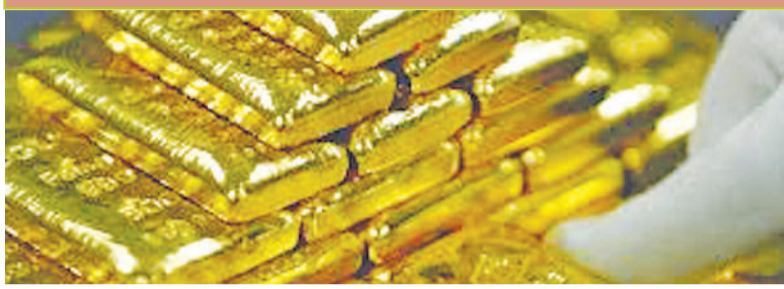




### National Pg 3

Police in Shinyanga seize fake gold, firearms



### National Pg 4

JKCI to reach more people with screening, NCD treatment



### National Pg 5

Call for maintaining road infrastructure in Zanzibar



## Paying by card has no surcharges - BoT

By Guardian Reporter

THE Bank of Tanzania (BoT) has issued a warning to traders across the country against charging extra fees on card transactions at point of sale (POS) terminals as it is prohibited.

BoT Governor Emmanuel Tutuba says in a recently issued statement that payments made using debit, credit, or pre-paid cards at merchant POS terminals should remain completely free of charge for consumers.

"Merchants are strictly prohibited from imposing any additional fees or surcharges on card transactions," he stated, while observations show that such fees or deductions are embedded in the card use rather than extra charge.

The statement indicated that the central bank was seeking to promote adoption of digital payments, seeking to climb another ladder towards a "cash-lite economy."

Diminishing extra charges is likely to encourage more people to use digital payment methods as they are not only convenient and efficient but also enhance security and transparency in financial transactions, he stated.

"Consumers should not be burdened by unexpected charges when using their cards for payments. This initiative is aimed at making digital payments more

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# Bishops bemoan abductions, healthcare costs, lack of jobs

*The quality of education in government schools is wanting, unsatisfactory, requiring more efforts to improve it*

By Guardian Reporters

APPEALING to an end to incidents of abductions, disappearances and killings surfaced at social media pre-Christmas messages by three bishops yesterday.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Benson Bagonza of the Karagwe Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) appealed for urgent action on these matters.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Msafiri Mbilu, bishop of the ELCT Northeast Diocese urged Tanzanians to celebrate Xmas by praying for the country, particularly for the upcoming 2025 general elections, featuring presidential, parliamentary and local council elections.

Bishop Emmaus Mwamakula of the Redeemed Moravian Church asked religious

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Members of 125 households now at Msomera in Misima ward, Handeni District, pictured at the weekend receiving foodstuffs extended through the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA). The government, through NCAA, has been providing food relief to people relocating to the village from the conservation area. Photo: Correspondent Cheji Bakari

## SPORTS



**SIMBA EYEING CHRISTMAS TOP SPOT**  
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**MBAPPE'S SELF-CRITICISM HAS FUELLED HIS RISE, ANCELOTTI SAYS**  
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## Heavy rains leave six dead, level 25 houses

By Correspondent Idda Mushi, Same

SIX people lost their lives while 25 homes were completely destroyed in a spate of heavy rains in Same District, Kilimanjaro Region.

Kasilda Mgeni, the district commissioner and chairperson of the district security committee, said at a press conference that the rains similarly swept crops and vital road infrastructure, exacerbating the challenges faced by local communities.

Relentless rains were hitting the area since the start of the end year rainy season nearly two months ago, such that early morning yesterday the rains caused widespread flooding and damage across the district.

A number of roads leading to the mountainous zone were severely damaged, making it difficult to access some of the affected areas, she stated, citing damage to planted fields, placing the harvest prospects on balance.

"The situation is dire, and our hearts go out to the families who have lost loved ones and homes. The damage is extensive and our teams are working hard to assess the situation and deliver assistance," she said.

The more affected areas include the Msindo, Vuje, Bombo Mtii and Maore wards, she said, with the district's disaster committee ascertaining the extent to which roads were rendered impassable, with occasional landslides making it harder to reach certain areas.

The committee is conducting a comprehensive survey to assess the extent of damage and the number of people affected. The survey also assessed the availability of mobile technologies that support services are now available seamlessly.

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## TCRA: Mobile phone data quality quite high

By Guardian Reporter

THE quality of mobile communication services countrywide has surpassed industry projected thresholds, thanks to the growing adoption of advanced technologies, the regulator has affirmed.

Dr Jabiri Bakari, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) director general, said in Dar es Salaam yesterday that a survey conducted across 17 regions shows that voice, data and video streaming services are now available seamlessly.

The survey evaluated the performance of five leading mobile phone service providers, finding significant improvements in voice and data quality, as well as seamless connectivity across regions, he stated.

TCRA measured key performance indicators such as network availability, call connection efficiency, voice quality and data transmission speeds in the regions surveyed, he explained.

The survey also assessed the availability of mobile technologies that support services are now available seamlessly.

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**Derm Group (T) Ltd and its subsidiaries** wishes to inform its esteemed clients and business partners that our offices will be closed during the festive season with effect from **Saturday, 21st December 2024**.

**Business will resume on Monday 6th January 2025**

Our site operations and regional offices in Kagera, Dodoma, Geita, Songwe, Tanga, Mbeya, Kigoma, Dar es Salaam and Shinyanga shall not be affected by this closure.

Any inconveniences caused is highly regretted. We would like to thank all our clients and business partners for their continued patronage of our services throughout the year.

"We wish you all a Merry Christmas and prosperous, productive and innovative 2025".



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## Former director Nnko, his daughter die in road crash

By Guardian Correspondent, Kilimanjaro

THE Director of Administration and Human Resource Management at the Office of the Treasury Registrar, Amos Nnko (pictured), has died in a car accident in Same, Kilimanjaro Region.

In a statement issued yesterday by Treasury Registrar Nehemia Mchecu confirmed the accident, which occurred on Sunday afternoon.

The statement also revealed that

Nnko's eldest daughter, Maureen Nnko, died in the crash.

Meanwhile, his wife, Agnes Nnko, and two children, Marilyn and Melvin, along with another family member, Sylvana sustained injuries. They are receiving treatment at KCMC and Mawenzi hospitals.

"The funeral arrangements are being coordinated by the family in collaboration with the Office of the Treasury Registrar," the statement added.



## Heavy rains leave six dead, level 25 houses

FROM PAGE 1

hensive assessment of the damage for presentation to the regional secretariat for stating the case to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the DC noted.

She urged residents to take all the precautions they can those living in high-risk areas to think of temporary relocation to safer locations to prevent further loss of life and damage to property.

While assessing damage due to

the flooding, the district authorities will be working to take swift measures to restore vital infrastructure to working conditions, she said.

"Plans are already in motion to ensure that all roads, bridges and other infrastructure damaged by the rains will be fully restored," the DC underlined.

Residents need to be assured that support, including food aid and emergency relief, is on its way, she added.

## TCRA: Mobile phone data quality quite high

FROM PAGE 1

voice, short messaging, data, video streaming and high-speed internet services, he elaborated.

"The findings show an overall industry quality improvement of 1.6 points, rising from 91 percent to 92.6 percent from June to September 2024," he stated, pointing at the Tanzania Telecommunications Corporation Ltd (TTCL) as seeing a substantial improvement, increasing its score by 8 points, from 78 percent to 86 percent.

Regions surveyed were Arusha, Dodoma, Iringa, Mara, Morogoro, Mwanza, and Njombe, as well as North Pemba, North Unguja, Coast, Ruvuma, Simiyu, Singida, South Pemba, South Unguja, Tanga and Zanzibar Urban Wes, he said.

He stressed efforts by TCRA in enforcing regulations on the quality of service provision through quarterly data taking to ensure sustained improvement.

The report also highlighted an increase in the population coverage for 3G, 4G, and 5G mobile technologies, noticed during the June to September 2024 survey.

Coverage for these networks

rose by 1/0 to 20 percentage points, where 3G coverage covers 90.1 percent of the subscribers, 4G coverage: 85 percent of the networks' population, while 5G coverage reaches 2.0 percent of total subscribers, he said.

Geographical coverage was by comparison narrower, with 3G coverage standing at 74 percent, 4G accessibility at 69 percent and 5G at 2.2 percent, he specified.

The penetration of smartphones among the population also increased, rising from 31.6 percent to 33.9 percent of subscribers from June to September 2024, the report indicates.

Additionally, SIM cards used for data network communications grew by 5.5 percent, from 962,928 to 1,015,820 during the period, with the East African Communications Organisation (EACO) saying recently that Tanzania leads East African nations in mobile communication technology penetration.

"This achievement is largely attributed to an efficient regulatory framework, sustained infrastructure investments and initiatives aimed at improving rural coverage," the top regulator affirmed.

## Paying by card has no surcharges - BoT

FROM PAGE 1

accessible to all," he said.

The central bank reiterated its wider strategy to shift towards a cash-lite economy where digital payments replace traditional cash transactions.

By encouraging the use of debit, credit and prepaid cards, BoT hopes to reduce the reliance on physical money, making transactions more secure and efficient for consumers and businesses alike, the statement emphasized.

"Digital payments have long been recognized for their numerous advantages, including enhanced security, convenience, and cost-effectiveness," it said, alluding to BoT's

effort to accelerate this trend.

Consumers need to adopt digital payment methods without concern for hidden fees or surcharges, he said, urging consumers to remain vigilant and report any merchants who attempt to impose extra charges.

"If you encounter any changes in surcharges while making payments at POS terminals, please report the issue to your respective bank or contact the Bank of Tanzania directly," the statement intimated.

Commitment to fostering a more digital-savvy society is expected to not only enhance the security of financial transactions but also increase financial inclusion across the country, it added.



Paskalina Sulle, a community development officer in Mtendaji ward, Tabora municipality, pictured at the weekend making remarks during the issuance of health insurance cards to needy households. The beneficiaries included people with mental health challenges. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Bishops bemoan abductions, healthcare costs, lack of jobs

FROM PAGE 1

leaders to condemn abductions and disappearances as evils, even if it risks their lives.

Bishop Oscar John Olotu, presiding bishop for the Lutheran Church in East Africa, underlined that society has to understand that the shedding of innocent blood always demands justice.

"Let us celebrate Christmas by performing acts of mercy, helping the vulnerable in our communities, such as orphans, widows, the sick and prisoners," he said in his social media message.

He also urged motorists to observe road traffic regulations to avoid accidents that result in loss of life, harming wide portions of society and impairing lives for years to come.

Bishop Bagonza addressed various social issues including abductions and disappearances, asserting inter alia that "the poor enriching

the rich is not new to us. We have seen poor farmers enriching the wealthy, poor congregants enriching preachers, and poor motorcycle riders making the sellers of bikes and traffic police wealthy," he declared.

Similarly poor voters create wealthy leaders 'but we do not see the wealthy enriching the poor,' he said.

In his Christmas and New Year 2025 message, Bishop Olotu urged society to stop acts of abuse, violence, hatred and enmity, underlining that murder, disappearances and killings deeply pain the hearts of many in the community.

"Let us think carefully. If your brother went missing or was killed, how would you feel, dear one? What if it were a father who had gone missing—how would his children or wife feel? Try putting yourself in their shoes and imagine how it would feel," he said.

Bishop Mwachaka's message

likewise dwelt on abductions, disappearances and killings of innocent citizens, the chronic problem of unemployment, the rising cost of living and high costs of healthcare.

"We are entering Christmas at a time when many of our people are in great distress, fear and even despair due to numerous challenges," he stated.

The security situation concerning people's lives and property has significantly deteriorated, with abductions and killings putting Tanzanian society on edge, as several people have been killed by unidentified individuals, he asserted.

"Many of our young people who were abducted in the past six months are still missing. Additionally, the security level of buildings in the country is alarming, with fires destroying buildings while others collapse, and the capacity for rescue is very limited," he lamented.

He also highlighted the dangers

posed by counterfeit goods, which threaten public health, and fears surrounding expired products in stores.

He decried the lack of jobs in the country as it is becoming a crisis, with many young people who graduate from schools, colleges and universities resorting to various forms of misconduct, including cybercrime.

"Political crime seems to be legitimized, leading to incidents such as murders during this year's local government elections, which have discouraged many young people," he said.

The cost of living has risen, driven by the increase in prices of goods, while incomes have not risen accordingly, and the cost of healthcare in some hospitals is unaffordable for many citizens, he further noted.

The quality of education in government schools is wanting, unsatisfactory, requiring more efforts to improve it, he added.



Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (2nd-R) pictured in Riyadh leading the Tanzanian delegation during talks with Saudi Arabia's Economy and Planning deputy minister Ammar Nagadi on the sidelines of the recent Business and Investment Forum jointly organised by the Tanzania Embassy, the Tanzania Investment Centre and the Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority. From-L: Tanzania's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Dr Moh'd Juma Abdalla; Industry and Trade minister Dr Selemani Jafo; and Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office (Finance and Planning), Dr Saada Mkuya Salum. Photo: Finance ministry

## Botswana seeks companies to deploy off-grid solar projects

GABORONE

BOTSWANA Power Corp. (BPC) seeks local companies to develop small-scale PV plants for off-grid power, as part of the government's efforts to expand access to affordable electricity.

BPC has issued a call for expressions of interest from Botswanan companies to design, install, and commission small-scale solar projects for off-grid power distribution.

The initiative is aligned with the government's efforts to expand electricity access through cost-ef-

fective and efficient solutions.

The tender invites submissions from locally registered companies with expertise in deploying PV plants with a minimum capacity of 30 kW. Companies experienced in integrating systems with distribution networks at voltage levels of 11 kV or higher will have an added advantage, according to BPC.

The selected companies will handle project design, equipment procurement, installation, and system testing in accordance with BPC standards. Their responsibilities will also include integrating solar plants into off-grid power distribu-

tion networks, maintenance planning, and post-installation support.

Eligible companies must meet a range of criteria, including valid tax clearance, compliance with regulatory standards, and technical experience in PV installations of at least 30 kW in size. Prospective companies must also provide evidence of projects involving integration with 11 kV networks or higher.

Submissions should include compliance certificates, proof of experience, and technical credentials. Interested companies will be expected to file their applications at BPC's Procurement Office in

Gaborone by Jan. 10, 2025.

BPC said the initiative supports Botswana's renewable energy ambitions by enhancing off-grid power distribution while strengthening local expertise in solar energy deployment.

Last week, Norway's Scatec ASA secured financing for a 60 MW solar plant in Botswana, part of a larger 120 MW complex in the country's central region.

At the end of 2023, Botswana had cumulatively installed just 6 MW of solar capacity, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).





Kigoma regional administrative secretary Hassan Rugwa (2nd-L) pictured yesterday receiving a cooking stove running on gas from UNIDO representative Doroth Kitutu yesterday when the UN agency donated gas stoves worth a total of 14m/- to the Uvinza Girls Secondary School community. Photo: Correspondent Adela Madyane

# Police in Shinyanga seize gold and firearm in major crackdown

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

POLICE Force in Shinyanga Region has seized over 250 grams of fake gold and a muzzleloader firearm that were being carried on a bicycle during a special crackdown operation.

The operation, which was carried out between November 27 and December 22, 2024, had led to the arrest of 81 individuals and the confiscation of various illegal items.

Shinyanga Regional Police Commander, Janeth Magomi, revealed the details of the operation during a press briefing yesterday.

She confirmed that the counterfeit gold, believed to be smuggled for illegal trade, was seized along with other significant items in a series of targeted raids across the region.

"The fake gold was recovered during our operations, along with a muzzleloader firearm in Bugomba A Village, Ushetu, in Kahama District. The suspect was seen with the firearm on his bicycle. However, upon noticing a police vehicle approaching, he fled, abandoning the bicycle. We are still on the lookout for him," Magomi said.

The operation has also led to the recovery of a wide range of other illegal items. These include 9,000 grams of cannabis, nine bundles of khat, 113 litres of illicit alcohol (locally known as 'gongo'), seven solar panels, four solar batteries, and several motorbikes.

A total of 11 motorcycles, three motorbike registration cards, four satellite TV antennas, two radios, and a bonanza machine for processing illicit alcohol were also confiscated.

"The items seized, including illegal drugs, firearms, and equipment for producing counterfeit gold and illicit alcohol, are clear evidence of

the ongoing illegal activities in the region," Magomi said.

He added: "We remain committed to breaking down the illegal supply chains that harm both our economy and the safety of the public."

In addition to crime, the police had been addressing road safety issues in our region.

According to Commander Magomi, the operation also targeted traffic violations, with a total of 5,376 crimes recorded. These included violations by 3,767 vehicles, 1,609 motorcycles, and auto-rickshaws. Offenders were promptly issued on-the-spot fines, and their vehicles impounded where necessary.

"We are taking a strong stance on road safety, and these fines are part of our efforts to curb accidents and ensure compliance with traffic laws. The increased number of fines shows the scale of violations in our region," Magomi said.

She further emphasised the importance of community cooperation in ensuring public safety, urging citizens to continue reporting criminal activities to the police.

She also appealed to parents and guardians to be vigilant, especially during the festive season when criminal activities often increase.

"We urge everyone to remain vigilant, especially as we approach the end of the year and the festive period. Parents and guardians must take responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children, and we call on the public to assist us in keeping our communities safe," she said.

The Shinyanga Police Force is expected to continue its crackdown on illegal activities, with further raids and arrests likely in the coming weeks as part of the broader effort to dismantle organised criminal networks in the region.

# Tanzania comes up with national tourism and conservation awards

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE government has launched its first-ever National Tourism and Conservation Awards, aimed at recognising individuals and organisations that contribute to the preservation of the country's natural resources, wildlife and tourism services.

The launch took place over the weekend here, with Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa presiding over the ceremony, the awards are designed to highlight outstanding efforts in wildlife conservation, tourism promotion, and the effective management of national parks and game reserves.

In his remarks, Majaliwa em-

phasized that the awards would be held annually, celebrating key stakeholders in the tourism and conservation sectors.

The initiative reflects Tanzania's ongoing commitment to strengthening its tourism industry, which has seen rapid growth in recent years.

"Tanzania's natural heritage is our wealth, and the sustainable management of this wealth is vital for the future of our country. The awards will encourage innovation and responsible practices in both tourism and conservation," he said.

Tanzania's tourism sector has experienced significant growth, with foreign tourist arrivals increasing

by 96 per cent from 2021 to 2023. The industry now contributes 25 per cent of Tanzania's foreign earnings and supports millions of jobs across the country.

The Prime Minister noted that the government's focus on promoting sustainable tourism and improving infrastructure will continue, with these new awards serving as a catalyst for further development.

The awards will also raise global awareness of Tanzania's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, attracting more international tourists who prioritize sustainability. Local businesses, park authorities, and conservation organizations will be encouraged to compete

for recognition, driving improvements in services and operations.

The government also expressed gratitude to key partners, including the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), the German Development Agency (GIZ) and the East African Community (EAC), for their continued support of Tanzania's conservation and tourism initiatives.

In addition to boosting Tanzania's tourism industry, the awards initiative is expected to foster greater international investment in the country's tourism infrastructure, including hotels, eco-lodges, and tour operators, offering travellers a range of experiences from safaris to coastal retreats.

**Wishing you cheerful holidays!**

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# UDOM students embark on 3-day educational tour in Iringa Region

By Correspondent Francis Godwin, Iringa

A Total of 300 students from the Tourism and Heritage Preservation programme at the University of Dodoma (UDOM) have embarked on a three-day educational tour in Iringa Region.

The purpose of the visit is to explore the region's historical and tourism attractions, enhancing the students' academic knowledge.

During the reception of the students, Jimson Sanga, the Director of the Iringa Regional Museum (Iringa Boma) and manager of the Fahari Yetu Project, highlighted that Iringa is home to numerous unique attractions, including the Isimila historical site, Kalenga (the home of Chief Mkwawa), Nyundo Memorial Grave at Lugalo, Ruaha National Park, and the Udzungwa waterfalls.

Sanga emphasised that Iringa is one of the regions with a rich colonial history and played a pivotal role in Africa's liberation.

He further explained that the Iringa regional museum has become a key destination for both local and international visitors seeking to learn about the region's historical significance.

"I am confident that these students will leave Iringa with a broader understanding of their studies. They will return to UDOM equipped with valuable knowledge and insights that will benefit their academic pursuits and future careers," Sanga said.

Selina Banzi, a tourism and heritage preservation lecturer at UDOM, explained that the tour is designed to provide students with practical experience to complement their coursework.

She emphasised that Iringa was selected as the ideal location due to its wealth of historical and cultural attractions.

"This tour has provided students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning, which has helped clarify many questions they had in class. We are grateful to Iringa Boma for their warm hospitality and unwavering support," Banzi said.

Students expressed their excitement about learning more about the Wahehe-German conflict, the leadership of Chief Mkwawa, and the historical significance of Lugalo.

They visited the Nyundo Memorial Grave, which honours those who lost their lives during the conflict.

The students also noted that the tour helped them understand the origins of place names such as Lugalo, which inspired institutions like Lugalo Secondary School and the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) camp, both named after the historical Lugalo site in Iringa.

Overall, the students praised the visit, stating that it greatly enhanced their knowledge of Iringa's history and attractions, offering valuable insights for both their academic and personal development.



Iringa Boma Museum director Jimson Sanga (R) shows around students from University of Dodoma's Department of Tourism who visited the facility in Iringa municipality - on Sunday. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin

By Guardian Correspondent

MORE than 20,000 citizens are expected to receive free screening and treatment for non-communicable diseases, including heart conditions, hypertension and diabetes, across various regions by 2025.

The service is being implemented by the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI), with funding from President Samia Suluhu Hassan through the 'Samia Suluhu Medical Kit' initiative, which allows specialist doctors from the institute to provide free services in different regions of the country.

Dr Peter Kisenge, JKCI Executive Director said that yesterday that to date, over 18,000 citizens from 17 regions have benefitted from the initiative, receiving screening and treatment for conditions identified during the assessments.

Dr Kisenge explained that

## JKCI to reach more with screening, NCD treatment

the programme was launched following a proposal from President Dr Samia to provide screenings and treatment in local communities, aiming to reduce the costs and time spent travelling to larger hospitals.

"By initiating the Samia Medical Kit service in January last year, we have been able to reach a wide number of citizens, significantly improving their health. The public response has been overwhelming," Dr Kisenge said.

He added that the service has reached various groups, including journalists, who have been given the opportunity to undergo free health screenings and help raise awareness about the importance

of regular health checks.

Dr Tulizo Shemu, director of JKCI-Dar Group Hospital and a Cardiology Specialist, emphasised that the programme will continue to encourage all artists in the country to get screened early, which will help in the early detection of non-communicable diseases and timely treatment.

"It is crucial for artists to take the initiative to undergo health screenings early, as it helps in identifying their health status, particularly the early signs of non-communicable diseases, and enables timely medical intervention," Dr Shemu said.

Dr. Gelvas Kasiga, the acting Executive Secretary of the

Tanzania Film Board (TFB), stated that the initiative will help artists understand their health status, allowing them to work freely and achieve their professional goals.

DrJohnstone Ndabila, a doctor at the JKCI Kawe Centre, said they continue to encourage citizens to take advantage of the opportunity and visit the various medical centres offering free services for non-communicable diseases, including heart conditions, diabetes, and hypertension.

The ongoing initiative continues to promote the importance of early detection and treatment of chronic health conditions, helping thousands of Tanzanians lead healthier lives.

