term tenure. The chairperson serves as the chief executive officer and legal representative of the AU, overseeing administrative and financial matters, promoting the AU's objectives, and engaging with stakeholders.

As Odinga throws his hat into the ring for one of Africa's most prestigious leadership roles, his candidacy carries implications not only for Kenya but for the broader trajectory of continental governance and development.

Police officers in Kenya arrested while drinking despite ban

NAIROBI

FOUR police officers have been arrested in Kenya after they were found drinking at a bar, in violation of a directive that ordered the closure of all bars in the central Kenyan county of Kirinyaga.

The county's governor, Anne Waiguru, imposed the order last Saturday, after more than 20 people in the county died from consuming alcohol laced with ethanol.

"I have today ordered the closure of all bars in Kirinyaga to pave the way for fresh vetting, those bars that will be found to have been operating without license or had previous cases of selling unauthorised products will not be allowed to open again," Waiguru said on Saturday during a mass burial of some of the victims.

The officers were arrested on Sunday during a raid on the bar, after a local resident tipped authorities.

The bar's owner was also detained, but several customers escaped arrest, privately-owned media reported.


Last week more than five others are admitted in hospitals after they consumed the contaminated alcohol.

The fresh deaths were reported between Wednesday and Friday in Kandongu village within Kirinyaga County even as Interior Cabinet Secretary Kithure Kindiki visited the area as part of efforts to address the menace.


Local officials said they expect the toll and number of those in hospitals to rise further given reports that the brew is still in circulation in the area.

Two other people lost their sight and are still admitted.

This came a week after at least 17 people died and dozens were admitted in hospital after drinking the poisonous alcohol.



TWIGA
Minerals Corporation Limited
in partnership between Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of Tanzania



Advertisement


REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUL-RFQ-24-01-09 – Supply of Atlas Copco ZT 132 STD Compressor

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine ("the Company"), a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is ultimately owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, requests the submission of Quotes from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following:

Atlas Copco ZT 132 STD compressor

Technical Specifications:	
Model	ZT132 STD
Model variant	Full Features
Cooling	Air cooled
Frequency	50 Hz
Electrical approval	IEC
Motor type	WEG IE4
Starting method	STAR-DELTA Y/D
Pressure vessel approval	CE
Supply voltage	400 V
Maximum Working pressure	7.5bar
Integrated dryer	IMD Dryer
Free air delivery	359.5 liters/sec (762cfm)



Technical Specifications

Reference conditions	
Absolute inlet pressure	1 bar(a)
Relative humidity	0 %
Air inlet temperature	20 °C
Cooling air inlet temperature	20 °C
Effective working pressure	7 bar(g)

Performance data**	
Maximum working pressure	7.5 bar(g)
• Free air delivery	359.5 l/s
• Total electrical power input	145.6 kW
• Total specific energy requirements (SER)	404.9 J/l
Effective working pressure	7 bar(g)
• Free air delivery	359.6 l/s
• Total electrical power input	141.8 kW
• Total specific energy requirements (SER)	394.3 J/l
Minimum effective working pressure	6 bar(g)
• Free air delivery	359.6 l/s
• Total electrical power input	134.2 kW
• Total specific energy requirements (SER)	373.2 J/l

Integrated dryer data	
Integrated dryer data	iMD400A
Typical pressure dew point Remark: Depending on operating conditions. Please consult Atlas Copco for more details.	-40 – -5 °C
Compressed air temperature at outlet	38 °C
Mean sound pressure level**2	
Total electrical power input at unload	31.6 kW
Cooling air flow compressor	5 m³/s
Cooling air flow motor	0.44 m³/s
Cooling air flow dryer	
Oil capacity	48 l

Dimension and Weight			
	Unit dimensions	Shipping dimensions with pallet only	Shipping dimensions with wooden crate
Length	4085 mm	4260 mm	4280 mm
Width	1660 mm	1780 mm	1870 mm
Height	2150 mm	2440 mm	2440 mm
Volume	14.58 m³	18.5 m³	19.53 m³
Net weight	4250 kg	4388 kg	5278 kg

Limitations	
Maximum effective working pressure	7.5 bar(g)
Minimum effective working pressure	6 bar(g)
Maximum ambient temperature	40 °C
Minimum ambient temperature	0 °C
Maximum cooling air temperature	40 °C
Minimum cooling air temperature	0 °C
Maximum altitude (above sea level)	1000 m

Installation connections	
Compressed air outlet	DN80-PN16
Condensate drain connections	G 1/2"
Electrical cable entry size	M63

Main drive motor	
Motor manufacturer	WEG
Motor nominal power	132 kW
Motor service factor	1.15
Motor efficiency class	IE4 -IEC 60034-30
Motor full load efficiency	96.2 %
Motor protection class	IP55

Electrical data	
Supply voltage	400 V
Supply frequency	50 Hz
Package current**4	249.4 A
Starter type	Y-D (Star-Delta)
Starting current DOL	
Starting current YD	542.7 A
Electrical network	TT or TN network

It is necessary to adhere to the technical data that has been listed.

Key documents:

- Clear and detailed Quotation.
- Company registration documents, i.e., Certificate of incorporation, business license, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- BRELA detailed search document indicating Tanzanian ownership percentage, Tanzanian management and below management employment percentage to determine classification as an Indigenous Tanzanian Company as per the Local Content Regulation, 2018.
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of the dealership as required.
- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner.

Submission of Quotes:

- Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com.
- The reference "BUL-RFQ-24-01-09 – Supply of Atlas Copco ZT 132 STD Compressor" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit a quote through this advertisement. If you do not hear from us in 21days after the deadline date, please consider your bid/quote unsuccessful.

Key dates:

- Last date to submit quotes: **27th February 2024**

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Limited

TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2024

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

Better late than never: Nyerere statue now at AU headquarters

ENTHUSIASTS of the memory of founder president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere had something to slime about at the weekend as the African Union headquarters finally put up a statue of the remarkable Pan-Africanist within its premises. Reports from Addis Ababa narrated how President Samia Suluhu Hassan led other African leaders in unveiling a life-size statue of the iconic leader, revered around the world both as a political leader and as a person, his refusal to amass wealth while in office being salutary in that era. He had but a few like minds.

The statue unveiling event was auxiliary activity to the business of the 37th ordinary session of the summit, the successor since 2012 of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which Nyerere helped to set up in 1963. Tanzania played some key roles in the 1963-2012 set up, as Nyerere and his erstwhile rival and like-minded liberation protagonist Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah. They saw it natural to set up the OAU at the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa as the only country with a legacy of defeating a major incursion by a foreign power seeking to make it a colony. The Battle of Adowa in 1896 was like the Maji Maji War being won over columns of Major Hermann von Wissmann to end German rule.

The key element in Nyerere's legacy was without question his creating and presiding over the OAU Liberation Committee more or less as an autonomous unit within the defence and security establishment. As the liberation struggle was making waves towards the mid-1970s, Nyerere formed the Frontline States group chiefly in relation to diplomacy on Zimbabwe, as there was unfinished business of formal transition from UK colonial responsibilities. Those who were in the 'frontline' media locally at that time will recall

how this group rattled conservative commentators in the West, having to agree with President Nyerere anything of diplomatic importance touching Southern Africa, contrary to habit.

The rule until that point was that decisions are taken in London, Paris, Brussels or Washington; the next day an African government would have been toppled in a military coup. China assisted with building the highway to Zambia and then the railway, changing the logistics of its foreign trade and in turn, enhancing its scope of options in diplomacy. London and Pretoria, then under apartheid, could no longer just cough and the whole of independent southern Africa staggers into their appointed positions to say 'yes sir,' and do nothing about OAU resolutions.

All this was not without a sort of fall out at the local level, but it simply elevated weaknesses that emerged in the very effort at consolidating independence.

The first round of self-reliance was Africanisation, getting rid of European civil servants for new graduates, school leavers, A few problems can be traced to this.

After Dr Nkrumah was overthrown and policy of compulsory National Service plus salary reductions for 18 months drew out University College students to come out into the streets with placards reading 'colonialism was better' it was clear to Nyerere that the writing was on the wall.

The script was written large in the Ghana coup: block payments from foreign sales, cripple revenue collection, military, police fail to get salaries; pick up some tribal prejudice, launch a coup. That was what Nyerere checked with the Declaration, spate of nationalisations. Africa has now more solid state systems and coups gave way to civil wars, sad.

Level playing field key to private sector capacity in health delivery

A RELATIVELY new medical facility has just been launched, though the building and its business were visible along Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road for several years. The head of government business, premier Kassim Majaliwa has just put a formal signature to its presence in the commercial capital, acknowledging the contribution of private sector in provision of health services in the country. While it is undeniable that the private sector plays an important role in ensuring the wellbeing of millions of people, the point is to make this role sustainable.

While presumably the government knows this much just like any of us, it is not always assured that there is adequate policy capacity to check winds blowing in the opposite direction. There is no reason for alarm just yet, but top levels among the public authorities had to meet with private medical groups on some regulatory provisions apparently seeking to level up charges in private hospitals to relate to what obtains in the public sector. Book-wise that is fine as costs can be plainly documented and ascertained, but in practice it is different, as a ploy to distort competition, level out performance differences, retention of expertise...

As the premier affirmed, the launch of the hospital and other modern facilities in the city and elsewhere shows that the government is committed to creating a conducive environment for investments in the health sector. That said, there are those in policy making corridors who understand that after one has put massive funds into an enterprise like a hospital, abandoning it will be overly diffi-

cult. That means such investors can take a lot of pressure from the government and remain put, which gives freedom to experiment, or to push, by top bureaucrats.

That we are among the most attractive places for investors to initiate projects of this sort is true, but there is always a possibility of reversal, of lost opportunities.

There was a point in the premier's remarks that modern hospitals like Saifee help to promote medical tourism, which is not so far visible to many people as it has just opened its doors, or rather start being heard at an important event. Yet to be sure it is well-equipped public facilities like the Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute (MOI) whose salutary reputation is being taken over by the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) that constitute the logistics of medical tourism. The role of best hospitals is to reassure the business community that all is well not just in the health sector but in investment as a whole as a living environment.

Considerations that good hospitals locally help to reduce the number of patients going outside the country for specialized medical services is valid, except for the fact that it wants medical tourism in a one sided manner. Some of our own people, or foreigners resident here may at times wish for something more elevated, at least for a try when diseases raise complications. Issues like costs incurred by public and private agencies in foreign treatment are similarly taken for granted in the value of insurance cover for an individual, where quite often relatives chip in with millions in topping up personal insurance optimum.

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SA on the backfoot in Africa's new 'gold rush' as investors bank on rival nations

By Peter Fabricius

SOUTH Africa was once Africa's undisputed mining champion. It built its major economy on gold and diamonds, particularly in the 20th century. But that status has been slipping, as was evident at the African Mining Indaba in Cape Town, where several other African mining countries shone brighter.

As Business Maverick Editor Tim Cohen wrote: "The big takeaway from the African Mining Indaba is incredibly obvious and simple: Africa is increasingly eating SA's lunch". He said for decades, mining companies had preferred to mine in South Africa – and possibly Botswana – rather than other African countries. But that was changing.

It's not easy to quantify the decline, though the Fraser Institute ranked South Africa only 57th among 62 global mining jurisdictions in its 2022 Mining Investment Attractiveness Index. Botswana ranked 10th, Côte d'Ivoire 30th, Ghana 33rd, Namibia 38th and Tanzania 53rd. Angola and Zambia ranked lower than South Africa – but it's clear that all three, and others, are moving ahead, while South Africa is seemingly stagnating.

Minerals Council South Africa statistics show that mining net fixed investment was near zero in 2021. Several companies at the indaba privately said the operational and regulatory environment and the mineral rights processing systems in other African countries were more welcoming to investors than in South Africa.

"South Africa had largely dropped off the exploration radar, with its share of global exploration expenditure remaining below 1% for the last three years; two decades ago we were well above 5%," another source said.

"South Africa has lagged [behind] its peers in Africa when it comes to implementing a modern, transparent cadastral system to efficiently manage mineral right applications and records," Minerals Council spokesperson Allan Secombe told ISS Today. "This has resulted in a backlog of thousands of unprocessed mining and prospecting right applications [and] mining permits."

"There are a plethora of regulations and policies to traverse to start an exploration project, build and operate a mine in South Africa – which add to the time it takes to start work. Coupled with severe constraints in electricity supplies and transport logistics, and a downturn in certain commodity prices, the domestic operating environment is challenging, making it a difficult mining investment destination for investors to consider."

He noted however that the Minerals Council, its members and other business organisations were working with



A dumper truck carries excavated iron ore at the Sishen open cast mine, operated by Kumba Iron Ore. File photo

the government to address the logistics bottlenecks, crime and corruption to improve investor perceptions.

Duncan Wanblad, CEO of Anglo American – the bellwether of South African mining – told the indaba that Zambia and Angola were creating investor-friendly environments, while the pace of South Africa's reforms needed to accelerate. He said Anglo American recently signed diamond mining investment contracts with Angola, where it was also exploring for copper and nickel. In Zambia it had begun prospecting for copper and cobalt.

Promises vs progress

Several analysts contrasted President Cyril Ramaphosa's speech with that of Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema. Ramaphosa was full of promises to fix the many problems frustrating investment such as power shortages, rail transport and port bottlenecks, and the lack of a proper cadastral system. Hichilema listed eight new major mining investments totalling about \$7-billion since becoming president in 2021.

Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Angola, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Namibia all showcased their mineral attractions to investors at the indaba.

Tanzania was prominent. Like Zambia, it has emerged from an era of fraught relations with foreign mining houses. Under President

Samia Suluhu Hassan, "an ambitious foray to position Tanzania as Africa's leading mining destination of choice" has been launched. Ministry of Minerals Permanent Secretary Kheri Mahimbali said in 2023 the mining sector contributed to about 10% of GDP, generating nearly 60% of foreign exchange and attracting some \$2-billion in investment.

It's clear from the indaba that there is a new 'gold rush' in Africa – powered mostly by demand for critical minerals such as lithium, coltan and rare earth elements vital for electric vehicle batteries and other renewable energy technologies.

It is also clear that African mining countries are implementing policies to ensure they don't again lose out on the benefits of mining investments. Examples are policies requiring that their minerals be beneficiated partly in-country, so that extra value flows to them, not foreign countries.

Ghana's mining minister Samuel Jinapor said relations between African and industrialised countries were fundamentally different to 50 years ago, when the approach to mining was 'dig and ship.' Now African countries demand two things: value addition and indigenous participation. Ghana has policies to ensure that Lithium, for instance, can't be exported raw, and there must be at least 30% Ghanaian participation. It will be inter-

esting to see whether that sort of policy can be sustained.

Last year, Zambia and the DRC signed an agreement for a joint venture to develop electric vehicle batteries on their territories. This was strongly supported by the United States, which sees it as a way of frustrating China's apparent effort to corner the market on critical minerals.

Jinapor exhibited a refreshing attitude toward investors. He said African countries had to create conducive environments for mining investment, including adequate transport, fair tax regimes and energy prices, and predictable regulation – 'not changing the rules in the middle of the game.'

More broadly, mining had to guarantee the sanctity of contracts, democracy, the rule of law and independent judiciaries. Having done all that, African countries could insist that the highest end of the value chain be retained in-country.

Properly managed, Africa's new 'gold rush' could be a big win for the continent as a whole. But if South Africa wants to retain its slice of the cake, it should accelerate the pace of reforms. The country is a major economic hub and anchor not only in Southern Africa but beyond – so its success or failure will ripple well beyond its borders. DM

Peter Fabricius, Consultant, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Pretoria.

Climate change: An amplifier of humans-wildlife conflicts

By Guardian Reporter

CLIMATE change is stated as one of the factors contributing to Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in most parts of the country. The conflicts occur when human beings invade wildlife corridors resulting in non-extractive interactions between humans and wildlife.

In most cases, the interactions results in adverse outcomes for one or both parties, such phenomenon are amplified by climate change. The outcomes including direct injury to people and wildlife as well as damage of personal properties, livelihood losses and other dire consequences for social-ecological systems.

Dr Elikana Kalumanga, Private Sector Engagement Manager from Research Triangle Institute (RTI International)—implementing partner for USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili project said they are also looking at climate change as an important area as it contributes to HWC.

“Climate change amplifies human wildlife conflicts and in other way hinders stakeholders as well as government efforts in protecting wildlife corridors. The non-extractive interactions between human and wildlife keeps on increasing following increasing demand for relevant services from both groups,” explained Dr Kilumanga when speaking at training to journalists from the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET).

The training was part of Tuhifadhi Maliasili (“Preserve Natural Resources”) project supported by USAID. The \$30.5 million, five-year conservation project aims to address the dynamics that threaten wildlife movement and the long-term preservation of biodiversity in Tanzania. The activity is implemented by RTI International—a non-profit research and global development institute.

The project is implemented in seven wildlife corridors—Kwakuchinja Corridor that connects Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem in Babati and Monduli districts, Manyara and Arusha regions, Amani-Nilo corridor connecting Amani Nature Reserve and Nilo Nature Forest Reserve in



“We have been empowering journalists through training and filed visits at various corridors. These helps them to produce good story pieces and features on biodiversity conservation and climate change issues.”

