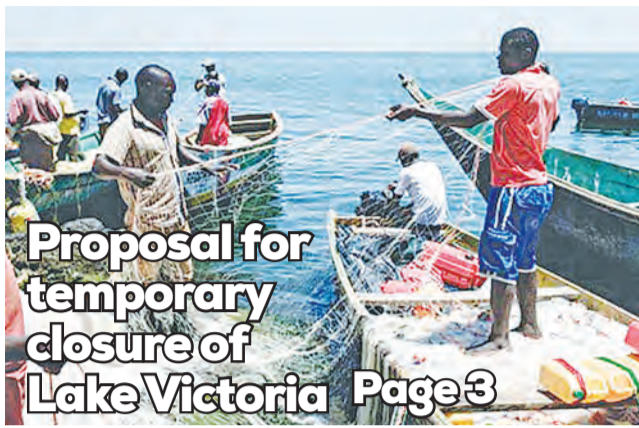




BUSINESS Digital trade to take centre stage as Rwanda hosts continental forum

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Dar port to receive Uganda oil shipments

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Uganda National Oil Co. (UNOC) has begun shipping oil products through the port of Dar es Salaam.

Proscovia Nabbanja, the UNOC chief executive officer, said in a statement yesterday that up to now UNOC utilised Mombasa port and relied on the Kenya Pipeline Co. (KPC) for oil transportation.

Uganda plans to transport upwards of 36m litres of oil each month—equivalent to 1,028 truckloads—through the port of Dar es Salaam, the statement indicated, affirming that UNOC anticipates that this volume will increase over time.

The first shipment of 18m litres (520 truckloads) has begun loading in Dar es Salaam and is expected to arrive in Kampala in the coming days, she said, asserting that the new agreements reflect joint efforts of the two countries to improve infrastructure and transportation routes for oil and other essential goods.

An accord between Dar port authorities and UNOC was agreed towards the end of May

We are negotiating with the Tanzanian government, and I will meet with Her Excellency the President on this matter

during the second bilateral business forum held in Dar es Salaam, where the two countries opted to enhance oil transportation through Dar es Salaam, replacing Mombasa.

Officials said that the decision was prompted by technical and cost issues tied with using Mombasa port, thus Dar port was a handy alternative.

Dr Doto Biteko, the deputy premier and Energy minister, stated at that moment that the accord is intended to strengthen



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa (R) pictured earlier this week visiting Cuba's Boyeros-based Labiofam factory and research centre, which produces pesticides and biocides. The PM's working tour is primarily aimed at strengthening relations between Tanzania and Cuba. Left is the facility's president, Rod Manuel Valdes. Photo: PMO

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SPORTS

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Simba eye strong start to Premier League campaign as they face Tabora United

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Yanga midfielder becomes key performer in Premier League and CAF Champions League

Temporary fishing ban lifted across Lake Tanganyika sites

By Guardian Correspondent, Kigoma

THE government has reopened fishing activities in Lake Tanganyika following a three-month ban.

Abdallah Ulega, the Livestock and Fisheries minister, officiated at the launch on Thursday at the Katonga landing site in Kigoma Ujiji municipality, explaining that the fishing ban from May 15 to August 15, was intended to protect and rejuvenate the lake's fish resources.

The ban decision was taken in accord with a regional agreement among member states of the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA), to ensure the sustainable management of fishing in the lake and its basin

The temporary suspension provided room for fish to breed and grow, which will make catches more substantial and for a while, benefit a wide range

of people living on fishing or depending on such incomes.

The ban decision was taken in accord with a regional agreement among member states of the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA), to ensure the sustainable management of fishing in the lake and its basin, he said.

In the wake of restarting fishing activities, fishermen need to adhere to regulatory fishing gear and usable methods to pre-

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WHO backs Africa's efforts to contain mpox - as Europe, Asia record cases

By A Special Correspondent

THE World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting African countries to scale up response to curb mpox, now an international global health emergency.

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, the agency's regional director for Africa, stated this position on Thursday afternoon, as Sweden became the first country outside Africa to record a case of the mpox, followed by Pakistan,

which traced the mpox case there to a traveller from the Gulf Zone.

Pakistan yesterday also confirmed its first mpox case in a patient who had recently arrived from the Gulf, just a day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the virus a public health emergency of international concern.

A health ministry spokesman said that it remains unclear whether the patient carries the new highly contagious strain

spreading in Africa while indicating that the man carrying the virus "had recently arrived from Saudi Arabia and is now missing."

He is from Mardan, a district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province bordering Afghanistan, he said, with the KP provincial health department reporting two additional mpox cases.

They said the persons carrying the virus originated from the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

but after a while the department later retracted this claim, observers noted.

Most cases arise from the Clade 1 variant identified as driving the latest outbreak, chiefly affecting the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and spreading to neighbouring countries, the agency has stated in an earlier briefing.

"We are hard at work on the frontlines of the response,

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TRC, PCCB tying up on SGR ticket, fare evasion

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) has said it is taking measures to address the ticketing complication where passengers exploit the loose controls to avoid paying correct fares.

Jamila Mbarouk, the TRC head of communications, told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday, that a recent investigation by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Morogoro uncovered significant ticket evasion on electric-powered SGR trains.

Inspectors have now been deployed to check tickets at the point of arrival to

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WHO backs African efforts to contain mpox - as Europe, Asia record cases

FROM PAGE 1

collaborating closely with governments and communities to strengthen mpox control measures," the director asserted, noting that the agency is ramping up efforts to curb the widening trend of the virus through coordinated action with partners and national authorities.

Mpox - otherwise known as monkeypox - is a viral disease transmitted through physical contact with an infected person, animal or contaminated objects. It was first detected in humans in 1970 in the DRC, and is considered endemic to countries in Central and West Africa, the agency noted.

Experts say that outbreaks are caused by mpox viruses called clades, with the clade 1 strain considered to be circulating in the DRC for years, where the emergence of a new offshoot - clade 1b - and its rapid spread there and to nearby countries became an emergency.

The rapid spread caused WHO to declare on Wednesday that mpox constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), with more than 2,100 laboratory-confirmed cases of the disease this year.

Up to 13 deaths have been reported in the DRC and a scatter of the deaths in 11 other countries, listed as Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda.

This constitutes a sharp rise from the 1,145 confirmed cases and seven deaths in 11 countries for all of last year, the agency specified, noting that WHO is stepping up support to affected countries.

It is deploying additional experts, including epidemiologists

and anthropologists while providing initial funding to accelerate outbreak response measures, the director affirmed.

Efforts are underway to enhance cross-border collaboration for case investigation, contact tracing and community engagement to ensure compliance with preventive measures, she further noted.

The UN agency is assisting national health and other authorities to speed up regulatory approvals, as well as providing guidance to national immunization technical advisory groups to ensure readiness for vaccine rollout.

WHO has also begun the process for emergency use listing for mpox vaccines to accelerate access for lower-income countries which have not yet issued their own national regulatory approvals for such drugs, she stated.

The listing brings partner agencies such as the Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) too rapidly procure doses for distribution.

WHO is also working to strengthen national diagnostic capacities by providing testing kits and reagents, as well as machines to decentralize testing, the agency noted. Genomic sequencing is also ongoing to determine the mpox clades, it stated.

To enhance preparedness in countries neighbouring the DRC and those at risk, disease surveillance and training of frontline health workers is being increased along with public awareness campaigns, the director underlined.



A representative of Dodoma Region tribal chiefs and elders presents a traditional spear to Vice President Dr Philip Mpango, who is also a member of CCM Central Committee member and the party's patron for Dodoma Region, on the sidelines of the VP's meeting with the leaders and members of the party in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: VPO

TRC, PCCB tying up on SGR ticket, fare evasion

FROM PAGE 1

confirm that it corresponds with the starting point and the final destination indicated on the ticket, to check situations where passengers skip stops indicated on the tickets to go on longer journeys, avoiding correct fare payments.

Passengers will now be required to present their identity cards to purchase tickets,

with these IDs being verified during the scanning process, as some passengers have been buying multiple tickets and reselling them at inflated prices.

The police have already arrested individuals involved in ticket evasion who will face legal proceedings in court, she said, insisting that not only will ticket purchasers furnish IDs, and no more than one ticket can be bought

per ID.

The names on the ticket must match those on the ID, she elaborated, affirming that tickets will now be scanned at the start and at the end of the journey, while auxiliary inspectors will ion hand inside the trains to conduct inspections.

Christopher Mwakajinga, the regional PCCB commander in Morogoro, cautioned speed train passengers to

adhere to fare regulations and ensure their payments correspond to their travel distances.

Non-compliance will result in legal repercussions to safeguard civic integrity and sustainability of railway services, he said, after the PCCB report highlighted a concerning trend of passengers traveling from Dar es Salaam without proper fare payment.

This has resulted in losses

for TRC, occasioning purchasing tickets for shorter distances, such as Soga, Ruvu and Ngerengere stations while actually travelling to Morogoro or Dodoma, or stations in-between, he said.

TRC officials will oversee ticket inspections and take stringent measures against spotted evaders, with evasion penalties and fines significantly increased, he added.



Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister Mahmoud Thabit Kombo (C), Defence and National Service minister Dr Stergomena Tax (L) and the Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office, Ali Suleiman Ameir, attend a meeting of the Southern African Development Community's Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in Harare, Zimbabwe, yesterday. Photo courtesy of Foreign Affairs ministry

Temporary fishing ban lifted across Lake Tanganyika sites

FROM PAGE 1

serve fish stocks and allow the various species to mature before being harvested.

Stressing the importance of compliance with regulations, he said that it would be counterproductive to

reinstate fishing and then illegal and harmful methods sabotage the benefits gained from the suspension.

Enforcing the ban on firearms was not the goal; and instead enforcing it was a collaborative effort involving fisher groups, local

authorities and other agencies.

The minister lauded concerns by President Samia Suluhu Hassan for the fisheries sector, pointing at a substantial increase in the ministry's budget this financial year, to facilitate significant improvements

in the regulatory and environmental uplift aspects.

Dr Edwin Mhede, the deputy permanent secretary, said in his remarks that fishing is a crucial sector in the local economy, providing lifetime occupations for 6,000 people in the region or upwards of

10 percent of the lakeside population.

There was a seven percent increase in fishing vessels over the past decade with 104 landing sites scattered along the lake shore on this side of international borders, he said.

Songoro Athumani, a Ka-

lilani village fisherman in Uvinza District, praised the three-month suspension affirming that it has resulted in increased fish yields.

Larger fish and sardines are more plentiful by sight, even before fishing activities actually resumed, he added.

Dar port set to receive Uganda oil shipments

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economic relations, citing the energy and industrial sectors.

The meeting was geared to enhance infrastructure development and foster cooperation in trade and industry, he stated, as culmination of efforts starting early this year, when Uganda began negotiations with Tanzania to shift to Dar port for its oil imports. Traditionally depending on the port of Mombasa, Uganda was increasingly dissatisfied with Ugandan fuel companies obtaining 90 percent of their supplies through Kenya-registered affiliates, a variation of non-tariff trade barriers.

President Yoweri Museveni had expressed concern about supply disruptions and high fuel prices when transportation involves too many hands setting service terms from a monopoly position.

In November last year, the Kampala authorities decided to transfer exclusive rights for petroleum supply to a unit of global energy trader Vitol, to supervise all of its \$1.6bn worth of petroleum products in 2022, mostly from the Gulf region.

Officials said that despite Uganda initially expecting use the port outlet for its oil imports Ugandan Energy minister Ruth Nankabirwa acknowledged that the Nairobi authorities had refused to grant the necessary license.

"We are negotiating with the Tanzanian government, and I will meet with Her Excellency the President on this matter," the minister had started early in the year.

"We want to find a route that ensures the security of our petroleum supplies," she added.

Govt allocates 2.8bn/- for water projects in Monduli

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE government has allocated 2.8bn/- for the implementation of 11 water projects in Monduli District Council, Arusha Region, in the 2024/2025 financial year.

The water projects will be implemented across 13 villages in the district, aiming to eliminate shortage of water services that currently affects all 62 villages in the region.

So far, a total of 45 villages have been provided with clean and safe water services, reaching an average coverage of 69 percent.

Monduli District Commissioner Feso Kiswaga unveiled this on Thursday here during the opening of the second general meeting for Community Based Water Supply Organisations (CBWSOs).

The DC said that upon completion of the projects, 86 percent of water service availability in Monduli District will be achieved, thereby ending the challenge for the local residents.

He emphasised the government's commitment to providing clean and safe water services and underscored

the residents' responsibility to protect water infrastructure and settle their water bills to continue receiving the service.

Neville Msaki, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) manager for Monduli District reported that the operation of water schemes was progressing well.

He said a total of 20 CBWSOs have been registered under the Water Act No. 5 of 2019.

He added that currently, 10 of the organisations are effectively carrying out their duties in their respective areas, namely Mtowambu, Lolkisale, Makuyuni, Naitolia, Mswakini Juu, Naiti, Meserani Bwawani, Selela, Mbaashi, and Saruni Oldonyo.

Despite the positive developments, he said that six organisations of Monalo, Mfereji, Enguik, Lendikinya, Emairete and Eluwai, struggle with their operations due to leadership challenges.

Additionally, two organisations, Mswakini Chini and Engaruka, have not yet started functioning, while two new organisations, Lepuruko and Nafco, have been established.



Kisongo Airport manager Godfrey Kaaya (L) pictured in Arusha city yesterday briefing Arusha regional commissioner Paul Makonda on the renovation now in progress at the facility. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

Initiative cuts maternal, child mortality by 28pc

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

ARUSHA Region has recorded a 28 percent decline in maternal and child mortality for the 2023/2024 financial year, thanks to the effective implementation of M-mama programme.

The number of deaths fell from 67 to 48, a reduction attributed to the programme which provides emergency transportation and referral services for pregnant women and children who are in dire conditions.

Dr Edna Chonge, acting Arusha Regional Medical Officer, unveiled this yesterday during the annual working meeting to evaluate the implementa-

tion of the M-mama programme in the region.

She noted that, in just over a year since its launch, the programme made notable progress in reducing mortality rates among pregnant women and children.

Dr Chonge highlighted that the programme, launched on December 19, 2022, and operational since March 2023, has made significant progress in reducing mortality rates among pregnant women and children. "Through the M-mama programme, we have successfully referred 4,189 pregnant women, representing 82 percent of total cases, and 808 infants, accounting

for 18 percent. In total, we processed 4,997 referrals, or 92 percent," she said.

She said that the purpose of the annual meeting was to evaluate the system's implementation, address any challenges, and develop actionable solutions. The goal is to create a strategic plan to sustainably tackle any issues and further reduce or eliminate preventable deaths.

Presenting revenue and expenditure estimates for the Ministry of Health for the 2024/25 fiscal year in the National Assembly recently, the then Health Minister Ummu Mwalimu said that the government had signifi-

cantly improved the health sector in the country.

She listed the "achievements" as the expansion and improvement of health infrastructure, whereby the numbers of health service delivery facilities increased from 8,549 in 2021 to 9,693 this year which is an increase of 1,144 facilities.

For the modern medical equipment, the minister said there has been an increase in diagnostic and disease detection equipment, including MRI machines from 7 to 13, CT scanners from 12 to 45, Digital X-ray machines from 147 to 346, Ultrasound machines from 476 to 668, Echocardi-

grams from 95 to 102, Cath labs from one to four, and the introduction of PET Scan which was previously unavailable in the country.

The minister said for increased bed capacity, the number of general hospital beds has gone up from 86,131 in 2021 to 145,374, the number of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in public facilities increased from 258 in 2021 to 1,362 and for the improved availability of medicine, the availability of medicines and health products (290 types) in public health facilities increased from 58 percent to 79 percent by March this year.

For emergency medical services,

the minister said the number of hospitals providing emergency medical services increased from seven in 2020 to 116 by March this year and for specialised services, she said the availability of affordable specialised and advanced medical services in the country increased, attracting international patients for medical tourism and the number of international patients rose from 5,705 in 2022 to 7,843 this year.

The minister said that the number of health facilities capable of providing emergency obstetric care, including caesarean section, increased from 388 in 2021 to 523 this year.



Inspector General of Police Camilius Wambura has an audience in Moshi municipality yesterday with police officers of various ranks as part of his ongoing official visit to Kilimanjaro Region. He underscored the need for them to perform their duties while upholding discipline, professionalism, integrity and fairness to the citizenry. Photo courtesy of Tanzania Police

TIC engages Ruvuma residents on potential areas of investment

By Guardian Reporter, Mbeya

TANZANIA Investment Centre (TIC) has identified Ruvuma Region as a prime area for domestic investment due to its significant economic potential and abundant resources.

Speaking recently here during a campaign to promote local investment, TIC regional manager for the Southern Highlands, Deusdedith Hokororo, highlighted the centre's commitment to supporting Tanzanians interested in investing.

"TIC is dedicated to educating the public about investment opportunities and the new Investment Act of 2022," he said.

Hokororo said that the new legislation has lowered the minimum capital requirement from \$100,000 to \$50,000, making it easier for local investors to participate. For the fiscal year 2023/24, projects worth \$650 million were registered in Ruvuma Region and expected to create 6,995 jobs upon completion.

The ongoing campaign, launched in January, currently targets southern regions, namely Lindi, Ruvuma and Rukwa, with plans to expand to Katavi and Kigoma.

The campaign aims to inform the public about investment opportunities and recent changes in investment laws to boost domestic investment and regional develop-

ment.

"With these developments, now is the ideal time for Tanzanians to seize these opportunities and contribute to the nation's economic growth," Hokororo added.

TIC's campaign provides a pathway for those aiming to achieve economic goals and positively impact the country's development.

Ruvuma regional administrative secretary Mtela Mwampamba emphasized the campaign's goal of educating investors and improving regional investment climate. Ruvuma, known for its rich resources and favourable business environment, responded positively to TIC's call for increased investment.

Mwampamba encouraged investors to attend seminars designed to enhance their understanding of investment opportunities and processes for initiating and developing projects in the region.

A notable success story in Ruvuma is the Super Feo flour production facility, established by Omary Msigwa.

Registered in 2020, the facility recently began operations with a daily production capacity of 100 tonnes of flour and plans to expand to neighbouring countries such as Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Msigwa credited the smooth execution of the project to Ruvuma's supportive environment.

Minister proposes temporary closure of Lake Victoria to restore ecosystem

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

DEPUTY Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Alexander Mnyeti has proposed that authorities and fishing stakeholders consider temporarily closing of Lake Victoria to aid in the restoration of its aquatic ecosystems.

This recommendation was made during the East Africa Biodiversity Conference this week, amid growing concerns over the decline of various

aquatic species in the lake.

Mnyeti said that decades of fishing activities have led to the gradual disappearance of several species, particularly non-cultured marine species.

"We are losing significant numbers of non-cultured marine species. It might be beneficial to temporarily close the lake to restore its natural balance," he said.

The deputy minister called on all stakeholders, from grassroots to top

decision-makers, to engage in discussions about the proposed closure and determine an appropriate duration for the lake's rest period.

He referenced a similar successful approach taken with Lake Tanganyika, where a three-month closure resulted in significant fish breeding.

Mnyeti expressed optimism that Lake Victoria could see similar positive outcomes if given a rest period.

In addition to the temporary clo-

sure, he outlined plans for the government to enhance public education on sustainable fishing practices and promote fish farming as a more reliable and productive alternative to traditional fishing.

Fatuma Katula, Secretary for the Tanzania Women Fish Processors Network, supported the proposal, noting that a temporary closure could boost marine species reproduction and ultimately benefit busi-

nesses. However, she emphasized the need for government support for small traders affected by the fishing halt. She urged the government to facilitate access to financial institutions offering soft loans to help traders transition to alternative income-generating activities.

Katula also proposed using the local governments' 10 percent loans offered to special groups to expand capital and support businesses until

the lake reopens, that is if the proposed closure is endorsed.

Pangani District Fishery Officer Erica Corne also echoed the proposal, emphasizing that the benefits of closing Lake Victoria would extend beyond current generations, aiding in the regular reproduction of marine species.

Corne supported the expansion of fish farming as a means to further promote species breeding.



Tanzania Revenue Authority commissioner general Yusuf Mwenda (R) presents a gift to the US Ambassador to Tanzania, Michael Battle, after talks at the TRA headquarters in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

UN struggles to raise \$400m for Southern Africa drought

HARARE

THE United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has faced challenges in raising \$400 million for its southern Africa drought response, collecting just one-fifth of what it needs to help seven countries in the region.

The funding environment had become increasingly difficult as drought dramatically raised the region's food needs, WFP spokesperson Thomson Phiri said.

Southern Africa is experiencing its worst drought in decades, forcing Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe to declare states of disaster. The drought resulted from the El Niño climate phenomenon, which can change world weather patterns, bring extreme seasonal temperatures, rainfall or dry spells and hurt crop yields.

About 70 percent of the Southern African population that relies on rain-fed agriculture had their harvests "wiped out" by lack of rains, Phiri said.

The WFP aims to use the proceeds

raised so far to feed 5.9 million out of 27 million in the region who are food-insecure until the next harvest season in 2025, and had started sourcing white grain from Tanzania, South Africa and Latin America to feed regional communities.

Despite notable donor support, current food needs were "exceptionally high and outpacing available resources," during a historical drought, he said. Some donors have had to trim their aid budgets and "people in places such as southern Africa are now facing a double whammy where they are reeling both from the historic drought and severe funding cuts," he said.

The UN's climate crisis coordinator for the El Niño response, Reena Ghelani, called for urgent action.

"We are very worried," Ghelani told Reuters. "In fact, we are seeing a sharp increase in the number of people going hungry."

Ghelani warned of a prolonged dry spell and frequent droughts across the region in coming years as a result of climate change.

Campaigners embark on awareness promotion to check sexual violence

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari,

Korogwe

IN efforts aimed at curbing sexual violence in Tanga Region, a team of experts has embarked on an awareness campaign to provide education to pupils and teachers in selected schools.

The team which comprises experts from Korogwe Town

Council, religious leaders and representatives from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Kizazi Hodari programme will sensitize about the negative effects of sexual violence and the importance of reporting such incidents to authorities. On Wednesday, the team visited Silabu Primary School in Old Korogwe Ward as part of its outreach to educational institutions.

During the visit, they conducted sessions with both teachers and pupils, offering guidance on recognizing indicators of sexual violence and the appropriate steps to take if such issues arise.

The discussions also covered preventive techniques to protect schoolchildren both at home and in their school environments.

"We want to ensure that our schoolchildren have a

broader understanding about the signs of sexual violence and how they can report them to their teachers, parents or guardians," said Happy Luteganya, head of Korogwe Town Council community development department.

Luteganya noted that reports of sexual abuse in communities have significantly increased, threatening the health and well-being of children. She urged pupils to avoid associat-

ing with individuals who exhibit inappropriate behaviour and to be cautious about accepting gifts or items that might be used to exploit them.

Sponsa Mhagama, head teacher at Silabu Primary School, expressed gratitude for the visit and emphasized the shared responsibility of the entire community in safeguarding children. "The fight against sexual violence in schools is not solely the responsibility

of teachers; every community member must take this issue seriously," Mhagama said.

According to Article 59A of the Law of the Child, 2009, teachers, craftsmen and trainers are legally obligated to report any evidence or concerns of child abuse to social welfare officers.

However, recent reports from the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) indicate a worrying rise in child

abuse cases, with sexual abuse accounting for 81 percent of the 350 documented incidents in 2022.

Globally, it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect. Target 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children."