## US announces visa restrictions on South Sudanese peace saboteurs

WASHINGTON

THE United States (US) has announced steps to impose visa restrictions on multiple individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining and impeding a sustainable peace in the Republic of South Sudan over the weekend.

According to a press statement signed by Matthew Miller, the Spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, they noted the continued failure of South Sudan's leaders to use their nation's resources to the benefit

of its people, their failure to end public corruption and elite capture of the country's resources, their failure to protect the people of South Sudan from abuses and violations of their human rights, including civil and political rights, and their failure to maintain peace.

"The US had hoped to join the people of South Sudan this week in celebrating their country's first election since the creation of an independent Republic of South Sudan," the statement reads in part.

It noted: "Instead, we mark another

missed opportunity for the transitional government of South Sudan to bring the cycle of election delays to an end and respect the people of South Sudan."

"Today's (Friday) actions demonstrate the United States' continued support for the people of South Sudan and their aspirations to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, and our ongoing commitment to promote accountability for those failing to maintain peace," the statement added.

This is the third tranche of actions taken pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and National Act under the policy announced in 2019 for individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining and impeding a sustainable peace in South Sudan, along with their family members.



**HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA  
DAR ES SALAAM**

**VACANCY**

Applications are invited for recruitment against four posts of Local Clerk in the High Commission of India, Dar es Salaam as per the following terms and conditions:-

- Minimum Education Qualifications** : Form VI with a working knowledge of Computers (Candidates with a graduation degree are encouraged to apply)
- Age** : Preferably 20 - 35 years
- Experience/Qualities** : Experience desirable. Candidate should be a team player with keen eye for details and multi-tasking capabilities
- Language** : Good command of written and spoken English and Kiswahili
- Health & Medical** : The person should be in good health and medically fit. A medical certificate will be required before issuing appointment letter
- Police record** : The appointment is subject to police clearance
- Salary per month** : Pay Scale as per Government of India approval. At present it is USD 810/- plus allowances.
- Nature of Job** : The job entails handling work like putting up drafts/notes, settlement of invoices, liaison with local authorities when required, protocol work and any other such work as assigned by reporting officers

Interested candidates may send their application along with their CV to the Head of Chancery, High Commission of India, 213/51, Shaaban Robert Street, P.O. Box No. 2684, Dar es Salaam within eight days (upto 31.12.2024) from the day of the publication of this advertisement. Candidates are requested to enclose recent passport size photograph and copy of Identity card in their application.

The candidates will be selected based on an interview by a three-member committee of the High Commission. The selected candidate would be on probation for a period of three months and confirmation would be subject to successful clearance of probation.



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2nd Floor, Masaki Ikon, Bains Singh Avenue, Masaki  
P.O Box 23451, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania  
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## ADVERTISEMENT

### INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - DISPOSAL OF WASTE CHEMICALS

Mantra Tanzania - Mkuju River Project is a prospecting uranium mining project located in Southern Tanzania, within the Namtumbo District of Ruvuma Region. The site is approximately 80km from Namtumbo Township and 180km from Songea Regional Centre.

The company is in the process of procuring waste chemical disposal services and is therefore inviting eligible contractors to submit expressions of interest to provide such services.

#### II. SCOPE OF WORK

Disposal of all waste/expired chemicals and reagents sorted and stored at the designated waste chemical area at the Mkuju River Project Site in Namtumbo - Songea and in Dar es Salaam warehouse.

#### III. CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

##### A. General Requirements

- Detailed information on the company with an organization structure.
- List of workers with CVs of key personnel.
- Search report from BRELA and the latest audited financial statements for the last three (3) years, signed and stamped by the audit firm. Financial statements should not be older than 18 months on the date of submission of response to the EOI.
- Attached copies of the following certificates
  - Business registration certificate,
  - Certificate of Incorporation,
  - TIN certificate,
  - VAT certificate,
- Attached copy of Tax Clearance certificate
- Workers' compensation certificate

##### B. Specific Requirements - Safety and Chemical Disposal Qualifications

- Must be a registered chemical disposal company by the Government Chemist Laboratory Agency (GCLA).
- OSHA Compliance Certificate.
- Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) policies, procedures and statistics covering the last 4 years.
- Details of completion of similar type of contracts in the last three (3) years and similar contract/agreements currently under execution under headings:
  - Brief scope of work
  - Contractual duration
  - Clients name
  - Contact details of the client (Mantra may approach the client directly for the feedback)
  - Also, attach copies of LPO's, Letters of award/signed contracts/reference letters

The interested bidders should submit a soft copy of their Expression of Interest (EOI) via e-mail addresses: [mantra@uranium1.co.tz](mailto:mantra@uranium1.co.tz)/[mantraprourement@uranium1.co.tz](mailto:mantraprourement@uranium1.co.tz). And/or the hard copy to the below address latest on 13th January 2025, 16.00 hours.

**Managing Director**  
**Mantra Tanzania Ltd**  
Plot No. 1520, Masaki Ikon, Bains Avenue-Masaki  
P.O. Box 23451, Tel +255764700440  
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kuanzishwa matahi dhama ilipo kama inavyoonekana hapo  
chini.

NO.	JINA LA MNAWA	SHIRIKA/MWALIMU	TAREHE YA MNAWA
1.	MSTI MAMBA - 2345 P.O. BOX 23451, DAR ES SALAAM	Mantra	09/01/2025
2.	MSTI MAMBA - 2345 P.O. BOX 23451, DAR ES SALAAM	Mantra	09/01/2025
3.	MSTI MAMBA - 2345 P.O. BOX 23451, DAR ES SALAAM	Mantra	09/01/2025

**MASHARTI YA MNAWA**

- Dhama itazwa kama ilivyo.
- Mnao utafanyika kutoka saa 8:00 mchana hadi saa 12:00 mchana.
- Chama za kubadilisha hati miliki (transfer of ownership) na gharama nyingine ni za mnao.
- Ungao wa dhama utafanyika kuanzia siku ya tangazo hii hadi kuanzishwa saa 12:00 mchana na kuanzishwa.
- Kwa mawasiliano zaidi, piga simu na: 0752722222



## Minister calls for maintaining road infrastructure in Z'bar

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office of (Constitution, Legal Affairs, Public Service and Good Governance), Haroun Ali Suleiman, has emphasised the importance of maintaining road infrastructure in the Isles to ensure its long-term durability and usefulness.

According to him, roads that are currently being constructed in Zanzibar were a significant step for the development of the isles.

He made the remarks during the inauguration of the Kidimni-Ubago road, which stretches for 4.3 kilometres which is part of the celebrations marking 61 years since the Zanzibar Revolution, is expected to facilitate both social and economic activities on the islands.

Minister Haroun further explained that the government is continuing its efforts to build 275.9 kilometres of internal roads across Unguja and Pemba, at a cost of \$80,300,000, funded by the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government.

The project, which spans 40 months, includes 140.95 kilometres in Unguja and 134.95 kilometres in Pemba.

He urged motorists to exercise caution while using these roads and to follow traffic signs to help prevent the frequent accidents that occur.

Makame Machano Haji, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works, Communication and Transport, provided a technical update, explaining that the Kidimni-Ubago road connects the southern and northern regions of Unguja.

Contractors from the IRIS and MAWI companies completed the project, which began in November of this year.

The Regional Commissioner for South Unguja, Ayoub Mohammed, stated that the Kidimni road project is one of 16 strategic initiatives marking the 61st anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution.

It is part of the implementation of the ruling CCM party's 2020/2025 manifesto, which aims to drive national development and transformation.

Uzini Member of Parliament, Khamis Hamza Khamis, urged all citizens to appreciate and take care of the road, which will ease various social activities for the people of Kidimni and Tanzanians at large.

"The government's goal is to improve and bring sustainable development to the nation under the eighth phase of President Hussein Ali Mwinyi's administration.

Therefore, let us be patriotic by taking care of our environment and the infrastructure around us, as this will benefit us all," said Khamis, who is also the Deputy Minister for Environment and the Union.

## Religious dignitaries urged to take a stand against GBV

By Correspondent Paul Mabeja, Dodoma

RELIGIOUS leaders have been urged to take a more proactive role in condemning acts of gender-based violence (GBV), with calls to lead in the fight against the prevalent challenge.

The appeal came from Priest Gershon Maloda of the Anglican Church of Tanzania at Kikuyu Parish in Dodoma Region, who addressed the congregation during a special campaign aimed at raising public awareness about the impact of GBV.

Speaking to worshippers yesterday as part of the church's campaign to educate the public on the impacts of violence, Maloda highlighted that the responsibility of tackling GBV should not lie solely with the government, but must also involve the church and religious leaders.

He stressed that because perpetrators of violence are often members of their own congregations, the faith community must take a firm stand against these harmful behaviours. "Gender-based violence is a widespread issue, and it is everyone's responsibility to condemn such acts," said Maloda.

He added: "The individuals committing these acts are our own members; they are our congregants in our places of worship. We must take a stand against this behaviour and actively work to bring it to an end."

The priest pointed out that the church has been receiving increasing reports of domestic violence, with married couples particularly affected.

Maloda shared that many complaints involved physical abuse within marriages, as well as mistreatment of housemaids and children.

"At present, the church is receiving numerous complaints from families about domestic violence, including beatings, denial of conjugal rights, and the abuse of children and housemaids within the home," he said. "We are teaching our congregants to follow sacred scriptures to guide them on how to address these issues in their homes."

Maloda further emphasised the importance of treating young girls with dignity and respect, advising parents and church members to avoid any form of abuse. He also recommended that children should not share a room with any relatives to prevent potential harm.

Margreth Ndonde, secretary and coordinator of the Anglican Women's Union of Tanzania highlighted the church's role in supporting national efforts to combat GBV. Ndonde explained that the campaign is part of a broader collaboration with other stakeholders to reduce gender-based violence across the country.

"As a church, we have been working with various partners every year to oppose gender-based violence," said Ndonde. "This year, we have focused on educating our congregants in places of worship so that they can better understand the impact of GBV and help in its prevention."

She further explained that the campaign would continue to run in church communities, reaching more congregants and empowering them to take action against violence in their homes and society.

Ndonde concluded by urging all members of the church to become active participants in spreading awareness and supporting victims of gender-based violence, as well as condemning perpetrators of such acts.

The campaign is expected to run throughout the year, with a focus on educating religious communities and encouraging them to play a key role in ending GBV in Tanzania.



## INVITATION FOR TENDER FOR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING, COMMISSIONING, INCLUDING WARRANTY FOR SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER SYSTEMS ON ROOF TOP PROCUREMENT REFERENCE NUMBER ICAP/TZ/6/2024.

### Introduction

MSPH Tanzania LLC, known as ICAP, is a non-governmental organization operating in Tanzania since 2004, with funding mainly from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). MSPH Tanzania LLC is supporting comprehensive HIV services in Geita and Mwanza regions through a five-years' PEPFAR-funded cooperative agreement and intends to procure assets for FIKIA+ project under PEPFAR/CDC awarded funding.

### Installation of solar power system to power health facility in Mwanza and Geita regions (170 health facilities)

### Capacity Required:

Solar panel capacity required for single facility will be as below

Requirements A			
S/N	Description	Capacity	Qty
1	Solar Pannel	550 WP	1
2	Invertor	800 VA/12V	1
3	Battery	200 Ah/12V	2
4	Charger Controller	20 A/12V/24V	1
5	Battery Rack and Solar Mounted structure		
6	Consumables, Connectors, isolators, Earth Rods		
7	Installation Materials kit		
8	Installation Labor		
<b>Note:</b> The lightning arrester must be installed by the vendor.			
Requirements B			
S/N	Description	Capacity	Qty
1	Solar Pannel	550 WP	2
2	Invertor	1500 VA/12V	1
3	Battery	150 Ah/24V	4
4	Charger Controller	50 A/12V/24V	1
5	Battery Rack and Solar Mounted structure		
6	Consumables, Connectors, isolators, Earth Rods		
7	Installation Materials kit		
8	Installation Labor		
<b>Note:</b> The lightning arrester must be installed by the vendor.			
Requirements C			
S/N	Description	Capacity	Qty
1	Solar Pannel	550 WP	3
2	Invertor	2000 VA/24V	1
3	Battery	200 Ah/12V	4
4	Chager Controller	70 A/24V	1
5	Battery Rack and Solar Mounted structure		
6	Consumables, Connectors, isolators, Earth Rods		
7	Installation Materials kit		
8	Installation Labor		
<b>Note:</b> The lightning arrester must be installed by the vendor.			
Requirements D			
S/N	Description	Capacity	Qty
1	Solar Pannel	550 WP	4
2	Invertor	3000 VA/24V/48V	1
3	Battery	200 Ah/12V	6
4	Charger Controller	100 A/24V	1
5	Battery Rack and Solar Mounted structure		
6	Consumables, Connectors, isolators, Earth Rods		
7	Installation Materials kit		
8	Installation Labor		
<b>Note:</b> The lightning arrester must be installed by the vendor.			
Requirements E			
S/N	Description	Capacity	Qty
1	Solar Pannel	550 WP	6
2	Invertor	4000 VA/24V/48V	1
3	Battery	200 Ah/12V	8
4	Charger Controller	70 A/48V	1
5	Battery Rack and Solar Mounted structure		
6	Consumables, Connectors, isolators, Earth Rods		
7	Installation Materials kit		
8	Installation Labor		
<b>Note:</b> The lightning arrester must be installed by the vendor.			

### General Requirements:

- The system shall be designed to withstand harsh weather conditions, including heavy rainfall, high temperatures, and strong winds.
- The supplier shall provide training to the health facility staff on how to operate and maintain the solar power system.
- The supplier shall provide a comprehensive warranty for the solar power system, including all components and parts.

### Solar Panel Requirements:

- The solar panels shall be high-quality, durable and potential damage.
- The solar panels shall come with a minimum warranty of 5 years.

### Battery Requirements:

- The battery capacity shall be sufficient to store the required power to provide backup power for a minimum of 12 hours in case of a power outage.
- The battery shall be of high quality and able to withstand frequent charging and discharging cycles.
- The battery shall come with a minimum warranty of 5 years.

### Inverter Requirements:

- The inverter shall be able to convert the DC power generated by the solar panels to AC power suitable for powering the health facility.
- The inverter shall be of high quality and able to handle the power capacity of the solar panels.
- The inverter shall come with a minimum warranty of 5 years.

### Mounting and Wiring Requirements:

- The solar panels shall be mounted securely and in a position that maximizes solar exposure.
- The wiring shall be installed safely and correctly to minimize the risk of electrical accidents.
- The mounting and wiring shall be done by certified and experienced professionals.

### Documentation Requirements:

- The supplier shall provide all necessary documentation, including technical specifications, installation instructions, and warranty information.
- The supplier shall obtain all necessary permits and approvals from relevant authorities before the installation.

### Testing and Commissioning Requirements:

- The supplier shall conduct a comprehensive test of the solar power system before commissioning to ensure that it meets all requirements and specifications.
- The supplier shall provide a commissioning report detailing the installation and testing process.

### Note

The public tender opening will be made in the presence of all bidders or their official representatives, we encourage all bidders to attend through zoom call and meeting invitation link that will be sent to all those who submitted their bids in advance of the meeting. Bids not received and opened in public at the public bid opening ceremony shall not be accepted for evaluation irrespective of the circumstances. The tender validity period is 14 days. Selection criteria will be lowest price, technically evaluated/ acceptable based on technical specifications and other criteria described above. MSPH Tanzania LLC reserve the rights to disqualify any offer based on failure to follow solicitation instructions. MSPH reserves the rights to waive minor proposal deficiencies that cannot be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition. MSPH will be contacting all those that have submitted quotes to confirm contact person, address and if the bid was submitted for this solicitation. The evaluation of bids will be conducted as per MSPH Tanzania LLC Procurement Guidelines.

### Application procedure

Interested and eligible vendors should email their electronic proposals/bids via email to procurement department at [TanzaniaProcurement@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:TanzaniaProcurement@cumc.columbia.edu)

The Internal Tender Committee (ITC), MSPH Tanzania LLC - ICAP at Columbia University, Alfa Plaza 7<sup>th</sup> Floor - Chaburuma Road, P.O Box 80214, Dar es salaam, Tanzania, all quotes must be in Tanzania Shillings. The deadline for the submission is 10:00am East Africa Time on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

### Important to note

No tender fee charged for this invitation



## Nigeria steps up fight against illegal oil trade

LAGOS

IN a concerted effort to tackle one of its most entrenched economic challenges, Nigeria's military and security forces have dismantled 56 illegal oil bunkering sites across the country.

The move is part of a broader crackdown aimed at curbing the rampant oil theft and pipeline sabotage that have plagued the nation for years.

Despite being Africa's largest crude oil producer, Nigeria has faced considerable setbacks due to these illicit activities. They have not only reduced national oil output but have also slashed exports and crippled government finances.

In the recent security operations, authorities seized at least 88 cooking drums and recovered approximately 1.2 million liters (317,000 gallons) of stolen crude oil. Additionally, 15 illegal refining sites located in the Okorodia forest in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, were destroyed. A significant amount of illegally refined automotive gas oil, along with stolen crude oil, was also recovered. Seventeen individuals were arrested, and several vehicles and oil refining equipment were confiscated.

Between 2009 and 2020, Nigeria lost an estimated 620 million barrels of crude oil—worth around \$46 billion (£42 billion)—to theft, according to the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), which works to promote accountability in the country's oil, gas, and mining sectors.

While oil theft in Nigeria is not a new issue, its scale and sophistication have grown significantly in recent years, with the Niger Delta region, in particular, being a hotspot for illegal activities. The thefts typically involve large-scale operations where sophisticated methods are used to tap into pipelines, refine crude oil illegally, and sell it on the black market.

Umaru Ahmadu, a financial consultant specializing in the oil and gas sector, argues that addressing the root causes of oil theft requires tackling the underlying socio-economic issues in the Niger Delta region.

He explained that successive Nigerian governments have neglected the oil-producing communities, leaving them without infrastructure, basic social services, and economic support. This neglect has exacerbated poverty, environmental degradation, and a sense of injustice among the local populations.

Ahadu stresses that as long as these communities continue to be exploited for their natural resources

without receiving adequate compensation or development, the tendency to engage in illegal activities such as oil theft and illegal refining will persist. "They've lost their means of livelihood; their environment has been destroyed completely," he said. "Unless the government addresses these issues and begins to provide tangible benefits to the communities, the problem will not go away."

Benjamin Boakye, the executive director of the Africa Centre for Energy Policy in Ghana, believes that the Nigerian government's failure to fully address the oil theft crisis stems from the lack of political will to hold key actors accountable. He noted that many of the politicians and security agencies responsible for curbing environmental pollution and enforcing oil regulations are often complicit in the very activities they are tasked with policing.

"There is a lack of accountability," Boakye explained. "The people in power are often the same ones benefiting from these crimes, and until there is a political will to clean up the system, we will continue to see these illegal activities thrive."

Boakye also emphasized that the Nigerian government must hold those responsible for the country's oil resources accountable, particularly those who fail to prevent individuals driven by profit from destroying the environment.

The illegal oil trade has had devastating effects on the environment. Studies have shown that the process of illegal refining and the destruction of pipelines result in widespread contamination of air, water, and land. The hazardous chemicals released into the environment during these activities not only harm local ecosystems but also pose serious health risks to communities living in the affected areas.

Ahadu highlighted the dangers of illegal refining, stating that the crude methods employed by oil thieves lead to severe environmental degradation.



**...Unless the government addresses these issues and begins to provide tangible benefits to the communities, the problem will not go away**



This is how a dust road serving Kwa Mkolemba locality in Dar es Salaam's Ukonga ward looked yesterday afternoon shortly after a few minutes of fleeting light rain, as captured by Correspondent Sabato Kasika

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

WIFE of Zanzibar First Vice President Othman Masoud Othman, Zainab Kombo Shaib, has called on organisations and individuals with resources to provide support to various institutions that assist orphaned children.

She made the appeal on Sunday at the 13th awards event for orphaned children held at Saaten Preparatory School.

She reiterated that through the efforts, the society could help improve quality of life for orphaned children, reducing the risks of neglect and exclusion from educational and other opportunities.

The event was organised by the Zanzibar Islamic Association for Education and Economic Development (UKUEM), an organisation committed to improving the lives of vulnerable children in the isles.

In her speech, she stressed that orphaned children face a variety

## Call for more support to orphaned children

of challenges ranging from loss of parental guidance to a lack of basic needs like food, clothing and shelter.

She pointed out that providing support to such children would go a long way in alleviating their struggles, allowing them to live a dignified life despite their difficult circumstances.

"This is not only an opportunity to help children in need but also to fulfil a sacred duty. The rewards are far greater than any material gain," she said.

She urged the society to contribute wholeheartedly to supporting orphaned children as this will secure a good outcome for the disadvantaged children.

She further pointed out that orphaned children in various parts of Zanzibar, on the islands of Unguja and Pemba, face extreme hardship. Many live without the basic necessity of life and the burden on their caregivers is overwhelming.

"Despite the difficulties they face, such children deserve the chance to lead better lives and it is our duty to ensure their needs are met," she said.

The Chairperson of the Nuru Foundation, an organisation dedicated to helping orphans, made a personal donation of 50 sets of school uniforms, 50 pairs of shoes and school bags worth 2.26m/- for the children.

She expressed her hope that her contribution would inspire others to give and support the welfare of orphaned children in Zanzibar.

UKUEM chairman Biarous Masheko said that the organisation in collaboration with various donors was working to address educational and other challenges faced by orphaned children.

He said the association is committed to expanding its efforts to help more orphans, particularly in improving access to education and providing essential supplies.

"We seek to increase our outreach and support for orphans by ensuring they receive education and resources they need for a brighter future," he said.



Emmanuel Bilikundi (C), a senior quality control officer with the National Health Insurance Fund in Tanga Region, takes notes at a seminar for medical officers in charge of health centres, dispensaries, and district hospitals. He is with is Petro Aloyce (R), a senior claims officer with NHIF in Tanga Region, and Muheza District Medical Officer Dr Fani Mussa. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

AL BORG

THE European Commission has adopted a decision to disburse €1 billion in loans to Egypt following the fulfilment of the policy conditions agreed with the EU under the ongoing Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA).

The disbursement, which corresponds to the first and only instalment, will take place in the coming days. It will help Egypt cover part of its financing needs for the fiscal year 2024/2025 and ensure macro-economic stability, while supporting its home-grown reform agenda in conjunction with the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

## European Commission provides €1 bn in macro-financial assistance to Egypt

Egypt's economy started to recover earlier in the year following the announcement of IMF and EU support, after experiencing significant balance of payments pressure. While the recovery is continuing, the economy remains affected by the economic effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East.

The instalment comes after the Commission concluded that Egypt has taken measures to strengthen macro-economic resilience by uni-

fying its fragmented exchange rate and improving its public financial management, while scaling up its social safety programme. Progress has been made in the business and investment environment, through increased transparency on investment and import conditions, and strengthening the role of the competition authority. Advancements have also been achieved in promoting the green transition by adopting the updated Egyptian Sustainable Energy Strategy until 2040 and advancing private sector

participation in renewable energy production.

This MFA, along with the second operation of €4 billion that is currently under discussion with legislators, forms a fundamental part of the EU-Egypt Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership.

It comes in response to multiple economic challenges over the last years, exacerbated by the complex geopolitical situation in the Middle East, where Egypt is a key pillar of stability and a strategic partner of the EU.