Muheza District, Tanga Region, Nyerere Selous-Udzungwa corridor that connects Nyerere Selous and Udzungwa Mountains National Parks in Ifakara, Morogoro Region, Ruaha Rungwa-Katavi corridor connecting Ruaha National Park, Rungwa Game Reserve, Inyonga and Kigosi Moyowosi-Burigi Chato corridor connecting Kigosi Moyowosi complex and Burigi Chato National Park (in Biharamulo and Kakonko districts in Kagera and Kigoma regions).

He said efforts will also be directed on tackling climate change through enhanced forest conservation whereas tree planting will be one of the initiatives. He added that provision of education to citizens would greatly help in reducing climate change impacts as well as enabling people to cope with it.

According to Dr Kilumanga, climate change is a global challenge whereas its negative effects can be seen in a number of sectors that touches people’s livelihood includ-

ing agriculture, livestock keeping and the environment.

He added: “Dealing with human wildlife conflicts requires concerted efforts in ensuring protection of corridors. Keeping corridors safe enable wild animals to move freely in search of food and water. We are also working closely with the government in combating climate change as well as protecting wildlife corridors.”

Reuben Magandi, is the Conservation Officer from the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) he said they also participate in efforts geared at protecting corridors whereas a number of tree planting campaigns have been conducted in various regions.

Mgandi noted that they have been working with private and public institutions in managing wildlife corridors. He said to ensure safety of the corridors, it everyone’s responsibility to protect forests and other plants are at the danger of extinction.

“There have been incidents where people invade forests for agricultural and other human activities such as logging and charcoal making. It is important to educate the public on responsible environmental practices. Initiatives such as tree planting, seedling distribution to communities and schools, and the promotion of alternative income sources like beekeeping and honey harvesting would help in preserving our forests,” remarked the officer.

He emphasized that concerted efforts are required to protect and conserve vital resources, particularly species such as *Dalbergia melanoxylon* (Mpingo), *Osyris lanceolata* (Misandali), and *Pterocarpus tinctorius* (Mikurungu). The tree species are endangered due to activities like illegal logging and charcoal production within protected forests.

To rescue forests, the agency has been working closely with communities surrounding protected forests by empowering them economi-

cally. He said assisting villagers to have alternative income generating activities reduces pressure on forests.

JET Executive Director, John Chikomo said that taking into considerations the importance of protecting corridors, the association collaborates with RTI International in providing education to Tanzanians on benefits of preserving both the environment corridors.

“We have been empowering journalists through training and filed visits at various corridors. This helps them to produce good story pieces and features on biodiversity conservation and climate change issues,” he said, adding, this is the third year since execution of the project started and there have been remarkable successes.

According to the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS 2021-2026), climate change affected wildlife whereas places that are known to hold water during the dry season for large mammals no longer hold water for dry season.

During dry seasons in 2009 and 2015 water dependent animals especially hippopotamus and crocodiles were often found crowded in small and few remaining water ponds impairing their physiological functions and many times becoming easy target by poachers and predators.

It said, due to climate change, human-wildlife conflicts have become a common phenomenon to crop raiding while wild animals roam around in search for pastures and water.

The animals commonly involved in these conflicts are hippopotamus, elephants and buffaloes. Serious lack of surface water in dry seasons of 2009/2010 and that of 2015 led to mortalities of hippopotamus and buffalo.

Continuing climate change impacts are likely to affect certain species related to particular ecological aspects of individual taxa, necessitating a species-based management approach.

Threats to biodiversity continue to increase as adverse impacts of climate change exacerbate.

The NCCS was developed in response to the growing concern of the negative impacts of climate change on the country’s social, economic, ecological, and physical environment. It covers adaptation, mitigation and cross-cutting interventions that focuses on enabling Tanzania to tackle challenges emanated from climate change at all fronts.

Smallholder farmers crucial in responses to global hunger crises

By Guy Dinmore

DR Ismahane Elouafi has her work cut out. As the new executive managing director of CGIAR, a global network of agricultural research centers, her mandate, simply put, is to tackle the world’s most severe hunger crisis in modern history.

And it is in Africa that the former Chief Scientist of FAO with a PhD in durum wheat genetics faces her greatest challenges, both in terms of developing science-based innovations and technologies and lobbying governments to adopt responsible policies.

Ten years ago, an African Union summit of heads of state and government signed the Malabo Declaration, committing to end hunger in Africa by 2025, to allocate at least 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture and to double productivity levels. Those goals are far from being reached.

The FAO’s 2023 report on state of global food security estimates that between 691 and 783 million people in the world faced hunger in 2022, as measured by the prevalence of undernourishment, with numbers rising in Western Asia, the Caribbean, and all sub-regions of Africa.

“Most countries in Africa are much below that (budget) target of 10 percent,” Elouafi told IPS in an interview from Nigeria after visiting the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), part of the

CGIAR network. Only Ethiopia and Morocco were close to that spending target, she noted, while African countries were also failing to meet goals of allocating three percent of spending on science and innovation.

The severely worsening climate crisis, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and soaring costs of grain and fertilizer following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine two years ago have all contributed to derailing grand pledges made in Malabo.

But as a recent report by Oxfam noted, nearly three-quarters of African governments have cut instead of increased their agricultural budgets since 2019 while spending almost twice as much on arms.

“CGIAR is a science-based organisation, and our bread and butter is science, mostly applied science,” Elouafi replies when asked if much of her time will be spent knocking on the doors of heads of governments over their policy choices.

But, she adds, many solutions are not “technical” as such and involve policies in investment, education, women’s rights, and capacity building.

“We need African countries to invest in solutions that are better fit for Africa,” she says. She highlights how the lack of food processing industries means that crops are exported and then re-imported, crossing multiple borders and contributing to the continent’s trade deficit in food of over \$40 bil-



Dr Ismahane Elouafi looks at cassava plantlets ‘grown in boxes’ in a mass propagation facility in IITA, Ibadan.

lion a year.

Durum wheat—the subject of her doctorate—may fetch some USD 300 a tonne on the international market, but processed as pasta, it is valued 10 times as much. The added value of processed quinoa is even more.

Much of the work on developing wheat—a significant component of Africa’s annual food import bill of over USD 80 billion—has been achieved under TAAT (Transformation of African Agricultural Technologies), a multi-CGIAR center initiative funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and led by IITA.

Delivering that knowledge to farmers and making an impact through innovative platforms is a vital element of CGIAR’s work, with TAAT a good example of a

model that Elouafi is considering for adoption by CGIAR.

In Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria and IITA’s International Goodwill Ambassador, welcomed Elouafi on her visit, during which they discussed IITA’s strategic initiatives for stakeholder engagement aimed at combating food insecurity at both national and African levels.

Recognizing IITA’s extensive contributions to improving Nigeria’s food systems, including its network of stations across Africa, Obasanjo noted gaps in research dissemination and agricultural extension services, suggesting an approach akin to the Zero Hunger Program with IITA in which he was involved.

Elouafi proposed a continental summit on food security to

synergize efforts between researchers and scientists, and also discussed the possibility of working with development banks to establish an endowment fund for agriculture.

Thanking Nigeria for hosting and supporting IITA, Elouafi said she was deeply impressed by the quality and strategic significance of IITA’s role in Africa and the commitment of its team under Director General Dr Simeon Ehui, who is also CGIAR’s Africa regional director.

“Leadership at a country level is very important,” she says, singling out Ethiopia, which has made substantial progress in wheat production using the expertise of CIMMYT and ICARDA, two of CGIAR’s network of 15 global research centers.

Food has become a major part of the world’s climate agenda, with every degree in temperature rise significantly increasing the number of people going hungry. Elouafi says, noting that 500 million small-scale farmers, who provide a third of the world’s food, live in regions disproportionately affected by climate change.

Africa’s rapid population growth means the continent must produce more food in terms of quantity and quality of nutrition. “This is where CGIAR has a huge role to play, because to produce more food on the continent, we need to adopt new technologies and innovation,” she says.

This is not just about improved crop genetics but also generating policies that, for example, provide more jobs and opportunities for African youth in agribusiness, she adds.

But Africa also needs to promote crop diversification, says Elouafi, who is a champion of neglected or “forgotten” crops like fonio, a climate-resilient grain and formerly a staple food across West Africa, as well as cassava and a wider range of vegetables.

Asked about the long-running debate that amounts to a battle for attention between large-scale industrialised agriculture and the needs of smallholders, Elouafi first points out that more than 80 percent of food in sub-Saharan Africa is produced by smallholder farmers.

Biggest clean energy surprises in 2023 and what they mean for 2024



By Jake Edie

AGGRESSIVE policies in the U.S. and Europe are starting to have an impact on clean energy supply chains, even as on-site quality and safety audits reveal a shocking increase in solar panel defects.

Such defects, coupled with a surprising level of safety issues, should raise red flags for the entire industry.

In the past year, Clean Energy Associates (CEA) supported dozens of supply agreement negotiations, performed in-factory quality assurance oversight at over 100 solar and energy storage factories, executed hundreds of on-site quality and safety audits, and advised many of the largest clean energy developers and investors on their most strategic questions.

Here is what we found most surprising and what clean energy developers and buyers will be watching most closely as 2024 unfolds.

The shocking increase in solar panel defects

CEA has performed electroluminescence (EL) testing of more than 300,000 modules over eight years and across 16 countries. We found micro cracks in more than half of the modules we analysed through mid-2023, up from around 20% in 2022 (see Figure 1).

Micro cracks are an underappreciated challenge because you can't detect them with the naked eye, only through electroluminescence testing (akin to an

“The steps to avoiding rooftop PV safety risks are straightforward. First, begin by carefully selecting and vetting your service providers. This includes reviewing the training requirements and experience levels of the installation teams that will be working on your roof.”

X-ray for solar panels). A pristine-looking panel can be riddled with micro cracks. Such cracks may start small but will grow over time, potentially leading to significant reductions in power generation and even safety concerns.

Developers and system owners can take several steps to protect themselves from this risk. The step includes stringent manufacturing quality requirements in supply agreements, adopt the procurement mantra, “You don't get what you expect, you get what you inspect.”

When it comes to sourcing and long-term quality and safety concerns, most energy storage buyers put the lion's share of attention on the battery cell, and for good reason: It is the most expensive single component, and widespread cell failures are catastrophic for any project.

Even so, 47 percent of the problems our inspectors found while auditing over 30 GWh of battery energy storage system (BESS) manufacturing processes were system integration issues.

Issues included critical areas such as fire suppression, thermal management, and battery management systems (BMS). Cell-level defects were the second most common issue, accounting for 30 percent of quality concerns. Module-level issues accounted for the remaining 23% (see Figure 2).

System integration problems can be especially challenging to diagnose. As a start,

buyers can address the problem by thinking differently about quality assurance for BESS systems versus PV systems.

BESS systems are much more complicated, which makes system integration more difficult. In solar, selecting high-quality modules, racking systems and inverters typically results in a high-quality project. By contrast, energy storage must be managed more closely.

The BESS factory acceptance test (FAT) is critical. Buyers should negotiate detailed and clear requirements in the supply agreement and have an experienced auditor, armed with an exhaustive checklist, on-site to witness the FAT.

Aggressive new policies in the U.S and Europe

Aggressive policies in the U.S. and Europe—such as the Inflation Reduction Act and net-zero manufacturing initiatives—have transformed the calculus of where new factories are being built.

Suppliers worldwide quickly reacted to new “on shoring” incentives. For example, announced new capacity additions for U.S. domestic module production represent 10X growth vs. current capacity; if even half of the announced capacity is built (a reasonable expectation based on past experience), then domestic module capacity will exceed expected 2030 demand (see Figure 3).

While it is impossible

to know how much of the planned capacity will be built, several manufacturers are already beginning to import the manufacturing equipment needed to equip the new factories. Significant domestic manufacturing capacity additions are already underway.

Greater geographical supply diversity and stronger public policy support should be good news for buyers and developers. But complexity lies beneath the surface. It is important to pay attention not just to the final assembly plants (PV modules, ESS cells/modules), but also to the rest of the supply chain.

In most cases, the domestic capacity for upstream materials significantly lags behind the final production capacity. This means many domestic manufacturing operations will continue to depend on overseas supply chains for key inputs, which can impact import tariffs and tax credit eligibility.

It is, therefore, essential for buyers and developers to carefully evaluate tax incentives for domestically produced components and tariffs for imported components; track other potential sources of supply chain disruption (such as trade barriers, shipping bottlenecks, and future changes to policies and regulations); and understand what the domestic manufacturing landscape will look like after the Inflation Reduction Act provisions expire in 2032.

Green hydrogen suppliers are rapidly ramping up capac-

ity

Fuelled by new policy support and continued demand for clean energy options, production capacities of electrolyser manufacturers grew by 103 percent from 2022 to 2023 and are expected to grow another 143 percent by 2025 (see Figure 4). Despite this eye-popping growth, the market remains young and the dominant electrolyser technology may not yet be locked in.

Alkaline, the most mature technology with the lowest costs, currently leads with 66 percent of the market. Competing technologies (proton exchange membrane, anion exchange membrane, and solid oxide electrolysis cell) have technical advantages, but face higher costs and other disadvantages today.

As a point of comparison, when the energy storage market was at a similar level of maturity, very few grid storage projects used lithium iron phosphate (LFP) chemistry, which has recently become the dominant technology.

As this exciting new market matures, it is the best approach to closely track developments among technologies and suppliers alike. The history of the solar and energy storage industries suggests the potential for important changes in costs and efficiencies, not to mention the arrival and departure of suppliers as the industry scales.

Monitor public policy developments to find attractive opportunities and gain real-

world project experience early on that is critical for long-term (and large-scale) success.

Watch manufacturing quality very closely. Young technologies, new manufacturers, and new factories often experience inconsistent production quality.

Safety problems

We found major safety concerns found in more than 97 percent of the 600+ rooftop PV systems that we audited. That's a surprising percentage, even to many industry veterans, and should be a concern for the entire industry (see Figure 5). Rooftop fires are dangerous and can disrupt the businesses that operate underneath the roof. A single day of disruption to a big box store, distribution centre, or data centre can cost millions of dollars.

Few safety concerns that our auditors found stem from design or manufacturing defects. Instead, the primary underlying causes were incorrect installation and/or insufficient maintenance practices.

Many of the safety risks, including damaged modules, cross-mated connectors, and improper terminations, are relatively inexpensive to fix compared to replacing major pieces of equipment, and the risks could have been easily avoided with proper installation and maintenance.

The steps to avoiding rooftop PV safety risks are straightforward. First, begin by carefully selecting and vetting your service providers. This includes reviewing the training requirements and experience levels of the installation teams that will be working on your roof.

It is not uncommon for the crew on your roof to be your contractor's contractor. This may lead to misaligned incentives, to say the least. Make sure the crew is experienced, well-trained, and properly accountable.

Second, create detailed and stringent specifications and standards for your suppliers and installers to follow. Providing a clear definition of what “correct” looks like minimizes disputes once work is complete. Third, conduct post-installation safety audits and hold all stakeholders accountable for any deviations from your specifications.

These big market trends that first emerged in 2023 will continue to shape the clean energy sector throughout 2024 and into the future.

Jake Edie is Vice President, Marketing at Clean Energy Associates, and an Adjunct Professor in the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois Chicago.

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 KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) 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 UMJUAVYO 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

EU-FAO project equips 300 beekeepers with better beekeeping skills, materials

By Getrude Mbago

THE Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in ACP Countries - Phase III (ACP MEAs 3) project has benefited 300 small-scale beekeepers in six districts in Tanzania.

They have been empowered with beekeeping skills and modern equipment to scale up honey production and improve the quality of honey and other bee products and meet local and international market standards.

The project implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the financial support from the European Union (EU).

Valued at \$31,000 (75m/-), the equipment, which includes 300 modern beehives, honey storage tanks, protective gear, and honey processing machines, was distributed to beekeepers in the districts of Kilosa in Morogoro, Kilolo (Iringa), Mbarali (Mbeya), Karatu (Arusha), Kigamboni (Dar es Salaam) and Same (Kilimanjaro).

During the official launch of the distribution in Dar es Salaam recently, the FAO representative, Dr Nyabenyi Tipo stated that the



Country Representative of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Dr Nyabenyi Tipo (L) and the European Union (C) Ambassador to Tanzania and the East African Community, Christine Grau (second left) present a honey processing machine to one of the beneficiaries at Tundwi-Songani village in Pembamazi ward of Kigamboni District in Dar es Salaam, an event held recently as part of the 300 beekeeping equipment provided to farmers in six districts in the country.

handover is part of the interventions of ACP MEAs 3 project, which aims to promote environmental sustainability in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, specifically Niger, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Saint Lucia, and Solomon Islands.

"Among the project's four outputs, output 2 focuses on supporting producers in transition-

ing to more sustainable, resilient, and productive production systems. To achieve this, during its inception phase, the stakeholders identified beekeeping as an alternative livelihood activity that not only contributes to environmental conservation but also improves the economic and nutrition status of small-scale producers in the project sites while protecting pollinators,"

she said. Dr Tipo noted that while mangrove forests provide homes for countless species, buffers against coastal erosion, and mitigate climate change, they face numerous threats from deforestation to pollution.

"It is our responsibility to find sustainable solutions to protect them. This is where beekeeping comes in as a power-

ful tool for biodiversity conservation. Often underestimated, beekeeping is a cornerstone in balancing ecological sustainability with economic development," she added.

Dr Tipo said that other successful project activities include the restoration of five hectares of degraded mangrove forest in Kigamboni, as well as training farmers in Kilosa and Mbarali

districts on the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), which increased rice productivity from 2.2 tonnes per acre to 3.8 tonnes. In addition, a highly hazardous pesticide (HHP) survey was conducted, and 24 HHPs were identified for phase-out across the country.