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Ghelani warned of a prolonged dry spell and frequent droughts across the region in coming years as a result of climate change.



DACADY operations director David Raymond (R) briefs Zanzibar Prisons Training College officers on the use of efficient gas stoves shortly after Mwanamke Initiatives Foundation donated the items to the college in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Libyans arrested in South African 'military camp' to be deported

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH African prosecutors have dropped charges against 95 Libyans who were arrested on suspicion of receiving training at an illegal military camp.

The case was withdrawn because of insufficient evi-

dence, said National Prosecuting Authority spokesperson Monica Nyuswa.

The men have only been charged with breaching South Africa's immigration laws and will be deported to their home country.

The Home Affairs department said in a statement it

would ensure "the deportations are conducted swiftly".

One of the men's lawyers, Nico du Plessis, told Associated Press the group was "happy" the charges had been dropped.

The group is expected to be deported to Libya's second city, Benghazi.

Since the ousting and killing of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, the country has suffered from chronic insecurity.

The group was arrested in July after South African police raided a farm in White River - a small town in the northern province of Mpumalanga.

At the time of the arrest, a police spokesperson said the group had "misrepresented themselves" on their visa applications by saying they would be training as security guards.

Licensed firearms and military tents were allegedly found at the camp, along with

cocaine and cannabis.

The camp was initially registered as a training site for a private security company but it appears to have been converted, a second police spokesperson, Donald Mdhuli, was quoted as saying by the AFP news agency.

Mdhuli said the owner of

the security company was a South African national and that the police were investigating if he had permission to run the site as a military-style camp.

Although the men will be deported, there will still be an investigation into the owners of the farm.

WHO warns of cholera resurgence globally

By Special Correspondent

AN accumulative total of 307,433 cholera cases and 2,326 deaths were reported from 26 countries between January this year and July, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

According to WHO, the Eastern Mediterranean Region recorded the highest numbers, followed by the African Region, the South-East Asia Region, the Region of the Americas, and the European Region.

The cholera response is facing significant challenges due to a severe shortage of Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCV), with demand far exceeding supply. Since January 2023, 18 countries have requested

105 million doses, nearly double the 55 million doses produced during this period.

In January 2023, the World Health Organization classified the global cholera resurgence as a grade 3 emergency, its highest level for emergencies.

Given the increasing number of outbreaks, their geographic spread, and the ongoing vaccine and resource shortages, WHO continues to assess the global risk as very high, maintaining the grade 3 emergency status.

The WHO said warming temperatures that allow the cholera bacteria to live longer, has worsened outbreaks and led to the highest death rates in a decade.



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Kinondoni mayor Songoro Mnyonge (L) receives the Overall Winner award for the Eastern Zone from the municipality's director, Hanifa Hamza, at a councillors' meeting held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The award is in connection with the municipality's participation in the recent 2024 edition of the Nane Nane (Farmers' Day) agricultural exhibition held in Morogoro municipality. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

Ministry acknowledges hurdles in CSR implementation despite positive retorts

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has acknowledged difficulties in implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) regulations for mining licence holders, despite companies contributing over 96.6bn/- to community projects over the past six years.

Dr Steven Kiruswa, minerals

deputy minister made the statement recently here at the meeting focused on improving regulations and responsibilities for mining companies.

The session aimed at addressing the obstacles and emphasized the need for regulatory improvements.

"Despite the challenges in CSR, from 2018 to 2023, 96.6bn/-

was allocated to CSR projects in regions with mining activities," he said.

He highlighted that the goal of the regulatory improvements is to enhance collaboration between communities and mining companies, ensuring more effective and sustainable project implementation.

He noted that since 2010

amendment of the mining law to include Article 105, which outlines company responsibilities to the community, there have been significant advancements in the mining sector.

"However, challenges remain in executing CSR initiatives. The challenges include delays in project planning and execution, absence of clear imple-

mentation guidelines, conflicts between councils and licence holders over project scope and execution, and limited community awareness about CSR," he said.

Dr Kiruswa also mentioned that disputes between mining companies and local government authorities have resulted in some social projects failing to

meet community needs and expectations.

Commissioner for Minerals Dr Abdulrahman Mwanga underscored the ministry's commitment to incorporating stakeholder feedback to improve regulations and overcome existing challenges. The aim is to ensure that Tanzanians continue to benefit from the mining sector.

Low funding labelled critical obstacle for biodiversity study

By Linda Nordling

LACK of funding is hampering biodiversity research in South Africa, a scientist formerly based at the country's main biodiversity research institute said this week.

Desire Dalton, now based at Teesside University in the UK, outlined various challenges facing biodiversity during a 14 August webinar arranged by South Africa's National Science and Technology Forum.

"Lack of funding is a critical obstacle in research," said Dalton, who until January 2022 held a senior position managing funding grants and developing research strategies at the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

"We have to diversify our funding sources in order to address this," she said. This would include looking to both the private sector and international funding to supplement local public funding sources, she added.

Dalton said the planet is failing to meet all the targets set for slowing down biodiversity destruction.

This is a big challenge for South Africa, a mega-diverse country that is home to 10 per cent of the world's plant species, 7 per cent of its reptile, bird and mammal species, and 15 per cent of its marine species, she said.

To stem the loss, South African scientists need access to the latest technologies and the skills and knowledge to be able to use them, she said.

Other challenges include ensuring data on animal populations is kept safe from poachers and including local communities in research and communication—something which is increasingly a condition for funding, she said.

"It's difficult for scientists because it's new, we don't have the training or knowledge of how to engage with communities," she said.



Pedestrians pictured yesterday crossing a Mbezi Mwisho section of Dar es Salaam's Morogoro Road through a portion of a fence demolished by 'stray' vehicles instead of using the overhead pedestrian bridge. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

EU urged to issue travel warnings as mpox risk in Africa grows

By Special Correspondent

EUROPEAN health authorities have advised European Union countries to issue travel warnings for regions affected by mpox after the outbreak was declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) warned yesterday that Europe is likely to see more imported cases due to the virus's spread in several African na-

tions. However, the ECDC noted that the risk of ongoing transmission within Europe remains low, provided that imported cases are quickly identified and controlled.

This update follows the detection of a new mpox variant in Sweden, marking the first case of this strain outside Africa.

Bruno Ciancio, head of surveillance at the ECDC, expressed concern over the worsening situation in Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic

of the Congo (DRC) and neighboring countries, where the number of cases is likely underestimated.

To prevent further spread in Europe, the ECDC emphasized the need for rapid case identification and containment. The agency has also recommended that EU and European Economic Area (EEA) countries issue travel advice for those visiting areas affected by mpox.

Since last year, mpox has been spreading in the DRC and other Af-

rican countries, causing over 500 deaths, mostly in the DRC. The WHO's recent declaration of the outbreak as a global health emergency calls for coordinated international efforts to tackle the crisis.

The ECDC highlighted the higher risk for EU/EEA travelers who have close contact with affected communities in mpox-impacted areas. They also noted a moderate risk for close contacts of possible or confirmed imported cases in Europe.

Two subtypes of the mpox virus exist: Clade I, which is more severe and endemic to central Africa, and Clade II, responsible for the 2022 global outbreak. Several African countries are currently dealing with an outbreak of Clade I and a new strain, Clade Ib.

Sweden recently reported the first European case of Clade Ib, leading the ECDC to raise the risk level for EU/EEA travelers and the general population. While the impact in Europe is expected to be low, the ECDC recommends

high levels of preparedness, including effective surveillance, testing, and contact tracing.

Travelers to mpox-affected areas are advised to consider vaccination, and European clinicians are urged to stay alert for potential cases, even though the disease is not endemic to Europe. Ciancio emphasized that while the risk should be taken seriously, it should not be overestimated, noting the availability of an effective and safe vaccine.



Kibaha district commissioner Nickson Simon (gesturing) makes remarks at Kibaha yesterday shortly after opening training for 70 street food vendors on the use of clean energy as part of a smart cooking programme. It was jointly organised by INTERFINI and Maestro Africa Solutions sponsored by CRDB Bank. Photo: Correspondent Margaret Malisa

Cameroon set to become leading banana producer

YAOUNDE

CAMEROON will inject “fresh impetus” into banana and plantain production as part of efforts to become the world’s leading producer of the crops by 2030, according to Gabriel Mbairrobe, the country’s minister of agriculture and rural development.

Banana and plantain output in the Central African country is estimated at more than 6 million tonnes per year, but the country wants to increase production to 7.5 million tonnes in 2025 and 10 million tonnes in 2030, Mbairrobe said Tuesday while signing a partnership agreement with state media CRTV.

“Our country is the first banana and plantain producer in Africa ... but there are still many challenges. (That is why) we want to introduce varieties that will resist climate change and parasites,” he said, emphasizing that the government will “spare no effort to give fresh impetus” to the sector.

Cameroon will host the third edition of the International Banana-Plantain Festival in December as part of the country’s drive to modernize the economic and productive system in a bid to boost production of the crops, said Samuel Tony Obam Bikoué, head of the National Association of Actors of the Banana-Plantain Sector in Cameroon.

Bananas and plantains, considered some of the staple foods and a reliable source of starch for many, play a crucial role in Cameroon’s food security. They can be boiled, fried, and roasted.

At least 16 dead in fighting pitting rebel groups in DRC

KINSHASA

CLASHES between local rebels and pro-government militias in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) killed 16 villagers on Thursday, a government official said, the latest violation of a ceasefire announced to help millions of displaced people in the region.

The villagers were killed in Rutshuru territory, North Kivu province, during fighting between the M23

rebel group, which is believed to be backed by neighbouring Rwanda, and local Wazalendo fighters, who often fight alongside Congolese security forces, according to Isaac Kibira, an administrative official in Rutshuru.

“The M23 rebel position was attacked by the Wazalendo youth (and) unfortunately, seven civilians died,” Kibira said. A second clash in Rutshuru resulted in a vehicle being set on fire, killing nine of the passen-

gers on board, he added.

None of the dead villagers were involved in the fighting, authorities said.

The fighting has raised new concerns about the sustainability of a ceasefire that came into effect on August 4 to end fighting in the region and provide aid to millions of people in need. Several other ceasefires announced in the past between the government and rebels have also been violated.

Eastern DRC has long been overrun by more than 120 armed groups seeking a share of the region’s gold and other resources while committing massacres. The result is one of the world’s largest humanitarian crises, with more than 7 million people displaced, many beyond the reach of aid.

The most active rebel group in the region is the M23, which rose to prominence more than a decade ago when its fighters seized Goma,

the largest city in eastern DRC on the border with Rwanda. It takes its name from a peace deal reached on March 23, 2009, which it accuses the Congolese government of failing to implement.

Separately, Governor Jean-Jacques Purusi Sadiki of South Kivu province on Thursday lifted the suspension of all mining activities, nearly a month after announcing the ban to “restore order” in the mineral-rich region.

The lifting of the ban follows meet-

ings with mining companies and a directive to them to file tax returns and sign a pledge of transparency in the mining sector, according to a statement from the governor’s office.

Many Chinese companies mine gold and other minerals in eastern DRC, where attacks on quarries and mining cooperatives are common. Last month, a militia attacked a gold mine in Ituri province, killing six Chinese miners and two Congolese soldiers.

UNDP launches drive to boost joint action and investment in the Sahel

DAKAR

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has unveiled the “IAMSahel” campaign, a transformative initiative aimed at reshaping global perceptions of the Sahel region.

Historically viewed through a lens of adversity, the campaign highlights the resilience, potential, and ambition of Sahelians, particularly focusing on women and youth.

Ahunna Eziakonwa, UN assistant secretary-general, UNDP assistant administrator and regional director for Africa, emphasized the campaign’s role in challenging prevailing narratives.

“The Sahel is rich in cultural diversity, geopolitical significance, and resources, yet often overshadowed by stories of conflict and despair. Beneath these challenges lies remarkable human spirit, community resilience, innovation, and ingenuity,” Eziakonwa said.

“The #IAMSahel campaign is not just about telling stories; it represents our renewed commitment to supporting the Sahel’s regeneration through our focus on governance, youth, and renewable energy.”

The campaign aligns with UNDP’s

broader efforts to implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). Since 2021, these efforts have positively impacted over 172.2 million people in the region.

Achievements include creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for more than 10 million youth, improving access to justice and infrastructure for 91.5 million people, and expanding renewable energy access for 70.7 million individuals.

The campaign aims to spotlight the lived experiences of Sahelians, showcasing their achievements and contributions while inspiring localized collective action. It seeks to reshape the narrative around the Sahel, highlighting its potential for development and encouraging investment in homegrown solutions.

Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UN under-secretary-general and special coordinator for development in the Sahel, highlighted the campaign’s significance. “Where some see only crisis and turbulence, I see resilience, creativity, and determination for change,” Dieye remarked.

“The #IAMSahel movement represents a generational moment, emphasizing that the future of the Sahel

is about people’s agency and human dignity.”

The campaign will feature emerging stories from the region, showcasing community-driven initiatives and innovative solutions that are driving transformative change. It aims to present a narrative of a Sahel actively shaping its own future and leading its development.

Singer Patrick Nnaemeka Okorie popularly known as Patoranking, the UNDP Africa Regional goodwill ambassador underscored the importance of these stories.

“My experiences across Africa have shown me that we can shape our own futures regardless of circumstances. This grit is evident in many Sahelians striving to make a difference every day,” he said.

“We must tell our stories in the best light possible to inspire lasting and positive change.”

Through the #IAMSahel campaign, UNDP aims to highlight the Sahel’s opportunities, resources, and vibrant cultures, as seen through the eyes of its people. This initiative is intended to lay the groundwork for a renewed Sahelian narrative and encourage much-needed investment in the region.



Necessity may indeed know law - but at such obvious risk, as in this case? This is a scene from a section of Dar es Salaam’s ever-busy Kawawa Road, as captured by Correspondent Jumanne Juma earlier this week.

Agriculture jobs decline in Q2 2024 but remain above long-term average in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG

THE latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) update from Statistics South Africa showed a reversal of job gains in the first quarter of 2024 which saw employment falling by 0.6 percent or 92,416 jobs quarter-on-quarter at 16,652 persons in Q2 of 2024.

This is, however, 1.9 percent or 306,140 people higher relative to the same period in 2023 with the year-to-June 2024 growth of 2.6 percent on the 2023 levels for the same

period. Primary agriculture jobs see declines

After surprising on the upside by posting a strong quarterly growth of 2.3 percent quarter-on-quarters and 6.1 percent year-on-year in Q1 of 2024, the primary agriculture sector saw a sharp downturn in the number of jobs by 4.8 percent q/q at 896,925 individuals in Q2 of 2024.

This was however marginally higher by 0.2 percent or 1,480 persons relative to the same period in 2023 and 97,284 persons above the long-term average of 798,640

persons.

Despite the immense challenges the sector had to deal with, it has maintained employment levels way above the long-term average in the past thirteen consecutive quarters or since Q1 of 2021. The two major summer crops, maize and soybeans saw massive reductions in production by 18.8 percent and 35.8 percent year-on-year respectively at 13.33 million and 1.78 million tons.

Other primary agriculture subsectors that recorded declines in employment include

livestock and forestry with the former still on the mend following the disruptive disease outbreaks in the past two years while operating in an environment of elevated feed costs.

Regional employment and industry Impact

Provincially, the Western Cape still accounts for the largest share (18.1 percent) of total primary agriculture employment, but saw numbers dropping by 24.7 percent quarter-on-quarter and 19.1 percent year-on-year.

Other provinces which

saw big declines include the Northern Cape (-38.9 percent quarter-on-quarter), Gauteng (-28.5 percent year-on-year), and the North West (-27.7 percent year-on-year), but the three remain the smaller contributors with shares of 3.7 percent, 6.3 percent, and 3.7 percent respectively of the total country employment for the primary agriculture sector. These downbeat employment numbers also reflect the mood in the field crop industry with the latest indicator being the agriculture machinery sales which

have retained the downtrend since the beginning of the year. Although rebounding by 12 percent month-on-month in July 2024, total agriculture machinery sales (tractors and combine harvesters) fell sharply by 17 percent year-on-year to 571 units with the total year-to-July 2024 falling by 29 percent year-on-year to 3,15 units.

Addressing critical issues such as biosecurity, roads and rail infrastructure, poor municipal services, and ports infrastructure and their efficiencies will go a long way in

helping agriculture to unlock further employment opportunities.

Nonetheless, all is not doom and gloom as we have recently experienced a sustained electricity supply in the past few months which has reduced operational costs for irrigation, cold storage, and other intensive agriculture operations such as poultry, dairy, and piggyeries. Additionally, the weather outlook has turned the corner with La Nina on the way for the 2024/25 summer rainfall season.

AfDB approves \$10m to clean-energy fund

By Special Correspondent

THE Board of Directors of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group has approved a \$10 million junior equity investment in the KawiSafi II Fund to help local businesses create and expand climate projects that aid vulnerable communities.

The approved financing will be deployed from the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), a catalytic financing facility managed by the Bank Group. KawiSafi II is a \$200 million venture equity fund to address investment gaps in energy transition, productivity, mobility and logistics in sub-Saharan Africa. It includes a \$10 million technical assistance facility to maximise climate impact and ensure better management of environmental, social, and governance risks.

KawiSafi II is a follow-on from KawiSafi Fund I, a \$67 million off-grid energy fund established in 2016, which benefited from a strong sponsor, Acumen Fund. Acumen has over 20 years of experience investing in transformational companies to solve global poverty challenges, including in the renewable energy space. KawiSafi Fund I successfully invested in companies such as Dlight, Bboxx and BioLite, among others.

"The African Development Bank's investment into KawiSafi II, our innovative climate fund, is catalytic for helping us reach a first close and attract the significant private capital that is urgently required to support Africa's climate innovators," said Amar Inamdar, Managing Director of KawiSafi Ventures.

"As the leading development finance institution on the continent, the Bank's catalytic commitment will leverage investments into breakthrough African start-ups addressing climate change through renewable energy, clean mobility, and other key sectors crucial to achieving our climate goals."

The KawiSafi Funds are prime examples of the patient and risk-tolerant capital required to support growing African climate businesses seeking to penetrate new markets against the backdrop of a significant shortage of equity capital in the market.

João Duarte Cunha, Manager of the Bank Group's Renewable Energy Funds Division, which oversees SEFA, said: "The KawiSafi Fund II presents an opportunity to avail more venture and growth capital to emerging businesses linked to energy access and energy transition, at a time when such capital is most needed in the market."



Loishiye Lesakwi (L), councillor for Oljoro Number Five Ward in Simanjiro District, pictured on Thursday receiving water pipes from Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Authority officials for use in the implementation of a 383m/- water project meant for Losinyai and Einot villages. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

SA govt joins forces with businesses to boost economic growth, fight corruption

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's Government of National Unity (GNU) and the business sector on Wednesday pledged to work together to address the country's pressing issues, including boosting economic growth, creating jobs, improving port logistics and fighting corruption and crime.

This commitment followed a meeting on Tuesday between President Cyril Ramaphosa and business leaders to tackle the challenges facing the 7th administration. Following the meeting's outcomes, the agreed-upon initiatives will be rolled out over the next 12 to 18 months.

In a statement issued by the pres-

idency on Wednesday, Ramaphosa confirmed that government and business leaders from various sectors, including energy and logistics, agreed to partner in tackling the challenges.

"The GNU has reaffirmed its commitment to urgently implement the reform agenda started by the 6th administration and to restore con-

fidence and sentiment - essential drivers of investment, inclusive economic growth, and job creation," he said. Ramaphosa also said since the cooperation commenced last year, progress has been made, especially in the energy sector.

"We have reaffirmed our commitment to a dynamic partnership between government and business

to foster South Africa's economic growth and social advancement. Since the start of the partnership just over a year ago, we have made substantial progress toward stabilizing the energy sector, improving the performance of our rail and port system, and strengthening the fight against crime and corruption," the president said.

According to the statement, Adrian Gore, co-convenor of the business delegation, welcomed the partnership, announcing that over 130 chief executive officers pledged support, and the business sector invested more than 260 million rands (about \$14.4 million) and mobilized over 350 experts across the three focal areas in the first phase.



Dodoma City Council acting director Joseph Fungo speaks at the last meeting for councillors in the city in financial year 2023/2024. It was held in the national capital on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

UN: Half a billion children face double extreme heat

NEARLY half a billion children around the world are now living in regions that experience at least twice as many extremely hot days as their grandparents did, according to a new analysis by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

This alarming statistic highlights the rapid escalation of extreme heat events, with 1 in 5 children—around 466 million—now exposed to these dangerous conditions every year.

The UNICEF analysis compares data from the 1960s with the average from 2020-2024, revealing a dramatic increase in the number of extremely hot days—defined as those exceeding 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). This trend poses a serious threat to the health and well-being of nearly half a billion children, many of whom live in areas lacking the necessary infrastructure or services to cope with such extreme temperatures. "What used to be the hottest summer days are now the norm," stated Catherine Russell, UNICEF's Executive Director. "This surge in extreme heat is disrupting children's health, well-being, and daily lives."

Country-level data from the analysis shows that in 16 nations, children now endure over a month of additional extremely hot days each year compared to six decades ago.

In South Sudan, for example, the average number of extremely hot days has risen from 110 in the 1960s to 165 today, while in Paraguay, the number has nearly doubled from 36 to 71.

Globally, children in West and Central Africa are facing the highest exposure to these dangerously hot days, with significant increases over time. The analysis indicates that 123 million children—representing 39 percent of children in the region—now experience extreme temperatures for more than one-third of the year. Countries such as Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Sudan are particularly affected, with children enduring over 195 extremely hot days annually. In Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly 48 million children are living in areas where the number of extremely hot days has doubled.

Exposure to extreme heat poses unique health risks, particularly for children and pregnant women. Without proper cooling interventions, heat stress can lead to severe health complications, including pregnancy-related issues, malnutrition, and an increased vulnerability to diseases such as malaria and dengue. The prolonged exposure to extreme heat also has long-term impacts on children's neurodevelopment, mental health, and overall well-being.

South Sudan not ready to hold elections in December- UN

JUBA

SOUTH Sudan is not ready to hold its first post-independence elections in December political players there discuss whether voting should be held this year, the U.N.'s top envoy in the troubled country said on Wednesday.

Nicholas Haysom told the U.N. Security Council that the consultations make it difficult to treat the election date of December 22 announced last month by the National Elections Commission "as a definitive trigger in isolation from other critical factors."

The vote, which would be the first since South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a long conflict, is meant to be the culmination of a peace agreement signed five years ago to pull the world's newest nation out of a civil war largely based on ethnic divisions. Fighting between forces loyal to the current president, Salva Kiir, battled those loyal to the current vice president, Riek Machar, killing

some 400,000 people.

Last December, Haysom outlined a series of conditions needed to hold credible and peaceful elections. In April, he told the Security Council the parties hadn't implemented a "critical mass" of the key steps for free and fair elections - and he told the U.N.'s most powerful body Wednesday that his assessment is the same today.

On a positive note, he said the Elections Commission has started assessing "the ground-level infrastructure and facilities required for a conducive environment for conducting elections," and 29 political parties have been registered.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission continues "to support the creation of an enabling environment for elections in South Sudan whenever they are held," focusing on its mandate to help protect civilians, Haysom said. He said there are concerns among large segments of civil society, political parties, the Commission on Human Rights and the international community about a

bill recently passed by South Sudan's parliament that grants the National Security Service the power to make arrests without a warrant.

Critics of the security bill say it contradicts "their aspirations for open civic and political space" to build a democratic society and is incompatible with the spirit of South Sudan's transitional constitution and its human rights obligations, he said.