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Dr Gabriel Mziwanda (L), Director of Abundant World Bible College of Ohio in the US, presents a PhD certificate to Irene Robert at the college's 8th graduation ceremony held in Dar es Salaam at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## Sub-Saharan Africa climate innovation gets AfDB boost

By Special Correspondent

THE African Development Bank has announced a \$10 million investment from its Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA) into the Persistent Africa Climate Venture Builder Fund (ACV Fund) to propel climate technology entrepreneurship across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The catalytic investment aims to unlock \$70 million in funding for African climate-focused ventures.

Wairimu Karanja, Partner and Chief Legal Officer at Persistent, stated, "This commitment reflects the African Development Bank's confidence in our climate investing and in-depth Venture Building model in Sub-Saharan Africa."

The ACV Fund invests financial and human capital in early-stage companies led by outstanding entrepreneurs and gender-aligned teams that can drive meaningful climate impact while achieving commercial scalability.

The ACV Fund will address the critical financing needs for early-stage climate technology entrepreneurs, focusing on high-potential ventures in key sectors, including solar energy solutions, energy efficiency technologies, electric mobility, agricultural technology, and circular economy innovations. The initiative emphasises supporting African entrepreneurs,

particularly women-owned and -managed businesses.

SEFA's strategic investment is expected to attract additional private capital while mitigating the risks associated with early-stage climate technology businesses. This blended finance approach directly addresses the chronic shortage of equity financing that often hinders the growth of promising climate ventures.

The ACV Fund is projected to deliver transformative impacts, including the addition of 200 MW of renewable energy capacity, expanded energy access for 420,000 households and 31,000 businesses, reduction of approximately 17 million tons of CO2e emissions, and the creation of over 66,000 jobs, with a significant portion benefiting women.

João Duarte Cunha, manager of the Bank Group's Renewable Energy Funds Division, which oversees SEFA, said, "Africa is at the forefront of both the climate crisis and the climate opportunity. We are keen to catalyze more risk and venture capital to support promising African technology start-ups developing commercial solutions to complex climate and development issues. We look forward to our partnership with Persistent as one of the more seasoned early-stage investors in the continent, with a strong track record in energy access and clean energy transition."

JUBA

## Displaced South Sudanese struggle amid rising floods

SOUTH Sudan's seasonal flooding, once a predictable part of life, has become an annual catastrophe, displacing hundreds of thousands of people and plunging communities deeper into crisis.

Families like that of Nyabuot Reat Kuor, a mother displaced from her home in Gorwai, bear the brunt of the climate disaster.

"When we were in Gorwai, there was too much flooding. It destroyed our farm and displaced us for good," Kuor said. "We don't know what caused this flooding, but it destroyed our land and killed our livestock. When we were displaced from our home, we only had wild plants to eat."

Kuor now lives with her family along the Jonglei Canal, a century-old, unfinished waterway that has become a lifeline for over 69,000 displaced people in Ayod County. Villagers survive on food assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP), wild plants, and water lilies from the swamp when aid runs out.

According to the U.N. humanitarian agency, more than 379,000 people have been displaced by flooding this year alone. South Sudan, described by the World Bank as the world's most vulnerable country to climate change, is poorly equipped to cope. Infrastructure is crumbling, and years of civil war

have left the government unable to address crises like flooding, which continues to submerge villages, destroy farmland, and kill livestock.

The displaced communities in Ayod County are almost entirely cut off from the outside world. Roads are impassable, and canals are too shallow for boats carrying food. Aid must arrive by air.

"We actually deliver food by airdrops," said John Kimemia, a WFP airdrop coordinator. "Before delivering, we have to prepare the ground for a drop zone. In this case, the area didn't have a clear drop zone, so we have to get the help of the community to clear it. There's

no access at this time by road or by boat from the canal."

Despite the World WFP's efforts, resources are stretched thin. Food aid rations have been halved in recent years due to dwindling international funding. When assistance runs out, displaced families are left with no choice but to forage.

The isolation of these communities deepens their challenges. In the village of Pajiek, Ayod's county headquarters is only reachable by a six-hour walk through waist-high water. There is no mobile network, no government presence, and no regular healthcare

access.

At the Paguong village health centre, surrounded by flooded lands, medics haven't been paid since June. Patients, mostly women and children, wait on the ground for treatment amid fears of venomous snakes in the area.

South Sudan's economic woes have only worsened as a damaged oil pipeline in neighboring Sudan, caused by its ongoing civil war, disrupts exports. Civil servants across the country have gone unpaid for over a year.

The repeated flooding has been linked to factors such as the opening of dams upstream in Uganda and

rising levels in Lake Victoria. South Sudan's wetlands, the Sudd, have expanded dramatically since the 1960s, submerging more land and displacing more people.

As the crisis worsens, the unfinished Jonglei Canal—a colonial-era project to divert water north to Egypt—has become a refuge for families seeking higher ground.

But for displaced people like Kuor, life remains precarious. "We survive on what we can find," she said. "Wild plants, water lilies. We just want food and help to live."

South Sudan's flooding is not only a climate disaster but a humanitarian emergency, exposing the fragility of a nation grappling with conflict, poverty, and climate vulnerability.

## Sexual exploitation of female cross-border traders raises concern, reports commission

HARARE

ZIMBABWE Gender Commission (ZGC) has expressed serious concerns over the sexual exploitation of female cross-border traders at the country's ports of entry, highlighting a systemic problem of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) faced by women attempting to smuggle goods into Zimbabwe.

The issue was detailed in the ZGC's 2023 report, tabled in Parliament, which revealed alarming levels of abuse by border employees, smugglers, and truck drivers. According to the report, women traders have been subjected to rape, robbery, and coercion for sexual favours as they attempt to navigate legal and illegal entry points.

The ZGC, in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, conducted an investigation at the Plumtree Border Post to confirm allegations of abuse. The investigation found that the exploitation of female cross-border traders was widespread and not limited to isolated incidents.

"This was a culmination of social media reports indicating the prevalence of sexual crimes, such as rape and various forms of GBV, being perpetrated on women trying to cross the border and smuggling commodities across the border," the report stated. "This gave birth to the need to gather countrywide information as it was discovered that these were not isolated incidences and that women cross-border traders were facing systemic gender issues at ports of entry and exits."

The ZGC's report also underscored the vulnerability of women using illegal entry points, with many fearing legal consequences if they report these crimes. "It was difficult to report such cases to the police because they would also be arrested for using undesignated ports of entry," the report added.

The commission pointed out that border officials allegedly demand sexual favours in exchange for allowing women to cross without financial extortion, while truck drivers and smugglers also play significant roles in the exploitation and abuse of female traders.

In addition to the sexual violence, the report highlighted the lack of basic facilities for cross-border traders. Many women are deprived of amenities such as bathrooms and safe houses, which are essential for providing temporary shelter and protection, especially for breastfeeding mothers and deportees. In areas like Chirundu and Kariba, where communities are located within game reserves, traders also face the risk of attacks by wildlife such as baboons, lions, and elephants.

The ZGC has called on the Government to take immediate action, including amending the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act to impose stiffer penalties for SGBV cases. The commission has also recommended empowering the ZGC to fine organisations that obstruct

investigations and that the Government should penalize entities that fail to comply with constitutional gender equality provisions.

The ZGC further urges the Government to develop regulations that allow the commission to seek court interdicts against employers who punish workers for reporting sexual harassment or discrimination. The commission is also calling for a review of laws to better align them with constitutional provisions on children's rights and gender equality, and for a stricter regulation of faith-

based organisations to combat harmful practices.

In addition, the ZGC advocates for a revision of the National Action Plan to end child marriage and for the judiciary to impose harsher sentences, including jail terms, to deter perpetrators of gender-based violence.

As investigations into these cases continue, the ZGC remains committed to advocating for the protection and empowerment of women, ensuring that the voices of female cross-border traders are heard and their rights are upheld.

**NOTIFICATION TO THE DEPOSITORS, CREDITOR, BORROWERS & CUSTOMERS OF TRANSFER OF THEIR ACCOUNTS FROM CANARA BANK (TANZANIA) LIMITED TO EXIM BANK TANZANIA LIMITED**


Reference is hereby made to the Notice of Transfer of Assets and Liabilities dated September 26, 2024 which was published in the Daily News and Mwananchi newspapers on September 26, 2024, pursuant to Section 4 of the Transfer of Businesses (Protection of Creditors) Act in regard to the then proposed transfer by CANARA BANK (Tanzania) Limited (CBTL) of its assets and liabilities to Exim Bank Tanzania Limited (Exim Bank), subject to the obtaining of regulatory approvals.

NOTICE is hereby given to you, as Creditor/Depositor/ BORROWER & CUSTOMER, jointly by CBTL and Exim Bank that post getting all the regulatory approvals, the transfer has taken place on December 20, 2024 after business hours.

Signed on behalf of CBTL (Transferor) by:  
 Names: Rajshakar Somashetty  
 Designation: MD & CEO  
 Signature: [Signature]  
 Date: 23/12/2024

Signed on behalf of Exim Bank (Transferee) by:  
 Names: SUMIT SHERKAR  
 Designation: HEAD - STRATEGIC MATTERS & SUBSIDIARIES.  
 Signature: [Signature]  
 Date: 23/12/2024

*(Seal of CANARA BANK (T) LIMITED TANZANIA DAR-ES-SALAAM)*



**Braeburn International School Arusha,  
invites applications for  
Head of Services**

Braeburn International School Arusha is a co-educational day and boarding school catering for both the international and Tanzanian community. Accredited by the Council of International Schools, we have earned a reputation for high academic standards, a rich extra-curricular programme and a supportive, friendly environment.

Braeburn International School, Arusha wishes to invite applications for the position of **Head of Services**.

The Head of Services (HS) is the focal point for assuring the quality and timeliness of all non-academic and non-administrative, operational functions. The HS is an integral part of the school management team. This position is responsible for providing primary oversight, day-to-day management and hands-on support in projects, facilities and grounds, logistics, transportation, security and risk management.

**To Line Manage:** transport, procurement, grounds & facilities supervisors, grounds staff, workshop staff and contracted services within operations e.g. security, catering.

The post will be based in the Kisongo campus, but will have oversight of the Njiro campus.

Previous experience of working as (HS) in a school, familiarity with building projects, inventories, transport, security and experience of managing people will be an advantage.

**Requirements:**

- Minimum of 5 years experience in management, with a background in business, logistics and management.
- Proven organizational, analytical and project management skills, including the ability to manage internal and external relationships; vendors, donors, customers, international and national.
- Meticulous attention to detail and accuracy.
- Proficiency in Office software, finance database software, asset management software. Good knowledge of google suites.

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## UN's extension of peacekeeping mission provides but mild relief

THE multinational peacekeeping corps currently stationed in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be there for yet another year, skipping what had earlier been agreed as to withdrawal from the country's eastern provinces.

It was less the DRC authorities which pressured for the peacekeepers to leave than the local population and a wide range of activist groups, such that the state authorities 'caught the bug' as it were. It seems they later had a rethink.

Not that any observer would be surprised at the change, as the DRC army has been reeling from a series of minor battle inconveniences and losses of some villages or towns in the war zone.

There is also less pressure among the population for seeing UN contingents leave the country, as earlier it may have appeared to a spate of opinion there, on the basis of international media tonality, that the UN presence tames the army's fighting spirit. Now, hardly anyone is so sure.

So it is imaginable that the United Nations Security Council vote to extend the mandate for the peacekeeping mission until at least December 2025 will be a relief even to MONUSCO critics in DRC itself.

This presents useful space to see if the DRC armed forces will be better organised to face the challenge in the eastern zone, as the population was persuaded that this was the case when pushing for the forces to leave. Easier said than done...

Few are sufficiently aware of the fact that this extension resonates with the rather intensifying presence of armed groups and

militias.

There is no model to imitate on what to do about this situation, as if often the case in many other areas, when governments are confronted with awkward choices of talking to rebel forces to share up the state, or refuse to do so.

While neighbouring states make various efforts to help restore calm, ultimately it is the capacity of the contending forces to generate cohesion or establish predominance that counts.

There is definitely plenty of anguish or soul-searching for those in authority, shifting from demanding that MONUSCO leave the country and retracting from that position.

Observers say that the earlier demand was made from a wish for greater self-reliance in handling security issues, tampered by realities emerging over the past few months of almost relentless gains by rebel forces.

Yet the time the UN force ought to have left isn't yesterday but the day before and even earlier, as it has been there since 1999 - for a long 25 years.

It is easy to wonder - or ask - as to whether during that period enough was being done to bring cohesion and stability to the breadth of DRC as a whole, to which the answer is just in the negative.

The UN presence is part of a balancing of forces where different groups live with whatever claims they have and the privileges they can extract from the situation, all of which can't be put on the table and sorted out democratically.

In addition, at times instability and warfare in a part of the country creates or sustains the sort of environment where accountability is diminished, since not everyone wants it...

## Media excellence awards review can beget hazards

THERE is new thinking on how the Tanzania Journalism Excellence Awards (EJAT) ought to be organised, with the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) having lately postponed the accepting of entries for 2024 while it starts work on a new format for the competition.

While it is basically the competition among journalists that is being reviewed to identify more practitioners, including those not submitting any work for consideration, society is also being mirrored: As these competitions date back to 2009, are we still in the same environment of old?

The MCT executive secretary told journalists in Dar es Salaam that the council will conduct a review, even research, to see how qualified personnel actually seek out impactful stories, moving away from individual presentation of published news or some other journalistic items.

MCT used to open the window for receiving entrances filed by the respective journalists during the final months of each year with intent to cover the outgoing year.

But are there better methods of selecting award winners other than by allowing journalists to make presentations? When a journalist opts not to compete by filing a story, what are the chances that such item will be particularly competitive?

Assuming that one seeks to diminish favouritism or oversight in excellence awards, the preliminary difficulty is how far the total scope of what comes into the media will be examined by a selected panel.

At the moment the panel examines entries, and then offers

points or marks depending on the level of professionalism the work demonstrates.

When it is asked to start from scratch without any preliminary entries, chances that it won't go far enough. It won't have a ready audience awaiting results, no entrants in the first place or even no registered competitors.

Another line of inquiry into this change in procedure is to demand if there are likely to be massive differences between entries from individuals and independently seeking out such candidates by a team of researchers.

If the difference is massive, it follows that there is a range of stories that are being ignored or are not being presented for consideration.

There would be an auxiliary question in that regard, as to what range of stories can be written, published and peered over for consideration in an excellence award competition.

For nearly a decade now, one could safely say that journalism has lost some of sparkle witnessed or experienced in the years starting with media sector liberalisation in the late 1980s and on to the 2015 General Election.

From then on, there has been such a stretch of controls on news output that themes have kept changing in ways that are disorienting for those attached to actual media excellence.

We now have statutes against investigative stories that are different from legislation on traditional libel, which makes the idea of panel selection all the more worrisome as to its possible direction in the face of pressures for non-eventful, exciting stories.

### The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO  
Circulation Manager: DENNIS NTAITA  
feedback@guardian.co.tz

### Newsdesk

News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON  
0757154767  
General line: 0745700710  
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

### Advertising

Mobile: 0677020701  
E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz  
Website: www.ippmedia.com  
epaper.ippmedia.com



## Artificial intelligence changing newsrooms in Nigeria

By Patrick Egwu and Ekpali Saint

Artificial intelligence (AI) revolutionises journalism practices worldwide, newsrooms in Nigeria increasingly are integrating new such tools to enhance storytelling and fact-checking.

These AI tools, although unable to replace the work of humans, can handle a wide variety of tasks. From summarising and analysing large datasets to verifying information, the new technology is indeed shaping and changing how newsrooms in Nigeria operate.

The internet has made it possible for people to access and share information swiftly. This information is often disseminated on social media today, where false news spreads six times faster than factual news.

But false information doesn't only spread on social media. It also travels by radio, noted Silas Jonathan, research and digital investigations manager at Dubawa - a West African fact-checking project initiated by the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development.

Recognising this, in May 2024 Dubawa introduced an AI-powered chatbot and an audio platform to debunk false information.

"When we talk about fact-checking mis-and disinformation, we look only at social media. But we have realised that people lie a lot on the radio and can say something misleading but nobody follows up to check," Jonathan explained.

"We decided to create the Dubawa Audio Platform that will help journalists monitor and identify false claims on radio and debunk them," he added.

After registering, users can use the Dubawa Audio Platform to monitor

live radio programmes, transcribe audio recordings and verify claims.

Unlike most AI tools today, which are created with a Western orientation, the tool allows journalists to transcribe local audio recordings to text in Ghanaian and Nigerian English dialects as well as Pidgin English.

The organisation also has plans to expand the platform into local languages in Ghana and Nigeria, as well as Arabic and French, Jonathan noted.

The Dubawa Chatbot, meanwhile, operates on WhatsApp, generating responses to queries and claims users submit. The chatbot also produces relevant links which users can visit to get more information, explained Jonathan.

The responses are informed by fact-checks conducted by Dubawa and the International Fact-checking Network, with Jonathan noting: "When you make a query, it's not just giving you random answers from unknown sources. It's giving you feedback and references from already verified information that followed through the editorial process."

One challenge Jonathan pointed out is the delay in getting verified information not available in the chatbot's database: "When you ask the chatbot a query that is not yet verified, you don't get any viable answer. The response has to have been fact-checked or written by credible media that we have selected to serve as the database," he said.

Overall, the number of users taking advantage of the tool is increasing. Just last month, the chatbot recorded 9,000 users and Dubawa Audio 4,000 across Ghana and Nigeria, according to Jonathan.

The year 2022 saw Dataphyte, a media, research and data analytics organisation in Nigeria, launch an

open-source AI tool called Nubia that helps users analyse large datasets and turn them into stories.

These stories are a "first draft" that human editors need to fine-tune, explained Ibilolia Akahome, a programmes and business development manager at Dataphyte. "This tool was created as a synergy between artificial intelligence and human intelligence," she said, adding: "The first draft must be improved on by the journalists."

Bernardo Motta, associate journalism professor at Roger Williams University (in Bristol, Rhode Island, United States) echoed the importance of human oversight of the tool.

"What makes stories good and appealing to people is that human connection. When we are talking about journalism, in which you talk about real-world people, AI does not have that information, or when it does it distorts that information," Motta said, adding: "It becomes a problem when the AI makes a conclusion."

Nubia has helped Oluwasegun Abidoye, a data analyst and an investigative journalist with Dataphyte, produce a variety of stories over the past year. In July, for instance, he used the tool to report on whether customers were getting the value they paid for from electricity distribution companies in Nigeria.

"I input the dataset and it gave a real-life story. It was really useful and user-friendly, and it saved time," said Abidoye, adding: "With Nubia, we were able to know whether they were supplying enough power, and even the total revenue."

One major challenge Abidoye encountered, however, is that he wasn't able to input multiple datasets at once to compare against each other.

"We wanted to compare findings with another country, but the initial dataset could not help us compare with other countries. We had to generate another dataset," he said.

To encourage users, both Dubawa and Dataphyte are investing in training. This year alone, Dataphyte has held more than 20 training sessions for media professionals, lecturers and university students, according to Akahome.

Dubawa has meanwhile trained about 4,000 journalists across Africa - in The Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and South Africa - on how to use its AI tools.

Given the ethical concerns arising from the use of AI tools in newsrooms, Motta argued that journalism ethics should be part of the conversation during training sessions.

"We never can assume that people who are doing journalism have been trained on the ethics of journalism, so that has to be part of the training. Journalists need to understand how AI tools are created and how they function. If you're just trained how to use a tool, you are substitutable," he said.

Journalists must be aware of data that AI tools may be collecting from them, too, according to Motta.

"If you are using a tool that you don't know what it's doing, I can guarantee you that it is collecting information from you, and that's another problem for journalism ethics, because that can give information about sources," Motta noted.

• **A dispatch by the International Journalists' Network (IJNet), a project of Washington-based International Centre for Journalists. Patrick Egwu is a Nigerian freelance journalist based in Johannesburg and Ekpali Saint is a Nigeria-based freelance journalist.**

## Divergent paths for journalism's future with AI

By Alfred Hermida

WHEN it comes to artificial intelligence (AI), journalism as a profession seems to be caught between the extremes of hope and disillusionment. Attitudes on the role and impact of AI on journalism tend to veer from fears about robots replacing journalists to hopes that machines could boost quality journalism.

The media industry is at a critical juncture in its relationship with artificial intelligence, especially generative AI.

The coming year is likely to see a significant divergence in how news organisations approach AI with two distinct choices - between substituting and complementing journalists.

The theories of AI as a substituting force or as a complementary force in the labour market provide a way to chart the choices ahead.

The substituting force refers to the

phenomenon where technological advancements or new work practices replace or reduce the need for certain types of labour. Consider the now obsolete job of the elevator operator.

The substituting path envisions AI as a replacement for human journalists. This scenario is already unfolding in some areas of journalism, with news agencies using AI to generate stories once performed by entry-level journalists.

In the UK, the Press Association already integrates non-generative AI into its wire service with products like RADAR. It enabled a team of five journalists to file more than 400,000 local news stories in the three years since its 2018 launch.

More recently, there have been AI-generated presenters, with the UK's third-largest regional media group - National World - debuting its AI weather presenter in 2023.

With AI rapidly developing, this trend could potentially extend to more complex journalistic tasks, such

as creating AI-generated podcasts like Discover Daily by Perplexity.

The complementary force, on the other hand, occurs when the same changes in technology or work increase the demand for certain types of labour by complementing existing skills. An example is the rise of data and computational journalists in the newsroom over the past decade.

In this scenario, AI assists journalists by handling time-consuming tasks like data analysis, fact-checking, and transcription.

For example, the Associated Press has developed a tool to search and filter posts on local government websites from across the US, looking for news tips. In the UK, meanwhile, the BBC is testing AI-generated story graphics to reversion existing BBC news for a younger audience on social media.

The choice between these paths is not binary, and the future lies somewhere in between. It is reminiscent of the early 2000s and

2010s when the internet and social media were going to save journalism and foster a more democratic media or to create a dystopian era where clickbait flourished and viral falsehoods spread.

The reality between these extremes has ebbed and flowed over the past two decades. There is no doubt that the direction taken with AI will significantly shape the future of journalism. The substitution path holds the lure of efficiencies, reduced costs, and savings at scale.

The complementary path, while preserving more human jobs, would meanwhile require a focus on public interest rather than profit-driven journalism.

As the news industry faces continued political, economic and societal pressures, 2025 looks set to be a year of reckoning for AI and journalism.

• **A Nieman Lab dispatch. Alfred Hermida is a journalism professor at the University of British Columbia.**



By Guardian Correspondent

CLIMATE change is not just a theoretical concern; it is an undeniable reality profoundly impacting Tanzania's environment and its people. We are witnessing the consequences firsthand—intense heat waves, destructive floods, violent storms, and prolonged droughts have become alarmingly commonplace.

The urgency of this situation compels us to respond collectively, as climate change is causing distress globally, and its ramifications are evident in our communities.

In the past two years, Tanzania has faced extreme heat and severe flooding, devastating lives and infrastructures alike. The recent catastrophic floods in the southern corridor serve as a stark reminder that we cannot remain passive. As we see similar disasters unfolding worldwide—from hurricanes in the U.S. to floods in Indonesia—taking decisive action is imperative.

Fostering a comprehensive and standalone climate change policy is vital, a view endorsed by numerous NGOs and faith-based organizations. Such a policy must be designed to be clear and accessible, ensuring climate change receives the priority it requires within our national budget. When we accord climate change the necessary focus, we can transform well-intentioned strategies into concrete actions that benefit all Tanzanians.

