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'Opposition polls win can never be ensured'

The National Assembly has endorsed the electoral commission to be an independent body. Secondly, the government has accepted that the head of state should not appoint members of the commission

By Carlos Banda

AN independent electoral commission is not an assurance that opposition parties stand to win future general elections, the ruling party has declared. Abdulrahman Kinana, the CCM vice chairman (Mainland), made this assertion when addressing party members and its regional leadership in the commercial capital yesterday. He said winning the polls is pegged to a combination of strategies, preparations and tactics to convince the voters, scolding the leading opposition party, Chadema for its incessant demonstration plans over electoral organisation is-

sues. Laying emphasis on background work by political parties, he said elections relate to policies, capacity for self-expression, listening to the public, having a strong electoral system within the party and making good preparations. "You may have an independent electoral body and get results that are the least of what you expected," he cautioned, rejecting opposition tenets of what makes an independent electoral commission. He showed that in all Commonwealth countries, which are a banner for democracy,

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Dr Angela Muhozya (L), Director of Cardiac Surgery at Dar es Salaam's Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute, has an audience in the city on Friday with Chinese government health experts now in Tanzania to collaborate with their JKCI colleagues in attending to people with heart conditions. Some of the foreign experts are lined up for two-year attachments with JKCI. Photo: JKCI

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Yanga's Miguel Gamondi hits out at Kagera for time wasting

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DStv launches 'Panda Tukupandishe' promotion

Shift to Kwala dry port, copper transporters told

By Correspondent James Kandoya

PORT administrators in Dar es Salaam are engaging copper transporters with intent to direct containers of copper bars to the Kwala dry port at Kibaha in Coast Region. Mrisho Selemani Mrisho, the port director, said in a media briefing yesterday on day to day operations of the port that plenty of copper cargo from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was finding its way to Dar port to be loaded into containers. Inland container depots (ICDs) in the city are overwhelmed by

waiting transit trucks whose cargo of copper bars has to be placed in shipping containers, as working from within the city takes much longer, he said. Over 400 transit trucks are waiting at Misugusugu locality within the Kibaha industrial and port access town, in a long queue for ICD service providers to load copper bars into containers, he pointed out. Kwala dry port was designated for transit goods to Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and DRC but now takes auxiliary functions of redirection of haulage trucks to reduce

congestion in the city. The port needs to cut on loading delays as well as excessive road presence of transit goods trucks, where using dry port facilities is seen as an optimal alternative, he said. Copper bars containers will access the port by a rail link from the dry port, thus eliminating the need for trucks to show up at city depots. Demand for dry port facilities was rising with the ongoing industrial park project, to which is attached the rail network as well as proximity to the road highway from Dar es Salaam to inland re-

gions, he said. Despite inconveniences of heavy rainfall, the port handled 86 vessels during the past month, handling 10 vessels in the first four days of this month, he stated, noting that the port has capacity of handling 90,000 containers per month. The port is rated at 14.1m tonnes dry cargo and 6.0m tonnes bulk liquid cargo handling capacity annually, with total quay length of 2,600 metres lining 11 deep water berths. The port handles upwards of 95 percent of the country's international trade the director remarked.

TCRA, stakeholders, reviewing broadcasting, postal challenges

By Guardian Reporter

PROGRAMMES to improve the quality of broadcasting content to safeguard national values and open the postal sector to more players are being discussed among a number of stakeholders, regulators say. Dr Jabir Bakari, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) director general, made this observation at a media

briefing over the weekend, presenting TCRA's last quarter performance report. TCRA is working with stakeholders on the production and airing of local content on national radios and televisions along with training on opportunities in postal operations supply chains, he said. These problems still abound despite that TCRA regulates broadcasting content on Tanzania Mainland and has a dedicated

committee mandated to monitor compliance with radio, television, and online broadcasting content regulations and ethics, he acknowledged. The five-member content committee advises the responsible minister on broadcasting policy, also handling complaints from operators and consumers, he said. Affirming that broadcasting is the most universally accessible means of communication reach-

ing more audiences in real-time than others, he stated the need for TCRA to create a conducive environment for expanding radio and television broadcasting services, apart from other communications networks all over the country. He went over the difficulties that TCRA faces in leading the planning, production, distribution and airing of broadcasting content up-

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College to build 1.7MW hydropower plant 'soon'

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Hai

ARUSHA Technical College has just inked a 10bn/- contract for the construction of an auxiliary electricity producing plant in Hai District, Kilimanjaro Region. Prof. John Chacha, the ATC rector, explained the project at the signing event for the power station construction over the weekend at the project site, noting that within this year the Kikuletwa plant will add up to 1.7 megawatts of electricity into the national grid. ATC runs the Kikuletwa Renewable Energy Training and Research Center, which also serves as a sub-regional training centre for renewable energy where ATC signed for the government, with

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TCRA, stakeholders, reviewing broadcasting, postal challenges

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holding the national heritage, customs and culture acceptable to the majority of the people.

TCRA, the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) and the University of Dodoma had designed a phased programme in which traditional dances from the 120 tribes and kindred communities are recorded for distribution to facilitate regular broadcasting of such content, he said.

By December 2023 the exercise had covered 10 tribes, he said, noting that TCRA was keen on coordinated the production of content with education on Tanzanian values, traditions and customs.

This overall work is intended to be distributed to 150 radio and television stations specifically those with district licences for convenient airing, he said, in the wake of a recent meeting with local content producers.

He appealed to the producers to enhance collaboration for the growth of such content and its wider use, underlining that unity of purpose would enable the government to be more effective in supporting cultural endeavours, for accessibility of quality content nationwide.

One item addressed at the meeting was the need to revive the Tanzania Independent Producers Association (TAIPA), as TCRA is keen to work with independent content producers for quality enhancement, he stated.

Concessionary term loans are being mooted to facilitate the work of content producers and broadcasting stations, thus helping to promote local content production, he said.

Regulation 31-(1) of the Radio and Television Broadcasting Regulations of 2018 requires radio and TV stations to put up at least 10 per cent local content in what is aired, while free-to-air content services licensees are required to air a minimum of 60 per cent local content, he specified.

The quota for community broadcasting stations is 80 per cent, on the basis of the 2023 regulations for community broadcasting, he elaborated, similarly raising issues on postal sector regulations.

So far 116 licences have been is-

sued to the Tanzania Posts Corporation (TPC) and courier companies, with six international courier operators, one East Africa courier operator and 45 domestic courier operators.

There are also 14 intra-city courier operators, and 50 intercity transporter courier operators (mainly passenger buses), he said, noting that courier services are key stakeholders in electronic commerce.

Items transacted online are physically delivered, he stated, affirming that this needs an uplift in the networking, highlighting that TCRA coordinates the national addresses and postcode system, while training postal sector service delivery stakeholders to assert the focus on integrity.

TCRA initiatives to enable the postal sector to emerge from decline since the rise of facsimile and internet with the digitalization drive on traditional postal operations.

Public postal operators worldwide fell drastically over the past decade, with TPC handling 10,121,388 items sent abroad and 2,339,149 items received from abroad in 2017. The volume fell to 243,199 items sent outside and 261,983 received via TPC last year, the director illustrated, noting that resilient service providers have diversified into operations applying digital interventions.

TPC now offers digital products, opening one-stop centres all over the country for postal delivery needs for government institutions and the wider public, he specified, pointing at TCRA liaisons with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to enhance local postal service quality.

UPU operates a strategy to encourage postal operators and regulators to engage other players in the postal supply chain, with this approach helping to promote electronic commerce as it involves segments of the postal network, bringing into fold airlines, shipping agencies, transporters, security, tax authorities and logistics companies, he explained.

Masahiko Metoki, the UPU director general announced recently that the union would support the establishment of an information and communications technology (ICT) innovation and training centre in Arusha use by 45 African zone member states, known as PAPU.