"It has been noted that the president has the power to refer the law back to Parliament to remedy the criticisms that have been raised," Haysom said. "This would be a significant opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to achieving the open political space in which to conduct South Sudan's first democratic elections."

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the council that the United States and many diplomatic missions are deeply concerned that the security law could "further erode the country's political and civic environment." Turning to the coun-

try's humanitarian and economic outlook, Haysom warned that "a perfect storm is gathering." He pointed to chronic food insecurity, the spillover of the conflict in neighbouring Sudan, a rapidly deteriorating economy exacerbated by a ruptured oil pipeline and a cut in revenue, "and the potential for once-in-a-lifetime flooding in September." "Any one of these elements on its own presents a significant challenge," Haysom said. "When taken together, it could push the country to a tipping point - and all during a time where the people of South Sudan are embarking on a delicate phase of nation-building."

Edem Wosornu, the U.N. humanitarian office's operations director, gave the council some stark figures - more than 9 million people, 76 percent of South Sudan's population, require humanitarian assistance and 7.1 million are "acutely food insecure, an increase of about 1.5 million people since last year."

Wosornu said mid-year projections

by U.N. food security experts suggested that conflict and flooding "could result in pockets of famine between June 2024 and January 2025." South Sudan's humanitarian plight is worsened by a deepening economic crisis, she said. Most oil exports have halted since February because of the ruptured pipeline.

The head of the U.N.'s Mission in South Sudan on Wednesday told the Security Council that "a perfect storm is gathering in South Sudan as regards its humanitarian and economic outlook."

Speaking virtually to the UN, Nicholas Haysom, stressed that "time is running out, and the costs of inaction at this juncture are too great." Haysom said the humanitarian crisis in the country is "founded on chronic food insecurity, a spill-over of the Sudan conflict into South Sudan resulting in the movement so far of 750,000 refugees and internally displaced people, uncertainties in the face of critical political events necessary for a peaceful transition.

SATURDAY 17 AUGUST 2024

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

War on counterfeits just cannot end as the cost could prove catastrophic

THAT Tanzania is one of many countries that have for decades on end suffered flooding by cheap imitated imports as well as locally made products, ranging from pharmaceuticals, clothes, electronic goods and building hardware, to mention but a few.

It has experienced this even as it has all along had in place several agencies charged with pre-shipment and post-shipment inspection, at times with overlapping duties.

Despite what could be regarded as water-tight procedures for vetting imports and all manner of other items, fake goods have kept streaming into the market at a pace betraying the fact that corruption is among the vehicle facilitating their proliferation. Numberless locations in the country, arguably the leading ones including the sprawling Kariakoo market zone in Dar es Salaam and its 'equivalents' in the likes of Moshi, Arusha, Mwanza and other major towns, have long gained notoriety for not only selling but also actually producing fake goods fraudulently marketed as branded products.

In such areas, shops sell substandard and outright fake products of every kind and people, especially those in the low-income category, tend to go for them no matter what.

In the main, this is because fake goods usually sell cheaper than the genuine or branded ones, and not many 'ordinary citizens' can afford the latter kinds. Given the hard economic times, with endlessly escalating transport and production costs, family budgets are stretched and household members are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Admittedly, substandard goods often serve as "safety valves" for low-income earners, but they threaten public safety and health, and impact on sales figures of local

industries to the extent that some are even threatened with the constant possibility of closing shop.

For this reason, there is absolutely no reason to tolerate this flawed trade, at least because what it does is to harm the country's economy. Even worse, selling imitations of registered products amounts to trademark infringement. A country that ignores the existence of such a danger invites unregulated trade, which results in less revenue collection and foreign exchange earnings.

The media have kept running reports on officials from the Fair Competition Commission and various other state agencies ensuring the confiscation and destruction of counterfeit items worth hefty amounts of money in surprise crackdowns mounted intermittently in various parts of the country.

There is a growing feeling that the penalties meted to offenders taken to court are far from inadequate as deterrents, with some people suggesting that long jail sentences, heavy fines and closures of businesses would be more appropriate.

The use of substandard electrical and other appliances has on numerous occasions led to tragedy, including loss of life and limb. Likewise, the increased death toll on our highways has increasingly been blamed on the use of fake tyres and vehicle spare parts. In fact, a major public service vehicle company once almost went into liquidation simply because of its buses were involved in horrific accidents. The firm's proprietors struck back by heaping all the blame for their "misfortunes" on a huge stock of the imported tyres they were using - but to what good?

The list of incidents of this tragic nature is near-infinite. The bottom line: We need to fight the production, marketing, sale and use of fake

Care, caution, wisdom and understanding needed when urban planning goes wrong

AS Tanzanians celebrated Easter roundabout 15 years ago, some 500 residents of Dar es Salaam's 'Tabata Dampo' suburb were practically living in hell following the demolition of 88 houses by the municipal authorities.

There were widespread complaints that whole affair amounted to unmitigated injustice although, to be honest and fair, turning the particular site into a residential area was ion the first place a recipe for a calamity and should not have occurred.

Yet, in that what was not supposed to happen had been allowed to happen, demolishing 88 homes revealed the existence of a power greater than that of the 500 victims lumped together - and was no lesser evil. The government was quick to act by suspending the municipal director and forming a probe team, whose findings are history gone by.

It is long years since then, but the incident still reflects the harm the impunity of irresponsible bureaucrats can do.

Considering the way the matter was handled, questions do arise as to how the alleged ownership of the contented plot was acquired, and why there was super-sonic speed in accomplishing the demolitions.

Time has come for exemplary penalties to be meted on those who act irresponsibly at the cost of unwarranted displacement of innocent people who may have saved for a lifetime to acquire the little they have only to see it go up in flames in an instant in circumstances impossible to defend.

Such injustice would give the

government a bad name. In the Tabata Dampo case, it was prudent for the whole of the dark side of the affair to be exposed.

Things may have changed but, up to some time, no one had publicly suggested that the evicted tenants should be allowed to rebuild their homes in the same plot.

Of course, it seemed easier allocating alternative plots to whoever may have laid claim to the plots than to have 88 families move to a new place altogether.

No one should allow anyone else to so senselessly tarnish the image of innocent government officials working hard to spearhead community and ultimately national development, and should in no way be entangled in energy-sapping and money-wasting controversies that should not have been there in the first place.

Finally, considering that we have since witnessed numerous incidents similar to the Tabata Dampo debacle, we call upon urban planners and surveyors to undertake their work in the spirit of good service to the public.

For too long, people have complained of double and even multiple plot allocations and unfair displacement or relocations. All errant public functionaries effectively expose themselves to ridicule and must pay the price for that.

We are not advocating illegal occupation of land, though. We are drawn into commenting on incidents of this nature simply because their stubborn recurrence shows there is often more to them than many people may think.

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How the private sector can create jobs and drive development in Western and Central Africa

By Abebe Adugna

EVERY year in Western and Central Africa, 6 million young people enter the labor force, while only about half a million new jobs are created. This enormous jobs deficit means that most entrants into the workforce work in the informal sector, with insecure income, low quality employment, and very little hope of escaping poverty.

The repercussions of this unemployment epidemic are profound: a breakdown in the social contract, social and political unrest, wasted human potential and increased poverty.

What is holding back Western and Central Africa from the kind of dynamic job creation seen in other developing regions?

Highly commodity-dependent economies that rely on export revenue but do not create jobs. Low levels of trade due to high trade barriers. Onerous presence of state-owned enterprises that crowd out the private sector. And declining foreign investment, which prevents the countries in the region from reaping the benefits of technology transfer, access to global markets, and job creation.

The Catalyst: Private Sector Development

Addressing the unemployment challenge is no easy task. But developing and nurturing a vibrant private sector has to be at the core. The private sector is an engine of economic growth, innovation, and job creation. And the tax revenues generated from thriving businesses enable governments to invest in essential public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, further improving the overall quality of life for citizens.

Yet the private sector has been repressed in many countries in Western and Central Africa and its role in generating jobs is falling woefully short.

So, what can be done?

To unleash the private sector's power to invest, generate jobs, catalyze a green transition and drive economic transformation, this is what needs to change:

- Improving the business enabling environment to enable private investment and promote market competition. For example, the World Bank is supporting countries such as Ghana, Liberia, Togo, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Sierra Leone to simplify and shorten the process of starting and closing a business, reform laws and regulations related to foreign direct investment (FDI), speed up the resolution of commercial disputes, and bring security and clarity to land and property titles. And the bedrock of many of these reforms is the digitiza-



Factory workers package products in Accra, Ghana. Credit: Nyani Quarmyne (Panos)/IFC

tion of government-to-business services.

- Enabling market access, investment and trade: More predictable trade and investment policies aligned with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would improve the conditions for domestic production of higher valued goods, economic diversification and regional integration. The pact connects 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$3.4 trillion. Yet the potential is not being realized due to a lack of progress in the implementation of the AfCFTA in West and Central Africa as yet.

For example, countries of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) have very low levels of intra-regional trade, with widespread global and sectoral trade barriers that elevate costs and diminish export potential. Governments could and should adopt policies that facilitate market entry, increase competition, and attract private investors, and avoid excessive state involvement in productive sectors.

All of these actions will help enable and mobilize private capital, expand market networks, reduce trade transaction costs and uncertainty, strengthen compliance, and enable digital trade. The World Bank supports implementation of the AfCFTA through Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA), which is a \$25 million technical assistance program over 6 years. This includes support for 6 trade corridors between sea ports and landlocked countries in the region, covering 9 countries.

- Improving sector and firm performance

Building a stronger private sector requires policy actions at the sector and firm levels to improve competitiveness and performance. Firm-level interventions should include incubator/accelerator programs, expanding access to finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups, and supporting technology adoption.

In the Republic of Congo, under our Support to Enterprise Development and Competitiveness Project, this set of firm level interventions has led to nearly all SMEs who received support to become formal, registered businesses. And our Senegal Jobs and Economic Transformation has already created or protected more than 21,000 jobs and provided support to over

4,000 firms, of which more than half are women-owned businesses.

Sectoral-level interventions hold even more promise in economies with high potential sectors such as in manufacturing (automotives, textiles and garments), tourism, wood, and construction.

- Climate smart is business smart: Countries in Western and Central Africa have an abundance of natural assets that could help create jobs, increase exports and build climate resilience for local and global communities. Wood, eco-tourism, fisheries, critical minerals are all examples where job creation and the preservation of natural assets can be reinforcing.

In Sierra Leone, the Economic Diversification Project is not only creating local, formal sector jobs through tourism sites, but incentivizing local communities to protect beaches from erosion, slow down deforestation, and protect chimpanzees from poaching. Although this agenda goes beyond job creation, it is also about businesses themselves being the solution to climate resilience.

New decarbonization technologies for manufacturing, sustainable sourcing of local materials, renewable energy for production is critical and they require financing. That is why in Burkina Faso and Ghana, we are piloting a 'green window' in an existing credit guarantee program to increase commercial credit for green investments. This is also helping raise awareness among SMEs about green solutions to strengthen resilience and adapt production to a changing climate.

Governments in Western and Central Africa can no longer rely on a narrow band of extractives and exports to keep their economies strong. To create the jobs needed, the private sector must be allowed to flourish, creating a virtuous cycle of job creation, competition, productivity, and exports. There simply is no other option.

Abebe Adugna, the Regional Director for Prosperity in the Western and Central Africa region at the IMF, was the former Practice Manager for the Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment global practice in Africa, specifically in the East Africa region.

By Joyce Chimbi

Gender equality has everything having to do with climate change

AFTER years of reporting on the frontlines of climate change, I have witnessed the devastating impact extreme weather events have on women and girls. In Kenya's pastoralist communities in far-flung areas of Northern Kenya, West Pokot, Samburu and Narok counties, droughts mean a resurgence in harmful cultural practices such as outlawed female genital mutilation (FGM), beading and child marriages.

When I visited Samburu County in 2019, beading was in the past. A young girl will be given a specific type of necklace to wear to signal that a Moran or male youth has booked her for marriage. In turn, the Moran is allowed to exploit her sexually for favors extended to her family in the form of gifts such as a goat, milk and meat.

During the recent severe drought of 2022-2023, such harmful practices made a comeback. Child marriages are used as a coping mechanism to recover lost livestock or, in the case of beading, to put food on the table. A pregnancy during the beading process is brutally terminated. It is taboo to have a child outside of wedlock.

Even when deadly floods rocked the country earlier in the year, women and children were crying out for help. In my experience reporting about climatic disasters, UN estimates ring true. Women and girls are 14 times more likely to die when disaster strikes and nearly 80 percent of all displaced people are women and girls.

Their vulnerability and exposure to natural disasters come from pre-existing social and economic inequalities. Growing up, every last Sunday of the month, my mother, aunts and grandmother would attend or host a merry-go-round. Women formed groups and, once or twice a month, they would visit each other in turn and bring household items bought from a set monthly or bimonthly contribution.

My earliest memories are of household items such as kitchen appliances, beddings and food items. Later on, they phased out these items for cash to be spent on the most pressing needs in various households, including school fees.

From the merry-go-round, the revolutionary table banking movement was born—a group funding strategy where all contributions are placed on the table once or twice a month, and shared out among members in the form of low-interest short- and long-term loans.

It took many years for me to understand why women went to such lengths to raise money. They had been locked out of formal financial institutions due to historical and structural gender inequalities. Even today, women still account for the majority of the unbanked in Kenya.

Women could only open a bank account if accompanied by a male chaperone, and I saw, growing up that women could only access land through male relatives. Only 1 percent of Kenya's land title deeds are in the hands of women today.

When a climatic disaster strikes, women have nowhere to go. They sit out dangerous climatic events, hoping that it is only a passing cloud. But for women, such as Benna Buluma, alias Mama Victor, a well-known human rights defender who perished in the April 2024 floods while in her house in Mathare infor-



Although women interact with the environment and its natural resources more closely than men, they remain underrepresented in climate-related decision-making. Credit: Joyce Chimbi/IPS

mal settlements, and millions of others, it's a disaster that can destroy lives and livelihoods.

Jane Anyango Adika of serikali saidia (government help) fame became the face of the enduring cry for gender-sensitive responses in times of floods through repeated media coverage in a region ravaged by perennial floods. By the time Anyango came into the limelight, she had been battling floods for two decades. As recently as 2022, she was still crying out to the government for help.

Now we are becoming increasingly aware that extreme weather patterns such as heatwaves and floods create favorable conditions for vector-borne diseases such as Zika virus, malaria and dengue fever, which cause miscarriages, premature birth, and anaemia among pregnant women.

I am yet to hear of arguments disputing that climate disasters affect women and girls more than men and boys, the lack of women in decision making is simply a manifestation of widespread gender discrimination that takes on different shapes and forms in everyday life. In our patriarchal societies, where women are to be seen and not heard, it is playing out in the very serious and consequential climate arena.

As a result, men still fill 67 percent of climate-related decision-making roles and women's representation in

national and global climate negotiating bodies remains below 30 percent. The 2022 SDG Gender Index, published by Equal Measures 2030, a leading global partnership on accountability for gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), exposes alarmingly insufficient progress on gender equality at the global level between 2015 and 2020.

In fact, of the 17 SDGs, Goal 13 on climate action was one of the three lowest-scoring goals and even high-performing countries on the index had weaknesses on gender equality under SDG 13. It is highly concerning that even though men own land and control natural resources, in two-thirds of all the States in the world, women are the pillars of agriculture and land management.

My hope that the world is slowly recognizing that there is no escaping the climatic onslaught when half of the world's population—women—are left behind critical decision-making structures related to climate has recently been ignited by the Conference of Parties (COP) climate and gender equality agenda.

Since COP25, experts have told world leaders that gender equality and climate change are not only two of the most pressing global challenges, but that they are inextricably interlinked. At COP 25, Parties adopted the five-year enhanced Lima work programme on gender

and its gender action plan (GAP). Followed by an intermediate review of the implementation of the gender action plan and amendments to the GAP adopted in COP27. At COP28, a new UN Women report stated that by 2050, climate change may push up to 158 million more women and girls into poverty and cause 232 million to face food insecurity. During the conference, Parties agreed that the final review of the implementation of the enhanced Lima work programme and its GAP would commence in June 2024, identifying challenges, gaps and priorities.

In my opinion, the road to COP29 should be littered with gender and climate blueprints from countries that are already making headway. Zimbabwe is now establishing a renewable energy fund to create entrepreneurship opportunities for women. Bhutan in South Asia has trained gender focal points in various ministries and women's organizations to better coordinate and implement gender equality and climate change initiatives.

This will in turn ensure that there is gender equality and equity at all levels of climate-related decision-making, and representation at all levels of climate negotiating bodies around the world will not deliver an effective and sustainable climate agenda if half the world's population remains on the margins. **IPS**

Chinese humanoid robots enter factory for on-site training

By Wang Yunna

RECENTLY, industrial humanoid robots developed by UBTECH Robotics Corp, a Chinese robot manufacturer based in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong province, were introduced to the assembly workshop of a factory of Chinese electric carmaker NIO in Hefei, east China's Anhui province. They were put to work alongside humans to inspect the quality of automobiles.

Making small steps, a humanoid robot came to the left side of a car and soon completed the quality inspection of the front and rear door locks. Pausing the movement, it extended its arm into the car body, rotated its wrist 180 degrees, and pulled down the seatbelt with its five fingers, completing the safety belt functionality check. The inspection results were uploaded to the factory's intelligent manufacturing management system as the robot performed its functions.

"Humanoid robots are now being used in actual car production settings, moving beyond experimental labs. By collecting data from the assembly line and understanding the company's production needs, they have undergone self-iteration and upgrades for formal deployment," said Jiao Jichao, vice president of UBTECH Robotics and executive dean of UBTECH Research Institute.

Industrial robots such as industrial manipulators and welding and painting robots are becoming increasingly common in production workshops. What makes humanoid robots different?

Humanoid robots are more intelligent than traditional industrial robots, which are limited to executing tasks with predetermined processes and often struggle to accomplish complex activities such as flexible assembly.

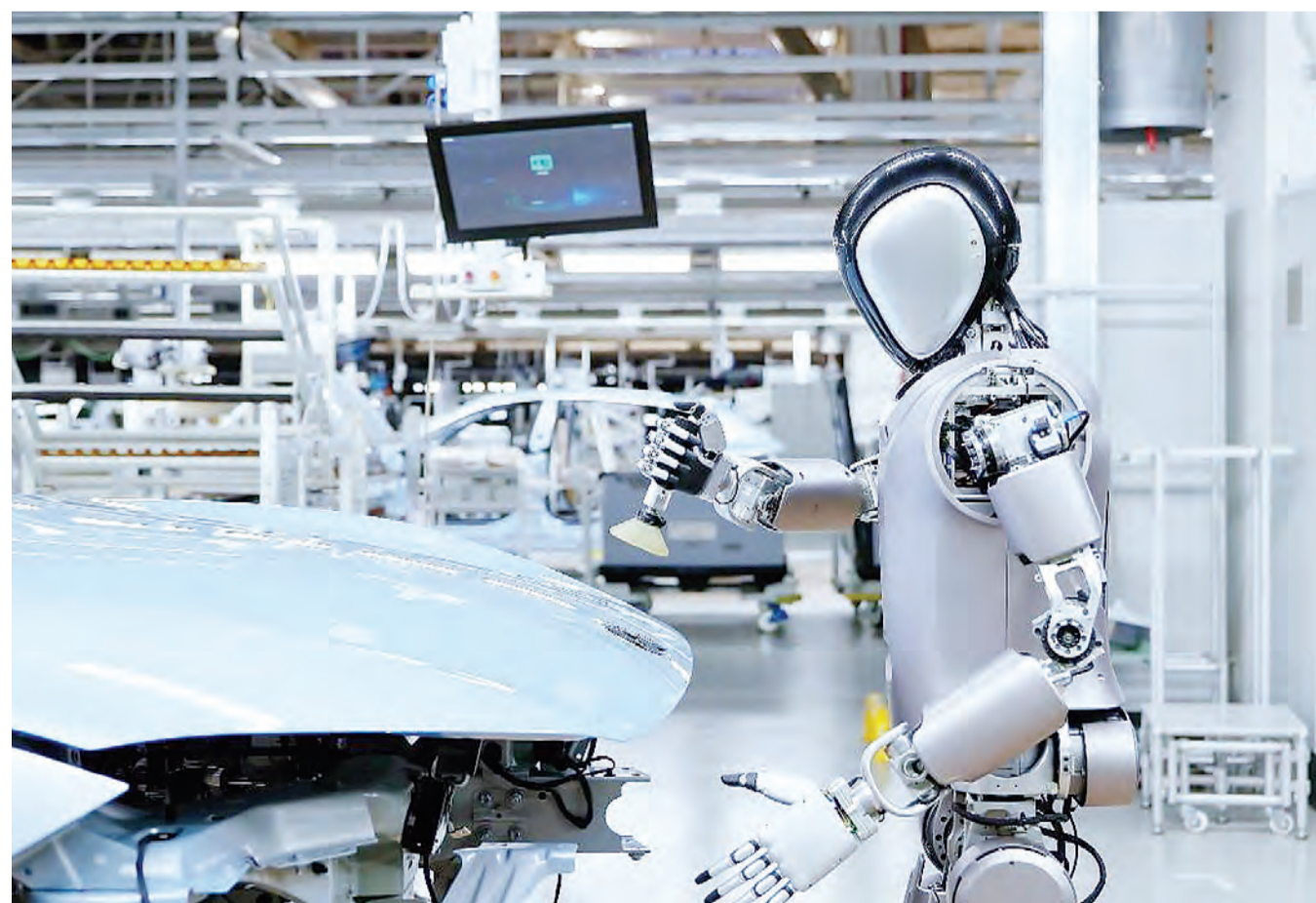
"Our company specializes in tasks that traditional industrial robots find difficult to accomplish," said Jiao.

Actions like walking, stopping, turning, and visual detection may seem simple, but they pose significant technical challenges.

The movements of humanoid robots, much like those of humans, are largely dependent on joints. When UBTECH Robotics teams initially developed humanoid robots, their biggest concern was the search for the right robot joints.

"At that time, we were unable to find them in the Chinese market, and the imported ones didn't meet our requirements," Jiao said.

Servo drives, acting as the joint actuators of robots,



A humanoid industrial robot developed by Chinese robot manufacturer UBTECH Robotics works in an auto workshop. (Photo/Zheng Xuexiong)

play a vital role in determining robots' motion capabilities. A high-power servo drive used in humanoid robots consists of 50 to 100 different parts, while a low-power one has 40 to 80 parts.

Thanks to continuous technological breakthroughs, UBTECH Robotics has managed to develop and commercialize a diverse range of servo drives, ranging from compact, low-torque models to powerful, high-torque variants. Over 90 percent of these components are produced independently in China, up from the previous 40 percent.

For instance, harmonic rotary servo drives are characterized by their high torque density, small size, light weight, and fast response, enabling robots to have more agile and stable arms and legs for heavy-duty tasks like carrying and sorting, Jiao explained.

"Leveraging the flexible disassembly of robots, we created modular end effectors such as 'hands' and 'feet.' For example, we designed various types of 'hands' for robots, including human-like five-fingered hands and two-fingered grippers. Using different connection methods, we can

easily swap out these end effectors as needed," said Jiao.

In addition to the developed and dexterous "limbs," humanoid robots also require an intelligent and adaptable "brain." Chinese professionals in big data and artificial intelligence are working to train humanoid robots on how to plan intricate models and improve strategies using algorithms, specifically for industrial manufacturing scenarios.