Agriculture, which employs 70 percent of our population, plays a crucial role in our response to climate change. Ex-



High-level faith leaders and government officials discussing issues related to climate change and the urgency for stakeholders to respond collectively. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Confronting climate change in Tanzania: A call for joint action

perts from Sokoine University of Agriculture advocate for harnessing science and technology to boost productivity and resilience.

By investing in sustainable agricultural practices, we can equip our communities to not only withstand climate variability but to thrive despite it.

It is essential to amplify

grassroots voices—particularly those of smallholder farmers—when crafting climate adaptation strategies. Faith actors from CCT opined that climate adaptation methods should start at and with grassroots levels that are heavily impacted, urging the government and all actors to be inclusive.

Rev. Canon Dr. Moses Ma-

tonya, General Secretary CCT asserts that “Climate adaptation is squarely connected to development hence, local adaptation skills in agriculture can deliver impactful development if it emanates from indigenous communities.

It is a call for all of us, as the Bible describes in Genesis 2:15 to be stewards of

creation.” Dr. Joyce Temu, former Lecturer at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) has aptly noted that solutions must derive from the insights and difficulties faced by those directly affected. Inclusivity is paramount; marginalized groups deserve representation, and their distinct needs must guide climate action plans.”

The importance of transparent governance and accountability in climate initiatives cannot be underestimated. Effective implementation is crucial, and public scrutiny can foster trust and collaboration among stakeholders. We must ensure that funds allocated for climate activities are utilized equitably, ben-

efiting those who are most vulnerable.

Effective communication about climate change is essential, tailored to resonate with diverse demographic groups and consider the different impacts based on gender, age, and socio-economic status.

By personalizing our messages, we enhance understanding and foster collective ownership. Ensuring that timely climate information reaches communities in actionable formats will galvanize engagement and empower local responses to this global crisis.

Finally, we must acknowledge and strengthen the current efforts of various stakeholders already involved in climate-related activities. By promoting collaboration among faith leaders, civil society, academic institutions, and the private sector, we can create a more inclusive and effective climate response.

The statistics are alarming: climate change presently costs Tanzania 1 percent of its GDP, a figure expected to soar to 2 percent by 2030. The absence of a specific policy to tackle climate change not only endangers our environment but also threatens the livelihoods of millions, subjecting most Tanzanians to vulnerability and compromising our economic future.

At this crucial moment, we have a unique opportunity and undeniable responsibility to act. Let us unite our efforts, leverage our collective strengths, and become the architects of change in the fight against climate change. The time for decisive action is now, and the future of Tanzania hangs in the balance.

## Embracing new paradigm shift in bid to improve our education

By Telesphor Magobe

TEACHERS have been traditionally regarded as providers of professional knowledge and students as receivers of such knowledge.

This traditional teacher-centred pedagogy makes students passive learners because “information providers or assessors who check students’ work to make sure they are coming up with the right answers, while students are just seen as passive recipients of the information,” according to Dr Sadaf Zamir Ahmedi, Dr Sohaib Sultan, Mamoona Kousar, Hafiz Abdul Basit, Dr Raham Zaid, and Sidra Bano.

The scholars said this in their article “Effectiveness of Teacher’s Centred Approach on Student’s Learning at University Level”.

They argue that when teachers dominate teaching and learning processes, “students are more likely to lose sight of their goals than when they develop their knowledge.”

In this way, learners are deprived of opportunities for developing their critical thinking and enhancing their problem-solving skills. “In the teacher-centred approach, the teacher uses the method of direct instruction to deliver knowledge to students. Direct teaching is a common teaching approach that relies on a commanding teaching style in which

trainers educate through lectures or self-conducted demonstrations.”

Yet, when students are unable to develop and use their critical and problem-solving skills they can hardly compete in this rapidly evolving world which creates new problems that need new solutions. So, how can passive learners develop skills which will help them solve new problems? It is from this background that a new paradigm shift in education has evolved. It focuses on learner-centred learning.

With this pedagogy, which is also referred to as “best practice pedagogy”, the role of teachers has changed from being providers of professional knowledge to being facilitators of learning. It has been adopted in many parts of the world.

A scholar, Prof Nikolaos Tzenios, advocates learner-centred learning. In his article he published International Research Journal of Modernisation in Engineering Technology and Science in 2022 says: “The learner-centred teaching (LCT) approach, also known as student-centred or child-centred teaching, is characterised by student participation and a focus on tailoring teaching methodologies to individual student needs, learning styles, skills, and goals. It involves clear skill instruction, reflection on learning and how it is achieved, student control over learning, and



collaboration within the classroom community.”

According to another scholar, Dr Rajendra Shah (2020), Paulo Freire is widely regarded as the founder of LCT. He says Freire established the groundwork for a system of education that empowered impoverished and illiterate individuals.

“He regarded traditional TCT as a means of perpetuating oppression and correspondingly advocated for a system of education that allowed students to express their voice through the creation of dialogue with the teacher and situated educational activity within the lived experience of participants,” he says.

Citing Freire, Dr Shah suggests that LCT challenges students “to actively create their own knowledge” through real-world experiences and provides activities and assessments of their choices. In this way, teachers help students acquire skills and competencies to discover their own knowledge.

“These abilities generally correspond to the real-world soft skills required by today’s knowledge-based or creative economy, including problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, innovation, and creativity.” These skills, says Dr Shah, resulting from students’ meaningful participation in their learning process, can provide free-

dom from poverty and oppression, which contains relevance in postcolonial societies and developing nations.

Tanzania adopts a learner-centred pedagogy starting from pre-primary education to higher education. However, in practice there is leaning towards teacher-centred learning. But Curriculum and Syllabus for Pre-primary Education (2023) says it recommends “the use of teaching and learning techniques that treat the child as the centre of learning and the teacher as the facilitator. The teacher will use techniques that engage the child into the teaching and learning process while considering their age, vari-

ous needs and levels of understanding.”

The curriculum says techniques to be employed in the learner-centred pedagogy include play and arts, information communication technology (ICT), discussions, gallery walk, and other interactive techniques that stimulate learning.

It stresses that teachers need to be creative and innovative in using real objects available in their environment and must create an environment for schoolchildren to use them effectively during learning.

It also recommends the teacher-student ratio of 1:25, which is ideal for learner-centred pedagogy because pre-schoolchil-

**Effective-ness of Teacher’s Centred Approach on Student’s Learning at University Level.**

dren need attention so that they may make the best out of their learning process.

It suffices to say that learner-centred pedagogy will improve the quality of education in Tanzania because it makes learners acquire skills and competencies that will make them participate in and contribute to the rapidly changing world of the 21st century.

The new problems created by emerging technologies need new solutions and the new solutions will be found by learners who have critical and problem-solving skills. Although learner-centred pedagogy is widely adopted worldwide and in the country there is a need to embrace it from pre-primary education.



# Trump wants China's help in making peace in Ukraine

By Stefan Wolff and

Tetyana Malyarenko

US President-elect Donald Trump has invited China's president Xi Jinping to his inauguration on January 20 in a surprise move which appears to be part of a plan to involve Beijing in ceasefire negotiations in Ukraine.

Just after his recent meeting with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky in Paris, Trump posted, "There should be an immediate ceasefire and negotiations should begin," and "China can help." That latter remark has suddenly gained more significance after Trump extended the unusual invitation for the foreign leader to attend the January 20 ceremony.

Leaving aside whether Xi will accept Trump's invitation to Washington DC (he probably won't), the more important question is whether he would indeed help Trump end the Russian war against Ukraine.

China has had a strong economic and trading relationship with Russia throughout the war, and has refrained from criticising Putin. While it has denied providing Moscow with military assistance, reports suggest that China has allowed some goods that have battlefield use

to be sent to Russia.

On the surface, Trump's initiative and what China has most recently put on the table with Brazil look like two reasonably well-aligned peace proposals.

Both call for a ceasefire along the current frontlines, followed by negotiations on a permanent settlement. Both seem to accept Russia's demand to freeze the territorial status quo, which would mean Ukraine would lose the near-20% of its territory that Moscow's forces have illegally occupied since 2014.

## Kyiv and Beijing

Ukraine and most of its western partners continue to reject this as unacceptable. Before Trump's election victory, this was a sustainable position because the west was able to prevent Ukraine from being militarily defeated on the battlefield.

## Trump has invited Xi Jinping to his inauguration

This position may be slowly changing, but it is not clear that it would suddenly make China a welcome partner for the west in any peace negotiations – least of all for Ukraine.

Kyiv has always been wary of China and its international policies, from the economic and trade Belt and Road Initiative to the recent peace pro-



Trump has invited China's Xi Jinping to attend his inauguration. This is clearly aimed at getting Beijing involved in negotiations over the Ukraine war.

posals. Zelensky called the China-Brazil peace initiative "destructive". He also accused China and Brazil of being "pro-Russian".

Zelensky is personally

deeply invested in his own peace plan, particularly as Ukrainians have made enormous sacrifices in the war so far. This does not rule out compromises,

but it makes concessions to China, widely seen by Ukrainians as one of Russia's main supporters in the war, very unlikely.

Even if there was a sud-

den change of heart in Kyiv, it is highly doubtful that a Trump-brokered deal would serve Beijing's interests. For Xi it is always about strengthening Chi-

na's role and influence as a global power. China will be concerned if the war is over, the US may become even more focused on its trade war with Beijing.

So far, the war in Ukraine has allowed China to benefit from the strain that it has put on the west.

US suggestions that it will pull back on its alliance commitments in Europe have raised doubts over the dependability of the US as an ally for Ukraine. This is becoming more acute as Trump prepares to move into the White House.

The longer the war in Ukraine continues in this way, the longer China will reap the benefits from the reduction of the relative weight of the United States as its main geopolitical and geo-economic rival.

A carefully managed continuation of the war against Ukraine, by contrast, benefits China in asserting its global leadership.

China's approach to managing the "Ukraine crisis" was reiterated by Xi at the recent Brics summit in Kazan, Russia, and in a meeting with former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev in Beijing on December 12 2024. It is focused on upholding "three key principles: no expansion of the battlefields, no escalation of hostilities, and no fanning flames, and [striving] for swift deescalation of the situation".

## What's in it for China?

This is a far cry from an end to the war as envisaged by Trump. A Trump-brokered deal would likely lift sanctions and

provide a possibility of renewed, more cooperative relations between the west and Russia.

It would significantly strengthen Putin's position, contribute to Russia's international rehabilitation, reduce his country's dependence on China, and potentially rekindle historical Russia-China rivalries. Trump's claim that he wants to "un-ite" Russia and China will not have gone unnoticed in Beijing.

And even if Trump did not manage to drive a wedge between Russia and China, a stronger Kremlin would mean a shift of the power dynamic in the partnership between Moscow and Beijing, potentially elevating Putin from a junior partner to Xi's peer.

From a Chinese perspective, helping Trump to broker a deal between Russia and Ukraine offers few incentives, except potentially toning down the US trade and tariffs war against it. Draining the west's resources in defending Ukraine keeps it away from the Indo-Pacific region in which most of the competition between China and the US will play out.

Xi has no interest in seeing Putin being strategically defeated in Ukraine, but keeping Russia bogged down in its war against Ukraine will ensure that the partnership between Beijing and Moscow will stay on current terms with the balance of power tilted towards China.

Keeping the war in Ukraine going, rather than helping Trump to end it, therefore is the most likely choice that Beijing will make.

# New births 'seed hope' of exiled Nicaraguan farmers

By Special Correspondent

IT'S 4:30 in the morning, and the sun is barely peeking through the distant hills that surround this lowland region of Upala, in northern Costa Rica.

A woman arranges firewood in a fire pit built with stones and pieces of corroded iron, while her husband prepares his machete to go out to the field. A little girl finishes tucking her notebooks into a backpack. A baby lets out its first cry. Life in the rural camp for Nicaraguans has begun a new day.

There are no houses here, but there are homes. Some of the family dwellings still retain a shaky air of improvisation. The ground serves as their floor, and a few pieces of plastic form a roof. One or two families share the same space. But despite all that's still lacking, there's an atmosphere of solidarity and hope. "This space under construction has been one of peace, because being an exile isn't easy, it's difficult, extremely difficult," says Tayling Orozco, 29, one of the residents.

Over 200,000 Nicaraguans have sought refuge in Costa Rica between 2018 and 2024, according to statistics from the head office of the Costa Rican Immigration Office.

Back in Nicaragua, Tayling's mother was a government employee in 2013, when she chose to become involved in the protests against Ortega's

plan for an inter-oceanic canal, which involved expropriating the small farmers' lands all along the proposed route.

"I've always been a woman who has her own convictions and defends them, and that same quality was what led me later to participate in the 2018 protests for the freedom of Nicaragua," she declares.

Tayling's level-headedness was exactly that which made her flee the regime of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo at the highest point of the dictators' so-called "Clean-up Operation," aimed at violently squelching the citizen protests.

The refugee camp in Upala was founded in March 2019. From that time on, it's been the first safe stopping place for Tayling. A group of exiled farmers, led by Francisca Ramirez - who'd been the most visible face of the rural Nicaraguans who demonstrated against Ortega and his canal project - rented these lands in order to begin again, and set to work doing what they're masters of: tending the land and growing food. Since that time, 21 children have been born here, doubling the original population.

Among the new residents are two daughters born to Tayling and her partner Maynor: Sasha, 3, and Sahory, just a few months old. "When I was a teenager and went to school on Ometepe Island, I was like a Cortes

tree in bloom; full of life, colorful, strong, beautiful. However, exile and the regime's violence dealt me deep wounds, and I feel I went from being that beautiful tree to one with dry branches and bark marked with machete blows, like a tree struck by lightning or attacked by a plague," Tayling describes. "My daughters have been my salvation; they're my new roots, and they've made me feel reborn, sprouting new greenery, leaving behind those dry and damaged parts to bloom again," she continues.

For the exiled families in this camp, the children are their main motivation. "Our children give us hope. They push us to fight to get ahead while we wait for the moment we long for, to return to Nicaragua," states Maynor. This exiled father, like the rest in the camp, starts his days before dawn. His tasks include feeding the pigs, operating the tractor in the cornfield, and milking the cows.

## The 'Nitalaguans'

The camp is a kind of island inhabited by Nicaraguans, but on Costa Rican soil. The farmers have rented these parcels of land to produce, feed themselves and have an income.

Corn, beans, yucca, and citrus are all fruits of their labor. They've also bought pigs and cows, whose numbers have tripled in just a few years. "We've received the support of



Tayling Orozco, fled to Costa Rica at 24-years-old in October 2018, after Ortega-allied paramilitaries sprayed her house with gunfire on the island of Ometepe. Living in exile, she's now the mother of two little girls.



Most of the food that goes to nourish the children of the exiled families is grown on the parcels of land that they rent collectively.

some organizations, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, but

long ago we decided to be proactive, and to do what we already know how to

produce," says Francisca Ramirez.

"We're clear that [our children] are going to grow up with some closeness to the Costa Rican traditions, their friends, the words they use differently, for example; but as their fathers and mothers, we're also instilling the love of Nicaragua, because we fled from there not because we planned to, but because we were forced out by the dictatorship. If things had been otherwise, they'd have been born in Nicaragua, and they're also Nicaraguans," affirms Tayling, a mother who still uses the Nicaraguan word lampazo for the mop that Costa Ricans call a palopiso.

Three-year-old Sasha sometimes says she's a "Nitalaguan" - her way of saying Nicaraguan - but other times she defines herself as a "Tica," (Costa Rican), her mother comments.

"To us, it's clear that they'll grow up with love for both their countries, because although we're Nicaraguans, they'll be growing up in Costa Rica, learning in their schools, sharing with the Costa Ricans. Without a doubt, we're going to teach them to love and respect Costa Rica, as the country they were born in and the place that sheltered us during the hardest times that we, their parents, faced. But they're also going to love Nicaragua, where we came from," she emphasizes. In the camp, residents share similar stories of dispossession, resistance and hope. The arrival of these 21 babies has lit a spark of optimism among the community leaders.

## The pain of distance

While it's true that things have improved, the fractures of exile continue just beneath the surface.

The family separation for those like Tayling and Maynor, who had to flee the Ortega regime's repression, is a pain that won't disappear completely, and will be passed on in some ways to the new generations. "What they're losing is having that connection with their larger family, because although I'm in exile, at least I feel supported by my family. Maybe not because my family sends me money, but I feel supported when my aunts or grandparents tell me: "Darling, I'm waiting for you. I love you, don't worry, this will pass." Or simply: "your home is here, and we're waiting for you," Tayling recounts, while her voice breaks and she can't hold back the tears.

## "Seeds of hope"

Amid the challenges, the community that has settled in this camp has begun to organize certain structures to guarantee that these children grow up surrounded by care and protection. The families have set up parcels of land for producing food, which are expanded over the years, and the community leaders are working with the Costa Rican NGOs and universities present in the zone to guarantee that the littlest ones will have access to a basic education.

Fathers and mothers like Tayling also seek to take advantage of every opportunity for their own growth. Tayling has resumed her undergraduate studies in the field of agriculture at the National Technical University. Other parents are receiving technical training in agribusiness.



By Special Correspondent

# Greenhouse innovations: Shaping future of sustainable horticulture

**H**ORTICULTURE farming, which encompasses the cultivation of a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and ornamental plants, utilizes diverse cultivation systems such as open field, soilless, organic, indoor, and protected cropping.

Increasing challenges like pests, diseases, and erratic weather—exacerbated by climate change—have made protected cropping a widely adopted practice globally.

Protected cropping includes greenhouses, glasshouses, shade houses, screen houses, and crop top structures. Among these, greenhouses stand out as one of the most intensive agricultural systems focusing on the production of high-value products in what is called greenhouse horticulture.

## Agricultural machinery

This system offers controlled environmental conditions such as temperature and light, efficient use of water and fertilizers, and advanced technologies like hydroponics and automation. This enables higher yields, consistent production, and superior quality crops.

Greenhouse horticulture has become indispensable for feeding large urban populations in the face of dwindling water and chemical resources, making it a cornerstone of sustainable modern agriculture.

## The evolution of greenhouse horticulture

According to a research article on History of Controlled Environment Horticulture: Greenhouses by Krishna Nemali published in 2022, the earliest record of producing crops using protected structures dates



Challenges like pests, diseases and erratic weather have made protected cropping a widely adopted practice globally

back to 14 to 37 century in Rome.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, structures called Orangeries were used in France to protect fruit trees from cold temperatures. These structures were tall masonry buildings with large glass windows on the southern side to allow sunlight.

Fast forward, in the 19th century, large glasshouse conservatories were built in Europe to grow exotic tropical plants collected from other countries.

These advances in structural design during the 18th and 19th centuries have had a significant impact on greenhouse designs developed during the 20th century and today.

Greenhouses are structures covered with transparent materials, designed to create controlled envi-

ronments for year-round or seasonal crop production.

## Greenhouse designs

According to Nemali, a common greenhouse design features medium-to-tall, multispan, arch or gothic arch structures with gutter-connected polyethylene covers.

Key elements include permanent roof ventilation with insect nets, side ventilation on all four sides, and thermal or shade screens to reduce temperature and reflect sunlight.

These structures protect crops from wind and rain, making them ideal for floriculture and increasingly for crops like tomatoes and bell peppers.

Greenhouse orientation and design considerations Orientation: Greenhouses above 40°N latitude

should run east-west to maximize low-angle light, while those below 40°N should run north-south for better sunlight distribution and minimal gutter shadows. Avoid overlapping shadows by spacing greenhouses appropriately, typically oriented east-west.

Wind Effects: Naturally ventilated greenhouses should align lengthwise perpendicular to prevailing summer winds. For fan-and-pad systems, airflow should follow the fan direction.

Size: Greenhouses should not exceed 50m x 50m to prevent excessive heat buildup. Evaporatively cooled greenhouses should be no longer than 60m.

Spacing: Maintain a 10-15m gap between naturally ventilated greenhouses to prevent exhaust airflow

from entering adjacent units.

Height: Maximum height is 5m for 50m x 50m greenhouses, with proportional reductions for smaller structures. Side ventilation should be 2m wide, and roof ventilation 1m wide.

## Types of greenhouses

Low-cost greenhouse: Constructed with local materials like bamboo and UV film, these greenhouses lack automated controls but use simple techniques, such as shading nets or plastic covers, to regulate temperature and humidity. They are cost-effective and suitable for cold climates, often used as rain shelters.

Medium-tech greenhouse: Built with galvanized iron pipes, these structures feature manual or semi-automatic con-

trols, including exhaust fans, evaporative cooling pads, and misting systems. While more advanced than low-cost models, maintaining a uniform environment can be challenging. They are suitable for dry and composite climates.

Hi-tech greenhouse: Fully automated systems control all environmental parameters, ensuring optimal conditions with minimal human intervention. These greenhouses address the challenges of medium-tech models and offer precise environmental regulation.

## Greenhouse glazing materials and their evolution

The choice of glazing material significantly impacts a greenhouse's environment, influencing light transmission, air

temperature, and humidity. Initially, glass was the primary material, valued for its strength and light transmission.

Advances in the 20th century introduced float and prismatic glass, with tempered glass becoming popular for its durability and safety. Single-pane glass is common today, though double-pane options offer better insulation.

The discovery of polyethylene in 1933 revolutionized greenhouse design, offering a lightweight, affordable alternative to glass. Introduced in the 1950s, polyethylene films expanded greenhouse use globally, particularly in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Additives like UV stabilizers and IR blockers have improved its durability and efficiency, though it remains less durable

than rigid materials.

Rigid plastics like polycarbonate and acrylic, developed in the 1990s, provide a middle ground between glass and plastic films. These materials offer better light distribution, reduced thermal transmission, and increased durability while blocking harmful UV rays. Polycarbonate advancements in the 1970s further enhanced its clarity, making it a popular modern choice for greenhouse glazing.

## Future trends in greenhouse technology

Greenhouses are expected to play a vital role in addressing global food supply challenges, especially as climate change drives a shift toward controlled environment agriculture. Rising temperatures may favor greenhouse farming in temperate regions, while efficient cooling technologies are likely to emerge for warmer areas.

Automation will become more advanced, with IoT-powered systems capable of monitoring plant growth, analyzing biochemistry, and adjusting environmental factors to optimize yield and quality without human intervention.

Sustainability will be a focus, with reduced reliance on fossil fuels, increased use of renewable energy, and technologies to enhance water-use efficiency as freshwater resources decline.

In response to consumer demand for safer food, greenhouses will likely adopt pesticide-free methods such as ultraviolet sterilization to manage pests and diseases.

By Liz Stephens and Luis Artur

**CYCLONE** Chido was an "intense tropical cyclone", equivalent to a category 4 hurricane in the Atlantic. It made landfall in Mayotte, a small island lying to the northwest of Madagascar on December 14, generating wind gusts approaching 155mph (250km/hr). Later on, it hit Mozambique, East Africa with the same ferocity.

This storm skirted north of Madagascar and affected the Comoros archipelago before making landfall in Mozambique. It is well within the range of what is expected for this part of the Indian Ocean. But this region has experienced an increase in the most intense tropical cyclones in recent years. This, alongside its occurrence so early in the season, can be linked to increases in ocean temperatures as a result of climate change.

News of the effects of tropical cyclone Chido in Mayotte, Mozambique and Malawi continues to emerge. Current estimates suggest 70% of Mayotte's population have been affected, with over 50,000 homes in Mozambique partially or completely destroyed.

Ongoing conflict in Mozambique and undocumented migration to Mayotte will have played a key role in the number of deaths and the infrastructure damage.



