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Dar's traders tell task force: TRA unfair, discriminatory

By Henry Mwangonde

BUSINESS stakeholders and sector representatives have voiced concerns about tax administration practices by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA).

Their grievances were presented to the Presidential Task Force on Tax Reforms set up by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, where the stakeholders decried excessive tax deductions and a lack of professionalism in tax collection.

The panel is tasked with finding ways to improve tax collection, ensure efficient use of public funds and address challenges within the tax administration structure.

Its mandate also includes finding out how to enhance transparency and accountability in tax management, to generate greater trust between the public and the government.

At the meeting on Thursday in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam, various business leaders criticized the TRA's tax administration methods and procedures, with Pasco Lugaga, a Tanzania Trade Union Confederation (TUCA) official, pointing at discriminatory tax deductions on



The number of tax collectors visiting traders in the central business district now exceeds the number of customers in one day

employees' allowances.

Some workers are taxed while others are not, he said, appealing for fairness in the tax procedures, even as Hassan Haruna, treasurer of the Tanzania Teachers' Union (CWT) in Temeke District, urged the government to reduce income tax deductions to a single-digit percentage levels.

He said that ethics of TRA officials remain a significant challenge as many officers lack the necessary ethical standards, while Charles Temba, chairman of the Tanzania Federation of Disabled People, pointed a finger at the tax system.

He said it needs to be reformed to make it more efficient and less complicated, asserting that tax enforcement is inconsistent, with officers demanding upfront payments for taxes. This creates confusion for businesses and individuals, he stated.

Renatus Mlelwa, secretary of the Kariakoo business community, highlighted the disparity in tax deductions at the port compared with neighbouring countries.

"For a container having 400m/- worth of goods the tax is 200m/- while at the port of Mombasa northward the tax levied is 50m/- he stated, insisting that Tanzania's tax laws should be tailored to the local business environment rather than relying on foreign models.

He recommended that the task force examine the practice of manipulating elec-

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Finance ministry permanent secretary Dr Natu El-Maamry Mwamba (C), the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Tanzania, Susan Ngongi Namondo (L) and the Deputy Ambassador of Ireland to Tanzania, Mags Gaynor, cut the ribbon in Dar es Salaam yesterday to launch the Development Cooperation Framework (2017/2018-2024/2025). It was shortly after talks on cooperation between Tanzania and its development partners. Photo courtesy of Finance ministry

World Bank pledges SGR support facility

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Bank has commended the country's significant progress in advancing the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project and pledged ongoing support for its construction, expected to bolster trade and drive economic growth.

Wendy Hughes, the World Bank regional director in charge of infrastructure construction, made this affirmation in Dar es Salaam yesterday on a working visit to Tanzania, extolling the railway line's quality infrastructure.



The SGR project is crucial for boosting trade across the region and addressing unemployment by creating job opportunities

She held discussions with Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba, alongside Transport minister Prof Makame Mbarawa and Works minister Abdallah Ulega.

World Bank country director Nathan Belete accompanied the Africa division specialist, where the visitor shared her experience of making the transit from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma.

The project is aligned with international standards, she said, noting that the World Bank is processing applications

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Tripartite linkage priming local honey for US homes

By Guardian Reporter

THE Jane Goodall Institute (JGI), Upendo Honey and social enterprise Burlap & Barrel also of the United States have teamed up to export premium Tanzanian honey to the US market.

Craig Hart, the Tanzania Mission director for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), said

in a statement issued by the US Embassy yesterday that the move shows the power of baseline communication.

"This collaboration between Burlap & Barrel, the Jane Goodall Institute, and Tanzania's Upendo Honey showcases the power of linking local communities with global markets to drive lasting benefits for biodiversity and livelihoods," he stated.

US consumers will be able to purchase

local organic honey online and have it delivered directly to their homes, it said, noting that central to the initiative is the production of certified organic honey, "sourced from forests far removed from agriculture, livestock and human settlements."

The environmentally scrupulous method of harvesting helps safeguard intact

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UNFPA, Sweden link up in \$2.8m girls health drive

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Sweden yesterday signed a new partnership agreement for \$2.8m to advance sexual and reproductive health in the country.

Charlotta-Ozaki Macias, the resident Swedish ambassador, said at the signing ceremony in Dar es Salaam that Sweden is committed to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly for adolescents.

"This partnership will contribute to UNFPA's 'three zeros' targets: zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero gender-based violence," she stated, underlining that Sweden is proud to support UNFPA's vital work in Tanzania.

"The flexibility of the funding reflects our trust in UNFPA's ability to deliver tangible, lasting results that empower individuals—especially women and youth—to access quality healthcare, education and opportunities to thrive," she stated.

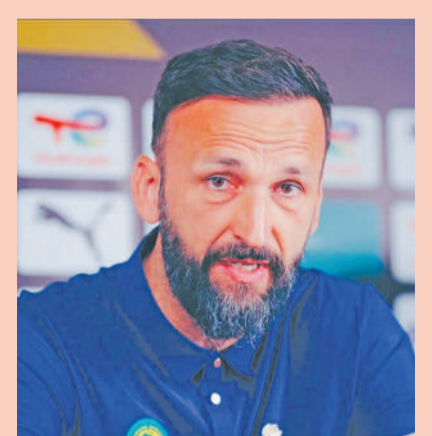
The programme is aligned with key expected outcomes of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), pushing voluntary family planning, working to reduce maternal deaths and preventing gender-based violence.

It similarly emphasizes women's and adolescents' health, education and empowerment, leveraging innovative solutions, partnerships as well as South-South and triangular cooperation, she further noted.

"Sweden's support for UNFPA reflects our broader commitment to gender equality, human rights plus sexual and reproductive health. By supporting the 9th Country Programme, we reaffirm our contribution to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring a future where every individual can lead a healthy and prosperous life," the envoy as-

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Yanga ready for pivotal CAF Champions League showdown against TP Mazembe

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Man City crisis puts United's malaise in the shade ahead of derby



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from the government and remains committed to supporting SGR construction as a strategic project

The ministers appreciated the World Bank's commitment in financing portions of the project, with the construction making vast progress so far, while experts see it as a model for Africa.

The SGR project, estimated to cost over 10trn/- is vital for enhancing passenger and freight transport, benefiting Tanzania and the wider Great Lakes region, the ministers' team leader said.

"The SGR project is crucial for

boosting trade across the region and addressing unemployment by creating job opportunities," the Treasury chief said.

With World Bank support and involvement of the private sector, the SGR project can transform regional trade and transport, driving economic growth in the sub-region, he said.

The meeting also focused on the development of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project and strategies to improve collaboration between public institutions and the private sector in implementing large-scale infrastructure projects, he added.

Tripartite linkage priming local honey for US homes

FROM PAGE 1

ecosystems like the miombo woodlands that are categorised as forests, while enabling local communities to earn up to three times the average market price for their honey, it stated.

By transforming beekeeping into a sustainable economic engine, the partnership contributes to the protection of critical wildlife habitats, including those of chimpanzees, the focus of Dr. Jane Goodall's ground breaking research at the Gombe National Park in Kigoma Region.

"This honey isn't just delicious—it's changing lives," said Dr Goodall in remarks on the export linkage. "Harvesting and selling this honey provides essential income for Tanzanian families, all while conserving vital ecosystems that support both people and wildlife."

The partnership empowers Tanzanian honey producers by connecting them to U.S. and global markets, unlocking new growth op-

portunities, she stated, underlining that it also fuels community-driven efforts to protect and restore biodiversity in Western Tanzania.

This initiative is supported by USAID's 'hope through action' project, described as a flagship programme that places communities at the heart of conservation, fostering sustainable development and a brighter future for both people and nature.

Currently, about 1,100 beekeepers involved in the USAID-driven action programme, producing upwards of 150 tons of honey annually.

"USAID's support has been instrumental in turning this vision into reality," the statement noted, affirming that in addition to boosting local incomes, five percent of the retail price from every jar sold will go towards supporting JGI's conservation efforts in Western Tanzania.

This ensures a sustainable future for both the environment and local communities, it added.

UNFPA, Sweden linked up in \$2.8m girls health drive

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Mark Bryan Schreiner, the UNFPA country representative, lauded Sweden's longstanding partnership and leadership in development aid, highlighting Sweden's consistent observation of the UN target for official development assistance (ODA) since 1974.

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Sweden to advance sexual and reproductive health in Tanzania. This funding will enable us to scale up critical programs that improve the lives of women and young people across the country," he said.

Despite adjustments to Sweden's

core funding, Tanzania remains a crucial partner for UNFPA's global and national programmes, particularly in maternal health and efforts to end female genital mutilation (FGM), the UN official noted.

"The signing ceremony not only marks the continuation of Sweden's commitment to supporting Tanzania's most vulnerable populations but also celebrates the longstanding collaboration between Sweden and UNFPA.

"This partnership serves as a key milestone in advancing Tanzania's development goals and ensuring access to equitable, high-quality healthcare and education for all," he added.



Dr Shila Mwashuyua (2nd-R), acting Chief Medical Officer for Singida Region, pictured on Tuesday presenting a specially fitted sewing machine to Rehema Juma - who has disability. The machine was support by international charity Sightsavers extended through an economic empowerment project for people with disabilities in Mkalama District and Singida municipality. Photo: Correspondent Tobias Mwanakatwe

portronic fiscal devices (EFDs) by some businesses, while Mfaume Fadhili, the community vice-chairman, protested at considerable powers granted to TRA officers.

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This allows them to make tax assessments based on impressions, creating room for unethical practices and bribes, he said, urging the revision of ambiguous provisions in the law.

Fredrick Lutindi, representing the national business community networking group, echoed concerns about customs procedures at

Dar's traders tell task force: TRA unfair, discriminatory

the port, citing varying tax rates on similar goods.

He proposed the introduction of a unified tax fee for all goods of flooded at the port, plus creating designated areas for street vendors in the Kariakoo business zone too cut out the congestion.

The number of tax collectors visiting traders in the central business

district now exceeds the number of customers in one day, he asserted.

Task Force chairman Ambassador Ombeni Sefue opened the meeting by explaining that the task force was created in response to complaints from businesses about unfair taxation.

He assured attendees that the task force, examining taxation in both

parts of the union, seeks to come up with more business-friendly approaches while boosting government revenue.

Its recommendations are expected to address concerns raised by business stakeholders and contribute to reforming tax procedures for greater predictability and fairness, he added.



Residents of Moya Mayoka in Magara Ward, Babati District, visibly distressed and in disbelief as they witness the massive damage induced by a mudslide that hit the village on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Jaliwason Jasson

US issues US\$118 million to support displaced people in Eastern Africa

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

THE United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has secured a \$118 million donation from the United States government to provide life-saving aid to over one million displaced individuals across seven countries in Eastern Africa.

This funding received through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, will support vulnerable populations in Tanzania, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, where the number of displaced people has surged in recent years.

The region has seen the number of displaced persons nearly double from 13.2 million in 2020 to 26.5

million in 2024, driven largely by conflicts such as the war in Sudan and extreme weather events like the Horn of Africa drought.

Laurent Bukera, WFP's Regional Director for Eastern Africa, said: "People who have lost their homes and livelihoods represent a significant portion of those WFP aims to reach across eastern Africa this year. This funding from the US is critical to ensuring we can continue providing support to these vulnerable populations, many of whom rely almost entirely on humanitarian assistance to survive."

The rapid increase in displaced populations has not been matched by a growth in resources, forcing WFP to make difficult decisions about food distribution. As a result, displaced people in the region are

not receiving full rations due to funding constraints. In some areas, the assistance is limited to only 40-82 per cent of the standard food ration.

The US contribution will help WFP provide both cash transfers and in-kind food assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons, and food-insecure host communities.

In Rwanda, it will prevent a potential disruption in the refugee operation, ensuring that support continues through early 2025.

In the WFP's support, Burundi has got over 60,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive 75 per cent of a full food ration, with 4,200 returnees supported each month.

Djibouti: 23,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive 70% of a

full ration. Kenya: 650,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive 40 percent of a full ration.

Republic of Congo: 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive 70 percent of a full ration. Rwanda: 120,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive 75 percent of a full ration, with additional support for livelihood strengthening activities.

Tanzania: 191,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive 82 percent of a full ration.

Uganda: 1.4 million refugees and asylum seekers receive 30-60 percent of a full ration, with new arrivals receiving full rations for the first three months.

Additionally, 52,000 refugees and Ugandan nationals benefit from livelihood strengthening activities.



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Finance minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba (L) exchanges greetings in Dar es Salaam yesterday with the World Bank's Director for Infrastructure, Wendy Hughes, who is on a tour of Tanzania and has already had an audience with the minister, Transport minister Prof Makame Mbarawa and Works minister Abdallah Ulega. The talks revolved mainly around the implementation of the Rapid Bus Transit (BRT) and Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) projects as well as ways to empower the private sector to collaborate with the public sector in the execution of various development projects. Photo courtesy of Finance ministry

By Guardian Correspondent

Training programme empowers girls in creating robots, AI skills

IN a bid to support the government's push to encourage more girls to study science, the Apps and Girls organisation has launched a training programme aimed at empowering female secondary school students in science and technology.

The initiative, which targets students from nine secondary schools, focuses on providing practical skills that can help girls excel in technology and innovation. The training includes hands-on experience in creating robots, understanding artificial intelligence and developing entrepreneurial skills.

Speaking during the launch in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Carolyne

Ekyarisiima, Director of Apps and Girls, explained that the programme was designed to address the gender gap in scientific subjects and equip girls with the skills necessary for self-employment and future careers in technology.

"We aim to close the gender gap by offering training to girls starting from secondary school and extending to those outside the formal education system. We teach them vital skills such as robotics, AI and entrepreneurship," Ekyarisiima said.

She emphasized that the

initiative aligns with the Tanzanian government's efforts to encourage more girls to take up science and technology. "At the end of each program, we host competitions where students can showcase their technological innovations. Top performers are rewarded to inspire and motivate other girls to pursue science subjects," Ekyarisiima said.

The programme has gained support from Yas Tanzania, with Rukia Mtingwa, a representative of the organisation, highlighting their partnership with Apps and Girls.

"We are committed to supporting

the government's goal of increasing female participation in science. This ICT training will benefit girls not only during their studies but also in their future careers," Mtingwa said.

For many of the students, the training has been a confidence booster. Maria Mtega, one of the participants, shared that the program has given her the confidence to continue pursuing science and technology subjects.

"The training has shown me how to develop and work with technology, and it has made me more excited about learning," Mtega said.

PM Majaliwa warns school heads on teen pregnancies

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has warned head teachers of primary and secondary schools across Tanzania to take action against individuals suspected of impregnating students, stressing that they must not protect perpetrators.

He made the directives in Dodoma on Thursday during the opening of the 19th Annual Conference of the Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association (TAHOSA) and the Tanzania Primary School Heads Association (TAPSHA).

"The issue of child pregnancies in our schools must be addressed urgently. We have the laws to deal with this problem, and school heads should not shield criminals who impregnate our students," he said.

He called for swift action against anyone found guilty of causing pregnancies among students and urged school heads to support efforts to eradicate teenage pregnancies.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the importance of fully implementing the new education policy alongside existing laws and regulations, particularly the free education policy, which should ensure that no additional financial burdens are placed on parents.

"Funds allocated should be used for their intended purposes, and local councils must assist where there are shortcomings," he said.

Majaliwa further directed school heads to manage student enrolment and attendance effectively to curb truancy and teenage pregnancies. He also insisted that teachers must

be adequately prepared before entering classrooms, ensuring quality teaching and learning.

In his address, the Prime Minister highlighted the government's commitment to improving the education sector, noting that up to 33.3bn/- per month is allocated to support primary and secondary schools. Since 2021/22, the government has invested 1.76trn/- in education, focusing on building infrastructure such as teachers' houses, dormitories, and classrooms.

However, Majaliwa noted that local councils must develop strategies to address challenges in schools built by the central government, particularly in providing food for students and constructing school fences independently.

TAHOSA President Denis Otieno echoed the Prime Minister's concerns, noting that secondary schools continue to face challenges, including the lack of fencing at boarding schools, which threatens student safety.

Funds allocated should be used for their intended purposes, and local councils must assist where there are shortcomings

College receives 58.1bn/- for infrastructure development

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA) has been allocated 58.1bn/- to complete various development projects, with a focus on enhancing learning and teaching infrastructure across its campuses.

Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Jenifa Omolo made the statement in Dar es Salaam yesterday during the institution's 22nd graduation ceremony.

Omolo commended the TIA management and staff for ensuring the timely implementation of these projects, urging the development of effective maintenance plans for the new infrastructure.

"Today, we celebrate the success of 6,950 graduates from the Dar es Salaam campus. As noted by the Chief Executive, 3,838 of these graduates are women and 3,112 are men. I particularly congratulate the female graduates for their hard work and dedication to their education."

She also highlighted the importance of adapting education systems to meet the demands of the ever-changing labour market. Omolo praised TIA for its implementation centres programme, which equips students with the skills to become self-employed, gain employment, and contribute to the national economy.

"In today's world, creativity is key to solving social challenges and seizing opportunities. Social networks are powerful tools that can be used positively for learning, self-promotion, and income generation," she added.

Omolo stressed that entrepreneurship and innovation are fundamental to success, urging graduates to use their knowledge for the benefit of society.

TIA Chief Executive Officer, Prof. William Pallangyo, explained that the 58.1 billion shillings have supported the construction of learning facilities across TIA's campuses in Mbeya, Mtwara, Mwanza, Kigoma and Zanzibar.

He also revealed that 6,950 graduates have received certificates, diplomas, degrees, and master's degrees in a range of fields, including Accounting, Purchasing and Supply, Business Management,

Human Resource Management, Marketing, Public Relations, Public Accounting and Finance, and Project Management.

"We have also established our eighth campus in Tanga, fulfilling TIA's mission to bring education closer to people through regional campuses across Tanzania," Prof. Pallangyo said. "With a total of 31,084 students enrolled, including 21,394 at the Dar es Salaam campus, our expansion continues to meet growing demand."

He attributed the rise in enrolment to the increase in loan beneficiaries through the Higher Education Student Loans Board (HESLB), with 12,263 students receiving loans worth 7.49bn/- in the 2024/2025 academic year—an increase of 35.9 percent from the previous year.

Prof. Pallangyo expressed gratitude to the government for boosting the number of beneficiaries and loan amounts, ensuring that TIA students are well-equipped to grow both intellectually and professionally.

To further support this development, the Dar es Salaam campus has provided training to 6,000 students, with a focus on building practical knowledge in entrepreneurship and creativity. This initiative has sparked a range of innovative ideas.

TIA also continues to collaborate with international institutions to increase efficiency and enhance the student experience. In the 2023/2024 academic year, two students participated in the Erasmus student exchange programme in Lithuania, while another represented Tanzania at the Commonwealth Youth Assembly.

We have also established our eighth campus in Tanga, fulfilling TIA's mission to bring education closer to people through regional campuses across Tanzania



Small traders conduct business yesterday at a makeshift open-air market on the pavement of the road serving Dar es Salaam's Mbezi Mwisho bus terminal. Those interviewed said they had failed to find site more friendly or convenient for their needs. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

By Guardian Reporter

Tanzania, Malawi pledge robust collaboration on climate change

TANZANIA has committed to continuing its collaboration with Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states to address the impacts of climate change in the region.

During a meeting in Dar es Salaam on Thursday Christina Mndeme, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Vice-President's Office (Environment), discussed climate change challenges with officials from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change of the Republic of Malawi, led by Director of Environment, Tawonga Mbale-Luka.

Mndeme highlighted the significant climate challenges

facing the region, including rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall, and changing weather patterns, stressing the need for collective action. She noted that strengthening regional cooperation is crucial in tackling these issues.

"Tanzania recognizes the importance of international collaboration in combating climate change and has ratified key agreements like the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement," Mndeme said, adding that the country is reviewing policies and

developing strategies to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development.

She also emphasized the role of carbon trading in global climate change mitigation, explaining that Tanzania has developed National Carbon Trading Management Regulations and Guidelines. These aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring community involvement and transparency.

He reiterated Tanzania's readiness to collaborate with Malawi,

particularly in building technical capacity and exchanging climate change management experiences.

Mbale-Luka thanked Tanzania for its support and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about Tanzania's climate change management practices, including carbon trading.

The Malawian delegation, which is on a four-day visit to Tanzania, is scheduled to visit the National Carbon Monitoring Center (NCMC) in Morogoro Region as part of their tour.

Tanga faces youth 'laziness' challenge

By Guardian Reporter

AUTHORITIES in Tanga Region are grappling with a pressing issue where over 30,000 young people neither seeking employment nor pursuing education, which has resulted in a rising burden to their families and the society.

Regional Commissioner Batilda Buriani revealed the alarming statistics during the launch of the Youth Forum in Tanga District, held on Thursday at the Tanga International School grounds.

Speaking at the event, Commissioner Buriani emphasised that youth unemployment is a major challenge in Tanga City, one that requires urgent and collective action from both the government and development partners.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), youth unemployment remains a pressing issue, and it is crucial that all sectors, including the youth themselves, take proactive steps to seek employment and explore self-employment opportunities.

NBS data shows that, of the 147,000 young people aged 15-35 in Tanga City, 109,000 are employed in both the formal and informal sectors. However, about 5,000 are actively seeking work. Of greater concern is the fact that nearly 30,000 young people are neither looking for work nor engaging in education.

"This is a social issue, and it is essential that we come together to address it," said Buriani. "Tanga City has been proactive in providing opportunities for young people to create their own jobs or secure employment by fostering a supportive environment for stakeholders to collaborate."

She highlighted the first phase of the TangaYetu project, which implemented various initiatives in productive sectors that benefitted the youth. One initiative involved

the production and supply of desks to primary and secondary schools, providing temporary employment for 123 young people, including 10 with disabilities.

Another project aimed at changing mindsets and promoting entrepreneurship among the youth reached 1,036 individuals. It established 17 savings and credit groups, empowering young people to lend to one another and start and expand their businesses.

The "Youth Employment Opportunities through the Internet" project trained 100 young people on identifying online opportunities and using smartphones to generate income. More than 45 participants successfully completed the training and secured short-term employment with mobile companies.

A further project aimed at economically empowering youth through the fishing sector reached 400 young people, connecting them to opportunities in seaweed farming, fish farming, mud crab fattening, and fish drying. Additionally, the project provided 14 boats to facilitate modern, environmentally-friendly fishing practices.

Buriani called for continued collaboration and commitment to addressing the youth unemployment challenge, stressing the importance of ensuring that young people make full use of available opportunities to improve their livelihoods and contribute to society.



This is a social issue, and it is essential that we come together to address it

'Global drowning deaths decline, vulnerable groups remain at risk'

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) yesterday released its first report on drowning prevention, highlighting a significant 38 per cent drop in global drowning deaths since 2000.

However, the report warns that drowning remains a major public health issue, with an estimated 300,000 people dying from drowning in 2021 alone, equating to more than 30 deaths per hour.