For example, semantic visual navigation technology is developed to enhance robots' perception of their surroundings

and scenes by extracting high-level semantic information and building spatial topological relationships.

"Through semantic navigation, humanoid robots are capable of autonomously scheduling tasks and performing diverse operations in different workshops," Jiao said.

Different car makers have different demands for humanoid robots, so on-site training in factories is crucial. "Car makers provide verification and testing scenarios for humanoid robots, which allows for data collection, algorithm iteration, and performance improvement," said Jiao.

According to him, UBTECH Robotics has collaborated with automakers such as Dongfeng Liuzhou Motor, FAW-Volkswagen Automobile Co., Ltd. Qingdao Branch, and Geely to update and iterate algorithms based on real manufacturing scenarios, thereby further enhancing robot performance.

It is expected that the first batch of humanoid robots will be delivered and put into operation in car manufacturing workshops within this year.

It takes more than 7,000 parts to build a humanoid robot. In recent years, the humanoid robot industry in Guangdong province has seen major achievements, with breakthroughs in key technologies and ongoing improvements in supply chains. As of August 2023, Guangdong was home to 39 humanoid robot companies.

In the first half of 2024, the Department of Industry and Information Technology of Guangdong Province announced an action plan to cultivate future intelligent equipment industry clusters. The plan aims to turn Guangdong into a global innovation hub for future intelligent equipment industries such as humanoid robots, aerospace equipment, deep-sea equipment, and underground equipment by 2035.

People's Daily

Origins of the Gaza catastrophe - Part 1

By Jan Lundius

DURING the first half of the 20th century, antisemitism was endemic in Europe and eventually burst out in full force when Nazi-Germany and its collaborators between 1941 and 1945 systematically (and well-documented) murdered six million Jews across German-occupied Europe. In an environment mined by hostile public opinion, the Zionist Nahum Sokolow popularized the Hebrew term Hasbara. The word has no real equivalent in English, but might be translated as “explaining”, indicating a strategy seeking to explain actions, regardless whether or not they are justified. As a skilled diplomat, Sokolow based his widely publicized opinions on in-depth research of actual events, though he presented his findings in a manner that favoured his cause.

The State of Israel has often used hasbara, now generally described as public diplomacy, meaning that policies and actions have not been denied, but at the same time has any criticism of such facts been presented as biased and/or tinged by “antisemitism”. To avoid being labelled as antisemitic the following article is mainly based on two books by Ilan Pappé - *The Biggest Prison on Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories* and *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Pappé is considered to be a member of the New historians, a loosely defined group of Israeli historians who challenge the official version of Israel's role in the 1948 expulsion of Palestinians. An event which among Palestinians is called Nakba, the Catastrophe.

In 1948, more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs, about half of the former British controlled Mandatory Palestine's predominantly Arab population, fled from their homes. At first they were attacked by Zionist paramilitaries and after the establishment of the State of Israel by its regular army, acting on direct orders from the newly founded nation's leaders. Dozens of massacres targeted the Arab population and between 400 and 600 Palestinian villages were destroyed. Village wells were poisoned and properties looted to prevent Palestinian refugees from returning.

The New historians debunked several myths. For example, that the British Government tried to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state - it was actually against the founding of a Palestine state. The official version states that Palestinians fled their homes on their own free will, instigated to do so by surrounding Arab states.

However, the majority of them were actually expelled, and/or fled out of a well-founded fear of the Israeli army. Furthermore, general opinion has been that the surrounding Arab nations at the time were united and more powerful than the newly established State of Israel - as a matter of fact, Israel had the advantage both in manpower and arms, while the Arab nations were divided by internal strife and did not have a coordinated plan to destroy Israel.

The recurrent praise that the Israelis made the desert bloom and took over a land without a people for a people without a land, are according to Pappé unfounded clichés. Before the ethnic cleansing the vast majority of agricultural land was being cultivated by Palestinians.

It is estimated that on the eve of the 1948 war, around 739,750 acres of agriculturally apt land were being cultivated by Palestinians, actually greater than the physical area which was under cultivation in Israel almost thirty years later.

The appropriation of Palestinian land occurred in conjunction with a Land Acquisitions Law allowing for a mass transfer of the entire Palestinian economy to the Israeli state. Practically overnight, the State gained control of a vast amount of fertile land, 73,000 houses, and 7,800 workshops. This dropped the average cost of settling a Jewish family in Palestine from 8,000 USD to 1,500 USD.

Furthermore, the whole issue whether Palestine belongs to “Jews” or “Arabs” is somewhat spurious. It is a myth that any region constitutes a closed environment. Trade, immigration, invasion and intermarriage are part of any nation's history. Across the millennia, additions and losses have befallen people living in Palestine (it was the Romans who in 131 CE changed the denomination “Judea” into “Syria Palaestina”). Conquerors, like those of the Muslim faith, seldom replaced an entire native population, they only added to it. Many of the Palestinians of today are the Jews of yesteryears. Palestinian Arabs did not suddenly appear from the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century to settle in Palestine, most of those “Arabs” living there now are descendants of indigenous peoples who lived there before. People who, like most others, over time



Sixteen years into this devastating siege, some Israelis advocate reoccupying part or all of the Gaza Strip. Such a move, however, would merely perpetuate the vicious cycle of violence and displacement, writes Daoud Kuttab. [GETTY]

have changed their beliefs and traditions. For example, Sardinians eventually became Italians, but no one would suggest that Sardinians were kicked out and replaced by a foreign Italian people. We ought to separate political nationalist identities from the actual reality of a human being. Nationalism is a relatively modern concept, especially in the Middle East.

Likewise, the Jewish diaspora was not the result of a sudden expulsion of Jews from their Holy land. It was, just as current migration, a result of various factors, including refugees from war and repression, forced labour, deportation, overpopulation, indebtedness, military recruitment, and not the least opportunities in business, commerce, and agriculture.

Before the Romans in 70 CE destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and in 131 forbade Jews to settle there, large and prosperous Jewish communities existed in provinces like Egypt, Crete, Cyrenaica, Syria, Asia, Mesopotamia, and in Rome itself. However, the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem motivated many Jews to formulate a new self-definition and adjust their existence to the prospect of an indefinite period of displacement, that eventually would culminate in a return to a mostly imaginary realm of Israel.

In 1948, this religious dream became a reality through the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel. A development that by most the U.S. and European politicians was considered to strengthen a “Western” strategic, economic, and political presence in the Middle East, at the same time as the establishment of Israel could ease the burden of a bad conscience for not having done enough to hinder the extermination of Jews, combined with easing the pressure to resettle and compensate the victims.

Nowadays, the State of Israel does not only control the land granted to it by the British, but also territories inhabited by also areas like the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Gaza strip. In Gaza, Israel maintains control of its airspace, its territorial waters, no-go zones within the strip, and the population registry. Pappé has stated that

“the tale of Palestine from the beginning until today is a simple story of colonialism and dispossession, yet the world treats it as a multifaceted and complex story - hard to understand and even harder to solve. Indeed, the story of Palestine has been told before: European settlers coming to a foreign land, settling there, and either committing genocide against or expelling the indigenous people.

The Zionists have not invented anything new in this respect. But Israel succeeded nonetheless, with the help of its allies everywhere, in building a multilayered explanation that is so complex that only Israel can understand it. Any interference from the outside world is immediately castigated as naïve at best or anti-Semitic at worst.”

On October 11th 2023, Hamas-led fighters breached

the Gaza-Israel barrier, attacking military bases and massacring civilians in 21 communities, killing 1,139 people, including 695 Israeli civilians, among them 38 children, 71 foreign nationals, and 373 members of the Israeli security forces, while taking about 250 Israelis as hostages. Incidents of great brutality and rape were witnessed and reported.

Israeli repercussion was swift and merciless. Israel has ravaged the Gaza Strip. Apartment buildings, mosques, schools, hospitals, and universities have been reduced to rubble. During their hunt for Hamas fighters Israel has deliberately targeted and destroyed civilian structures where civilians have sought refuge. On May 21st 2024, Israeli government offered its first estimate of the operation's death toll, claiming its troops had killed 14,000 terrorists and 16,000 civilians.

A week earlier the U.N. reported that approximately 35,000 individuals had died during the conflict, including 7,797 minors, 4,959 women and 1,924 elderly, the latter three groups with confirmed identities. Among the victims were 103 journalists and 196 humanitarian workers. At almost the same time, Save the Children reported that more than 13,000 children had been killed, while WHO stated that at least 1,000 children have had one or both legs amputated. On the 11th of August the death toll was estimated to be approximately 39,000 people.

The killing is continuing unabated, worsened by starvation. WFP recently reported that 1.1 million Gaza inhabitants are facing catastrophic hunger. In northern Gaza, one in three children under two years of age suffer from acute malnutrition.

According to estimates by UNICEF, people's daily nutritional intake is down to 245 calories, i.e. less than a can of beans. This is mostly attributable to an Israeli blockade that according to UNICEF

since March 1 has stopped 30 percent of aid missions, letting in a daily average of only 159 of the required 500 aid trucks.

Even before October 11th people of Gaza had an intolerable existence, lacking sufficient access to electricity, potable water, food, and medical equipment. Unemployment rate was more than forty per cent, while children grew up in a world of intermittent war and persistent trauma, of barbed wire and surveillance. Israeli attacks continue while remains of Hamas' military branch has become a drastically diminished insurgent force, which fighters pop up from the rubble to shoot at Israeli soldiers.

An entire population has been severely punished for the presence of a fanatical, political party, which according to polls conducted in September 2023 by the majority of Gazans was considered to be repressive and corrupt, but which they were frightened to criticize. Hamas's support was estimated to be between 27 and 31 percent, though since many Gazans are unable to perceive a viable solution to Israel's iron grip on their confined strip of land, they consider armed resistance to be the only way out.

In Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu's two decades long regime has tried to sabotage a two-state-solution by weakening the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank, allowing for vast amounts of mainly Qatari money to reach Hamas, in exchange for maintaining a ceasefire and sowing division within Al-Fatah, the party governing the West Bank. Part of this policy has also been the increased support to 144 Israeli settlements within the West Bank, including 12 in East Jerusalem, and a discreet sustenance to over 100 “Israeli outposts”, i.e. settlements not authorized by the Israeli government.

Over 450,000 Israeli settlers reside in the West Bank, with an additional 220,000 in East Jerusalem. Living in a settlement is made attractive through lower costs of

housing compared to living in Israel proper. Government spending per citizen in settlements is double, in some cases triple, than what is spent per Israeli citizen in Israel proper.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ruled that Israeli settlements on occupied territory is, according to international laws, illegal and established that Israel has “an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers from the occupied territories”.

The Court is talking to deaf ears. A current expansion of settlements has involved the confiscation of Palestinian land and resources, leading to displacement of Palestinian communities while creating a source of tension and conflict.

The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that from 1 January to 19 September 2023, Israeli settlers killed 189 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and wounded 8,192.

The violence increased after October 3rd, after that date 460 Palestinians have so far been murdered by settlers. On average, there are every day three cases of settlers attacking Palestinians in the West Bank, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinians, harming their property, and preventing them from reaching their land, workplace, family, and friends.

International ramifications are continuously unfolding - armed exchanges between Israel and Iran, between Israel and Hezbollah, Iran supported Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, followed by Israeli counterattacks on Yemen, waves of pro-Palestine demonstrations across Europe, the U.S., and Arab capitals, combined with increased antisemitism. All this could for Israel mean its worst defeat ever, while at the same time it may for Palestinians prove to be more deadly and devastating than the Nakba.

IPS

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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

Tanzanian young women urge President to reject anti-corruption law amendments

By Getrude Mbago

IN Tanzania, women, girls, and children face various forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including discrimination, denial of basic services as well as physical and psychological abuse from their communities.

One of the significant challenges impeding women's and girls' progress is sextortion or sexual corruption, which hampers their quest for employment.

Recently, the government proposed amendments to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption (PCCB) Act. The proposed changes include replacing Section 25 with a new Section 10(b), which would criminalise not only those who demand sexual favours but also those who offer them.

The bill, which will be debated in upcoming parliamentary sessions, has faced considerable criticism from women's rights activists, who argue that it could exacerbate sexual corruption and adversely impact women and girls.

This has greatly been criticized by Tanzania women's rights activists saying that the new changes will further promote sexual corruption which in the end affects women and girls.

The current Act concerns only the person who demands sexual favours or any other favours.

The proposed sub-section reads: "9A person who) promises, gives, or offers sexual favour or any other favour to a person who is in a position of power or authority, to influence him to exercise his authority in his favour in giving employment,

promotion, a right, privilege or any preferential treatment commits an offence and on conviction shall be liable to a fine of not less than two million shillings but not exceeding ten million shillings or to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years but not exceeding ten years or to both."

Addressing reporters in Dar es Salaam on Thursday, some young women leaders from various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) appealed to the government to drop its proposal that both the perpetrator and the victim of sextortion should face sexual corruption charges, noting that the proposition fails to consider the issue of power that is central to the crime. They urged President Samia Suluhu Hassan to reject the proposed amendments to Act, if Parliament approves them.

Hellen Sizya, leader of the young women leaders highlighted that corruption affects various aspects of life, including at home, in universities, workplaces, the arts, sports and political parties.

Sizya pointed out that research by PCCB in collaboration with anti-sexual corruption coalitions, underscores the gravity of the issue and young women are acutely aware of its implications.

Sara Beda, head of communications at Msichana Initiative urged legislators to recognise that young people are the majority and are disproportionately affected, urging them to reject the proposed section or else the youth will conduct hard decisions in the upcoming elections.

"Our Parliament, which repre-



sents us, should not pass these amendments. The role of Parliament is to create laws that protect rights, not to create laws that protect criminals," Beda said.

She also called on Tanzanians, particularly human rights activists focusing on women and girls, to strongly oppose the inclusion of Section 10(b) in the bill.

"The law offers a clear distinction between sexual corruption and other types of corruption. Sexual corruption involves those in positions of power exploiting their authority to demand sex as a condition for providing victims with their rightful benefits and preferential treatment," she explained.

According to her, this section is unnecessary and dangerous, urging the government to scrap it from the proposed legislation.

"We actually thought that if there were to be any amendments to

the law, then they would be about making the punishment against the perpetrators of sextortion harsher and stricter," she remarked.

On Wednesday, the Anti-Sextortion Coalition in Tanzania also called for an amendment of the proposed PCCB Act section 10(b) for violating women's rights.

The coalition that engages approximately 200 organisations from the community to the national level was involved in the feasibility analysis of the initial proposals for the amendment of the law and gave its recommendations to the PCCB. Mary Ndato noted that the addition of article 10(b) allows a person to offer sexual favour or any other favour to another person in a position of power to exercise their authority in giving employment, promotion, or any preferential treatment.

Also, upon conviction, an offend-

er shall be liable to a fine of not less than 2m/- but not exceeding 10m/- or to imprisonment for a term not less than five years but not exceeding ten years or both. The coalition is of the view that this penalty is lenient.

"Despite awareness of sextortion and its effects on vulnerable groups, we are shocked by the continued neglect of our recommendations: to delete additional article 25(b) which deprives the victim of their rights, and instead add article 10(b) that justifies continuing the abuse of power by condemning the victim of sexual corruption as a method to silence them and trivialize the fight against sexual corruption is not acceptable."

She also highlighted that if the Parliament ignores their demands, they will appeal to President Samia not to accept the changes based on their implications for the nation's

growth and development.

According to her, sexual corruption has effects on the victim including; robbing their dignity, deprives opportunities to develop their talents, and giving privileged positions to those with meritorious qualities.

Sexual corruption affects the national economy to a great extent, where it causes misuse of human resources, thus weakening efforts to fight poverty; it undermines the nation's dignity by turning rights into privileges contrary to work ethics and international and regional laws prohibiting acts of sexual corruption.

Dr Ave Maria Semakafu, a coalition member, said sextortion awareness and its effects on university students have helped them attain their rights, arguing that passing the bill would automatically deprive them of their rights.

Climate change threatens public health, raising the spread of food-borne diseases

By Leocadia Bongben

CLIMATE change threatens public health by affecting the distribution and spread of food-borne pathogens, according to a recent study by food scientists from Benha University in Egypt published in Nature.

Food-borne pathogens are microorganisms that can cause illness when consumed via food or water sources.

The authors found that changes in temperature and precipitation patterns, shifting consumer behaviour, and altered distributions of food-borne pathogens increase exposure risk for humans and animals.

"This study aims to highlight the connections between climate change and public health, raise awareness, promote discussion on effective mitigation strategies, advocate for increased investment in research and the development of local expertise, and promote partnerships between African researchers and international organizations to share knowledge and resources," Dr Ahmed Alhussaini Hamad, one of the study's authors, told Mongabay in an interview by email.

The World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 10 people fall ill every year because of eating contaminated food. Contaminated food has been identified as the cause of 600 million food-borne diseases and 420,000 deaths annually, according to the study. Africa alone contributes to 91 million cases of illness and 137,000 deaths annually—over a quarter of all deaths. Among these diseases, diarrheal diseases account for 70 percent of the overall burden. The impact of climate change on diarrheal diseases is expected to be more significant in Asia and Africa, Hamad and colleagues state.

An elderly lady receives food supplies from the Red Cross in the drought-affected district Mabalane, Mozambique.

Climate change is also projected to contribute to a surge in the in-



cidence of food-borne illnesses globally, according to the study. For example, an increase in the number and severity of heatwaves, droughts, and heavy precipitation events are all expected to lead to a rise in food-borne pathogens.

This news is especially worrisome for Africa. Low-income countries in Africa are often disproportionately affected by climate change due to their geographic locations, reliance on agriculture, and limited resources for adaptation and mitigation, according to Hamad.

For African countries, Hamad says, "rising numbers of food-borne illnesses can strain already overburdened health systems. And, food contamination can lead to significant financial losses in the agricultural sector."

According to Hamad, five food-borne diseases—Salmonellosis, Campylobacteriosis, Listeriosis, cholera and Aflatoxin Poisoning have a link with climate change. For example, he says that variations in the water temperature and qual-

ity affect the vibrio cholerae-bacteria that causes cholera.

In Africa, Cameroon has been grappling with cholera in recent years. A study in Infectious Disease Monitoring indicates that "the absence of water channels in some cities of Cameroon and the presence of garbage everywhere have favoured the multiplication of V. cholerae in the environment over time that triggered a new outbreak in 2018." In July 2018, when the Cameroon government declared a cholera outbreak, 470 cases and 34 deaths were registered. Cameroon has reported 20,649 cases and 484 deaths cumulatively from January 1, 2022, to March 7, 2024.

Dr Rene Ramses Meyong, a climatologist at the National Climate Change Observatory in Cameroon, told Mongabay that the link between climate change and food-borne diseases is hinged on the mechanisms by which climate affects the reproduction and propagation dynamics of pathogens whether bacteria, viruses,

parasites, natural toxins, etc. The epidemiological profile of any disease can be modulated by the dynamics of climate parameters in the short, medium, or long term.

"The work of the observatory has revealed that, since at least 1950, climate disruption has been reflected at the local level by an increase in average temperatures across the five agro-ecological zones, instability in the start and end dates of the seasons, high spatial and temporal variability in rainfall, and an upsurge in extreme weather situations (floods, droughts, etc.). Assuming that the disturbances impact food production, processing, and storage techniques, it is reasonable to assume that a portion of the elevated risk of food-borne illness transmission throughout the nation's five agroecological zones can be attributed to climate change," the climatologist says.

The study on climate changes and food-borne pathogens suggests that changes in food production and trade can intro-

duce new sources of contamination. Meyong says it's realistic to assume climate change is raising the risk of food-borne illnesses in Cameroon given its impact across the country. The climatologist has also linked potential sources of contamination in Cameroon to the overuse of chemicals.

"To meet the growing demand on the consumer market, many actors are forced to use significantly more chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.) during the manufacturing process, contributing to the rise in anti-microbial resistance," says Meyong, adding that "chemical exposure can also raise the danger of severe poisoning or the spread of chronic diseases like cancer."

The climatologist expressed concern about the storage conditions of foodstuffs displayed in some Cameroon markets. "Poor display conditions for foodstuffs, coupled with unfavourable weather conditions, exacerbate the risk of contamination by food-borne bacteria like Vibrio cholerae."

The study published in Nature in June 2024 recommends monitoring the impact of climate change on food-borne pathogens to develop strategies to mitigate its effects on human health and understand the science behind the link between climate change and food-borne diseases.

Meyong states that the climate observatory already provides national sectors, such as agriculture, livestock, and health with forecast climate information (climatological services) translated into local languages to facilitate monitoring in the context of global warming.

Mitigation strategies

By adopting climate-smart agriculture methods—such as integrating agronomic practices, and conservation agriculture, among others—the study by Egyptian scientists suggests farmers can reduce the impact of climate change on their crops and minimize the likelihood of foodborne pathogen contamination.

Mothers and children wait in Changanine community (Chibuto District), Mozambique to collect their seeds from the Red Cross. The community has been hit very hard by the current drought, many have lost their crops and locals have to walk up to five kilometres to dig for water.

In addition, mitigation strategies are improving food safety protocols and regulations, enhancing surveillance programs, and investing in research to understand the relationship between climate change and foodborne illness could help mitigate the health impact.

The study further suggests investing in research and innovation that can provide valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms of climate change-pathogen interactions and novel solutions for mitigating these effects. This includes developing new technologies and tools for detecting, tracking, and managing food-borne pathogens in a changing environment.

WOMEN & ECONOMY

Yemen crisis brings small reprieve for entrepreneurial women

TORONTO

ONCE upon a time, the Sheba (Seba'a) Kingdom (today's Yemen) had a prominent queen. Women, in the presence of men, were held in a higher position, literally.

Things afterward have upended to the disadvantage of female Yemenis living under a strong-hold tribal and patriarchal system.

Amid an eight year long war between the the government and Houthis rebels brought a humanitarian crisis considered to be one of the worst in the world, there is a small good news story. While the armed conflict has kept Yemeni men busy at the front(s), some Yemeni women have stumbled upon a societal and economic breather, stemming from a national need to generate an income for themselves and their families to stay afloat.

Women began venturing in small, low-risk businesses.

Dhekra Ahmed Algabri, executive director at Al-Amal foundation, praises the rise of women in many trades and commercial sectors, although they are "linked to conservative patterns established by society, such as sewing, hairdressing and styling, cooking, handicraft making, incense and perfume production and women's clothing."

Absence of an Integrated, Empowering System

Najat Jumaan, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics, Dean of the Faculty of Finance and Management at Ar-Rasheed Smart University and Board of Director Member at Jumaan Trading and Investment Co., believes that Yemeni women run projects here and there, "but they are not subject to an integrated system to empower and encourage them from a young age to be an active element in the economic and productive process."

Nevertheless, some Yemeni women broke free from cultural limitations and into traditionally male-dominated fields, such as programming and engineering. Algabri explains that "during the ongoing conflict, women turned to e-commerce, e-marketing and professional services of consulting and training."

The bright side businesswomen saw in the dark situation of Yemen was their existence in a closed market they knew inside-out.

"I can move in it and find solutions to several of its



Najat Jumaan, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Economics, Dean of the Faculty of Finance and Management at Ar-Rasheed Smart University and Board of Director Member at Jumaan Trading and Investment Co.

problems, and when you achieve things in a more natural and organic way, you attract public recognition and reap supplemental exposure," says Eman Al-Maktari, co-founder and CEO of MOSNAD Talents Marketplace. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Gender Equality in Yemen underlines the need for "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life."