Mara regional commissioner Said Mtanda addresses Bajaj taxi riders in Musoma municipality at the weekend, the thrust being on ways to ensure the latter operate smoothly and observe road safety regulations. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

College to build 1.7MW hydropower plant 'soon'

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HNAC Technology Co. Ltd, a Chinese global operator for water related technologies, where Tader Miao, the company's project director, said that the company has 30 years of project experience and expects to finish the task on time.

HNAC operates six power generation systems in Changsha, Beijing, Wuhan and Shen-

zhen city within China, along with overseas branches in the Central African Republic, Chile, Pakistan, Indonesia, Uzbekistan and Zambia, he explained.

Prof James Mdoe, the deputy permanent secretary for Science in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, stated that the project will be realized within the time frame to help solve wide ranging outages at local and national level.

Robert Kabusi, Head of the Kikuletwa Project, said that the Kikuletwa hydropower plant will not be unduly sensitive to changing rainfall patterns as it is located at meeting point of rivers flowing around the year.

ATC is closing in to become the first vocational training institution in East Africa to operate a substantive electricity generation plant, where the World Bank has so far injected

37bn/- (\$16.25m) for operating the centre for renewable energy, he said.

The credit is part of the Eastern Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) framework, where ongoing expansion work at the centre will raise the number of students to up to 1,500 trainees, he elaborated.

Previously electricity genera-

tion technicians used to go to Zambia but the Lusaka centre offers short-term training and focuses on hydropower, while the

Kikuletwa Center provides full-time training, covering various renewable energy systems, he said, pointing at hydro, solar, wind and bioenergy fields were it is the sub-regional hub, he added.



Vita Kawawa (R), Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security, pictured in Dodoma city yesterday bidding farewell to Home Affairs deputy minister Jumanne Sagini at the conclusion of a seminar at which the Prisons' Department elaborated to members of the committee on its activities. With them is Home Affairs ministry acting permanent secretary Miriam Mmbaga. Photo courtesy of Home Affairs ministry

Western miners lag as oil powers enter race for Africa's critical metals

JOHANNESBURG/LONDON

Risk aversion is likely to leave major Western miners lagging in a race to tap Africa's reserves of critical raw materials that has gathered pace now Middle Eastern oil powers have begun to emulate China's years of investment on the continent.

Attracting the capital needed to advance copper, cobalt, nickel and lithium projects in Africa will be high on the agenda when executives, bankers and government officials gather in Cape Town, South Africa, for the annual African Mining Indaba beginning on Monday.

For the big listed miners,

the problem is convincing board members anxious to keep shareholders onside, an issue China and the state-backed funds from the Middle East with a mandate to diversify from oil and gas do not face.

Major mining companies' mergers and acquisitions teams have been busy nego-

tiating in countries including Democratic Republic of Congo, the world's top cobalt supplier, and third biggest source of copper. Potential deals in the country, however, are being held up in the boardrooms of Rio Tinto (RIO.L), opens new tab, (RIO.AX), opens new tab and BHP Group (BHP.AX), opens new

tab, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

The sources said boards were mindful of the shareholder focus on ESG (environmental, social and governance) concerns and past scandals in countries viewed as high risk.

Agencies

'Opposition polls win can never be ensured'

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the president can't be circumvented in how the electoral commission is constituted.

There are various ways in which members of such commissions are nominated or endorsed to hold office but the president always has the final word, especially on the chairman and vice-chairman.

Going over various electoral experiences for opposition parties, Kinana said that some countries instituted constitutional reforms and an independent electoral body but opposition parties still failed to secure victory in subsequent polls.

At times, after an independent electoral body is put in place, those in office and in opposition castigate its usefulness from different viewpoints, citing a nearby country with a vibrant electoral commission that was at loggerheads with the pre-election government. The opposition won in the last election and now the government is at loggerheads with the commission, saying the reformed constitution was now an irrelevance to their purposes and expectations, he said.

He was explaining the legislature's approval of three bills aimed at reforming key electoral institutions, throwing mud at opposition criticism of the bills and their demonstration plans.

He said the leading opposition party was playing at different levels which add to an incoherent political outlook, first planning demonstrations all over the country, while making suggestions on electoral law reform or composition of the commission, including raising placing those proposals to the legislature.

He enumerated a number of opposi-

tion and activist demands on the commission, which were all endorsed by the president, with exception of removing all appointing or endorsement power on the chairman and vice-chairman.

No such separation of presidential powers from the polls commission can be found anywhere in the Commonwealth, the head of the party secretariat intoned.

"The National Assembly has endorsed the electoral commission to be an independent body. Secondly, the government has accepted that the head of state should not appoint members of the commission," he said, castigating the view that for the president to appoint or confirm nomination of the chairman and the vice chairman shows that the ruling party has 'hidden intentions.'

"There is no place on earth where the president does not take part in running the operations of the government and the commission. None. The head of state can delegate powers but never give them up," he explained.

It was therefore agreed that names of the chairman and vice chairman will be proposed to the president to choose instead of making direct appointments, he said, insisting that this endorsement was a result of the comments and views given by a total of 1700 stakeholders.

They shared their recommendations on reforming election rules and regulations with MPs, where rectifying election rules and regulations was to intended to reassure Chadema, the Civic United Front (CUF), ACT-Wazalendo and other parties that they will be participating in free, fair and transparent elections, he added.



Tanga regional commissioner Waziri Kindamba (L) has a word with sugar wholesaler Latifa Shehoza (2nd-R) on Saturday while on an inspection tour of shops in Tanga city chiefly relating to non-compliance with the indicative price for the item. Sugar has been short supply in many parts of Tanzania in recent weeks, the scarcity leading to haphazard price hikes. Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchalla

Namibia grieves as president Geingob dies

WINDHOEK

HAGE Geingob (pictured), Namibia's President has passed away at 82 while undergoing medical treatment in Windhoek.

Vice-President Nangolo Mbumba disclosed the news of President Hage Geingob's passing yesterday.

The vice-president said: "It is with utmost sadness and regret that I inform you that our beloved Dr Hage G. Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia has passed on today. At his side were his dear wife Madam Monica Geingos and his children."

"The Namibian nation has lost a distinguished servant of the people, a liberation struggle icon, the chief architect of our constitution and the pillar of the Namibian house."

"At this moment of deepest sorrow, I appeal to the nation to remain calm and collected while the Government attends to all necessary state arrangements, preparations and other protocols," he said.

President Geingob travelled to the United States last month for cancer treatment and reportedly returned on February 2.

Until his passing, he was undergoing treatment at Lady Pohamba Hospital in Windhoek.

As prime minister in 2014, Geingob told the public that he had survived prostate cancer. He assumed the presidency the following year.

He had previously held the position of Namibia's longest-serving prime minister, serving for a total of 12 years from 1990 and a brief stint in 2012.

In the 2014 election, he won a huge majority, taking 87 percent of the vote. However, five years later, his support had decreased, and he won with 56 percent in the subsequent election.

According to the constitution, Mbumba will now act as president as there is less than a year left of Geingob's second term in office. Namibia is gearing up for presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of 2024.



CCM women wing cadres plant avocado to fight stunting

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

CCM women's wing in Njombe District have planted avocado at Manyunyu Girls' Secondary School in a campaign to combat stunting and malnutrition amongst pupils.

The fruit trees were planted at the weekend in an exercise led by CCM women wing leaders in the district.

Speaking shortly after participating in the avocado planting, Sure Mwasanguti, the party's women wing secretary in the district said that the exercise was meant to honour the work done by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to combat stunting and malnutrition in the country.

"In future, our children will eat balanced diet and this will make

stunting a history in our region and this is a permanent mark we made," she said. Mwasanguti said that tree planting at the school will help children to get fruits as well as take care of the environment.

Beatrice Malekela, chairperson of CCM women's wing in the district said that the sixth-phase government has done a good job, including bringing people together and "that's

why we're asking people including party members to remain united all the time if we're to achieve development." Lupembe Ward councillor Faraja Mbagi commended CCM leadership in the district for planting such fruit trees to fight stunting and malnutrition.