Despite progress, the report reveals that nearly half of all drowning deaths occur among people under 29 years old, with children under the age of five particularly at risk. Unsupervised children are most vulnerable, the WHO states.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, praised the reduction in deaths but emphasized that "every drowning death is one too many."

He stated, "The significant decline in drowning deaths since 2000 is great news and proof that the simple, practical interventions that WHO recommends work... this report contains crucial data for policy-making and recommendations for urgent action to save lives."

While global efforts have seen a decline, progress has been uneven. The WHO European Region saw a 68 per cent drop in drowning deaths between 2000 and 2021, yet the African Region, with the highest death rate, saw just a 3 per cent reduction. Only 15 per cent of countries in Africa have a national strategy for drowning prevention, compared to 45 per cent in Europe.

Michael Bloomberg, WHO Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases, highlighted the importance of governments working with local partners to prevent drownings, stating: "This new report shows what more countries can do to help save thousands of lives every year."

WHO recommends several community-based interventions to reduce drowning, including the installation of barriers to prevent child access to water, teaching school-aged children water safety and swimming, and enhancing public awareness.

However, the uptake of these interventions varies. While 73 per cent of countries have search and rescue services and flood risk mitigation programs, only 33 per cent offer national programs for bystander rescue and resuscitation training, and just 22 per cent include swimming and water safety in school curricula.

Accurate data collection is essential for effective prevention, but only 65 per cent of countries report collecting drowning data. WHO's report also highlighted gaps in legislation, noting that 86 per cent of countries lack laws requiring fencing around swimming pools, a critical measure for preventing child drownings in specific settings.

The report concludes that drowning prevention requires a coordinated, society-wide effort. Through increased collaboration and investment, the global community can protect the most vulnerable and ensure that the decline in drowning deaths continues equitably across all regions.



The significant decline in drowning deaths since 2000 is great news and proof that the simple, practical interventions that WHO recommends work...



From R: Japan's Ambassador to Tanzania, Yasushi Misawa, Kigoma regional administrative secretary Hassan Rugwa, UNFPA Tanzania Resident Representative Mark Bryan Schreiner and UNFPA communications officer Dr Warren Bright pictured in Dar es Salaam earlier this week with some of the medical and other equipment the agency extended in support to healthcare initiatives in the region. The ambassador's support was meanwhile in the form of a vehicle. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has officially reintroduced the domestic gemstone auction in Mirerani, Simanjiro District, Manyara Region, following the completion of necessary legal amendments.

The auction, which had been temporarily suspended, aims to add value to Tanzania's gemstones and position the country as a leading hub for gemstone trading and jewellery manufacturing in Africa.

Minister for Minerals, Anthony Mavunde, launched the auction on Thursday, which is part of the government's broader strategy to promote Tanzanian gemstones internationally and increase their market value.

The reopening of the auction aligns with directives issued by President Samia Suluhu Hassan during the inauguration of the Gold

Govt reinstates domestic gemstone auction in Mirerani to boost trade

Refining Plant in Mwanza City on June 13, this year.

Minister Mavunde explained that the gemstones would be sold through auction, providing a platform for local miners to sell their gems at competitive prices in line with global market standards.

The initiative aims to support the economic development of Tanzanian miners while ensuring the security of the gemstone trade.

"The launch of this auction is a key government initiative to combat the illegal export of gemstones, which has been a persistent issue," said minister Mavunde.

He highlighted that the auction would involve both domestic

and international buyers, with the highest bidder securing the gemstones.

"This auction will be conducted with heightened security due to the substantial value of these gemstones, particularly Tanzanite. The government has reinforced security measures to protect against unscrupulous individuals," he said.

The auction is also expected to provide a transparent platform for collecting royalties and taxes, contributing to the national revenue while ensuring the protection of sellers, buyers, and their assets.

Similar gemstone auctions are held in other African countries, including Zambia (emeralds), Zimbabwe and

South Africa (diamonds).

The Tanzania Mining Commission, in collaboration with the Tanzania Mercantile Exchange (TMX), will oversee the management of the auction, using an electronic sales system. This will include the valuation and pricing of gemstones to ensure the best possible prices are achieved based on the specific gemstones.

Minister Mavunde reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening market management rules and centres for both domestic and international gemstone auctions, creating a more secure and profitable environment for all stakeholders.



Judge Ruth Massam of the High Court of Tanzania pictured at the Shinyanga Regional Referral Hospital on Thursday presenting to the hospital's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Luzila John (L), a ventilator meant to support the growth of premature babies. It was assistance from female lawyers based in the region. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Z'bar to tackle illegal fishing through community teamwork

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

MANAGERS of marine protected areas and patrol chiefs in Zanzibar have been urged to collaborate closely with local communities during inspections to address the ongoing challenge of illegal fishing.

Dr Makame Omar Makame, Director of the Marine conservation department at the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries in Zanzibar, made the call in Maruhubi during a review meeting of the last month's patrols.

Dr Makame acknowledged that

illegal fishing remains a significant issue but highlighted the notable improvements in the marine environment, thanks to efforts to control and eliminate the use of illegal fishing gear in protected areas.

He stressed that further action would be taken against fishermen who persist in illegal activities, such as fishing within coral reefs or using prohibited methods like monofilament nets and wire traps, which undermine the government's conservation efforts.

"The use of illegal fishing

methods continues to contribute to environmental damage, particularly the destruction of coral reefs, which are crucial breeding grounds for fish," Dr Makame.

He added: "It is vital that everyone takes responsibility for combating illegal fishing to protect our marine ecosystem."

Nuru Said, from the Mwambao Institute, reaffirmed the institute's commitment to collaborating with the government on marine conservation efforts, reinforcing the need to safeguard both the environment and marine

resources.

"The ocean is a key resource for our nation's development," Said explained. "Protecting it is essential to combat environmental degradation and ocean pollution."

Ali Mwalim Mahafoudh, Fisheries Officer for Central Unguja District, added that additional education would be provided to fishermen on the importance of sustainable ocean practices.

He also stressed the need for proper licensing of both fishermen and their vessels in accordance with government regulations.

GBV champions recognised for their exceptional impact

By Guardian Reporter

WOMEN in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) has awarded 16 champions for their outstanding contributions to combating gender-based violence (GBV) in the country through various initiatives.

The GBV champions were awarded on Wednesday in a ceremony in Dar es Salaam as part of commemorating 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence which commenced on November 25 and ended on December 10.

Among the awards presented were those for outstanding efforts in combating online violence, fighting violence against people with disabilities, defending the rights of widows, protecting female journalists from GBV, and traditional leaders in the fight against GBV, especially in Ngorongoro, Arusha region. Religious leaders who have taken a firm stand against GBV were also recognised.

Other recipients included leaders working against female genital mutilation (FGM), those leading efforts to prevent and combat gender-based violence, and advocates using art and creativity to raise awareness about sexual violence.

Speaking during the event WiLDAF's Director Anna Kulaya, explained that the purpose of the awards was to honour the resilience, courage, and commitment of individuals who have bravely stood up to fight against gender-based violence in Tanzania.

She emphasized that their determination to end violence, particularly against women, girls, and children, demonstrates the power of collective action in creating a violence-free society.

"Gender-based violence is not just a personal issue; it is a societal problem. In Tanzania, it is a national crisis that disrupts the fabric of our communities," Kulaya said.

She added: "While there may be darkness, there is always light. Today, we celebrate that light—people who have refused to remain silent. These individuals have taken action, extended their hands to those in need, and worked relentlessly to create a society where everyone can live in dignity and safety."

Kulaya reminded the audience that change begins with those who take action. The work of these champions reflects the courage and compassion needed to transform lives and communities. "Even in the face of great challenges, there is always an opportunity to act, heal, and empower others," she said.

She also stressed that the fight against GBV is ongoing. "Although we celebrate these achievements, we must remember that the struggle against gender-based violence is far

from over," she said. "GBV remains a persistent challenge, and our work must continue."

Dr. Monica Mhoja, chairperson of WiLDAF's Board, expressed her excitement in marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence by recognising individuals who have been instrumental in pushing for change both within Tanzania and beyond its borders.

"These 16 leaders have worked tirelessly to combat gender-based violence in various settings, including workplaces, homes, and online," Dr Mhoja said.

She also highlighted the important role played by law enforcement, particularly the officers working in gender desks, who have been crucial in ensuring that the rights of women and children are upheld.

The officers have handled numerous cases and fought for justice.

Ashley Inman from the US Embassy who presented one of the champions commended the good job of the champions, partners and stakeholders which continue to produce positive impacts in the society and national development.

One of the champions, Alaigwanani Parmira, a traditional leader from Ngorongoro District in Arusha Region, expressed his gratitude for the recognition.

"This is the first time people like us have been awarded for this kind of work, and it is a meaningful acknowledgment of our efforts," he said.

Parmira noted that the situation of gender-based violence has improved significantly compared to the past, where children were denied education, FGM rates were high, and women faced widespread abuse.

Nuru Awadhwi, another champion and leader advocating for people with disabilities, expressed her deep appreciation for the recognition, emphasizing the weight of responsibility she feels in promoting gender equality.

She acknowledged that WiLDAF's efforts have encouraged more women with disabilities to join the fight against GBV.



Gender-based violence is not just a personal issue; it is a societal problem. In Tanzania, it is a national crisis that disrupts the fabric of our communities

TBS urged to strengthen fight on illegally imported products

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) has been instructed to develop strategies to tackle the growing issue of products entering the country through informal routes, bypassing necessary inspections.

The directive, issued by TBS chairman Prof. Othman Chande Othman, came during a visit to the Bureau's offices at the Tunduma and Kasumulu border posts this week. The visit aimed to assess current operations and explore ways to improve the effectiveness of TBS in supporting business growth.

He wanted the Bureau to reinforce public education efforts, ensuring that consumers are better equipped to identify safe and quality-assured goods.

"Along with strategies to curb the illegal entry of products, TBS management must continue educating the public about the dangers of using banned and uninspected products," Prof. Chande said.

The visit also underscored the importance of ensuring that both imported and locally manufactured goods are properly marked to make

it easier for consumers to identify quality-assured products.

The call for action follows a report by TBS Director General Dr Ashura Katunzi, which revealed that banned products, including uninspected cosmetics, continue to infiltrate the market through informal channels. Despite collaborations with other regulatory bodies for surveillance at official entry points, the challenge of porous borders remains a major issue.

Dr Katunzi highlighted that the persistence of substandard and banned goods reflects their high demand in the market, stressing the need for stronger public education campaigns and enhanced market surveillance to protect consumer safety and maintain market integrity.



...ensuring that consumers are better equipped to identify safe and quality-assured goods



Dr Thomson Ananth (3rd-R), President of the St Joseph University in Tanzania Council, confers a certificate on a graduand at the Dar es Salaam-based university's 17th graduation ceremony earlier this week. Second right is vice chancellor Prof Eliab Opiyo. Photo: Correspondent Mary Kadoke

By Correspondent Mary Kadoke

GRADUATES have been encouraged to nurture their talents, embrace creativity, and refine their skills with dedication, which are crucial to unlocking opportunities and making a meaningful impact on their communities.

Dr Thomson Ananth, President of St Joseph University in Tanzania (SJUIT) Council, made the call during the 17th graduation ceremony held recently in Dar es Salaam.

He emphasised that by diligently nurturing their chosen paths with skill, creativity, and energy, graduates can transform small beginnings into thriving ventures.

"Graduates must be alert to opportunities that can be created. They must appreciate and nurture their talents and passionately seek out the seeds of success to plant. Once they identify these, they need to nurture them, watering them with diligence, skill, and creativity," he said.

He added: "If they do this, even

Graduates urged to nurture talents, embrace creativity

the smallest seed will grow and flourish, providing shelter, fruit, and fulfilment, not only for themselves but also for the many others who will share in the journey."

Reflecting on the University's mission, 'Capacity Building Through Employable Quality Education,' Dr. Ananth expressed how fulfilling it is to see those equipped for success bringing transformation and empowerment to their communities, driven by a genuine spirit of service and a focus on productive, people-centred, and creative engagements.

Prof. Eliab Opiyo, SJUIT Vice Chancellor, stated that it is essential for graduates to continue enhancing their knowledge, skills, and competence through further studies. He highlighted that the more one learns, the more one

becomes aware of the challenges within communities that require additional knowledge to address.

"This graduation should serve as a catalyst for planning further studies. I encourage you to upgrade yourselves and stay updated with new technology and scientific developments to provide the best and most current services to your clients," Prof. Opiyo said.

He also praised the government's ongoing support for students at higher learning institutions, including those at SJUIT, and the provision of guidelines aimed at improving the quality of education.

"Apply the knowledge and skills you've gained at SJUIT to serve our people with discipline and integrity. Be ambassadors of empathy, advocates of justice, and uphold the regulations and norms set out in

your professions and workplaces," he added.

A total of 542 graduands were awarded degrees and diplomas, of which 358 (66.1 per cent) were male and 184 (33.9 per cent) were female.

Through its Innovation and Technopreneurship Facility (ITAT), SJUIT continues to implement project incubation programmes, developing selected student projects further to the commercial production stage.

The initiative ensures that, upon graduation, students can establish spin-off companies that will provide employment opportunities for themselves and their peers.

This year, three alumni innovation projects were selected for further development and commercialization, with the goal of establishing spin-off companies.



WiLDAF community mobiliser Selemani Bishagazi (R) sensitises small traders at the Moshi municipality's Mbuyuni market yesterday on the importance of updating their personal data in the national Permanent Voters' Register. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

CTI hails govt response to industrial challenges

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

THE Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) has commended the government for its continued response to the challenges facing industrialists, including addressing the nuisance taxes that had long affected the sector.

Leodegar Tenga, director of the Confederation made the remarks during the opening of CTI's 31st annual general meeting and symposium held yesterday in Dar es Salaam.

Tenga expressed the confederation's commitment to working alongside the government to foster industrial development and contribute to the country's economic growth.

He also highlighted the government's efforts in line with its vision of building industrialisation.

"CTI will continue to collaborate with the government to advance industrial development, which is crucial for our national economy. The government's commitment to addressing issues affecting industries is evident," Tenga said.

He further emphasized that many of the challenges faced by industrialists, such as burdensome taxes and restrictive laws, had been effectively tackled through amendments. He praised the government for its ongoing efforts to create a more conducive environment for industries to thrive.

"We are working very well with the government. Whenever an issue arises, we meet, negotiate, and reach solutions. I sincerely thank the government for its willingness to listen and act upon our concerns," Tenga added.

The symposium, which coincided with the General Meeting, focused on the importance of integrating environmental and social responsibility into industrial practices.

Tenga expressed satisfaction with the robust discussions, thanking CTI members for their active participation.

"I am delighted with the quality of the discussions. We have underscored to industrialists the importance of considering environmental issues, as this is a global agenda that we must all prioritize," he said.

Principal Secretary Fatma Khamis of the Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development Zanzibar applauded CTI on its 31 years of

existence, praising the organization for its resilience and its role as a strong voice for industrialists in the country.

She urged industrialists to ensure their production processes are environmentally sustainable, culturally respectful, and beneficial to the local population.

"The environmental agenda is a global priority, and I urge you to ensure that every aspect of your business practices considers the health of our environment. If we neglect it, we risk destroying the future for the next generation," Fatma warned.

She also highlighted the significance of CTI's longevity, acknowledging the challenges faced by such institutions. "It's not easy for an organization to remain strong for over three decades, especially given the financial and operational hurdles that many face. CTI's endurance is a testament to its strength," she said.

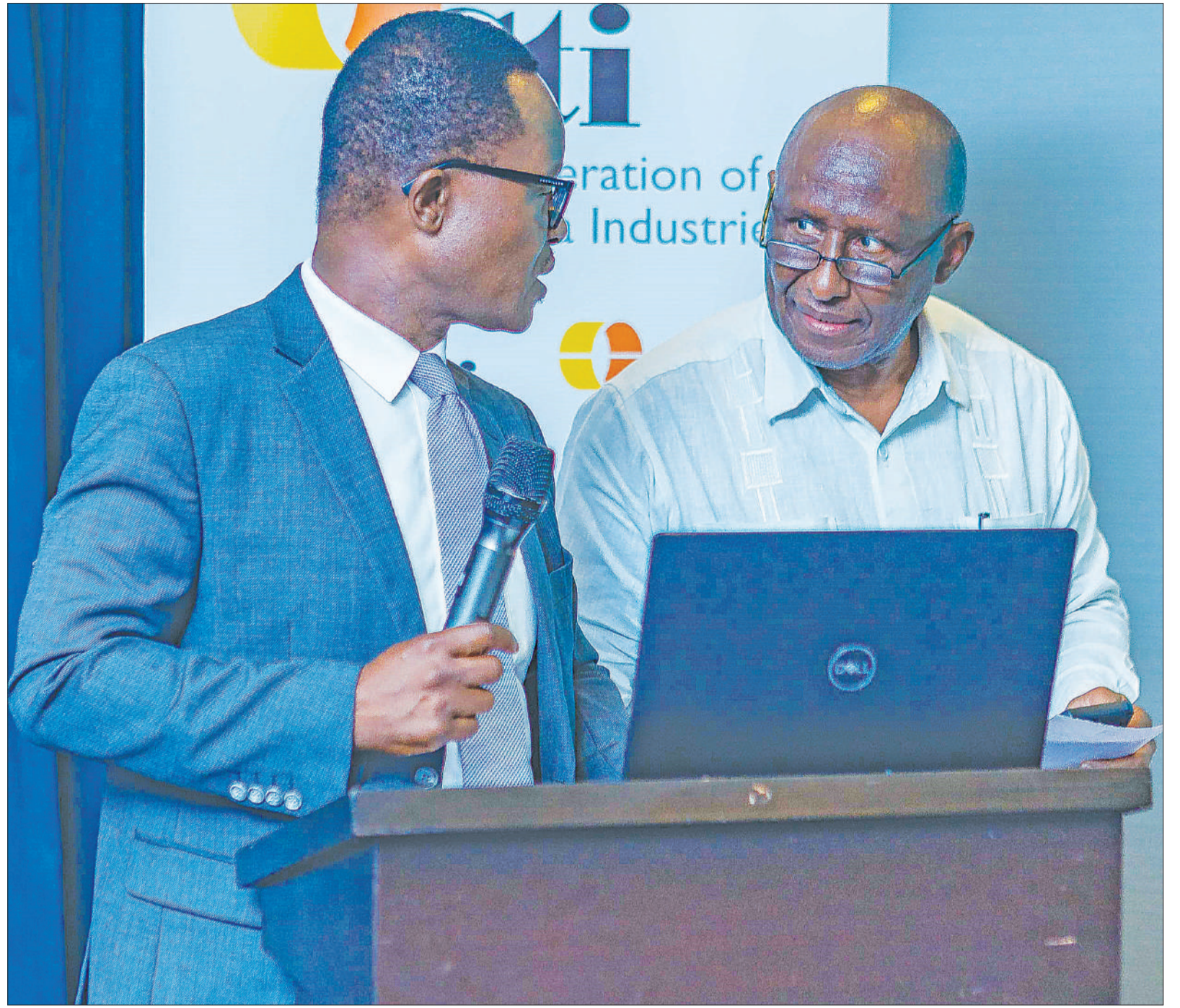
She reiterated the government's commitment to improving the business environment to attract both domestic and foreign investment. She pointed to a recent initiative by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who established a committee to evaluate the tax system and propose reforms.

"Through this blueprint, we've identified several challenges, such as the cumbersome licensing process for investors. These issues are being evaluated and addressed," she explained.

She also praised President Samia's international efforts to attract foreign investment, noting that her diplomatic trips were beginning to yield positive results, as evidenced by the growing influx of foreign investors into Tanzania.



We are working very well with the government. Whenever an issue arises, we meet, negotiate, and reach solutions. I sincerely thank the government for its willingness to listen and act upon our concerns



Confederation of Tanzania Industries executive director Leodegar Tenga (R) and chairman Paul Makanza consult in the course of CTI's annual general meeting held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

By Correspondent Elizabeth Zaya

IRINGA District Commissioner Herry James has said the ongoing national legal aid campaign will greatly help address existing conflicts influenced by limited understanding of human rights as well as oppressive customs and traditions.

Implemented by the Constitution and Legal Affairs Ministry, the Mama Samia Legal Aid Campaign which commenced in February 2023, will run until February 2026 focusing on massive public education and support to strengthen access to justice.

Speaking during the opening of a training session for members of the Civic Education and Good Governance Safety Committee, organised by the Ministry of Constitution and Legal Affairs recently here, DC James said the

'Samia Legal Aid Campaign to address current conflicts'

campaign will also help address gender-based violence and various challenges that affect residents in the region.

He noted that Iringa is one of the regions fortunate enough to benefit from the campaign which will run for 10 days across four regions.

He emphasized that this initiative should be effectively utilised to tackle long-standing challenges in the region.

James explained that the training would empower leaders at various administrative levels, ensuring that they uphold the principles of good governance, human rights,

and democracy when serving the public, particularly in providing access to justice for individuals.

The training session will involve members of the regional and district safety committees, local council experts, and ward executives from across Iringa.

"For our region, this campaign, alongside the training, has come at a critical time, and we believe it will greatly assist in addressing the issues that have troubled us for a long time. We must make the most of it," James said.

He called on participants to collaborate in solving these challenges, utilising the knowledge

gained during the training. He further urged leaders and officials in the Iringa region to fully participate in encouraging citizens to take advantage of the free legal aid services offered through the ongoing campaign.

James also encouraged the participants to ensure that the knowledge they gain serves as a catalyst for change in their daily work.

"It is our responsibility to ensure that this education is disseminated from the family level to the workplace, to build a society founded on justice, peace, and good governance," he said.

Mystery disease in DR Congo might be malaria - authorities

KINSHASA

The mystery flu-like illness that has killed dozens of people in southwest Congo in recent weeks might be malaria, according to results from laboratory samples of infected people, authorities said Wednesday.

"Of the 12 samples taken, nine were positive for malaria but these samples were not of very good quality, so we are continuing to research to find out if this is an epidemic," Dr. Jean-Jacques Muyembe, director-general of the National Institute for Biomedical Research in Kinshasa said.

"But it is likely malaria because most of the victims are children," he added.

On Tuesday, the head of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, also said most of the samples tested positive for malaria, but noted it is possible that more than one disease was involved. He said further samples will be collected and tested.

In recent weeks, there were 416 reported cases of the mystery disease and 31 deaths in hospitals, WHO director-general said. There were another 44 deaths in the community, Congo's health minister Roger Kamba said last week.

Most of the cases and deaths are in children under 14 in the remote Panzi health zone in Congo's western Kwango province,

according to the WHO.

Panzi resident Ezekiel Kasongo said his 9-year-old son was just released from the hospital after he fell sick two weeks ago.

"He had a high fever, a headache and was very weak," Kasongo told the AP. "We were very worried because of the number of deaths, especially among children, but God be praised, he is out."

The symptoms include fever, headache, cough and anemia. Experts from the National Rapid Response Team and WHO were in Panzi last week to take samples and investigate.