Damaged houses in Mamoudzou, in the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte on December 16 2024 after being battered by the islands' worst cyclone in nearly a century

## Climate, migration, conflict mix to create 'deadly' intense tropical storms like Chido

Assessing how these cyclones characteristics are changing across southern Africa is part of the research we are involved in. Our team also studies how to build resilience to cyclones where conflict, displacement and migration magnify their effects.

## A human-made disaster?

The risk that tropical

cyclones pose to human life is exacerbated by socioeconomic issues. Migrants on Mayotte, many of whom made perilous journeys to escape conflict in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, now make up more than half of the island's population.

Precarious housing and the undocumented status

of many residents reportedly made the disaster more deadly, as people feared evacuation would lead them to the police. On islands with poor infrastructure such as Mayotte, there is often simply nowhere safe to go. It takes many days for the power network and drinking water supply to be restored.

The situation is particu-

larly complex in Mozambique. The ongoing conflict and terrorist violence, coupled with cyclones, including Kenneth in 2019, has caused repeated evacuations and worsening living conditions. Cabo Delgado and Nampula in the far north of Mozambique, the provinces most affected by both Chido and the

conflict, rank among the poorest and most densely populated in the country due to limited education, scarce livelihood options and an influx of people displaced by violence.

As of June 2024, more than half a million people remained without permanent homes in the region, many living in displacement camps. That number is likely to rise significant-

ly after Chido. Compounding the crisis, Chido's landfall so early in the cyclone season meant that the usual technical and financial preparations were not yet fully ramped up, with low stock levels delaying the timely delivery of aid. Unrest following elections in November hampered preparations further, cutting the flow of resources and personnel needed for anticipatory action and early response.

## Tropical cyclones in a warmer world

Warmer sea surface temperatures not only provide more fuel for stronger storms, but may also expand the regions at risk of tropical cyclones.

The Indian Ocean is warming faster than the global average, and is experiencing a staggering increase in the proportion of storms reaching the intensity of Chido.

Climate simulations predict that storms will continue getting stronger as we further warm our world, and could even lead to an unprecedented landfall as far south as the Mozambican capital, Maputo.

Scientists carry out attribution studies to determine how climate change contributed to specific events. Scientists undertaking rapid attribution studies of Chido have found that the ocean surface temperatures along the path of the storm were 1.1°C warmer than they

would have been without climate change. So, temperatures this warm were made more than 50 times more likely by climate change. Another study focusing on Chido itself concluded that the cyclone's winds were 5% faster due to global heating caused by burning fossil fuels, enough to bump it from a category 3 to a category 4 storm.

Intense winds are not the only hazard. Scientists are confident that tropical cyclones will dump more rain as a result of climate change. A trend towards slower-moving storms has been observed, causing more of that rain to accumulate in a single location, resulting in floods.

Cyclone Freddy delivered a year's worth of rain to southern Malawi in just four days in March 2023. Storm surges, exacerbated by sea level rise, also raise the scale of flooding, as in the devastating Cyclone Idai in March 2019. An increase in the number of storms that rapidly intensify, as Chido did before landfall in Mayotte has also been linked to climate change, which makes it harder to provide early warnings.

To improve resilience to future cyclones, conflict, migration and social dynamics must be considered alongside climate change, without this, displaced and migrant communities will continue to be the most affected by the risks that climate change poses.



By Prosper Heri Ngorora

# Fears in DRC as mystery disease kills dozens, mainly children

JUST four months after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency over mpox – which has overwhelmed health systems in Democratic Republic of the Congo this year – a new mystery flu-like illness that's killed dozens of people has raised fears among many Congolese.

Forty-year-old Denise Kabeya lives in the Panzi area in DRC's western Kwango province – where health authorities say most cases of the unknown disease have emerged since October.

That month, Kabeya's 12-year-old daughter Diane fell ill.

"My beloved little one had headaches, runny nose, no appetite and was physically weak," Kabeya said over a telephone interview. "I thought it was malaria and typhoid fever," she shared, explaining that those diseases are endemic in the region.

When Diane developed a blocked nose, Kabeya hoped the worst was over and that she would make a speedy recovery, as was usually the case when she developed such symptoms. But the child complained about more aches and pains, and eventually passed away from her illness in late October.

Between October 24 and December 11, there were 514 cases of the undiagnosed disease reported in eight of the 30 health areas in Panzi health zone, according to figures from the local health authorities.

Earlier this week, the WHO, which has sent experts to the region to investigate the cause of the outbreak and help with the response, said more than 30 people had died in hospitals from the disease.

There were another 44 deaths recorded in remote communities in Panzi, Congolese Minister of Health Roger Kamba said last week.

Kamba said the outbreak was first reported in October, with the alert level raised to



A girl suffering from mpox walks past a treatment centre in DRC in August 2024. The country has been struggling with multiple health crises.

high at the end of November.

Most of the cases and deaths are in children under 14, national health authorities said, with children under five presenting with the majority of cases.

Because so little is known about this mystery disease, it is difficult to know why children are so vulnerable, experts said. WHO branch in the DRC said that investigations are still continuing to understand the reasons.

## 'Rural and remote'

Speaking at a media conference last week, Kamba said that the disease is flu-like.

"Respiratory distress was noted in some children and some other people who died," Kamba said, noting that some patients were anaemic, which was the cause of some of the deaths

linked to the disease.

Cases of severe malnutrition have aggravated the disease in some children, according to local sources in Panzi, information also corroborated by the national Ministry of Health.

"Symptoms are flu-like. Patients suffer from high fever, headaches, coughing, runny nose and aches and pains," Serges Zenga, an attending physician in the Kenge health zone, near Panzi, said.

This week, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said laboratory samples from infected people were being collected and tested. So far, most of the samples had tested positive for malaria, he said, but added that it was possible more than one disease was involved.

Meanwhile, the remote-

ness of the epicentre of the outbreak, as well as a lack of infrastructure, was jeopardising the fight against the disease.

Teams of laboratory technicians, epidemiologists from the Health Ministry and some of the Congolese government's partners, including the WHO, are already deployed in the field, with a view to identifying the disease and reinforcing efforts to combat it.

But located some 700km (435 miles) away from DRC's capital, Kinshasa, the Panzi health zone is "rural and remote" and difficult to access, the WHO said – a feat made tougher by poor road conditions.

"We sent a team into the field. The team took two days to reach the area because the road is very bad in the rainy season," Kamba

said.

Additionally, rural Panzi lacks testing capacity, meaning that samples have to be taken to laboratories in Kikwit, more than 500km (310 miles) away.

The WHO said limited diagnostics in the region have delayed the identification of the underlying cause of the outbreak. However it added that its teams were helping with patient treatment, risk communication and engagement with the community as the health crisis continued.

Meanwhile, on the ground, medics say there are huge difficulties in caring for patients who are bedridden at Panzi hospital.

"We don't have resuscitation kits such as oxygen condensers, we don't have treatment centres and isolation facilities, and we don't even have electricity; [there

is] scarcity of communication tools and internet," Dr Rufin Mukuwa, a doctor at the Panzi general referral hospital said.

## Fears and calls for vigilance

Speaking by phone from Kenge, the capital of Kwango province, some residents said they feared the outbreak spreading from remote Panzi into their communities.

"We're worried that the provincial authorities haven't taken preventive measures to prevent this disease from spreading to other areas," resident Emile Yimbu complained.

He called for the reinforcement of epidemiological surveillance measures to contain the disease within a well-defined zone, and lessen its consequences.

Prosper Kiswemba, a local councillor in Kenge, is also worried about how end-of-year travel plans in the region may affect the potential spread of the disease.

Kiswemba said hygienic measures such as temperature sampling and the installation of hand-washing stations along arterial roads leading to Panzi needed to be reinforced, lest the disease spread further.

Meanwhile, one local health expert who preferred anonymity, said they feared the disease may be zoonotic in origin.

Even though national and global health bodies have not announced any animal-related links, the expert said: "Most of the people I've interviewed personally admit to having been in contact with certain wild animals a few days before falling ill."

To be safe, he said people should be cautioned about reducing contact with wild animals.

## Another health crisis

As the mystery disease spreads, patients in Panzi health zone are also suffering from a number of other diseases, including typhoid fever and measles, doctors said.

The timing of this new outbreak has some local health facilities overwhelmed, a local medical source said.

Mukuwa at Panzi general hospital, however, sees the outbreak as a worrying but surmountable challenge.

"We are receiving numerous cases, varying between 15 and 20 patients a day," he said.

He sees some symptoms of the disease – like respiratory issues – as being similar to those of COVID-19, and said patients at the hospital are being treated according to the signs and symptoms they present with.

"For example, we use azithromycin, amoxicillin or spiramycin for respiratory complications. If patients come in with headaches, we use paracetamol to relieve them," he explained.

# Top African academics, policymakers reimagine continent's justice systems

By Kingsley Ighobor

PROFESSOR Nggwa Thiong'o, one of Africa's celebrated novelists, created a stirring moment at a conference of African academics and policymakers at the United Nations headquarters on 3 December by delivering his keynote address in Kikuyu, his native language from Kenya.

In his remarks, the Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine, who stopped writing in English years ago, rhetorically asked the audience: "Have you ever heard an African leader address the UN in an African language?"

Drawing a direct connection between Africa's colonial-era constitutions and treaties, all written in English, and the continued marginalization of African masses in legal systems, Prof. Thiong'o declared: "Justice cannot be justice if conducted in a language people do not understand."

The 2nd Annual Academic Conference on Africa, organized by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and the UN Academic Impact under

the theme "Power, Justice, and the People: Human Rights and the Rule of Law for Africa's Transformation," brought leading minds to discuss Africa-led solutions to some of Africa's challenges.

Participants included Ghana's Chief Justice Gertrude Sackey Torkornoo, Kenya's Appeal Court Justice Joel Mwaura Ngugi, former Ugandan MP Ronald Reagan Okumu, Paramount Chief Mary Larteh of Jorquelleh of Liberia, and a host of eminent African academics.

The organizers intended for attendees to take a comprehensive look at human rights in Africa by exploring the interplay between political, socio-economic, and cultural rights. They also wanted an examination of the evolution of the rule of law on the continent, focusing on how history, culture and socio-political factors have shaped African legal systems. A session was earmarked to address ways to strengthen collaboration between African academics and policymakers.

The three-day discussions lived up to their billing, addressing a range of topics including weak institutions, the digital

divide, systemic inequalities, human rights, and the rule of law, among others.

## A continent of agency

Christina Duarte, Under-Secretary-General and UN Special Adviser on Africa, set the tone in her opening remarks: "Africa is not a prisoner of its past. It's a continent of resilience, agency and diverse systems of governance." She urged attendees to reimagine justice through an African lens, advocating for the integration of customary and formal justice systems.

The recurring theme of "African solutions to African challenges" resonated strongly, though participants equally debated the extent to which Africa's colonial past could be blamed for its present woes versus the necessity of focusing on the future.

Africa "should stop begging, start blaming, and start moving forward," stressed Prof. Chidi Odinkalu of Tufts University, drawing cheers from the audience.

Justice Joel Mwaura Ngugi of Kenya's Court of Appeal criticized the "epistemic hierarchies brought to Africa from the Global North." Human



The Academic Africa 2024 conference ended on a high note with academics, policymakers, development practitioners, traditional leaders and participants proposing practical solutions to address inequality and promote a better future while considering Africa's past and present reality.

rights, for example, must go beyond cataloging violations to championing dignity and social justice, he maintained.

## Duality of justice systems

The duality of Africa's justice systems—formal courts and customary traditions—was a central topic of discussion.

Chief Justice Torkornoo pointed out that the strength of Ghana's customary law has been instrumental in preventing civil war in the country, as these courts have provided crucial leadership during crisis times.

Adding a grassroots perspective, Paramount Chief Mary Larteh of Jorquelleh, Liberia, reinforced that

the pre-colonial justice systems under the "palava hut" as rooted in community and tradition, and resolved conflicts quickly and fairly. "Our culture is [now] devalued, but it brought peace faster than the imposed systems," she lamented.

Justice Ngugi highlighted that in Kenya, 64 percent of disputes are resolved through alternative systems, 17 percent go to court, and 19 percent remain unresolved due to lack of access. With the courts already overburdened, to expand access he emphasized that "We must bring the 19 percent into alternative systems."

Prof. Zeleza outlined challenges to Africa's judicial systems, including

weak institutions, limited independence, poor oversight, resource constraints, corruption, and limited accessibility. He noted that bodies like the African Union, International Criminal Court, and International Court of Justice lack enforcement power and rely on national governments.

Ms. Duarte underscored the importance of bridging the gap between scholars and policymakers. "Policy cannot thrive without the insight of research, and research must influence the corridors of power," she said.

Ashraf Swelam, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for African Organizations and Communities, pointed to the disconnect

between academia and governance. Academics often prefer perfect solutions while policymakers contend with bureaucracy and resource constraints. That gap can be bridged, he counseled, urging academics to proffer actionable ideas at local levels.

## Power of digital technology

Hailed as a transformative force, participants acknowledged technology as a double-edged sword. It has the potential to democratize access to justice and at the same time exacerbate inequalities if deployed inequitably. They also raised privacy concerns.

Still, according to Mr.

Swelam, digital technology places young people in a much stronger position to "understand the world we are about to face and prepare for it."

The participants also addressed Africa's limited representation in global scholarship, despite its rich intellectual traditions. "Africa accounts for just 3.4 percent of global research output," way below Asia's 40%, noted Prof. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza of Howard University.

There was broad consensus on the importance of capturing and showcasing Africa's knowledge production, taking advantage of advancements in technology.

## Not just another conference

As the final session ended, Ms. Duarte reminded participants that this was "not just another conference." It was a starting point for actionable change. She challenged political leaders, scholars and citizens to think boldly and collaboratively.

"Africa's future must be defined by its people, not external narratives," she emphasized, pointing to Africa's clout in self-financing its development by up to 75 percent, which is 20 times more than official development assistance and 60 times more than foreign direct investment. "Why do we keep looking outside for solutions?" she asked. "We need to challenge our mindset and knowledge."





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## Producer inflation dips 26.9 per cent

ACCRA

The Producer Price Inflation (PPI) dropped significantly from 33.0 per cent in October to 26.9 per cent in November, this year.

This rate indicates that between November 2023 and November 2024 (year-on-year), the PPI increased by 26.9 per cent, representing a 6.1 percentage point decrease in producer inflation relative to the rate.

The month-on-month change in the PPI between October 2024 and November 2024 was -1.9 per cent, according to a release issued in Accra yesterday. The Producer Price Index (PPI) measures the average change over time in the prices received by domestic producers to produce their goods and services.

The PPI for Ghana reports the producer price indices with an index reference period of March 2020-February 2021.

The year-on-year service producer price inflation stood at 12.5 per cent in the period under review.

The monthly change rate was 0.3 per cent. The accommodation and food service sub-sector recorded the highest year-on-year producer price inflation rate of 32.5 per cent, followed by the transport and storage sub-sector with 31.7 per cent.

The information and communication sub-sector recorded the lowest year-on-year producer inflation rate of 8.1 per cent.

The accommodation and food service sub-sector recorded the highest month-on-month inflation rate of 3.5 per cent, followed by the transport and storage sub-sector with 0.8 per cent. The information and communication sub-sectors recorded the lowest month-on-month inflation rate (0.2 per cent) in November 2024.

The service producer price inflation in the Transport and Storage sub-sector decreased by 0.1 percentage points from 32.7 per cent in October 2024 to 31.7 per cent in November 2024.

The Accommodation and Food Services sub-sector rate increased by 2.9 percentage points from 29.6 per cent in October 2024 to 32.5 per cent in November 2024.

The Information and Commu-

nication sub-sector, on the other hand, recorded an inflation rate of 8.1 per cent for November 2024.

The Industrial Producer Price inflation in the Mining and Quarrying sub-sector decreased in November 2024 to 41.9 per cent by 12.4 percentage points compared to the October 2024 rate of 54.3 per cent.

The Manufacturing sub-sector decreased by 3.4 percentage points to 19.3 per cent in November 2024.

The Electricity and Gas sub-sector recorded a 10.2 per cent inflation rate for November 2024, a decrease of 0.4 percentage points over the October rate of (10.6 per cent). The Water Supply, Sewerage, and Waste Management sub-sector recorded an inflation rate of 5.0 per cent.

The year-on-year producer inflation for the industry sector, less construction was 41.3 per cent in November 2024. The monthly change rate was -2.0 per cent.

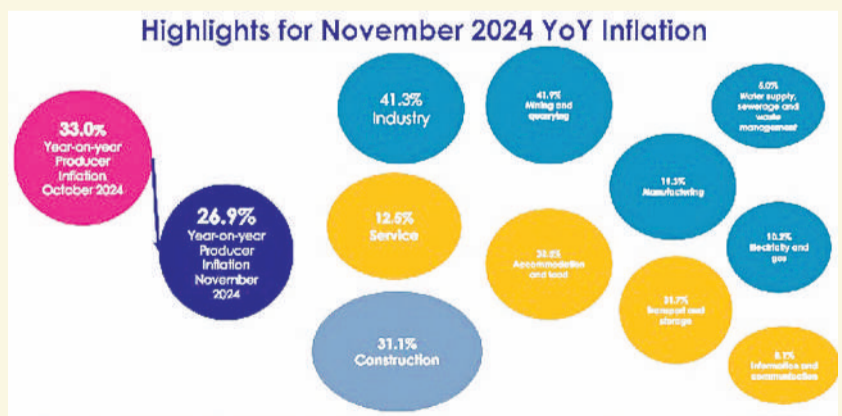
The Mining and Quarrying sub-sector recorded the highest year-on-year producer price inflation rate of 41.9 per cent, followed by the Manufacturing sub-sector with 19.3 per cent.

The Water Supply, Sewerage, and Waste Management sub-sector recorded the lowest year-on-year producer inflation rate of 5.0 per cent.

The Manufacturing sub-sector recorded the highest month-on-month inflation rate of 2.5 per cent, followed by the Electricity and Gas sub-sector with -0.01 per cent.

The Mining and Quarrying sub-sector recorded the lowest inflation rate of -6.4 per cent for the month-on-month in November 2024. Regarding the construction sector, the year-on-year producer inflation for construction was 31.1 per cent in November 2024 representing a monthly change rate of 0.1 per cent.

The civil engineering sub-sector recorded the highest year-on-year producer price inflation rate of 36.8 per cent, followed by the construction of buildings sub-sector with 19.6 per cent. The specialised construction sub-sector recorded the lowest year-on-year producer inflation rate of 18.3 per cent.



## Govt urged to support groups involved in forest conservation



Handeni district commissioner Albert Msando, waters a seedling after planting.

By Beatrice Philemon

**T**HE Handeni District Commissioner in Tanga Region has urged Handeni District staff to introduce a new compressive programme to support groups involved in environmental conservation and community-based forest management, enabling local communities to benefit from the forest resources available in their localities.

Albert Msando, Handeni District Commissioner made this call recently when speaking to Journalists and staff from the Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA) and the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) staff who visited the village to assess the impact of the Integrated Forest Biomass Energy Solutions for Tanzania (IFBEST) project in Handeni District.

He says, instead of issuing loans to unproductive sectors, allocate funds to forest conservation, which is a good source of income.

Additionally, as district staff, "You should stop making political decisions when issuing loans for projects, as the funds set aside by the councils are the people's money, collected through taxes," he says

Also, the department responsible for environmental issues should receive funding for conservation activities, enabling them to operate more

effectively and prevent deforestation and cattle grazing within the forest reserves.

He thanked the European Union, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) and the Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA) for implementing the IFBEST project in Handeni district that has helped villagers to designate village land forest reserves for community-based forest management, sustainable charcoal harvesting and establish land use plan at Genda Genda village.

The district will continue to conserve and protect the forest resources available within the district, enabling the community to benefit and generate profit.

"In Handeni District, we have many areas suitable for carbon trading, and we will make sure that all these areas are well protected," he says

Msando issued a directive to the Handeni District staff to manage the Gendagenda village land forest reserve and prevent deforestation.

Additionally, "as a district, we have been able to visit in Tanganyika District in Katavi Region to witness and learn how they conserve forests and engage in carbon trading business which is good source of income

Simon Lugazo, the IFBEST's project manager added that the European Union has injected a total of 5.4bn/- through the ministry of finance to sup-

port the implementation of the IFBEST project.

Currently the project is being implemented by Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA) and Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) in eight villages in Handeni, Pangani and Kilindi District councils.

He named villages as Lusane, Mswaki, Nghobore, Mkalamo, Gendagenda, Mmbogo, Mapanga and Mseko.

The main goal of the project is to enhance environmental sustainability through sustainable forest management and wood-fuel production in Tanga Region. Isaya Nyange, Pastor of the Nameloki Baptist Church in Lusane Village says, the IFBEST project has brought positive results to the residents of Lusane Village in Kilindi District, Tanga Region.

"People are more knowledgeable about gender equality, they understand that all people are equal and that everyone has the right to provides their ideas and be heard, something that was not the case in the past," he says

Additionally, the training offered by MJUMITA, attending various religious conferences and globalization have helped people become aware that everyone has equal rights and all people are equal.

Apart from TFCG and MJUMITA training, he also teaches people to know God in their lives and see that all people are equal before God, therefore,

"We should not think of discriminating or failing to listen to each other," Nyange says.

"A father and mother are the ones who build a family or a household. The father has the right to listen to the mother, and the mother has the right to listen to what the father says," Pastor Nyange says

He called on IFBEST to continue providing more training on modern cattle farming to the residents of Lusane Village. He lauded TFCG, European Union and MJUMITA for introducing the IFBEST project in their localities.

Under the project, Lusane residents were trained in land use planning, forest conservation and management, environmental issues and the establishment of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in their localities.

Through the knowledge and skills gained from the IFBEST project, "We are now taking serious measures to conserve our forest reserve for the benefits of both ourselves and future generations.

Through the village land forest reserve, Lusane residents will be able to engage in sustainable timber harvesting and secure traditional medicines.

Additionally, MJUMITA and TFCG trained villagers on how to formulate by-laws for forest protection and management.

"As result, we have already formulated by-laws for forest conservation and a land use plan," he says.

## African destinations Nigerians travel to

LAGOS

Travelling to the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for Christmas or tourism is becoming less popular owing to strenuous visa processes and scarcity of foreign exchange in Nigeria.

African destinations seem to be the newly-found treasure for many Nigerians as several Africans have opened their doors to visitors by introducing visa-free entry,

seamless visa-on-arrival and e-visas processes.

According to opinions sampled by tour operators and travel agents in Nigeria, top African destinations often visited by Nigerians include: Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Mauritius, Egypt and Zanzibar.

These countries offer visas on arrival and e-visas, accepting local currencies in the home countries, thereby reducing pressure on scarce foreign exchange currency for Nigerian

tourists and holiday makers.

Susan Akporaiye, managing director and CEO, Topaz Travels and Tours and former president of the National Association of Nigeria Travel Agencies (NANTA), told BusinessDay that Nigerians are beginning to prefer African destinations because of ease of accessing visas and affordability.

Akporaiye said in terms of top rating, Rwanda continues to lead as number one

because of its visa-free policy.

"Nigerians now travel to Rwanda as if it's Abuja to Lagos," she said.

Other destinations, according to her, are Morocco, which offers visa on arrival; Mauritius, which offers paid-for visa on arrival; and Egypt, which also offers visa-on-arrival opportunities to tourists.

"Egypt, Mauritius, Seychelles and Maldives offer visas on arrival for Nigerians and lately travel agents are offering

packages into these destinations. Visas are motivations for travel and once the destinations offer great tourist attractions, and travellers can access visas, they would be sought-after," said Jumoke Lawanson, communications director, PFZ Limited and a frequent traveller.