Reports show that despite multiple awareness campaigns, children in Njombe Region are still suffering

from alarmingly high rates of malnutrition due to poor diets that do not nurture cognitive and physical development.

Njombe, one of the East African nation's "bread basket" regions known for its delicious avocado species, is afflicted by acute malnutrition, with nearly half of children there under the age of five suffering from stunted growth.




REQUEST FOR TENDER

North Mara Gold Mine, a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation, which is ultimately owned by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania requests the submission of Tenders from reputable, experienced, certified, and qualified parties to provide the following service:

Steel Balls Performance Trials

Prequalification Criteria

No.	Reference no.	Description of work	Prequalification Criteria
1	NM004/2024	Steel Balls Performance Trials Specs: i. 60mm Steel Balls ii. 125mm Steel Balls	i. Company Profile and project profiles over the last three years for assessment as well as tonnage manufactured and supplied per month for the last 24 months. ii. Supplier should be an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). iii. Confirm the lead time, number of weeks after PO is received. iv. Confirm the incoterms. v. Share the manufacturing QA/QC document. vi. Warranty & Guarantee of the steel balls performance. vii. Provide contacts of references. viii. Provide the safety, health, and environmental ISO compliance certificates. ix. Local Content Regulations compliance.

Expression of interest (EOI)

If your company meets the prequalification criteria and would like to be considered for the trial, send your request along with your company profile to nm.proposal@barrick.com

Applicants must quote the tender description(s) and the respective reference no.(s) in the subject line of the email.

NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit a request through this advertisement.

Qualification of any company submitting an 'Expression of Interest' shall be at the sole discretion of NMGM.

If you do not hear from us in 21 days after the deadline date, please consider your submission unsuccessful.

Key Dates

- Last date to submit EOI

10 February 2024

North Mara Gold Mine Limited

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA MINISTRY OF FINANCE



INVITATION TO STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING PROCEEDINGS OF THE TASK FORCE ON TAX REFORM IN PREPARATION FOR BUDGET 2024/25

The proceedings of the Task Force on Tax Reform in preparation for Budget 2024/25 are scheduled to get underway in February 2024. The working sessions of the Task Force will be launched by the National Tax and Investment Conference for the year 2024 which will be held in February.

The Task Force provides a structured forum for discussion of various issues relating to tax policy and administration. Its deliberations have constituted a vital input to policy makers for a long period. It has helped to shape the country's tax regime and, through dialogue and analysis, facilitated an effective, transparent and efficient resolution of a number of issues.

The Task Force Secretariat is expected to organise a schedule of meetings with stakeholders for presentations and discussions in this financial year. The Government will take lead by giving an update of policy objectives, agenda and challenges as well as an appraisal of tax policy priorities for Budget 2024/25. This will provide participants with a broad context for this year's proceedings and motivate analysis and discussion on impacts of various proposals in-depth.

The fiscal policy measures aim at improving business environment in order to attract investments, facilitating growth of small and medium business enterprises for sustainable economic growth; enhancing voluntary tax compliance; broadening the tax base; mainstreaming the use of ICT System in tax administration; strengthening enforcement of tax laws in order to address tax evasion challenges and minimize revenue leakages; and streamlining levies and fees in order to improve business and investment environment.

The Task Force invites submission of proposals from Government officials, private sector, civil society, religious organizations, academia, research institutions and other specialists in public finance. The submissions from interested parties should be in writing, stating clearly:-

- Firm(s) Organization(s) or Association(s) being represented;
- The proposed changes in tax or non-tax revenue,

including analysis of the sectors, regions or taxpayers that would be affected;

- The projected impact on the economy and Government revenues in the year of implementation and outer years;
- The rationale and justification for the proposed revenue policy changes and, in particular, analysis of the means by which the proposal will help the Government achieve its overarching economic, fiscal and poverty-reduction objectives; and
- Where proposals entail a reduction in Government revenues (even in the short term only), there must be alternative proposals which set out explicit and credible measures consistent with the overall thrust of the Government's fiscal policies to offset the proposed revenue shortfall.

We are looking forward to having a productive engagement and exchange of ideas this year among stakeholders and the Government.

Submissions are accepted with effect from the date of this press until **31 March 2024** through the following portal: <https://maoni.mof.go.tz/>

For Hard Copy, please submit your proposals to the following address:

**Secretariat Task Force on Tax Reform
Ministry of Finance and Planning,
Policy Analysis Department,
Treasury Square Building (2nd floor),
18 Jakaya Kikwete Road,
P.O Box 2802,
DODOMA.**

E-Mail: mathias.kadebe@hazina.go.tz or salha.mzee@hazina.go.tz

For more details/clarifications please call: **0713 694 895** or **0652 442 944**

Or visit our website: www.mof.go.tz

**Dr. Natu E. Mwamba
PERMANENT SECRETARY – MINISTRY OF FINANCE
February, 2024**



A Mbeya resident (R) airs his grievances at a CCM open meeting held in the city at the weekend. Left is Mbeya city director John Nchimbi. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Grass changing fortunes of Kenyan dairy farmers

NAIROBI

THE lush green, tall and succulent grass at the expansive Juncao farm in Kenya's western county of Nakuru swayed to the rhythm of a Friday afternoon wind, creating a spectacle to behold.

Inside the 50-acre (about 20-hectare) farm, a group of local farmers and workers strolled as they enjoyed the ambiance and the sight of more than six meters of tall grass that has defied harsh elements to blossom.

Introduced by Chinese agripreneur Jack Liu in 2021, the grass has revolutionized animal husbandry in Kenya's semi-arid outposts, guaranteeing an uninterrupted supply of nutritious fodder to herders and subsistence farmers.

In the last couple of weeks, Francis Fwamba Wanambisi, a 60-year-old dairy farmer, has been a regular visitor to the farm where he has been purchasing Juncao grass at a reasonable cost to feed his nine cows.

"So far, I have bought this grass three times since the beginning of the year and have witnessed tremendous improvement in my cows. Their milk production has doubled," Wanambisi said.

Three of his cows are zero grazed, and the moment he started feeding them the grass, each started producing five and a half liters of milk in the morning, up from around three liters.

Wanambisi learned about the Juncao grass from his peers who spoke highly of its rich nutrition content including proteins that are key to high milk output among local cattle breeds.

As his cows now produce more milk, the father of eight said he is selling the surplus at the local shopping center, earning him a decent income to sustain his family.

Located at the tip of Nakuru County's expansive plains that are semi-arid, the Juncao farm has changed the topography and weather of a hot, water-scarce, and food-insecure rural hamlet.

Liu, the farm's chief executive officer and founder, said it has acted as a model for sustainable cattle feed production in Kenya, through harnessing cost-effective but locally adaptable Chinese technology.

"We are specialized in Juncao grass plantation, supplying silage to local livestock farmers," Liu said.

Juncao grass, according to Liu, has a crude protein content of 18.6 percent, can be harvested more than five times annually, has an annual yield of about 180 tonnes per acre, and takes 12 weeks to mature.

When fed to dairy cows, Juncao grass can boost milk yield by 40 percent, while beef cattle can attain 500 kg in 12 months when they consume the fodder that is disease-, pest- and drought-resistant, according to Liu.

Grown in over 100 countries worldwide and gaining traction in Africa, the Juncao grass was developed by Chinese scientists in east China's Fujian Province in the 1980s, and has superior features, including height,

broad leaves, and sugar-rich stems.

Liu disclosed that plans are afoot to establish 50,000 acres of Juncao grass across Kenya, and so far, the fodder is being cultivated in several semi-arid counties, aided by irrigation.

"Juncao grass is Chinese wisdom, transforming pastoralism in Africa. One acre can feed 20 cows," Liu said.

He added that Juncao grass can be used to control desertification, soil erosion, and land degradation, and boost biodiversity protection while helping communities cope with the climate crisis.