The Panzi health zone is hard to access, and according to Congo's health minister, the experts took two days to arrive. It is around 435 miles (700 kilometers) from the capital, Kinshasa.

Because of the lack of local testing capacity, samples had to be taken to Kikwit, more than 500 kilometers away, the head of the National Institute for Public Health, Dieudonne Mwamba, said last week.

Mwamba added that Panzi was hit by a typhoid fever epidemic two years ago, and there is currently a resurgence of seasonal flu across the country.

The area also has high levels of malnutrition and low vaccination coverage, leaving children vulnerable to a range of diseases including malaria, the head of the WHO said.



Dr Joyce Nyoni (R), Director of the Dar es Salaam-based Institute of Social Work, pictured at the launch of the institute's Research Ethics Committee on Thursday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Nigeria rolls out malaria vaccinations to young children

ABUJA

NIGERIA has begun implementing a malaria vaccination programme in an effort to ease the world's highest burden of the mosquito-borne disease which last year killed some 200,000 people.

The vaccination schedule targets young children, with the first dose administered at five months.

One of the first areas where the programme is being rolled out is the southern state of Bayelsa, which has

one of the country's highest rates of malaria.

Rebecca Godspower brought her six-month-old baby to a clinic for the vaccination after having twice treated him for malaria.

"Now that there's a vaccine for malaria, at least I'm happy, I am glad that stress won't be there again," she said.

A view echoed by another mother, Esther Michael, who also visited the clinic.

"I'm happy to bring my child to

the health centre to take a vaccine because we hear that malaria is killing other children."

Infants, children under five years, pregnant women and girls, travellers, and people with HIV or AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection.

Bayelsa State Commissioner for Health, Professor Seiyefa Brisibe, said malaria infection rates are high in the region.

"It accounts for about 30 per cent of deaths in children under five and

it also accounts for a good number of reasons why adults, both mothers and fathers, stay out of a job."

The commissioner said that despite the success recorded in Bayelsa so far, his administration still has to deal with misconceptions and misinformation regarding vaccines, including that it causes infertility.

"Religious leaders, some religious sects do not believe that people need to take vaccine, so that penetrates to society," he said.

UN chief urges rich nations to fulfil climate finance promises

MASERU

UNITED Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has urged rich nations to honour their commitments to help the world's poor countries fight climate change.

In his speech to Lesotho's Parliament on Thursday, he repeated his hope that Africa would soon have permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council.

Guterres is on a three-day visit to southern Africa and was in South Africa on Wednesday.

His two-day trip to neighbouring Lesotho, a small landlocked mountainous kingdom, will also see him visit the Katse Dam, an integral part of the country's plans to harness its water reserves.

A focus of Guterres' visit has been the money-poor nations in Africa and elsewhere need to deal with the impact of a warming planet. While Africa contributes a tiny amount to global warming, it is one of the worst affected continents.

Countries adopted an agreement at the U.N. climate talks in Azerbaijan last month to inject at least \$300 billion a year to help developing nations cope with global warming. It was far short of the more than \$1 trillion developing countries were calling for.

"Developed countries must meet their commitments ... and deliver the promised \$300 billion annually for climate finance," Guterres said to Lesotho's lawmakers. "Landlocked and least developed countries like yours are especially vulnerable."

He also said the new Loss and Damage Fund, created to compensate poor countries for natural disasters caused by climate change, "must be operationalized swiftly and funded generously by those most responsible for climate destruction."

'European Union nations can suspend asylum amidst Belarus-Russia tactics'

BRUSSELS

THE European Union has authorised Poland and several other eastern European countries to temporarily suspend asylum rights when they believe Belarus and Russia are manipulating migrants to undermine the stability of the region.

In October, Prime Minister Donald Tusk of Poland announced a proposal to enact a law that would freeze asylum applications for up to 60 days, a decision that has sparked outrage among human rights advocates.

Henna Virkkunen, EU Commission Executive Vice-President, stated that "Following Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, the practice of instrumentalizing and weaponization of migration started in 2021 and has continued at the borders with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Finland. But what we are seeing today is of an exceptional nature."

The European Commission has accused Belarusian authorities of aiding migrants in their journey to Europe by offering ladders and other means of assistance.

Virkkunen stated that there is a serious and ongoing issue at the eastern border, noting a significant increase in illegal crossings, especially at the Polish-Belarus border, which has risen by 66% compared to last year. He pointed out that Russian authorities are aiding these illegal activities, with over 90% of migrants crossing the Polish-Belarusian border using

Southern Africa is in the grip of one of its worst droughts, triggering a hunger crisis that has affected more than 27 million people, according to the U.N. Lesotho is one of several countries to declare national disasters because of the drought's devastating impact on crops.

The drought has been blamed on the naturally occurring El Niño weather phenomenon, but other crises like recent deadly cholera outbreaks and floods across the East African region have been attributed to climate change.

A report this year by the World Meteorological Organization said African nations are losing up to 5% of their gross domestic product every year and bearing a heavier burden than others from climate change.

Guterres said in South Africa on Wednesday that he hoped that Africa would have at least two permanent members of the Security Council by the time his term ends in December 2026, although he acknowledged it would be difficult. In Lesotho, he said it was another "injustice" against Africa that a continent of more than 1.4 billion still had no permanent representation in that body.

"When a continent that is home to nearly a fifth of humanity remains systematically excluded from global decision-making, we must call this what it is, a relic of colonialism that has no place in today's world," Guterres said.

Yesterday, Guterres was due to visit the Katse Dam, which is part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The project aims to build a series of dams and tunnels to redirect some of Lesotho's water into South Africa's river system to help ease its neighbour's water shortages.

Museveni defends military trials with rival under arrest

KAMPALA

UGANDA'S President Yoweri Museveni, 80, has defended the use of military courts to try civilians - following an outcry over the arrest and trial of opposition leader Kizza Besigye.

His 68-year-old rival has been charged in a military court with possession of pistols and attempting to purchase weapons abroad - accusations he denies.

Besigye, who was abducted while visiting Kenya last month and forcibly taken to Uganda, found out on Tuesday that he would be spending Christmas in custody as his trial has

been delayed until January.

Museveni said any crime involving a gun was dealt with in a military court to ensure the country's stability as civilian courts took too long to deal with cases.

Hundreds of civilians have been tried in Uganda's military courts, even though the Constitutional Court has ruled against the practice.

How Besigye disappeared in Kenya and ended up in military court

How an ex-rebel has stayed in power for more than 30 years

"I have seen the arguments in the



Wilson Wairara, a representative of the Director of the Property Division at the Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development ministry, makes remarks during discussions on the recognition and registration of real estate stakeholders held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Special Correspondent

African Development Bank approves \$108 million loan for Zambia reforms

THE African Development Bank Group's Board of Directors has approved a \$108 million loan to Zambia to enhance the nation's economic governance and implement reforms in essential public sectors.

The funding will facilitate the Fiscal Sustainability and Economic Resilience Support Programme, a crucial component in efforts to create a robust and diversified economy in Zambia.

The programme aims to increase domestic revenue generation by supporting various initiatives, including the introduction of an electronic "smart invoice" system, registering 12,000 VAT-

liable taxpayers, and Zambia's participation in the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes.

The programme aims to boost agro-industrial growth by supporting the agricultural mechanisation strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and establishing ten mechanization centres.

The goal is to enhance agricultural productivity and increase production to supply both national and international markets

by providing rental equipment to farmers lacking access.

This initiative will help reduce dependence on the mining sector. Additionally, the project will assist the ministry with a financing mechanism focused on sustainable agriculture.

It plans to allocate at least 257 million kwachas (approximately \$9.4 million) for the 2023-2024 agricultural season.

This market-driven initiative, managed by the private sector through financial institutions, offers

customized funding in the form of agricultural inputs, particularly benefiting small and medium-sized farmers with limited access to affordable financing.

Additionally, the project will promote the efficiency and transparency of public spending by reinforcing the public investment management strategy.

By November 30, 2024, the African Development Bank Group's active portfolio in Zambia featured 24 projects, collectively valued at \$872.3 million.



Crop management experts with Japan's Kawasaki Kiko Company pictured earlier this week at a farm in Mufindi, Iringa Region, checking Tanzanian tea. It was as part of preparations to develop machines ideal for use in handling the processing of tea grown in the country. Standing (notebook in hand) is Tanzanian agricultural officer Bahati Majaliwa. Photo: Correspondent Halfani Chusi

Museveni defends military trials with rival under arrest

papers by some lawyers regarding the correctness of some civilians being tried in the Court Martial," President Museveni said in a long post on X.

He said his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party had enacted a law through parliament in 2005 to allow the use of military courts because of the "rampant activities of criminals and terrorists that were using guns to kill people indiscriminately".

"The civilian courts were clogged with the many court cases of the whole country: murders, rape,

assaults, robbery, land matters, divorce matters etc, etc. They could, therefore, not handle these gun-wielding criminals quickly. Yet, for stabilization you need speed," he said.

Besigye has objected to being tried by a court martial, saying that if there were any charges against him, he should be tried in a civilian court.

A fierce rival of Museveni, he has contested and lost four presidential elections against Uganda's leader, who has been in power since 1986.

He has been less active in politics in the last couple of years, and did not

contest the 2021 election.

The veteran politician - who was once Museveni's personal doctor - has been arrested dozens of times in Uganda but never convicted.

Earlier this year he announced he was returning to the political fray to help sort out his party, which has split into two factions.

Activists and rights groups have rallied behind him, condemning his treatment as unfair.

"Civilians tried in Uganda's military courts do not receive the same due process guarantees as those in civilian

courts," UN human rights chief Volker Türk said.

There are reports that his arrest had been planned for months.

Human Rights Watch has urged the Ugandan government to end the "weaponisation of military detention" and the trial of political opposition leaders and their supporters.

But Museveni said the East African nation was justified in using court martial.

He ended his statement with this praise for them: "You have made your own contribution to our peace."

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World Bank's climate change GDP impact helpful reminder

AS officialdom and especially its planning teams sit down to listen 'more of the same' views on how the country needs to look like by 2050, a sharp intervention is being heard from outside.

However, it is not very clear if it fits with what was being celebrated about the draft document.

A World Bank report in a new series, the Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR) for Tanzania, has just been published.

It asserts that, without significant climate action, economic growth could be reduced by up to 4 per cent by 2050. In fact, it could be worse, as United Nations agencies commonly desists from inducing shocks.

The WB country director made sobering observations that the effects of climate change could push an estimated 2.6 million people into poverty, with localised migration of as many as 13 million seeking better land, including for pasture.

To avoid that sort of scenario, the report talks of an urgent need to integrate climate change issues into the country's development agenda. It was as if the team charged with preparing the report was unaware of Vision 2050 preparations.

The report talks of the need to align climate action outlook with economic growth and poverty reduction goals, neither of which is strictly speaking being debated in the Vision 2050 platform.

The director's other remarks were clearly aligned with local perspectives such as the view that Tanzania has made impressive strides in social and economic development.

High poverty levels and an over-reliance on low-productivity agriculture however make the economy vulnerable to climate

risks. The report seeks a clear strategy, not just projects.

Projects to mitigate the impact of the challenges are routine in their being put up, this including carbon trade business, to which the report ideally wants broad reforestation and not being paid handsomely for protecting some forest patches.

The lessons which World Bank researchers are talking about don't come out in the underlying reasoning on the shift to clean energy. All these strategies seek to help those on the ground, but have few answers for an expanding population, insufficient farming land or rising urban unemployment.

It is in like manner that ministerial administrators were for a while asking officers in local councils and regional secretariats to take account of the 2022 population and housing census results in planning for social services.

There is an effort to think of the statistics collected as steadfast information that can be used in the next three to four years, whereas chances are that the population will likely be rising by at least two million per year.

In the next 25 years, if we continue with carbon trading, local seeds and customary law land titles, we will likely need twice the farmland we now have, and that is exactly where the World Bank sees serious challenges.

The World Bank report is on track with respect to threats of rising pressure on land and what it says will be internal migrations, it doesn't come out clearly enough on the key issues.

For example, absorbing a vastly bigger population is neither an issue of changing agro-sector tools nor of tackling climate issues but of capitalisation in the economy as a whole.

Presidential legal aid campaign might find it hard with all 'current conflicts'

REGIONAL and district administrators are making spirited efforts to ensure that a presidential legal aid campaign covers more areas, which suggests that a mobile ministerial unit set up for the purpose in the Lands ministry has not made the headway expected.

A district commissioner in the Southern Highlands zone has suggested that the ongoing national legal aid campaign will greatly help address existing conflicts.

He said the conflicts are "influenced by limited understanding of human rights as well as oppressive customs and traditions", and it is unclear how far the legal aid drive will help.

The campaign is administered by the Constitution and Legal Affairs ministry and has been around nearly two years now.

It is a daunting task seeking to fill the gap of mistrust targeting land tribunals that the law framers considered would suffice, and the mobile land clinic set up some time in the past year was supposed to fill up.

It makes rapid reminders of the law to the contending parties and trust in their grasp of the issues, to solve cases. This doesn't appear to have been borne out, so the presidential team is expected to do much better.

The presidential legal aid campaign seems to have time on its side as it runs until February 2026, with its publicists saying it focuses on massive public education and support to strengthen access to justice.

That formulation appears to be inaccurate as it would imply that the legal aid team explains to

people in this or that locality how to use the court mechanism, land tribunals, etc. Yet it is clear that it was created precisely owing to drawbacks detected in the use of these mechanisms.

The ministry seems to be working around to try and resolve these difficulties by the methods that state agencies and civic organisations know best, namely, providing 'education' on the issues.

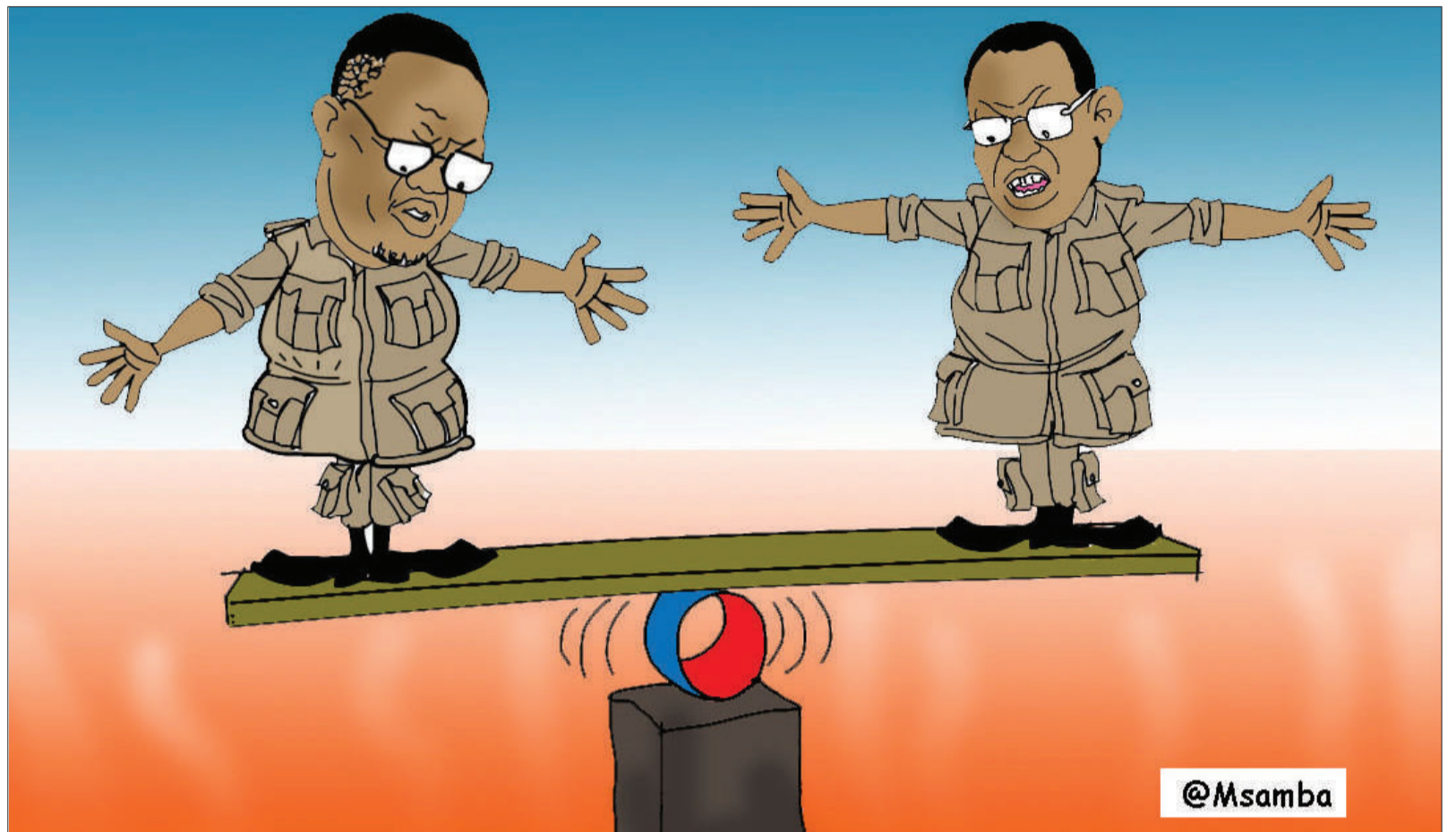
Relieved that Iringa is among regions "fortunate enough to benefit from the campaign which will run for 10 days across four regions", the district administrator underscored the need for more effective use of the campaign to tackle long-standing disputes in the region.

He also focused on the importance of training meant to empower leaders at each level to uphold principles of good governance, human rights and democracy when serving the public, say, in providing access to justice for individuals.

More pointedly, the administrator appealed to leaders and officials in the region to participate fully in encouraging the citizenry to take advantage of the free legal aid services offered through the ongoing campaign.

That the participants could use the training as a catalyst for change in their daily work was vivid enough. What was uncertain, though, is whether contending parties on land would accept their advice or rulings.

Thus, the matter could sadly return to square one, even as many people might be hoping that the legal aid team is representing the president and would therefore prove of immense utility and relevance.



No time to gamble: Leaders must unite to prevent pandemics

By Special Correspondents, Madrid

H5N1 avian influenza is surging in mammal populations and causing new human infections, with mpxx leading to deaths of children.

The former co-chairs of The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response are meanwhile warning that leaders have not done nearly enough to prepare for pandemic threats, leaving some eight billion people vulnerable.

"In 2024, for everyone who survived Covid-19, a pandemic is a lived experience and not a theoretical threat," says one of the former co-chairs, former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

She notes: "Instead of taking action to prepare for the next major outbreak, leaders have turned away from pandemic preparedness. This is a gamble with our futures."

Sirleaf has noted with alarm the number of child deaths occurring as a result of a more dangerous strain of mpxx, a scarcity of diagnostic testing and the fact that vaccines exist but they are not yet available where children are dying.

In their new report, entitled 'No Time to Gamble: Leaders Must Unite to Prevent Pandemics', the former co-chairs take stock of progress against the package of recommendations the panel made to the World Health Assembly in May 2021 following its eight-month review of the response to Covid-19.

"We were clear in 2021 at the height of Covid-19 that leaders needed to act urgently to make transformative change to the international system so that there would be a new approach to funding, new ways of managing equitable access to products like vaccines and tests as well as a new Framework Convention to complement the rules for outbreaks and pandemics," said the other co-chair, former New Zealand Helen Elizabeth Clark, at an event to release the report hosted by Club de Madrid.

She added: "Instead, the funds now available pale in comparison to the needs and high-income countries are holding on too tightly to traditional charity-based approaches to equity. The pandemic agreement is vital and must succeed, but it has yet to be agreed. In short, if there were a pandemic threat today - such as if H5N1 began to spread from person to person - the world would likely again be overwhelmed."

Some cause for hope

The report also points to progress. The Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly's (WHO) agreement to amend the International Health Regulations (IHR) was also highly expected to result in faster information-sharing from countries and from WHO itself, more transparent processes in

deciding a public health emergency of international concern, and a definition of a pandemic emergency - which was not codified before.

The annual event was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from this May 27 to June 1 under the theme: All for Health, Health for All.

Other progress includes WHO Member States' decision in 2023 to increase the proportion of unearmarked funding to the base budget of the United Nations' health agency, giving the organisation more independence in the allocation of funds.

However, the panel co-chairs have also warned that WHO may be spending too much on the operational side of health emergencies, including on delivery of supplies, when it should focus attention on excellence in normative and technical support.

Given the attention both emergencies and technical excellence require, the report suggests that WHO member states consider whether the global health agency should be split into two entities so that emergency operations do not overwhelm the normative work.

Are countries prepared?

The co-chairs have also stated that it is impossible to know if countries are prepared for pandemics, based on the current assessment tools and metrics.

The report shows that while voluntary self-assessments reached a record high in 2023, the infrequency of joint external evaluations, lack of visibility on national plans, and limitations on the types of information being collected provide only a patchwork picture of country-level preparedness.

Areas to address to help change the future

The report lays out several steps that must be taken to implement the panel's package of recommendations and make the world safer from pandemic threats. Governments, international financial institutions, international and regional organisations and WHO have been presented with several priorities to consider.

One: Pandemic rules

By this July, WHO member states ought to have set new ways of working to make progress on the pandemic agreement, with one of the new modalities expected to be inclusion of independent experts and civil society. Meanwhile, the pandemic agreement should be adopted by this month (December 2024).

WHO member states and the agency itself should have immediately abided by the amended International Health Regulations and prepare for their coming into force

by June 2025.

Two: Multisectoral leadership

A new Champions Group to Prevent Pandemics, comprising former and current leaders, should be established. At the Summit of the Future in September, the United Nations General Assembly ought to have adopted a new Emergency Platform for complex global shocks as part of the Pact for the Future. Furthermore, the platform should have expanded to include emergency preparedness.

Three: Accountability

In October, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board should have been made fully independent and de-linked from WHO, or a new independent monitoring board, similar to the IPCC, should be established. The pandemic agreement must include an implementation and compliance mechanism.

[IPCC - The Geneva-based Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations. It was jointly set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Its job is to advance scientific knowledge about climate change caused by human activities.

Four: Finance

The Pandemic Fund was expected to have had a successful pledging round of non-Overseas Development Assistance funds in advance of last month's G20.

The nineteenth meeting of Group of Twenty (G20) Heads of State and Government meeting was held at the Museum of Modern Art in Brazil's commercial capital Rio de Janeiro from this November 18 to 19.

The G20 was expected to lay plans to convert The Pandemic Fund into a preparedness and surge mechanism based on a global public investment model.

Five: Equitable Medical Countermeasures

At the Rio de Janeiro G20 and the next one, Brazil, South Africa and other middle-income countries were expected to indicate the need to move away from a charitable model for medical countermeasures access and towards one of regional resilience, knowledge generation and technology sharing to stop outbreaks, managing countermeasures as part of the global commons.

Six: Independent, more authoritative WHO

At the November G20, member states were expected to meet milestones for WHO's investment round and repledge their commitment to unearmarked funding.