However, there is a lack of official and reliable numbers about the actual extent of women's contribution in the economy.

According to Jumaan, "women's participation is very limited and they are poorer compared to men in Yemen."

Her statement is confirmed by World Bank statistics which puts women's participation in the labor force at 5.1 percent compared to 60.4 percent for men in 2023. The same study noted there were no official statistics for shares in businesses. Only 5.4 percent of women had bank accounts compared with 18.4 percent of men.

Obstacles and Social Media Blessing

Long-standing obstacles are deep rooted in the society's culture and perpetuate across generations, such as male-female segregation and restricted movement for women (the imposed "mahram"). Individual exceptions might overcome some of the barriers as in the case of Al-Maktari, whose family is more open, but the majority face "a glass ceiling that prevents them from ascending, growing, continuing, and achieving profits," says Jumaan.

To make matters worse, war related obstacles appeared. The airport of Sana'a was closed for a long time and hindered participating in meetings and conferences. Additionally, Al-Maktari finds that her Yemeni nationality prevented her "entering other countries to participate in opportunities available to other women around the world, which results in an unfair advantage. The undertakings I made would have had a two- to three-time greater return if I were in another country."

The alternative rescue came from social media that opened vistas for Yemeni businesswomen to promote and show case their work. Nonetheless, it didn't solve the problem of regional inaccessibility and foreign investors' reluctance to join the fragile and volatile Yemeni market and expand there.

Incentives But Unclear Future

Civil society and donor organizations, the bank-

ing sector and the government are investing in "many incentives, initiatives and forms of support for businesswomen through training programs, workshops, financing, loans, professional networks and consultations," highlights Algabri.

The General Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Yemen also plays an important role, albeit not prominent in light of the crisis, to support the economic and commercial sector in the country.

Al-Maktari benefitted from mentorship and training programs to understand business and start one of her own.

"I received support from an Indian mentor in the field of IT, and it helped me greatly when I was emerging as a digital expert and found a platform to build projects and a name".

Yet she describes the current situation in Yemen as "foggy," with an unclear future for businesswomen in a country weighed down with multi-layered obstacles in women's paths.

"Even economists are not capable of answering the question about our future. We cannot plan annually or quarterly and have very short-term business plans."

Despite all challenges, hope is growing for Yemeni women. "If conditions and components of success are met, many of which are related to women and the belief in and perfection of their abilities, they can reach their economic power when given the opportunity to educate, learn, qualify, and gain experiences and talents," says Jumaan. IPS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions. Clues include: 1. modern name of Kazeh, 6. a deep wide trench filled with water, 10. a house or home, 11. speakers of Polynesian language, 12. used in sewing, 14. gather a crop, 15. Worldwide, 16. a plateau, 19. a devious or cunning stratagem, 20. besides, 21. of little depth, 23. a utility vehicle in USA, 24. female swan, 25. the solution to a problem, 26. a young girl. Solutions provided include: 1. modern name of Kazeh, 6. a deep wide trench filled with water, 10. a house or home, 11. speakers of Polynesian language, 12. used in sewing, 14. gather a crop, 15. Worldwide, 16. a plateau, 19. a devious or cunning stratagem, 20. besides, 21. of little depth, 23. a utility vehicle in USA, 24. female swan, 25. the solution to a problem, 26. a young girl.

Word search puzzle with a grid and a list of words to find. Words include: DENY, TRY, LEECH, DIVE, THEY, SOT, NOISE, LOT, KIOSK, KIND, OLIVE, MONO, OILER, SEED, SHOE. Includes a 'Yesterday's solution' section with words like DODOMA, OVERT, MENO, ERYA, A NILE, GASLIGHT, LEG, O ADUL, WAR, BIBBLE, ORVOTE, OPENER, KEROSE, A DREM, L SOME, CADET.

Radio One advertisement for the week of August 17-19, 2024. Features the slogan 'RADIO One RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI' and a detailed schedule of programs for Monday through Sunday. Includes social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, and the slogan 'Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One'.

BUSINESS

Digital trade to take centre stage as Rwanda hosts continental forum



Combating food insecurity using solar irrigation

LAGOS

In a significant move to address food insecurity in Nigeria, the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) has joined forces with Community Energy Social Enterprise Limited (CESEL) to execute an ambitious solar irrigation project.

This groundbreaking partnership aims to deploy solar irrigation systems across 200,000 hectares of farmland nationwide over the next four years, leveraging on the REA's Productive Use of Equipment (PUE) framework.

According to a joint statement, this initiative is expected to increase grain and crop production by an impressive 1.2 million tons annually. Moreover, the project will replace traditional fossil fuel-powered irrigation pumps with clean energy alternatives, saving an estimated N413 billion in fossil fuel purchase by the farmers, and dislodging 412,800 cubic meters of fossil fuels.

"Beyond the increase in food produc-

tion, the partnership will also emphasise the promotion of energy efficiency. REA and CESEL will collaborate to enhance the adoption of energy-efficient appliances and productive use of energy devices, leveraging sales, distribution, and credit financing to reach more farmers," the statement continued.

REA's Managing Director, Abba Abubakar Aliyu, highlighted the alignment of this partnership with the government's broader efforts to end food shortages and promote sustainable development. "By harnessing solar energy for agriculture, we are creating a win-win situation for farmers, the environment, and the nation," said Aliyu.

He further added, "This partnership is more than just signing an MoU. For me, it's akin to a marriage agreement due to the long-term importance of these projects. I am particularly impressed with the inclusion strategy you have implemented, especially for the female farmers in Kogi State."

KIGALI

THE Government of Rwanda, in partnership with TradeMark Africa (TMA), will host the Trade Development Forum, bringing together senior government officials, development partners, academics, multi-lateral organisations, and private sector leaders from 14 TMA countries and beyond.

Set to take place in Kigali from December 2 to 3, this two-day forum, themed "Digital Trade," will explore cutting-edge digital trade practices and technologies.

Topics to be discussed include the interoperability of digital payments, the application of distributed ledger technology (DLT) and artificial intelligence in trade processes, and the role of automation in supporting green trade initiatives.

The discussions aim to leverage technology to streamline trade facilitation and strengthen policy frameworks across Africa.

David Beer, the CEO of TradeMark Africa, expressed excitement about the upcoming forum, emphasizing the organization's commitment to Africa's economic growth.

"Africa's economic prosperity is our business. TradeMark is entirely focused on delivering practical results to remove trade barriers and boost exports within and from Africa. While significant progress has been made, such as reducing transport times by about a third across the Northern Corridor in East Africa, there's still a big leap ahead," he said in a statement.

He added: "The 2024 forum will center on expanding digitization successes and introducing cutting-edge technologies. We look forward to sharing lessons and presenting innovative ideas to help governments and the private sector further reduce the cost and time of trade," he said.

Jean-Chrysostome Ngabitsinze, Rwanda's Minister for Trade and Industry,



Brigette Harrington, the owner of Igire Coffee, a Rwandan coffee exporting company that exports its products under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Guided Trade Initiative.

highlighted Rwanda's role as host, stating, "We are honored to host the Trade Development Forum, a symbol of our commitment to Rwanda's and Africa's economic development."

He added, "We are dedicated to realizing the vision of a seamlessly integrated Africa, a vision championed by our President in the formation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Initiatives like the Rwanda Electronic Single Window and Kigali Dry Port demonstrate how trade solutions can overcome geographical challenges and enhance our trade capabilities."

This is the sixth edition. Previous meetings took place in Kenya in 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2019, and in Uganda in 2018.

Jean-Chrysostome Ngabitsinze, Rwanda's Minister for Trade and Industry, highlighted Rwanda's role as host, stating, "We are honored to host the Trade Development Forum, a symbol of our commitment to Rwanda's and Africa's economic development."

Rwanda exported its first consignment of goods to Ghana, on September 30, 2022, under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Guided Trade Initiative aimed to kick off commercially meaningful trade across the continent.

The first AfCFTA Certificate of Origin for Rwanda was issued to Igire Coffee - a Rwandan coffee exporting company owned by

Brigette Harrington - for coffee products destined for Ghana as part of the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative.

Harrington's company seeks to uplift women financially by purchasing coffee beans from Hingakawa Women's coffee association, adding value, and exporting it to international markets.

Rwanda was among eight state parties - Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Tunisia - participating in the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative.

The latter aimed to prompt state parties to start issuing AfCFTA trading documents including certificates of origin, importer as well as exporter declaration forms, and ensure that their customs laws and systems are aligned to the AfCFTA requirements.

Previously, Harrington used to export her coffee in an informal manner which posed risks and yielded lesser profit. But ever since the beginning of the Initiative, her export volumes increased from 150 bags to 400 bags of coffee.

"The roasted packaged coffee was shipped to Ghana and it was sold to individuals, three cafes, a golf course, among other places," she said.

As a small woman-owned business, she noted, "definitely, the agreement works."

She added: "But I faced challenges to do with the sustainability of the business. When exporting to

another country, there must be a buyer with a distribution network within the country, otherwise, market penetration becomes a huge issue."

Being a relatively new concept, Harrington said, some mistakes occurred at the Customs Office in Ghana because the staff wasn't familiar with the exact tariffs, and it was only identified after clearance and delivery of products.

This "resulted in an increased price which also affected the bottom line" of her product pricing, as the price on the market was no longer what she initially anticipated.

The AfCFTA is an intra-Africa preferential trade agreement that offers the importer reduced tariffs, allowing products to be imported at less cost, thereby making them more competitive in pricing in the target market.

With Rwanda Development Board's expanded one-stop center, Harrington is confident that acquiring a certificate of origin and other related documentation will be faster and will facilitate the whole trading experience.

On the other hand, she called for a harmonized system across countries when it comes to testing and certification of standards for goods to be traded among countries.

"While the coffee was tested, certified, and registered in Ghana with the Ghana Standards Authority and Food and Drug Authority, these certifications were not transferrable in Rwanda," she noted.

"It is imperative that the countries participating in the agreement have standardized testing methodologies and certifications, which can be accepted among countries."

Simply put, Harrington noted, for a trader to participate under the AfCFTA, they should ensure that their product meets international standards, have a potential customer in an AfCFTA-ratified country, and be knowledgeable on the least expensive mode of payment.

"Ensure that your products meet international standards in terms of quality, packaging, and labeling. Whenever possible, buy Africa and encourage others to do so as well."

A year later, Igire coffee is sold in Simba Supermarket and will soon be on shelves of Sawa City supermarket in the local market, as well as available on the company's e-commerce platform.

The AfCFTA Secretariat is gearing up for a second phase of the Guided Trade Initiative for trade in goods as well as the first pilot for trade in services.

Prudence Sebahizi, Director for Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination at the AfCFTA Secretariat, said that at the launch of the initiative, seven partner states traded 98 products, and through mobilization efforts, the number of interested countries increased to 31 and hundreds of businesses are trading under AfCFTA in areas of agriculture, manufacturing, among others.

He added: "On a practical note, we learned that there is a huge gap in infrastructure, logistics, market information, connectivity, and finance. We recommend that AfCFTA trading companies act as aggregator intermediaries of products from SMEs to trade in volumes and diversity."

Sebahizi pointed to the establishment of AfCFTA National Implementation Committees which need capacity building and finalization of strategies, with at least 35 strategies for state parties developed so far.

Empowering South Africa's youth in tackling unemployment surge

CAPE TOWN

Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability, and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa, a leading non-profit organization committed to leadership development and youth empowerment in Africa announced at a recent stakeholder and press conference in Johannesburg on 7 August the launch of its Youth Day of Service (YDOS) initiative.

YDOS is a youth-led social impact campaign that empowers young Africans to drive tangible progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By providing resources, skills, and a platform for their voices, YDOS equips young people to become catalysts for positive change in their communities.

YDOS launches in SA at the same time as the release of the latest youth unemployment rate (45.5 percent) which was announced by StatsSA's Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) on 13 August. This is an increase of 0.5 percent since the last survey was announced, highlighting the severity of the youth crisis.

The entrance by LEAP Africa into Southern Africa, through South Africa, comes at a time when SA's youth need more than just handouts but empowerment and upskilling. The catch-22 that many youth face however is that even if they have the right qualifica-



Collaboration with government, civil society and NGOs undertaken in-country to kickstart youth-based projects that will help young people's futures

tions, they need some form of work experience first before applying for their first job. Without it, they often cannot secure work.

LEAP Africa's partnerships with headline sponsor, Dow Africa, a global leader in materials science, and key local stakeholders, brokered during their visit to South Africa is

essential for scaling the impact of the Youth Day of Service (YDOS).

This campaign will afford many youth an opportunity to learn key skills, gain work experience through volunteerism and effect change in their communities and cities - giving them a foot in the door when it comes to

securing future work, while impacting social change.

Funding to scale efforts For the Youth Day of Service, now in its fifth year, is the headline sponsor Dow Africa, a global leader in materials science also based in South Africa, alongside World Connect and other implementing partners across Africa. With the support of sponsors and partners, LEAP Africa has successfully launched youth developed and run projects in 28 countries including Zambia, Morocco and Kenya, uplifting over 10 000 youth with knowledge, skills and critical experience.

The theme for YDOS 2024, "Intensifying Youth Action for the SDGs," reflects the campaign's commitment to scaling impact. Marking a significant milestone since its inception, this year's edition underscores LEAP Africa's ongoing effort to engage and empower young leaders across Africa to drive meaningful change within their communities and contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

While in South Africa to kickstart the YDOS campaign and commemorate International Youth Day on 12 August, LEAP Africa will engage participants and harness opportunities for youth-based partnerships. Through these meetings, LEAP Africa intends on getting new SDG-aligned projects off the ground during the month-long campaign.

Currently in South Africa, two projects by

Clean City SA and SACAN will be taking place during the YDOS pan-African campaign month. Each is a stellar example of what the company intends to achieve in SA and across Africa. Clean City SA operates a sorting of waste for recycling station at the Randview Shopping Centre in the Randburg Central Business District (CBD).

Protecting SA's future while aligning to the SDGs Africa's growing youth population presents a unique opportunity for accelerated development. However, the continent is still facing significant challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sami Mainich, President of Dow Africa stated: "Young people are the architects of our future, and their creativity, innovative thinking, and energy are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."

Dow is proud to partner with LEAP Africa once again on the Youth Day of Service. By empowering young leaders across Africa, we are investing in a sustainable future for the continent and creating lasting positive change.

With the current unemployment rates in South Africa, and the lack of available jobs, stakeholders are encouraged to do much more in tackling the issues of youth unemployment and equipping young people with the resources and skills to excel.

Fostering US-Africa trade relations for startups

LAGOS

THE recent Prime Startups behind Lagos Startup Week, convened tech stakeholders including local and foreign founders, investors, accelerators, regulators, and international observers interested in the African tech ecosystem, to bring its annual week-long event to an impactful close.

The closing event which took place in two parts - the networking event and the summit was graced by stakeholders including Tomi Davies, Collaborator-in-Chief, TVC Labs; Bashira Hassan, Policy Advisor to the DG/CEO, NITDA; Victoria Fabunmi, National Coordinator, Office for Nigeria Digital Innovation; Tracey Okoro-Isaac, State Adoption Lead for the Nigerian Startup Act; Arun Venkataram, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets & the Director General of the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service; among others.

Kicking off the keynote address, Arun Venkataram, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets & the Director General of the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service stated that he was thrilled to have been invited by Prime Startups to join the Lagos Startup Week 2024 and discuss the USA's collaborative interest in Africa's tech landscape.

"We are at a pivotal and exciting moment in history, where the intersection of technology and commerce is in a dynamic place that presents boundless opportunities, or limitless as we heard, for collaboration, to solve problems and improve people's lives. As Nigeria positions itself to be a global leader in the digital space, it is critical that we begin these conversations around how the public and the private sector can collaborate to advance technological innovation sustainably."

Speaking on how invested the US government is in technological transformation on the African continent, he further said, "From where I sit in the U.S. government, we have been particularly focused on capturing the boundless opportunities presented by the digital economy, for job creation, wealth generation, and youth empowerment; and to help realize this potential, President Biden announced the Digital Transformation With Africa initiative, launched in 2022 to promote the goals of expanding digital access, increasing digital literacy, and strengthening a digital-enabling environment across all of the continent."

"We are so proud at the Commerce De-



partment to play a leadership role in this effort, including promoting the best-in-class US technology in support of an inclusive African digital ecosystem. I am looking forward on this visit, to advance this initiative with the goal of unlocking the immense potential of Nigeria's digital economy. If it wasn't clear before, it is clearer now that America's future is in Africa's future, and that Africa's future is a digital future." He concluded.

In a similar vein, efforts to strengthen the relationship between the tech ecosystem and the regulators who are critical to the establishment of startups, leveraging technology, and the ease of doing business within Nigeria, yielded success at Lagos Startup Week as Prime Startups teamed up with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA).

In his opening speech at the opening ceremony, the Director General of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, represented by the Director of Corporate Planning and Strategy, NITDA, Dr. Aristotle Onumo disclosed that the purpose and theme of Lagos Startup Week resonate with the thoughts of the government and connects

strategically to the roadmap and action plan of the agency.

He said, "Innovation doesn't happen in isolation, it takes a conglomerate of key growth enablers to ensure that there is a viable tech ecosystem that would be productive, and also meet the needs of the times that we are in. Many do not know the role of Regulators in the place of innovation. Regulators are gatekeepers that provide compliance and maintain a balance between innovation and safety. Hence we plan to create a framework within which people who wish to play a role within the digital economy can be safe."

Speaking further on how the agency intends to support the tech ecosystem and its players, Dr. Onumo said, "We want to create a good framework for data exchange, digital public infrastructure, engineer a pathway to the creation of over 6,000 technology-enabled jobs through agritech, ensure that about 40% of women can participate in the agency's digital service offering, establish about 6 technological development zone in Nigeria, promote the use of blockchain technology by developing use cases for new adopters, establish a robust PKI structure that would enable Nigerians'

participation and safety within the transactional context in the digital ecosystem, and nurture an innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem by efficiently implementing the Nigerian Startup Act so that all can benefit from the incentives being provided by the Federal Government."

At the closing ceremony, in an exclusive panel session hosted in partnership with the Office for Nigeria Digital Innovation of NITDA, Tracey Okoro-Isaac, State-adoption lead for the Nigerian Startup Act, dedicated quality time to expound on the Act and the incidents that led to its passage. She said, "The Nigerian Startup Act came at the intersection of disruption and displacement. We had gotten to a point where the government saw nothing unique about the startups that flooded the ecosystem, and this had influenced several harsh policies and regulations that affected the growth of these startups. We needed to do something, but we needed the government by our side. So we began the big-tent approach, which led us to commission a stakeholder mapping of everybody that was required to win at each step and brought them together in a group."

Further speaking to how these

players brought the government to play an active role in the burgeoning ecosystem that is seen today, Okoro-Isaac said, "While we understood the government's hesitation about the sudden disruption taking over the business landscape and the displacement it had caused in the traditional workforce, we also needed them to see the advantage and introduce regulations that would ensure the best interest of all. We found a middle ground to make sure that while tech stakeholders are supporting and nurturing innovation, the government was able to create an enabling environment to prepare for displacement."

Victoria Fabunmi, National Coordinator, Office for Nigeria Digital Innovation, speaking to the implementation of the Act, and the reignition of stakeholders' confidence in this Act, maintained that quite a lot of people are still not aware of the Nigerian Startup Act and its composition.

"How do people take advantage of something that they have no idea of? This is a major problem and has cut our work for us in terms of expanding touch points for stakeholders' understanding and leveraging. Today, a platform has been created to aggregate core players like Angel

investors, venture capitalists, startups, innovation hubs, accelerators, and advisors; register and verify them. Now, because the awareness doesn't exist, the uptake or engagement with the act that establishes this platform has been low."

Speaking about NITDA's role in increasing uptake and engagement, she said, "At NITDA, we are responsible for engaging the national council which is a critical component of the act, and ensuring that we (everyone in the ecosystem) can create an enabling environment for ourselves."

Bringing the discourse to an end, Fabunmi disclosed that success for her office would come in the form of positive engagement in the Consultative Forum - a group that convenes appointed officials representing the interests of members across the ecosystem and integrated into a council to make decisions on policies for enabling business environment, funding, e.t.c and kick off implementation. She urged stakeholders present at the summit to read and digest the act, and also do their best to collaborate with NITDA and the government, in strengthening the ecosystem.

Bringing its famous week-long event to an end for 2024, and setting the pace for the corporate entity's plans for celebrating ten years of Lagos Startup Week in Nigeria, Prime Startups Co-founder, Olumide

Olayinka stated that Lagos Startup Week had made an incredible impact on the tech landscape since its inception nine years ago.

He said, "For the past nine years, we've been cultivating Lagos as the powerhouse for innovation in Africa. When we started the Lagos Startup Week nine years ago, the startup scene was very much at a nascent stage. As organizers of Lagos Startup Week, we at Prime Startups are dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship ecosystems across Africa. It's no wonder how some of the founding members of the Lagos Startup Week embodied this collective vision and built some of the continent's fastest-growing startups. This makes us proud and inspires us to keep the collaborative spirit alive."

Insurance role in driving Zambia's sustainability farming

LUSAKA

With Zambia having recently commemorated Farmer's Day and the contributions and work made by farmers in the agricultural sector in the country, Hollard has highlighted the importance of ensuring the sustainability of farming in the country, by providing adequate disaster risk financing mechanisms as a means to protect farmers against natural and man-made disasters.

Choolwe Sianyinda, Chief Operating Officer of Hollard says, "The long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector in Zambia and prospects for the country's socio-development hinges on the adoption of adequate cover and protection to mitigate against the increasingly volatile and erratic weather patterns - which are largely attributed to climate change - placing an extra burden on food security."

The socio-economic development of Zambia is closely aligned with the success of the agricultural sector which accounts for 51% of the labour force and feeds 50% of the population which depends on the sector for food, primarily through smallholder production, according to a report by the African Development Bank Group titled: Country Food and Agriculture Delivery Compact.

According to the African Development Bank Group, the agricultural sector in Zambia is also the main source of raw materials for the manufacturing and food processing sectors and, therefore, offers additional job opportunities through downstream industries, especially for women and the youth. The sector also contributes to Zambia's export earnings: agriculture currently accounts for approximately 29% of non-traditional exports and 7% of total national exports. Given this, agriculture offers a robust pathway for fostering Zambia's envisioned diversified, inclusive national socio-economic transformation.

Climate change is emerging as a major challenge to agricultural development in Africa according to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisa-

tion (FAO). "Progress on rural development has already been hit hard by the combined effects of the global financial downturn and the food crisis and, as a result, hunger and malnutrition trends remain stubbornly high. Without extensive adaptation the effects of climate change on agriculture is expected to exacerbate Africa's deepening food crisis, narrowing channels of food access and slowing efforts to expand food productivity," the report reads.

"Agriculture is a key impact area where inclusive and sustainable insurance solutions can drive the long-term sustainability of the sector. To that end, we are exploring partnerships with financial institutions willing to provide credit to farmers, with insurance serving as a safety net to ensure that farmers can repay their loans in case of crop failure. This approach aims to build resilience among farmers and safeguard their livelihoods," says Choolwe.

According to Hollard, while policy adaptations and investment are critical in driving the development of agriculture in Zambia, the smallholder and commercial farmers require insurance coverage for their farming inputs, tools or equipment and produce. Agriculture insurance plays a vital role in risk mitigation, allowing farmers to safeguard their businesses from financial losses. By minimising uncertainty, it enables farmers to efficiently manage their production and income.