Also during the handover ceremony, Christine Grau, Ambassador of the European Union

to Tanzania and the East African Community, reiterated the EU's commitment to development cooperation in Tanzania including support to environmental management and the blue economy, adding that the ACP MEAs 3 project is a key element in achieving this.

Ambassador Grau said the other crucial part is the restoration of the degraded environment.

"In Tanzania, we are now implementing a Blue Economy programme with a budget of 302bn/-. In this programme, environmental conservation and support to communities to withstand climate change features are very high.

She added: "We will carry out activities such as marine spatial planning, fish stock assessment, support to fisheries and sustainable tourism, mangrove and forest conservation and putting in place systems for reporting emission reduction of the greenhouse gases."

Following the official handover ceremony, farmers supported under the project received beekeeping training on beekeeping and good management of the provided materials. The farmers were grateful to FAO and EU for providing support that will transform their lives.

Daudi Ntaki, a farmer in Kigamboni recognized that many people do not fully understand the importance of bees beyond honey production.

"We have been told here by the experts that bees can produce a lot of products if well managed, these include beeswax, and bee venom used to make medicine, bees are also important pollinators," he said.

Ruto, Tinubu: Africa's 'flying presidents' under fire

By Basillioh Rukanga

SINCE Kenya's William Ruto and Nigeria's Bola Tinubu became presidents, they have faced similar criticism over their frequent trips abroad.

The two men have been the subject of unflattering descriptions - the costs associated with their alleged penchant for air travel often contrasted with tough economic conditions at home.

A Kenyan newspaper, the Standard, nicknamed Ruto the "Flying President". It said "so great is his love for flying that it appears that he cannot pass up any opportunity" despite pressing domestic demands, such as dealing with the high cost of living.

Last month, as Tinubu made yet another trip to Europe, Nigeria's opposition leader Atiku Abubakar said on social media that Nigeria does not need a "tourist-in-chief". He criticised the president's private visit "while Nigeria is drowning in the ocean of insecurity".

This in some ways can be seen as a cheap shot, easily levelled by any critic. Presidents need to attend heads-of-state meetings and nurture foreign relations. This is important not only for diplomatic reasons, but also economic ones, as lucrative investment deals can be negotiated.

But some have pointed out that late Tanzanian President John Magufuli never travelled outside

Africa in his six years in office.

"Personal glorification" Kenyan foreign policy analyst Prof Macharia Munene acknowledges that some trips are necessary but says others are undoubtedly "wasteful".

"You have presidents who love to be in the air... Some of these trips are personal glorifications, not so much for the country," he said.

Ruto and Tinubu and their spokespeople defend their trips as being vital to help address the very problems they are accused of ignoring.

In the eight months since his inauguration, Tinubu has made 14 trips - an average of just under two a month - but this is dwarfed by Ruto, who has made about 50 journeys abroad since he became president in 2022 - averaging more than three a month.

In comparison, Ruto's predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta, averaged just over one foreign trip a month in his decade in charge, similar to the record of Nigeria's previous president, Muhammadu Buhari, although in terms of total days spent abroad, the difference is not that much.

Other world leaders have also notched up the air miles, but Ruto and Tinubu face continued questions over whether every trip is necessary.

The Nigerian and Kenyan leaders were both in Europe at the end of last month - Ruto in Italy attending the Italy-Africa summit while Tinubu



Critics have targeted both Kenyan President William Ruto (L) and Nigerian President Bola Tinubu (R) for the number of trips they have made

was continuing his unexplained "private visit" to France, the third time he has been in the country since last May. Since then, Ruto has been on other trips.

In June 2023, just three weeks after assuming office, Tinubu travelled to Paris for a two-day climate summit. He had already been there months earlier "to rest" and plan the transition shortly after being elected president.

From Paris he went on to the UK for private talks with his predecessor, who had also travelled to "rest" after the elections. A week later, Tinubu went to Guinea-

Bissau for a meeting of West African bloc Eco-was, followed by a trip to Nairobi.

In August he visited Benin, and in September India, the United Arab Emirates and the US for the UN General Assembly before returning to Paris.

He was home for the whole of October before resuming travels with a trip to Saudi Arabia, then Guinea-Bissau and Germany at the end of November and a week later travelled to Dubai.

The Nigerian presidency has said the trips are important for attracting foreign investment.

"On every foreign trip

I have embarked on, my message to investors and other business people has been the same. Nigeria is ready and open for business," President Tinubu said in his 2024 New Year message.

Ruto's travel schedule since his inauguration in 2022 has been even more hectic.

Between September of that year and last December he had travelled abroad at least twice every month. In May 2023 he made five trips. He has travelled to various African countries, Europe and the US for global events and bilateral meetings.

Italian Prime Min-

ister Giorgia Meloni welcomes President of Kenya William Samoei Ruto as he arrives for the Italy-Africa international summit, 29 January 2024. Image source, Reuters

This year, in January, he has been in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Italy. And already this month, Ruto has been to Japan and the UAE. There is not just the question of frequency, but also the question of cost.

Tinubu is said to have spent at least 3.4bn naira (\$2.2m; £1.8m) on domestic and foreign travel in the first six months of his presidency - 36

percent more than the budgeted amount for 2023, the Nigerian newspaper Punch reported, citing GovSpend, a civic tech platform that tracks government spending.

In Kenya, the Controller of Budget, an independent office that oversees government spending, showed a significant increase in the office of the president's travel expenditure in the year to July last year - which included nine months of Ruto's presidency.

Overall spending for both domestic and foreign travel for the year was over 1.3bn Kenyan shillings (\$9.2m; £7.3m),

exceeding the travel budget for the previous year by more than 30 percent.

Ruto himself has said he does not "travel like a tourist" and the trips are necessary to get foreign investment and create employment for Kenyans abroad - he recently said he had secured more than 300,000 job opportunities through negotiations.

After the recent trip to Japan, Ruto said he had secured deals worth more than \$2.3bn.

Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera was in Saudi Arabia in November shortly before halting all foreign trips

While stressing the benefits of the presidential trips, both Nigeria and Kenya have also taken some action to counter the criticism of government employees travelling abroad.

Kenya said it had cut its civil service travel budget by 50 percent in the wake of accusations of "wastage" on domestic and foreign trips. But this does not seem to have affected the president himself, who has said he will not shun trips as long as they are beneficial.

Last month, the Nigerian president announced a reduction in the official travel delegation by about 60 percent. The directive announced by his spokesman Ajuri Ngelale included cutting down the president's own travel entourage, but did not say whether he would cut the number of his trips.

Yet is not just Kenya and Nigeria where the cost of travel has been a concern.

The trial of Kwoyelo: Fate of LRA rebel commander divides northern Uganda

By Sophie Neiman

At a market in Gulu, northern Uganda, women spread tropical fruit on plastic sheets, calling out to passing customers. The sun is blinding, and the air is thick with the chatter of bargaining shoppers.

Distant are the days when children used to sleep under the same market stall awnings, after marching grimly from the surrounding villages to this small city each night to avoid capture by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Fearsome rebels commanded by Joseph Kony, the LRA dominated the region, capturing young children to serve as soldiers and sex slaves, between 1987 and 2006 before being pushed out of Uganda and into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Not far from this lively market is Gulu's High Court, which will soon play host to the trial of Thomas Kwoyelo, now in his 50s, the first LRA commander to be tried for his crimes in Uganda.

Kwoyelo was abducted as a teenager walking to school in the early years of conflict. He went on to serve in the LRA for some 20 years. Taking on the alias Latoni, the boy soldier became a senior commander and was responsible for treating wounded fighters.

He was captured during a battle in DRC in 2009. Brought home nursing a bullet wound in his stomach and without shoes, he spent the next 14 years in detention as attempts to try him dragged on.

In April 2023, more than a decade after he was jailed, the prosecution wrapped up its argument against Kwoyelo, with the defence now gearing up to make its case.

But his controversial trial has raised alarm among human rights and monitoring organisations, who say his lengthy detention has made it impossible for him to get justice.

Meanwhile, survivors of the conflict in northern Uganda assert that Kwoyelo, the first person from the armed group to be tried in the country, should not be on trial at all. They want him forgiven and allowed to come home as other LRA captives, and commanders who allegedly held higher ranks, were allowed to do so.

Rebel uprising

Kony, a former altar boy, crafted his fighting force from the remnants of another rebel group, hoping to topple President Yoweri Museveni and rule the country according to the Ten Commandments.

Clashes between the rebels and the Ugandan army killed some 10,000 people, with the LRA often turning their weapons on civilians and forcing children to become fighters.

Among them was Margret, who spoke to Al Jazeera using only her first name. Before the war, she enjoyed going to school, helping out on the family farm, and fishing in a nearby river.

In 1991, she was taken along with 15 girls from her village in an attack that killed her father and the men of their village. The new recruits were tied together with ropes and forced to carry looted goods. Margret, only 12 years old at the time, was immediately made the wife of an LRA commander.

The girl was taught to handle a weapon and transformed into a fighter. After two years with the rebels, she tried to escape, only to be taken again.

"There were terrible beatings and no one to turn to," Margret said of her time in captivity.

These mass abductions pushed leaders from northern Uganda's Acholi ethnic group to advocate for an amnesty policy that would allow LRA fighters who gave up



Charles served as a high ranking officer in the LRA. He was wounded in battle many times, including losing a leg.

their weapons to return home, free from repercussions. This policy was signed into law in 2000.

"Our children are innocent because they were forcefully conscripted into combat," said Okello Okuna, a spokesperson for Ker Kwaro Acholi, a traditional kingdom for northern Uganda, headquartered in Gulu.

"A number of them returned home and they're living now peacefully amidst us without any reprisal, without any reprimand [and] without any arrest," he added.

On the local radio station Mega FM, John "Lacambel" Oryema spent the war interviewing repatriated LRA fighters and playing peace songs, urging the remaining rebels to lay down their weapons and come home again.

"I used to say, brothers, sisters, let us all unite and make sure we forgive and forget," Oryema said.

This approach ran in contrast to international interest in seeing LRA leaders tried for their crimes.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights decried Uganda's Amnesty Act as a violation of international law, standing in the way of accountability for war crimes.

In 2003, a year after the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague was founded, Uganda referred the cases of five high-ranking LRA commanders to the court, making them the first people it indicted.

Kony, the LRA leader, has remained at large. Cases against another of his top three commanders at the ICC have been closed down, with the accused presumed dead. But in 2021, Domonic Ongwen, another boy soldier, was convicted by the court in the Hague and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Tenuous peace

Margret gave birth to two children while in LRA captivity, and rose to the rank of sergeant. But when Uganda launched an operation against the rebels in 2004, she took her chances, fleeing into the hills with other women. In Gulu, she received amnesty and began, slowly, to rebuild her life.

Senior commanders also benefitted from the same law, renouncing rebellion, and returning home.

Charles, who like other ex-LRA recruits spoke using only his first name, was captured at a young age.

He gave few details about his time in the LRA, other than confirming he held a high rank and pointing to visible marks of conflict on his body, including an amputated leg.

"I have undergone all categories of military training," Charles, who once hoped to become a lawyer, said bluntly. "That is how my dream was diverted and all of a sudden, I became a soldier."

Like Margret, he received am-



Margret was abducted by the LRA as a young girl. Returning to a normal life is difficult, and it is particularly hard to find work.

nesty and was able to return home after 17 years of war.

Kwoyelo tried and failed to benefit from the same amnesty policy after being captured in 2009. It was originally granted by the constitutional court, but an appeal went all the way up to Uganda's Supreme Court, which denied Kwoyelo's request for clemency and sent his case back to the International Crimes Division (ICD) of Uganda's High Court.

The ICD was established in 2006 as a condition of peace talks held with the LRA in Juba with the intent of trying the rebel's top brass in Uganda. So far, Kwoyelo is the only one to face charges.

Former abductees have contended he shouldn't be on trial at all.

"There are so many people I know that have done serious bad things that are here at home that have never been tried," Margret said.

"Kwoyelo should be given amnesty so that he can be reintegrated with his family, so he has a normal life just like any of us who came back.

Agnes, who also spoke using her first name, agreed.

She was abducted by the LRA as a girl and forced to marry a commander in captivity. She recalled Kwoyelo nursing the gunshots she sustained in battle and working to gather food for the sick.

Seeing him on trial is unfair and he looked old and depressed, she said.

"After all the good things that Kwoyelo did to support us ... he's not in a position to support his family or go back to his mother and his siblings," she said.

Charles, the ex-LRA officer, was reluctant to give an opinion about a case currently before court, but eager to paint Kwoyelo - whom he referred to as his junior - in a neutral light.

"He is a normal person," Charles said simply.

He hasn't bothered to attend trial sessions as Agnes has, but tunes his radio to listen for news of Kwoyelo.

Others who returned from captivity or lived through the war

told a different story, describing Kwoyelo as a cruel man who must answer for his crimes.

"He was a rude person and a fighter," said Jackline, who is also being identified by only her first name. She was born in LRA captivity and accused Kwoyelo of killing her father as punishment for failing to follow orders.

Even Oryema, who spoke about forgiveness on the radio, told Al Jazeera that Kwoyelo should suffer some retribution for his crimes.

"He had very little peace in his mind," Oryema said of a visit he made to Kwoyelo, while trying to persuade LRA recruits to return home. "He was full of revenge."

Child soldier in court

It is amid these tensions over peace, and accountability that the Kwoyelo trial is taking place.

After 14 years, judges confirmed 78 (PDF) of the prosecution's charges against Kwoyelo in December, including rape, murder, and the forcible recruitment of other child soldiers.

The defence plans to argue his innocence, asserting he was a victim of the war himself.

"He was abducted as a child and trained," said Charles Dalton Opwonya, one of Kwoyelo's lawyers. "The government failed to protect him."

Long delays in the case - including the closure of the courts during COVID-19 - have caused funding shortages, with the court only putting on sessions when there is money to hold them, observers said.

The International Crimes Division of the High Court, where Kwoyelo is being tried, is intended to act as an equivalent to the ICC under the court's doctrine of complementarity, which declares cases should be sent to the ICC only when the national court system is lacking.

Building that capacity is difficult and the wait is particularly hard on victims, who have spent more than a decade in limbo.

"People are tired. People are fatigued. People are anxious. People are even giving up," said Hen-

ry Komakech Kilama. He acts as a lawyer for the victims, in a position modelled after the ICC.

The next session in Kwoyelo's case is expected to take place on February 19, and lawyers like Kilama hope the case will be wrapped up before the end of the year.

But prior postponements have also raised concerns from human rights experts, who worry about the accused as much as his alleged victims.

"If you look at it objectively, justice delayed is justice denied. When you put someone on trial for over a decade, whatever the outcome of that trial is, it doesn't [have] meaning," said Irene Anying, director of Avocats Sans Frontières in Uganda, which has monitored the trial since it began.

In a January statement, Human Rights Watch also urged Uganda to bring the trial to a speedy conclusion.

Hunting Kony

With the defence now preparing its arguments in the Kwoyelo case in Uganda, the ICC has simultaneously moved forward with a separate confirmation of charges against Kony in absentia in the Hague.

"It brings confidence to the victims who have been waiting for justice, which Joseph Kony has evaded for over 18 years," Maria Kamara, an outreach coordinator for the ICC, said from the Ugandan capital of Kampala.

Karim Khan, the ICC prosecutor, has also asserted that confirming the charges against Kony will make it easier and quicker to hold a trial in the Hague should he be caught.

The United States Department of State has offered a five million dollar reward for information that might lead to Kony's arrest. But past attempts to hunt him down have failed.

The administration of Barack Obama funnelled eight million dollars into efforts to capture Kony between 2011 and 2017, providing logistical support to Ugandan troops, before Donald Trump shut down the mission shortly after entering office.

The LRA is now weakened and divided, expected to number about 100 to 2,000 soldiers, hiding out in jungles between the DRC and the CAR, struggling to survive.

Starting over

In Gulu, and across northern Uganda, life in once war-torn areas continues.

Coming back from the LRA was difficult, Margret said. Most of her family had died and she was not sure how to make a life for herself.

"There was no one to go to, no source of livelihood or income whatsoever," she stated.

Despite receiving amnesty, many former LRA members face discrimination.

Margret has since joined support groups comprising other women who survived LRA captivity, but she said it is difficult to make enough money to send her children to school.

Charles also scrapes by operating a village savings organisation whose membership includes former rebels and civilians, in the hopes of fighting stigma and poverty at once.

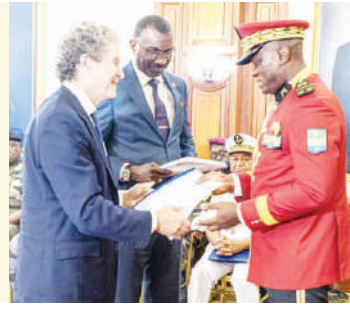
Uganda's parliament passed a transitional justice policy to support survivors of the war in 2019, but has yet to implement its key tenets.

Kilima, the victims' lawyer, hoped that both a court process and more traditional methods could help bring permanent peace and stability to Uganda.

"We must look for more than one solution - not the ICC alone, not amnesty alone, not transitional justice alone," he said. "We must look at different options. Everyone must try to contribute to the dialogue about peace."



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BoT seeking to contain inflation rate at 3.2 pc in H2, 2023/2024

By Guardian Reporter

THE Bank of Tanzania (BoT) is targeting to contain inflation rate at 3.2 percent during the second half of the current financial year ending in June, 2024, the Monetary Policy Statement (MPS), mid-year review for 2023/2024 says.