The January 2025 Executive Board was meanwhile expected to initiate a one-term approach for the agency's Director General and Regional Directors, as the agency itself worked to depoliticise senior appointments.

Country-level preparedness

Countries were expected to ensure that they had updated pandemic plans based on WHO benchmarks, as the agency itself updated assessment tools in line with the amended International Health Regulations (IHR) and wider whole-of-government and society approaches. That was expected to run alongside beginning to publish clear annual assessments of country preparedness.

The IHR are an instrument of international law that is legally-binding on 196 countries, including the 194 WHO member states. They grew out of the response to deadly epidemics that once overran Europe. The regulations create rights and obligations for countries, including the requirement to report public health events, while also outlining the criteria to determine whether or not a particular event constitutes a "public health emergency of international concern".

The panel's report is emphatic that there is about a fifty per cent chance that the world could face another pandemic threat on the same scale as Covid-19 in the next 25 years, making it even more important to invest in preparedness now.

"There were lessons to be learned from Ebola in West Africa," said Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, elaborating: "Just five years later, having not applied those lessons, there were lessons to be learned again from Covid-19. There is no need to keep learning. Instead of gambling, leaders can make practical decisions and apply those lessons. Why would they make any other choice?"

The Independent Panel spent eight months rigorously reviewing various dimensions of the Covid-19 pandemic. In May 2021 the co-chairs submitted their evidence-based landmark report entitled "Covid-19: Make it the Last Pandemic to the World Health Assembly".

It made recommendations which, taken as a package, could transform the international system in a way that could make Covid-19 the last pandemic of such devastation.

The panel co-chairs, several members and advisors continue to advocate implementation of the full package of recommendations owing to concerns about the failure to put into effect advice from past high-level reviews of major outbreaks.

Their interest is to see a fit-for-purpose, transformed and effective international system for pandemic preparedness and response. They continue to do this work because of the serious implications of lack of transformative change being made.

Striving for universal health coverage for all in Tanzania

By Telesphor Magobe

LAST week, we briefly looked at Tanzania's electoral justice (state of democracy) in relation to the country's current economic performance. We said although Tanzania's economy was fast growing, according to various global reports, its growth does not match its democracy profile, which is still a fledgling democracy.

We suggested that Tanzania was supposed to be referred to as an emerging, and not merely, a fledgling democracy so that its democracy profile also reflects or matches its economic growth.

We, however, said given the allegations of electoral flaws in the just ended civic election in which the ruling party won 99.01 per cent against opposition parties which ended up with just 0.09 per cent, electoral justice (which reflects a free, fair and democratic process) in the country is still more of an ideal than a reality.

At global level, according to "The Global State of Democracy (GSoD) 2024: Strengthening the Legitimacy of Elections in a Time of Radical Uncertainty", which covers 173 countries worldwide there is marked uncertainty in periodic democratic elections across the world.

Today, I invite you to reflect on universal health coverage. Since 2017, on December 12 each year the world marks International Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day adopted by the General Assembly by resolution 72/138.

The idea of having UHC is to raise public awareness to ensure every person everywhere across the world accesses quality and affordable healthcare in line with sustainable development goal (SDG) 3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages." In particular, Target 3.8 states: "Achieve



The Law and you

universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare ser-

vices, medicines and vaccines for all."

Although each member state to the UN has committed itself to achieving universal health coverage by 2030, not all countries are on track in this area. In many aspects, especially low income earners can hardly access better health services. Another thing is that in Africa especially senior government officials and rich people tend to travel overseas for medical consultation, check-up and treatment.

This means investment in quality domestic health services is still needed and that is why those who can afford it go overseas to seek specialised medical consultation, check-up, and treat-

ment which are unavailable in their countries and if they are available are not yet up to standard.

Why can't those officials and rich people be treated in their own countries like any other citizens? The answer is that health services are not up to standard depending on the economic position of each country.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), UHC Day 2024 focuses on the role of financial protection in accelerating UHC progress. It says financial protection ensures that "people don't fall into poverty because of having to pay out-of-pocket for health costs."

Over the last 20 years, financial protection has progressively deteriorated, with 2 billion people experiencing financial hardship and 1.3 billion people pushed into poverty due to health spending."

It suggests that "mothers may miss out on the life-saving intervention they need for themselves or their children, people are not diagnosed and treated for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on time, with delays in early treatment leading to severe, untreatable or life-threatening illnesses."

In Tanzania, health services have been improved to a considerable extent, yet not all people can afford better health services because of inherent high costs. Even for those who use insurance covers, some medical check-up procedures and medicines are not included in the health insurance cover. That is people have to find other means of meeting their medical check-up procedures or medical treatment

expenses.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2024 suggests that 1.1 billion of 6.3 billion people live in acute multidimensional poverty, over half of them being children. It says large proportions of the 1.1 billion poor people lack adequate sanitation (828 million), housing (886 million) and cooking fuel (998 million). In sub-Saharan Africa, 553 million people live in poverty.

Obviously, if 828 million of 1.1 billion people worldwide lack adequate sanitation, 886 million people lack housing and 998 million people lack cooking fuel, it means they won't also be able to afford health services. It translates into saying, UHC is still a big challenge across the world especially in Africa.

One of the targets of Tanzania Development Vision 2025 is achieving high quality livelihoods. In the health sector, this involves access to quality primary healthcare for all, access to quality reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages, reduced infant and maternal mortality rates by three-quarters of current levels, universal access to safe water and life expectancy comparable to the level attained by typical middle income countries.

Time is running out as we seem to meet these health targets. Yet, every citizen is entitled to health services that meet his or her health condition and in a fast developing economy like Tanzania health services should be affordable to all.

Today's quote: "Health is a state of complete mental, social and physical wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." - World Health Organisation.

By Guardian Reporter

WWF-Tanzania, through its Voices for Biodiversity project is working to empower and engage young people on issues related to biodiversity. The goal is to amplify their voices in the fight against climate change and promote positive transformations in the natural environment.

The project aims to empower and engage young people in biodiversity conservation, especially in the context of the ongoing challenges posed by climate change. It focuses on equipping youth with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to become active participants in environmental advocacy and policy-making, thereby amplifying their voices in the fight to protect biodiversity.

It builds the capacity of young people—particularly university students and members of youth networks like the Tanzania Youth Biodiversity Network (TYBN)—to engage effectively in biodiversity conservation.

Through training, information, and exposure to international platforms, it helps youth develop leadership skills that are essential for creating long-term change in environmental protection.

By actively involving youth, the project aims to create sustainable solutions for the protection and conservation of ecosystems. Youth engagement is seen as a key driver of real, long-lasting change in the way the world addresses environmental challenges.

WWF has equipped them with critical skills, thus making them aware of existing environmental policies, ensuring they are prepared to contribute meaningfully to biodiversity conservation efforts.

Maureen Mboka, the Policy and Advocacy Officer for the Voices for Biodiversity project, shared that the project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), focuses on empowering different community groups. It provides them with the skills needed to participate actively in biodiversity issues.

According to Mboka the project focuses on raising awareness on the importance of biodiversity, the threats it faces, and the role that young people can play in safeguarding it.

"We provide youth with the tools to understand biodiversity policies; we ensure that they are well-equipped to advocate for sustainable environmental practices and influence decisions at local, national, and international levels.

"The project has enabled youth to take part in policy-making processes,

Climate change: WWF empowering youth on biodiversity conservation



Enabling youth to be responsible for environmental stewardship is crucial as they are likely to live longer with the consequences of today's environmental challenges. Photo: Guardian Photographer.

attend technical sessions, and engage in international conferences such as on-going 16th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD-COP16) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia," said Mboka, adding that two youth attended the conference with support from the project.

In a recent training session held in Dodoma, youth were provided with updates on key discussions and agreements made during COP16 whereas they were also received guidance on how to engage in the implementation of the agreements.

Youth action for sustainable development

Paulina Tete, a student from Ardhi University, described how the training equipped par-

ticipants with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development in ecosystems.

She emphasized the importance of youth taking responsibility for environmental stewardship, saying young people are likely to live the longest with the consequences of today's environmental choices. By taking action now, youth can help shape a more sustainable future and mitigate these challenges before they become irreversible.

She told The Guardian that when youth take part in environmental stewardship, they empower themselves to make a difference and build confidence in their ability to enact change.

"When youth are educated and involved in environmental efforts from an early age, they

are more likely to carry these values into adulthood," said Tete, promising to apply the skills and knowledge gained to lead biodiversity conservation efforts and contribute to a greener future.

Alsalm Sengere, a TYBN alumnus, highlighted the critical role of young people in addressing environmental challenges. He noted that youth bring fresh ideas, energy and creativity to solving these issues.

"Biodiversity awareness education is crucial for youth because we have the ability to think outside the box and bring innovative solutions to the table," explained Sengere, adding: "Through training and capacity building, we can now create environmental networks that effectively protect and conserve biodiversity at

the grassroots level."

Sengere added that engaging youth in biodiversity conservation is essential for positive change in the natural world. He also committed to being a strong biodiversity ambassador and inspiring others to adopt sustainable practices.

Thomas Sichimba, a student from the University of Dodoma, urged WWF and other development organizations to extend biodiversity education, especially to rural areas where youth can drive positive change.

"We believe youth in village areas have the power to create lasting environmental change, and we need more programs to reach them," Sichimba said.

Ahmed Abdallah Hamis from the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) expressed his commitment to using the knowledge

gained from the training to address human activities that contribute to biodiversity loss. He emphasized the need to safeguard both life and nature for future generations.

Key outcomes from COP16

Steven Kapinga, an Environmental Governance and Policy expert, provided an overview of the key agreements made at the UNCCD-COP16 saying among the significant outcomes is the set target to reduce biodiversity loss by 2030.

COP16 also saw the adoption of a Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, which aims to curb zoonotic diseases, prevent non-communicable diseases, and promote sustainable ecosystems.

One of the key priorities at COP16 was to establish mechanisms for fair and equitable benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, ensuring that the benefits of biodiversity are shared globally.

WWF continues to work tirelessly to protect the world's natural resources, including oceans, land, and wildlife. By conserving these ecosystems, WWF ensures that current and future generations can continue to benefit from vital resources like food, water, and energy.

Through initiatives like Voices for Biodiversity, WWF is fostering a new generation of environmental leaders, helping them to drive change, and ensuring that biodiversity remains safeguarded for years to come.

Mahrang Baloch: Feted worldwide, persecuted at home

KARACHI

“This recognition by a media outlet highlights the painful stories of abductions, torture, and the genocide of the Baloch people,” said 31-year-old political activist Mahrang Baloch, speaking with IPS over the phone from Quetta, Balochistan, in reference to her inclusion on the BBC’s annual list of 100 most inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2024.

“BBC 100 Women acknowledges the toll this year has taken on women by celebrating those who—through their resilience—are pushing for change as the world changes around them,” stated the media organization.

This is the second award that Mahrang received this year. In October, she was among Time magazine’s 2024 Time100 Next’ list of young individuals to recognize for “advocating peacefully for Baloch rights.”

She was invited by the magazine to attend a ceremony in New York, but she was stopped at the airport from boarding the plane on October 7 “without giving me a reason” why. She stated that she was termed a “terrorist” and a “suicide bomber,” with multiple cases filed against her. “And if this were not enough, now I and my brother have been placed on the Fourth Schedule list,” she said. Introduced in 1997, the Fourth Schedule aimed to combat sectarian violence, militancy, and terrorism. Almost 4,000 Baloch have been placed in the Fourth Schedule list.

Being placed on the Fourth Schedule under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) is a serious matter, resulting in restrictions such as travel bans, frozen bank accounts, prohibitions on financial support, arms license embargoes, and employment clearance limitations.

A trained medical doctor, Mahrang began protesting against the alleged abductions and killings of innocent Baloch by Pakistani security forces in 2006, well before her father, a political activist, forcibly disappeared in 2009. His tortured body was discovered in 2011.

In 2017, her brother was abducted, and though he was released in 2018, Mahrang continued to advocate for justice for all the disappeared, despite facing threats and intimidation. In 2019, she founded the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), a human rights movement dedicated to raising awareness and seeking justice for the Baloch people.

Balochistan’s history of resistance against the Pakistan government began in 1948 and continues. Pakistan’s military, paramilitary and intelligence forces have responded with kidnapping, torturing and killing tens of thousands of Baloch men.

The Voice for the Baloch Missing Persons, a non-profit organisation representing family members of those who disappeared in Balochistan, has registered approximately 7,000 cases since 2000.

“We have been fighting for our families now for over two decades, on every platform. I have appeared in courts, even the Supreme Court of Pakistan, presented our cause at every commis-



Mahrang Baloch recently was acknowledged by the BBC as one of the most inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2024. Credit: Baloch Yakjehti Committee

sion and committee that the government or the judiciary has set up but so far there has been no progress. In fact, in the last three months of this year alone, more Baloch individuals are being picked than in any other time,” said Nasrullah Baloch, chairman of the VBMP, speaking to IPS over the phone.

“We have no confidence in any government institution, especially the government-constituted Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (CoIED), anymore to resolve our issue,” he rued.

But neither does the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). In 2020, Ian Seiderman, ICJ’s Legal and Policy Director, stated the commission (established in 2011) had failed to hold even a single perpetrator of enforced disappearance responsible.

“A commission that does

not address impunity nor facilitate justice for victims and their families can certainly not be considered effective,” he said.

Since the ICJ’s policy brief, not much seems to have changed. Indeed, Mahrang asserts that the situation has deteriorated. In the past three months, “over 300 Baloch have been abducted, and seven cases of extrajudicial killings have been reported.” On the other hand, the CoIED reported that it had resolved 8,015 of the 10,285 cases it had investigated from 2011 to June 2024.

In 2021 and then again in 2022, Pakistan’s parliament tried passing a bill to criminalize enforced disappearances but it has not yet come into force. Pakistan has refused to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced

Disappearance.

Media’s Dismal Role

While the international media has given Baloch activists like Mahrang “hope” by amplifying their voices and bringing “visibility” to their “genuine” cause, she said it has failed to ignite the Pakistani media.

“Our national media has failed us,” she lamented, adding that they never supported their “genuine” cause. In such circumstances, the recognition by the international media gives her some “hope.”

Prominent journalist and author Mohammad Hanif, who has consistently highlighted the issue of missing Baloch, described Mahrang as “articulate, clearheaded, and inspirational.” He admitted that the media in Pakistan has not given the issue adequate coverage, revealing, “There

were standing instructions to newsrooms not to cover it.” Furthermore, he pointed out a “clear bias among mainstream journalists against Baloch issues.”

Talat Hussain, political commentator and journalist, agreed that media coverage of enforced disappearances had been “limited and partially blacked out” but added it was not entirely absent in its coverage.

He acknowledged he had not covered the issue extensively, not because he had been asked to avoid it, but because the overwhelming news flow in Islamabad, driven by political unrest, protests, rising terrorism, and economic challenges, eclipsed everything.

However, Hussain noted that what was considered a human rights issue had become deeply politicized, in-

creasingly intertwined with Baloch separatism. Many now view the activists as opponents of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects. “This complicates efforts to recognize Mahrang solely as a human rights campaigner,” he remarked.

Farah Zia, director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, declined to equate the BYC with the separatist movement. She described women like Mahrang, who “come out to protest and even lead them,” as a refreshing phenomenon. “This completely unarmed, non-violent resistance movement makes these young women leaders extremely powerful.” Moreover, said Zia, “Even her followers are young, educated Baloch who have defied their traditional power centres, including their tribal elders.”

“They have broken many stereotypes associated with Baloch women,” agreed Zohra Yusuf, a rights activist. In 2023, Mahrang led hundreds of women on a 1,000-mile (1,600 km) march to the capital Islamabad to demand information on the whereabouts of their family members. She was arrested twice during the journey. The BBC highlighted her December 2023 march to Islamabad, where she and hundreds of women marched for “justice for their husbands, sons, and brothers.”

“The people of Balochistan see Mahrang and the BYC as a beacon of hope because they have completely lost faith in the politicians,” pointed out Mir Mohammad Ali Talpur, who has been associated with the Baloch rights struggle since 1971 and wrote about violations of their rights in newspapers till 2015, after which he said the “media stopped publishing my pieces due to state pressure.”

“There are no consequences for those implementing disappear, kill and dump policies,” said Hanif. “The state believes in its own brute colonial power.”

“Enforced disappearances will continue as there is total impunity for the perpetrators. Those associated with the intelligence and security agencies have no regard for the rule of law,” pointed out Yusuf. She said the young doctor had exhibited “positive leadership qualities by being firm on her demands without creating hatred towards anyone.”

IPS UN Bureau Report

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

By Special Correspondent

THE Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has finalised the framework for the establishment of a \$75million Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Facility.

Besides, ECOWAS said it would need about \$19 billion investment towards improving storage facilities, milling initiatives and enhancing mechanization in paddy production.

The President, ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Aliou Omar Touray made the disclosure on Thursday at the opening of the 93rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers holding in Abuja.

Touray also commended the ongoing work on the Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline project, as part of some of the integrated project for the community.

He also listed other integrated programmes aimed at integrating the region including the 6,800km Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline projects, regulation on Roaming, direct flight, water amongst others.

Evening Roundup: Stories making waves in The Nation - The Nation 0:00 / 0:00

He said: "A Framework Document for the Establishment of an ECOWAS Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Facility has been finalised by the Ministers. This is a new blended finance facility with an initial amount of USD75 million, whose objective is to provide grants, loans and guarantees through regular demand-driven competitive calls for proposals providing clean energy solutions for the ECOWAS region.

"Towards regional self-sufficiency in rice production, the "Rice Offensive" project launched by the Commission in 2014, under the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) has now reached a second cycle with the development of a Second Regional Action Plan (2025-2035) to replace the 2020-2025 plan, which is expiring next year.

To Attain regional self-sufficiency in rice, it would require the local production of 33 million tonnes of milled rice to meet a planned consumption target by 2035.

This will also require a financial investment of US\$15 to \$19 billion dollars of capital expenditures (CAPEX) towards improving storage facilities, milling initiatives and enhancing mechanization in



ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Omar Touray

ECOWAS finalises framework for a US \$75m renewal energy facility

paddy production."

On the Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline, he said: "This regional integrative project aims to build a gas pipeline linking Nigeria to Morocco, feeding ECOWAS member states and Mauritania with future extension to Europe. It is an infrastructure of 6,800 km long, including 5,100 km offshore, with a transport capacity of 30 billion cubic feet of natural gas per year."

On other integration project, he said: "Furthermore, progress has continued to be recorded regard-

ing the implementation of ECOWAS Regulation on Roaming on Public Mobile Communications Networks in the ECOWAS Space. Phased implementation of this roaming tariff rates is progressing through several bilateral arrangements.

"The ECOWAS Roaming is now live in at least six (6)-member states since its adoption in December 2017 by this Council.

Related News
Breakaway States: ECOWAS should extend time for mediation

- Crisis Group

ECOWAS committed to protecting civilians in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger - Tinubu

ECOWAS Commission's president calls for renewed commitment amid regional challenges

"Regarding high cost of air transport in the Community, which hinders intra-regional air transport development, the Ministers responsible for Air Transport met recently to deliberate on a Regional Strategy for the Harmonization of Air Transport Charges, Fees

and Taxes in ECOWAS Member States, and a Supplementary Act relating to the Common Policy on Aviation Charges, Taxes and Fees in ECOWAS Member States.

"The Act seeks a cancellation of all taxes deemed inconsistent with ICAO rules and principles, along with a 25% reduction in passenger and security charges. This is a significant development for the business improvement of the regional air transport sector and the facilitation of movement of persons and goods within the

Community.

"Furthermore, this year, ECOWAS Commission revived its regional cooperation and integration programme in the water sector which dates to 2001. The ministers in charge of water resources met and adopted fourteen (14) Resolutions relating to the revision of the 2008 West Africa Water Resource Policy; Management of Shared Water Resources in West Africa, Water Infrastructure Development, among others, with the goal of contributing to poverty reduction, sustainable development and environmental protection."

Touray, assured: "Commission will continue to measure the impact of our Community investments in regional cooperation and integration through the Human Capital Development indexes which include both regional and member state's strategies, and commitments made towards improving health and nutrition, education, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy."

The president of the commission also lamented the dwindling community Levy in the last six years, saying only 40% of the approved Levy for this year had been received as at October 2024.

He said: "For instance, for now six consecutive years, the Community levy remittances from the Member States have been declining. This year, as of 30th October, the Community Institutions received only 40% of the approved funds from the Community Levy, thereby hindering the implementation of the Community work programme.

"This Council has a critical role in the realization of the many objectives we set for our region. The role of our member states in providing the necessary resources for our Institutions, removing non-tariff barriers, implementing regionally agreed policies and commitments is vital to our success. Our local private sector actors also have an important role, and they need the support of both the regional institutions and governments to exploit the vast potentials in our community.



Plastic pollution on an island Seychelles stresses urgency for global action

Plastics treaty as negotiations stall

VICTORIA

SECHELLES has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the Global Plastics Treaty is finalised by 2025, following the conclusion of the latest round of negotiations without an agreement.

The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5), tasked with developing an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, took place recently at the Busan Exhibition and Convention Centre in Busan, Republic of Korea.

A potential goal of reducing the production of primary plastic polymers, prohibitions and limitations on chemicals of concern in plastic products, and problematic and preventable plastic products were the principal areas of disagreement.

Major oil-producing nations and the "High Ambition Coalition," which includes the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, and other African, Latin American, and Pacific nations, failed to reach a consensus on these points.

For Seychelles, the treaty holds immense importance as a small island state disproportionately affected by plastic pollution.

"We are disappointed that the treaty has not been finalised, but at the same time, we understand that we cannot have a document that does not reflect the position of everyone involved," said Nanette Laure, the director general of the Waste Enforcement and Permit Division in the Department of Environment, during a press conference on Thursday.

Laure highlighted the specific challenges faced by small island states, emphasising the need for the treaty to address the full life cycle of plastics. She added, "We also want to guarantee that countries that produce plastics finance activities with regards to dealing with plastic pollution."

While no agreement was reached in Busan, the negotiating committee has approved a draft text to serve as the basis for discussions at the next meeting. This progress is seen as a significant step toward achieving a deal.

The goals of the European Union have

been embraced by the vast majority of over 100 nations, with support continuing to grow. Seychelles remains optimistic that an agreement will be reached in the next round of negotiations, expected in 2024.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), every day, the equivalent of 2,000 garbage trucks full of plastic are dumped into the world's oceans, rivers, and lakes.

Annually, 19-23 million tonnes of plastic waste leak into aquatic ecosystems, polluting lakes, rivers, and seas. Plastic pollution alters habitats and natural processes, reducing ecosystems' ability to adapt to climate change and directly affecting millions of people's livelihoods, food production capabilities, and social well-being.

Seychelles actively working to reduce plastic pollution

Seychelles has been a pioneer in reducing plastic pollution. In 2017, the island nation banned the importation and sale of plastic bags and plastic utensils, including cups, forks, Styrofoam takeaway boxes, and plates. This was

followed by a ban on single-use plastic straws in 2019 and balloons in 2021.