Lawanson said many travellers are now opting for destinations with easier visa processes such as Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Morocco.





## NEW YORK

SECRET Santa, stockings and presents under the tree - gift-giving is at the heart of Christmas Day.

This year more people have been exploring underconsumption - the trend where shopping hauls and miracle must-buys are replaced with reusing beloved possessions and purchasing less.

It's taken off on TikTok, where mentions soared by almost 40,000% in the UK earlier this year.

Experts say it's resonated with younger people affected by the cost-of-living crisis and concerned about the climate as they look to make sustainable changes.

But can you mix that lifestyle with a time of year many people associate with overspending and indulgence?

Underconsumption means buying fewer unnecessary things and making the products you already own go further. It might not sound that radical, especially if you're used to stretching your weekly budget.

"It's highlighting a behaviour that's quite normal," author and creator Andrea Cheong tells BBC Newsbeat.

"But in the realm of TikTok or Instagram it feels so unnatural it's gone viral."

On platforms built around ads and glamourised lifestyles the hashtag stands out, and Andrea does believe that underconsumption is different because "it's a habit, not a trend."

"The people who are sharing what they've done in their daily lives, they've been doing this forever," she says.

"They were probably taught by their parents to do it."

At Christmas, choosing to buy and consume less can feel like a challenge in the face of big-budget marketing campaigns, the pressure to share



## TikTok's underconsumption trend meets festive excess

gifts and the perfectly placed extravagant home decor shared online.

"Companies are spending millions of pounds on ads that make you want to go out and buy that thing right now," says Darwin Alford, a retail worker living in Brighton.

Darwin, who shares sustainability tips online in her spare time, says she doesn't want presents this Christmas. She admits the "hardest step" is telling your family members.

"My nan, she's one of those who loves having all of the gifts under the tree," she says.

"It's her way of showing

love, it's her way of making me feel special."

Darwin says it pays to be straight-up with loved ones and it helps to suggest alternative ideas for gifts, such as experiences, rather than products.

Influencer Charlie Gill, from Manchester, has been sharing sustainability tips on social media for six years now and says her content has taken off since the underconsumption trend began.

She's turned her focus on to Christmas, suggesting ways that decorations, gift wrap and even Christmas dinners can be stripped back.

"There are so many small steps anybody can do," she says.

"Considering how much food you're purchasing, don't buy things in excess, make sure you're actually eating your leftovers."

Charlie makes her own decorations, and this year she's created a Christmas tree out of a magazine, as well as "stars out of toilet rolls, all that kind of thing".

Some people aren't fans of the homemade aesthetic and Charlie admits she got some hate online over a TikTok of her festive decorations last year, but says it doesn't put her off.

"I don't think there's any-

thing wrong with people celebrating Christmas in a different way," she says.

"There are different ways of gifting and creating the kind of Christmas you want whilst also underconsuming and not creating excess waste."

Underconsumption might be a new hashtag, but it's not a new idea.

"It's not a new concern but it is an enduring phenomenon that's been labelled in different ways in different times," says Prof Caroline Moraes, of the University of Birmingham.

One example is the voluntary simplicity movement in the 19th Century,

she says, which advocated for an anti-consumerist lifestyle.

Prof Caroline, a marketing and consumer expert specialising in sustainable consumption, says the renewed interest in 2024 can tell us about modern-day worries.

She says it points to a greater concern over the environment and the cost-of-living crisis but also a greater awareness of brand ethics and where the things we buy come from.

Earlier this year, fast fashion giant Shein said it found two cases of child labour in its supply chain, some luxury per-

fumes have also been linked to child labour and concerns about the fashion industry's environmental credentials are widely reported.

"I think all of us are beginning to realise the part we need to play in terms of tackling the sustainability challenges and the climate crisis we're facing," says Prof Caroline.

Author Andrea thinks the sudden rise in interest also shows a fatigue with consumer culture.

"I think people like myself are so excited about underconsumption because we share the same mission, which is 'let's just slow down'," she says.

"But really it's rooted in a lack of control over the cost of living."

Last week, figures showed prices were rising at the fastest rate since March.

While the cost of turkey and sprouts has driven down the cost of a Christmas dinner this year, what you pay for potatoes, carrots and parsnips has shot up.

"When life feels chaotic and overwhelming, you're always going to have this human retreat to something slower," says Andrea.

Trends come and go but the people Newsbeat spoke to hope that underconsumption might spark meaningful changes in our shopping habits all year around.

"We are conditioned to believe we need to be consuming more because this is the time of year to do so," says Prof Caroline.

"Trying to reduce consumption goes against the norms of consumer culture."

"So I think it's a really good thing these influencers are out there because they're questioning excessive modes of consuming, they're questioning some of these lifestyles that have appeared alongside social media and trying to bring us back to a normal way of consuming."



US President - elect Donald Trump

## Trump threatens to regain control of Panama Canal

## WASHINGTON

President-elect Donald Trump has demanded Panama reduce fees on the Panama Canal or return it to US control, accusing the central American country of charging "exorbitant prices" to American shipping and naval vessels.

"The fees being charged by Panama are ridiculous, highly unfair," he told a crowd of supporters in Arizona on Sunday.

"This complete rip-off of our country will immediately stop," he said, referring to when he takes office next month.

His remarks prompted a quick rebuke from Panama's president, who said "every square metre" of the canal and surrounding area belong to his

country.

President José Raúl Mulino added that Panama's sovereignty and independence were non-negotiable.

Trump made the comments to supporters of Turning Point USA, a conservative activist group that provided significant support to his 2024 election campaign.

It was a rare example of a US leader saying he could push a country to hand over territory - although he did not explain how he would do so - and a sign of how American foreign policy and diplomacy may shift once he enters the White House following his inauguration on 20 January.

Trump's comments followed a similar post a day earlier in

which he said the Panama Canal was a "vital national asset" for the US.

If shipping rates are not lowered, Trump said on Sunday, "we will demand that the Panama Canal be returned to us, in full, quickly and without question".

The 51-mile (82km) Panama Canal cuts across the central American nation and is the main link between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

It was built in the early 1900s and the US maintained control over the canal zone until 1977, when treaties gradually ceded the land back to Panama. After a period of joint control, Panama took sole control in 1999.

Up to 14,000 ships cross the canal per year, including con-

tainer ships carrying cars, natural gas and other goods, and military vessels.

As well as Panama, the president-elect also took aim at Canada and Mexico over what he called unfair trade practices. He accused them of allowing drugs and immigrants into the US, although he called Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum a "wonderful woman".

Trump made his remarks in front of thousands at Turning Point's annual conference, one of the country's largest gatherings of conservative activists.

Turning Point poured huge resources into get-out-the-vote efforts in swing states designed to bolster Trump and other Republicans during the election campaign.

It was his first speech since a deal passed Congress this week to keep the US government open, after several provisions were removed including one that would have increased the country's debt ceiling.

Trump had supported raising the debt ceiling, which restricts the amount of money the US government can borrow.

But his speech on Sunday avoided that issue entirely, instead recapping his election victory and hitting on themes - including immigration, crime and foreign trade - that were mainstays of his campaign.

He did, however, mention Elon Musk.

"You know, they're on a new kick," he said. "All the different hoaxes. The new one is that President Trump has ceded the presidency to Elon Musk."

"No, no, that's not happening," he said. "He's not gonna be president."

Several speakers here at the conference were critical of government spending and of politicians in both parties - however the divisions inside the Republican Party which have played out in Congress in recent days were mostly muted.

## Rubber imports up by 106 per cent as production stalls

## LAGOS

Shrinking local rubber production has forced imports to jump by 106 percent in 10 years.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows that Nigeria imported N631.1 billion worth of rubber in 2013. But this has jumped by N1.3 trillion in 2023, representing a 106 percent surge in the period.

Nigeria's naira has slumped 90 percent over the 10-year period, indicating that this is not entirely due to the nation's foreign exchange crunch.

Experts say the predominance of low-yielding aging trees and lack of investments in the subsector have reduced rubber production and led to the need for importation.

Igbinosun Idowu, national president of the National Rubber Producers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (NARPPMAN), said the country urgently needs to resuscitate old trees to boost production.

"Most plantations, particularly smallholdings, were established more than 30 years ago and have passed their economic thresholds. Re-planting some of these farms has been difficult because of poor management and funding," he said.

According to Idowu, the federal government should partner with other funding bodies to fund the development of rubber in the country.

"The Central Bank of Nigeria, the Bank of Agriculture and other financial institutions must fund the development of rubber in Nigeria. This is the only way to go if Nigerian rubber must find a comfortable position in the world," Idowu stressed.

Data show that in 2013, rubber imports contributed 9 percent to total imports of N7 trillion. It contributed only 2.4 percent to exports of N14.2 trillion.

Similarly, in 2023, the commodity contributed 3.62 percent to total imports of N35.9 trillion and a meagre 0.15 percent to N35.9 trillion exports value.

While industry experts say the surge is mainly a result of the naira devaluation and not an indication of volume, Nigeria still imports a huge proportion of its rubber needs through an informal route.

An analysis of the GDP nine months report for 2024 shows that crop production totalled N35.2 trillion. However, there is no way to ascertain rubber's contribution to the subsector.

Going by the latest data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAOStat), between 2020 and 2022 the country's rubber production hovered around 149,000 metric tons, creating an enormous gap for importation.

Idowu said Nigeria cannot increase production without substantial governmental intervention through the implementation of working policies and accessibility of land for cultivation. "The land tenure system in the country has made land acquisition or lease for agro purposes difficult," he said.



# Private sector gaining strong legal support

JINZHOU

CHINESE lawmakers are deliberating a draft of the country's first law specifically focusing on the private sector's development and protection, aiming to bolster the private economy through legal norms amid strategic reforms to optimize the business environment.

The draft, which comprises nine chapters and 78 articles, covers eight main aspects, including fair competition, improving the investment and financing environment, and scientific and technological innovation. It was submitted to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, for deliberation on Saturday.

Upon approval, the draft, which elevates crucial measures for promoting private sector growth with legal norms, will be conducive to creating a law-based environment that is favorable for economic growth, including the growth of the private sector, said He Rong, minister of justice.

The official drafting process began in February, when the Ministry of Justice,



A worker is seen at a workshop of a refrigeration equipment company in Jinzhou city, North China's Hebei province.

the National Development and Reform Commission and the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee jointly organized a legislative seminar on the formulation of the law, gathering opinions and suggestions from representatives of private enterprises and experts.

The issuance of the private economy promotion law was also mentioned as a key task for 2025 during

the Central Economic Work Conference held earlier this month.

Bi Jiyao, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said: "It is important to improve the business environment and offer more opportunities for entrepreneurs in the private sector to boost their confidence. This, in turn, will play a proactive role in stabilizing economic growth and ensuring

stable employment."

China has consistently been refining its legal frameworks to boost private economic development since the start of the year, with a focus on attracting investment, promoting equitable market access, and strengthening financial support across various regions and departments. Officials and experts said that these policy adjustments have started to yield tangi-

ble results, bolstering the resilience of China's private enterprises and fostering a noticeable trend of market recovery.

Data from the State Administration for Market Regulation shows that as of the end of September, the total number of registered private enterprises nationwide surpassed 55 million, accounting for 92.3 percent of all enterprises. In the first three quarters of this

year, 6.19 million private enterprises were newly registered across the country, according to the administration.

Lin Song, dean of the Business School at the Central University of Finance and Economics, said the increasing numbers of newly registered private enterprises, patents, and research and development expenditures serve as evidence of the overall favorable business environment for private enterprises.

"Still, we need to improve a high-quality fair competition system, transform the regulatory approach to the private economy sector, integrate the private economy into the overall regional development ecosystem, further stimulate private investment vitality, and promote the sustainable development of the private economy," Lin said.

The draft law emphasizes the implementation of a nationwide unified market access negative list system, saying that aside from areas on the negative list, various economic organizations, including private entities, will have equal access in accordance with the law.

It also noted that bidding and government procure-

ment must not restrict or exclude private entities.

Meanwhile, as the ongoing technological revolution and industrial transformation are spurring a wave of emerging technologies, industries and business models, and creating fresh demand that offers new growth opportunities for the private economy, the draft law supports the active participation of private economic entities in national scientific and technological projects. It also supports empowering capable private entities to spearhead major technological advancements.

The draft also advocates including private economic entities in major national scientific research infrastructure and promoting collaboration across industry, academia and research institutes, while strengthening the protection of their intellectual property rights.

"China has broadened market access for the infrastructure sector, allowing private companies to participate equally, which effectively expands the scope of investment for many private companies," said Bi, from the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research.

## KSh stable against US dollar lifted by diaspora remittances

NAIROBI

The Kenya shilling remains stable against the U.S. dollar, supported by a 19.2 percent rise in diaspora remittances to \$423.2 million in November 2024, according to Central Bank of Kenya data.

These inflows have strengthened the current account and foreign exchange market, ensuring more financial stability. With foreign exchange reserves at \$9 billion, covering 4.6 months of imports and meeting statutory requirements, confidence in the market remains strong and may attract foreign investment.

On Friday Kenya's shilling gained slight ground against the dollar amid slow activity. Commercial banks quoted the shilling at 128.50/129.50

per dollar, compared with Thursday's close of 129.00/130.00, according to Reuters.

Today, the Kenya's shilling was stable against the US dollar on Monday, data from the London Stock Exchange Group showed. At 0722 GMT commercial banks quoted the shilling at 128.85/129.85 per dollar, compared with Friday's closing rate of 129.00/129.50.

According to the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), diaspora remittances increased to \$423.2 million (KSh 54.7 billion at the current exchange rate) in November, a jump of 19.2% compared to a similar period in 2023.

"Remittance inflows in November 2024 totalled USD 423.2 million (KSh54.7 billion) compared to USD 355.0

million (Ksh45.9 billion) in November 2023, an increase of 19.2%. The cumulative inflows for the 12 months to November 2024 increased by 16.7% to USD 4.872 billion compared to USD 4.175 billion in a similar period in 2023," the regulator revealed.

CBK explained that remittance inflows continue to support the current account and the foreign exchange market. The US remains Kenya's largest source of remittances, accounting for 53.4% in November 2024. "The usable foreign exchange reserves remained adequate at USD 9.010 billion (KSh 1.2 trillion) (4.6 months of import cover) as of December 19. This meets the CBK's statutory requirement to endeavour to maintain at least 4 months of import cover," said CBK.

## Spending 30 percent on over-bloated bureaucracy

LAGOS

FORMER Vice President Atiku Abubakar has called on President Bola Tinubu administration to review the size of the civil service, describing the 30 percent allocated to recurrent expenditure in the 2025 budget, as clear lack of fiscal discipline.

Abubakar in his reaction to the 2025 Appropriation Bill presented to the National Assembly last Wednesday, said that the 2025 budget's capacity to foster sustainable economic growth and tackle Nigeria's deep-rooted challenges is questionable, given key indicators.

He described the budget as unsustainable, as "Government's recurrent expenditure remains disproportionately high, with over N14 trillion (30% of the budget) allocated to operating an oversized bureaucracy and supporting inefficient public enterprises."

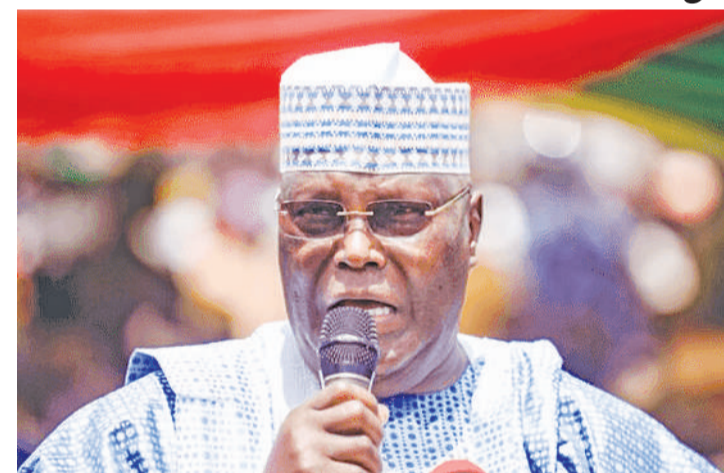
He therefore, advised President Tinubu to enhance the budget's credibility by prioritising the reduction of inefficiencies in government operations, tackle contract inflation, and focus on long-term fiscal sustainability rather than perpetuating unsustainable borrowing and recurrent spending patterns.

"A shift towards a more disciplined and growth-oriented fiscal policy is essential for the nation's economic recovery," he said.

The former Vice President also noted that the budget did not provide for "concrete steps to curb wastage and enhance the efficiency of public spending exacerbates the fiscal challenges, leaving limited resources for development."

He also expressed concerns over the poor allocation of resources to fund capital components, as he noted that "after accounting for debt servicing and recurrent expenditure, the remaining allocation for capital spending, ranging from 25% to 34% of the total budget, is insufficient to address Nigeria's infrastructure deficit and stimulate growth."

"This equates to an average capital allocation of approxi-



mately N80,000 (US\$45) per capita, insufficient to meet the demands of a nation grappling with slow growth and infrastructural underdevelopment."

President Tinubu had proposed a budget of N49.7trillion with a revenue forecast of N35 trillion, resulting in a deficit exceeding N13 trillion or 4% of GDP reflects a continuation of business-as-usual fiscal practices.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Presidential candidate in the 2023 election, said the budget represents a persistent trend under the APC-led administration since 2016, wherein budget deficits have been consistently presented, accompanied by an increasing reliance on external borrowing.

To bridge this fiscal gap, the administration plans to secure over N13 trillion in new borrowings, including N9 trillion in direct borrowings and N4 trillion in project-specific loans.

According to him, "This borrowing strategy mirrors the approach of previous administrations, resulting in rising public debt and exacerbating the attendant risks related to interest payments and foreign exchange exposure."

Abubakar also linked the current economic challenges to what he described as the weak foundation in the 2024 budget.

"The 2024 budget's underperformance signals poor budgetary execution. By Q3 of the fiscal year, less than 35% of the allocated capital ex-

penditure for MDAs had been disbursed, despite claims of 85% budget execution. This underperformance in capital spending, crucial for fostering economic transformation, raises concerns about the execution of the 2025 budget."

Abubakar also berated the disproportionate Debt servicing, which accounts for N15.8 trillion (33% of the total expenditure), saying that this is nearly equal to planned capital expenditure (N16 trillion, or 34%).

"Moreover, debt servicing surpasses spending on key priority sectors such as defence (N4.91 trillion), infrastructure (N4.06 trillion), education (N3.52 trillion), and health (N2.4 trillion). This imbalance will likely crowd out essential investments and perpetuate a cycle of increasing borrowing and debt accumulation, undermining fiscal stability."

"Regressive Taxation and Economic Strain: The administration's decision to increase the VAT rate from 7.5% to 10% is a regressive measure that will exacerbate the cost-of-living crisis and impede economic growth. By imposing additional tax burdens on an already struggling populace while failing to address governance inefficiencies, the government risks stifling domestic consumption and further deepening economic hardship."

He noted that the 2025 budget lacks the structural reforms and fiscal discipline required to address Nigeria's multifaceted economic challenges.



Central Bank of Kenya

VIEW FROM THE TOP



## WORLD

# Netanyahu threatens to 'act with force' against Yemen's Houthis

JERUSALEM/ADEN

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Israel would "act with force" against the Houthi group in Yemen, a day after the group launched a missile toward the Tel Aviv area.

"Just as we acted with force against Iran's (other) allies, we will act against the Houthis," Netanyahu said in a video statement.

He emphasized that Israel was not acting alone, noting that the United States and other nations share the same view with Israel that the Houthis are posing "a threat not only to international shipping but to the global order."

"Hence, we will act with strength, determination, and ingenuity," Netanyahu added. "Even if it takes time, the outcome will be the same as with other terrorist groups."

A Houthi missile hit a playground and a building in Tel Aviv overnight between Friday and Saturday, injuring 14 people and causing building damage, according to the latest update from Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service.

The Houthi attack followed a series of Israeli airstrikes on Thursday, which targeted Yemen's capital Sanaa as well as the ports of Hodeidah, As-Salif, and Ras Issa. The strikes, which the Israeli military said were aimed at Houthi infrastructure, killed at least nine people.



Houthi fighters march during a rally of support for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and against the U.S. strikes on Yemen outside Sanaa, Jan 22, 2024. AP

Also on Sunday, Yemen's Houthi group said it attacked a US aircraft carrier with eight cruise missiles and 17 drones and downed a US fighter jet.

The group successfully struck aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman and its escorts, thwarting the joint US-British attack on Yemen, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said in a statement, aired by Houthi-run al-Masirah TV.

"Our forces shot down an American F/A-18 fighter jet during the operation as it attempted to intercept our missiles and drones," Sarea added.

Earlier on Sunday, US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement that two US Navy pilots ejected safely after their fighter jet was shot down over the Red Sea in an apparent "friendly fire" incident. "The guided-missile cruiser USS

Gettysburg, which is part of the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group, mistakenly fired on and hit the F/A-18," CENTCOM said.

The incident came the same day US forces conducted airstrikes on a missile storage facility and a command-and-control facility reportedly operated by the Houthis within Sanaa, and shot down multiple Houthi one-way attack drones and an anti-ship cruise missile over the Red Sea, according to a separate statement by CENTCOM.

Since November 2023, the Houthis have been carrying out rocket and drone attacks on Israeli cities and disrupting "Israeli-linked" shipping in the Red Sea.

In response, the US-led navy coalition stationed in the area has been conducting regular air raids on Houthi targets since January in a bid to deter the armed group.

## Trump threatens to designate Mexican cartels as terrorists

PHOENIX, Arizona

US President-elect Donald Trump said on Sunday he will launch a new anti-drug advertising campaign to show the physical impact of taking drugs like fentanyl and repeated his threat to designate Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations.

"We're going to advertise how bad drugs are for you. They ruin your look, they ruin your face, they ruin your skin, they ruin your teeth," Trump said at a conference of the conservative group Turning Point in Phoenix, Arizona.

Trump gave few concrete details about the ad campaign, which he does not appear to have mentioned before and that he likened to running a political campaign. He said his administration would spend "a lot of money" on the program but that it would be a "very small amount of money, relatively."

The Trump transition team did not respond to a request for further information.

Trump's plan has echoes of the



President-elect Donald Trump speaks at AmericaFest, Dec 22, 2024, in Phoenix. (PHOTO / AP)

"Just Say No" anti-drug campaign, led by Republican for-

mer first lady Nancy Reagan in the 1980s to encourage

young Americans to refuse drugs.

Between 50,000 and 60,000 Americans are projected to die from synthetic opioid overdoses this year, most from taking fentanyl or closely related drugs.

The fentanyl crisis featured heavily in Trump's 2024 presidential campaign, even though synthetic opioid deaths more than doubled under his 2017-2021 administration.

Trump on Sunday also revived a campaign vow to designate Mexico's drug cartels as terrorist groups.

"I will immediately designate the cartels as foreign terrorist organizations," Trump said.

While in office in 2019, Trump shelved such a plan at the request of Mexico's then-President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who said he wanted US cooperation on fighting drug gangs, not intervention.

Some US officials had also privately expressed misgivings that the measure could damage relations with Mexico and hinder the Mexican government's fight against drug trafficking.

Trump's official election platform says that when he takes office he will order the Pentagon to use "special forces, cyber warfare, and other covert and overt actions to inflict maximum damage on cartel leadership, infrastructure, and operations."