In December 2021, Theophilus Mutui, the managing director of Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), said after thorough inspections and audits at an open quarantine facility in southeastern Kenya, the regulator observed that Juncao grass complied with all plant health requirements.

No pest of major concern or risk of invasiveness was detected in the grass during the inspection, according to the letter from Mutui.

"The company is therefore allowed to expand the acreage under Juncao grass production and establish more fields," Mutui said.

Monitoring of Juncao grass by the regulator has been ongoing, and no threat to human or environmental health has been detected, said Erick Were, an inspector at KEPHIS.

John Chelimo, a 50-year-old smallholder farmer from Nakuru County, said he has planted Juncao grass on his farm, and after feeding it to his grade cattle, milk production has shot up.

In addition, Chelimo said local farmers have embraced the grass, having cushioned them from perennial fodder shortages linked to harsh weather.

Samia pledges support for needy boy, family

By Guardian Reporter

CCM national chairperson President Samia Suluhu Hassan has promised to educate a 10-year-old boy who dropped out of school when Standard Three due to difficulties that forced him to sell bananas to

support his family.

The leader also promised to educate five young siblings of Alhaji Abdallah as well as build a house for her mother Ester Hussein who is needy.

On Friday, the boy got the opportunity to speak at a party meeting organised by CCM ideology and publicity secretary Paul Makonda at Kigoma-Ujiji municipality in Kigoma Region where he asked for support to get education since his mother is not able to educate him.

He told the gathering that his business earns him money that he uses to buy food and pay rent for a room where they live.

After getting Alhaji's story, Makonda and other well-wishers who were at the public rally contributed a total of 2.22m/- for the boy.

Makonda also pledged that the party will educate the boy and his brothers and sisters and asked party leaders in the area to start working on the matter and if possible the boy starts going to school as soon as possible.

On Sunday, Makonda visited the family and informed President Samia on the matter and she promised to help the family, including supporting education for the remaining five children.

"President Samia has been touched by Alhaji's life, she has seen love, she has seen how he was fighting for the lives of his mother and his brothers and his business talent because he was keeping money from 4,000/- to 20,000/- per day," Makonda said, adding that the well-furnished house will be built within this year.

Makonda said that Alhaji's mother will also be given 5m/- as capital to start business. The capital will be added as per business development.

According to him, President Samia will also pay for Alhaji's mother's medical bills and already Kigoma Regional Commissioner was directed to ensure that she is brought to the hospital for more medical examinations.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Kamal Steels Ltd wishes to inform the general public that **Mr. Sachin Pralhad Pawar** is no longer associated/ employed with the Company or any of the Group Companies from **31 January 2024**.

Please be advised that any business transaction, communication or arrangement with **Mr. Sachin Pawar** whose picture is attached above shall not be binding to the Company.

EMBASSY OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, DANISH, BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION, WORLD BANK, CORUS INTERNATIONAL NA UMOJA HOUSE DAR ES SALAAM.

PUBLIC AUCTION:

UNIVERSAL AUCTION CENTRE under instructions received from Embassy of the United States of America Danish, British High Commission, World Bank, Corus International and Umoja House. We shall sell Household and Office furniture's, Vehicles and Generator by public auction on Saturday February 10, 2024 commencing at 10:00 am. The auction will take place at Golden Resort Sinza, Lion Street.

Furniture Bidding Start at 10:00am; Sofa set, Sofa bed, Chest drawer, dining table, Chairs Book case, Dresser, Recliner, Office table, Office chairs, Conference table, Conference chairs, Steel cabinets, Beds, Mattress, Fridge double door, UP Right freezer, Washer, Dryer m/c, Electric/Gas cooker, A/c split unit, Vegetable Solar Dryer, safe, Simtank 1000, 3000 Lts, Sports Bicycles etc.

Vehicles & Generator Bidding Start at 12:00 hrs.

Unit	Make	Model	Year	Duty
3	Toyota L/ Cruiser Prado TX S/ Wagon	1KD Diesel Engine	2016	Not Paid
1	Toyota L/ Cruiser V8 Station Wagon	IVD0 Diesel Engine	2009	Paid
1	Nissan Patrol Station Wagon	TD42 Diesel Engine	2009	Not Paid
1	Suzuki Grand Vitara Station Wagon	J20 Petrol Engine	2006	Paid
1	Ford Everest Station Wagon	WLAT Diesel Engine	2004	Paid
2	Generators 500 KVA 3 Phase 415V	Perkins Diesel Engine	2001	Not Paid

All items may be inspected at Golden Resort Sinza, Lion Street from February 7 to 9, 2024 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

AUCTION CONDITIONS:

- The winning bidder for Furniture has to make full payment to cashier immediately. For Vehicle or Generator winning bidder must pay 25% to cashier immediately and the final payment in full within 5 working days by February 16, 2024 at 4:00pm. For payments not made within 5 working days, the Vehicle or Generator will be offered to the next highest bidder and the advance payment will be forfeited.
- Payments via CRDB and NBC Bank VISA & Master Cards will be accepted.
- All items are sold on "as is" basis with no guarantee.
- Duty and all taxes are the responsibility of the buyer.
- Bidder will remove the items after all payments and duties
- All persons entering the premises must obtain a Bid Number at the entrance.

For further information, contact:

UNIVERSAL AUCTION CENTRE,
(PLOT NO. 5 "E" LION STREET SINZA
CELL NO: 0754 284 926
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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)-DIAMOND AND AIRCORE DRILLING

Title of the EOI: Surface Exploration diamond drilling at its Mkuju Uranium Project

Date of this EOI: 5th February 2024

Closing Date for Receipt of EOI: 19th February 2024

Address EOI Response by E-mail to the Attention of: Technical Director

E-mail Address: zeustanzania9@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

- Zeus Resources Tanzania Limited a subsidiary of Gladiator Resources Limited is issuing this Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) to seek interest from qualified Local and International Companies/Contractors with expertise and relevant experience, domestically situated for pre-qualification as a potential service provider. The planned program is an initial 2000m diamond core drilling a part of early-stage exploration. Holes will be a maximum of 220 m in depth and will be vertical, drilled in NQ. The host rocks are Karoo Supergroup. The Project located in approximately 50 km east of Namtumbo in the Ruvuma Region Southern of Tanzania. Scope of the drilling program may expand for additional metreage depending on results of the initial drilling. Interested drilling contractors must demonstrate their capability in terms of equipment and experiences for this type of drilling, formation and conditions. Holes will be logged through casing using downhole geophysical tools. Contractors should describe their experience and suitability of equipment for the conditions and requirements stated above.
- Contractors expressing interest should note that this REOI serves as a pre-qualification of the Companies that will be invited to participate in the Bidding process that will follow. As explained in the detailed REOI (to be provided) Mandatory Requirements, only contractors that meet the minimum pre-qualification criteria set out in this REOI will be invited to participate in the ensuing competitive bidding exercise.
- This call for EOI does not constitute solicitation. Zeus Resources Tanzania Limited reserves the right to change or cancel the requirement at any time during the EOI.
- Applicants may ensure better understanding of the opportunity and the requirement of the Expression of Interest by contacting Ryoba Chacha at zeustanzania9@gmail.com

PRE-QUALIFICATION SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Interested Vendors/Contractors will be pre-qualified through the pre-qualification evaluation criteria stipulated in the detailed REOI.
- Applicants/Interested parties can obtain the project scope in the detailed REOI by emailing zeustanzania9@gmail.com. A hardcopy will also be available at **Zeus Resources Tanzania Limited**, located along **Yacht Club Road, House 19, Dar es Salaam Tanzania**.
- While preparing and sending their responses to this REOI, Contractors are requested to take note of important REOI dates as outlined below. Contractors will be notified in case of any changes in the dates indicated below:
 - REOI Publication date: 5th February 2024
 - Deadline for posing REOI related questions and clarifications: 14th February 2024 at 16:00hrs Tanzania local time;
 - Deadline for responding to REOI questions and clarifications 16th February 2024 at 16:00 hrs. Tanzania Local Time;
 - REOI Closing Date: 19th February 2024 at 16:00 hrs, Tanzania Local time.