"People need to understand that the impacts of plastic pollution are not just on the environment, but also on human health, which is the biggest concern," Laure explained. She warned that microplastics pose real threats, as they carry chemicals used in plastic production and are ingested by people through food, water, and air.

Studies have shown that microplastics significantly damage cells in the human body, leading to serious health effects, including cancers, lung disease, and birth defects. Toxic chemical additives in plastics can disrupt hormone activity, affecting reproduction, growth, and cognitive function. Additionally, microplastics act as vessels for pathogens, increasing the spread of diseases.

The Global Plastics Treaty seeks to address these critical issues, and negotiations continue to face challenges. However, Seychelles' consistent advocacy reflects its determination to ensure the treaty considers the perspectives of vulnerable nations and prioritises comprehensive, enforceable solutions.

Mnangagwa arrives in Botswana for first visit as Chairman of SADC

GABORONE

PRESIDENT Emmerson Mnangagwa has arrived in Botswana for his first visit to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat Headquarters since assuming the role of Chairperson of the regional bloc.

The visit underscores his leadership commitment to advancing SADC's strategic goals and fostering regional integration.

Mnangagwa was warmly received by Botswana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Phenyu Butale, Botswana Ambassador to Zimbabwe Ms. Sarah Molosiwa, and Zimbabwe's Ambassador to Botswana, Henry Mukonoweshuro.

The visit highlights Zimbabwe's dedication to implementing SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020-2030) and Vision 2050. These frameworks focus on enhancing industrial development, infrastructure growth, and social and human capital development to drive economic progress across Southern Africa.

Key components of the RISDP include: Industrial Development and Market Integration; Promoting regional trade and industrial growth. Infrastructure Development: Establishing robust infrastructure to support regional connectivity. Social and Human Capital Development: Enhancing education, health, and skills among SADC populations.

Upon his arrival, President Mnangagwa was welcomed with a military guard of honour, symbolizing the significance of the occasion. His agenda includes a high-level briefing, meetings with SADC Secretariat officials, and presiding over two landmark events: the official handover of the newly acquired SADC Secretariat Headquarters building and the ground-breaking ceremony for the SADC Regional Logistics Depot.

The visit underscores Mnangagwa's leadership in addressing regional challenges such as economic integration, infrastructure development, and sustainable growth. It also reaffirms Zimbabwe's commitment to SADC's collective efforts in fostering regional cooperation and achieving the Vision 2050 goals.

As Chair of SADC, President Mnangagwa's tenure is expected to focus on driving these priorities, reinforcing the bloc's role as a cornerstone of regional unity and development.

BUSINESS



Ride-hailing drivers adjust prices on high petrol costs

LAGOS

Drivers of ride-hailing companies such as Bolt, Uber, and inDrive are increasingly asking riders to pay more than official prices to mitigate against high petrol costs and a cost-of-living crisis in Nigeria.

These drivers, including Olabode Olukunmi, a 45-year-old driver, said recent increases by these companies have not been able to offset rising costs. Petrol prices have surged by 66.13 percent to N1,025 per litre since September 2024.

Bolt and Uber have had to review prices upward to adjust to this reality. "We understand that your operational cost may have increased due to the current macroeconomic situation and want to help ensure your earnings are protected. With this in mind, we have reflected a 13 percent increase in the UberX product," Uber said in September.

However, these drivers argue that the price review does not reflect reality.

"Whenever I buy fuel of N10,000, I make only N12,500. I have to feed myself and my family and consider car repairs, among others. In fact, most of us do not work during the day. We work at night because we know that people do not have a choice but to pay at that time," said Olukunmi.

This means higher costs for riders, who sometimes have no option but to pay the extra amount demanded by the drivers. Ben Osagie, an event host visiting Ibadan, said,

"I had an event in Ibadan, so I ordered a ride from my hotel. The Uber app showed N3,500 to my destination, but the driver insisted on collecting N6,000. I asked him why, and he kept asking if I was going or not. I told him I wasn't going at that price, and he hung up."

Osagie eventually got another ride but had to pay N1,000 more. Kemi Adebode, also in Ibadan, told BusinessDay that she once had to pay N4,000 for a trip that was officially meant to be

N2,000. According to her, ride-hailing is now a last resort for her commute.

In Abuja, Uche had to pay N2,000 more than the N13,000 quoted by his Bolt app for a trip to the airport. "I didn't have a choice," he said.

In Lagos, Faith Lisa, a writer, narrated, "I ordered a Bolt ride from Ikoyi to Lakowe, and the price of the ride was N10k on the app.

"During the trip, the driver complained that the money was too small. He narrated how he had to stay in the queue for hours and kept hinting that I should add more money to the price. When I was about to pay, he asked that I add N5k to the initial fare. After bargaining for over 10 minutes, I added N2k."

Another rider in Lagos told BusinessDay, "I ordered via inDrive from Lekki to Four Points by Sheraton. After bargaining for a price on the app, the driver still asked for more money when he arrived, citing the traffic."

For Temitope Victoria, her inDrive driver collected N1,000 more than the N6,500 he agreed to on the app.

However, Olukunmi, earlier mentioned, noted that the drivers are only trying to survive. He noted, "Personally, I would carry them. I understand because they don't have enough money too."

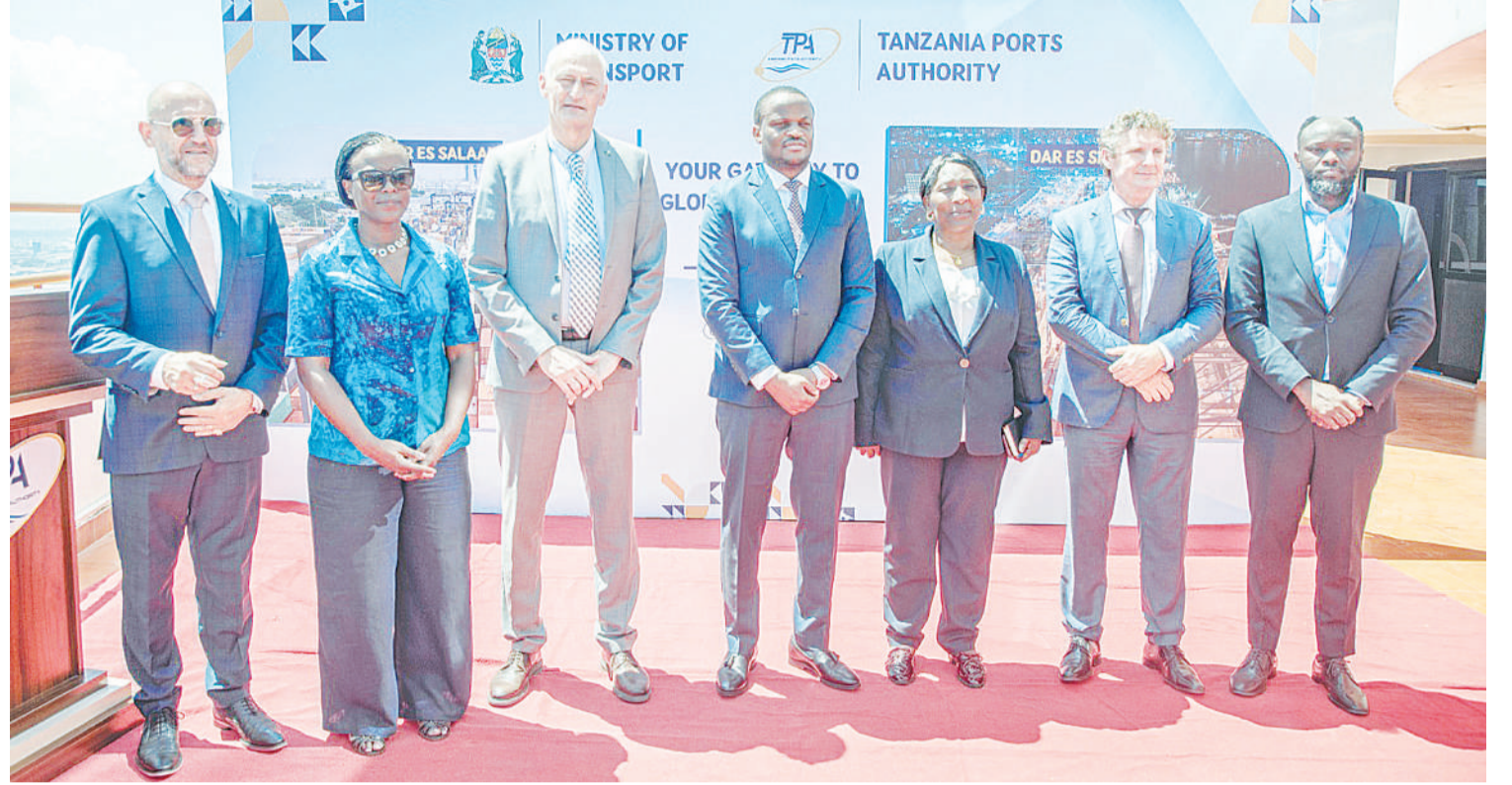
Temitayo Johnson, another ride-hailing driver, echoed that drivers do this because the rates on the apps are low, and even for those on inDrive – where riders can negotiate prices. He said the apps are unable to raise prices so high because it scares passengers off.

He stated, "There are several riders with different rates on inDrive. No passenger will pick the highest, so we try to agree to their low price and speak about an increment when they come in."

Johnson, who drives in Ibadan, noted that drivers have asked for higher rates from ride-hailing apps but have not received a suitable response.

Bolt did not respond to emails for comments as of the time this report was filed.

Govt, EU launch €15million project to revolutionise regional trade, DSM port



Tanzanian Government officials and European Union officials in a group photo shortly after signing the four-year project to enhance Dar es Salaam port efficiency.

By Francis Kajubi

The Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA), has launched a €15 million, four-year project funded by the European Union to enhance the efficiency of the Dar es Salaam Port, improve trade facilitation, and transform urban mobility across East and Central Africa's trade corridors.

The initiative, implemented by TradeMark Africa (TMA), the Port of Antwerp, and UN-Habitat, with management support from Enabel, seeks to address significant barriers to trade and transport along the Dar and Central Corridors.

As a critical gateway for Tanzania and its landlocked neighbours, the Dar es Salaam Port plays a vital role in regional trade. However, persistent inefficiencies and barriers have hindered its ability to operate at full potential. This project directly addresses these challenges through an integrated approach focusing on port optimisation, trade facilitation, and urban mobility enhancements.

The signing ceremony, held at the Tanzania Ports Authority's Headquarters on 11 December 2024, brought together high-level representatives from the European Union, TPA, and the Ministries of Transport and Finance, underpinning the strong partnerships driving this ambitious undertaking.

Plasduce Mbossa, Director General Tanzania Ports Authority, expressed confidence in the initia-

tive: "We commend the partnership dedicated to enhancing the performance of the Port of Dar es Salaam. We are optimistic that this project will deliver transformative interventions to improve the port's operations and efficiency."

Our gratitude goes to the European Union for funding this vital initiative. TPA will remain committed to supporting effective implementation of this project."

According to him the project is built around three core pillars, each addressing distinct trade ecosystem challenges. The Port of Antwerp leads efforts to optimise port operations, ensuring smoother trade flows through operational improvements.

TradeMark Africa drives the trade facilitation pillar, focusing on eliminating barriers, digitising customs processes, integrating systems, and improving infrastructure for handling perishables. With €4.2 million allocated to this component, the interventions aim to reduce the time and cost of goods movement.

UN-Habitat oversees urban mobility initiatives, aimed at improving the efficient movement of goods and people in the port's surrounding areas, a crucial enabler of trade efficiency.

Hans Stauboll, Acting Director Africa, Directorate-General for International Partnerships at the European Union, emphasised the broader significance of the project, stating: "We are proud to support this transformative project aimed at enhancing trade flows through the Port of Dar es Salaam.

The collaboration between TradeMark Africa, the Port of Antwerp, and UN-Habitat with management support from Enabel exemplifies the power of partnerships in delivering impactful initiatives.

Through the planned interventions, we anticipate significant improvements in corridor efficiencies, driving increased trade and economic growth through the port."

Elibariki Shabby, Country Director for TradeMark Africa, emphasised the transformative potential of the initiative, commenting: "This project represents a milestone in our commitment to creating an efficient, inclusive, and resilient trade ecosystem;

By addressing barriers and embracing digitisation, we aim to unlock the full potential of the Dar and Central Corridors, driving regional economic growth and shared prosperity."

He said the initiative exemplifies the power of international collaboration in achieving meaningful and sustainable trade reforms. It is a significant step towards enhancing regional integration, boosting competitiveness, and fostering lasting prosperity across East Africa.

TradeMark Africa (TMA) is a leading African Aid-for-Trade organisation, founded in 2010 with the mission to grow intra-African trade and increase Africa's share in global trade, while helping make trade more pro-poor and environmentally sustainable.

TMA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the Bill

and Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Ireland, the Mastercard Foundation, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

TMA works closely with regional and continental organisations, national Governments, the private sector, and civil society.

Since its inception, TMA has delivered substantial gains for trade and regional economic integration in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, including a reduction of 16.5 percent in cargo transit times on the Northern Corridor from Mombasa to Bujumbura, and a reduction of an average of 70 percent in the time taken to cross selected one stop border posts.

TMA works in 14 countries across East and West Africa, Southern Africa, and the Horn.

In 2022, TMA set up a catalytic finance company - Trade Catalyst Africa - that will pilot commercially viable projects for creating trade infrastructure both physical and digital as well as increasing access to Trade Finance for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Both TCA's and TMA's headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya. Offices are in: EAC (East African Community) Secretariat - Arusha, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Somaliland, Tanzania, and Uganda, with operations in Mozambique, South Sudan, and Zambia.

Central Economic Work Conference to shape Chinese, global economies

BEIJING

China concluded the much-awaited annual Central Economic Work Conference (CEWC) held yesterday, outlining the government's main economic objectives and policy plans for 2025, which are largely in line with our CEWC preview and Politburo meeting.

As usual, key growth and policy targets were not announced at CEWC but will be released at the National People's Congress (NPC) meeting next March. The CEWC recognized the growth headwinds from domestic demand weakness and external uncertainties, although the potential higher US tariffs was not cited explicitly.

Therefore, the CEWC prioritized "stabilizing growth" as the central task and emphasized boosting domestic demand with more proactive macro policies, with "reviving household consumption" listed as a top task. In particular, the government highlighted its comprehensive goals of achieving stable growth, stable employment and "reasonable rebound" of inflation, the latter of which is a direct response to the lingering deflation pressure and an important anchor for market expectation and policy setting. Overall speaking, the CEWC set a much

more supportive macro policy tone to stabilize growth, while more details are still set to be revealed later.

Our baseline forecast assumes that a plan of higher US tariffs may be released in Q1 2025 and implemented in stages starting from Q3 2025. Therefore, after the March NPC unveils next year's overall policy stimulus package, we think the government may also ramp up additional policy support in stages throughout the rest of 2025 and in 2026, as macro situations develop, higher tariffs are announced and their impact is felt. Some of the proposed policy targets and measures in the CEWC may be revised in the NPC meeting.

The CEWC emphasized more expectation management, better policy coordination and stronger local incentives. Some market participants and policy advisors may expect China to set 2025's growth target at "around 5 percent" again to anchor market expectations, which we think is very challenging to achieve.

We see China's GDP growth slowing to around 4 percent in 2025, as headwinds from the lingering property downturn and potential higher US tariffs may be partly offset by stronger policy support.

The CEWC called for "more proactive" fiscal policy, a tone similar to



Beijing, China's capital city.

that in 2020 when China expanded overall fiscal support notably. It indicates a broadly stronger fiscal expansion in 2025.

The CEWC explicitly called for higher headline fiscal deficit, more issuance of ultra-long special treasury bonds (CGB) and special local government bonds (LGB), and improving fiscal spending structure (to support social welfare and consumption), with a key focus to scale up fiscal subsidies for trade-in program of consumer goods and equipment upgrading.

The government also mentioned rolling out policy measures to boost childbirth, which we think may include the establishment of a subsidy

scheme for families with young children.

Our baseline forecast assumes 2 percentage point of GDP expansion in augmented fiscal deficit (AFD) in 2025 and another 1 percentage point AFD expansion in 2026.

The former in 2025 includes a higher headline budget deficit of close to 4 percent of GDP (3.5-4 percent), larger ultra-long special CGB issuance of RMB 2 trillion, another RMB 500-1000 billion issuance of special CGB for capital injections to banks, and more special LGB issuance of RMB 4.5-5 trillion to support local debt swap and home inventory destocking. Overall speaking, total issuance of government bonds may

increase by over RMB 3.5 trillion in 2025 from 2024.

As highlighted in the Politburo meeting and we had expected, the CEWC vowed to take a "moderately easy" monetary policy stance, which is an explicit shift from the "prudent" tone that China had set during 2011-2024.

The tone for 2025 is the same as that in 2008-2010, when China eased monetary policy aggressively to revive the economy after the global financial crisis.

It indicates more convincing monetary policy easing ahead, although monetary policy room in 2025-2026 is much more limited than 15 years ago. The government explicitly called for cutting (reserve requirement ratio) RRR and policy rates, maintaining ample liquidity, stabilizing financial market and housing market, and guiding prices to recovery appropriately.

Our baseline forecast expects the PBoC to cut policy rate by 30-40 basic points in 2025 and another 20-30 basic points in 2026, which could help lead to more cuts in LPR and mortgage rates.

We think the PBoC may also use various facilities (including more outright REPO of government bonds) to maintain ample liquidity and support faster total social fi-

nancing credit growth in 2025.

The CEWC prioritized "boosting consumption" as the first key policy task, and called for implementing a special action plan for it. As expected, the government vowed explicitly to expand the scale and coverage of trade-in subsidies of consumer goods.

We continue to expect the size of trade-in program may more than double to over RMB 300 billion in 2025 from RMB 150 billion in 2024, with expanded coverage for consumer electronics and some general consumption coupons, on top of auto and home appliances in 2024. As we anticipated before, the CEWC planned to "properly" increase pension payout levels for retired employees and urban-rural households, and increase the subsidy standard for household health insurance.

These measures could gradually help underpin household confidence and unleash consumption potential in the long run, although the scale of additional fiscal spending may be not big in 2025. In addition, despite no mention from the CEWC, we think the government may create childcare / childbirth subsidies for families with young children, which could reach up to RMB 200 billion or more per year.

Corporate council on Africa announces Angola as host of 2025 US Africa business annual summit

WASHINGTON, DC

The Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) has the high honor of announcing that the Government of the Republic of Angola will host the 17th U.S.-Africa Business Summit in 2025 in the city of Luanda, Angola.

Following on a meeting of CCA leadership with João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola during the May 2024 U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Dallas, Texas, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) was developed and was signed in Washington, DC by Agostinho VanDunem, ambassador of the Republic of Angola to the United States and Florizelle (Florie) Liser, President and CEO of CCA to officially mark this important collaboration.

The U.S.-Africa Business Summit is recognised as one of the most important business platforms that annually brings together African heads of

state and key ministers, U.S. Cabinet officials and heads of major agencies, and CEOs and senior executives of U.S. and African companies to foster investment, trade, and commercial collaboration.

The 2025 Summit marks a significant milestone as Angola celebrates the 50th anniversary of its national independence and assumes the chairmanship of the African Union (AU). Thus, co-organising and hosting the U.S.-Africa Business Summit during such a momentous year underscores Angola's firm commitment to promoting a new phase in as well as strengthening economic ties between Africa and the United States.

Angola's selection as the host country is a testament to its remarkable progress and potential as a key player in the African economy.

The Summit will showcase Angola's diverse industries but will be continental in focus highlighting



business and investment opportunities across the African continent in a range of sectors from energy and infrastructure to agriculture and technology, creative economy, manufacturing to digital economy and health.

"We are delighted to bring the U.S.-Africa Business Summit to Angola

in the Summer of 2025," said Florie Liser, President and CEO of the Corporate Council on Africa. "This year's Summit promises to be a landmark event, highlighting not only Angola's economic potential and strategic importance as a leader in Africa, but recognizing the African continent's increasing importance as a strategic economic, trade and business partner of the U.S. Government and private sector."

The 2025 Summit will be a crucial opportunity to identify effective and sustainable solutions to diversify the African economy, and to increase trade, investment and business in sectors with a high impact on the lives of African and American people, enterprises, workers, and consumers.

Participants will engage in high-level discussions on the critical issues and challenges, key sectors, and opportunities impacting the U.S.-Africa trade and investment re-

lationship as well as sign deals and advance new business ventures and commercial partnerships that will drive economic growth and development both in the United States and Africa.

The government of Angola and the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), represented by ambassador VanDunem (right) and CCA President Florizelle Liser, signed a Memorandum of Understanding formalising an agreement for the city of Luanda to host the 2025 US-Africa Business Summit.

The 2025 U.S.-Africa Business Summit is expected to attract over 1,500 attendees, including African Heads of State, senior U.S. Government officials, CEOs, investors, and entrepreneurs.

The event will feature plenary sessions, panel discussions, investment pitch sessions, networking opportunities, and an exhibition showcasing innovative products and services.

Absence of competent leaders the biggest problem in Nigeria government: Moghalu

ABUJA

A former presidential candidate, Prof Kingsley Moghalu, has said though Africa is plagued by multiple challenges, the biggest problem remains lack of competent governance.

The political economist who stated this during the conferment of the 2024 Chartered Institute of Directors (CIoD) Nigeria Good Governance Award in Lagos fingered governance and leadership crisis as the primary factors behind Nigeria and to a larger extent Africa's distressed economy.

The former Central Bank deputy governor who was an awardee and chairman of the occasion said, "You see, in Africa, we tend to think our problem is we don't have money. We need investors, and we go around the world looking for investors. We are indebted. We need debt re-

lief. We need foreign aid.

The biggest problem the African continent faces, and that also includes our dear country, Nigeria, is the absence of good and competent governance.

"That country or a continent that was well governed, the way it should be, with purpose-driven leadership that is thinking about improving lives of the citizens and the people, about taking people from poverty into the middle class, about taking people from being mid-range to being globally.

"We would not be in the situation in which we are today. The private sector in Nigeria is bleeding, bleeding massively, and if the private sector is bleeding, you can imagine the condition of Nigerians who are not corporate citizens, just ordinary. We need to emphasize the importance of governance in the public

sector, because without good governance and competent governance in the private, in the public sector, the private sector will not be able to create wealth in the manner in which it should. It will not be able to create prosperity. It will not be able to create the wealth of nations, rather than the wealth of individuals.

"Good governance means transparency. Good governance means efficiency. Good governance means effectiveness. Good governance means inclusiveness."

The president, African School of Governance, Kigali, Rwanda, added that in Nigeria and in many African countries people wonder why the continent is poor or is lagging behind.

"We say Nigeria is the richest potentially, yes, potentially, yes. No doubt about it. Nigeria has the brightest black people on

the face of the earth. We have a huge population, but how productive is our population? We always leave the substance and chase the shadow. We are 220 million people. How many million people are in Switzerland? Not more than 10.