According to the document published yesterday, the central bank noted that the monetary policy during the last half of the current financial year will specifically continue focusing on maintaining low inflation and facilitating economic growth.

“Following the adoption of the interest-based monetary policy framework in January 2024, the MPC set the Central Bank Rate (CBR) at 5.5 percent for the third quarter of 2023/24, while for the fourth quarter; it will be announced in April. This rate aims to contain inflation at 3.2 percent and steer growth to 5.5 percent or more in 2024,” the statement says.

Inflationary pressures are expected to remain muted in the second half of 2023/24 and throughout 2024, it says.

“Headline inflation is projected to be low, consistent with the target of 5 percent, in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar,” the central bank says.

The low inflationary environment is attributed to the expected adequate food supply, moderate food and oil prices in the world market, exchange rate stability, and the impact of monetary policy.

“The upward risk to the inflation outlook is oil prices in the world market and geopolitical tension,” the statement cautions.

From July to December 2023, headline inflation averaged 6.5 percent compared to the average of 6.7 recorded during the corresponding period in 2022.

In 2023, inflation was 5.5 percent from 8.1 percent in the preceding year. The downturn was due to a decline in food and non-food consumer goods and services.

Food inflation declined, but remained relatively high, reflecting the pass-through impact of world market prices and exchange rate depreciation.

“Inflation is projected to remain in single-digit levels in the remaining period

of 2023/24, supported by measures taken to stabilize food prices and exchange rate,” the statement said.

The Bank will use monetary policy instruments to align the 7-day interbank rate with the CBR, allowing a deviation of +/-200 basis points. In addition, the Bank will align monetary conditions for attaining the targets under the 40-month IMF-ECF Program implemented by the Government.

GDP

According to the statement, the performance of the economy is expected to remain strong.

Output growth in Mainland Tanzania is projected at around 5.5 percent in 2024, and the Zanzibar economy is at 7.4 percent.

Public and private investment, reforms to improve business conditions and a rebound in tourism activities are expected to contribute to the growth projection significantly.

In addition, on balance, the ongoing rains will contribute positively to output growth.

Concerns about power outage are fading due to ongoing rains in most parts of the country.

There is also prospect of increasing electricity generation from the Julius Nyerere Hydro Power Plant and other sources during the second half of 2023/24.

However, the main risk to the growth outlook is geopolitical tension and monetary policy tightening in the advanced economies.

Globally, the growth is projected to be subdued and varying significantly across countries and regions in the second half of 2023/24 and the same trend is projected in 2024.

The IMF projects the economy to grow at 3.1 percent, same as 2023, World Bank projects the economy to grow at 2.4 percent from 2.6 percent in 2023, and OECD to 2.7 percent from 2.9 percent.

The projected slow growth is attributed to the global shocks influenced by geopolitical tension and the monetary policy tightening cycle.

Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to grow at 3.8 percent, owing to the fading of effects of previous weather shocks and supply chain disruptions.

‘Removing trade barriers vital for boosting intra-EAC trade’



By alleviating tax constraints, businesses anticipate newfound opportunities for investment, innovation, and market expansion. File photo

By Guardian Reporter

THE country’s businesses have ardently called upon the government to take proactive measures in removing trade barriers, addressing both tax-related and non-tax-related obstacles, while simultaneously prioritizing the enhancement of border infrastructure.

Speaking exclusively with The Guardian, Thomas Onyango, Managing Director for Onyango & Sons’ Enterprises, said the call underscores a collective aspiration to fortify the business landscape and catalyze growth within the broader East African economy.

“At the forefront of these calls for reform is the imperative to streamline taxation policies. Burdensome tax regulations have long hindered the expansion and competitiveness of Tanzanian enterprises,” he said.

For Onyango, by alleviating tax constraints, businesses anticipate newfound opportunities for investment, innovation, and market expansion.

Furthermore, he said: “A simplified tax regime fosters a more conducive environment for both do-

mestic and foreign investors, thereby stimulating economic activity and bolstering revenue generation for the government.”

Beyond tax reform, the business community advocates for the removal of non-tax obstacles that impede operational efficiency and market access.

“These impediments encompass bureaucratic red tape, cumbersome licensing procedures, and regulatory inconsistencies,” said Johnson Majed, a trader in Arusha.

Adding that: “Addressing these barriers not only cultivates a more business-friendly environment but also cultivates a culture of entrepreneurship, where enterprises are empowered to thrive and contribute to national prosperity.”

Majed was of the view that the enhancement of infrastructure in border areas holds immense strategic significance. Efficient transportation networks, modernized customs facilities, and streamlined logistical processes are pivotal in facilitating cross-border trade and connectivity.

“Of course, the government is doing well with One Stop Border Point (OSBP), because by investing in such infrastruc-

ture development, can significantly reduce trade bottlenecks, lower transaction costs, and expedite the movement of goods and services across borders,” he asserted.

Adding: “Such enhancements not only amplify trade volumes but also foster regional integration, positioning Tanzania as a pivotal hub within the East African Community (EAC).”

Commenting on, Hadija Mohamed, a trader at Namanga Border said: “The imperative to fortify border infrastructure extends beyond mere economic considerations; it encompasses broader geopolitical and developmental objectives.”

She added: “It strengthens connectivity with neighboring countries, fosters diplomatic goodwill, enhances regional stability, and cultivates a conducive environment for cross-border cooperation.”

Additionally, she believes that improved infrastructure serves as a catalyst for socio-economic development in border communities, empowering local populations and fostering inclusive growth.

For her, embracing such reforms, underscores

Tanzania’s commitment to fostering a dynamic and resilient business environment that is conducive to sustainable development and inclusive prosperity.

“By proactively addressing commercial obstacles and enhancing border infrastructure, the government can unlock the full potential of its business sector, thereby driving economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction,” she maintained.

Moreover, these initiatives align with broader regional aspirations for integration and cooperation, positioning Tanzania as a vanguard of East African economic development.

On the other hand, the concerted efforts of Tanzanian businesses and policymakers to remove commercial obstacles and enhance border infrastructure represent a pivotal step towards revitalizing the country’s economy and advancing regional integration.

It is noted that by fostering a more conducive business environment and strengthening cross-border connectivity, Tanzania can unleash its full economic potential and emerge as a beacon of prosperity within the East

African region.

After attending the Council of Ministers for Trade, Industry, Finance, and Investment (SCTIFI) meeting held on February 9, 2024, in Arusha, Tanzania, Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade, Exaud Kigahe, addressed the press, highlighting the bloc’s steadfast dedication to fostering trade and investment.

He stressed the pivotal role of the private sector, underlining the consensus among member countries to foster its growth by dismantling trade barriers, encompassing both tax and non-tax hurdles, and by prioritizing infrastructural improvements in border regions.

Moreover, he emphasized the importance of ensuring fair business practices in the region, citing the role of the Competition Commission (FCC), in upholding equitable trade practices across the region.

Additionally, he underscored the significance of quality assurance, citing the pivotal role of Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS), in ensuring that products traded within the EAC adhere to stringent quality standards.

Anticipating a surge in exports, Kigahe highlighted Tanzania’s strategic investment in the agricultural sector, which is poised to bolster crop production and consequently drive export growth in the fiscal year 2024/2025.

Echoing said sentiments, the chair to the meeting and Minister of Trade and Industry of South Sudan, William Anyuon Kuol, stressed the imperative of empowering entrepreneurs, both small and large, in the realms of industry and investment.

Moreover, the 43rd Ministerial meeting placed particular emphasis on assessing the efficacy of the unified customs area and provided a status update on the implementation of the electronic cargo tracking system.

Mbinga resident wins 250mn/- betting jackpot



By Guardian Reporter

PETER Lupembe, a resident of Mbinga district in Ruvuma Region, cel-

ebrated his birthday over the weekend as a shilling millionaire, list, after winning 250mn/- jackpot by Betway.

He is joining another Ruvuma Region resident, identified by one name as Bernard M, who won similar jackpot in December

last year.

Speaking during the award presentation held at the company office in Dar es Salaam, Lupembe

said it was a dream and this good news came unexpected.

“I didn’t imagine that one day I would win such amount of money and being among of the millionaires through betting,” he said.

He thanked Betway officials for the cooperation since he was declared the winner of this top award.

Betway Tanzania marketing manager Calvin Mhina congratulated the winner, by saying the betting company has been closer to its customers through building trust.

“We will continue bringing more betting activities not only in Tanzania, but also across the globe,” he added.



AI is revolutionising marketing agencies

THE digital marketing practice is undergoing a seismic shift with AI (Artificial Intelligence) emerging as an industry revolutionizer. We've seen the rise of chatbots, predictive analytics to image, audio and video automated content generation. AI is transforming the way businesses connect with their audience.

To be successful in the world of AI marketing, it requires a combination of technical experience, a strategic vision, a creative mindset and a deep understanding of how you will connect the tools to the client's message. It's an exciting and potentially lucrative journey that offers both challenges but even greater opportunities for any marketing agency that is willing

to take this path.

AI marketing is made up of a transformative bravura that harnesses the capabilities of AI in order to redefine traditional marketing practices. This (AI Marketing) discipline includes a range of segments, but the most important is data analysis. Whereby AI on the side of predictive analytics rapidly processes and interprets vast datasets to extract actionable insights for the decision-making process.

AI leverages customer behavior and demographic information to create personalized content that will significantly increase engagement and conversion rates. Similar to having an army of researchers who know exactly what each customer wants. It has turned the traditional

DIGITAL MARKETING

Alley Mmatya



approach of research that took very long to gather, now, the same information can be gathered, proceed and analyzed in seconds or minutes.

It introduces automation into your marketing tasks, like email marketing, social media posting, and customer support can now run on autopilot. Giving you more time to focus on other important initiatives and creative endeavors. Marketing Agencies need to brace themselves for the

predictive strength of AI. It's as if AI holds the keys to a treasure chest of data insights. It unveils upcoming trends and deciphers consumer behavior, giving your business a strategic advantage that's worth its weight in gold. Most organizations are already using AI with predictive analytics, yes, ask yourself when you last watched a video say on Instagram or Facebook? As you continued to scroll down suddenly more videos of similar content

that you viewed or engaged with earlier are now bombarding your screen. It is AI studying you and directing similar content to what interest you.

I recall a few years back trying to master various data tabulation tools such as python in order to gain insights and provide a simpler presentation for people to understand. So, to say, I got lost in the backend coding process, a story for another day.

An agency must dive headfirst into the distinct needs and challenges of a client to be their AI marketing agency of choice. They must listen and understand their clients needs. Listen to their stories, pains and aspirations. This process builds trust, understanding and allows you to pinpoint solutions that match the cli-

ents goals.

When you master the dynamics of the clients' industry, from niche trends to compliance nuances. An agency can embrace a tailor-made approach, crafting AI-powered marketing strategies that are as unique to the client. Furthermore, using data-driven insights to decode customer behaviors and preferences will put you on a fast track to crafting specific or targeted campaigns. It is always important to conduct a thorough and competitive analysis, in order to define key performance metrics that genuinely make a difference.

An AI marketing agency represents a remarkable opportunity. Imagine this, the AI marketing industry is in a dynamic phase of expansion. With business-

es from various corners of the market recognizing the game-changing potential of AI. Now stop imagining and consider this being real and is at the forefront of a digital revolution right now. Every innovation and idea brought to the table can give your client a powerful edge in their competitive landscapes that is backed by facts.

The sheer beauty of AI marketing lies in its versatility.

Lastly, one should maintain a culture of continuous learning to stay at the forefront of this dynamic change. By addressing these key factors, you'll build a way to a lasting success at your AI marketing agency.

Alley Mmatya is the founder of Eyeland Advertising and Analytics based in Dar es Salaam

BoT is set to amend microfinance regulations for non-deposit takers

By Guardian Reporter

STAKEHOLDERS are currently airing their views for the planned amendments of the microfinance regulations 2019 for the Tier 2 (non-deposits taking) service providers.

This comes after being experienced that some of the sections of the existing regulations are suited for microfinance banking service providers, which are categorized as Tier 1.

Tier 2 microfinance service providers include credit companies, financial organizations, housing microfinance companies, individual money lenders and digital microfinance lenders.

"Some of the sections of the current regulations are banking oriented and they are suited for

microfinance banks and deposits taking services providers," said Deogratius Mnyamani, senior principal bank examiner, directorate of financial sector supervision, Bank of Tanzania (BoT).

"This move wants to ensure that the amended regulations go hand in hand with their classification."

According to Mnyamani, microfinance act 2018 has categorized various services providers into four tiers including microfinance banks (tier 1), non-deposit taking (tier -2), savings and credit cooperative unions (tier-3) and community microfinance group (tier-4).

Currently, a total of 1,700 Tier-2 microfinance services providers have already been registered and they are inspected by the central

bank on quarterly basis.

He said the new regulations will be ready by September this year, as the stakeholders comments are accepted by the end of June this year.

Under the current regulations for non-deposit takers, unless otherwise authorized by the central bank, a licensed microfinance service provider shall not engage in various activities including accepting any type of deposits from the public.

Other prohibited activities according to the regulations include foreign exchange business, foreign trade operations, trust operations, credit and debit cards, payment orders and transfer of funds, any business other than providing financial products and services to its members.

Bringing order to document chaos with SaaS solution

By Norman Kretzmer

DECADES after the notion of a paperless office was first conceived, most organisations still need to stay on top of massive volumes of printed documentation. While paper documents such as invoices, customer records and receipts are becoming increasingly digitised, contracts and other legal documents are still largely stored and managed in filing cabinets.

For many businesses, the result is document chaos. Paper documents are expensive to store on site, hard to track and easy to misplace. There are also security concerns when a company is trying to keep tabs on dozens or even hundreds of confidential documents scattered across different departments.

Moreover, paper documents are a roadblock to efficiency and transparency in the business. If contracts are signed and relegated to a dusty storage room, it's all too easy to lose track of vital information and tasks, such as who the counterparties are, deadlines for renewals and renegotiation, and contractual penalties or incentives.

There is, thankfully, a better way with the move towards software as a service (SaaS) platforms. Today's SaaS solutions enable you to rapidly digitise contracts, including agreements with vendors and service providers, sales agreements, leases and rental contracts, employee contracts, and subscription agreements.

This, in turn, enables you to gain better visibility into your contracts, automate business processes, and facilitate better collaboration within the business and with counterparties in legal agreements. Here are

some of the benefits that your business can achieve from using SaaS solutions to improve the management of documents such as contracts:

Cost-efficiency - Adopting a SaaS solution is an affordable way to digitise paper and store documents. You will pay an affordable monthly subscription for a software solution that enables you to store and manage your documents, with no need to invest in underlying infrastructure. You'll be able to scale up effortlessly as your requirements evolve and your business grows.

Faster speed of deployment and lower barriers to entry - There are no upfront IT costs involved in adopting a SaaS platform, significantly lowering the barriers to entry as well as ongoing IT costs. Furthermore, SaaS applications can be deployed quickly since there's no need to install software on individual devices.

Accessibility - With your contracts stored in a cloud repository, your team will have the information at their fingertips whenever and wherever they need it - no need to dig through cabinets to find a contract before it's time to renew or cancel. You'll have access to contracts and amendments in one place.

Data security and compliance - SaaS contract management solutions should include robust security features, such as encryption, access controls, and data loss prevention mechanisms, to protect sensitive information from unauthorised access, breaches, or data loss.

Enhanced visibility - A SaaS platform will offer you better visibility into involved parties, obligations, deadlines, and clauses of your contracts. This will help you to meet any deadlines as

well as to ensure you comply with any terms and conditions. It will also enable you to ensure you avoid penalties - for example, for late payments - as well as take full advantage of any contractual benefits and incentives.

Process automation - You can't automate business processes unless you digitise paper and store it in a shared, centralised system. An advanced SaaS solution will use AI to extract essential details and clauses from uploaded contracts, examining documents and pinpointing critical data points like involved parties, deadlines, benefits and obligations. This will help you streamline and automate tasks such as renewals, terminations, price escalations and breaches via automation. It will ensure better quality and consistency of work, reduce errors, and free up employee hours you can use to grow your business.

Disaster recovery - SaaS contract management and backup solutions offer built-in disaster recovery capabilities, with data replicated across multiple data centres. In the event of hardware failures, natural disasters, or other unforeseen events, you'll still be able to retrieve your important legal information.

With today's SaaS platforms, any business can benefit from a cutting-edge solution that uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to facilitate accurate data capture. This offers you a scalable and reliable way to manage documents and data, improve collaboration and ensure compliance in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Norman Kretzmer is the founder and CEO of Contract Understanding based in Johannesburg



Dr Paul Saidia (L), the Director of the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) Ukiriguru Centre, explaining something about cotton plants to the farmers. PHOTO: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

Research gets underway to curtail the impacts of climate change in cotton

By Correspondent

Valentine Oforo

A new research is underway to find ways that will help to assisting cotton farmers to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Conducted by Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) Ukiriguru Centre is bridging efforts with the Tanzania Cotton Board (TCB) the research focuses on heightening production and productivity in the fibre crop sector amid effects of climate change, based on review of fertilizer recommendations in cotton, as well as review of cotton sowing calendar.

Dr. Paul Saidia, the Director of Mwanza-based TARI Ukiriguru Centre told The Guardian during an exclusive interview that severe effects of climate change was weakening production and productivity in the sector.