NOTE

Information of the Company's Projects is available free of charge at the following address Projects – Gladiator (gladiatorresources.net)

Italy teams up with AfDB as it unveils \$5.95bn plan for Africa

By Special Correspondent

ITALIAN Prime Minister Georgia Meloni and the President of the African Development Bank Group Dr Akinwumi Adesina have agreed to work together to strengthen the alliance between Italy and Africa.

Meloni and Adesina held a bilateral meeting in Rome recently, whereby more than 25 African heads of state and government attended the summit as well as representatives of the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations, international financial institutions, and multilateral development banks.

During the summit, Meloni unveiled her almost \$6 billion Mattei plan to bolster economic links and create an energy hub for Europe, while curbing African emigration to Europe. The plan is named after the founder of Italy's national oil and gas company Enrico Mattei.

Adesina said the AfDB was ready to work with the Italian government because "the Mattei Plan fits into the priorities of the bank," known as the High 5s.

He thanked Italy for being a staunch supporter of the African Development Bank Group and said to the Italian prime minister: "You can count on

the African Development Bank as your partner of choice."

Meloni said she looked forward to building an alliance with Africa and that "the role of the African Development Bank is useful."

The Mattei Plan covers five sectors: education and training; health; energy; water and agriculture, which Meloni said was the plan's focus.

Adesina told the Italian prime minister about the AfDB's initiatives to transform development of the African continent.

He outlined its work on accelerating the drive to achieve food security through its Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme which it has so far delivered to more than 13 million farmers.

He explained that the technology has helped Ethiopia—which used to import wheat—become self-sufficient and a net exporter of the product.

“She looked forward to building an alliance with Africa and that ‘the role of the African Development Bank



Faustine Malecha, an assistant investigation officer with the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau in Dodoma Region, pictured in Dodoma city at the weekend addressing a Tanzania Higher Learning Institutions Students Organisation (Tahliso) general meeting on the agency's activities. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Rare romance of Chinese-Tanzanian couple blossoms

By Special Correspondent, Zanzibar

WHEN talking about his Tanzanian wife, Dilshat Tursun, a 30-year-old Chinese man, could not help but break into a broad smile.

Dilshat, from Kashgar city in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in northwest China, and his wife, Hadiya Msham Abdulla, from Zanzibar, have been leading a happy life since they tied the knot in Kashgar more than three years ago.

"We first met in 2016 when we were university students. I was studying at Fujian Medical University, and he was studying at Fuzhou University," she said.

They lived together in a university town and always met at a local restaurant that served Xinjiang food, which Hadiya was obsessed with. They went there every weekend to enjoy food and lovely ambience, and slowly fell in love.

"He was handsome, spoke good English, and played basketball well, and I often went to see him play basketball when I was in school," she recalled.

They eventually married in Xinjiang in May 2020 and travelled to Zanzibar in 2023 to celebrate their wedding with her family.

"My family was quite shocked when I told them I was going to

marry a Chinese man because they thought there would be many difficulties for an intermarried couple," she said.

"But coping with different cultures is very easy because we are all human beings, and our basic needs are the same: to breathe, to eat and to sleep."

Still, she spared no effort to learn the Chinese culture, and Dilshat also tried hard to learn the Zanzibari culture, and in a way, they blended very well.

"After all, love conquers all," Dilshat said.

After getting married, they opened a coffee shop in the old city of Kash-

gar where the ancient Silk Road passes. "Endless tourists visit there every year, and our coffee shop, called Dilhediya, helps us make a living," Dilshat said.

Now they have a one-year-old son named Mayir Dilshat. They teach him several languages, including English, Kiswahili and Chinese.

"He picks up a few words from here, a few words from there. Now he can speak two Kiswahili words, one English word and one Chinese word, but at some point in his life he will catch up with all the languages," she said.

The couple came to visit the family in Zanzibar again last month for

the holidays. During their vacation, they travelled to almost every corner of Zanzibar and recently visited Mikumi National Park in Morogoro Region.

"It was a memorable visit. It was a dream come true for my husband because he always saw the animals on TV. He was very happy and excited to see the animals, including lions, elephants, zebras and giraffes, some of which are special because you can't find them in the Asian continent," she said.

She added that they send a lot of messages to China about what they have seen in the national park, and they will be promoting Tanzania so

that more Chinese visit Tanzania for tourism.

Msham Abdulla Khamis, Hadiya's father, 72, said that he respected his daughter's choice of love.

"My daughter and her husband live very peacefully and enjoy life together. So many people admire them and visit their coffee shop. They go there not just to drink coffee, but to observe how a Chinese and an African couple live together in harmony.

"Thanks to the friendship between Tanzania and China that has been in place for the past six decades; it has provided a chance for a Chinese boy and a Tanzanian girl to meet and fall in love," she said.

NCBA BANK TANZANIA LIMITED TARIFF GUIDE EFFECTIVE FROM 6TH MARCH 2024. Table with columns for ITEM/TRANSACTION, TZS, FCY, TRADE FINANCE TRANSACTION, TZS, and FCY. Includes sections for Deposits Rates, CURRENT ACCOUNTS, OVER THE COUNTER CASH WITHDRAWAL, CHEQUES, SAVINGS ACCOUNTS, ELECTRONIC BANKING, TELEGRAPHIC TRANSFERS INTERNATIONAL, TANZANIA INTERBANK SETTLEMENT SYSTEM (TISS), and CREDIT CARDS.

NOTE: USD EQUIVALENT WILL APPLY FOR TRANSACTIONS IN OTHER CURRENCIES OUTSIDE TZS AND USD (KES GBP AND EUR)



Shinyanga regional commissioner Christina Mndeme (2nd-L) cuts the ribbon yesterday at the handing-over of 42 houses built in compensation for people rendered homeless when a Mwadui Diamond Mine mud storage pond collapsed, destroying their houses, on November 7, 2022. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

Hundreds of works submitted for data journalism excellence awards

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

A TOTAL of 529 works of journalists from various media outlets have been submitted for consideration in data journalism excellence awards for women's leadership reporting organised by the Tanzania Media Women's Association -Zanzibar (TAMWA-Zanzibar).

A statement released yesterday by Dr Mzuri Issa, TAMWA-Zanzibar director, said among the works are radio and television programmes, newspaper articles and content from social media platforms, all produced and broadcasted by their respective organizations from 1st of January to December 31, 2023.

"These works show how journalists have elevated their awareness of reporting on women's leadership, encouraging women and young girls to be more self-confident and inspired about obtaining various leadership positions. Additionally, they also serve to educate the community on the significance of women in leadership roles," she said.

According to her, the aim of the awards is to encourage journalists to use their pens and media platforms to educate the public about the importance of women's issues in

leadership, thereby promoting increased women participation in various decision-making positions.

This marks the third occasion for the awards to take place in Zanzibar, and they are expected to be held in early March 2024.

The data journalism excellence awards for women's leadership reporting is jointly organized by TAMWA-Zanzibar, Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association (ZAFELA), the Association for Environment, Gender Equality and Advocacy in Pemba (PEGAO) in collaboration with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Tanzania.



These works show how journalists have elevated their awareness of reporting on women's leadership, encouraging women and young girls to be more self-confident and inspired about obtaining various leadership positions

Victims of dam accident get houses, others await cash

By Guardian Correspondent, Kishapu

SHINYANGA Regional Commissioner Christina Mndeme has handed over 42 houses to people who were affected by dam accident at Petra Diamonds' Williamson mine in Mwadui which led to flooding that extended into nearby community, affecting 47 households and 59 individuals.

The handing over event was held on Friday at Mwang'olo village, Mwa-

dui Ward in Kishapu District where the houses have been built.