"Everybody in Nigeria and their uncles are always talking about politics. But politics without governance is a merry-go-round of poverty. Politics without governance is a merry-go-round of insecurity. It is the governance that brings transformation.

"How many public sector corporations can we go to and see the principles of corporate governance being followed? No. But most public sector corporations in Nigeria have become bottomless pits for the gratification of partisan political associates. It doesn't matter the party.

"It doesn't matter whether it's federal or state. This is what is going on. And that's why the country is not being governed. You have public sector corporations, but there is no corporate governance in those corporations. How can they deliver?" he fumed.

Earlier, the president and chairman, Governing Council of the institute, Alhaji Tijjani Borodo, said the annual directors dinner was an important occasion to the institute, saying it was not just because it runs off its annual activities, but because it is the occasion for celebrating achievers and recognizing the invaluable contributions of individuals and organizations that have modeled ethical leadership and high standards of corporate governance practices in the country.

He said, "But this year's edition of Annual Direc-

tors Dinner is particularly unique in that in addition to the annual awards for excellence in various categories, there will also be appreciation awards for many leaders in the Charter Institute of Directors who have served the institute materially over the past years or even decades. In this category, we have seven past presidents and 16 executive committee chairmen of the institute who will be stepping down as members of the governing council and executive committee."

Borodo added, "As we celebrate tonight, let us not forget the significance of our roles as directors and leaders. We have a responsibility to lead with integrity, vision, and courage. And we have a responsibility to make a positive impact on our organizations, our communities, our society, and the country at large."

N. Korea made millions from remote work scheme, US says

PYONGYANG

North Korean IT workers allegedly used false, stolen, and borrowed identities to get hired and work remotely for US firms

A federal court in St Louis has indicted 14 North Koreans for allegedly being part of a long-running conspiracy aimed at extorting funds from US companies and funneling money to Pyongyang's weapons programmes.

The wider scheme allegedly involves thousands of North Korean IT workers who use false, stolen, and borrowed identities from people in the US and other countries to get hired and work remotely for US firms.

The indictment says the defendants and others working with them generated at least \$88m (£51.5m) for the North Korean regime over a six-year period.

North Korea's mission to the UN did not immediately reply to a request for comment from BBC News.

The prosecutors say the suspects worked for two North Korean-controlled companies - China-based Yanbian Silverstar and Russia-based Volasys Silverstar.

They were among a group of 130 North Korean IT workers employed by the two firms where they were internally referred to as "IT Warriors", according to the US Department of Justice.

The suspects were allegedly ordered to seek salaries of \$10,000 a month from their US employers.

On top of the monthly wage, they would also raise funds for the North Korean regime by stealing valuable company information and threatening to leak it unless the employer made an extortion payment.

The group is now facing wire fraud, money laundering, identity theft and other charges.

Aside from using stolen identities to avoid detection, prosecutors said they paid people residing in the US to receive, set up, and host laptops provided by the US employers.

They would then instruct those US residents to install remote access software allowing them to appear to be working from the US when they were actually overseas.

Investigators believe the suspects are in North Korea making it unlikely that they will ever face justice.

Still, the US State Department has announced that it will offer a reward of up to \$5m for anyone who can provide more information on the suspects as well as Yanbian and Volasys.

US officials have not named the American companies targeted in the scheme.

"While we have disrupted this group and identified its leadership, this is just the tip of the iceberg," said Ashley T. Johnson, special agent in charge of the FBI's field office in St Louis.

"The government of North Korea has trained and deployed thousands of IT workers to perpetrate this same scheme against US companies every day."

African Development Bank celebrates 60 years of transformative impact in Africa's southern region

ABIDJAN

The African Development Bank (AfDB) proudly celebrates its Diamond Jubilee, marking 60 years of driving social and economic transformation across the African continent. The Southern African regional celebration, held in Johannesburg, brought together leaders, stakeholders, and partners to reflect on the institution's remarkable journey and its vision for a prosperous future.

Speaking at the event, Leila Farah Mokaddem, Director General of the African Development Bank Group, highlighted the Bank's legacy of impact and transformation. "Sixty years ago, the African Development Bank was born out of a vision for a better Africa. Today, we celebrate not just numbers but the lives transformed and communities uplifted through our work," she said.

Key achievements in Southern Africa

With an active portfolio of 226 projects worth USD 11 billion, the Bank's unwavering commitment to fostering sustainable growth and integration in Southern Africa is evident. Notable achievements include:

- SADC sub-regional transport and facilitation pro-



ject: A USD 231.3 million investment connecting Malawi and Mozambique, fostering trade, and mitigating regional fragility.

- Lesotho highlands water project: A USD 2.1 billion initiative enhancing water transfer and hydroelectric power, essential for energy security.

- Kazungula bridge project: A USD 81.6 million investment strengthening connectivity between Zambia and Botswana along the north-south corridor.

- Support for transnet: A

recent USD 1 billion sovereign-guaranteed corporate loan to aid South Africa's freight transport recovery and growth.

The celebration also underscored the deep partnership between the bank and the government of South Africa. Minister Enoch Godongwana shared his reflections on this enduring collaboration:

"The government of the Republic of South Africa celebrates this significant milestone with the African Development Bank. Our region, and indeed South Africa, continues to enjoy a fruitful

partnership with the Bank as we work together toward a shared goal of creating a better Africa for future generations.

As we gather to celebrate the many achievements of our collaborative efforts, we also recognise the need to continue advancing Africa's development agenda. This milestone energises us and strengthens our commitment to a shared vision for the next 60 years!"

As the Bank embarks on its new ten-year strategy, it prioritises integrated regional projects and climate resilience. Projects like the Lobito Rail Integrated

Corridor, connecting Angola, DRC, and Zambia, promise to drive economic growth, agriculture value chains and renewable energy investments.

"Our work is far from over," Mokaddem noted. "We invite all partners—governments, private sector actors, and international institutions—to join us in building a more inclusive and sustainable Africa. Together, we can address climate-related challenges and mobilise resources to ensure no one is left behind."

Under the leadership of President Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina, the Bank has maintained its AAA rating and authorised capital of USD 318 billion, with nearly 2,000 staff serving all 54 African countries.

The institution continues to champion its "High 5s" priorities: lighting up and powering Africa, feeding Africa, industrialising Africa, integrating Africa, and improving the quality of life for the people of Africa.

The 60th-anniversary celebrations are a testament to the Bank's resilience and the enduring support of its partners. The African Development Bank remains steadfast in its mission to transform lives and catalyse growth across the continent.

'We will not go quietly into the rising sea,' Tuvalu tells International court of justice

THE HAGUE

Rising sea level caused by greenhouse gas emission-fueled climate change is threatening existence in coastal communities and island nations. At the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on Thursday, December 12, 2024, small island states, including Tuvalu and a Pacific-based fisheries agency detailed their ongoing existential threats caused by the climate change-induced sea level rise and impacts on fishery-based livelihood.

Tuvalu, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) both focused their oral presentations before the court on highlighting added and exacerbated struggles faced by people in the region through visual evidence and testimony of the frontline community.

At the request of Vanuatu, the UN General Assembly asked the ICJ to issue

an advisory opinion on the obligations of UN member states in preventing climate change and ensuring the protection of the environment for present and future generations. While its advisory opinion will not be enforceable, the court will advise on the legal consequences for member states who have caused significant harm, particularly to small island developing states. So far, more than 100 countries and agencies have presented their case before the court.

On Thursday, island states stressed the disproportionate effects of climate change on small islands, urging the court to recognize the duty of cooperation, the stability of maritime zones, and the principle of continuity of statehood.

Climate Crisis Can not be Solved in Isolation – Tuvalu

Tuvalu, a small island nation in the South Pacific with over 11,000 people, emphasized its right to



Water floods in, showing how nature and people are at risk. Trees can't grow because of salt, leaving no protection. This photo warns about climate change's effect on our islands and atolls. It's a clear sign we need to act to keep our world safe. Credit: Gitty Keziah Yee/Tuvalu

self-determination and territorial integrity at a time when it is facing an existential threat from climate change-induced sea level rise.

The low-lying island nation of Tuvalu is fighting for its existence; according to scientists, much of their land area, along with critical infrastructure, will be under water by 2050. Tuvalu urged the ICJ to issue a strong advisory opinion on states' obligations to combat climate change and protect small island states.

Furthering the submission, Laingane Italeli Talia, Attorney General of Tuvalu, said climate change is the single greatest threat the country is facing. "It cannot be that in the face of such unprecedented and irreversible harm, international law is silent.

"Tuvalu, accordingly, asks the court to keep the unprecedented infringement on our people's right to self-determination at the very center of his critical advisory opinion in order to help chart the pathway

forward for our very survival."

'Annihilation Posed By Nuclear Weapons'

Professor Phillipa Webb, representing Tuvalu, used the analogy that the threat of disappearance faced by states like Tuvalu is like the potential annihilation posed by nuclear weapons.

"This extreme circumstance triggers all the tools that international law provides for respecting statehood, ensuring territorial integrity and

protecting sovereignty over natural resources," Webb said.

"Tuvalu's constitution affirms that its statehood will remain in perpetuity, notwithstanding any loss to its physical territory. In the same way that the right to survival requires state continuity, the right also compels respect for territorial integrity, which encompasses a state's permanent sovereignty over its natural resources," Webb said, drawing on the drawing on the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States.

"Respect for territorial integrity and territorial sovereignty is an essential foundation of international relations in the context of climate change. This obliges States to prevent and mitigate transboundary environmental harm. It requires that States facilitate adaptation to climate change impacts, and these measures should not be limited to the preservation and restoration of coasts and islands but also to protecting the rights of peoples to self-determination."

The right to self-determination includes aspects other than physical land, and the court should take this into account.

"Territorial integrity, a corollary of the right to self-determination, is not limited to physical land territory. It must be conceived as a historical and cultural norm linked to the vitality, dignity and identity of the people holding the right to self-determination to ensure respect for territorial integrity goes beyond ensuring the maintenance of physical land boundaries. Like other concepts in international law, such as cultural heritage, biodiversity and intellectual property, it covers tangible and intangible assets."

Quoting Tuvaluan climate activist Grace Malie, Webb told the court, "Tuvalu will not go quietly into the rising sea."

Statehood Should be Ensured – AOSIS

AOSIS submitted its case on behalf of the 39 small island and low-lying coastal developing states and urged it to consider the existential threat posed by climate change-induced sea level rise and the possibility that some states may not even have dry land in the near future.

It emphasizes the importance of equity and self-determination in the context of climate change and the need for international law to support the continuity of statehood and sovereignty.

Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Dr. Pa'olelei Luteru, Chair of AOSIS and Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations, focused on the impact of the climate crisis on states defined by the ocean's limited resources and geographic vulnerability.

UK economy shrinks for second month in a row

LONDON

The UK economy shrank for the second month in a row in October as concerns about the Budget continued to weigh on confidence.

Official figures showed a 0.1 per cent drop, despite expectations that the economy would return to growth after a fall in September.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said that activity had stalled or declined with pubs, restaurants and retail among sectors reporting "a weak month".

Chancellor Rachel Reeves said the figure was "disappointing", but added: "We have put in place policies to deliver long-term economic growth."

Shadow chancellor Mel Stride said: "This fall in growth shows the stark impact of the chancellor's decisions and continually talking down the economy."

KPMG's chief economist Yael Selfin said that activity was "held back by uncertainty ahead of the Budget on 30 October" as businesses and consumers held back on spending.

But some industries, such as real estate, law firms and accountancy, brought forward work before Reeves announced the Budget, the ONS said.

Separately, a survey measuring consumer confidence in December found people were a little more positive about their personal finances for the year ahead.

But the findings from market research firm GfK found that "views on the economy are unchanged from November which suggests people don't know where we are going".

"In a nutshell, it's the continuing uncharitable view on the UK's general economic situation that's suppressing consumer confidence," said Neil Belamy, consumer insights

director at NIQ GfK.

Shortly after becoming prime minister in July, Sir Keir Starmer warned that the Budget would be "painful" following 14 years of Tory government.

He later denied that he was talking down the economy.

The economy has grown just once over the past five months, ONS figures show.

Capital Economics said GDP was 0.1 per cent lower than before Labour won the election in July.

"That suggests it's not just the Budget that is holding the economy back," said Capital's chief UK economist Paul Dales. "Instead, the drag from higher interest rates may be lasting longer than we thought."

The Bank of England has cut interest rates twice this year but, at 4.75 per cent, they are still relatively high compared with recent years.

The Bank will meet next week for the last interest rate decision of 2024, though it is not widely expected to reduce borrowing costs again until next year.

Economists cautioned about placing too much emphasis on the reading for October. It is an initial estimate of economic growth by the ONS and could be revised.

Over the three months to October, the economy expanded by 0.1 per cent.

"People are still cautious" The manufacturing industry recorded the sharpest drop in activity in October, down 0.6%, followed by construction which fell by 0.4%.

Meanwhile, the services sector, which makes up the bulk of the UK economy, stalled with zero growth.

Rick Gaglio, owner of menswear shop Twisted Fabric in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, said "people are still being cautious", and added that prices are still comparatively high.

ITV PGM SCHEDULE			
SATURDAY 7 Dec	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 KumeKucha	7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba 5	10:35 Mjuzi Zaidi rpt
11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	11:50 Hawavumi lakini wamo	12:50 Art and lifestyle	13:20 Shamba lulu
13:50 Soap rpt: Laws of love	15:45 Doc rpt: Beyond Narrative	16:10 Igizo: Haikufuma	17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Hapa na Pale	18:10 ITV Top 10 rpt	19:30 Jungu kuu	19:30 Shika Bamba
20:00 Habari	21:05 Kipindi maalum: Tatu Mzuka	21:15 Igizo: Haikufuma	21:45 Supa Min Jackpot
22:15 Art and Lifestyle	22:15 ITV Top 10	23:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo	23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt
00:30 Al Jazeera	SUNDAY 8 Dec	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABAARI
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SUNDAY 9 Dec	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABAARI	7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba
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THURSDAY 12 Dec	5:00 Soap rpt: Uzalo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABAARI
6:40 KumeKucha	7:00 Habari	8:00 Al Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu
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8:00 Al Jazeera	9:00 Watoto wetu	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:05 Shika Bamba
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23:40 Soap: Uzalo rpt	00:30 Al Jazeera	SUNDAY 15 Dec	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
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11:00 Sports Gazette rpt	11:30 DW	12:00 Out & About Extra rpt	12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt
13:00 In good shape rpt	15:15 Abu yako	15:30 Rev rpt	16:00 Dakika 45 rpt
16:45 Beyond the Narrative rpt	17:00 The Decor rpt	17:30 Meza huru	19:00 Beyond the Narrative RPT
20:00 Abu Yako	20:15 Local Pgm: Business Edition	20:45 Telenovela: In Love With Ramon rpt#112	21:30 Capital Prime News
22:00 Out & About Extra rpt	22:30 EcoAfrica	23:00 Al Jazeera	Wed 11 Dec
06:00 Al Jazeera	09:00 KumeKucha Michezo rpt	10:00 Meza Huru Rpt	11:30 Tomorrow Today rpt
12:00 DW News Africa rpt	12:30 Our Earth	13:00 Telenovela In Love With Ramon rpt	14:00 Capchat
15:00 Out & About rpt	15:30 Special Pgm : Culinary Tourism rpt	16:00 Business Edition Rpt	16:30 Culinary delight rpt
17:00 Innovation	17:30 Meza huru	19:00 Sports Gazette	19:30 Chetu ni chetu
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WORLD

FBI didn't send undercover operatives to join January 6 attack, watchdog says

WASHINGTON

A US Justice Department watchdog report released on Thursday debunked claims by far-right conspiracy theorists who falsely alleged that FBI operatives were secretly involved in the Jan 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by Donald Trump's supporters.

The report by Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz concluded there was no evidence to suggest that undercover FBI agents participated in the attack on the US Capitol.

The report also found that the FBI did not authorize any of its informants to enter the building or engage in violence.

The FBI has long denied having any involvement by its own staff or its informants in the riots at the Capitol, though conspiracy theories about its role in the attack have persisted. One such false claim pertained to James Ray Epps, an Arizona man who entered the Capitol that day. Epps, who was charged last year with a misdemeanor for entering a restricted building or grounds, was falsely accused by Trump's supporters and by former Fox News host Tucker Carlson of being an undercover government informant.

Horowitz's report comes a little more than a month before Trump will be sworn in for his second term as president. He has pledged to grant clemency to many of the



Rioters wave flags on the West Front of the US Capitol in Washington on Jan 6, 2021. AP

people who stormed the Capitol as soon as his first day in office.

The report found that the FBI could have done more ahead of the Jan 6 attack by canvassing its field offices for intelligence from informants to prepare for what was to come.

Twenty-six FBI confidential informants were in Washington DC on the day of the attack, the report said. Three of them were tasked with reporting on domestic terrorism case subjects. One of those three entered the Capitol that day, while two others entered a restricted area around the Capitol.

The other 23 informants who were in Washington to attend protests did so on their own initiative and were not asked by the bureau

to attend the events, the report said.

Several of the informants cited in the report on Thursday were tasked with providing the FBI with information related to far-right groups including the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys.

Leaders for both the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys were later prosecuted for their involvement in the Capitol attack, with juries convicting Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes and Proud Boys former chairman Enrique Tarrio of seditious conspiracy and other crimes.

In its response to the report, the FBI said it will accept the watchdog's recommendations for how to improve its processes to prepare for future events that could pose domestic security issues.

Macron nominates Francois Bayrou as new French PM

PARIS

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron has nominated Francois Bayrou as France's new prime minister, the Elysee announced in a press release yesterday.

"The President of the Republic has nominated Francois Bayrou as Prime Minister and tasked him with forming a government," Macron's office said.

Francois Bayrou (pictured), a centrist ally of Macron, succeeds Michel Barnier who was ousted in a no-confidence vote. Bayrou now needs to form a government and make a 2025 budget adopted by the French National Assembly.

Born in 1952, Bayrou founded the centrist party Democratic Movement (MoDem) in 2007. He ran as a presidential candidate three times, in 2002, 2007, and 2012.

After the announcement of the Elysee, Jordan Bardella, president of the far-right wing party National Rally (RN) told French news channel BFMTV that his party would not immediately censor Bayrou.

However, Bardella called on Bayrou to "take into consideration the new political situation" and to "understand that he has no democratic legitimacy nor the majority in the National Assembly, which requires a dialogue with all the forces represented in the parliament."

The hard-left party La France Insoumise (LFI) has announced a plan to launch a no-confidence vote to bring down the newly nominated Bayrou.

The LFI has repeatedly said that the position of prime minister should be given to someone from the left-wing parties alliance who won the most seats in the snap legislative elections this year.

The French National Assembly voted Dec. 4 in favor of the no-confidence motion, compelling Michel Barnier to resign and causing the government to collapse. Barnier's government became the first to fall to a no-confidence vote since 1962.

Xinhua

Russia hits Ukraine's power grid after Kiev attacks airfield in Taganrog with ATACMS

MOSCOW

In response to Kiev's attack on a military airfield in Taganrog using ATACMS missiles, the Russian army carried out a precision strike on major Ukrainian fuel and energy facilities that support the country's defense industry, the Defense Ministry reported.

TASS has compiled the key details about the strike.

Defense Ministry report

- In response to the ATACMS missile attack on the Taganrog military airfield, Russia's military carried out targeted strikes on crucial Ukrainian fuel and energy infrastructure facilities that ensure the operation of its defense enterprises, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

- The attack was carried out with the help of high-precision long-range airborne and sea-based weapons, as well as strike drones.

- According to the ministry, the strike was a success, hitting all designated facilities.

Aftermath of the strike

- In the morning, an air alert went off throughout Ukraine. Explosions occurred in several areas, including the Lvov Region.

- Ukrenergo announced restrictions on power supply.

- Infrastructure damage was reported in a number of regions.

- Russian missile strikes hit a UAV production facility in the city of Borispol and a Ukrainian heavy equipment repair facility in Pereyaslavl, said Vladimir Rogov, Chairman of the Civic Chamber Commission on Sovereignty, Patriotic Projects, and Support of Veterans.

- According to him, more than 120 attacks using various weapons, including hypersonic Kinzhal missiles, were carried out.

- Rogov added that the Russian Armed Forces had launched a missile strike on the facilities of an airport in Kiev, where pilots of F-16 fighter jets were undergoing training.

ATACMS attack on Taganrog military airfield

- The Russian Defense Ministry reported on Wednesday that the Kiev regime launched a missile attack using Western precision weapons against the Taganrog military airfield in the Rostov Region on the morning of December 11, 2024.

Israeli strike on Gaza post office kills 30 Palestinians

CAIRO

AN Israeli strike on a post office sheltering Gaza residents killed at least 30 Palestinians and wounded 50, medics said, and the Israeli military said on Friday it had been targeting a senior Islamic Jihad member.

Families displaced by the 14-month-old conflict had sought refuge in the postal facility in the Nuseirat camp, and the strike late on Thursday brought the day's death toll in the enclave to 66, the medics said.

Israel said its target was an Islamic Jihad leader of attacks on Israeli civilians and troops and accused the militant group of exploiting civilian infrastructure and population as a human shield for its activities.

An Israeli military statement said it was reviewing reports on the number of casualties. It did not identify the Islamic Jihad member by name.

Nuseirat is one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic camps originally for Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war around the establishment of Israel. Today, it is part of a dense urban area crowded with displaced people from throughout the enclave.

Earlier on Thursday, two Israeli strikes in southern Gaza killed 13 Palestinians who Gaza medics and Hamas said were part of



A Palestinian man checks the damage inside a building targeted by an Israeli air strike early on Dec 12, 2024 near the Nuseirat refugee in the central Gaza Strip, amid the continuing conflict between Israel and Hamas. (PHOTO / AFP)

a force protecting humanitarian aid trucks. Israel's military said they were Hamas militants trying to hijack the shipment.

Many of those killed in the attacks on Rafah and Khan Younis had links to Hamas, according to sources close to the militant group.

The Israeli military said in a statement the two airstrikes aimed to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian aid and accused Hamas members of planning to prevent the aid from reaching Gaza civilians who need it.

Armed gangs have repeatedly hijacked aid trucks, and Hamas has formed a task force to confront them. The Hamas-led forces have killed over two dozen members of the gangs in recent months, Hamas sources and medics said.

Hamas said Israeli military strikes have killed at least 700 police tasked with securing aid trucks in Gaza since the conflict began on Oct 7, 2023.

Separately, the Israeli military on Thursday ordered residents of several districts in the heart of Gaza city to evacuate, saying it would respond to rockets fired from those areas. At nightfall on Thursday, dozens of families streamed out of the areas heading toward the center of the city.

Months of ceasefire efforts by Arab mediators, Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, have failed to conclude a deal between the two warring sides. US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in Tel Aviv on Thursday he believed a deal on a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release may be close as Israel had signaled it was ready and there were signs of

movement from Hamas. The war in the Palestinian enclave began after Hamas gunmen stormed into Israeli communities, killing around 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages back to Hamas-run Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.