Choolwe further explains that while commercial farmers rely on indemnity-based insurance, smallholder farmers have access to index insurance to secure their crops.

He says, "It is evident that farmers need more education and awareness about the benefits of insurance in dealing with climate change and natural disasters. Training and customer-centric products are essential, as is improved access to telecommunications and digital agriculture. Expanding distribution channels is crucial to reach more smallholder farmers.

"Addressing these challenges can be



achieved through sensitisation efforts, which can boost the adoption of insurance as a coping strategy in times of disaster. Improving connectivity in the telecoms sector and promoting digital agriculture. Simplifying farmers' access to technology like smartphones is essential, as is providing access to accurate meteorological data and information and collaborating with financial partners to make access to funding easier and more affordable for farmers."

As a member of a consortium of insurers, Hollard provides insurance coverage to more than a million smallholder farmers through the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), a government initiative that aims to improve the accessibility of agricultural inputs for small-scale farmers at a reduced cost, thereby enhancing their productivity.

"As a consortium member we provide index insurance to over 97 000 households who are on Food Security Packs, and over 23 000 households on Sustainable Agriculture Financing Facility (credit facility window)," says Choolwe.

Furthermore, Hollard has collaborated with Financial Sector Deepening Zambia (FSDZ) to introduce an Inclusive Crop Insurance Scheme, offering Area Yield index to support smallholder farmers in managing the impact of climate change, droughts, pests, floods, and other natural disasters. The FSDZ has been providing technical assistance and subsidies to the farmers on the program.

Between 2021 and 2022, Hollard paid claims of up to ZMW1,656,904.38 to farm-

ers. This figure increased significantly to ZMW16,136,309.72 between 2022 and 2023.

Choolwe says, "At the core of what insurance should deliver on, is enabling communities, and in this instance farmers, to create better futures, and become sustainable, even in the event of risk factors, from natural disasters and climate change to man-made disasters."

"Our goal is not only to provide the necessary assistance, but also to help older farmers transition from subsistence to commercial farming. We are also actively seeking additional partners who would like to work with us. The digital agriculture industry is looking for ways to ensure farmers have smartphones and technology at their fingertips. Our approach to offering affordable and accessible solutions for farmers, especially smallholders, involves strategic partnerships. This also includes collaborating with insurance companies, co-insuring, working with technical partners like KMD and Pula, and partnering with Vision Funds and Zambia Co-operative Federations to subsidise insurance premiums."

Looking ahead, Hollard is focused on expanding partnerships with organisations like MFI, Input suppliers such as ETG, Yara Zambia to integrate insurance and enhance accessibility for farmers. This will be done in collaboration with funders and donors such as Financial Sector Deepening Zambia and other entities that provide financial support through premium subsidies.

Empowering women to boost skills in financial industry

LAGOS

Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria has enhanced its commitment to empowering women by pioneering initiative at nurturing the skills and talent of professionals, amplifying their potential to shape a brighter future in the financial industry.

Hosting the second edition of the Standard Chartered Banking Academy in Lagos, the bank stated that its first edition in 2023 pioneered initiative targeted at empowering women within the financial services sector, fostering a more inclusive and diverse community of professionals within the sector.

This year the program expanded to include talent from across the Bank's West African franchise and external participants from other Banks to provide the first of its kind, unique learning opportunity for knowledge sharing, networking, and growth.

Speaking on the Bank's commitment to empowering women through initiatives like the Banking Academy, Dalu Ajene, CEO, Of Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria Limited said, "Our Academy remains committed to nurturing the skills and talent of professional women, amplifying their potential to shape a brighter future in financial industry."

"The Academy is the first of its kind in Nigeria and with the continued support of our implementation partners, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) (Nigeria chapter) and the Association of Professional Women Bankers (APWB), we are dedicated to making a positive impact on our beneficiaries and the financial services sector as a whole."

Henry Otaigbe, Head of Cash Product Transaction Banking, Nigeria and West Africa and one of the initiates project managers added "Our goal is to create a pipeline of talented women who will shape the future of banking in Africa. We believe that diversity and inclusion are critical to driving innovation and growth, and we're committed to supporting the development of female leaders in the industry."

Financing Africa's future economic development

CAIRO

THE current global financial architecture faces significant challenges in addressing the financial needs for climate action, sustainable development, and debt management. The calls for reform are growing louder, seeking to create a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable financial system.

Increasing the representation of developing countries, particularly African nations, in global economic decision-making processes is crucial for the continent's development and prosperity. We therefore commend the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for creating a third chair (board membership) for sub-Saharan Africa to improve its voice and representation.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, with far-reaching consequences for our planet and its inhabitants. Addressing climate action requires a multi-faceted approach that involves individuals, communities, organizations, and governments.

We need to build a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient Africa through renewed partnerships and strong institutions. However, a troubling trend has emerged: governments worldwide are grappling with mounting public debts, limiting their ability to invest in core social services that their citizens so desperately need.

The average public debt in Africa is around 65% of GDP, amounting to \$1.1 trillion, with some countries having much higher debt levels. Alarmingly, nearly 40% of African countries are in, or at high risk of, debt distress. To make matters worse, 60% of African nations now spend more on servicing their external public debt than on healthcare.

The existing global debt architecture is ill-equipped to address the pressing needs of African countries. Urgent reforms to the G20 Common Framework are required to make it more effective, transparent, and fit for purpose. Furthermore, we appeal for the suspension of debt service for all countries entering Common Framework restructurings and a comprehensive review of the IMF-World Bank Debt Sustainability Analysis Framework to prioritize solvency over mere liquidity.

The path ahead is not without its challenges. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 will require an estimated \$1.3 trillion per year, while the costs of addressing climate change alone are projected to reach \$2.8 trillion by 2030 in Africa. Sadly, even as these financing needs grow, official development assistance to Africa declined by 3.5% in 2022, while borrowing costs have soared in the tighter global monetary environment and private capital remained sidelined.

Africa has made significant progress in financing its development through domestic resources in recent years. However, this funding is inadequate to close a widening financing gap.

To bridge the funding gap, African countries need to boost domestic re-

source mobilization (DRM) by increasing financial resources, improving public spending efficiency, leveraging large pension fund markets and sovereign wealth funds, curbing illicit financial flows out of the continent, and harnessing partnerships. New sources of tax revenue should be sought, including those from digital payments, informal sector taxes, and sin taxes, among others.

Africa must explore innovative solutions and leverage the ongoing Financing for Development processes to secure adequate financial and technical resources to support Africa's participation and engagement in the tax reform process.

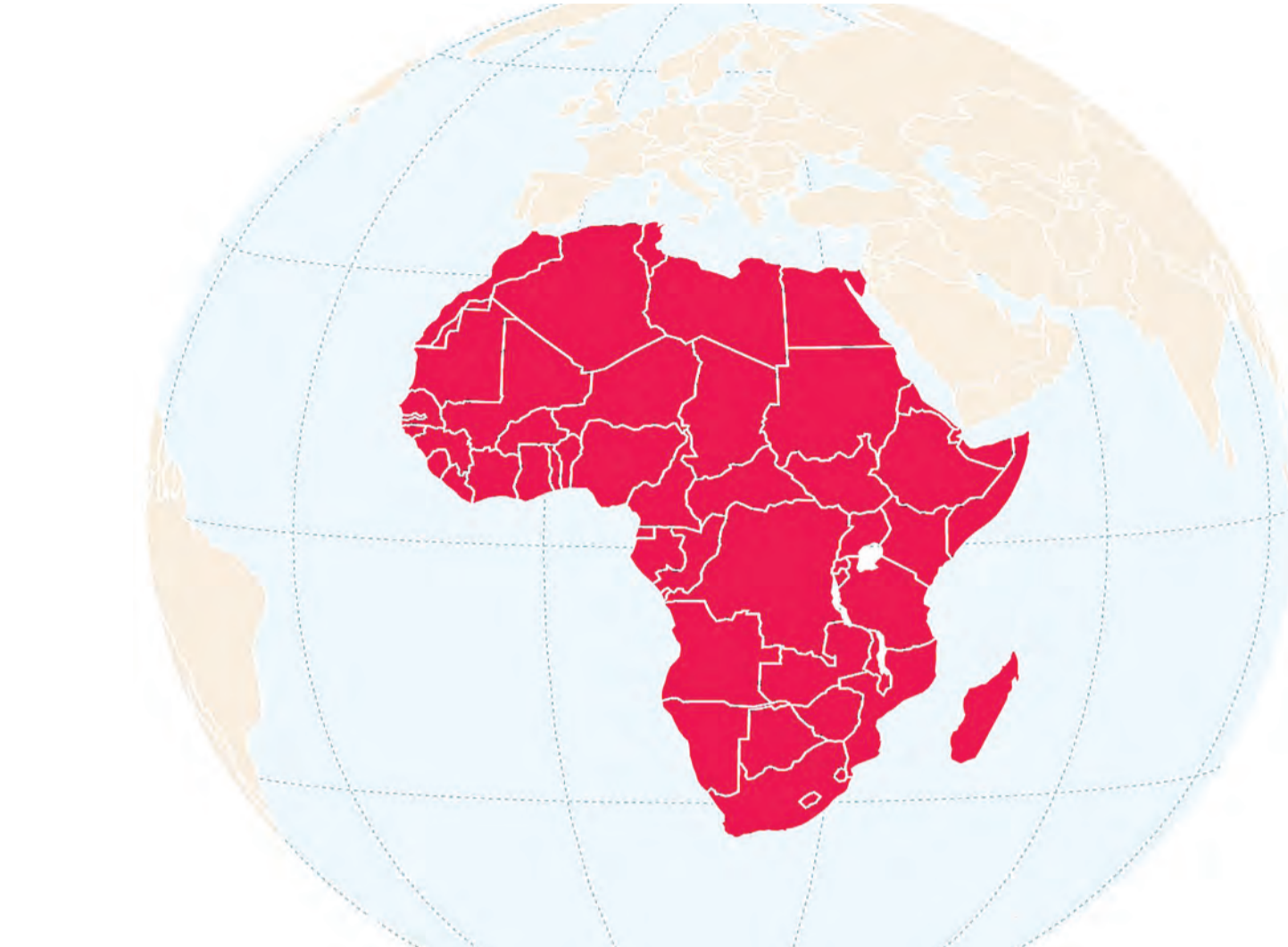
Deepening Africa's capital markets for resource mobilisation will enable countries to source additional financial resources from the private sector and the pension fund industry. The use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) will also allow African countries to finance critical infrastructure projects with resources from the private sector.

By leveraging carbon credits, countries can unlock benefits supporting sustainable development, economic growth, and climate resilience while contributing to global efforts to combat climate change. There is scope for the issuance of green and blue bonds linked to climate change to raise additional resources for development. Climate insurance at both sovereign and micro-level goes a long way in mitigating the negative impact of climate shock to vulnerable communities for example Zimbabwe and Malawi recently received pay-outs from the African Risk Capacity Group (ARC), for the insurance they took against the 2023/2024 agricultural season.

Africa's significant diaspora community enables various countries to issue diaspora bonds and related instruments to raise additional funding. Sovereign wealth funds have also proved to be a critical economic pillar in driving economic development in some countries. There is, therefore, a need to create sovereign wealth funds across Africa, not only to harness natural resource revenues to achieve intergenerational equity but to harness the full potential of state-owned enterprises. The example of Temasek, a sovereign wealth fund in Singapore, presents a successful case for achieving optimal contributions from state-owned entities and beyond. Such sovereign wealth funds will also help to improve the credit rating of African countries.

Scaling up resources from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is vital for African countries to address economic challenges, including those exacerbated by geopolitical tensions. These resources should be more concessional, long-term, and inclusive. In particular, the Poverty Reduction Growth Trust (PRGT) and the Growth and Sustainability Fund (GSF), under the IMF, need reform to better serve Africa and developing countries.

Affordable finance is crucial for sustainable development, and strengthening multilateral development banks (MDBs) is



essential to increasing lending capacity and supporting development projects. By strengthening MDBs, we can unlock more resources for sustainable development, bridge the financing gap,

and achieve the SDGs. Furthermore, innovative financing tools and mechanisms can help reduce financing costs, making it easier for countries to access affordable finance for de-

velopment. The balance sheets of IFIs can also be utilised to provide guarantees for crowding in resources from the private sector. Debt swaps can be valuable for managing debt and alleviat-

ing financial stress. By exchanging debt for new obligations with more favourable terms, countries can manage their debt more effectively, reduce financial stress, and create space for sustainable de-

velopment and economic growth.

Alongside debt relief, African nations are also calling for support in developing tools and instruments to lower extreme financing costs. The recent UN General Assembly resolution 78/230 emphasizes the need for a UN Framework Convention on international tax cooperation, which is a positive step in the right direction. Concrete action is needed to achieve results from the UN Framework Convention on International Taxation in order to establish a globally fair and transparent tax system. This will ensure the achievement of a more just and equitable global tax system.

African countries should begin implementing the Domestic Minimum Top-Up Tax (DMTT) to ensure that multinational companies contribute their fair share of taxes in Africa and minimize transfer pricing leakages. For example, Zimbabwe and South Africa have begun implementing the DMTT provision, which will ensure that multinational cooperation pays at least 15% of corporate tax.



SATURDAY 17 Aug				SUNDAY 18 Aug				MONDAY 19 Aug				TUESDAY 20 Aug				WEDNESDAY 21 Aug				THURSDAY 22 Aug				FRIDAY 23 Aug				SATURDAY 24 Aug				SUNDAY 25 Aug											
5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI	5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00	HABARI

WORLD

Nordic countries join forces to combat spread of Swedish gang crime

STOCKHOLM

NORDIC countries will increase police cooperation and form a hub in Stockholm in an effort to prevent Sweden's serious gang crime problem from spreading to Norway, Finland and Denmark, the Swedish government said on Wednesday.

Swedish gangs have long been among the most violent in Europe but this year 10 Swedes - over half of them minors - have been charged in Denmark with attempted murder or weapons possession, stirring alarm and harsh criticism in Denmark.

Swedish Justice Minister Gunnar Strommer told Reuters that in response, Sweden and Denmark would post police officers in each other's countries.

"An important reason for this is to be able to share information between our countries in real time," Strommer said. "Both to be able to identify at an earlier stage which children and young people are at risk of being drawn into these

criminal networks, and to prevent it."

In addition, a Nordic hub of police officers from Finland, Norway and Denmark would be set up in Stockholm. Norwegian and Finnish officers are already there, and the Danes would join in a few weeks' time.

Swedish gang members have been hired by Danish gangs for violent attacks on rivals and Danish Justice Minister Peter Hummelgaard said there were 25 such instances just since April.

He labelled them "child soldiers" and said Sweden had a "sick" culture of violence not wanted in Denmark.

Poor integration of immigrants

"The reality right now is that not only Denmark but large parts of the Nordics are feeling the consequences of long-standing failed immigration and legal policies in Sweden, and we take that extremely seriously," Hummelgaard told a news conference on Wednesday.

Strommer said Denmark also bore some responsibility for its own gangs but agreed with much of the criticism



Police officers Michael Cjocaru (left) and Rissa Seidou patrol the main square in Rinkeby, Sweden, on Aug 31, 2022. AFP

regarding Sweden's gang problem.

Sweden for several decades had some of the Western world's most generous immigration policies but has tightened them substantially in recent years after a sharp rise in crime largely blamed on poor integration of immigrants.

Sweden has the highest per-capita rate of gun violence in the European Union. Last year 55 people were shot dead in 363 separate incidents in a country of just 10 million people. By comparison, there were just six fatal shootings in the three other Nordic countries combined.

Police say Swedish gangs have in some instances helped troubled teenagers as young as 14 to bust out of youth homes to carry out contract killings in exchange for new clothes, cash and drugs.

Norway has said Swedish criminal networks are now operating in

all parts of the country. The gangs' presence has become more visible, drawn by higher drug prices and less competition, Norwegian police said in a recent letter to the government obtained by Reuters under Norway's freedom of information act.

The EU's open borders have made it easy for criminals to move around the Nordic region, but Denmark tightened surveillance at its Swedish border this summer and began a more active monitoring of passengers arriving by train from Sweden.

Sweden's centre-right government won the 2022 election on a platform of law and order and reduced immigration, and is ruling with support of the far-right Sweden Democrats. The country has taken in over two million people since the start of the millennium; about 20 percent of the population was born abroad.

US VP nominees agree to debate hosted by CBS on Oct. 1

WASHINGTON

U.S. Vice Presidential nominees - Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Ohio Senator J.D. Vance - on Thursday agreed to participate in a debate hosted by CBS News, which is scheduled for Oct. 1.

The debate will be moderated by "CBS Evening News" anchor and managing editor Norah O'Donnell and "Face the Nation" moderator and CBS News chief foreign affairs correspondent Margaret Brennan, according to the network.

On Wednesday, the network announced that Walz agreed to the Oct. 1 date, after proposing four dates for a debate between the two vice presidential nominees.

"See you on October 1, JD," Walz, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, said Wednesday in a post on "X", formerly known as Twitter. Vance, the Republican vice presidential nominee, said in a post on "X" Thursday that he has agreed to the debate. "Not only do I accept the



File photo taken on Aug. 7, 2024 shows Tim Walz speaking during a campaign rally at an airport hangar outside Detroit, Michigan, the United States. U.S. Vice Presidential nominees - Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Ohio Senator J.D. Vance - on Thursday agreed to participate in a debate hosted by CBS News, which is scheduled for Oct. 1. Xinhua

CBS debate on October 1st, I accept the CNN debate on September 18th as well. I look forward to seeing you both!" said

Vance. Former President Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee,

picked Vance as his running mate on July 15, the first day of the Republican National Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

President Joe Biden dropped out of the race on July 21, and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic presidential nominee. Harris quickly consolidated support within the party and won enough delegates to become the Democratic nominee after a five-day online balloting process in early August.

On Aug. 6, Harris announced that she selected Walz as her running mate. On the same day, the two kicked off a five-day campaign tour in key swing states including Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and Nevada.

Last week, ABC announced that Trump and Harris agreed to a presidential debate to be hosted by the network on Sept. 10, setting up the first confrontation between the new opponents on stage prior to the November election.

Xinhua

India, Vietnam discuss enhancing maritime cooperation during 4th 'Maritime Security Dialogue'

NEW DELHI

THE 4th India-Vietnam Maritime Security Dialogue was held on 16 August 2024, in Hanoi, Vietnam, during which the two sides discussed enhancing maritime cooperation and maritime law enforcement, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

"During the dialogue, the two sides discussed the ways to enhance maritime cooperation in furthering a conducive environment for mutual growth and global well-being," the MEA stated

in the release.

The Indian delegation was led by Muanpui Saiawi, Joint Secretary, Disarmament and International Security Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, while the Vietnamese delegation by Trinh Duc Hai, Vice Chairman of the National Boundary Commission.

The two sides reviewed the ongoing cooperation initiatives in the maritime domain and discussed the avenues to cooperate at various international and regional fora for shared objectives.

They agreed to further strengthen

their shared efforts in areas such as Marine Scientific Research, Ocean Economy, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Navy and Coast Guard cooperation and maritime law enforcement.

India and Vietnam have agreed to hold the next round of dialogue in New Delhi at a mutually convenient date, the MEA stated.

Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh visited India earlier this month.

During his meeting with Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi, the two leaders emphasised the current geo-political realities calling for closer cooperation between New Delhi and Hanoi and agreed to further strengthen the Vietnam - India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in all areas.

The two leaders also recognised convergence in their world view and expressed support for a greater voice and role for Global South in international affairs, a joint statement following the Vietnam PM's visit stated.

ANI

Sweden reports first case of contagious mpox strain outside Africa

STOCKHOLM

SWEDEN confirmed on Thursday the first case of mpox Clade I, a viral infection that spreads through close contact and is a more dangerous variant of the mpox disease, Al Jazeera reported.

The Swedish government announced this on Thursday, marking the first case of the variant outside of Africa.

"We have now also during the afternoon had confirmation that we have one case in Sweden of the more grave type of mpox, the one called Clade I," Health and Social Affairs Minister, Jakob Forssmed told a news conference on Thursday.

The World Health Organization on Wednesday declared mpox a global public health emergency for the second time in two years, following an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo that has spread to other countries.

According to Swedish state epidemiologist Magnus Gisslen, the person became infected during a trip to "the part of Africa where there is a major outbreak of mpox clade I" and that they have "received care" after seeking medical assistance in Stockholm, Al Jazeera reported.

"The fact that a patient with mpox is treated in the country does not affect the risk to the general population, a risk that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) currently considers very low," Gisslen added.

The WHO on Wednesday said 548 people have been killed by mpox in DRC this year, and declared a global public health emergency following the outbreak of mpox in several neighbouring countries.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also declared mpox a public health emergency on the continent on Tuesday, as reported by Al Jazeera.

"On top of outbreaks of other mpox clades in DRC and other countries in Africa, it's clear that a coordinated international response is needed to stop these outbreaks and save lives," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a social media post on Wednesday.

ANI

West involved in planning of attack on Russia's borderline Kursk region - Kremlin aide

MOSCOW

UKRAINE'S incursion into Russia's borderline region of Kursk was planned with the participation of NATO and Western special services, and was prompted by Kiev's realization of its imminent collapse, Russian presidential aide Nikolay Patrushev said.

"It was the West who brought the criminal junta to power in Ukraine. NATO countries sent weapons and military instructors to Ukraine, they continue to provide them with intelligence data and they control actions of neo-Nazi groups," he said in an interview with the Izvestia daily. "The operation in the Kursk Region was also planned with the participation of NATO and Western special services."

"This criminal undertaking was prompted by the neo-Nazi Kiev regime's realization of its looming imminent collapse," the official added.

Patrushev dismissed the US Department of State's claims of non-involvement into the matter.

"It's common for the United States to say one thing and do just the opposite. Without their participation and direct endorsement, Kiev would have never dared to set its foot on the Russian territory," he said.

Ukrainian forces started a major attack on the Kursk Region on August 6. Missile attack warnings have been issued repeatedly in the region since then, and the government declared a federal-level emergency there. Most residents were temporarily resettled from the border areas and are now out of harm's way, the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry said. More than 720 people have been evacuated over the past day alone, according to the ministry.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, Kiev has already lost up to 2,640 troops, 37 tanks, 32 armored personnel carriers since the beginning of the hostilities on the Kursk direction. The operation on elimination of Ukrainian troops continues.



China's Fujian turns waste plastic bottles into wealth, contributes to green development

MOST people would throw plastic bottles into recycling bins after drinking bottled water. Where do the recycled bottles go?

In Jinjiang, Quanzhou, southeast China's Fujian province, a plastic bottle embarked on a green and low-carbon journey.

Early in the morning, a 10-meter-long trailer stopped at a factory entrance of Jinjiang Gangyi Fibre Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of Koyee Corporation, loaded with compressed "bottle bricks" made from discarded plastic bottles.

"We receive 200 tons of these rectangular bricks every day, each of which is 1.5 meters long, with a width and height of nearly one meter,"

said Cai Jinzhong, general manager of Koyee Corporation.

Later, these bottle bricks were taken to a workshop by transport vehicles and then unpacked. On the production line, a label peeling machine squeezed and rubbed the bottles to remove the labels, and then the bottles entered a sorting machine. The machine automatically sorted them into blue, white, green and miscellaneous colors. Afterward, together with their caps, they were sent to a high-speed rotating crusher and cut into pieces.