## Qatar reopens embassy in Damascus after 13-year closure

DAMASCUS

QATAR officially reopened its embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus on Saturday, raising its national flag over the building for the first time in 13 years.

In the upscale Abu Rummaneh neighborhood of Damascus, workers were seen cleaning the embassy compound and removing graffiti from its walls.

The embassy's reopening comes amid a wave of regional and Western representatives visiting Syria to meet the country's new de-facto leadership following the fall of former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government on Dec. 8.

It also comes almost a week after a Qatari delegation visited Damascus to prepare for the resumption of the

Qatari diplomatic mission, which was closed in 2011 following the outbreak of the Syrian civil war.

The delegation met with representatives of Syria's transitional government and reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to supporting the Syrian people in their pursuit of security, peace, development, and prosperity, Qatari Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Majed Al Ansari

said. The meeting also discussed ways to enhance the flow of Qatari humanitarian aid into Syria and assessed the urgent needs of the Syrian population during this critical phase, Al Ansari noted.

Qatar is the second country, after Türkiye, to formally resume diplomatic operations in the Syrian capital since Assad's downfall. ■

## China's commercial aerospace sector builds full industrial chain

AT 10:25 p.m. (Beijing Time), Nov. 30, a Long March-12 carrier rocket blasted off from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in Dongjiao township, Wenchang, south China's Hainan province, and sent two experimental satellites into their planned orbits. The launch mission achieved complete success at 10:48 p.m., according to Hainan provincial authorities.

This mission marked the first launch mission undertaken by the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site, which is the first to be built for commercial missions in China.

"The successful maiden launch marked a groundbreaking achievement in China's first commercial spacecraft launch site. It completes

the whole industrial chain that covers satellite and rocket manufacturing, testing and launch services of commercial spacecraft launch sites, and satellite applications," said Guo Qiang, a board member of Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Co., Ltd. (HICAL).

With an area of more than 2,500 mu (about 166.67 hectares), the launch site is located about 3 kilometers away from the Wenchang Space Launch Site, which is China's first open seaside spacecraft launch site that covers over 10,000 mu.

Since the 1950s, China has successively established satellite launch centers in Jiuquan, north-west China's Gansu province, in

Taiyuan, north China's Shanxi province, and in Xichang, south-west China's Sichuan province. In response to the demands for higher rocket carrying capacity and fewer launch costs, the Wenchang Space Launch Site was completed in 2014 and held its first launch in 2016.

The rapid development of satellite launch sites leads to rising market demands. According to the 2023 blue book on China's aerospace science and technology environment, China managed to complete 26 commercial launches in 2023, accounting for 39 percent of all launches that year.

In June 2022, Hainan officially proposed the construction of the Hainan commercial spacecraft

launch site. At the same time, HICAL was set up to accelerate this process. The construction commenced just a month later, with two launch pads for liquid propellant rockets.

In December 2023, the No. 1 pad was completed, designated for the Long March-8, China's new-generation medium-lift carrier rocket. The No. 2 pad was completed in June 2024, which is capable of launching multiple types of rockets with various diameters from commercial rocket companies. Each pad has an annual capacity of 16 launches.

Not far from the launch site lies the satellite-rocket industrial park of the Wenchang International Aerospace City. There,

construction is in full swing with vehicles and towering cranes bustling about. A super satellite manufacturing factory that consists of several buildings is about to complete roofing.

"The factory will be able to produce satellites in a way similar to how cars are manufactured on an assembly line," said Wang Shicheng, who has spent over 20 years in the field of aerospace. Wang now works for a satellite company and is involved in the factory's construction.

"Commercial aerospace encompasses rocket and satellite development, satellite operations and applications, as well as the manufacturing and servicing of ground equipment. The key aspect of

'commercial' is to follow market-driven principles," explained Yang Tianliang, HICAL's chairman of the board.

Yang stressed the need to reduce costs and increase efficiency across the entire industrial chain, from construction and production to launch and operation, because this is essential to attracting more enterprises to the sector.

"The high launch frequency of the site allows rocket developers to gather more telemetry data and will accelerate the upgrading of China's rocket technology," said Ma Lei, deputy general manager of Hainan Tianbing Technology Co., Ltd.

People's Daily

## China injects new momentum into Asia-Pacific cooperation

HONG KONG

IN a global economy beleaguered by alarming anti-globalization sentiment, rising protectionism and unilateralism, openness and cooperation are of vital significance and in dire need of fresh vitality.

In the year 2024, China has consistently endeavored to foster broader space for cooperation in Asia-Pacific, ensuring that the region remains a driving force for economic globalization.

CONNECTIVITY

Connecting towns, cities and countries with improved roads, railways and ports has long been a focus of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region have witnessed the tremendous changes brought about by upgraded transport infrastructure on people's livelihood.

In Indonesia, the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, a landmark project as Southeast Asia's first high-speed rail built in cooperation with China, has transported a total of 5.79 million passengers since it was officially put into commercial operation on Oct. 17, 2023.

Affectionately called "Whoosh" for its remarkable speed, the rail has inspired profound changes in the towns and cities along the route. Businesses are thriving with more people coming to enjoy the ease of traveling between the country's two major cities at a speed of 350 km per hour.

Another transformative infrastructure project, the China-Laos Railway, linking Kunming of Southwest China's Yunnan Province and the Laotian capital of Vientiane, has significantly enhanced regional connectivity.

Three years into its operation, more goods, especially machinery, electronics and farm products, are moving across the border, thanks to a significant reduction of time and cost for freight transportation through the rail. "The railway connects Laos more directly with China, which is one of the world's largest consumer markets," Somsavanh, a fruit vendor in Vientiane, told Xinhua.

Chen Yunya, from a Chinese travel agency, said the railway has built a bridge of cultural exchange between China and neighboring countries. "An increasing number of travelers from Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, Thailand, and Laos are taking the China-Laos Railway into China to visit Xishuangbanna," Chen noted, referring to a tourist spot in China's Yunnan Province.

As part of its efforts to facilitate global exchanges and mobility, and reaffirm its commitment to greater openness as the world's second-largest economy, China has expanded its unilateral visa-free arrangement to include more countries in 2024, including Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan in the Asia-Pacific region.

Meanwhile, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore have agreed with China respectively to waive travel visa requirements for each other's citizens, welcoming a travel boom driven by Chinese tourists in the Southeast Asian countries.

INNOVATION

Over the past decade, China has made strides in technology development, ranking 11th on the Global Innovation Index in 2024, and remains the only middle-income economy in the top 30.

As it reaches out to cultivate an open and innovative ecosystem in the region, China is contributing to the shaping of a green and digital Asia-Pacific, creating new engines for economic growth for the coming decades.

In Thailand, a key automotive production hub in Southeast Asia, Chinese carmaker BYD's factory was completed and began production in July, with an annual capacity of about 150,000 vehicles.

From exporting complete vehicles to building local factories, China's electric vehicle (EV) makers are venturing further, benefiting the local automotive industry and consumers while reducing carbon emissions and facilitating the energy transition.

China's leadership in the EV market not only fosters production collaboration between Thai automotive companies and Chinese manufacturers but also accelerates the growth of supply chain industries such as batteries and charging stations, supporting Thailand in building a full-fledged EV ecosystem, said Rachanida Nitipathanapirak, vice president of the Strategic Department at the Thailand Automotive Institute.

The Binh Duong factory in Vietnam was TCL's first completely self-built overseas factory and one of the largest digital production bases established by a Chinese TV brand in Southeast Asia. Following a "Made in Vietnam" strategy, TCL has invested over 100 million U.S. dollars in Vietnam, creating more than 10,000 jobs for the locals.

"As we gradually release production capacity, many of our domestic supply chain partners have followed us to



## China's stimulus measures timely to boost confidence, says German economist

FRANKFURT

CHINA'S recent stimulus measures came at the right time to boost investor confidence worldwide, a leading German economist has said.

The stimulus package represents the right policy of the Chinese government to stabilize the overall situation, said Horst Loechel (pictured), professor of economics and co-chairman of the Sino-German Center at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management.

The Chinese economy fared well this year, with a growth rate close to 5 percent in line with Beijing's projection, the expert told Xinhua in a recent interview, calling this "a success."

He said he believes the country's private consumption and government investment are likely to rebound, and if that happens, China's growth will register over 5 percent in 2025.

China continues to be a preferential investment destination for German companies, as shown by a business confidence survey published by the German Chamber of Commerce in China earlier this month.

Up to 92 percent of the survey's respondents confirmed that they would continue to operate in China despite challenges. "The reason is totally clear," Loechel said.

China is a predominantly huge market with a growing middle-income class and has become a leading innovator, especially in the electric vehicle (EV) industry, he added.

As two large exporters, both Germany and China have benefited from economic globalization and trade liberalization,



and made due contributions, he noted, stressing that joint efforts are still needed to "promote free, open trade and work against protectionism."

Furthermore, he said bilateral cooperation across the board would bring the two countries closer. "We will see more joint ventures, more cooperation between Germany and China, which we already have in the automotive industry," he said.

Chinese companies and their innovations can effectively inspire the German automotive industry, he said, emphasizing that European Union (EU) tariffs on Chinese EVs will impede Europe's green revolution.

The overwhelming majority of the European automotive sector strongly opposes such protectionist measures, said the expert, adding that it reflects more of an internal political power struggle within the EU, rather than a rational business decision.

"We want to resolve this issue. We are not interested in worsening the business and political relationship with China," he added.

Xinhua

## Mulino: The canal will remain 'in Panamanian hands'

PANAMA CITY

PANAMA'S president Jose Raul Mulino said Sunday that the canal will "continue to be in Panamanian hands" after US President-elect Donald Trump threatened to retake it.

Every square meter of the Panama Canal and its adjacent area belong to Panama and "will remain so," and "the sovereignty and independence of our country are not negotiable," Mulino said in a social media video post.

Trump on Saturday called the Panama Canal "a VITAL National Asset for the United States," threatening to retake the canal, citing "exorbitant prices" on US ships.

Mulino (pictured) said he hopes to maintain a "respectful" relationship with the next US government. He also pointed out that security issues such as illegal migration, drug trafficking, terrorism, and organized crime should be a priority in the two countries' bilateral

agenda. He recalled that according to the Torrijos-Carter Treaties signed in 1977 by the then-Panamanian president Omar Torrijos and then-US president Jimmy Carter, Panamanians recovered their sovereignty over the canal on December 31, 1999.

Mulino added that the Torrijos-Carter Treaties established the permanent neutrality of the Panama Canal, "guaranteeing its open and safe operation for all nations. (...) any position to the contrary is invalid."

"(The tariffs) are established based on an open hearing, considering market conditions, international competition, operating costs and the maintenance and modernization needs of the inter-oceanic waterway," said Mulino.

"The Canal will continue to be in Panamanian hands as an inalienable patrimony of our nation and guaranteeing its use for the peaceful and uninterrupted transit of ships of all nations," said the Panamanian president.



## Global significance of China's poverty alleviation theories and practices

CHINA'S story of poverty alleviation, one about lifting 800 million people out of poverty and meeting the poverty reduction target of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ahead of schedule, is one of the most magnificent chapters in global development.

These historic achievements have deepened humanity's understanding of poverty alleviation and enriched the theoretical framework for combating poverty worldwide.

On Nov. 18, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at Session I of the 19th G20 Summit on Fight Against Hunger and Poverty. He said, "China's story is proof that developing countries can eliminate poverty, that a weaker bird can start early and fly high, when there is the endurance, perseverance, and striving spirit that enables water drops to penetrate rocks over time and turns blueprints into reality."

Osmar Junior, executive secretary of Brazil's Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family and Fight against Hunger, noted that Xi has gained rich experience in poverty reduction when working in China's impoverished regions. Junior said that Xi has a profound understanding of national governance and social development, adding that China's experience will help Brazil and other developing countries find a way to get rid of poverty and achieve sustainable development.

In the battle against poverty, China always places the people front and center. It has made targeted policies tailored to each village, each household and each person, helped localities generate growth by fostering industries with distinctive features, and promoted common prosperity by pairing up well-off regions with less developed ones. Such experiences have given inspiration for other countries that if China can eliminate poverty, other developing countries can make it too. This is what China's battle against poverty says to the world.

According to Samuel Darkwa, a governance fellow at the Institute of Economic Affairs, Ghana, China has followed a targeted approach to poverty alleviation, which involves accurate identification of impoverished people, customized projects, and efficient resource allocation. China's experience provides positive guidance for African countries in improving the livelihood of their vulnerable populations, said Darkwa.

Darkwa said that through a people-centered approach, China has identified the causes of poverty, learned about the needs of impoverished households, and taken tailored measures, which has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of its poverty alleviation efforts.

Austin Maho, editor-in-chief of Nigeria's Day-



Photo shows African officials visiting a modern tea plantation in Leshan, southwest China's Sichuan province, during the first Seminar on Poverty Reduction and Development for African Officials held in May this year. (Photo: Song Haoxin/ People's Daily)

break newspaper, has thoroughly read Xi's book on poverty relief, "Up and Out of Poverty." He also visited many places in China, such as southwest China's Guizhou province, to learn about local poverty alleviation measures such as relocating poor people, developing tourism, and leveraging science and technology to tackle poverty.

He observed that China has followed a development-driven strategy, with a focus on unleashing the economic vitality of rural areas. By implementing measures such as providing skills training, improving social welfare, and enhancing infrastructure, China has promoted economic growth in rural areas and created employment opportunities, he said.

Many countries around the world, especially those still plagued by poverty in the Global South, can study China's path of poverty alleviation to find ways out of poverty in line with their own national conditions, said Maho.

In its modernization drive, while improving the livelihood of its own people through development, China is also committed to advancing shared development of the whole world and helping other countries improve their people's livelihood.

During the G20 Hangzhou Summit, China placed development at the center of the G20's macroeconomic policy coordination for the first time. Since then, the country has put forward ten partnership action plans for modernization to deepen China-Africa cooperation and spearhead the Global South modernization. It also outlined eight actions for global development,

and focused on improving and promoting the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation mechanisms to create new space for win-win development at a higher level and with greater resilience and sustainability.

China has always maintained a global vision and fulfilled its commitments with concrete actions, facilitating modernization of all countries featuring peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation, and common prosperity.

During the China-Central Asia Summit held in May last year, China and Uzbekistan set up a subcommittee on poverty reduction cooperation under the framework of the intergovernmental cooperation committee. It is the first subcommittee on poverty reduction that China established with other countries at the governmental level.

Uzbekistan has intensified efforts to reduce poverty in recent years, piloting China's anti-poverty experience in various regions across the country. Nearly 10,000 Uzbeks have participated in online training programs introducing China's poverty reduction experience and practices.

This year, China hosted many training programs for the Global South, such as the training program for commercialized agricultural (poultry) development for Lesotho, the fourth training session for Indonesian rural officials, a cotton production, processing and management training program for Uzbekistan, and the seminar on culture and tourism empowering high-quality rural development for ASEAN countries.

People's Daily

## US charges 14 North Korean IT workers in \$88 million identity theft and extortion case

FOURTEEN North Korean nationals indicted for carrying out multi-year fraudulent Information Technology Worker Scheme and related extortions

The Department of Justice had accused the 14 North Korean nationals of conspiring to use false identities to get IT jobs with U.S. companies and siphon money back to their home country, in violation of U.S. sanctions. The conspirators allegedly worked for two North Korea-controlled companies, Yanbian Silverstar and Volasys Silverstar, which are respectively based in China and Russia. The U.S. Treasury Department has previously sanctioned both companies.

A Federal Court in St. Louis, Missouri has indicted 14 nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea (DPRK or North Korea) with long-running conspiracies to violate U.S. sanctions and to commit wire fraud, money laundering, and identity theft. Specifically, the conspirators, who worked for DPRK-controlled companies Yanbian Silverstar and Volasys Silverstar.

They are said to have conspired to use false, stolen, and borrowed identities of U.S. and other persons to conceal their North Korean identities and foreign locations and obtain employment as remote Information Technology (IT) workers for U.S. companies and non-profit organizations.

The conspirators, some of whom were ordered by their superiors to earn at least \$10,000 per month, generated at least \$88 million throughout the approximately six-year conspiracy between April 2017 and March 2023. In multiple instances, the conspirators supplemented their employment earnings by stealing sensitive company information, such as proprietary source code, and then threatening to leak such information unless the employer made an extortion payment. Ultimately, the conspirators



used the U.S. and PRC financial systems to remit the proceeds of their activity to accounts in the PRC for the ultimate benefit of the DPRK government.

In some cases, they boosted their earnings by stealing sensitive company information and forcing employers to make extortion payments to prevent its release, the DOJ said. "To prop up its brutal regime, the North Korean government directs IT workers to gain employment through fraud, steal sensitive information from U.S. companies, and siphon money back to the DPRK," said Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco.

"This indictment of 14 North Korean nationals exposes their alleged sanctions evasion and should serve as a warning to companies around the globe – be on alert for this malicious activity by the DPRK regime."

"The indictment is the latest in a series of actions under a National Security Division initiative launched earlier this year to disrupt North Korea's efforts to generate revenue by duping American companies into hiring its citizens for remote work," said Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

"This indictment and associated disruptions highlight the cybersecurity dangers associated with this

threat, including theft of sensitive business information for the purposes of extortion."

"The fourteen conspirators indicted yesterday victimized companies across the United States, as well as many Americans whose identities they stole, to generate revenue for the North Korean regime," said Assistant Director Bryan Vorndran of the FBI's Cyber Division.

"The FBI will continue to work with our partners to expose and mitigate these fraudulent IT schemes and provide unwavering support to victims of North Korean cyber actors."

"North Korean IT workers pose a sophisticated and persistent threat, especially to businesses seeking to employ large numbers of contract workers quickly," said U.S. Attorney Saylor A. Fleming for the Eastern District of Missouri.

"While we have disrupted this group and identified its leadership, this is just the tip of the iceberg. The government of North Korea has trained and deployed thousands of IT workers to perpetrate this same scheme against U.S. companies every day," said Special Agent in Charge Ashley T. Johnson of the FBI St. Louis Field Office.

"Protect your business by thoroughly vetting fully remote IT workers. One of the ways to help minimize your risk is to insist cur-

rent and future IT workers appear on camera as often as possible if they are fully remote."

The charges are the most recent step in an ongoing, two-year Department's effort to disrupt this specific group of conspirators, one of multiple such DPRK groups attempting to generate revenue for the DPRK government through such schemes. Prior Department actions against this group.

They include: (i) a January court authorized seizure of approximately \$320,000 (unsealed today); (ii) a July court authorized seizure of approximately \$444,800 (unsealed today); (iii) previously announced October 2022 and January 2023 court-authorized seizures of approximately \$1.5 million; and (iv) previously announced October 2023 and May 2024 court-authorized seizures of 29 internet domains used by the same group to increase the bona fides and appeal of their assumed identities to prospective employers. In addition to these actions, the State Department announced today a reward offer of up to \$5 million for information on these companies, the individuals identified, their illicit activities, and/or those of associated individuals and entities.

The identified individuals are: Jong Song Hwa, Ri Kyong Sik, Kim Ryu Song, Rim Un Chol, Kim Mu Rim, Cho Chung Pom, Hyon Chol Song, Son Un Chol, Sok Kwang Hyok, Choe Jong Yong, Ko Chung Sok, Kim Ye Won, Jong Kyong Chol, and Jang Chol Myong.

These two organizations collectively employed at least 130 North Korean IT workers – referred to within these organizations as "IT Warriors." As alleged in the indictment, Yanbian Silverstar and Volasys Silverstar organized periodic "socialism competitions" for their employees. During these competitions, IT workers would compete to generate money for the DPRK. Bonuses and other prizes were



# Gifted Tanzanian youngster on the verge of hitting the big time

By Lloyd Elipokea

IN the eventful history of Tanzanian football, there have been some abundantly talented football maestros who have bowled us over with their terrific skills.

This pantheon of masterful football icons who became all-time greats includes football players par excellence such as the unforgettable Abdallah Kibadeni, the dependable defender Shadrack Nsajigwa and the always penetrating Edibily Lunyamila, who was renowned for his spell-binding dribbling skills.

One wonders then if the precocious Tanzanian starlet, Joseph Godwin, will be added to the select list of Tanzanian football heroes in the coming years.

It should be noted that Godwin wonderfully rose to prominence at this year's East African Chipkizi Cup, which featured teams from Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

You see, Dear Reader, the ascendant Tanzanian teenage sensation Godwin will soon fly to the football-obsessed Spain to hold trials with the mega successful Barcelona Football Club.

Needless to say, if Godwin can impress the coaches at Barcelona, then he will have most certainly propelled himself to stardom and international recognition.

Despite competing against the creme de la creme of East and South African youth football, Godwin fantastically stood



Soccer youth team players pictured recently during a training session at the Jakaya Kikwete Sports Park grounds in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

out and consequently won the accolade of being the Best Player of the Championship. Thanks to his magnificent exertions, Godwin now has the golden opportunity to join the ranks of one of European football's perennially successful clubs.

Clearly then, countless Tanzanians will be rooting for Godwin to make a positive impact during his trials as he could potentially be on the cusp of utterly changing his life. Indeed, we wish him the very best of luck.

Let us now switch our focus to this year's CAF Awards, which was brimming with stars.

Indeed, the high-profile momentous event took place in Marrakech, Morocco and featured the leading lights of football from both within and beyond the continent.

Unsurprisingly, the award for CAF's Men Player of the Year was claimed by Atalanta's awesome Nigerian attacker, Ademola Lookman, who undeniably established himself this year as one of the game's most illustrious stars.

Fittingly, the CAF's Female Player of the Year gong went to the deadly Zambian striker, Barbara Banda, who massively helped her club Orlando Pride to secure America's

National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) title earlier this year.

In what was a memorable title-decider against Washington Spirit, Banda brilliantly netted the winner for Orlando Pride to seal victory for her side.

In addition, another consideration which ultimately tipped the scales in Banda's favour regarding the award was the fact that she netted a hat-trick for Zambia at the Paris 2024 Olympics, which was her third in Olympic history and notably, was an all-time record to boot.

Another rising star in continental football who was the picture of utter

contentment at the CAF Awards was the Ivorian tactician Emerse Fae, who bagged the prize for CAF's Male Coach of the Year.

One feels that this particular accolade was richly deserved by Fae as the Ivorian coach rescued Cote d'Ivoire from the verge of exiting the AFCON to steering the Elephants (Ivory Coast's nickname) to thrillingly win the whole shebang on home soil.

Thus, as the end of the year draws closer, it is hoped that this year's winners at the CAF Awards will inspire their fellow African personages in football to soar to greater heights next year.

## Down 14 early, Rockets roar past slumping Raptors

By Field Level Media

DILLON Brooks scored 27 points, Jalen Green added 22 and the visiting Houston Rockets rallied past the Raptors 114-110 on Sunday night, sending Toronto to its seventh straight loss.

Alperen Sengun contributed 17 points, 10 rebounds and five assists for the Rockets, who have won two straight.

Jabari Smith Jr. scored 15 points and grabbed nine boards, Cam Whitmore added 11 points, and Amen Thompson chipped in 10 points for Houston, which shot 44.9 percent from the field (40 of 89), including 25 percent from 3-point range (7 of 28).

Toronto's Ja'Kobe Walter scored 14 of his career-best 27 points in the first quarter before fouling out with 2:40 left in the game.

Chris Boucher scored 15, Ochai Agbaji also notched 15, Grady Dick contributed 14, Jamal Shad matched his career best with 11 and Jamison Battle also scored 11 for the Raptors, who shot 45.7 percent from the floor (42 of 92) and 39.5 percent from beyond the 3-point arc (17 of 43).