Since then, Israel's military has levelled swathes of Gaza, driving nearly all of its 2.3 million people from their homes, giving rise to deadly hunger and disease and killing more than 44,800 people, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Agencies

China strives to facilitate global sharing of benefits from AI development

ON December 3, local time, the first meeting of the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on Capacity-Building of Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter referred to as "the Group of Friends") was co-chaired by China and Zambia at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York, marking the official establishment of the Group of Friends.

Representatives from over 80 countries and officials from UN agencies including the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology attended the meeting. They expected the Group of Friends to inject new impetus into the international cooperation on AI capacity building, improvement of AI governance, and closing the digital divide.

The meeting represents another

significant step taken by China to promote the inclusive and universally beneficial development of AI, demonstrating the country's vision and sense of responsibility as a major player in AI technologies.

In recent years, AI technologies have been breaking new ground, with mushrooming new applications, providing tremendous opportunities for economic and social development of all countries.

That said, AI technologies are also accompanied by risks and challenges. Developing countries are yet to benefit from AI advancements, and the AI divide and the digital divide are making development even more uneven among countries. There is a pressing need for the international community to enhance global AI governance and

step up AI cooperation.

Last year, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forth the Global AI Governance Initiative, contributing China's wisdom and proposal on global AI governance.

China advocates for international cooperation and practical actions to help developing countries enhance their AI capabilities, in a bid to ensure equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal rules for all countries in global AI development and governance, and make sure that no country is left behind.

In his speech at the Session II of the 19th G20 Summit, Xi further stressed the need to step up international governance and cooperation on AI, to make sure that AI is for good and for all, not a game of the rich countries

and the wealthy. China has been a proactive advocate and a doer in advancing the inclusive and universally beneficial development of AI.

This year, the 78th UN General Assembly adopted a resolution spearheaded by China on enhancing international cooperation for AI capacity building. Besides, China hosted the 2024 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai, and co-organized the inaugural Workshop on AI Capacity Building with the UN.

China is committed to putting AI capacity building at the forefront of the global macro policy framework for AI governance. It has taken tangible measures to support developing countries in enhancing their AI capabilities, ensuring that they truly benefit from AI

development.

In September, during the UN General Assembly high-level week, China and Zambia co-hosted the High-Level Meeting on International Cooperation on Capacity-Building of Artificial Intelligence. At the meeting, China announced the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All. The action plan presents five visions and goals, including promoting AI and digital infrastructure connectivity, empowering industries through the AI plus application, enhancing AI literacy and strengthening personnel training, improving AI data security and diversity, and ensuring AI safety, reliability, and controllability.

The plan also outlines ten actions in response to the common expectations of the Global South, such as develop-

ing AI infrastructure, carrying out cooperation on the R&D of AI models and the empowering application of AI, jointly promoting the fair and inclusive use of global data, and jointly addressing AI risks related to safety and security.

China's proposal to establish the Group of Friends will be a key component in advancing the action plan.

Prudence Kaoma, acting permanent secretary in Zambia's Ministry of Finance and National Development, said that the international community should bridge the intelligence gap and support the UN in playing a key role in global AI governance. Kaoma is expected all countries to support the Group of Friends and strengthen global coordination and cooperation.

People's Daily

Kazakhstan's relations with Russia enhance, seem promising, says Kazakh president

ASTANA

RELATIONS between Kazakhstan and Russia are progressing rapidly, and the visit of Russian leader Vladimir Putin to Astana has provided them with a serious impetus, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said on Thursday.

The president of Kazakhstan shared his positive thoughts regarding the prospects for Astana-Moscow cooperation at a meeting with Russian Federation Council Chairperson Valentina Matviyenko.

"Relations between our states are improving. Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent state visit to Astana added momentum to the advancement of strategic partnership and allied relations of our states. I feel optimistic about the future of our interaction," the press service of Kazakhstan's president quoted Tokayev as saying.

The Kazakh leader also emphasized that inter-parliamentary diplomacy and the work of the countries' lawmakers greatly contribute to the growth of cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. According to the Kazakh president's press service, the Russian top senator conveyed to Tokayev the Russian leader's words of greetings and



high praise for the results of his visit to Astana in late November.

"The visit was indeed very productive and effective. The main thing is that our cooperation, which is gaining momentum, is mutually beneficial and respectful. Thanks to the efforts of Russia and Kazakhstan's leaders, bilateral relations have reached an all-time high," the press service quoted Matviyenko as saying.

She pointed to the spheres of trade, investment, industrial projects, energy, and agriculture as clear examples of "strong strategic partnership between the two states."

The delegation of the upper house of the Russian Parliament is on an official visit to Astana. Earlier, Matviyenko held a meeting with the republic's Senate Speaker Maulen Ashimbayev, after which the sides signed a plan of inter-parliamentary cooperation for 2025-2027.

Russia hopes to keep military bases in Syria, Guterres urges deescalation

DAMASCUS

RUSSIA hopes to keep its military bases in Syria as they are important in the fight against terrorism, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said on Thursday.

"I think there is general agreement that the fight against terrorism and the IS is not over, it requires collective efforts. In this regard, our presence played an important role in the fight against international terrorism," state-run RIA news agency reported, citing Bogdanov.

The Russian diplomat added that Moscow has established contacts with the political committee of Syria's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and discussed issues of ensuring the security of the Russian diplomatic mission and citizens in the country.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is "deeply concerned" by the recent and extensive violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, urging parties to de-escalate violence throughout the country, his spokesperson said Thursday.

"The Secretary-General is particularly concerned over the hundreds of Israeli airstrikes on several locations in Syria, and stresses the urgent need to de-escalate violence on all fronts, throughout the country," Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN chief, said at a daily press briefing.

Türkiye on Thursday appointed an acting charge d'affaires at its embassy in Damascus, the semi-official Anadolu Agency reported. Türkiye's Ambassador to Mauritania, Burhan Koroglu, was appointed as

the acting charge d'affaires at the Turkish embassy in Damascus.

Türkiye closed its embassy in Damascus in 2012, citing escalating violence and its call for then-Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down amid the country's civil war that began in 2011.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday discussed regional conflicts, bilateral ties, and mutual cooperation with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Ankara, according to the Turkish presidency.

In their meeting, Erdogan emphasized the importance of strengthening relations between the two nations, which have surpassed a century, said a statement from his office.

He expressed his commitment to increasing mutual trade volume and deepening cooperation across various sectors, said his office.

Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday highlighted the necessity to protect Syria's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a phone call, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan discussed the latest developments in Syria and the broader West Asia region, according to a statement released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The two sides stressed the need to ensure Syria's security and stability, calling for an immediate end to Israeli airstrikes and ground operations against the Arab state.

International conference held in London to explore role of AI in shaping future of higher education

LONDON

AN international conference on online education and massive open online courses (MOOC) opened in London on Thursday, drawing hundreds of educational professionals from across the globe to discuss the transformative potential of online learning and artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping the future of higher education.

The 2024 Global MOOC and Online Education Conference (GMC), themed "Reimagining the Future of Higher Education in the Intelligence Era," focuses on the opportunities and challenges brought by rapid digital advancements and the emergence of generative AI.

"MOOCs have dramatically expanded access to higher education on a global scale in recent years," Stefania Giannini, UNESCO's assistant director-general for education, said during her opening remarks.

She described the conference as "a unique opportunity" to reflect on how digital and AI-driven transformation can offer "new unexpected opportunities" for higher education, "from expanded access to personalized learning," while raising awareness about equity, ethics and fairness.

During the two-day event, educators, experts and policymakers from over 130 universities, online education platforms,

international organizations and government agencies across more than 20 countries and regions are expected to share their insights both online and offline.

"I believe that through exchanges and cooperation among different countries, we can jointly promote the development of AI-empowered higher education and are excited about the prospects," Xu Kun, president of Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, told Xinhua.

This year's GMC saw the publication of two reports on the digital development of global higher education, highlighting how AI is accelerating the onset of a new era in smart education.

During the event, a demonstration of smart education showcased a scenario of a future computational biology class using AI, digital twin and virtual reality (VR) technologies.

Other projects from global universities were also presented to highlight the achievements and potential of AI in educational practices.

"By investing in innovative research, supporting educators, and fostering lifelong learning, we can ensure that our education system not only adapts to the demands of the future but also leads the way in creating a more inclusive and dynamic society," said Jacqui Smith, minister for skills in the UK's Department for Education.

Chinese-funded project for empowering African youth takes spotlight at UNESCO forum

NAIROBI

THE China Funds-in-Trust Phase 3 (CFIT III) project, initiated by the Chinese government in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has played a transformative role in equipping African youth with market-relevant skills, delegates said Wednesday at a forum in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi.

Launched in 2019, the CFIT III project has extended to six African countries to enhance the capacity of higher education institutions to provide local youth with technical and soft skills tailored to labour market demands.

Its success was highlighted at the 2024 UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in Africa, co-organized by UNESCO, the African Union (AU), and the Kenyan government, from Tuesday to Wednesday.

The forum brought together education ministers, diplomats, representatives of regional blocs, academia, industry leaders, and civil society to assess the project's impact across 12 higher education institutions in Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. These efforts have helped students transition from academic institutions to the workforce.

Chinese Ambassador Level Representative to UNESCO Yang Xinyu emphasized education's pivotal role in Sino-African relations, saying that since its launch, the CFIT III project has enhanced the capacity of African tertiary institutions to address the growing need for skilled labor in critical economic sectors.

"We are encouraged by the early results of the CFIT III project. Over 24,000 beneficiaries across six African countries have already benefited from various initiatives, including curriculum enhancements, capacity-building workshops, gender equality initiatives, and industry partnerships," Yang said.

The Chinese government has provided up to 20 million U.S. dollars to support the project, aligning with the AU's Agenda 2063, which emphasizes skills development as a cornerstone of



Graduates attend the 70th graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi, in Nairobi, capital of Kenya, on Dec. 15, 2023.

Africa's socio-economic transformation, said Yang.

Louise Haxthausen, director at the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa based in Nairobi, said the CFIT III project has showcased the power of collaboration to address the skills gap in Africa and spur inclusive growth.

According to Haxthausen, the project has aligned technical higher education with labor market demands, enhancing the employability of African youth and fostering university-industry partnerships, gender parity, and curriculum reforms. Kora Tushune, Ethiopia's state minister of higher education, said that the project has accelerated higher education curriculum reforms, strengthened linkages between academia and industry, and pro-

moted youth upskilling and employability. Under the project, Ethiopian tertiary institutions have been able to deliver courses that enhance the competencies of youth working in public service, manufacturing, health, and technology sectors, Tushune noted.

Borhene Chakroun, director of the policies and lifelong learning systems division at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, said that through CFIT III, Africa's tertiary institutions have proactively engaged companies to foster career guidance and mentorship aimed at preparing the youth for gainful employment. "We have created a new mechanism for collaboration between universities and the labor market and also have young people at the universities who are creating their own start-ups," Chakroun said.

China's automobile trade-ins spur business volume of recycling enterprises

TRUCKS loaded with scrapped vehicles pulled into a dismantling workshop of China Recycling Luoyang Renewable Resources Development Co., Ltd. in Luoyang, central China's Henan province. Inside the workshop, scrapped vehicles would be completely repurposed.

In the bustling workshop, machines operated at full capacity, accompanied by the rhythmic clanking of tools. Components such as doors, wheels, batteries, and engines were meticulously disassembled, sorted, and sent to different destinations: steel materials were crushed and delivered to steel mills for reuse; old tires were recycled by downstream companies to produce rubber granules; and engines in good condition were sent to factories for refurbishment in accordance with national standards.

"This year, favorable policies have encouraged many vehicle owners to scrap their old cars and purchase new ones. Once the required documents are prepared, they can claim subsidies," said Zheng Yinghui, deputy general manager of the Henan-based company.

The "favorable policies" Zheng referred to are China's recent initiatives to promote vehicle trade-ins. These policies include subsidies for consumers who replace their old vehicles with new ones through official scrapping and renewal programs.

Such measures have sparked enthusiasm for upgrading vehicles and have significantly increased the workload for dismantling enterprises like this one in Henan. According to Wang Gongxian, deputy manager of the scrapped vehicle division of China Recycling Luoyang Renewable Resources Development Co., Ltd., more than 10,000 scrapped vehicles had been acquired by the company as of early November, a nearly 70 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

At a deregistration inspection area for scrapped vehicles, Zhang Yaoshen drove his old car onto a weighbridge, where the vehicle's residual value was calculated based on its weight. For most old vehicles, owners receive around 2,000 yuan (\$276.48) per ton.

"My car has been running for over a decade, and the fuel consumption has become increasingly high. I've been wanting to switch to a new energy vehicle (NEV). The current trade-in subsidies are a great deal, saving me about 20,000 yuan," Zhang said.

In about half an hour, the deregistration procedures were completed, and his old car joined others heading for the dismantling workshop.

Many car owners, like Zhang, are taking advantage of the policies to replace outdated fuel vehicles with newer, more efficient options. Whether it's an old fuel vehicle with declining performance or an early-generation new energy vehicle with limited range, these policies are driving a wave of vehicle upgrades across the country.

The vehicle trade-ins are injecting new energy into automobile consumption. By Nov. 18, over 4 million subsidy applications for vehicle scrapping and replacement had been submitted nationwide. In the first ten months of this year, China's automobile pro-

duction and sales both surpassed 24 million units, maintaining growth on an already high base.

Encouraged by subsidies, many people have opted for low-carbon, environmentally friendly alternatives. From January to October this year, the production and sales of NEVs in China grew by 33 percent and 33.9 percent year on year, respectively, with nearly 40 percent of new car sales being NEVs. This reflects a growing embrace of green consumption across the country.

The trade-in program has also opened new opportunities for the recycling industry. From January to October, 5.846 million scrapped vehicles were recycled nationwide, a year-on-year increase of 55.9 percent. In October alone, the number of recycled vehicles reached 879,000, up 113.4 percent from a year ago.

Recycling enterprises across China are accelerating technological innovation and enhancing production efficiency. For example, companies are adopting tiered utilization methods for used power batteries to maxi-

mize their lifecycle. In response to the increasing scrapping of city buses, diesel trucks, and agricultural machinery, businesses are expanding their operations to improve the speed and efficiency of recycling and reuse.

"Next, we will enhance the speed and efficiency of vehicle dismantling, expand the circular economy, and achieve green, low-carbon development," said Zheng.

At the same time, relevant authorities are working to regulate the market and improve services. To make the process more convenient and reassuring for car owners, the government regularly publishes information about licensed vehicle recycling and dismantling companies. Efforts are also being made to improve the recycling network, optimize enterprise layout, and promote door-to-door vehicle collection services. With the ongoing impact of trade-in policies, China's new car sales market and the automotive after-sales market are poised for even greater growth.

People's Daily



A scrapped vehicle is dismantled in a workshop of a recycling enterprise in Liaocheng, east China's Shandong province, Sept. 25, 2024. (Photo by Ma Hongkun / People's Daily Online)



Nostalgic Gill savours return to Gabba after 2021 heroics

By Ian Ransom

FACING fierce Australian pace on a bouncy Gabba pitch is among the toughest assignments a touring batter can face but India's Shubman Gill will approach the task with a clear head in the third test starting today.

Nearly four years ago, the Gabba was the proving ground for Gill's test career in the deciding fourth match of the 2020-21 series.

A callow, 21-year-old opener playing in just his third test, Gill scored a brave 91 as an injury-depleted India chased down a record 328-run target for victory and sealed the series 2-1.

Pugnacious wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant was Player-of-the-Match for seeing India home with an unbeaten 89 but Gill was also hailed a hero in the subcontinent for his starring role in the thriller.

Little wonder Gill is glad to be back at the Gabba this week with the five-test series delicately poised at 1-1.

"Definitely very nostalgic when I came here," the Punjabi told reporters yesterday. "Just walking through the stadium again after the 2021 win felt very nostalgic. Definitely I feel pretty confident playing here."

Plenty has changed since India last played at the Gabba.

In 2021, they were captained brilliantly by Ajinkya Rahane, with regular skipper Virat Kohli having returned home after the first test to spend time with his newborn daughter.

India were down to playing net bowlers at the Gabba after a terrible run of injuries.

Rahane and fellow veteran batter Cheteshwar Pujara have since moved on but Kohli and Rohit Sharma, now the captain, remain.

Out of form with the bat, Rohit missed India's victory in the series opener in Perth while caring for his newborn son but returned to the team for the second match in Adelaide.

He contributed only nine runs batting in the middle order as India were trounced by 10 wickets, raising fresh queries about his place in the side.

Though captains generally turn up for press conferences on the eve of a test, Rohit was spared the duty yesterday and did not take part in training.

"Yeah, this was an optional practice session and I think he practised enough," said Gill.

He added that Rohit had demanded more from the batters as a collective in Brisbane after India were twice skittled for less than 200 in the pink ball test in Adelaide.

"We are looking to post a big total first up," said Gill. "We are a bit more used to playing with the red ball in the day."

Meanwhile, Australia batsman Steve Smith is weighing a "less is more" approach to training in a bid to arrest his form slump following advice from former teammate Mike Hussey during the first test against India.

Once the team's batting maestro, 35-year-old Smith heads into the third

test in Brisbane under major pressure after managing a total of 19 runs in three innings.

The meagre returns in the series-opener in Perth and second match in Adelaide have come despite a reversion to his favoured number four slot in the batting order following a failed stint as an opener.

With pundits writing off his chances of regaining career-best form, Smith approached fellow batting obsessive Hussey who produced arguably his best cricket when on the wrong side of 35.

"It's well documented that him and Marnus (Labuschagne) in particular, they hit a lot of balls, they practise really hard and they do a great deal of preparation," Hussey told Cricket Australia's website (cricket.com.au).

"And I just said (to Smith), 'It's worth just thinking about how much you hit, and is it actually helping you, or is it slightly detrimental?'"

"I think as a young player, volume is really important. But as you get older, I certainly found from my own perspective, it wasn't about hitting more balls and working yourself into the ground."

"It was more about coming into games as mentally and physically fresh as you possibly can."

Nicknamed "Mr Cricket" for his enthusiasm for the game, Hussey scored eight test centuries after turning 35 before retiring in 2013 with an average of 51.52 from 79 tests.

Smith took a leaf out of Hussey's book and did not train on the day before the Adelaide test, hoping to be fresh for a big score.

It didn't materialise as he was out for two runs, nicking Jasprit Bumrah down the leg-side.

"In an ideal world, I probably wouldn't hit as many balls as I do in the lead-up," said Smith. "It's just if I need to feel a bit better with something or work on a certain movement or whatever, I might need that last session."

Smith has been dismissed by Indian pace each time, raising questions about his defence.

Fans question how long a team crying out for regeneration can afford to carry him.

Once the standard-setter in Australian batting, Smith is now looking at what works for his teammates in more bowler-friendly conditions that have emerged in recent years.

"In the last two years or so, while the wickets have been tricky, the guys getting runs are probably the ones going harder at the ball, almost keeping their bodies out of the way, giving themselves room in a way, and hitting hard and scoring quickly," he said.

"Travis (Head) and Mitch Marsh are two prime examples there."

"For me, there's a balance. Obviously, you've got to try and put the bowler under some kind of pressure and try and dictate terms a little bit. But that can be tricky on those sorts of wickets as well."

REUTERS

Combined Kings hammer Tanga Kings in 2024 U-17 Boys Bilateral Series

By Correspondent Japheth Kazenga

COMBINED Kings have opened their campaign in the 2024 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) U-17 Boys Bilateral Series grandly, commanding a five-wicket thrashing of Tanga Kings in Dar es Salaam recently.

Tanga Kings went in to bat first in the low-scoring game at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) ground, notching 89/6 in the allotted 20 overs.

The batting team experienced a shaky start to their plan to end their innings with a convincing total after the openers fell victim to an early exit.

Deuji Enock ended four runs short of a two-digit figure and his fellow opening batting partner Mnunga Mbelwa returned without a run to his name.

The two openers' dismissals had Tanga Kings managing 15-2 after three overs, leaving the remainder of the performers with the tricky task of stepping up their game.

Team captain Masoud Rashid, slotted in at number three, somehow improved the score with his 11 runs, whilst nailing a four.

Rashid had Tanga Kings reaching 30-3 after his dismissal in the sixth over, and they were 37-4 in the ninth after the exit of the other top-order performer, Feisal Mohamed.

Edward David and Wingu Mohamed, who notched 13 runs apiece, kept on pressing for a better figure for their squad.

Omary Khatibu (15 runs not out) gave Tanga Kings hopes of ending the innings with a better total, as the cricketer made his way back with the bat in hand.

Khatibu formed a seventh-wicket stand with Omary Mbelwa (five runs not out) as Tanga Kings ended their turn with the



Combined Kings cricket team. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TANZANIA CRICKET ASSOCIATION

bat 11 runs short of a triple-digit figure.

Tanga Kings' total was significantly buoyed by 25 extras given away by the Combined Kings bowling unit.

The extras consisted of 22 wides, two leg byes, and one bye.

Needing 90 runs to come out victorious, the Baraka Freddy-led Combined Kings confidently got down to a successful chase, recording 90/5 in the scheduled 20 overs.

Combined Kings' resolute-ness hardly waned, even though they endured an early blow in the form of an early exit of the opener Zephania Leonard.

Leonard left the crease one run short of two digits, and the other opener, Freddy, for that matter, had to carry the day.

Freddy garnered an impressive 29 runs after getting the innings underway, pushing Combined Kings' score to 64-2 upon his dismissal in the 11th over.

The other top-order perform-

er, Alex Elias, had Combined Kings staying within reach of the target, grabbing 26 runs.

He had Combined Kings reaching one run short of the required target, with five wickets taken, when he got out in the 18th over.

Edson Edward, who posted four runs, Pascal Peter, and Mustafa had an easy task of making certain of Combined Kings' victory with a few confident knocks.

Peter scored two runs not out and Mustafa ended with one run not out as Combined Kings deservedly emerged victorious.

Combined Kings' chase was made much easier by 17 extras given away by Tanga Kings.

They were made up of 12 wides, four leg byes, and a no-ball.

Much as Hemedi Ntemo garnered 2-19 in his bowling turn, his efforts could not help the Tanga Kings turn their fortunes around.

The Player of the Match honour went to Elias (Combined Kings) for his 26 runs.

In the day's other clash played at the same venue, Morogoro Kings garnered a comprehensive 125-run victory over Arusha Kings.

Morogoro Kings raced to 169/7 in 30 overs when they took the crease first.

Roman Adinani grabbed 69 runs not out to propel the batting team to an imposing total and John Meya chipped in with 18 runs not out.

Arusha Kings faltered in the chase as they ended up with 44/10 in 12.3 overs.

Ramadhan Ammy walked away with the Player of the Match prize after finishing with an incredible 5-8 in just three overs for the eventual winners.

A TCA official pointed out that it was an exciting start to the tournament, adding that the young talents are already showing their potential.