Next, the pieces entered a cleaning machine for washing, disinfection, and drying. Interestingly, during the

cleaning process, the pieces were automatically separated into bottle body fragments and bottle cap fragments based on the density difference. The bottle body fragments then became the major raw material for the company's products.

"In the past, all of this was done manually, which consumed a lot of time, energy and water," said Cai. At that time, turning one ton of bottles into fragments required 1.5 tons of fresh water, 270 kilowatt-hours of electricity, and 75 workers, Cai explained.

"There were many small, scattered, and disorganized enterprises at the beginning, which managed to lower their

cost by avoiding wastewater treatment," Cai noted.

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of Fujian province in reforming the management system for environmental protection, these enterprises with poor management and pollution have been rectified.

"Many non-compliant enterprises have been shut down, and the remaining ones were required to focus more on environmental protection. The reform in environmental protection is driving the progress of the entire industry," said Cai.

As she spoke, the bottle fragments were sent to another workshop, where they were further dried in a gi-

gantic rotary blower, then heated and extruded into molten form. They were then fed into a spinning machine, turning into transparent fibers as thin as fishing lines. After stretching, curling, and shaping processes, they were finally cut into polyester staple fibers of different lengths as required.

This type of recycled fiber is supplied to other enterprises for producing non-woven fabrics used in shoes, automotive interiors, and other applications, and has gained popularity among many well-known brands.

The "new fashion" of garbage sorting, a simple task in daily life, has magically transformed waste plastic bottles

into bundles of fibers, joining the green production cycle and returning to people's lives.

"Such recycling techniques allow every part of a plastic bottle to be reused. For instance, bottle caps can be sold to other companies and then processed into safety nets, and labels can also be processed into slipper filling material," said Cai.

Over 20 years ago, Cai and her husband founded the company, which initially focused on producing non-woven fabrics for shoes. Later, they began to produce recycled fibers using bottle fragments as raw materials. In 2016, they introduced the bottle cleaning line to make bottle fragments, extending

their business to the upper stream of the industrial chain.

The company has become a single champion enterprise of China's manufacturing industry in terms of non-woven fabrics for shoes. Cai said that these achievements were closely associated with China's reform and opening up.

Technological progress has injected new impetus into Koyee Corporation. For instance, Jinjiang Gangyi Fibre Co., Ltd. has established research cooperation with universities and institutions to develop new products and techniques. After three technological upgrades, the company has achieved automation in its bottle cleaning line

People's Daily

Tensions remain high as Gaza death toll surpasses 40,000

BEIJING

THE Palestinian death toll from Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip since the outbreak of the current round of Israeli-Hamas conflict began on Oct. 7 has surpassed 40,000, Gaza-based health authorities confirmed on Thursday.

With an additional 40 people killed over the past 24 hours, the death toll in Gaza has risen to 40,005.

The tragic milestone comes as the latest round of conflict between Israel and Hamas has entered its 10th month, while the humanitarian situation in the coastal enclave has been worsening.

So far, about 305 square kilometers, or nearly 84 percent of the Gaza Strip, have been placed under evacuation orders by the Israeli military, according to an update released by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on Monday.

Since July 4, the UN Human Rights Office has recorded 21 strikes against schools serving as shelters in the Strip, which have resulted in at least 274 fatalities, including women and children, the update said.

Water, food and fuel supplies in Gaza are critically low, while diseases like Hepatitis A continue to spread across the strip, according to the UN office. "Two out of every three buildings in Gaza are damaged or destroyed," Philippe Lazzarini, commissioner-general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, said on the social media platform X.

"These include people's homes, schools, markets, and places of worship. The once closely-knit society and kinship are being torn apart day by day, under our



People take part in a protest against the assassination of Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh in the West Bank city of Hebron, July 31, 2024. Xinhua

watch." There is also growing fear across the Middle East that the conflict could spill over and escalate into a full-scale regional war.

Iran and its allies vowed revenge for the killings of Hamas Politburo chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and Hezbollah senior military commander Fouad Shokor in Beirut, which both occurred in late July. In the face of potential retaliatory strikes from Iran and its allies, Israel is monitoring the situation "with all capabilities," Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari said Monday.

"We are at the highest state of readiness in both offense and defense." Amid heightened regional tensions, mediators of the fragile Gaza ceasefire talks, including Qatar, Egypt and the United States,

urged Israel and Hamas on Aug. 8 not to delay finalizing a ceasefire agreement. Israel is expected to send a delegation to the latest round of talks on Thursday, while Hamas has called for the implementation of previously approved plans rather than engaging in further negotiations or introducing new proposals.

Notably, days before the scheduled ceasefire talks in Qatar, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken approved a 20-billion-U.S. dollar sale of fighter jets and other military equipment to Israel, boosting the country's military capability.

Addressing the UN Security Council earlier this month, Dai Bing, charge d'affaires of China's Permanent Mission to the UN, called on all parties to respond to the "overwhelming consensus of the interna-

tional community" and to jointly promote the "full and effective" implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions to achieve an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, to put an end to the humanitarian catastrophe and to contain the spillover of the conflict.

On Monday, the leaders of France, Germany and Britain issued a joint statement calling for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and the delivery and distribution of aid to the people of Gaza.

Despite U.S. President Joe Biden's claim on Tuesday that an Iranian attack on Israel could be averted if Israel and Hamas manage to reach a ceasefire deal, the outcome of Thursday's negotiations - dubbed by many as the "last chance" for a truce - remains uncertain.

World leaders including Macron, Putin, Meloni greet India on its Independence Day

NEW DELHI

AS India celebrated its 78th Independence Day on Thursday, leaders from across the globe wished India on the occasion and stressed building even stronger ties with New Delhi in the coming years.

French President Emmanuel Macron was one of the first leaders to wish on the occasion and expressed his eagerness to work with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to achieve the ambitious goals set for the strategic partnership between the two nations.

Macron shared a picture on X and wrote, "Congratulations to the Indian people on your 78th Independence Day!"

"I remember your warm welcome during my visit to India in January and look forward to working with my friend @NarendraModi on achieving the ambitious goals we have set for our strategic partnership," he added.

The Prime Minister thanked his "good friend" Macron for his wishes and said they will keep working together to further global good.

"I thank my good friend, President @EmmanuelMacron for the wishes on our Independence Day. I too fondly recall not only his India visit but also our various interactions, which have added great strength to the India-France partnership. We will keep working together to further global good," PM Modi stated.

Russian President Vladimir Putin extended greetings to India stating that Moscow attaches great importance to the relations of a particularly privileged strategic partnership with New Delhi and intends to further develop ties.

"Over 77 years of independent development, your country has achieved generally recognised success in the socio-economic, scientific-technical and many other spheres, and has earned high authority on the world stage," Putin said in a statement addressed to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni extended her greetings to all Indians on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day and affirmed that India-Italy strategic partnership is an important pillar for the future. ANI

Younger generation wows world with confident voice for China

BEIJING

"TRYING to be higher, faster and stronger is the pursuit of each athlete. I think it should also be the pursuit of all young people," said Paris Olympics gold medalist Deng Yawen.

Deng, 18, won gold in the women's BMX Freestyle competition on July 31. She briefly shared her story on the sidelines of the ongoing 2024 World Youth Development Forum that opened in Beijing earlier this week.

Her victory marked a milestone for China's freestyle BMX team, which had not even qualified for the Tokyo Olympics.

At the award ceremony in Paris, an interesting shot was captured of Deng wearing a unique hair clasp and showing it to the camera. The dangling ornament, a common accessory for ancient Chinese ladies, is now enjoying a resurgence in popularity among many young Chinese.

This summer, young Chinese athletes like Deng impressed the world, not only with their outstanding performances but also with their youthful spirit, confident demeanor and



Deng Yawen, an 18-year-old gold medalist of Cycling BMX Freestyle at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, speaks during the opening ceremony of the 2024 World Youth Development Forum in Beijing, Aug. 12, 2024. Xinhua

open-minded personality.

On the same day when Deng stepped onto the highest podium, young Chinese swimmer Pan Zhanle wowed the world by setting a new world record as he stormed to victory in the men's 100m freestyle, an event previously dominated by Western swimmers.

Four days later, Pan, just turning 20, broke his own record and anchored China to victory in the men's 4x100m medley relay final. The four young swimmers pulled off a stunning triumph over the United States that had remained top for about four decades.

In response to disbelief from some Westerners, Pan said he hopes to crash prejudice with competition results.

Pan said he is not worried about his record being broken someday. "There must be someone first to break the stereotype

that Asians cannot be 'flying fish'," he said in an interview.

Among the 40 gold medals the Chinese team clinched in Paris, more than a half were pocketed by athletes born after 2000. The young faces, who caught attention both on and off the field, presented a younger, fresher China to the world.

An article published on the Hong Kong-based Yazhou Zhoukan this week says young Chinese athletes are "more international" than their predecessors, speaking English fluently with foreign media outlets and have "more comprehensive knowledge structures."

"Young Chinese born in and after 2000 have a world view that is totally different from older generations, which allows them to blaze new ways and see different scenery on their path towards the gold medal of their own lives," the article reads.

China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 and surpassed Japan to become the world's second-largest economy in 2010. The post-2000s generation is a witness of China's rise in infrastructure and social governance and is naturally proud of their country.

"When I saw the national flag raised and national anthem played, I came to realize that my confidence comes from the strength of our country," Deng said after the award ceremony.

China's development, particularly its modernization efforts, also received positive evaluations from foreign participants at the World Youth Development Forum.

Dejan Ilioski, president of the European Youth Association, had an opportunity to tour southwest China's Chongqing Municipality this week and visited some EV companies there.

"I'm so excited and impressed to learn from China, from its innovation technologies and entrepreneurship," Ilioski said to Xinhua.

In China, there is a saying that a nation will be strong only when its young people are strong, and this maxim has struck a chord with both the government and public.

In 2017, China released a youth development plan for 2016-2025, the first state-level plan specifically for youth development. Under the policy guidance, measures have been taken to address concerns of young people, from employment and entrepreneurship to marriage and elderly care.

Xinhua

Abbas says recognition of unified Palestine key to peace

ANKARA

WITHOUT the international recognition of a unified Palestine, there won't be peace, solidarity and prosperity in the region, said Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday during his visit to Türkiye's Ankara.

After meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday, the Palestinian president made a speech in the Turkish parliament for the first time since the Gaza conflict erupted in October last year.

During the speech, he noted that the international society should not remain silent over the conflict in Gaza. He pointed out that the U.S. had used its veto power three times in the UN Security Council to block resolutions concerning Gaza, and that the resolutions passed regarding the Palestinian issue had not been implemented.

The Palestinian president said the recognition of the state of Palestine is the key to the peace, solidarity and prosperity of the region. Unless Palestinian people achieve national unity, it could be difficult to gain the final victory, he added.

Currently the Palestinian state is recognized by 145 UN member states but it is still an observer of UN, instead of membership.

During his speech, the Palestinian president announced that he would



go to Gaza, saying his life is no more valuable than the children there.

Abbas's visit to Ankara came as the Palestinian death toll in Gaza from the ongoing Israeli attacks has surpassed 40,000. There is also a growing concern over a potential regional escalation following the assassination of former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. The Iranian government has repeatedly vowed that it would retaliate Israel which it accused of carrying out the assassination.

Xinhua

Sensational rural football tournament boosts county-level tourism in China

THE final competition of China's Village Super League (VSL), an amateur football tournament dubbed "Cun Chao" by Chinese netizens, for this year was held in Rongjiang county, southwest China's Guizhou province on July 20, following a pre-game show that demonstrated the rich cultural heritage of local ethnic minorities.

When the game started, players skillfully passed the ball, with spectators' cheers growing louder as it neared the goal. The excitement was further amplified by the rhythmic beating of drums.

In the stands, local residents offered free delicacies such as pickled fish and rice noodle rolls. During halftime, the audience appreciated the traditional singing and dance performances of the Dong ethnic group.

lago team defeated the Dongmen village team 5-0 to win the championship.

"I initially planned to watch for just one evening, but now I just can't get enough," said a tourist surnamed Wu from east China's Jiangsu province, who was very much captivated by the enchanting atmosphere.

The VSL has become a sensation in China over the recent years, with its name drawing inspiration from the Premier League and Chinese Super League. Over the past year, VSL-related topics garnered more than 10 billion views on the internet, leading to a significant increase in tourist visits and tourism revenue in Rongjiang county.

Innovation is what drives the football tournament from making its mark to becoming a perpetual sensation. This summer, Rongjiang county

hosted a football competition for middle school and primary school students across China, to facilitate football exchanges between amateur teams and school students, and unleash the vitality of summer tourism.

As Wu stepped out of the stadium after the game, she was soon captured by food stalls emanating an enticing aroma. At a stall selling rice noodle rolls, she indulged herself.

"Here I can watch the games, appreciate intangible cultural heritage, and savor delicious food. County-level tourism destinations are becoming more and more appealing," said Wu.

"Rongjiang county has six food zones, and since the VSL gained popularity, a total of 216 new dining businesses were set up in the county, significantly boosting the night

economy," said Yang Qiong, head of Rongjiang's bureau of culture, sports, radio, television and tourism.

Rongjiang county has been actively exploring the cultural and tourism value and the industrial potential of the VSL, Yang noted. According to her, the football tournament helped generate night consumption of 586 million yuan (\$81.61 million) in 2023, a year-on-year growth of 253.2 percent.

Accommodation is also booming in Rongjiang county. "Local residents were encouraged to accommodate tourists in line with their capabilities. Besides, we have built RV parks and camping sites to enhance our reception capacity," said Yang.

The county has strived to meet the accommodation needs of tourists through different channels. So far,

113 new accommodation businesses have been set up across the county, with the number of beds increasing from 5,958 to 10,190. The Guizhou VSL hotel also officially opened earlier this year after three years of construction.

"We are targeting the middle- and high-end market, striving to improve our reception capacity to attract more tourists by strengthening our weak points in accommodation," said Peng Jinyan, chairman of the Guizhou VSL hotel. The hotel has also developed study tours and intangible cultural heritage programs to expand the customer base, Peng added.

To turn the popularity of the football tournament into economic and social benefits, Rongjiang county has launched multiple tourism routes centered around the

VSL, local scenic spots, intangible cultural heritage and exquisite food to promote the integrated development of agriculture, culture, sports, tourism, and commerce," said Yang.

Leveraging rural tourism roads, the county has strengthened cooperation with surrounding scenic areas such as Xijiang township, Zhaoxing township, and Libo county to promote tourism development of the whole region.

In Rongjiang, friendly football matches of different types are still ongoing. Wu has decided to stay in the county and started livestreaming, becoming an envoy of VSL and the county. "I want to stay for a while longer and capture more beautiful moments through my camera," Wu said.

People's Daily



With AI, the inheritance of traditional culture can overcome the limitations of space and geography, which enables a wider and more high-quality spread of traditional crafts that could only be passed on orally in the past



Young Africans' midfielder, Ivorian Pacome Zouzou. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YASC

Yanga midfielder becomes key performer in Premier League and CAF Champions League

By Correspondent Cheji Bakari, Tanga

SOCCER is a game that thrives in strategy, skill, and teamwork. While the strikers often steal the spotlight with their goals and the defenders guard the net with unwavering determination, midfielders are the performers who hold the key to success on the pitch.

Acting as the link between defense and attack, these versatile players are the engine that drives the team forward, dictating the tempo of the game, and orchestrating play with their precise passing and intelligent decision-making.

In Tanzania's soccer landscape, soccer fans have been witnessing all 16 teams in the Premier League battling to outsmart each other - when it comes to recruiting talented players with what it takes to have the clubs do well.

Simba SC boast Fabrice Ngoma, Edwin Balua, and Joshua Mutale, whereas Young Africans' midfield is marshaled by, among others, Pacome Zouzou, Stephane Aziz Ki, Maxi Nzengeli, and Khalid Aucho. Azam FC take pride in roping in Feisal Salum 'Fei Toto', Ever Meza, and many more.

The Ivorian Zouzou, who wears jersey number 25 at Young Africans, highlights the focus on the midfielders. He originates from a country found in the western part of Africa.

Zouzou has, for the two seasons he has featured in the top flight, proved he is the most valuable player and potential at Young Africans.

He has what it takes to send his side's fanatics into ecstasy when he torments opponent's defenses in tightly contested games in Tanzania's soccer landscape.

Zouzou is, however, not the first prominent midfielder to have extensively stolen the limelight in Tanzania and beyond the East African territory, as the country had several prominent midfielders.

They are among others Jonas Mkude - who is now a Young Africans' midfielder and is regularly used as a substitute. The midfielder was prominent while turning out for Simba SC.

The list also has James Kotei (Simba SC), Thabani Kamusoko, Papy Tshishimbi (Young Africans), Himid Mao (Azam FC), and Mudathir Yahya (Singida United).

Zouzou's uniqueness and magical skills have made fans rate him as a game-changer, a pretty versatile performer who can play as a dribbling winger, goalscoring central attacking midfielder, creative playmaker, and a box-to-box midfielder - the kinds of skills that are so hard for many players to master.

In several games, the Ivorian footballer has turned out for his outfit and has delighted the squad's supporters.

When Young Africans met Egypt's Al Ahly in the 2023/24 CAF Champions League clash at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam and held the Egyptian side to a 1-1 draw, he showcased a stellar showing and won the followers' hearts.

Even though Al Ahly is one of the highly respected teams in Africa that has seriously invested in football by signing many prominent players, the Ivorian baller tormented the continental football giants and he netted a goal for Young Africans, putting the club in a good position.

The midfielder once again put his talent to show when Young Africans locked horns with long-time rival, Simba SC, in the 2024/25 TFF Community Shield mini-tournament second semi-final. Young Africans won 1-0 in the derby.

Even though the clash was highly competitive, Zouzou displayed eye-catching dribbling and mesmerizing footwork, outsmarting Simba defenders and they could hardly keep up with his swift movements.

His passes were accurate, given the player threaded them through tight spaces, breaking down the opponent's defense and creating many scoring opportunities.

The derby - a tough, end-to-end clash, witnessed the performer holding the key that unlocked Simba given he was involved in a brilliant build-up with fellow midfielder Max Nzengeli.

Zouzou found Zimbabwean forward Prince Dube with a great pass - the goal-getter executed a clever assist to Nzengeli and the Congolese got past a Simba defender and rifled past onrushing Guinean keeper Mousa Camara's legs.

The Ivorian player's versatility, strategic positioning, and exceptional skills ultimately made him a hero in the match.

Simba coach Davids confident ahead of new season, hails Lionel Ateba as key addition

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA SC head coach Fadlu Davids has expressed optimism about his team's prospects for the upcoming season, reassuring fans that the squad is well-prepared for both the Tanzanian Premier League and international competitions.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam, Davids highlighted the recent signing of striker Lionel Ateba (pictured) as a crucial addition that will bolster Simba's attacking force.

"I have no doubt that our team will perform exceptionally well this season," Davids stated. "We're preparing in a way that will not only make us competitive but also provide entertainment for our fans. The arrival of Lionel Ateba, as requested, will add a sharp edge to our striking force, and I ask our fans to expect great things when the league starts."

Davids also emphasized the importance of continuing preparations and fine-tuning



the squad to achieve the desired level of play.

"We're working hard, and I believe that in a short time, we'll be where I want us to be. I want a fast-paced and effective style of play," he added.

The coach praised the quality of his players, noting that Ateba's arrival provides more options for his starting lineup depending on the demands of each game.

"I've assessed each player's strengths, and my focus now is on ensuring that they fully grasp our systems and methods. We're progressing well in that regard," he said.

Despite not having won the league title in the past three

seasons, Davids expressed confidence that Simba will bring joy back to its supporters.

"I'm not worried about our team's performance; I know we'll restore the happiness of our fans, who have missed out on the league championship for three consecutive seasons," he stated.

As Simba navigate these roster changes, the club is also gearing up for the start of the Premier League. The Msimbazi Street-based side will kick off their campaign tomorrow against Tabora United FC at the newly designated KMC Complex Stadium.

This match is highly anticipated as Simba look to make a

strong start to the season and reclaim the league title after finishing third last year.

Following the league opener, Simba will face Fountain Gate FC on August 25, also at the KMC Complex, before traveling to Sokoine Stadium in Mbeya for a clash with Tanzania Prisons on October 22.

The early fixtures also include a potentially tricky encounter with Azam FC in the fourth round, a match that could have significant implications for Simba's title ambitions.

In addition to their domestic league pursuits, Simba are preparing for the CAF Confederation Cup, where they will face either Zanzibar's Uhamiaji FC or Al Ahly Tripoli of Libya in the preliminary second-round match.

As the club continues to make strategic moves both on and off the pitch, the upcoming season promises to be a crucial one for Simba as they aim to achieve success on multiple fronts.



Youth soccer players are seen training barefoot on Thursday at the Jakaya Kikwete Sports Park in Dar es Salaam, showcasing their passion and dedication to the sport. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Simba SC: Balancing expectations amid growing pressure

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC's dominance in Tanzania's top-tier league has become a recurring theme, casting a long shadow over rivals Young Africans and Azam FC. However, while Simba has consistently contended for titles, concerns are growing about the club's progress and pace.

Critics argue that Simba's approach lacks the urgency expected of a top-tier club. Though the team has undergone significant squad changes and requires time for the players to gel, the patience of fans is wearing thin.

The recent three-year title drought has only heightened expectations, leading to increased scrutiny from supporters.

Traditionally, elite clubs aim for multiple trophies. Yet, Simba's focus seems to be on player integration, citing the need for time as justification for recent performances. While building team chemistry is essential, many believe this approach is more suited to smaller clubs than a dominant force like Simba.

Simba's recent performances

have left fans divided. A narrow 1-0 defeat to arch-rivals Young Africans in the Community Shield semi-finals showed potential improvement. However, a lackluster display in the third-place playoff against Coastal Union, despite securing a 1-0 victory, has raised serious concerns about the team's readiness for the upcoming season.

Inconsistency has been a major issue for Simba. Flashes of brilliance, like those seen against Young Africans, have been overshadowed by sub-par performances like the one against Coastal Union. This unpredictability has left fans frustrated and longing for more consistency from their team.

Simba's squad still needs reinforcement, particularly in attacking and creative midfield positions. A longer pre-season could also help improve team cohesion and performance.

The Community Shield highlighted areas where Simba needs improvement. While the match against Young Africans offered hope, the game against Coastal Union was a stark reminder of the challenges ahead.

Simba's path to winning the league title looks increasingly difficult, with rivals Young Af-

ricans and Azam significantly strengthening their squads.

Young Africans, in particular, have retained key players like Stephane Aziz Ki, Khalid Aucho, and Djigui Diarra, while adding high-profile signings such as Prince Dube, Chadrack Boka, and Clatous Chama. This formidable lineup makes them a serious threat to Simba's title aspirations. Azam FC, on the other hand, has taken a bold step by scouting talent from South America, signaling their intent to compete fiercely for the championship.

Simba will need to be at their best to overcome these challenges. Defensive solidity will rely heavily on center-back Chamou Karaboue and Kelvin Kijiri, who has emerged as a capable replacement for Shomari Kapombe. Goalkeeper Moussa Camara provides a strong foundation, but the team must capitalize on his stability.

Matches between Simba and Young Africans have become increasingly predictable, with the better team often emerging victorious. Young Africans' current form is particularly impressive, and Simba will need to match their intensity.

Key to Simba's success will

be the rapid integration of new signings like Jean Charles Ahoua, whose creativity is crucial to the team's attacking play. Joshua Mutale's impact on the wing also needs to improve, as his final ball accuracy remains inconsistent.