He unveiled that climate change has propelled major changes in the cotton growing season (calendar), together with application of fertilizer.

Dr Saidia observed, "For instance, in the western cotton growing zone (Mwanza) growing season normally started from 15 to 15 December, and in eastern zone of Morogoro from end of January to mid-February, but due to climate changes, the seasons have changed,"

He detailed research over review of cotton sowing calendar majors to determine which period of year will be the most proper season to start growing the fibre crop.

"Through the ongoing trials we're working to determine the best growing season, between the earlier season, recommended (timely) season or the late season," the TARI Ukiriguru Centre director informed.

Dwelling over review of fertilizer recommendations, he said the vision is to determine the best dose rate, being between the higher dose rate, middle and lower fertilizer dose rate.

"The purpose is to establish which fertilizer dose rate will enable the growers to realize high yields and productivity amid effects of climate change," he expressed.

He added that due to several effects of climate change high nutrient was required in cotton, saying the test was based on the NPK fertilizer.

Outcomes of the two researches, according to him, will be forwarded to the ministry of agriculture in order to be used as potential stick yard among the local cotton farmers.

He said the state-owned research institute, TARI, at its Ukiriguru Centre was continuing imparting the cotton growers with the other recommended agro-

economic practices in order to improve production, including proper planning spaces, application of best seeds and pesticides management.

He said in Tanzania, the cotton farmers largely use the UKM08 seed variety which has been researched and produced by TARI.

"If well managed, the variety has the potential of producing at least 1200Kg per acre," he briefed.

In further efforts to spur production of the crop, the parent ministry in cooperation with TCB has recently launched cotton cultivation in new regions where relevant research proves the fibre crop can flourish in abundance. The regions, among others include Dodoma, Singida and Morogoro.

To ensure the farmers in the new cotton growing regions are adopting cultivation of the crop professionally, TARI Ukiriguru Centre is planning to implement a special initiative to impart at least 30 agricultural extension officers in each new cotton growing region.

Cotton stands among the strategic economic cash crop in Tanzania, currently attracting a total of 500,000 who are cultivating at least 1,000,000 acres in different 17 regions across the country, including Geita, Tabora, Katavi, Shinyanga and Mwanza, among others.

CRDB Bank empowers journos scribes in spurring financial

By Guardian Reporter

IN an effort to advance the media sector in the country, CRDB Bank conducted a special seminar for stakeholders in the media sectors dubbed "CRDB Bank Media Day," held at the bank's headquarters on Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road.

Opening the seminar, the Group CEO and Managing Director of CRDB Bank, Abdulmajid Nsekela, stated that this year's "CRDB Bank Media Day" focused on the Finscope 2023 report and how the media can promote financial inclusion in the country.

"The Finscope 2023 report indicates that only 22 per-

cent of Tanzania use banking services despite significant efforts and innovation in products. This highlights a significant gap in financial literacy, so today we discussed how our colleagues in the media sector can help in pushing financial literacy agenda," said Nsekela.

During the seminar, journalists were trained on how to better prepare and deliver business, finance, and economic news.

The Director of Corporate Affairs of CRDB Bank and Managing Director of the CRDB Bank Foundation, Tully Esther Mwambapa, stated that these training sessions are part of the bank's efforts to support the development of skilled jour-

nalists in the country.

Speaking at the seminar, the Government Spokesperson, Mubhara Matinyi, commended CRDB Bank for organizing the seminar, which brought together stakeholders in the media sector to discuss how to increase its contribution to the country's development, especially in enhancing financial inclusion.

Matinyi assured stakeholders in the sector that the government will continue to create conducive environments to improve the media sector.

Various topics were presented at the seminar, including 'The Role of Media in Shaping Financial Inclusion Narrative,' presented

by retired Editor of National Media Group Kenya, Charles Onyango Obbo; 'Financial Literacy in the Digital Era,' presented by Fayness Sichwale, Personal Finance Coach and founder of Personal Finance Hub; and 'Business Reporting,' presented by Dr. Ndalaha Masanja, Senior Lecturer at ESAMI University.

During the seminar which was attended by journalists and editors from various media outlets in the country, CRDB Bank also launched a special competition to find young journalists specializing in business, finance, and economics reporting.

The competition, which will run for two months until April 18, 2024, will award

three winners with a prize of 1mn/- each and an opportunity to work with the Bank.

Furthermore, the Bank presented awards to recognize the contributions of two distinguished journalists in the country's media sector.

The recipients of these awards were Eda Sanga, retired journalist from the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) and former Chairperson of the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), and Ndumara Tegambwage, former journalist for Uhuru and Mzalendo newspapers, and one of the founders of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).



Abdulmajid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank

Japan plans to allow venture capital to invest directly in crypto startups

TOKYO

JAPAN is seeking to relax its venture capital (VC) crypto investment rules, allowing VCs to invest in Web3 startups that only issue cryptocurrencies.

According to local media outlet Coinpost, the Japanese Cabinet has approved revisions to the Act on Strengthening Industrial Competitiveness.

As part of the proposed amendments, the Cabinet seeks to add crypto assets to the list of assets that investment business limited partnerships (LPS) can acquire.

LPSes are typically funds that invest in unlisted companies and startups.

The legal reform has been submitted to the legislative body and will be debated on.

Previously, LPS operators were prohibited from holding crypto assets. If approved, the move would allow VCs to invest directly in cryptoassets, potentially revolutionizing the way Web3 firms raise funding in Japan. Under existing rules, startups can only offer VCs shares in their companies, as the law blocks them from giving LPS investors crypto.

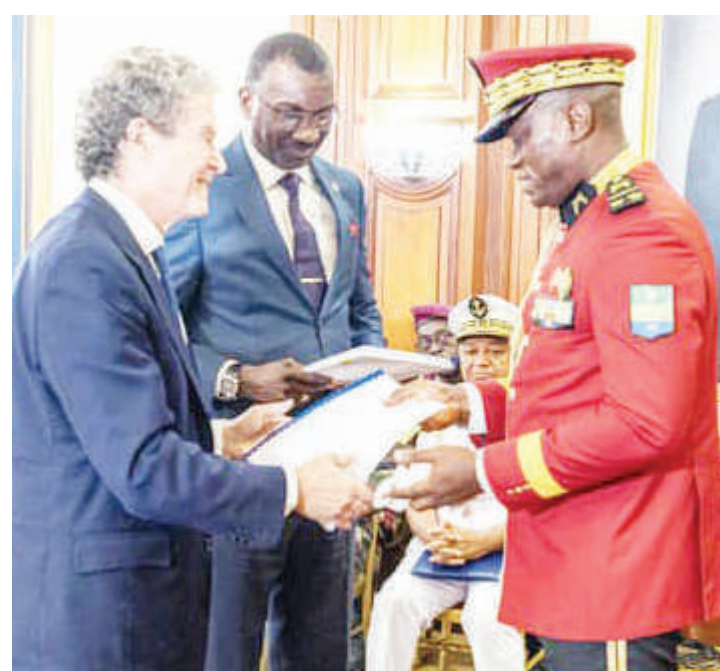
The government plans to

submit a bill to parliament later this year to formalize the changes to the VC crypto investment rules. Lawmakers would still need to approve the amendment, but no government-proposed crypto legislation has failed to receive parliamentary approval in Japan so far.

This move comes amidst great scrutiny over 'unlawful' crypto transactions to exchanges. The Financial Services Agency (FSA), Japan's financial regulator, has requested banks to strengthen monitoring as it attempts to clamp down on fraudulent crypto transactions.



VIEW FROM THE TOP



Gambian President Brice Oligui Nguema receives a signed purchase contract from an official representing Assala company.

Gabon oil company now acquires Assala Energy from Carlyle

By Guardian Reporter

GABON'S national oil company (GOC) has acquired Assala Assets from Carlyle Group for \$1.3 billion, a move towards having a more competitive oil market by supporting the country's efforts to boost oil production and attract further investment to its upstream sector.

A statement issued over the weekend by African Energy Chamber (AEC) and made available to this reporter, indicated that the acquisition reflects Gabon's broader oil and gas sector revitalization strategy.

This move comes after France's Maurel & Prom (M&P) had in August last year, agreed to purchase Assala Energy for \$730 million including the assumption of a \$600 million credit facility.

M&P has three projects, including the 100 percent owned Kari and Nyanga-Mayombe exploratory projects and a 91.43 percent exploratory interest in the producing Ezanga project, which was initially set to expand its operations through the Assala acquisition.

Moreover, the statement reads: "Under efforts to enhance Gabon's position as a competitive oil and gas market, Gabon Oil Company (GOC) has acquired the Gabonese assets of US private equity firm Carlyle - the owner of Gabon-focused oil and gas company, Assala Energy."

It adds: "Assala Energy holds seven onshore production licenses in Gabon, of which it operates six along with a pipeline network and the Gamba export terminal."

Representing the country's second-largest producer, the

company has concentrated on brownfield assets in Gabon and implemented high-quality maintenance, risk management, workovers and well interventions to maximize production from mature fields.

As one of Africa's most historic oil producers, Gabon aims to increase production to 220,000 barrels per day on the back of accelerated on- and offshore exploration, new investments from IOCs and the redevelopment of mature and marginal fields.

While historically serving as a partner to the country's operators - operating only the onshore Mbouma field - GOC is seeking to transform into a more competitive upstream player.

The state-backed firm is currently in talks with foreign partners to acquire new technologies aimed at halting declining production and optimizing mature fields.

Gabon's exploration and development prospects, as well as decisive opportunities in gas recovery and monetization, refining and downstream industries, will be on display at the upcoming IAE 2024, set to connect Africa's energy and infrastructure opportunities with the global investment community.

For Gabon, the forum will serve as a critical platform to promote its revitalization strategy and initiate more deals in the sector.

"We encourage and support Gabon in taking on this world-class initiative, led by President Brice Oligui Nguema and Minister of Petroleum and Gas Marcel Abéké. This deal not only demonstrates Gabon's commitment to increasing its hydrocarbon production, but also attracting more investment in key energy assets," stated NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of the AEC.

UAE firm to install clean energy plant in Kinshasa

By Guardian Reporter

IN a significant move to advance renewable energy development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), two entities have joined forces for the initial phase of the 200MW Green Giant project.

According to a statement made available to this paper, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and SkyPower Global are the entities involved, emphasizing that the 200MW phase 1, represents a significant milestone in fulfilling the groundbreaking 1,000MW Solar Purchase Agreement (PPA) inked between SkyPower and the DRC's state-owned utility.

It is noted that the said partnership creates a formidable force in the pursuit of sustainable energy solutions for the continent in the

fight against climate change.

The Green Giant project marks DRC commitment to enhance electrification rates through renewable energy partnerships.

The joint development agreement is set to catalyse the construction of the first 200MW phase of the project, with all necessary approvals secured and land allocation completed, ensuring a swift transition to development stage and the commencement of construction by 2025.

In fact, the project is more than just an infrastructure development; it's a beacon of hope and prosperity and once in full swing, it is poised to inject a staggering \$700 million directly and indirectly into the DRC's GDP.

The ripple effects of this venture are immense, with projections indicating a potential \$2.3

billion stimulus to the nation's GDP and the creation of approximately 30,000 job years.

The said initiative not only underscores the DRC's commitment to a greener future but also highlights the pivotal role of renewable energy in stimulating rapid industrialization, local job creation, and sustainable economic growth across Africa.

"Partnering with SkyPower, is well aligned with our mission to advance energy access on the continent through renewable energy," said Amadou Wadda, Senior Director of Project Development and Technical Solutions at AFC.

He added: "Through this collaboration, we aim to contribute significantly to rapid industrialisation, local job creation, sustainable economic growth and a pragmatic transition to net zero

in DRC and Africa as a whole."

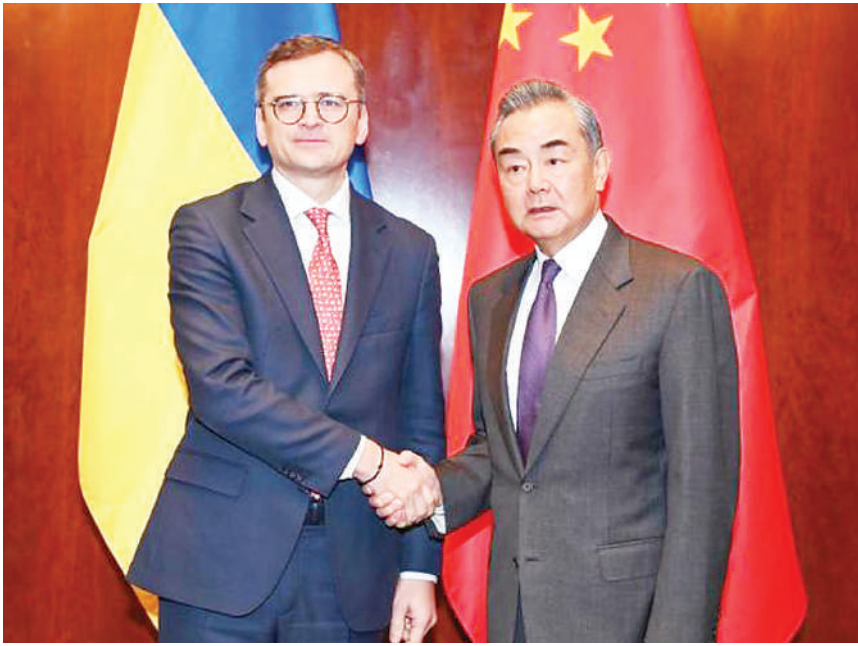
Kerry Adler, President & Chief Executive Officer of SkyPower, highlighted AFC's leadership role and its commitment to fast-tracking the deployment of essential energy projects as crucial to leveraging solar energy to spur economic development, create job opportunities, and tackle climate change effectively.

"Partnering with AFC exemplifies a concerted effort toward realizing the ambitious goals set by forward-looking countries such as the DRC, aiming for a brighter, more sustainable future for everyone," Adler noted.

"This agreement underlines AFC's pivotal contribution to promoting renewable energy solutions and both AFC and SkyPower's unwavering commitment and dedication to ensuring a greener, more resilient world."



AFC and SkyPower Global executives agree on joint development of 200-MW solar project in DRC. Photo: BNN courtesy



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany, on Saturday. XINHUA

China to continue constructive role for peace in Ukraine

MUNICH

CHINA will continue to play a constructive role in bringing an early end to the conflict and restoring peace in Ukraine, and will not give up as long as there is a glimmer of hope, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here on Saturday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on the sidelines of the ongoing Munich Security Conference.

Noting that China and Ukraine reached a strategic partnership many years ago and the two peoples have enjoyed traditional friendship, Wang said that no matter how the international situation changes, China hopes relations with Ukraine will develop normally and continue to benefit the two peoples.

He expressed his gratitude again to the Ukrainian side for helping Chinese personnel evacuate safely in an emergency, saying the Chinese people will never forget.

Wang elaborated on China's position on the Ukraine issue, stressing that China adheres to the political settlement of hot-spot issues and promoting peace talks, and does not fan the flame, profit from the situation, or sell lethal weapons to regions and parties involved in conflicts.

For his part, Kuleba said that Ukraine is willing to maintain friendly exchanges with China and push for further development of their bilateral relations.

China has an important influence on global affairs, and Ukraine highly appreciates China's release of a position paper on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, Kuleba said.

He said the Ukrainian side hopes that China will continue to play a unique constructive role in promoting peace, and is willing to strengthen contact with the special representative of the Chinese government on Eurasian affairs.

Xinhua

India's respect is at an all-time high due to PM Modi's efforts

CHANDIGARH

BJP national spokesperson Jaiver Shergill, while speaking at the Munich Security Conference, emphasised that India's respect in the world is at an all-time high due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts.

BJP spokesperson Shergill was invited to the prestigious three-day Munich Security Conference held in Munich, Germany, from February 16-18. He spoke at three to four crucial events.

Highlighting that PM Modi's message is clear that India is on the side of peace, rule of law, progress and a clean environment, he said, "India's respect in the world is all-time high due to PM Modi's efforts."

He further said that now India has become an agenda setter and is no more a camp follower.

Moreover, Shergill also spoke about India's unprecedented economic growth and emergence as the voice of the global south under the leadership

of Modi.

He said that it was evident that today's world is curious to know how under PM Modi's leadership, India has become the fastest-growing economy and how India has turned into an investment hub despite the pandemic and other roadblocks.

"There was an obvious sense of heightened respect and curiosity about India's growth trajectory under the leadership of PM Modi", he added.

Moreover, emphasising that India's democracy has had an interesting journey, he said, "When India got independence in 1947, the British Prime Minister said on record that it won't survive. India will be ruled by bullet and not a ballot. India will disintegrate..."

He added that today in 2023 and 2024, "the US State Secretary said India is the biggest expression of free political will anywhere in the world, so, that is the trajectory of Indian democracy."

ANI

AU summit calls for international solidarity to Palestine

ADDIS ABABA

AFRICAN leaders on Saturday urged for an "immediate end" to the Palestine-Israel conflict, calling for international solidarity with Palestine during the 37th African Union (AU) summit.

The current situation in Gaza is "an evident illustration of the imperative for reform" within the international system "marked by considerable injustice and varying standards," said Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani, AU chairperson for 2024 and Mauritanian president, at the opening session of the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government.

"It is paramount to recognize the Palestinians' inherent right to establish their independent state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in alignment with pertinent resolutions of international legitimacy," Ghazouani told African leaders.