Mndeme lauded the mine for executing the government's directive of compensating those who were affected by the disaster by building houses and some given cash.

She asked beneficiaries to maintain their houses and plant more trees as "the government has overseen this process so that you live in good houses."

The RC assured four people who resorted to be given cash that the mine and the government are working on the matter so that their rights are accorded.

She directed the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) in Kishapu District and Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO) to deliver water and electricity services quickly to those houses to improve people's lives.

Bernard Mihayo, mine community development manager at Williamson mine said that 47 victims lost their houses and the mine built another house for a deserving person, meaning they had to build 48 houses.

"So far, we've built 42 houses and two more are under construction and two houses delayed as the beneficiaries earlier denied to be given houses," he said.

Mihayo also said that the assessment of compensation for their houses which were mud-thatched houses is 1.8m/-, the money that cannot build a house, but as a mine they felt it is good to build houses worth 20m/- for each to improve their housing standards.

He said that the next step is to shift 14 graves of the victims, as well as to start projects to improve their income, including raising chicken

and goats.

One of the beneficiaries, Samuel Kulwa, thanked the government and Mwadui mine, for building them houses, saying they now live in better houses that have replaced the mud-thatched ones.

On November 7, 2022, the eastern wall of the tailings storage facility at the Williamson open pit operation burst open, causing the accident.

Senegalese president postpones election amid integrity concerns

DAKAR

SENEGALESE President Macky Sall postponed the presidential elections due later this month in a decree announced on Saturday, citing controversies over the disqualification of some candidates and allegations of corruption in election-related cases.

Sall said he signed a decree repealing the law that convened the electoral body just as campaigning was set to begin for Feb. 25 election, in one of West Africa's most stable democracies.

"For my part, my solemn commitment not to run in the presidential election remains unchanged, finally, I will engage in an open national dialogue to bring together the conditions for a free, transparent and inclusive election," the Senegalese leader said, without announcing a new date for the vote.

The decision came just hours before the start of the election campaign and follows the establishment of a parliamentary commission investigating the integrity of two judges from the Constitutional Council.

President Sall revealed that he had revoked his earlier decree, which set the election for February 25, after concerns were raised about the integrity of the electoral process. This unprecedented move in Senegal marks the first direct universal suffrage presidential election delay since 1963.

In his address, President Sall expressed his commitment to initiating an open national dialogue to ensure conditions for a free, transparent, and inclusive election, although he did not specify a new date.

Initially elected in 2012 for a seven-year term and re-elected in 2019 for five years, President Sall had earlier declared that he would not seek another term, designating Prime Minister Amadou Ba as his successor.

The Constitutional Council had excluded several candidates from the election, including opposition figures Ousmane Sonko and Karim Wade, sparking controversy.

The political landscape in Senegal is now in flux, with the postponement raising questions about the country's electoral process and the challenges faced by the opposition candidates who were disqualified.



Adila Hilal Vuai (C), international cooperation and coordination director of Zanzibaris in diaspora, briefs journalists in Zanzibar at the weekend on a meeting expected to be held in Zanzibar today and collect stakeholders' proposals on amendments to the Foreign Policy of 2001. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Mobile irrigation operators seek support to expand services

By Correspondent Felix Andrew

MOBILE irrigation service providers in Njombe, Songwe and Iringa regions have called on the government and development stakeholders to help them expand their operations to increase farmers' productivity and improve livelihoods.

They made the call when speaking in separate interviews with journalists who visited them recently to see the use of mobile irrigation tools that were donated last year by Agricultural Markets Development Trust (AMDT).

Edom Ndelwa, a service provider at Mtwan-

go Ward in Njombe Region said that most of them do not have enough capital to run the business.

"We need more support, especially mobile irrigation infrastructure, that would enable us conduct our activities easily," he said.

Ndelwa said most of the service providers do not have enough capital to expand mobile irrigation services which play crucial role for agricultural development. He thanked AMDT and other organizations for supporting mobile irrigation schemes in the area.

"They provided me with some irrigation

infrastructure but I need water sprinkler and more pipes to bring services to more farmers," he said.

Ndelwa also said there are some financial institutions which showed interest in supporting mobile irrigation in Mtwango Ward.

Richard Mahenge, a service provider at Chang'ombe Village in Songwe Region said a total of 13 farmers have registered to receive mobile irrigation services during the dry season this year.

"We have many farmers who want to access our service but more tools are needed to support the initiative," he said.

He said some farmers at the village tap water from Songwe River but many are far away hence the need for mobile irrigation for those who cannot drill wells to feed their farms.

At the moment a trip of water bowser (15,000 litres) to a nearby farm at the village is sold at between 35,000/- to 40,000/-

Jovita Mzena, a service provider at Utosi Village in Mufindi District, Iringa Region said she had started to provide mobile irrigation services to a few farmers.

"I received water pump in November last year; when the rains started I managed to

provide service to few farmers but I believe more will seek my services during dry season," she said.

Delta Shilla, AMDT programme officer said the organization has started to sensitize and support few farmers on mobile irrigation services.

"We want to see many farmers engage in agriculture throughout the year by using mobile irrigation," he said.

Shilla urged farmers who attended demonstrations on mobile irrigation to encourage others to engage in profitable agricultural activities.

UN receives reports about starvation deaths in Sudan

KHARTOUM

THE World Food Programme (WFP) says it has received reports of people dying of starvation in Sudan, where a war has displaced millions of people since last April.

Violence is escalating between the army and a rival paramilitary force as they fight for control of the country.

Security threats and roadblocks have made the work of humanitarian agencies nearly impossible.

Nearly five million people across Sudan now face emergency levels of hunger.

This is twice the number since the start of the conflict, according to the WFP.

The humanitarian body says it has only been able to deliver vital aid to 10 percent of those in need in areas embroiled in the conflict.

These include the capital, Khartoum, and the western Darfur region, which have endured some of the worst violence.

Earlier this week, the UN's refugee agency said almost eight million

people had been forced from their homes by the conflict.

Both sides in the conflict - the army and the Rapid Support Forces - have been accused of war crimes. Attempts to broker peace between the warring factions have so far failed, and in recent weeks fighting has only intensified.



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University of Dodoma lecturer Aziza Konyo (L), a PhD student at the Arusha-based Nelson Mandela African University of Science and Technology, pictured in Tanga city at the weekend presenting to Tanzania Sisal Board director general Saddy Kambona a sample of enriched fertiliser she has come up with after conducting research on sisal residue. Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchalla

Illegal fishing vessels deny Africa \$11bn annually

By Special Correspondent

ILLEGAL, unreported and unregulated fishing costs Africa up to \$11.49 billion annually, with over 75 percent of the world's industrial fishing vessels operating "incognito."

According to satellite images recorded in the past three years and published in the Nature Journal by researchers from Global Fishing Watch, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Duke University, most vessels don't broadcast their location and are not detected by monitoring systems.

As a result, the world has no clear picture of who fishes what.

In a new study, researchers have used machine learning and satellite imagery to create a global map of large vessel traffic and offshore infra-

structure. By synthesising GPS data with five years of radar and optical imagery, the researchers were able to identify vessels that failed to broadcast their positions. Using machine learning, they then concluded which of those vessels were likely fishing.

They found that 75 percent of the world's industrial fishing vessels are not publicly tracked, mostly in Africa and South Asia.

The survey articulates the challenges in managing natural resources in Africa such as protected marine areas, with many of the unmapped vessels said to engage in illegal fishing. David Kroodsma, director of research and innovation at the NGO Global Fishing Watch and co-lead author of the study, and a team of researchers went through over two million gigabytes of satellite imagery

from 2017 to 2021 to spot vessels and offshore infrastructure in coastal waters.

"Although not all boats are obligated by law to transmit their position, the presence of vessels not participating in public monitoring systems, commonly referred to as 'dark fleets,' presents obstacles to the conservation and management of natural resources. Studies have found many dark fleets operating within various marine protected areas," the report says.