The TCA U-17 Boys Bilateral Series is organized by the national cricket governing body to improve the standard of the game domestically.

Payton Pritchard leads short-handed Celtics past Pistons

By Field Level Media

PAYTON Pritchard came off the bench to score a game-high 27 points and deliver 10 assists, leading the Boston Celtics to a 123-99 victory over the visiting Detroit Pistons on Thursday night.

Pritchard shot 10 of 20 from the field, including 7 of 15 from 3-point range.

The Celtics received 23 points from Derrick White and 19 from Kristaps Porzingis while beating the Pistons for the 12th consecutive meeting.

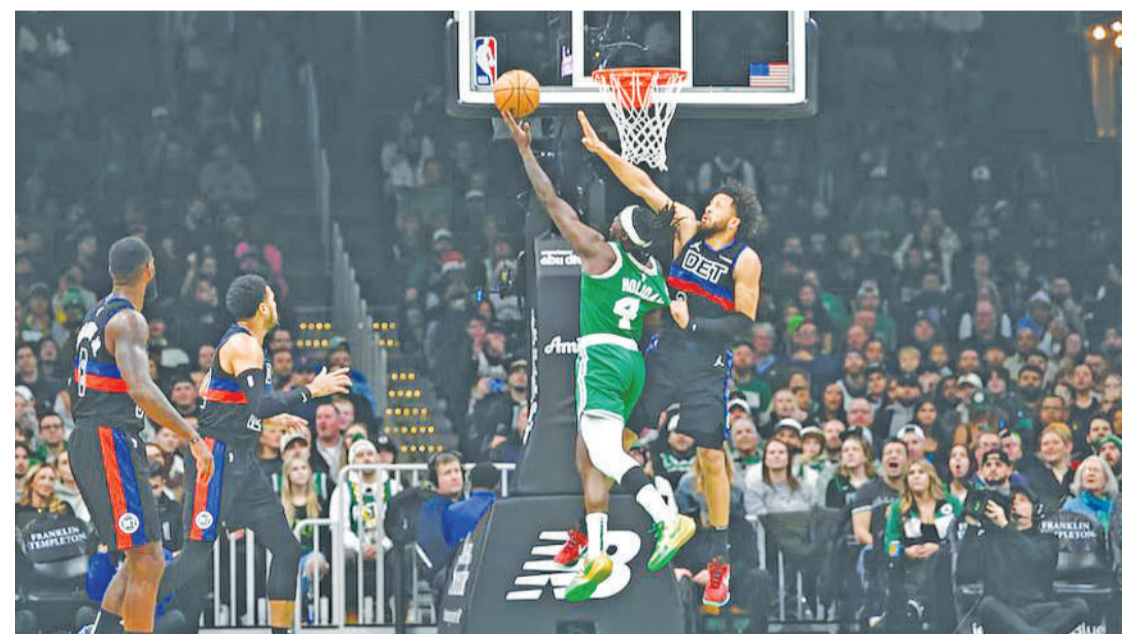
Rookie Ronald Holland II scored a career-high 26 points for the Pistons, who shot 7 of 37 (18.9 percent) from 3-point territory. Detroit's Cade Cunningham finished with 18 points, eight rebounds and eight assists. Jaden Ivey, who logged 10 points on 3-of-14 shooting, was the only other Detroit player who reached double figures.

The Celtics were without Jayson Tatum (knee) and Sam Hauser (adductor), two of the team's top shooters. Tatum leads the team in points per game (28.2) rebounds per game (8.9) and assists per game (5.7). Hauser, one of Boston's top reserves, is averaging 8.5 points in 22.2 minutes per contest.

The Pistons didn't have Jalen Duren (wrist). The center is averaging a team-high 8.9 rebounds per game.

Boston ended the first quarter on a 14-2 run and led 27-16 entering the second. Detroit was 0-for-12 from 3-point territory in the opening quarter.

A 10-0 spurt capped by a Jrue Holiday 3-pointer gave Boston a 47-33 lead with 4:19 remaining in the first half, and the Celtics



Boston Celtics guard Jrue Holiday (4) shoots against Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham (2) in the first half at TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts, USA on Dec 12, 2024. Agencies

had a 59-44 advantage at halftime.

The Celtics extended their lead to 27 points in the third quarter, when they outscored the Pistons 34-24 to take a 93-68 lead into the final 12 minutes. The Pistons trailed by as many as 32 points in the fourth.

Boston has won all three meetings between the teams this season. The Celtics prevailed 124-118 on Oct. 26 in Detroit, then won 130-120 on Dec. 4 in Boston.

Meanwhile, in Miami, Florida, Bam Adebayo scored 21 points and grabbed a game-high 16 rebounds, leading the host Miami Heat to a 114-104 win over the Toronto Raptors on Thursday night.

Raptors star RJ Barrett made just 5 of 18 shots, but he had a triple-double with 13 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists.

Miami, which won its season-best fourth straight game, also

got a game-high 23 points from Tyler Herro. The Heat also received important bench contributions from Nikola Jovic (14 points) and Dru Smith (11 points). Grady Dick led Toronto with 22 points, including 12 in the first quarter. Jakob Poeltl added 16 points.

Toronto lost its fourth straight game, and the Raptors have the worst road record in the Eastern Conference (1-12). Toronto also has the second-worst overall record in the East at 7-19.

The Raptors played without two injured starters: Scottie Barnes (right ankle) and Immanuel Quickley (left elbow).

Toronto, though, led by nine points before settling for a 27-23 lead at the end of the first quarter. Toronto had a 10-3 edge on fastbreak points in the period.

The Raptors stretched their lead to 16 points in the second quarter. But Miami finished the quarter on a 29-8 run, taking a

58-51 lead into halftime.

Jovic led all second-quarter scorers with 11 points. His 3-pointer tied the score 49-49 with 1:32 left. In fact, Miami made four straight 3-pointers during their run -- two by Jovic, one by Herro and one by Smith.

The only thing we can really do about today,

The third quarter ended with Miami leading 89-76 and with the Heat shooting 50.8 percent from the floor and 5-for-10 on 3-pointers.

Miami cruised in the fourth quarter and finished the game with 48.2 percent shooting, including 40.6 percent on 3-pointers (13-for-32).

Toronto shot 44.6 percent, including 11-for-32 on 3-pointers (34.4 percent).

The Raptors lost despite having a 56-52 edge on paint points and a 19-5 advantage on fast-break points.

REUTERS

Man United sharpened up to snatch late Europa League win, says Amorim

PLZEN, Czech Republic

MANCHESTER United learnt lessons from their bland first half at Viktoria Plzen in the Europa League on Thursday and sped up the action in the second period, allowing them to get a 2-1 win, coach Ruben Amorim said.

Forward Rasmus Hojlund scored twice in the second half to allow United to come back from a goal down at six-times Czech champions Plzen for their third consecutive European win.

"We improved during the game," Amorim told TNT Sports. "We controlled the game in the first half but without any great chances.

"We lacked speed and movement and we didn't control the ball because the pitch was difficult to make the connections with the strikers. Viktoria didn't have chances either.

"In the second half, we gave a goal away but we reacted well. We pushed the opponents to their own half and we managed to score. The win is important at the moment and it's good to prepare for the next game."

United, still unbeaten in this year's competition, had more possession throughout the game but had to stand up to an initial spell of pressure from the hosts, who ended up taking the lead in the 48th minute through forward Matej Vydra.

"The speed improved (in the second half)," Amorim added. "I told the players we need more movement in front because they have to feel we are a danger.

"We changed a little bit of our game and the players from the bench also helped. We improved not just the way we play, but also the speed of the game.

"We are improving in some details. We controlled the transitions very well. We were aggressive when we lost the ball. We need to spend more time near the opposition goal."

The Portuguese manager was happy with the performance of substitute Hojlund, who needed just six minutes to cancel out Plzen's opener before sealing the win with another strike just before fulltime.

"He is improving, he is more near the goal now," Amorim added.

"He knows better the movement he has to do. He could score more this evening. But he is scoring, working and controlling the ball better."

The Danish striker has been involved in six out of 12 of United's goals in the Europa League this season, scoring five of them.

Meanwhile, Manchester United players need more time to perfect newly appointed manager Ruben Amorim's 3-4-3 system, striker Rasmus Hojlund said on Thursday after he came off the bench to score both goals in the club's 2-1 Europa League win at Viktoria Plzen.

The Denmark forward, who previously said Ruben's formation suited his playing style, has scored five goals in six Europa League appearances this season.

REUTERS

Former China coach Li Tie sentenced to 20 years in prison for bribery

BEIJING

CHINA's crackdown on corruption in soccer claimed a notable figure yesterday when former Everton midfielder and national team coach Li Tie was sentenced to 20 years in prison for giving and receiving bribes.

Li, one of his country's best known players from his time as a midfielder in the English Premier League and the national team at the 2002 World Cup, was coach of China from late 2019 until he resigned two years later.

The Communist Party investigation into Li's conduct began in November 2022, state broadcaster CCTV reported yesterday, and the 47-year-old appeared in a court in Hubei province in March this year when he submitted a guilty plea.

The Xianning court alleged that from 2015, when he was an assistant coach at the Hebei China Fortune club, until 2021, when he quit as China coach, Li gave and received bribes totalling 120 million yuan (\$16.5 million).

In exchange for bribes, the court said, Li would select certain individuals for the national team as well as help clubs win competitions and sign players.

Chinese football has grappled with match-fixing and graft at least since the late 1990s with local fans blaming corruption for the continuing poor performance of the national team.

When President Xi Jinping came to power, he expressed a hope that China would qualify for the World Cup for the second time after 2002, then host the tournament, and ultimately one day win it.

Xi also unleashed a sweeping anti-corruption campaign which earlier this year resulted in former Chinese Football Association (CFA) Chen Xuyuan being sentenced to life in prison for taking bribes worth over 81 million yuan.

(\$1 = 7.2754 yuan)

REUTERS

Manchester City crisis puts United's malaise in the shade ahead of derby

By Martyn Herman, LONDON

IT would have seemed inconceivable at the start of the Premier League season that by the time the Manchester derby rolled around it would be Pep Guardiola's City enduring a crisis so serious it has distracted attention from United's malaise.

That has really taken some doing. After all, United sacked manager Erik ten Hag in October, parted ways with sporting director Dan Ashworth this week after just five months and sit 13th in the table under new manager Ruben Amorim.

United's 3-2 home defeat by Nottingham Forest last weekend underlined the size of the task Amorim faces at Old Trafford.

Yet it is City's meltdown which is the main talking point ahead of tomorrow's clash at The Etihad Stadium.



Guardiola's side have won once in their last 10 matches in all competitions, sit fourth in the Premier League, eight points behind leaders Liverpool, and are in danger of a humiliating exit from the Champions League.

Beset with injuries to key players and drained of confidence, City's 2-0 defeat by Juventus on Wednesday had some pundits declaring the end of Guardiola's golden era.

"We just have not seen

a Pep Guardiola side in general ever be this bad. He has to find a way of galvanising this team and reinstalling some form and confidence."

former Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand said. "They are under real pressure now."

All things are relative though. Since United's last Premier League title in 2013, City have won it seven times, six under Guardiola including the last four.

City still possess a squad full of serial win-

ners and Guardiola, having signed a two-year contract extension, is hardly likely to walk away or be shown the door any time soon.

The Spaniard is not immune to criticism though and City fans will demand a return to business as usual, starting with the visit of United tomorrow.

"Of course, I question myself in the good moments and the bad moments. I was stable in the good moments and I'm stable in the bad mo-

ments," Guardiola said after defeat in Turin left his side in 22nd place in the 36-team Champions League group.

CITY BACKLASH

United have conceded a total of 13 goals in their last three Premier League visits to their local rivals and will be wary of being on the receiving end of a City backlash.

But they did beat them in last year's FA Cup final and will believe they can feed off City's sudden fragility which has seen them concede 21 goals in all competitions since the start of November, more than any other club in Europe's big five leagues.

Before City and United battle to restore lost pride tomorrow, Liverpool will return to Premier League action with a home game against Fulham today.

Last week's postponement of the Merseyside derby because of stormy weather allowed second-placed Chelsea to reduce

the Reds' advantage to four points, albeit having played a game more.

Arne Slot's Liverpool side maintained their 100% Champions League record on Tuesday by beating Girona 1-0, albeit with a display not to the Dutch coach's liking.

Slot has set very high standards already and Fulham are likely to be in for a long afternoon at Anfield.

Chelsea, who face a 16-hour round trip to Kazakhstan in the Conference League this week, albeit without most of their first team, host Brentford on Sunday in a game that promises goals with the pair already having scored a combined 66 this term.

Third-placed Arsenal, who are six points behind Liverpool, host Everton today before Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa -- sitting fifth and sixth respectively -- meet.

REUTERS

Bellingham boosts Real's chances of taking top spot from faltering Barca

By Trevor Stynes

LALIGA leaders Barcelona's dip in form has allowed Real Madrid to move within striking distance and the defending champions could top the standings today for the first time this season, with Jude Bellingham again firing on all cylinders.

While Barca drew 2-2 at Real Betis last weekend, Real Madrid strolled to a 3-0 win in Girona and are now two points off the pace with a game in hand going into this weekend's short trip to mid-table city rivals Rayo Vallecano.

A win at Vallecas would increase the pressure on Barca before they host Leganes tomorrow, after their once commanding lead has been whittled away over five matches, with third-placed Atletico Madrid also waiting to pounce a point further back.

In October, Barcelona stunned the Bernabeu with a 4-0 hammering of Real Madrid and when they followed that with victory over Espanyol the gap at the top was nine points, after Real's game at Valencia was postponed because of flooding.

Since then, however, Barca have won once in five while Real racked up four wins helped by the return to scoring form of Bellingham (pictured), who has netted in all five games.

Bellingham had previously failed to score in the league this term having bagged 19 goals last season, more than any Real player, with the England international shining in his debut season in LaLiga.

The attacking midfielder also scored his first Champions League goal this season in Real's 3-2 win over Ata-



lanta on Tuesday, where Kylian Mbappe was also among the goals.

Mbappe has failed to set Spanish football alight as Bellingham did on his arrival and a possible upturn in form could now be hampered by injury, although manager Carlo Ancelotti is optimistic the problem is not serious.

The former Paris St Germain forward went off early against Atlanta and is doubtful for today's game but was replaced in Bergamo by Rodrygo, a welcome boost for Ancelotti.

The Brazilian forward missed the Girona game and against Atalanta Real also welcomed back

his compatriot Vinicius Jr, scoring on his return from a muscle injury.

Real were held to a 1-1

draw at Rayo Vallecano last season, but this time around, playing catch-up to Barcelona and

with Atletico snapping at their heels, all three points will be the target against a club 12th in the

standings.

Barca will be boosted by their 3-2 win at Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday, which put them second in the Champions League standings and where Ferran Torres continued his fine form with a double having also scored in the last two league games.

If Real get the win, Barcelona will be expected to reclaim top spot against promoted side Leganes, who are 17th, two points above the relegation zone and without a win in three games.

Hansi Flick's Barca side will need to shore up their defence, however, having failed to keep a clean sheet in their six league games since beating Real.

Atletico are firmly back in the title race after five straight wins and also have a game in hand on Barcelona. Diego Simeone's side are at home to 15th-placed Getafe tomorrow.

Girona are struggling to repeat last season's heroics and six losses already leaves them in ninth place before Saturday's trip to Mallorca, who are two points above them in eighth place.

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Manchester City crisis puts United's malaise in the shade ahead of derby

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Yanga ready for pivotal CAF Champions League showdown against TP Mazembe



While Young Africans emphasize that they are not relying on past victories for motivation, their previous encounters with TP Mazembe provide a glimmer of hope.

In the 2022/23 CAF Confederation Cup Group D, Young Africans triumphed 1-0 in an away match against TP Mazembe, with Farid Mussa netting the decisive goal. They also secured a 3-1 win in the earlier group stage match at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

However, coach Ramovic is adamant that those results are history, and his team must focus on the present challenge.

"We understand that Young Africans won their last match here in Congo, but that is in the past. Today is a new game, and we are prepared for this challenge," he reiterated.

Young Africans fans, renowned for their unwavering support, will hope for a spirited performance from their team.

The players and technical bench are determined to deliver, knowing the significance of today's game in shaping their CAF Champions League journey.

The stakes couldn't be higher for Young Africans and TP Mazembe. With both teams desperate for points, fans can expect a fiercely contested battle in Lubumbashi as the race for quarter-final spots intensifies.

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans (Yanga) are set to face TP Mazembe today in a CAF Champions League Group A encounter at Stade TP Mazembe in Lubumbashi, DR Congo.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 4:00 PM East African Time.

The Jangwani-based giants, under head coach Sead Ramovic (pictured), approach this fixture with determination, aiming to overturn their inconsistent form in the competition.

Speaking ahead of the game, Ramovic acknowledged the quality of their opponents while expressing confidence in his team's preparation.

"Our goal is to showcase our abilities and perform well. Regardless of our opponent's strength, we know TP Mazembe is a big team with talented players.

"Today's match will be a great battle. We cannot dwell

on past results; we see this as a fresh challenge, and we are ready," Ramovic stated.

Young Africans midfielder Max Nzengeli echoed his coach's sentiments, emphasizing the team's commitment to fighting for their fans who have traveled long distances to support them.

"We thank Yanga fans who made the effort to travel here. It's not easy to come by bus all the way to Lubumbashi.

"The match won't be easy, but we assure them we will give our all. We're grateful for their support and are ready to give our best for them," Nzengeli said.

"We thank God for a safe journey to Lubumbashi. We are here to fight. Although we haven't won our first two matches, it's not the time to hang our heads low.

"This is our opportunity to bounce back and bring joy to our fans. We know the strength of Mazembe, but we will fight to secure a win tomorrow," he declared.

Young Africans have struggled in their opening two matches of the group stage, losing 2-0 to MC Alger in their previous outing. TP Mazembe, too, are looking to recover after a 2-1 defeat to Al Hilal Omdurman. Group A is currently led

by Al Hilal with six points, while MC Alger are second with four. Both teams are also scheduled to meet today in another crucial encounter.

Young Africans, sitting at the bottom of the group without a point, face a must-win situation to revive their chances of advancing to the quarter-finals.

A positive result in Lubumbashi could be a turning point in their campaign, with upcoming matches against TP Mazembe at home, Al Hilal away, and MC Alger at home offering further opportunities to collect crucial points.

TONIGHT @ 9:00

EATV MONDAY

5Sports

11:00 DADAZ
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA
13:00 Zote Kuntu
13:30 Kaili Za Wana
13:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
14:00 SKONGA (r)
14:30 Planet Bongo (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Akili & Me
15:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
16:00 Zote Kuntu
16:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kuraso
18:00 Kaili Za Wana
18:30 #HASHTAG
19:00 EATV SAA 1
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 5SPORTS
22:00 Zote Kuntu
23:00 Kuraso
23:05 EATV SAA1 (r)

5Sports

The week's local and international sporting events as well as in-depth analysis of the biggest sporting highlights of the week are covered on 5Sports.

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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

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM

England to face Serbia in European qualifying for 2026 World Cup

ZURICH, Switzerland

ENGLAND will renew acquaintances with Serbia, whom they played at Euro 2024, in the European qualifying competition for the 2026 World Cup after the draw was made in Zurich yesterday.

However, many teams remain in the dark over their group opponents.

The draw procedure means that eight groups are not yet fully decided, as they will contain either the winners or losers of the Nations League quarter-finals, which take place in March of next year.

England are one of only four top-seeded countries who know their fate, and under new manager Thomas Tuchel, who takes charge from Jan. 1, they will take on Serbia, Albania, Latvia and Andorra in Group K.

At this year's European Championship, England beat Serbia 1-0 in their opening group game before going on to reach the final which they lost 2-1 to Spain.

Spain take on Netherlands in their Nations League quarter-final, and the winner will join Turkey, Georgia and Bulgaria in Group E while the losing team goes into Group G alongside Poland, Finland, Lithuania and Malta.

World Cup 2022 runners-up France are also involved in a Nations League quarter-final, playing Croatia, and if they win that they will go into Group D with Ukraine, Iceland and Azerbaijan.

The 2026 World Cup will be played in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, kicking off on June 11 with the final on July 19, and will be the first to include 48 teams, expanded from 32.

Europe will have 16 places at the tournament, up from 13 at the last World Cup and the 12 group winners qualify automatically.

The 12 group runners-up go into the playoffs along with four best-ranked group winners of the 2024/25 UEFA Nations League that did not finish in first or second place in the European Qualifiers group stage.

REUTERS

Coach Maxime blames defensive lapses for Dodoma Jiji's defeat to Singida Black Stars

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

DODOMA Jiji FC head coach, Mecky Maxime, has attributed his team's 2-1 loss to Singida Black Stars in the Premier League to defensive negligence during the first 20 minutes of the match at Liti Stadium in Singida.

The defeat marked Dodoma Jiji's sixth loss of the season, leaving them in 10th place with 16 points after 14 matches.

Maxime (pictured) lamented his side's lack of focus early on, which allowed Elvis Rupia to score twice within the opening 15 minutes, sinking Dodoma Jiji's hopes of a comeback.

Rupia struck in the eighth and 15th minutes to secure all three points for Singida Black Stars, who now sit in fourth place with 27 points, trailing Young Africans only on goal difference.

Speaking after the game, Maxime expressed frustration over his team's poor start, stating: "We ruined things early in the first 20 minutes due to a lack of focus from the defense. The attack also lacked stability, even though we managed to score one goal in the second half."

Despite the defeat, Maxime highlighted that Dodoma Jiji created more opportunities than Singida Black Stars, with at least four clear chances



to score.

However, he pointed out that a lack of composure in front of goal and the opposition's experience proved costly.

"It has happened, and we are now preparing for the next game to achieve better results. In this match, we let ourselves down. If we had remained calm and composed, we

could have secured a big victory," Maxime added.

The coach, a former Taifa Stars right-back and Mtibwa Sugar player, also reassured fans of the team's commitment to improvement. He revealed that he and his technical staff are working on rectifying the mistakes that led to the back-to-back losses, including a previous 3-1 defeat

to Azam FC.

"As a coach, together with my assistants, we will address all the mistakes from this game. We cannot afford to let these errors continue. The team must come back stronger," he said.

Maxime used the opportunity to rally support from Dodoma Jiji fans, promising better performances in upcoming matches.

"We urge our fans to keep supporting us. We will make sure we bounce back and bring them the happiness they deserve," he vowed.

Dodoma Jiji's focus now shift to their next league fixture as they seek to turn their fortunes around. The team's mixed results this season have highlighted the need for greater consistency if they are to climb the league table and avoid further disappointments.

Singida Black Stars, on the other hand, will look to build on their impressive form, with Rupia's brace underlining their attacking threat. With their experienced squad, they remain in contention for a top-three finish in the league.

Dodoma Jiji will need to regroup quickly, addressing both defensive vulnerabilities and inefficiency in attack, as they prepare to face another challenge in their quest for redemption.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