Houston outscored Toronto by 18 at the free-throw line, making 27 of 33 attempts compared to 9 of 13 for the Raptors.

Toronto led by 14 before taking a 35-24 lead after the opening quarter. Houston

committed nine turnovers in the quarter, leading to 17 Raptors points.

The Raptors scored the first five points of the second quarter to build a 16-point cushion. The Rockets stormed back, trimming the margin to three midway through the quarter. Toronto led 57-51 at halftime.

Houston opened the second half with a 10-3 surge and led by one with 9:32 left. Toronto regained the lead at 75-73 on Boucher's dunk with 3:13 to play in the third, but Houston bounced back with four straight points.

Boucher's three-point play gave Toronto a four-point advantage near the end of the third. But Thompson answered with a three-point play and Brooks made a layup to put Houston ahead 84-83 after the third.

The Rockets opened the fourth quarter with an 8-3 burst. Walter came back with five straight points, cutting the Raptors' deficit to one.

Houston's 9-0 run pushed its lead to 10 with 5:49 left, but Toronto cut the lead to three on Agbaji's dunk with 22.7 seconds to play.

Toronto got the ball on Houston's 21st turnover with 16.9 seconds left but turned the ball over, also for the 21st time. Toronto's RJ Barrett (illness) and Jakob Poeltl (groin), along with Houston's Tari Eason (leg), did not play.

REUTERS



Houston Rockets guard Fred VanVleet (5) passes the ball as Toronto Raptors forward Scottie Barnes (4) blocks a shot attempt during the second half at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on December 22, 2024. Agencies

## Matola confident as Simba eye crucial victory against JKT Tanzania

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA are set to face JKT Tanzania today in a crucial Premier League fixture at the KMC Complex in Dar es Salaam.

The match, scheduled for 4:00 PM East African Time, is expected to be a significant test for both sides as they aim to secure crucial points.

Currently sitting at the top of the Premier League table, Simba SC boast a narrow lead, just one point ahead of Azam FC and Young Africans SC (Yanga).

However, Simba have the advantage of having played two fewer matches than their title challenger Azam, giving an edge in the title race. With 11 wins, one draw, and a single loss from 13 matches, Simba remain a formidable force this season.

Their main rival, Young Africans, is just one point behind Simba but has played an equal number of matches. This tight competition adds pressure on Simba to maintain their lead, especially as the league enters a critical phase.

On the other hand, JKT Tanzania is positioned eighth on the league table with 19 points from 14 matches. They have registered four wins, seven draws, and three losses so far.

While their home form has been solid, their away performances have been less impressive, as they are yet to secure a victory on the road this season. Out of their seven away matches, JKT Tanzania has drawn four and lost three.

Last season, Simba dominated JKT Tanzania in their two league encounters, winning 1-0 away and 2-0 at home. Despite JKT's improved form this season, Simba remain the favourite to clinch all three points, especially on home soil.

With the title race heating up, Simba will look to leverage their superior form and home advantage to secure a convincing win. While the league is not known for high-scoring matches, Simba are expected to win comfortably, potentially by a two-goal margin.

Simba's next two matches include a tricky away fixture against Singida Black Stars, followed by a crucial CAF Confederation Cup clash against CS Sfaxien. These games underline the importance of today's match, as Simba aim to build momentum heading into a busy schedule.

Simba assistant coach Selemani Matola has expressed confidence in his team's ability to overcome JKT Tanzania. Speaking ahead of the match, Matola acknowledged the quality of the opposition but emphasized Simba's readiness to secure maximum points. "We know it will be difficult due to the kind of players present in most opponents, but we are organized enough to ensure we get the three points against them. That is possible," said Matola.

Simba will rely on their star-studded lineup to deliver another commanding performance. The team's attacking firepower, coupled with a solid defense, has been pivotal in their successful campaign so far.

Players like Jean Charles Ahoua, Leonel Ateba and Steven Mukwala will be key in unlocking JKT Tanzania's defense.

For JKT Tanzania, maintaining defensive discipline will be crucial in their quest to secure at least a point. The team's attacking options, led by their in-form striker, will also need to step up if they are to break Simba's defensive line.





## Man United boss Amorim bears brunt of ugly 3-0 loss to Bournemouth

MANCHESTER, England

MANCHESTER United boss Ruben Amorim took responsibility for his team's undoing in a depressing 3-0 loss to Bournemouth on Sunday that saw thousands of frustrated fans head to the exits well before the final whistle.

Dean Huijsen, Justin Kluivert and Antoine Semenyo scored to keep United 13th in the table, the first time they have been in the bottom half at Christmas in Premier League history.

"It is my responsibility to coach them," Amorim said.

"Of course we want to improve. In this moment, everything is so hard, a club like Manchester United to lose 3-0 at home, it's really tough for everybody.

"And of course the fans are really disappointed and tired. You can feel it in the stadium, and I understand that, but we have to face it."

Conceding from set pieces has become a theme of United's woeful season and the issue reared its head again on Sunday when Huijsen headed home from a corner kick in the 29th minute. It was the 17th goal that United have conceded from set pieces in the Premier League in 2024, the most by them in a single calendar year in the league's 32-year history.

"Without conceding nothing to the opponent, and then one set piece makes us more nervous, all the stadium, I felt it since the first minute. There's a lot of anxiety, that's normal because of the context and it's really disappointing," Amorim said.

United had 23 shots to Bournemouth's 10, but simply could not finish, with captain Bruno Fernandes firing a flurry of shots just wide of the net late in the first half alone. Amorim said the team's struggles are "a lot of mental."

"You can feel it, not just the players, the fans ... this moment, everybody in the club is tired of these moments," he said. "We have to face it and focus on the next game. We know what to do, we have to address a lot of things but we are ready to do it. We already knew that the challenge is big."

The Portuguese left Marcus Rashford out of the squad for the third successive game, with talk swirling that the forward might not be long for the team.

"I want to see the best of my players," Amorim said of the decision. "And then I try different things with different players, so that is my focus."

REUTERS

# Mbappe's self-criticism has fuelled his rise, Ancelotti says



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe scores their first goal against Sevilla during their LaLiga match at Santiago Bernabeu, in Madrid, Spain on December 22, 2024. REUTERS

MADRID

SELF-CRITICISM has helped Real Madrid overcome a challenging period and fuelled forward Kylian Mbappe's integration into the team, manager Carlo Ancelotti said after their 4-2 home win over Sevilla on Sunday.

The 26-year-old Frenchman netted the opener and set up another goal as Real beat mid-table Sevilla to move up to second place in LaLiga, closing the gap on leaders Atletico Madrid to one point going into the winter break.

Federico Valverde, Rodrygo and Brahim Diaz were also on target for Real, but it was Mbappe, now with six goals in his last eight games, who led the charge as the victory lifted Madrid to 40 points, two clear of third-placed Barcelona.

Mbappe had struggled to adjust to the Spanish side after his close-season move, experiencing a dip in form and brief spell on the sidelines.

Reigning champions Madrid struggled to keep pace with their rivals early in the season and were thrashed 4-0 by Barcelona in October.

The Italian manager

admitted that a lack of attitude and collective effort had been holding back his star-studded side, but introspection has aided the team in finding their rhythm again.

The disconnect has stung the most in the Champions League, where the defending champions are 20th after three wins and three losses but Ancelotti said a turnaround is on the horizon for Madrid who have ended their double-winning year on a good note.

"After the defeat against AC Milan, we sorted things out in the

dressing room by talking very clearly," Ancelotti said.

"Self-criticism has made us clear up what we were lacking, which was a bit of a lack of attitude, of collective commitment, of running a bit more.

"We have gone back to doing things the way we should have done them... Mbappe has been self-critical and that's why he has gotten out of a situation that could have been complicated."

Ancelotti had insisted before the match that he had confidence in Mbappe's ability to meet the club's high expecta-

tions and said the talisman has proven him right.

"His adaptation period is over and today he has shown that I, from time to time, am right," Ancelotti said.

"In 2024 I give the team an A+. Last season was fantastic. We started (this season) with more difficulty, but we were able to fix the situation in time and there is hope for 2025, but it is difficult to repeat it. We will try."

Meanwhile, Kylian Mbappe hit "rock bottom" with a penalty miss at Athletic Bilbao earlier this month as he struggled to adapt to his new

surroundings at Real Madrid but the French forward said he used that disappointment to fuel his recent return to form.

Mbappe left Paris St Germain in the close season as the French club's all-time top scorer but his move to Real has been plagued by teething problems, while a hamstring injury and a thigh issue have also hampered his settling-in time.

However, since missing his second penalty in a week in a 2-1 loss at Bilbao Mbappe has scored four goals in all competitions, including the opener in Sunday's 4-2 LaLiga win over Sevilla.

"I took a lot of positives from the Bilbao game. I hit rock bottom," he told Real Madrid TV. "I missed a penalty and I realised at that moment I have to give my all for this shirt and play with personality."

Mbappe now has 10 goals in 16 league appearances, helping Real end the calendar year second in the table, just a point behind leaders Atletico Madrid.

"I can score a lot more. I know I have a lot more to give. The last few games I've played better," he said.

"I think we now know each other better. I've joined the team and that changed a lot of things. The settling-in period is over, as the coach says. I feel very comfortable in the team and I play better with the others on the pitch."

Real next travel to face Valencia in LaLiga on Jan. 3.

REUTERS

## I can't just flick a switch and change style, says Spurs boss Postecoglou

LONDON

TOTTENHAM Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou said there is no easy fix for his injury-hit side after a 6-3 defeat at home to leaders Liverpool in the Premier League on Sunday.

Once again, the London club proved great entertainment but that was little consolation to fans who have seen them concede nine goals in their last two home league games.

They also showed their chaotic side in a 4-3 League Cup win over Manchester United in midweek, after which Postecoglou took issue with some pundits who questioned his tactics.

In reality, a three-goal deficit masked the gulf between Tottenham and Liverpool on Sunday, but Postecoglou once again came out fighting in some spiky post-match interviews.

In one, his patience appeared close to snapping when he was asked whether there were other reasons apart from a lengthy injury list as to why his side were down in 11th place in the table heading in to Christmas.

Tottenham started against Liverpool without first-choice goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario, centre backs Micky van de Ven and Cristian

Romero, left backs Ben Davies and Destiny Udogie and forward Richarlison.

"You know what? I'm just going to stop answering these questions," the Australian told BBC Sport. "If people can't see the obvious I'm not going to point it out. Look, make of it what you want, yes we're conceding goals."

"If you want to discount the fact we're missing a goalkeeper, two centre backs and a left back as well and that hasn't coincided with what we're doing ... I don't know what to say anymore."

According to Opta, Tottenham's Premier League games under Postecoglou average 3.6 goals per game, the highest for any manager taking charge of at least 50 games in the competition.

Some are now suggesting that Postecoglou is more interested in style than substance and while Spurs fans still sung his name on Sunday, many took to social media or radio phone-ins to criticise him for Tottenham's fragility.

"If people want me to change my approach, it's not going to change. We are doing it for a reason, we are doing it because we think it will

help us to be successful," he told reporters.

"I get the idea that people think that I should just flip a switch and change and somehow that will miraculously make us a better team."

Postecoglou said last month that if his side were 10th at Christmas no one would be happy, confidently predicting that they would have climbed the table by the festive period.

But that is now the reality. Asked whether he was feeling under pressure, he said: "I'm not sure what you mean by pressure. I'm not happy about where we are in the table. I'm not sure about pressure in what sense?"

"If you're saying that 10th means I'm not doing a good job and I maybe somehow should be uncomfortable, well that's for others to judge."

Meanwhile, Liverpool head coach Arne Slot was full of praise for his side's devastating attacking performance at Tottenham Hotspur, but warned the Premier League leaders against complacency after Spurs briefly threatened an unlikely comeback.

The Reds were 5-1 up and cruising thanks to a quickfire second-half

double from Mohamed Salah with just over an hour played, before Dejan Kulusevski and former Liverpool striker Dominic Solanke pulled it back to 5-3.

Luis Diaz scored his second five minutes from time to make it 6-3 and finally end a crazy contest, which Slot said was Liverpool's best away performance of his tenure.

"Until 60-65 minutes (in), I really, really, really enjoyed what I saw," Slot told reporters. "But then you also saw that, no matter how much quality players have, they think they don't have to run anymore."

"In this league, especially against Tottenham because they are so good with the ball as well, they immediately start to create. And that's what they did, and

they scored two goals. I was happy that the sixth one went in, to be fair."

The Liverpool boss, who has enjoyed a near-flawless start to life at Anfield, accepted that "maybe it is human that if you are 5-1 up, you think 'OK'".

"I exaggerate a bit if I say they don't run anymore," he conceded.

"Of course they still run, but they don't run to crosses anymore, they don't defend in front of the goal, where until that moment it was every time, wherever the ball was, we were there with two, three, four players."

But Slot said his players needed to be more ruthless, telling reporters: "You have to be on top of your game every second of the game. And if you're not 100%, then it immediately

hurts you."

Slot, who won the Dutch league with Feyenoord before joining Liverpool, was happy to be top of the league at Christmas but said there was a long way to go.

"Of course it means something, because you always prefer to be where we are at the moment ... but you know just as well as I know, because I've won the [Dutch] league once, how hard it is to win it," he said.

"You have to keep on going, keep on going, every three days you have to be on top of your game, every minute of the game."

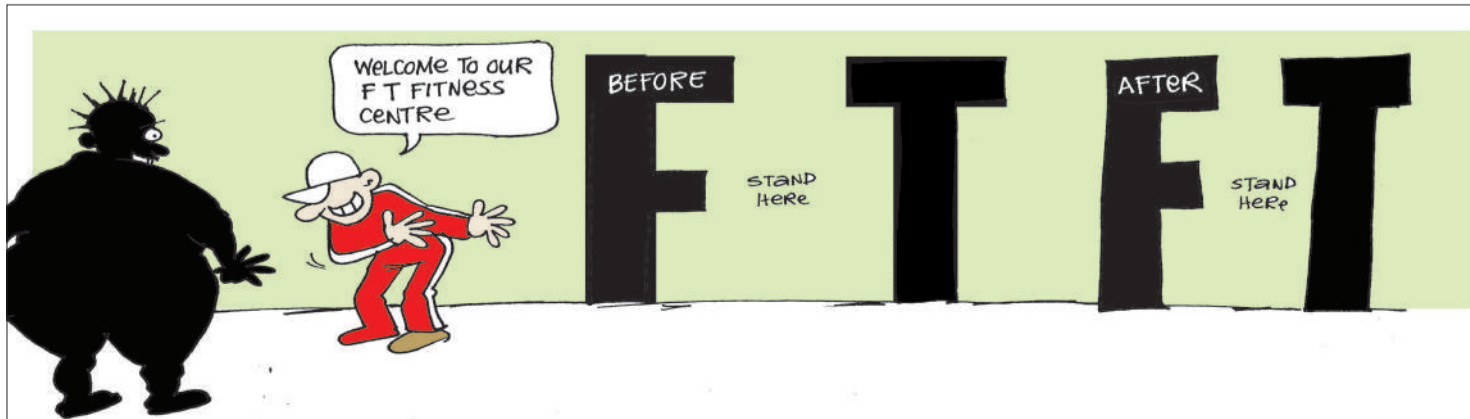
"That's why it's so hard to win it, because it's not always easy to show up every three or four days."

REUTERS



Tottenham Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou looks dejected after the Premier League match against Liverpool at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, in London, Britain on December 22, 2024. REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

**Mbappe's self-criticism has fuelled his rise, Ancelotti says** PAGE 19



By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

## Serengeti Boys battle South Sudan for AFCON ticket

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE Tanzania U-17 men's national team, Serengeti Boys, are out to secure their spot in the finals of the CAF Under-17 Africa Cup of Nations CECAFA Zone Qualifiers when they meet South Sudan in the semi-final this afternoon.

It is a re-match of last year's semi-final when South Sudan triumphed in Ethiopia to deny Tanzania a fourth AFCON U-17 finals appearance.

Serengeti Boys sealed their place in the semifinals after a 1-0 victory over Kenya in their Group A clash in Kampala on Wednesday last week.

Serengeti Boys came out on top after a lone first-half strike from Juma Sagwe Mwita handed them three points to finish second behind Uganda Cubs in the group.

The team, coached by Aggrey Morris, went into the match with a disadvantage after they were forced to a 1-1 draw by hosts Uganda in the group opener.

On the other hand, South Sudan saw off Sudan 1-0 in a Group B tie played at the Nakivubo Hamz Stadium to finish top of Group B with six points.

The first semi-final clash will see defending champions Somali take on hosts Uganda before Serengeti Boys and South Sudan face off at 4:30pm at the same venue.

The final and play-off will be played on Friday. The winners and runners-up will qualify to represent the region in the U-17 AFCON 2024 finals in Morocco.

Having reached the U-17 AFCON finals in four of the five recent editions, Serengeti Boys will be banking on their defence to make an immediate return to AFCON.

Coach Morris is aware anything less will be regarded as an under achievement.

Tanzania qualified for the continental finals in 2017 in Gabon, 2019 as hosts in Dar and 2021 in Morocco which unfortunately were cancelled at the last minute due to the Covid pandemic.

The 15th edition of the U-17 Africa Cup of Nations is slated for Sunday March 30 to Saturday April 19, 2025 in Morocco where the semi-finalists will earn a place in the prestigious FIFA Under-17 World Cup finals.

# Simba SC eyeing Christmas top spot

having conceded just five times, the best record in the division.

On Saturday, they triumphed on the road, thrashing Kagera Sugar 5-2 at Kaibata Stadium in one of their most impressive performances of the season under Davids (pictured). It was a follow up to a confident 2-0 victory over KenGold last week.

The results underlined Simba's attacking strength in the league, and this fixture provides another opportunity to showcase their title credentials.

JKT Tanzania, under the tutelage of Ahmad Ally, will arrive at the KMC Mwenge Complex with some confidence, having gone unbeaten in their last five matches.

However, their form has been inconsistent throughout the season, with their attack an area of concern, producing just nine goals in 14 games, ranking as one of the least effective in the Premier League.

They have scored two goals in the last seven matches.

JKT Tanzania's lack of quality options in attack is shown by the fact that former Simba

striker John Bocco leads the club's Golden Boot race boasting just two goals, with the 35-year-old scoring in just one of his 12 appearances so far. Despite their weaknesses, JKT Tanzania will hope to frustrate Simba and take advantage of any complacency from the hosts.

Their defensive solidity has been key to their success this season, with just eight goals conceded - the fourth-best record in the league so far.

In head-to-head stats, Simba and TKT Tanzania have met in 22 league matches since 2010. The Msimbazi Reds have claimed 16 wins compared to four for JKT Tanzania, while two matches have been drawn.

Simba have claimed seven wins from 11 home league matches against the army side, suffering two defeats in the process.

Last season, Simba took six points off JKT

Tanzania to stretch their winning run to seven games in the rivalry.



## Ramovic: 'What a performance' as Yanga reclaim second spot in Premier League

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans head coach Sead Ramovic hailed his team's performance following their emphatic 4-0 victory over Tanzania Prisons in a Mainland Premier League match at the KMC Complex.

The win marked the defending champions' second consecutive triumph at the venue, lifting them back to second place on the league table.

"What a performance today," Ramovic (pictured) said after the match. "We came with the right mindset, knowing it would be a tough game and it was. But we were ready. From the first minute to the last, we controlled the game, stayed focused, and demonstrated our hunger for the three points. Our supporters witnessed a beautiful game."

Young Africans dominated the encounter with a blend of attacking prowess and defensive discipline, securing their first clean sheet in several matches. Ramovic highlighted the significance of the defensive effort, which limited Tanzania Prisons to just one shot on target.

"Keeping a clean sheet makes the 4-0 win even sweeter," he noted. "Our defensive structure was solid, and when we stay compact for 90 minutes, it's a beautiful thing. Of course, there's always room for improvement, but we're on the right path," he said.

The coach also reserved praise for goalkeeper Abutwalib Mshery, who stepped in for Abubakar Khomeiny.

"He only had to make one save, and that



speaks volumes about the team's collective defending," Ramovic added.

Ramovic made notable changes to the lineup, starting midfielders Khalid Aucho and Stephane Aziz Ki alongside striker Prince Dube. The backline featured entirely homegrown talent, with Kibwana Shomary, Nickson Kiba-

bage, Ibrahim Bacca, and Dickson Job forming a formidable defensive unit.

The tactical adjustments paid off, as Young Africans delivered a clinical performance. Ibrahim Bacca stood out with two goals, including one controversial effort reminiscent of Diego Maradona's 'Hand of God' goal in the 1986

World Cup. Replays suggested a handball, but the referee allowed the goal to stand.

Bacca's first goal came in the 42nd minute, capitalizing on a well-taken free kick by Aziz Ki. He added his second in the 84th minute, heading in a corner from substitute Pacome Zouzoua.

The match also saw Clement Mzize and

Prince Dube continuing their fine form. Mzize opened the scoring in the 13th minute, finishing off a precise pass from Dube. The Zimbabwian striker then netted Young Africans' second goal just before halftime, taking his tally to five goals in three matches across all competitions.

Ramovic praised the attacking duo, emphasizing their growing chemistry and contribution to the team's success.

"Mzize and Dube are working incredibly well together," he said. "Their understanding on the pitch is improving, and it's showing in the goals they're scoring."

The second half saw several substitutions, with Pacome Zouzoua, Bakari Mwamnyeto, and Chadrack Boka entering the fray. Zouzoua, in particular, made an immediate impact, providing the assist for Bacca's second goal.

Ramovic credited the squad's depth and versatility for the team's strong performance. "We have 22-23 fantastic players, and everyone is contributing. This depth allows us to maintain

our intensity and adapt to different challenges," he said.

The victory brought Young Africans level with archrivals Simba SC in terms of wins, with both teams securing 11 victories from 13 matches. Young Africans now sit in second place with 33 points, behind Simba's 34. Both teams boast impressive goal tallies, with Simba leading with 29 goals scored and five conceded, while the Jangwani-based outfit has scored 23 and conceded six.

The result also saw Young Africans surpass Azam FC, who dropped to third place despite sharing the same points tally. Young Africans' superior goal difference gives them the edge in the standings.

Closing his remarks, Ramovic expressed gratitude to the players, supporters, and the club's management.

"This team is amazing on and off the pitch. The players' effort and commitment, the incredible supporters, and the support from the club's leadership make it a joy to be part of Yanga. We're proud of where we are and excited about what lies ahead."

**TO NIGHT @ 9:00**

**MJADALA**

**EATV TUESDAY**

11:00 DADAZ  
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA  
13:00 Mpera Mpera  
13:30 Kali Za Wana  
13:55 Dondoo Za Michezo  
14:00 5SPORTS (r)  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Mpera Mpera  
16:00 Zote Kuntu  
16:55 Dondoo Za Michezo  
17:00 SSELECT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 Kali Za Wana  
18:30 #HASHTAG  
19:00 EATV SAA 1  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 MJADALA  
21:30 Zote Kuntu  
23:00 Kurasa  
23:05 EATV SAA 1

**MJADALA** is a program that brings together stakeholders and the executive elite to discuss timely, national development issues.

The program targets an audience that is aware of current developmental challenges and opportunities and is keen to share, engage and participate in the shapping process.

**eastafrika RADIO**

05:00 Supa Breakfast  
09:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
19:00 Kipenga  
21:00 The Cruise

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## Flexibles by David Chikoko