He expressed concern over the international community's "hesitancy to exert the necessary influence for an immediate ceasefire, aid delivery, and the establishment of a comprehensive and enduring solu-



tion." Ghazouani commended the AU for its "steadfast positions" on the matter, which "denounce injustice and champion just causes adhering to international law and humanitarian principles."

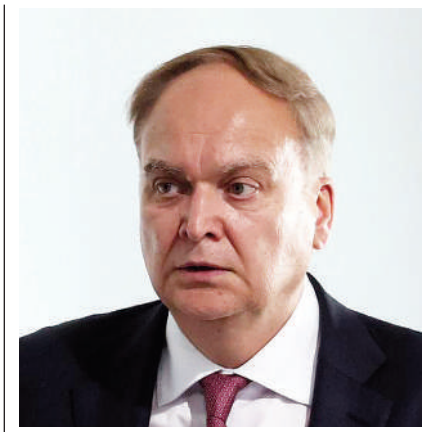
Moussa Faki Mahamat (pictured), chairperson of the AU Commission, also underscored the urgent need to address the Palestinian issue.

"Hegemony and the absurd desire to resolve our differences by brutal and vain force prevail publicly before the eyes of all," Faki said, adding that international law, international humanitarian law, human rights, and morality have been "blithely ignored, trampled underfoot, and flouted."

Noting the crucial need to enforce justice, Faki praised the "ethical reaction" of South Africa. On Dec. 29, 2023, South Africa filed an application to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for proceedings against Israel. The following month, the ICJ ordered Israel to take all possible measures to prevent genocide acts in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Ishtaye, addressing the summit, also commended the AU for its continued call for "an end to the killing and the aggression that is perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people." Ishtaye underscored the two-state solution as the only option to solve the Israel-Palestine issue peacefully.

"The world needs to recognize the State of Palestine on the basis of the borders of 1967," he said. The summit is held under the AU's theme for 2024, "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa," at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Xinhua



US reaction to Navalny's death another attempt to interfere in Russia's domestic affairs

WASHINGTON

A reaction on behalf of the United States following the death of Russian blogger Alexey Navalny is another attempt of the American authorities to interfere in Russia's domestic policy, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said.

"The death of a person is always a tragedy," the Russian ambassador stated. "In this situation it is extremely important to figure out all the details of the occurrence."

"However, local [US] politicians do not want to wait and have already blamed the Russian authorities," Antonov continued. "Here arises a quite natural question: who is the judge? There is another attempt to interfere in the internal policy of the Russian Federation. And death is just an excuse."

"Such a policy is unacceptable. It would be better for local leaders to focus on the problems of their country that require urgent measures," Antonov noted.

According to the Russian ambassador: "Here they are looking for a reason for derogatory attacks, and most importantly, for the introduction of additional sanctions. The main task is to save collapsing Pax Americana based on so called rules."

US President Joe Biden said on Friday that Washington was considering "a whole number of options" following the death of Russian blogger Alexey Navalny in prison. "We are looking at a whole number of options," he said when asked, if the US could toughen sanctions against Russia due to Navalny's death.

"The answer is we don't know exactly what happened. But there is no doubt that the death of the volunteer was a consequence of something that Putin and his thugs did," the US president stated.

The Federal Penitentiary Service's Directorate for the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region said on February 16 that Navalny had died in penal colony No.3 on February 16.

According to the penitentiary authority, Navalny felt sick after a walk and fainted. Medics arrived immediately but their more than 30-minute resuscitation efforts failed.

Agencies

Yemen's Houthis claim attack that damaged British ship

SANAA

THE Houthi group in Yemen on Monday claimed responsibility for the missile attack against what they described as a "British ship" on Sunday in the Gulf of Aden.

"Our naval forces have attacked the British ship, Rubymar, in the Gulf of Aden with a number of missiles," Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said in a televised statement aired by his group's satellite TV channel al-Masirah, adding that the missiles were an accurate hit.

"Our attack damaged the ship, causing it to stop completely... The ship is now at risk of sinking in the Gulf of Aden," he said.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations, a security observatory agency, said a vessel was abandoned by its crew on Sunday after being hit by Houthi missiles in the Red Sea off Yemen.

The crew was safe, and military authorities were



Supporters of Yemen's Houthi rebels take to the streets of Sanaa on February 24, 2023, to denounce the recent Israeli raid on the West Bank city of Nablus, that left 11 Palestinians dead. AFP

on the scene, the UKMTA said, referring to the US-British naval coalition formed in January to counter Houthi attacks on shipping.

The agency did not identify the vessel, but Houthi activists on social media claimed it was a British ship.

The Houthis have stepped up their missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia and its allies since November, saying they are in response to the Saudi-led coalition's bombing campaign and blockade of Yemen.

The Saudi-led coalition, which intervened in Yemen's civil war in 2015, said it is trying to prevent the Houthis from acquiring advanced weapons from Iran and restore the internationally recognized government.

The US Central Command said on Sunday it had destroyed five Houthi targets, including missile launchers and underwater drones, in self-defense strikes.

Israeli Defence Minister Gallant: Hamas has no confidence in its commanders

TEL AVIV

ON Sunday, Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant held an operational situation assessment at the IDF's Southern Command HQ, during which he said Gazans are looking to

The commanders briefed the Minister on operational developments in the Gaza strip, with an emphasis on operations conducted in the area of Nasser Hospital.

The Minister was also presented with operational plans for the fight against Hamas battalions in



central Gaza and the Rafah area.

"The deepening of military activities in Khan Yunis continues to bear fruit," he told them. "Two-hundred terrorists have surrendered at Nasser hospital,

dozens [of terrorists] have surrendered at Amal hospital - this shows that they [Hamas] have lost their fighting spirit. Terrorists armed with RPGs, weapons and guns, [faced the IDF] and did not fight back.

They [Hamas terrorists] understood that their options were to surrender or die."

"Hamas has no confidence in its commanders - this is very, very apparent," added Gallant. "In addition, the Hamas-Gaza branch is unresponsive - there is nobody to talk to on the ground, and the external leadership [abroad] is

looking for leadership [in Gaza]. This means that there is a 'bid' for who will manage Gaza - there is no party in control."

"The Khan Yunis brigade has been defeated and no longer functions as a military entity. Hamas is left with forces in the central area of Gaza, and the Rafah brigade.

The only thing required for their total collapse as a military system, is the IDF's decision. There is no one here to come to their aid - no Iranians and no international assistance."

ANI

Digital technologies accelerate innovation in China's tourism market

AT the National Museum of Classic Books, an immersive exhibition hall has been launched to present a fascinating journey exploring the past and present of the Yongle Encyclopedia, the largest encyclopedia in ancient China commissioned by the Yongle Emperor of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

Based on the history of the Yongle Encyclopedia, this exhibition hall incorporates rich science fiction elements and utilizes digital technology to lead the visitors through different time and space dimensions

in history.

With six viewing routes and four story endings that can be chosen by the visitors, the immersive exhibition presents an interesting plot that brings the visitors closer to the charming traditional culture.

Currently, immersive cultural and tourism experiences are favored by Chinese tourists, such as immersive performing arts, immersive night tours, immersive exhibitions, and immersive cultural blocks.

A tourism enhancement

plan for the period between 2023 and 2025 issued by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2023 proposed to accelerate the development of smart tourism and create new immersive and smart tourism experiences and scenes.

An official of China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism noted that immersive and smart tourism spaces use technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence to create interactive experiences for tourists.

By combining digital elements with cultural and creative features at destinations like tourist attractions, resorts, museums, and heritage sites, this will produce new tourism products and consumer experiences. The goal is to deeply engage tourists and allow them to interact with these blended virtual and real environments.

Recently, China's National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and Ministry of Industry and Information

Technology jointly announced the first pilot list on cultivating national new spaces for smart tourism and immersive experience.

Nearly 1/3 of the projects on the list were related to culture and museums, including the Yongle encyclopedia-themed immersive exhibition at the National Museum of Classic Books, the "Magnificence and Grandeur: Immersive Experience of Grotto Art" at the National Museum of China, "The Dreams of Lady Xin Zhui"

digital exhibition featuring the restoration of cultural relics unearthed from the Changsha Mawangdui Han Dynasty Tombs, and an immersive smart tourism space initiated by the Dunhuang Academy.

Statistics released by Meituan and Dianping, two Chinese shopping platforms for locally found consumer products and retail services, indicated that "immersive" has become a hot search term and booking for cultural and tourism products over the Spring Festival holi-

day in major tourism cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Chengdu.

"The popularity of immersive tourism is driven by efforts on both the supply and demand sides," said Liu Min, a professor at the Tourism College of Beijing Union University.

On the supply side, new technologies like the internet and virtual reality are accelerating their application in the cultural and tourism sector, driving continuous innovation in immersive and smart tourism offerings. *People's Daily*

Transatlantic discordance emerges over Gaza conflict

PARIS

AS Israel keeps expanding its attacks against Gaza, Europe's stance on the ongoing conflict has been changing, with several European countries recently voicing their opposition against Israel's further military actions in the southern part of the coastal enclave, and some European observers even criticizing Israel's patrons in Washington.

Analysts say that Europe's shifting stance has highlighted the transatlantic discordance over the Gaza conflict, which could be explained by the differences in domestic needs and strategic interests of Europe and the United States.



Palestinians buy bread from a bakery in Rafah, Gaza Strip, on Sunday. AP

EUROPE VOICES OPPOSITION

In the past week, Israel has launched airstrikes against Gaza's southernmost city Rafah, and indicated that it is set to launch a ground operation in the city, which shelters more than 1.3 million displaced Palestinians.

On Friday, the EU urged the Israeli government not to take military action in Rafah. A military action in Rafah "would worsen an already catastrophic humanitarian situation and prevent the urgently needed provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance," Josep Borrell, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, said in a statement.

On the same day, French President Emmanuel Macron, after meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Paris, said that Israel's attack on Rafah could lead to an "unprecedented humanitarian disaster" and become a "turning point in the conflict."

He reiterated that "the only viable solution to meet the security needs of the Israeli people and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people is the effective implementation of the two-state solution."

In a joint letter addressed to European Commission President Ursula von

der Leyen on Wednesday, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and his Irish counterpart Leo Varadkar wrote that Israel's military actions in Rafah posed a "grave and imminent threat" and asked the European Commission to undertake an "urgent review" to assess whether Israel was complying with the human rights provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

Also on Wednesday, while visiting Israel, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock told reporters that "1.3 million people are waiting there (in Rafah) at a very small space. If the Israeli army were to launch an offensive on Rafah under these conditions, it would be a humanitarian catastrophe."

Earlier in February, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also expressed concerns over the humanitarian situation in Gaza in a phone talk with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"One of Israel's strongest allies within the (European) bloc" is now "rethinking their unyielding support of Israel's war in Gaza," commented POLITICO Europe.

DIFFERENT TUNE IN U.S.

Since the deadly conflict between Israel and Hamas started four months ago, Europe has shared a similar stance with the United States - condemning the attacks by Hamas and emphasizing Israel's "right to self-de-

fense."

With tens of thousands of Palestinians killed and the call for a ceasefire growing, both Europe and the United States have adjusted their positions, but to different extents and in different ways.

U.S. President Joe Biden reiterated that Israel should not proceed with military action in Rafah without a "credible and executable plan" to protect Palestinian civilians.

It indicates that if Israel has a plan to protect civilians, the United States will maintain its support for Israel's expanded operations in Gaza, including the attack on Rafah. In fact, the United States has not stopped providing military assistance to Israel.

Such a position has raised questions among the Europeans. "President Biden said this is too much on the top, it is not proportional. Well, if you believe that too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide less arms in order to prevent so many people (from) being killed. Isn't it logical?" asked Borrell at a press conference last week.

Where does Israel expect the Palestinian civilians in Rafah to evacuate to, "to the moon?" he questioned.

European countries, including Ireland, Belgium, Spain, Slovenia, Portugal, Malta, and Luxembourg, are "taking alternative direction to likes of the United States and UK" over Israel's actions in Gaza, noted the Guardian.

"It's an important counterweight against the usual suspects - the pro-American countries - who tend to be more pro-Israeli," the British daily quoted Brigitte Herremans, a researcher at the University of Gent, as saying.

DIFFERENT POLITICAL INTERESTS

Analysts believe that Europe and the United States have both adjusted their stances on the conflict for domestic political considerations.

Both sides await important elections. The United States will elect a new host of the White House in November, and new deputies will be elected to sit at the European Parliament in June. They have to consider the feelings of their Muslim communities.

However, the domestic political needs and foreign policy goals of Europe and the United States are not completely the same.

When supporting Israel, Washington expects to gain support from the powerful Jewish lobby groups in the United States, which are financially and politically influential, while the Europeans act out of a sense of guilt over the persecution of Jews in history.

As the civilian casualties and humanitarian crisis caused by Israeli military operations mounted, the United States chose to continue to support Israel with only verbal "warnings," while Europe has been more explicit in its opposition to expanded Israeli military operations.

Besides, Europe is much less in need of Israel strategically, but the United States regards Israel as a pillar of safeguarding Washington's strategic interests in the Middle East.

For Europe, already hard hit by a two-year conflict in Ukraine, Israel's attempts to eliminate Hamas through military action make things harder. Caught "between two wars," "Europe is in danger," Borrell wrote in the French magazine *Le Grand Continent* in January.

"I believe that Europe should be much more involved in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Until now, we have relied too heavily on the United States in the search for a solution to this conflict that directly affects us," Borrell said.

World Bank, participants from 21 countries visit Gujarat's education review center

GANDHINAGAR

A team led by Luis Benveniste, Global Director of Education, visited the Vidya Samiksha Kendra in Gujarat's Gandhinagar along with participants from Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Togo, Central African Republic, Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone. About 65 people, including education ministers and dignitaries from Lyon, Nigeria, Cameroon, Mongolia, and Ghana were also present.

They were apprised of the activities that are held in this special review centre.

Vidya Samiksha Kendra is the country's first centre for real-time, online comprehensive monitoring of school education. Vidya Review Centre, which has contributed significantly to the radical change in the education sector, has been visited by dignitaries from across the country and the world including the Prime Minister.

The World Bank has adopted the Center for Education Review as a global best practice and advises other developing countries to emulate it. Additionally, in August last year, Janet Yellen, Secretary of the Treasury, the US and Ajay Banga, President, of the World Bank visited the Center for Education Review.

Vidya Samiksha Kendra collects more than 500 crore data sets every year from all school education initiatives. This huge data is then meaningfully transformed using modern technologies like big data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve the norm-compliant learning outcomes of students and the state. All data sets are monitored online on a real-time basis.

Vidya Samiksha Kendra records the daily online attendance of all 1.15 crore students and all 4 lakh teachers of the state.

The centre has been very helpful in taking all policy decisions - data-based decision-making in school education. Necessary data-based inputs are provided through this Vidya Samiksha Kendra and based on this the learning outcome of the students of the state is improved and the education success graph is enhanced.

Gujarat Education Minister Praful Pansheriya said, "Gujarat has used the loan from the World Bank to make sure that education reached every village...World Bank is thinking of developing education in other countries of Africa...To understand the functioning of Vidya Samiksha Kendra, representatives of more than 20 countries visited here today...Gujarat is moving forward in terms of education...We will make sure that the New Education Policy is implemented in the country properly."

ANI



Vidya Samiksha Kendra records the daily online attendance of all 1.15 crore students

Taiwan's callous Kinmen act draws flak from mainland

A Chinese mainland spokeswoman on Sunday voiced firm support for the coast guard authority in Fujian province to conduct regular patrols in the Xiamen-Kinmen maritime area after two mainland fishermen drowned near Kinmen, an island administered by Taiwan, located on the Fujian coast.

The China Coast Guard also announced on Sunday that the authority in Fujian will strengthen its maritime law enforcement capabilities and conduct regular patrols in the waters near Fujian's Xiamen and Kinmen to maintain further order in these areas and safeguard fishermen's lives and property.

The measure was announced

after a fishing boat from the mainland was forcefully driven into the waters near Kinmen by Taiwan authorities on Wednesday, causing all four people on board to fall into the sea and resulting in the two fatalities.

Zhu Fenglian (pictured), a spokeswoman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said: "The violent expulsion of the boat by Taiwan authorities was a callous act with disregard for human life. It has caused strong indignation across the mainland, seriously harming the feelings of compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and severely damaging cross-strait relations."

Many people expressed anger and sorrow over the incident that



occurred during Spring Festival.

Huang Chih-hsien, a political commentator in Taiwan, wrote in a social media post: "This is a tragedy involving two lives. The mainland fishermen who lost their lives are our compatriots. What angers me is that a tragedy result-

ing in the loss of two lives due to pursuit is being manipulated as if it were a matter of course."

Taiwan's coast guard authority claimed that the mainland boat was entering "prohibited" waters off the coast of Kinmen island. The vessel capsized while attempting to flee, and the coast patrol boat rescued two crew members. The two others, who were found unconscious in the sea, were confirmed dead after being taken to a hospital, the Taiwan coast guard said.

Tang Yonghong, a professor of Taiwan studies at Xiamen University, said that Taiwan and the mainland belong to one China, and there is no so-called boundary between the two. The waters

near Xiamen and Kinmen are traditional fishing grounds shared by fishermen from both sides, and there are no "prohibited" or "restricted" areas, he said.

Taiwan should have worked together with the mainland to protect the fishing activities of fishermen from both sides, and it has no right to arbitrarily prohibit or restrict these activities, let alone violently expel fishermen, leading to injuries and fatalities, Tang added.