The researchers detected 63,300 vessel occurrences between 2017 and 2021, with three-quarters of them not appearing in public monitoring systems.

In East Africa, Kenya has declared war on illegal fishing by suspending licensing of foreign fishing vessels for

not remitting required levies and declaring fish catches.

Last year, President William Ruto said Kenya loses about \$97 million a year to foreign boats fishing without permission.

According to the Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA), foreign-owned vessels, with China, Seychelles, Italy, Taiwan, and Hong Kong flags are appearing multiple times on the tracking site, some recording more than 50,000 fishing hours within Kenyan waters. Kenya loses between 11 million and 26 million tonnes of seafood annually due to illegal fishing in its territorial waters. The fishing licensing has always been shrouded in secrecy, with the number of licensed vessels remaining undisclosed.

According to the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region

(IFC-IOR) 2022 report, 392 incidents of illegal, unreported and unreported (IUU) fishing were monitored in 2021 compared to 379 in 2020 in the Indian Ocean.

In June 2023, Spanish and French vessels found fishing in the exclusive economic zones of Somalia, Mauritius, India and Mozambique without the permission of these countries were blacklisted after the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) discovered they were repeat offenders.

A situational report by IOTC says: "Fleets such as these cause irreversible damage to our ocean, threatening marine life and the people who depend on it around the world."

Despite Kenya embracing the plan of action that came from the "Agreement on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal,"

unreported and unregulated fishing which was adopted in 2009 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (Fao), it has failed to deter illegal fishing losing billions to foreign fishers.

In 2022, The World Trade Organisation (WTO) indicated that IUU fishing was ranked top after piracy as the primary maritime security threat in African waters.

IUU fishing often leads to other crimes, such as drug and weapons smuggling, human trafficking and piracy with WTO works to end harmful fuel subsidies countries pay to finance their distant-water fishing fleets.

The negotiations which have been ongoing for 20 years, China and India have been in the forefront opposing an end to the subsidies.

Burundian officials on public procurement benchmarking

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

OFFICIALS from Burundi Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARMP) are in Tanzania for a five-day visit aimed at learning how to improve efficiency in the management of public procurement.

The officials will also learn about the development of national e-procurement system in Tanzania (NeST) by the Tanzania Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA).

The delegation was received at the weekend in Dodoma Region by chief executive officer of PPRA Eliakim Maswi, who said that the visit was part of the cooperation of East African countries in the exchange of knowledge.

Maswi said that one of the features that attracted Burundi was Tanzania's success in building the NeST system which has helped increase accountability, transparency and fair competition to ensure value for money in the public procurement process.

"Tanzania and Burundi cooperate in many areas and learn from each other; when we go to Burundi we learn from them, when they come to Tanzania they learn the steps we take to improve the management of public procurement, and this is part of the East African Community's resolutions," he said.

He said last December Tanzania hosted a delegation from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which oversees major agricultural projects in Tanzania, Burundi and other countries.

"When we presented how the NeST system works, they saw that it as an important step to increase accountability and IFAD is cooperating with us to ensure its success and use is achieved quickly," he added.

He said PPRA showed delegates some of the major projects carried out by the government of Tanzania in Dodoma through public procurement procedures, including the construction of the University of Dodoma (UDOM) and the government city of Mtumba.

Maswi said the delegation from Burundi was informed about the new law on public procurement signed by President Samia Suluhu Hassan last year.

Nduwimana Cloude, leader of the delegation, said they were impressed with Tanzania's decision to build the NeST system using local experts. "We appreciate the way PPRA received and welcomed us; we have come here to learn about your NeST system which we know is well built and we will benefit from this knowledge. We are very happy because it is our first time to come to Dodoma," he said.



Public Procurement Regulatory Authority CEO Eliakim Maswi (C, facing camera) pictured in Dodoma city at the weekend hosting talks with a delegation from Burundi. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

New coffee genetic map promises better brews

By Helen Briggs

SCIENTISTS have unravelled the genetic secrets of coffee in a discovery they say paves the way for more flavoursome brews.

Researchers in Italy pieced together the most complete genetic map yet of Arabica coffee, the world's most popular drink.

The new insights into the plant's genetic make-up will help in the breeding of new coffee crops.

And it may lead to coffee plants that

can cope better in a warming world.

"We have produced a new sequence map of coffee, Arabica," said Dr Michele Morgante of the University of Udine in Italy.

"This tool may give us ways to provide coffee growers with better plants that appeal more to the consumers, and cope better with changing climatic conditions." The study used the latest DNA sequencing technology to examine the genetic make-up of the Arabica coffee plant in unprecedented detail.

The knowledge allows scientists to home in on the genes important in coffee production, such as the distinctive sweet, soft flavour of the brew.

It may also help coffee growers develop new varieties of coffee with particular flavours and aromas as well as those able to tolerate tougher growing conditions.

Rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall are altering the conditions under which coffee plants are grown, leading to decreased yields and increased attack from pests and

diseases.

The study is published in the scientific journal, Nature Communications.

Dr Aaron Davis of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, said it was an "important step forward in our understanding of the genetic diversity of coffee which may help to guide the future development of this economically important and much-loved crop species." Jeremy Torz, co-founder of the London-based coffee roasting business, Union Hand-roasted Coffee, said much of what we taste and enjoy

about coffee is a result of the work of coffee farmers - and the science will help them develop plants that are well-suited to producing good coffee in a changing environment.

"It's a reassurance that with the combination of good science and passionate farmers, the brew that we love will be around in a form that we know it for a lot longer," he said.

Arabica beans are deemed to have a superior taste. The coffee is grown in the mountains and accounts for over 60 percent of the world's coffee pro-

duction. Arabica has limited resilience to climate change; farmers are already experiencing the impacts of elevated temperatures and low or erratic rainfall. Other threats to coffee production include price fluctuations, pests and diseases, and extreme weather.

The vast majority of wild coffee grows in the remote forests of Africa and on the island of Madagascar. Beyond Africa, wild coffee is found in other tropical climates, including parts of India, Sri Lanka and Australia.

MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2024

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

New carbon emission levies justified by disaster spending

IN the wake of agreements during recent and earlier global conferences on climate change, some African countries are applying - or studying how to apply - emission levies of various sorts.

One example is Ghana, where reports say a recently introduced levy is touching off mixed reactions.

The move is being applied on vehicle owners, with people having to pay an annual levy for carbon emissions from their petrol- or diesel-powered vehicles. It's not surprising that many people are opposed to the charges seeing them as adding burdens while conditions of living are already difficult.

Arguing that the levies will help cut the country's emissions and raise more revenue for public coffers begs some questions - for instance, in the effect desired.

Carbon taxation basically relates to efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels, which hardly applies here in that it is scarcely true that governments in Africa are actually discouraging the use of cars, trucks or motorcycles.

Reports say that Ghana is the third African country to introduce a form of carbon tax, after South Africa and Mauritius. Looking at the two other countries and then comparing them with Ghana, there is an impression of a higher level of credibility for Mauritius as an island nation grossly concerned with climate change.

What can't be said is whether there is also an impression there that local emissions are a factor in the country's climatic twists and turns. But the significance here relates to size and the probable climatic snag like drying up of underground water sources owing to drought.

How far the levy actually promises to carry forward the stated agenda of promoting the use of eco-friendly technology and green energy is a different matter. Were it that there is a free energy mar-

ket where fossil fuel and green energy producers compete, or an energy mix environment with usable price differentials, that objective could be validated as likely to influence energy mix behaviour.

But that sort of environment hardly obtains in Africa as most countries have public electricity firms - which would equalize prices and absorb energy sourcing differentials.

That is why some skepticism is warranted for formal environmental justification of the levy as its opposite is impractical. No behaviour change can be ignited if the math isn't right, with little cost advantage for energy shift migration.

Whether indeed charging the levy was an act of insensitivity as several fuel and road-use taxes already are is a different matter, as taxes or levies have a dual objective first for collecting resources and second for fostering equity.