The pressure is on Simba to deliver results from the start of the new season. With lofty ambitions for both domestic and continental success, the club cannot afford to delay building a championship-winning squad.

The early introduction of left winger Mutale as a key attacking piece underscores the urgency within the club.

Fans are demanding immediate results and expect the recent changes, including the appointment of coach Fadlu Davids and new signings, to yield positive outcomes.

Simba's success will hinge on strong early performances and a sustained challenge in the CAF Confederations Cup.

As Simba embarks on this journey, the passionate fanbase will continue to provide unwavering support. However, the team must convert this backing into tangible results on the pitch.

Mauricio Pochettino's USA move is a win-win scenario

By Matt Law

MAURICIO Pochettino has agreed to become the new head coach of the United States national team, ruling him out of the race to be Gareth Southgate's permanent successor at England.

Former Chelsea head coach Pochettino is set to be formally appointed by the USA to lead the nation into the 2026 World Cup in America, Canada and Mexico.

It represents a huge coup for the US and a new challenge for Pochettino, who has never managed an international team before.

Pochettino has been in negotiations with US technical director Matt Crocker, whom he worked with at Southampton, and became the overwhelming choice for the role after Jurgen Klopp made it clear he was not interested in an instant return to coaching.

The news of Pochettino's intended appointment has been welcomed in America and the fact he is a Spanish speaker makes it a particularly popular move among the country's Latino population.

Pochettino had been considered one of the leading candidates to permanently succeed Southgate as England manager, but the Football Association have put Lee Carsley in interim charge for September's Nations League games.

Barring any last-minute hitch, Pochettino will now be unavailable to the FA should they appoint a permanent manager other than Carsley.

The United States will not have to pay any compensation to Chelsea. The terms of Pochettino's exit dictated that only a top-six Premier League club would have to pay a £5 million fee to appoint him within six months of his Stamford Bridge departure.

It is anticipated that Pochettino will be joined in the US role by his former Chelsea staff of assistant Jesús Pérez, coach Miguel D'Agostino, goalkeeping coach Toni Jiménez and son Sebastiano.

The US will now have two former Chelsea coaches in charge of their national teams after Emma Hayes took charge of the women's team.

England fans will be wondering why Mauricio Pochettino has not held out to ensure he would not get the permanent gig to replace Gareth Southgate. Maybe he knows which way the wind is blowing, or maybe the US job is more attractive than many will initially think.

Pochettino's appointment is a huge coup for the US and he will be working with technical director Matt Crocker, whom he knows from his Southampton, which immediately puts the Argentine in a powerful position.

Add into the mix that, as co-hosts, the US do not have to qualify for the 2026 World Cup, which gives Pochettino two years to prepare for the tournament with a squad that has underperformed recently.

There will, of course, be extra pressure not to flop on home soil, but interest levels in football are expected to go through the roof in the US when the world's best players arrive.

Pochettino should be able to increase standards quickly and restore a feel-good factor with his infectious personality. As a Spanish speaker, he will likely get the backing of the huge Latino population in America.

While the basic salary of the US coach might not be astronomical by Premier League standards, it is thought that Pochettino will be able to earn big money from sponsorships and endorsements before and during the World Cup, should he wish.

Pochettino has never managed an international team, which adds a layer of intrigue to the appointment, but he should be able to win over the US press pretty easily and his man-management skills will quickly work on his players.

And let's face it, international football management is a part-time job on full-time money, which is a win-win in anybody's book.

THE TELEGRAPH

Soccer heading for 'point of saturation' as more games added to calendar, says Premier League chief

LONDON

SOCCER will reach saturation point if more matches are added to the calendar, the head of the Premier League said Wednesday.

England's top league is part of a legal challenge against FIFA, alongside other domestic competitions in Europe and player unions. They argue the game's global governing body has not consulted with them in any meaningful way on the sport's calendar and have been urging a rethink on what they claimed was an "inherently abusive" decision-making process, including expanding the men's World Cup and Club World Cup.

Richard Masters, the Premier League's chief executive, believes too much soccer risks turning people off.

"It's a really difficult thing to predict when saturation takes hold," said Masters, speaking ahead of the new Premier League season starting Friday.

"Obviously, we have lots of football. The Premier League is part of it. It's part of the picture, our clubs participate in multiple competitions, and we're adding to that calendar, so it should be a concern. I think that we will reach a point of saturation, yes."

AP

Five huge questions ahead of the new English Premier League season

By Alex Mott

IT has been just over 12 weeks since the end of the 2023/24 campaign but with EURO 2024 and the Paris Olympics to fill the time, this new Premier League season has come around quicker than usual.

But what are the main questions hanging over this new campaign ahead of kick off? Let's find out.

***Is this the year Arsenal finally do it?**

They took it to the final day last season but we're backing Arsenal to go one better this time out.

Mikel Arteta's side just fell short in 2023/24, eventually cursing their dropped points over Christmas and a defeat to Aston Villa at the Emirates in April.

This season though, expect the north London side to have learned from last term and to push Manchester City even harder.

The addition of Riccardo Calafiori should add to their already impressive backline and don't be surprised if another midfielder comes in before the end of the window.

If that does happen, then Arsenal are the best-placed side to end City's domination of the top flight.

And if City are as strong as they have been in the last four seasons, we will have another almighty title tussle on our

hands.

***What does the season hold for Manchester United?**

Despite signing a new contract over the summer, there remains a great deal of uncertainty about Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag's Old Trafford future.

Winning the FA Cup last season appeared to give the Dutch coach a stay of execution, after new owners INEOS looked at their replacement options and evidently came up short.

The likes of Thomas Tuchel, Mauricio Pochettino and Kieran McKenna were all linked with the post but eventually, majority shareholder Sir Jim Ratcliffe flew to meet Ten Hag on holiday in Ibiza and inform the former Ajax boss he would be remain in charge of United.

For how long remains to be seen though, and it's fair to say that pre-season hasn't gone entirely according to plan either.

Big money arrival Lenno Yorl played all of one friendly game before getting injured, while Joshua Zirkzee arrived from Bologna but is yet to make his debut after he was an unused sub in the Community Shield.

Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui both joined from Bayern Munich this week and will bolster a backline that conceded the most shots in the Premier League



Head Coach Enzo Maresca of Chelsea in action during the pre-season friendly match between Chelsea and FC Internazionale at Stamford Bridge. (Agencies)

last season.

The club's hierarchy has also been revamped over the summer, and there will be pressure on Ten Hag and his team to perform after a disappointing 8th-place finish in 2023/24.

Unless United fly out of the blocks in the opening weeks, things could be tough for Ten Hag.

***Where does the Chelsea project go from here?** It has been a genuinely remarkable summer at Stamford Bridge.

Pedro Neto's signing from Wolves a week before the start of the season was Chelsea's 35th under Todd Boehly - 35 signings ago for Manchester City was Kyle Walker, for Liverpool it was Christian Benteke.

The term "squad building" perhaps has a different meaning at Cobham than elsewhere, with the Blues now having a grand total of 42 senior players to pick from, including eight goalkeepers.

What the grand plan

is at Chelsea is really anyone's guess with great players like Roméo Lavia, Noni Madueke and Levi Colwill all unsure of their role in the team heading into this term.

Boehly and his American cohorts see themselves as football 'disruptors' ready to shake up the Premier League with new ideas and out-of-the-box thinking.

It's difficult not to think they might be disrupting their chances of Champions League football again this term.

***Has West Ham's transfer business made them an unlikely top four challenger?**

Eight new arrivals at a sum of almost £130m - this summer West Ham have meant business... and lots of it.

Former Wolves, Real Madrid and Spain boss Julen Lopetegui has come in to replace David Moyes and has immediately gone about rejuvenating what was already a decent squad.

The Hammers finished

ninth last term but must surely have a genuine shot at the top six, and perhaps even the top four after this summer's recruitment. Crysencio Summerville, the best player in the Championship last term, has joined from Leeds and will turbocharge the Irons' attack. The same could also be said for Borussia Dortmund striker Niclas Füllkrug, who is a definite upgrade on Michail Antonio.

Last season's defence meanwhile, which was the fourth-worst in the Premier League, has had a total revamp with Aaron Wan-Bissaka, Jean-Clair Todibo and Max Kilman all coming in and likely to start.

It really could be the start of something exciting in east London.

***Are the promoted teams going straight back down?**

For the first time since 1997/98, all three promoted teams went straight back down last term.

In truth, Luton, Burnley and Sheffield United never really looked like staying in the division, but what about this season's trio? Leicester, Ipswich and Southampton will be back in the Premier League and all three have varying chances of staying afloat.

Leicester are arguably the best-equipped to avoid relegation with Steve Cooper at the helm and the likes of Ricardo Pereira and Wilfred Ndidi still in the

squad, and Facundo Buonanotte and Bobby De Cordova-Reid joining over the summer.

But after a tough pre-season, the Foxes face a tough opening few weeks, having to face Tottenham, Crystal Palace, Aston Villa and Arsenal, with the cloud of Profit and Sustainability Rules also hanging over them.

Ipswich meanwhile are arguably the most exciting team to come up with McKenna at the helm, a coach likely to be in charge of one of the top six sides by the end of next year.

The Tractor Boys haven't made a whole host of eye-catching signings so far, but Chelsea youth star Omari Hutchinson has joined on a permanent deal and will be the one to watch in East Anglia.

And finally, it's Russell Martin's Southampton who are favourites to go straight back down, with Saints arguably a year ahead of where they should be under their young coach.

The south coast side needed the goals of Adam Armstrong to get back into the top flight and thankfully the former Blackburn man has remained at St Mary's.

Saints have a slightly easier time of it in the opening weeks, facing Nottingham Forest, Ipswich and Bournemouth before the end of September.

ONEFOOTBALL

Matthijs de Ligt signing is proof Erik ten Hag is all-in on his Dutch gamble

By Richard Jolly

"MANCHESTER is red," read the message on a football club's social-media account; though not from the Manchester club who play in red. It was a cheeky point made by Ajax, surveying Manchester United's recruitment drive and the addition of two of their alumni, Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui, on the same day. It means that, in the former Ajax manager Erik ten Hag's reign, United have now spent around a quarter of a billion pounds on his Ajax players.

Not that all the proceeds have gone to Amsterdam: De Ligt and Mazraoui arrived from Bayern Munich, just as Andre Onana had taken the long route from the Netherlands, via a one-season stay at Internazionale. But Ajax cashed in to the tune of £56m for Lisandro Martinez and, ridiculously, £86m for Antony.

De Ligt and Mazraoui, meanwhile, could debut for United against Fulham along with Joshua Zirkzee, a compatriot of the centre-back and the United manager. There is a theme: 11 of Ten Hag's 20 signings for the club have played in the Netherlands, though the Eredivisie only stands sixth in Uefa's rankings. They include the non-scoring Wout Weghorst - two goals in 31 games - and the invariably injured Tyrell Malacia. They include Mason Mount, from his

loan spell at Vitesse Arnhem, and Christian Eriksen, though he left Ajax nine years before joining United. They include Sofyan Amrabat, who played for Ten Hag at Utrecht. If Ten Hag had got his way in 2022, they would have included Frenkie de Jong, too.

If New York was once called New Amsterdam, perhaps that tag should now be applied to Manchester. And yet Ten Hag, in a defence of his spending, insisted signings were not driven by nepotism and that there was widespread agreement about them.

"Not for favouritism," he said. "First of all, it is club decisions, none of them is only my decision. It is always backed or even brought up through the scouting, recruitment, technical director or sporting director. It is a decision made by more than one. But, some, you know also players and personalities and it has to fit also in the finance."

There could seem a peculiarity that while United's old regime of chief executive Richard Arnold and football director John Murtough let Ten Hag have his way, their new powerbrokers appear to have followed suit. Enter co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe, CEO Omar Berrada, sporting director Dan Ashworth and technical director Jason Wilcox, none of them from the Netherlands, and all intent on bringing change and yet United have carried on going Dutch. Ten Hag's

revamped backroom staff is full of Dutchmen: Ruud van Nistelrooy, Rene Hack, Jelle ten Rouwelaar.

Nevertheless - this year anyway - Ten Hag may have been right to reference finance. Martinez may represent his best buy to date, but Antony is arguably the worst in United's history, given the exorbitant price and his negligible output. Yet this summer, United look to have got more value for money. De Ligt is the cheaper of the centre-backs they have signed and Mazraoui arrives for less than United recouped for Aaron-Wan Bissaka, who joined West Ham for £15m. He cost €15m (£12.8m) of a €60m double deal.

The Moroccan's versatility and ability to play left-back forms part of his appeal. "In English football there is always pressure on the ball and one of his key attributes

is that it's very difficult to put him under pressure," said Ten Hag. It is harder to say the same of Wan-Bissaka, given his limitations in possession.

United have struck a cheaper deal for De Ligt, meanwhile, than his two previous clubs did: an initial €45m compared to the €75m Juventus paid and the €67m Bayern Munich forked out. It gives him a remarkable pedigree: he will become the first footballer ever to play for all of Ajax, Juventus, Bayern and United, arguably the four biggest clubs in their respective countries.

Yet the diminishing prices tell a tale: the defender's fortunes have declined since Ten Hag made him Ajax's youngest captain at 18 and he skipped them to a Champions League semi-final. "He told me right from the start: 'You are an example for the

team, and I want you to be captain.' I would never have expected that at that moment, but it was such a great honour," De Ligt said.

They have been separated for five years: a time in which De Ligt was expected to become one of the world's outstanding centre-backs. Instead, he spent the summer being kept out of the Netherlands team by Stefan de Vrij. De Ligt described Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini as "defensive masters"; he was supposed to be their successor at Juventus, but was sold. For some of last season, he was Bayern's third-choice centre-back and was allowed to leave by a manager, in Vincent Kompany, who was an outstanding central defender himself. That early promise may not have been fully realised.

"He has fantastic potential," Ten Hag said. "But Matthijs turns 25

this week and he has almost 375 games for Ajax, Juventus and Bayern Munich [and the Netherlands] under his belt. That is incredible. Now he is turning into his best years. He has great skills as a football player but also in his character, his personality. I am very pleased to have him here."

De Ligt will see plenty of familiar faces among the Dutch connection. And if Ten Hag's greatest achievement in management was taking Ajax to the last four of the Champions League, perhaps it is understandable he was keen on a re-union. De Ligt, too, could be forgiven for hoping to rewind time, to a happier period for them both. But with every transfer, it amounts to more of an experiment: how the Eredivisie old boys and Ajax all-stars can fare in English football.

THE INDEPENDENT

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Five huge questions ahead of the new English Premier League season

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Yanga begin CAF Champions League campaign against Vital'O FC



Young Africans Sports Club official squad for the 2024/25 season. Photo: Courtesy of YASC

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

YOUNG Africans Sports Club are set to kick off their CAF Champions League campaign today, facing Vital'O FC of Burundi in the preliminary round of the first leg.

The match will take place at the Azam Complex Stadium at 4:00 pm, with Vital'O using the Tanzanian venue as their home ground for this encounter.

As Young Africans embark on this critical match, head coach Miguel Gamondi has rallied his squad to ensure they avoid any embarrassment against their Burundian opponents. The stakes are high, as the winners of this tie will advance to face either SC Villa of Uganda or Ethiopia's CBE in the next round.

In his pre-match comments, Gamondi emphasized the importance of not underestimating Vital'O, despite Young Africans' strong recent form. The Argentine tactician noted that while his team has performed well in recent matches, including victories over Tanzanian rivals Simba SC and Azam FC, complacency must be avoided.

cy must be avoided.

"The players have shown a good level in the few matches we've played so far, but they cannot afford to be overconfident," Gamondi stated. "Our opponents are new to us, and in football, it is never wise to take any team lightly. Vital'O is a side we haven't faced recently, so our players must stay focused and disciplined."

Gamondi stressed that the CAF Champions League is different from domestic league play.

"This is not the league where you can measure your opponents easily; anything can happen in these games. The victories over Simba and Azam should not be seen as a guarantee of success against Vital'O," he added.

Young Africans' ambitions in the CAF Champions League are clear. After reaching the quarterfinals in the 2023/2024 season, where they were eliminated by South Africa's Mamelodi

Sundowns, the club is determined to make an even deeper run this year.

The Jangwani-based fighters aim to establish themselves as a dominant force in African football, building on their strong performances in recent years.

The team's journey in the Champions League last season was a source of pride for their fans, and they are eager to take the next step towards continental glory. However, Gamondi knows that the path will not be easy, starting with the challenge posed by Vital'O.

While Young Africans focus on their Champions League responsibilities, they are also preparing for the upcoming Premier League season. The reigning champions are aiming to defend their title, having won the league for three consecutive seasons.

Their first league match is scheduled for August 29 against Kagera Sugar at Kaibata Stadium, a fixture that

will set the tone for the season.

Young Africans' domestic league fixture list is packed with key matchups that could prove decisive in their quest for another title. After the Kagera Sugar match, Young Africans will travel to Mbeya to face Ken Gold at Sokoine Stadium, a game that promises to be closely contested. The team will then return to Azam Complex Stadium on October 22 to take on JKT Tanzania.

As the season progresses, Young Africans will face a series of crucial fixtures, including a fourth-round match against Mashujaa FC and a fifth-round clash with Singida Big Stars.

These games are expected to be pivotal in determining the side's standing in the league and their ability to continue their winning streak.

Young Africans are balancing their ambitions on multiple fronts, with the CAF Champions League and

the Premier League both presenting significant challenges.

The club's recent success has raised expectations, and the pressure is on Gamondi and his squad to deliver results both domestically and internationally.

The upcoming match against Vital'O is the first step in what Young Africans hope will be a successful Champions League campaign. With a disciplined approach and a focus on avoiding complacency, Young Africans are well-positioned to advance to the next round and continue their quest for African football supremacy.

As the team takes to the field today, fans will be watching closely, hopeful that their club can make a strong start in this prestigious competition. With the right mindset and preparation, Young Africans have the potential to overcome Vital'O and move one step closer to achieving their continental ambitions.

5 **EATV MONDAY**

TONIGHT @ 9:00

Sports

11:00 DADAZ
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA
13:00 Zole Kuntu
13:30 Kall 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 Zole Kuntu
16:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
17:00 SSELECT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 Kall Za Wana
18:30 #HASHTAG
19:00 EATV SAA 1
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 5SPORTS
22:00 Zole Kuntu
23:00 Kurasa
23:05 EATV SAA1 (r)

Sports

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.

eastafrica RADIO

05:00 Supa Breakfast
09:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
19:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM

Mashujaa FC eager to make a crucial start as they host Dodoma Jiji

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

MASHUJAA FC will begin their 2024/25 Premier League campaign today as they host Dodoma Jiji FC at Lake Tanganyika Stadium.

This early-season encounter could set the tone for both teams' campaigns, with each side eager to secure a positive start.

The hosts, led by coach Abdalla 'Baresi' Mohamed, finished an impressive eighth in their debut season last year.

To build on that success, the team has strengthened its squad with key signings, including Chrispin Ngushi, Seif Karihe, Jafari Kibaya, and Mohamed Musa. These additions make Mashujaa a formidable opponent, ready to push for an even higher finish this season.

However, Mashujaa has also seen several notable departures, with key players such as Samson Madeleke, Omary Abdallah, Ally Ramadhan, Juma Makapu, Shadrack Ntabhindi, and Michael Masinda leaving the club.

Additionally, they bid farewell to their two main strikers, Adam Omar, who moved to Azam FC, and Reliants Lusajo, who joined today's opponents, Dodoma Jiji.

Despite these changes, Mashujaa remain optimistic, aiming to surpass last season's eighth-place finish. The new recruits and a renewed sense of ambition position them as slight favorites for this opening match.

On the other side, Dodoma Jiji FC is looking to rebound after a disappointing twelfth-place finish last season.

Former Taifa Stars captain Mecky Mexime has taken the reins as head coach, replacing Francis Baraza, who departed following a poor end to the season.

Dodoma Jiji were active in the transfer market, bringing in eight new players. This means, the team will have a fresh look this season, with significant changes aimed at revitalizing their squad. The attacking department, in particular, has been bolstered by the arrivals of Waziri Junior and Reliants Lusajo, who scored 11 and eight goals respectively last season.

With these new additions, Dodoma Jiji will hope to cause trouble for Mashujaa. Expectations are high for coach Mexime and his squad, and fans are eager to see if the investment in new talent will pay off.

As the two teams face off today, all eyes will be on how these changes translate on the pitch. Both sides have much to prove, and this match could be a critical early indicator of how their seasons will unfold.

Simba eye strong start to Premier League campaign as they face Tabora United

By Correspondent Seth Mapoli

SIMBA are gearing up for a crucial start to their 2024/2025 NBC Premier League season, with their first match scheduled for tomorrow against Tabora United.

The game will take place at the KMC Complex in Kinondoni, kicking off at 4:15 p.m.

After three consecutive seasons without a league title, Simba face immense pressure to reclaim their domestic crown. The club's passionate supporters are eagerly anticipating a return to dominance in Tanzanian football.

Head coach Fadlu Davids, who joined Simba after a stint with Raja Casablanca in Morocco, is tasked with guiding the team back to the top. Davids has infused the squad with a mix of experienced players and promising young talent, emphasizing resilience and fighting spirit as key attributes for the upcoming season.

In a recent press conference, Davids expressed optimism for the season ahead, assuring fans that the team is determined to bring glory back to Msimbazi Street. "We are not yet 100 percent ready, but we are prepared to fight in every game. Our objective is



Simba Sports Club head coach Fadlu Davids. Photo: Courtesy of SSC

clear - to win the league and bring joy to our fans," Davids stated confidently.

The KMC Complex will serve as Simba's home ground this season, a move that has excited fans eager to see their

team perform on familiar turf. Tickets for the opening match against Tabora United have been priced at 15,000/- for VIP seats and 10,000/- for regular seating, ensuring accessibility for a wide range of supporters.

This opening match is expected to be a stern test for Simba as they aim to make a strong statement early in the season. With high expectations and a packed schedule, the team knows that a positive start is crucial.

Tabora United, having narrowly escaped relegation last season through play-off matches, will be looking to avoid another challenging campaign. After suffering a heavy 4-1 defeat to Azam FC last season, they have made significant changes during the off-season and are determined to challenge Simba in what promises to be a fiercely contested match.

Following the league opener, Simba will host Fountain Gate FC on August 25 at the KMC Complex before traveling to Mbeya on October 22 to face Tanzania Prisons at the Sokoine Stadium. An early-season clash with Azam FC in the fourth round is also on the horizon, a match that could have significant implications for Simba's title aspirations.

In addition to their domestic cam-

paign, Simba are preparing for the CAF Confederation Cup, entering the competition in the preliminary second round. They are set to face the winner between Zanzibar's Uhamiaji FC and Al Ahly Tripoli of Libya. This international competition adds another layer of pressure on Davids and his squad as they seek to make their mark on the continental stage.

Davids is aware of the challenges ahead but remains focused on the task at hand. "Every team in the league is aiming for three points, and we are no different. We know we have a target on our backs, but we are ready to show that Simba have something new to offer this season," he remarked.

The stakes are high for Simba this season. The team's success will depend on their ability to navigate a demanding schedule, perform consistently, and deliver under pressure. For the fans, the anticipation is palpable as they hope to see their team lift the Premier League trophy once again.

As the 2024/2025 season gets underway, all eyes will be on Simba as they embark on their journey with a clear mission: to reclaim their status as Tanzania's football powerhouse and write a new chapter in the club's storied history.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