Zhu Fenglian stressed that while the Chinese mainland has goodwill toward Taiwan compatriots, it will not tolerate Taiwan's disregard for the safety of mainland fishermen's lives and property. *Xinhua*

Art contributes to rural development of village in China's Inner Mongolia

"LIANG, where are you going," asked a villager in Xikou village, Mingshuihe township, Arxan of Hinggan League, north China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

"I have a guest, so I'm showing him around the village," Liang Shusen answered.

Today, Xikou village has become more and more enriched with cultural landscapes - a cultural square covered by artistic works, sculptures scattered among the woods on hills, and an art gallery turned from an old village office where photography exhibitions are often held.

This artistic atmosphere has been created thanks to some teachers and students from the Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University (AADTHU).

An art fair was previously held in Xikou village. The chief curator of the event and dean of the AADTHU Ma Sai told People's Daily that as one of the organizers of the event, the academy has taken over 200 teachers and students in more than 10 batches to Xikou village for artistic exploration since September

2022.

Last summer, Xikou village teamed up with several artists from art schools and design institutions to carry out art creations in the small mountain village. Through creative collaborations, the village has been infused with new artistic charm.

"This work is called 'Fish Every Year' and we participated in its creation," said Dong Yali, head of a willow weaving workshop in Xikou village, referring to a group of "fish" weaved with curved willow branches. The work has the best wish of "may there be surpluses every year," because the Chinese word for fish is a homophone of the word for surplus.

When the LED light strips on the creation are illuminated in the night, it looks as if the fish are swimming in the sky.

Having been engaged in willow weaving for over 30 years, Dong had never imagined that one day she would collaborate with students and teachers from the AADTHU.

"In the past, most of what we made were daily necessities and decorations.

Now, willow branches have become art pieces. It's especially fulfilling to introduce them to tourists," she said.

The main designer of "Fish Every Year" is Professor Lin Lecheng at the AADTHU. Engaged in fiber art research and design, Lin became interested in the willow branches when he first visited Xikou village.

Therefore, his team then used local materials and collaborated with the villagers to create the artwork. The exhibition label on the side of "Fish Every Year" lists the names of the 12 villagers who participated in its creation.

In Lin's view, art is vitalized when it comes to the countryside. The vast rural areas provide fertile ground for creativity and offer ample space for artistic works.

Kong Fandi, who graduated from the AADTHU, was born in the 1990s and grew up in the city. Last year, he made several trips to Xikou village.

He was inspired by the firewood sticks used by the villagers, so he started making art pieces with them. "Wood comes from the forest, and I want to 'move'

them back to the forest," he said.

Kong collected unused wood from the villagers and stacked it in a natural and artistic way with different colors. Together with nine villagers, he created an artwork called "Waves of Forests," which shines like a rainbow in the forest.

The villagers participated in the creation by fixing the wood and painting. They also documented the process through short videos on social media.

"Some villagers said they want to transform their homes into B&B hotels for tourists to enjoy the scenery. I think this is a manifestation of art empowering rural areas," she said.

In Xikou village, the artistic works bear the imprint of villagers' participation, and many of the villagers can explain the connotation behind the artworks to visitors. The village brings inspiration to art creation, and the vibrancy of art also permeates the lives of the villagers.

Villager Su Lihong has placed vibrant bouquets in front of her family restaurant, which makes the restaurant more lively.

"These decorations were done by my family - after seeing other people's artworks, I also wanted to give it a try," Su said.

"The village is becoming more beautiful, and more and more tourists are coming here. As a result, our restaurant's business has also improved," she added.

Shang Yan, the owner of an inn in Xikou village, held a T-shirt designed by students and teachers from the AADTHU, hoping to have each creator sign their names on it.

"The students staying at our inn have such amazing design works, and I would love to collect a few pieces. In the summer of 2023, we had more guests staying at our inn, and our income increased by 1/3 compared to the same period the previous year," said Shang.

It is reported that Xikou village is a key village for rural tourism in China. During an art season in 2023, the village saw approximately 8,000 visits, with tourism revenue exceeding 2 million yuan (\$281,611).

Western statements regarding Navalny's death unacceptable - Kremlin spokesman

CHELZYBINSK

THE Kremlin considers the statements regarding Alexey Navalny's death that come from the West rabid and totally unacceptable, given that no information is available regarding the cause of death, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"There has been no information regarding the cause of death. Yet, such statements are coming. Obviously, these are absolutely rabid [statements]. We consider such statements totally unacceptable. They are unacceptable," the spokesman underscored.

In particular, the spokesman pointed out, there has been no information from the medics and the forensics.

"There has been no final information from the Federal Penitentiary Service (FPS)," he noted.

Answering a question if the Kremlin will react to this situation, Peskov said: "The FPS is reacting."

"We have said everything, the president has received a report, now the FPS does everything that needs to be done," the spokesman concluded.

When asked if the president can take the investigation of Navalny's death under his personal supervision, Peskov said: "I have nothing else to say to you on this topic."

On February 16, the FPS an-



nounced that Alexey Navalny died in a penal colony. According to the agency, Navalny felt sick after a walk in prison and lost consciousness. Medics have immediately started providing medical aid, resuscitation attempts continued for over 30 minutes.



We have said everything, the president has received a report, now the FPS does everything that needs to be done

Kilimanjaro Marathon's lengthy and ultimately successful odyssey

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

IN the realm of marathon running, which is an utterly demanding sport, there are run-of-the-mill races and then there are the highly prized, much-cherished races.

Twenty-two years after the maiden Kilimanjaro Marathon was organized, it is an incontestable fact that this marathon, which has become incredibly popular in the country and beyond, definitely falls into the category of treasured marathon races.

This year, the Kilimanjaro Marathon is set to take place this Sunday in the town of Moshi and as earlier stated, the race will be marking its 22nd anniversary.

Indeed, in 2002, the organizers of the Kilimanjaro Marathon had a real peach of an idea, which was to stage a marathon that would lure runners to Tanzania, who would then go on to either climb the internationally renowned Kilimanjaro Mountain or go on a safari after partaking in the race.

This has proven to be such an exceptional blueprint for the overall success of the Kilimanjaro Marathon, which has been nothing short of tremendous.

Therefore, as we await this year's Kilimanjaro Marathon with boundless excitement, it is hoped that the race can continue being one of the premier sporting brands on the continent in the years ahead.

Let us now turn from the taxing sport of marathon running to chess, which is a sport that doubtlessly requires great intellect.

Granted, although chess is not yet a major sport here in the country all sports-loving Tanzanians and neutrals too ought to rightly feel proud of our very own Cleophas Charles, who recently finished third at the Inter-School Chess Championships, which was staged in Poland.

Indeed, Cleophas who is pursuing studies in business analytics at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska



Tanzanian marathoner, Sarah Ramadhani, is pictured jubilating once she crossed the finishing line and won the women's category of the 2023 Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon held in Moshi. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

University in Poland, has distinguished himself as a gifted chess player, who has the potential to achieve big things in the sport.

While Cleophas' achievements in chess are indisputably heartening, one hopes that his compatriots will be able to emulate his exemplary coup and excel in the sport as well.

In addition, it is incumbent upon the administrators who govern chess on the local scene to ramp up the popularity of the sport, which has great benefits for its practitioners.

For instance, some of the benefits of playing chess include developing perspective, improving memory, and boosting planning skills, among others.

Let us now turn from the cere-

bral sport of chess to the beautiful game, where the 2023/24 CAF Champions League Group Stage campaign will resume this weekend.

Indeed, Simba SC face a stern test this weekend in Abidjan where the club will attempt to bag three points against hosts ASEC Mimosas, who have already advanced to the knockout stage from a thrillingly unpredictable Group B.

As for Young Africans, the club will be champing at the bit to garner the maximum points that are up for grabs in the Group D clash this weekend, as they are currently sitting in third place in the group.

Young Africans have the same number of points as Algerian side

CR Belouizdad in Group D but significantly, the Jangwani Street side has a worse goal difference than its Algerian counterpart.

It should be remembered here that both Simba SC and Young Africans endured catastrophic starts to their respective group stage campaigns and both clubs have had to fight incredibly hard to turn around their fortunes in their respective groups.

Thus, with this season's CAF Champions League Group Stage campaign approaching its climax, it goes without saying that all Tanzanians will be keeping their fingers crossed that Young Africans and Simba SC will be able to gain safe passage to the knockout stage of the continent's foremost football championship.

Dabo calls for consistency as Azam FC aim to bridge gap in title race

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

THE recent 2-1 victory against Geita Gold has ignited Azam's head coach, Youssouph Dabo, with the belief that their chances of clinching the Premier League title this season are substantial, despite acknowledging the formidable competition posed by Simba and Young Africans.

Securing their 11th victory of the season in 15 matches, Azam displayed their prowess at the Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam, amassing 35 points, just one shy of Simba's tally, who stand second, and eight points behind Young Africans, who lead the table.

The goals that sealed Azam's triumph were expertly executed by Gibril Silah and Idd Seleman Nado, taking their respective tallies to four goals each.

Meanwhile, Tariq Seif's contribution marked his third goal of the league campaign.

Reflecting on the match, Dabo emphasized the fierce competition among teams, where every point is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge.

He stressed the significance of securing three points in each game to bolster their standing in the league.

Acknowledging the gap between Azam and the leading teams, Dabo highlighted

the need for sustained effort and determination from both players and staff.

He urged them to continue their relentless pursuit of success, emphasizing the necessity of consistent high-level performance, given the swift pace of their opponents.

"We recognize there's substantial work ahead, considering the point difference with teams above us, but I'm moderately pleased with our current position. The tenacity and determination displayed by the players from start to finish have been commendable," he remarked.

Dabo emphasized the dynamic nature of football, where a single game can dramatically alter a team's position in the league standings. He emphasized the importance of not becoming complacent and remaining adaptable to the evolving challenges posed by their competitors.

"A single game can completely alter the landscape, and that's precisely what happened to us. Despite leading for a considerable period, our rivals' performances have seen them climb above us.

"It's a reminder not to become complacent and to continually strive for improvement," emphasized the tactician.

The last time Azam claimed the Mainland Premier League championship

was during the 2013-2014 season, where they emerged victorious by defeating Young Africans and finishing the season unbeaten with 62 points.

This season, Azam have showcased impressive form with 11 wins, two draws, and two losses in 15 matches, scoring 38 goals and conceding 12.

Azam's recent victory has bolstered their confidence in their pursuit of the Premier League title, with Dabo and his team determined to overcome the challenges posed by their rivals.

With a strong emphasis on consistency and resilience, Azam aim to replicate their past success and etch their name in Tanzania football history once again.

Later yesterday, Azam were set to take on Tabora United in a highly anticipated Tanzania Premier League match at the Ali Hasan Mwinyi Stadium in Tabora.

The encounter carried significant weight with Tabora United seeking redemption after suffering a crushing 4-0 defeat against Azam during their previous face-off at the Azam Complex Stadium.

In their first encounter, Azam showcased dominance, leaving Tabora United reeling from the substantial goal deficit. With the memory of that defeat fresh in their minds, Tabora United is determined to reverse their fortunes and secure a victory this time around.



Azam FC head coach Youssouph Dabo. (Agencies)

Coastal Union now battle for success in PL's second phase

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

SCINTILLATING displays showcased by Coastal Union when the club took on Kinondoni Municipal Council FC in the recent NBC Premier League tie played in Dar es Salaam not only delighted its fans, but also boosted their confidence.

With such a performance, soccer followers in Tanga, particularly those rooting for Coastal Union, now harbour hope the Tanga-based side is of late ready to competently battle for one of the top four slots in the top flight.

The match, which took place at Azam Complex, witnessed Coastal Union managing to register a 0-0 draw with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC.

The Tanga side had started the 2023/24 NBC Premier League poorly, having failed to notch a victory in the first five matches. Under Congolese tactician Mwyni Zahera's tutelage, Coastal Union started the league on the wrong foot, losing 2-0 in the tie against Dodoma Jiji FC in a clash that took place at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma.

Coastal Union then notched a 0-0 draw with Mtwara Sugar when the two sides took on each other at Manungu Stadium in Turiani, Morogoro.

Simba SC was thereafter Coastal Union's opponent in the clash that took place at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam and climaxed in a 3-0 victory for the host.

Coastal Union - popularly known as 'Wagosi wa Kaya' - prolonged less convincing results and, ultimately, the outfit's leadership resorted to firing Zahera and brought in caretaker coach, Fikirini Elias.

The changes nevertheless could not end the poor trend as the side struggled to secure victory.

With the less satisfying outcomes still troubling the side, its management hired Kenyan tactician David Ouma to serve as the head coach.

Elias was assigned as Ouma's assistant and the outfit's leadership also resorted to recruiting new players during the mini transfer window to reinforce the team.

"With Coastal Union putting entertaining displays, it is clear that the team will perform well in 2023/24 NBC Premier League's second phase," the team's supporter Dotto Mnehele disclosed.

Richard Nicholas, one of the Tanga club's fanatics, noted: "The squad boasts depth, Ouma should only reinforce the center-forward to see to it footballers playing in the area coordinate well with wing-backs and midfielders."

The clash pitting Kinondoni Municipal Council FC against Coastal Union, refereed by Abdallah Mwinyimkuu, turned out to be quite physical.

Awesu Ally - dependable central attacking midfielder for Kinondoni Municipal Council FC - experienced stiff opposition from his Coastal Union counterpart, Daud Semfuko, forcing the Kinondoni players into a defensive game for the first 45 minutes.

Coastal Union's captain Denis Modzaka and Gerald Greyson managed to torment Kinondoni Municipal Council FC's defense but their efforts ended in vain.

The Tanga squad's pace left Kinondoni Municipal Council FC's head coach Abdihamid Moallin seeking ways to contain the opponents.

Twiga Stars head coach aims to take advantage of South Africa's rusty fitness

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA women's national football team head coach Bakari Shime has said that preparations for the first leg of the Olympic qualification, third round game against South Africa are going well and they hope to do well on Friday at Azam Complex.

Shime said that the ongoing training sessions held in Dar before the game against South Africa highlighted that it will not be an easy game due to the prowess and experience of their opponents.

"This is the first time we have started our preparations with players who play in the country and those playing abroad, and the first task is to check the fitness of their body and then we are going to unite our team in tactical play.

"The main thing is to ensure that the preparations go well step by step and to have a strong and good team that will get good results in this important game for us," said Shime.

He said that the game is a big one because they have two rounds left to get a chance to participate in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, so the most important thing for them as a technical bench is to make sure everything goes well.

"We are grateful to the Tanzania Football Federation

(TFF). It has provided us with everything we need to get for the preparations. What remains is implementation. South Africa are yet to begin their 2023/2024 season and we will exploit that, but they have other players playing abroad," said Shime.

The last time South Africa played Tanzania was in 2014 in a friendly match where Tanzania lost 6-1 away.

The reverse fixture between the two sides is slated to take place on February 27 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Meanwhile, South Africa women's national team head coach Desiree Ellis stressed the importance of the preparation camp with the Hollywoodbets Premier League season yet to return to action, and also gave credit to the players for their work ethic.

"Some players have put on a lot of work. Thanks to the clubs as well for the work that they put in during the pre-season. Last week was a bit rusty but next week will be much better.

"We are just trying to find that energy and find that connection because it is a group of players that have been together for a while. So it's not difficult to find that connection," said Ellis.

The final 23-member squad to play the Olympic qualifier against Tanzania was expected to be announced later yesterday.

Title 'not so realistic', says Tuchel after Bayern's 'horror' week

BERLIN

BAYERN Munich coach Thomas Tuchel said winning this season's Bundesliga title was "not so realistic right now" after a loss on Sunday which left Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen eight points clear at the top.

The 3-2 defeat at lowly Bochum was Bayern's third reverse in a row, after a 3-0 thumping by Alonso's league leaders last weekend and a 1-0 midweek loss at Lazio in the Champions League.

The German champions have not lost three matches in a row since 2015, a run which included semi-final defeats to Barcelona in the Champions League and Borussia Dortmund in the German Cup.

Asked if his job was in danger, Tuchel said "there is no point worrying about it".

Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen told reporters Tuchel would "of course" be in the dugout against Leipzig on Saturday.

"I don't believe in making these huge statements of support for the coach. I know what people want to hear, but these oaths of allegiance can be over after a week.

"That's why I'm saying it my way. (Tuchel's firing) is not an issue we're considering at the moment. We have to concentrate on the next few games."

Bayern were 1-0 up on Sunday after Jamal Musiala's opener, but ended up 3-1 down with 10 minutes remaining. Dayot Upamecano giving away a penalty and getting sent off, having also seen red at Lazio when giving away a spot kick. A late Harry Kane goal gave Bayern hope but Tuchel said "everything that could go wrong did go wrong" for his side.

Tuchel said his side would continue to fight to close the eight-point gap with Leverkusen with 12 games remaining.

"Last season we believed right until the end and it worked out, so we will do that again," he said.

In the previous campaign, Dortmund were two points clear heading into the final round but drew 2-2 at lowly Mainz, allowing Bayern to claim their 11th straight crown.

Bayern midfielder Leon Goretzka, who has never not won the league title since moving to Munich in 2018, told DAZN "it is difficult to say yes" when asked if his side could still win the Bundesliga.

"Everything speaks against us at the moment. But it's the wrong question to ask ourselves. We need to find our game back -- and win our matches."

Bochum-born Goretzka described his side's week as "like a horror movie which won't end".

AFP

Inzaghi pushing red-hot Inter to new heights as Atletico come to town



Simone Inzaghi has won two Italian Cups and three Italian Super Cups since arriving at Inter in 2021. Agencies

MILAN

SIMONE Inzaghi is on the verge of a major breakthrough at Inter Milan as the Serie A leaders push towards the first Serie A title of his coaching career and eye another deep run in the Champions League.

Inter are in red-hot form as they await the visit of Atletico Madrid today, eight wins from eight in 2024 giving them the Italian Super Cup and a nine-point lead over Juventus in Italy's top flight -- with a game in hand.

Inzaghi has long been viewed as a cup coach, one who can win the domestic knockout baubles but isn't capable of challenging for football's biggest prizes. But last year's run to the Champions League final and their imperious current campaign in Serie A suggests that Inzaghi belongs at the top table.

Inter have two points fewer than reigning champions Napoli -- who charged to the Scudetto with five matches to spare -- did at the same point last season.

However Inter have scored a goal more and have a better goal dif-

ference than Napoli did after 24 games, on their way to finishing a triumphant season 16 points clear.

"We're now in that period where the matches are all close together so we're going to have to be good enough to react to problems," said Inzaghi after Friday's 4-0 thrashing of Salernitana.

Inter destroyed Serie A's bottom team to win their eighth straight victory over Juve and Roma, leaving fans wondering just how far their team can go in Europe's top club competition.

"We're playing really well," Inzaghi added. "It's difficult, you have to wait until the end of the season to make any conclusions."

What makes Inter's season even more remarkable is that it comes after yet another pre-season in which big players left and serious financial problems hampered their summer transfer activity.

Inter weren't even sure who their first-choice goalkeeper was going to be until a fortnight before the start of the season after Andre Onana was sold to Manchester United in a 57 million-euro deal.

Yann Sommer, Bayern Munich's reserve 'keeper, was brought in for a relative pittance, while Benjamin Pavard didn't arrive until transfer deadline day but has since slotted perfectly into Inter's three-man defence.

Meanwhile free transfer Marcus Thuram immediately struck up a devastating partnership with Lautaro Martinez, making the loss of Edin Dzeko and Romelu Lukaku almost entirely pain free.

Inzaghi's ability to adapt to and get the best out of a changing cast of players has been a hallmark of his reign in Milan and it has created a special looking team.

Just how good Inzaghi's latest Inter team are compared to previous years will be revealed over two clashes with Atletico, a tough team with an even tougher manager in Diego Simeone.

"They're physical, they know what they're doing, they have lots of great players coached by a really good manager who was also a great teammate," said Inzaghi of Atletico.

Today will be the second straight match Inzaghi faces a former Lazio teammate in

the opposing dugout after swatting aside Fabio Liverani's Salernitana.

A similar performance on Tuesday would give Inter and Inzaghi a great chance of continuing their push for European glory.

Meanwhile, Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone returns to a happy hunting ground today at the San Siro, but must put feelings to the side in an intriguing Champions League last 16 clash with Inter Milan.

The Rojiblancos, fourth in La Liga, need a strong run in Europe to make something significant of a season which started well but stalled with elimination in the Spanish Super Cup and Copa del Rey.

In their path lie the runaway Serie A leaders and last year's Champions League runners-up, with the first leg in Italy.

Simeone, who played for Inter between 1996-1999 winning the UEFA Cup in 1998, has fond memories from his time in Milan and has long been touted as a future coach of the Serie A side.

During the first half of last season it seemed Simeone was close to the end of his tenure in the Spanish capital, with Atletico struggling.

Rumours emerged suggesting Inter would move for the 53-year-old in the summer, but the state of play changed at both clubs before then.

Atletico bounced back strongly in the final months of the season and Simeone, encouraged greatly by the team's improvement, decided to extend his deal until 2027.

Meanwhile Simone Inzaghi's Inter found form and came within a whisker of winning the Champions League for the first time since 2010.

Atletico have never won it at all -- and it is the one clear piece of unfinished business for Simeone, who has led the team to virtually every other trophy.

The coach steered them to the final in 2014 and 2016, only for rivals Real Madrid to defeat Atletico on both occasions in agonising fashion, in extra-time and on penalties respectively.

If Atletico are to break new ground this season, Simeone will have to lead them past his former -- and potentially future -- team.

Victory in Europe has become Atletico's key goal as they lie a long way off the pace in the

Spanish title race.

Simeone rested Antoine Griezmann for the 5-0 win over Las Palmas on Saturday in La Liga, indicating where his priorities lie.

"I'm sure he'll be annoyed because he didn't play, I thought he needed a pause," explained Simeone. "We need a great Griezmann, and we need him fresh."

Simeone and Inzaghi both tend to line up with 3-5-2 formations and the matches promise to be an intriguing tactical battle.

Atletico's coach reserved special praise for Inzaghi, whom he played with at Lazio between 1999-2003.

"A team doesn't win the Super Cup or (lead) the league without being a very well-drilled side," said the Argentine. "They have a coach, Simone, whom I have a good relationship with because I was with him at Lazio and he's doing very good things at Inter."

Inzaghi led Inter to last season's final, where they were narrowly beaten by Pep Guardiola's treble-winning Manchester City.

This year the Italians are head and shoulders above the rest domestically, suffering just a single defeat in the league, while they are unbeaten in Europe.

"They have only lost one game this season, they are strong, they believe in what they do, and do a lot of work both in defence and attack," Simeone told DAZN on Saturday.

"They got to the (Champions League) final last year and it's not just chance that they are leading Serie A."

Simeone, known for his manic touchline displays, sharp all-black suits and combative spirit, will not be as generous once the ball is rolling, Inter history or not.

AFP

PSV's Bosz eyes Champions League redemption vs old club Dortmund

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands

PSV Eindhoven coach Peter Bosz has added incentive for today's Champions League last-16 clash against Borussia Dortmund -- he spent a miserable few months at the Bundesliga giants culminating in a humiliating sacking.

The 60-year-old Dutchman has enjoyed a remarkable season with runaway Eredivisie leaders PSV, who equalled a top-flight record by winning their first 17 league games.

PSV are now gunning for their first Champions League quarter-final since the 2007-2008 season, as Eindhoven fans dare to dream of emulating Guus Hiddink's class of 1988 which lifted the cup.

But Bosz will have a personal point to prove against Dortmund, who tempted him away from Ajax in June 2017, paying a Bundesliga record five million euros (\$5.4m) in compensation.

The Bosz reign started brightly enough.

Six wins from the first seven games led some to speculate that Dortmund could finally dethrone perennial champions Bayern Munich.

But the rot started to set in by mid-October, when Dortmund embarked on a run of five games without a win, piling the pressure on the new coach.

The domestic woes were compounded by failure in Europe, with Dortmund crashing out of the Champions League group stage without a single win.

However, the low point came on November 25, in a famous game at home against bitter local derby rivals Schalke 04.

Dortmund were 4-0 up within 25 minutes but somehow contrived to draw the game 4-4, leaving the home fans -- and backroom bosses -- furious.

At a board meeting the following day, CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke told booing club members: "I feel just as shitty as you all... I have never experienced anything

like that."

Media slammed Bosz's 4-3-3 system and he failed to get the best out of star striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who eventually transferred to Arsenal after several disciplinary issues at Dortmund.

The die was cast and Bosz was finally sacked on December 10, after just 167 days in charge. "Bye, Bye, Bosz," headlined mass circulation daily Bild.

When the last 16 draw was made against his old employers, Bosz was diplomatic, describing Dortmund as a "big club" with one of the strongest fanbases in Europe.

"I still know a lot of people at the club and I'm looking forward to it," he said.

But in an interview with the Algemeen Dagblad late last year, he revealed the behind-the-scenes difficulties, notably with Aubameyang and French striker Ousmane Dembele.

Bosz said the trouble started when Dembele disappeared from training, only to surface

in Monaco, where he was in secret contract talks with Barcelona.

The day after Dembele left, Aubameyang turned up late for training. And the next day, finally, Bosz suspended him after he filmed a commercial on the pitch without permission.

"I learned from that. The situation became poison in the group," said Bosz.

After a year on the sidelines, Bosz eventually returned to the Bundesliga with Bayer Leverkusen.

In his third season in

charge there, the team was top at the winter break but things fell apart rapidly after that and he was sacked again, heading to Lyon.

The pattern repeated itself and he was fired from the French club in October 2022 after a poor run of form, finally joining PSV in June last year.

PSV come into Tuesday's game at the Philips Stadium suffering a small blip in form from their flying start.

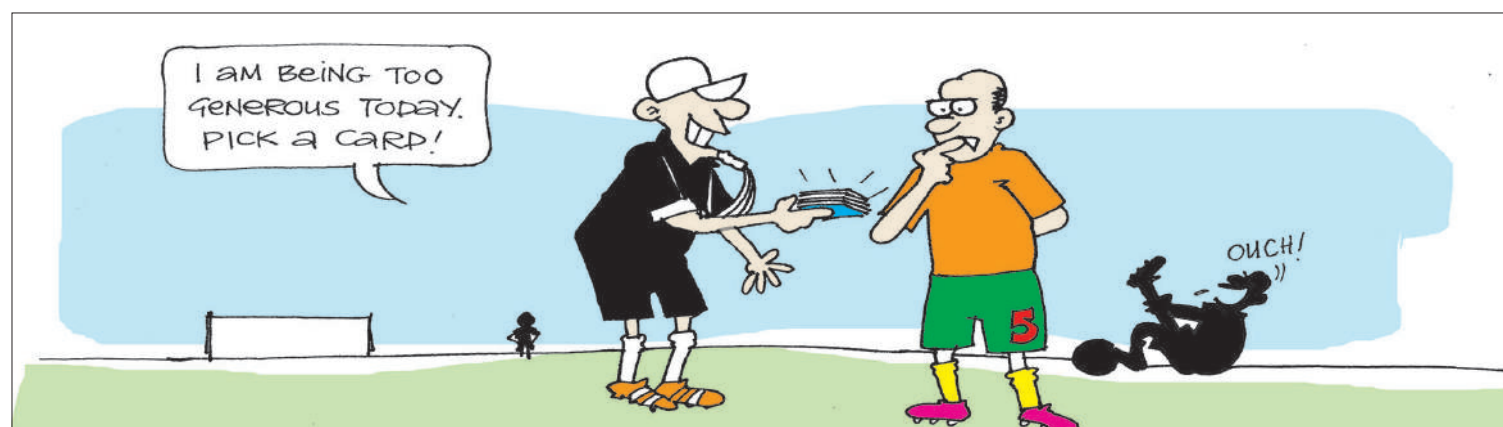
Hampered by a long injury list, they were held 1-1 by a resur-



Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said he will leave the club in June after a string of bad results left the team in a "negative dynamic". Agencies

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



PSV's Bosz eyes Champions League redemption vs old club Dortmund

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Simba jets out to Ivory Coast ahead of ASEC Mimosas tie



are rock bottom with three points.

The Wekundu wa Msimbazi come from a victory in the NBC Premier League after beating JKT Tanzania 1-0 last week and will be looking to keep their unbeaten run to six games.

Against ASEC Mimosas, who have already booked a spot in the CAF Champions League quarter-finals with two games to spare, Simba need to avoid defeat in Abidjan and win their last home game against Jwaneng Galaxy to progress.

The Tanzanian representatives resurrected their qualification hopes with an impressive 2-0 win against Wydad at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on match day four.

The club confirmed the trip logistics details and the reason for the early departure for the crucial match in the West African nation that hosted the recent African Cup of Nations.

"The team will leave the country at three in the



Simba Sports Club

morning to head to Ivory Coast for the CAF Champions League Group Stage reverse game against ASEC Mimosas to be played on Friday evening.

"We will leave with a total of 23 players, the entire

technical bench as well as some leaders from the management.

"The aim of leaving early for Ivory Coast is due to the long trip. We need our players to have time to acclimatise before the game."

After the West African trip, Simba will quickly regroup for the final CAF Champions League Group Stage game against Jwaneng Galaxy at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium on Saturday, 2 March (19:00 EAT).

Experienced Benchikha prepares Simba for crucial Champions League clash

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA Sports Club head coach Abdelhak Benchikha (pictured) boasts an impressive track record from his tenure with previous teams before arriving at the Msimbazi side.

Renowned for his tactical prowess, Benchikha has garnered acclaim for delivering favorable outcomes in crucial fixtures.

Last season, during his tenure at USM Alger, he orchestrated the team's triumph in two CAF competitions, the Confederation Cup and the Super Cup, prevailing over Young Africans and Al Ahly, respectively.

This Friday, Benchikha will guide Simba in yet another crucial away fixture, where a defeat is not an option.

Despite encountering setbacks in away matches during this Champions League season, including securing only a point against Jwaneng Galaxy and suffering a loss away to Wydad Athletic, Benchikha's side emerged victorious with a 2-0 win in the home leg against the Moroccans.

Acknowledging the formidable prowess of ASEC Mimosas, the first team to advance to the quarterfinals of this season's Champions League, Benchikha underscores the importance of facing them with full awareness of their quality.

Emphasizing the need for a cohesive team effort, Benchikha asserts the necessity of capitalizing on every opportunity during the upcoming match.

Benchikha affirmed: "We're facing a cohesive and formidable opponent. Our objectives are defined, and we must maximize every opportunity we create during the game."

With their sights set on securing a favorable outcome, Simba must secure a victory or at least a draw to bolster their chances of progressing to the quarter-finals.

The culmination of the group stage will see Simba facing Jwaneng Galaxy at home, offering an opportunity for redemption at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Revenge will be sought and potentially attained on home turf.

The upcoming match in the fifth round of Group B of the Champions League will see Asec Mimosas hosting Simba at Felix Houphouet Boigny Stadium on Friday.

The stadium, a venue for the recently concluded Afcon 2023 in Ivory Coast, witnessed Group B matches featuring Cape Verde, Egypt, Ghana, and Mozambique, with a seating capacity of approximately 28,000 spectators.

For Simba, a win or even a draw in this match is crucial to enhance their chances of advancing to the quarter-finals.

A single point secured in Ivory Coast could prove pivotal for Simba's progression, while a victory in their subsequent home match against Jwaneng Galaxy from Botswana is imperative.

On the other hand, ASEC Mimosas have already secured their spot in the quarter-finals. However, they aim to solidify their position atop the group. A draw in this match would suffice to ensure their claim to the group's top spot.

The upcoming clash holds significant importance for both teams. While Simba seek to secure their advancement, ASEC Mimosas aim to maintain their dominance in the group.

The stage is set for an exciting encounter at Felix Houphouet Boigny Stadium, where the outcomes will undoubtedly have a profound impact on the teams' Champions League campaigns.



By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

A DELEGATION of Simba Sports Club constituting 23 players, technical members and supporting staff was scheduled to leave Dar on Tuesday dawn for Ivory Coast ahead of their clash with ASEC Mimosas in the CAF Champions League group stage.

Group leaders ASEC Mimosas will host Simba in the penultimate round of the CAF Champions League group stage on Friday.

Simba are second in Group B, one point ahead of Jwaneng Galaxy while Morocco's Wydad Athletic Club



Youngsters play basketball during a training session at the Jakaya Kikwete grounds in Dar es Salaam over the weekend. PHOTO: JUMANNE JUMA

Yanga geared up for weekend thriller against CR Belouizdad

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans gear up to host Algeria's CR Belouizdad for the reverse fixture of the CAF Champions League Group D campaign.

Wananchi will be looking to avenge the 3-0 defeat from the first leg when they visited Algeria.

Young Africans are in Group D which also has reigning champions Al Ahly of Egypt and Ghana's Medeama and remains wide open with two rounds of fixtures to go.

Ahly maintain top spot with six points, followed by CR Belouizdad and Young Africans who are equally tied on five points. The bottom of the group is Medeama with four points.

The top two teams will advance to the quarter-finals.

Ally Kamwe (pictured), Young Africans media manager, spoke to the media yesterday in a press conference regarding the upcoming game against the North African side.

Kamwe confirmed that the players are ready for the game, pointing out they would play their Federation



Cup round of 32 game against Polisi Tanzania as part of their build-up to take on the Algerians on Saturday.

"There is a big chance for Yanga to play in the quarter-finals of the Champions League if we win the next game against CR Belouizdad. There is no other way to do that, we must get the three points in that game.

"In our group each team has shown that they have the ability to qualify for the next stage, all of us are big boys," said Kamwe.

"Despite having this difficult game and the hectic league schedule, we will need to play other matches to build the physical fitness of our players for the

CR Belouizdad match. Thus, there is no reason to postpone our game with Polisi Tanzania at Chamazi," he added.

Kamwe also called up fans to rally behind the team and come out in large numbers at Chamazi to create a formidable home advantage.

"Saturday won't be a child's play, it is a really big match. The technical bench is well prepared. As for the fans, we should come out with real vigour.

"Anyone who believes that he has something that can help the team to win, then do it, wherever you are, don't be afraid of anyone, do it. There is no room for error in the next game, if we draw then you know we are done.

"What helped CR Belouizdad was the huge number of their fans. The truth is that we are not a weak team but we cannot succeed without the presence of our fans who at all times have offered great support, from the first minute to the last minute.

"We should not wait to celebrate only the results, we should cheer the team every minute to ensure the Arabs go crazy," he said.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

THERE'S NO BUSINESS IDEA THAT HASN'T CROSSED MY MIND THIS YEAR.



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