Those using commuter buses only will feel little of the pain as only the one running the bus pays for emissions produced, while those running cars and motorcycles will pay in a more directly individual manner.

The cost of living issue is without merit unless there is a substantial problem with government expenditure or social sector delivery gaps.

As a commentator with an economic think-tank argues, the new levies will not actually lower emissions, as levies will not prevent anybody from driving. In that case, the carbon emissions will still be produced and the levy is seen as futile and thus a bad idea.

The critic and those with a similar mindset have also to show if governments need funds for climate-related relief - for instance, if there is disaster as we have often noticed - and that this should just come from routine taxes because levying heavier polluters will not reduce emissions.

With biogas and briquettes abundant, maybe shifting to gas not that urgent

TOP officials in various public institutions are working on modalities to facilitate smooth migration from the use of charcoal or firewood for cooking in establishments with hundreds of people.

It is a measure meant to reduce the demand for charcoal and firewood, opting for cleaner energy more at home with concerns on environmental various prisons in implementation of a widely supported clean energy uptake drive.

On the whole, these establishments are expected to move to the use of natural gas being marketed and applauded by public officials.

The Prisons Service is sort of leading the way in decamping from charcoal, and there is no pressure from government ranks for adopting cheap coal mixture tablets or briquettes.

We have plenty of coal in the Mchuchuma-Liganga area which is now being 'mined' for export. But we have witnessed wanton felling of trees since Independence a whole six decades ago, despite at least 50 years of environmental awareness in between.

Yes, there have been intermittent attempts to get the likes of State Mining Corporation to issue briquettes that households and public institutions can put to good use.

While the decamping from use of charcoal is commonly celebrated with a tree planting events, it remains largely uncertain how costs related to the use of charcoal and firewood compare with those of using natural gas.

There are at times when some plausible comparisons show that gas is cheaper as charcoal is less available these days, but there are foods (including beans) with respect to which using gas in cooking is routinely skipped.

This is often the case for roasting and boiling, though some small restaurants

have adopted newer "technology" of roasting using slow gas while those without such tools stick to charcoal.

A science journalist once prepared a series of articles for newspapers in Tanzania on using biogas with relatively low amounts of capital and literally inexhaustible supply or raw materials for sourcing biogas energy.

The monopoly supply of electricity to households and offices came under attack for reportedly ensuring that no company would be licensed to provide electricity to this or that section of the population.

That leaves out the commercial use of biogas by strictly private solar installations if there is a power cut, and so biogas technology withered except in a few areas.

So the formula obtaining in the clean energy shift campaign is now obtaining cylinders and starting using natural gas and, as we have it aplenty, this appeal looks natural and well deserved.

Yet, the government has an opportunity to provide poor families with briquettes costing much less than charcoal and sold in small quantities - with supply costing even just one thousand shillings proving enough for several few days' use.

However, gas marketing preferences and middle-class biases for the use of clean energy often take precedence, occupying all the frequencies to the detriment of the application of biogas technology in schools and prisons with less cash to spare.

Were it that institutions were encouraged to think of more alternatives to shift to or adopt, the case of the use of briquettes would be much different. That is assuming that there were private firms able to produce enough of the items.

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An open letter to parents: Let's get our children off the screens

By BV

Hi, Parent, I know this does not reach you well: you're exhausted. But if you have the time, please read me out. I write to raise the alarm on the effects of screens and social media on our children. I write to share our own struggles and maybe help a few of us along the way.

My son was born in 2011 and he was immediately socialised to an iPad. With hardly an intelligible word out of his mouth, he knew which buttons to push and how to make his toddler apps work. He loved the puzzles, the flash cards, and the songs on YouTube - and we loved seeing him learn.

At 16 months, we took him on a long-haul flight, and having the iPad onboard was crucial. His paediatrician, a tall, well-dressed, loquacious man, had surprisingly little to say about screens. He did caution us that the science on it was still coming together.

When my son turned five and his sister three, both were happily swiping at an iPad, slicing up fruit and launching excitable birds from a catapult.

It was around this time that my wife, who does communications and media research, first learned about the ill effects of screens (and social media) on children and teens.

It was worrying enough that we started limiting our children's use of the iPad - which led to unhappy children. Soon, more research pointed to even worse effects, and we somehow slimmed down screen usage in our household.

Fast forward to 2019, and the pandemic happened. Students, including my children, were locked down and forced to take online classes. For a whole two years.

The unintended consequence: A fully-digitised student life, and the hardening of an already problematic relationship with screens and social media. My children were on screens for at least six hours a day. And, at that time, many already knew that screens and social media were bad for our children. In a 2020 survey of American parents, 66 per cent say parenting is harder than two decades ago, with many citing technology and social media as the reasons.

Now, 2024 and what was once mounting evidence has become a mountain. Excessive screen usage can: limit a child's ability to develop optimally, lead to childhood obesity, poor language development, sleep disorders (especially among young adults), and mental health conditions including depression (again, especially among young adults).

We now also know how social media content amplifies inadequacy and extreme self-loathing, and erodes

self-esteem, especially among teens.

Still, there are some things I found most other parents do not know. First, excessive screen use obstructs a child's ability to properly interpret emotions.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when my daughter was going through grades 1 and 2 online, it was clear that she could not develop any relationships with any of her classmates or her teachers. They were just images on a screen, barren of any emotion.

Not having any real connections with her classmates and teachers online, our seven year-old child started reading to a plant during the second year of lockdown.

And, I found that my children developed a peculiar anxiety: they found it hard to untangle their lives from devices. They started paying more attention to their screens than to us human beings.

Remember when we got out of school at 5 PM and we wouldn't hear from our teachers until the next morning? That freedom no longer exists for our children. Schools - from teachers to group mates, from gossip to bullies - now have access to our children 24/7. Just like our work often does. And, that's pretty bad.

Then, of course, there's all the garbage online. So many times I've spotted and reported racist, sexist, and patently offensive content I find on Facebook and Instagram - posts I know will harm any child.

Now, I want to talk about academic outcomes. PISA scores from 2018 and 2022 have Filipino children at or near the bottom in Math, Science and Reading among 81 countries. The Department of Education calculates our students are as much as six years behind.

Now, PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment] is a worldwide OECD study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in member and non-member nations intended to evaluate educational systems by measuring 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance on mathematics, science, and reading.

More significantly, the study found that globally, scores are all in decline. There are many reasons, but the PISA report sure thinks phones are the main culprit. I'll quote from a recent article in The Atlantic: PISA finds that students who spend less than one hour of "leisure" time on digital devices a day at school scored about 50 points higher in math than students whose eyes are glued to their screens more than five hours a day. This gap held even after adjusting for socioeconomic factors (emphasis mine).

In sum, students who spend more time staring at their phones do worse in school, distract other students around them, and feel worse about their lives.

Recognizing the harmful effects of both screens and the social media they ferry, schools and governments have started to act. In the UK, the Online Safety Act requires social media platforms to shield children from harmful content or face steep fines.

In the US, the federal government has issued a public warning about social media, with the Surgeon-General adding: "There are ample indicators that social media can also have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents." The State of Utah has banned social media for children in the state.

UNESCO has called for a global ban on smartphones in schools. In Vietnam, only students in middle and high schools are allowed to use smart phones, and only with the teacher's permission. (Vietnam has consistently outperformed many developing countries and even wealthier countries in PISA assessments.)

Elsewhere, France and the Netherlands will have fully banned smartphones in schools by the end of 2024. Italy and China have also banned phones in classrooms.

In Spain, there is good evidence that their school cellphone ban has reduced cyber-bullying and improved grades in math and science. A study in Norway yields similar results, noting that a reduction in bullying targeting female students was "particularly pronounced". But everyone knows that children are too smart to be policed that way. They will find a way to get online. After all, these devices and their content are designed to be as addictive as possible. So, parent to parent, I'm sharing a few things that have worked for us, so far:

First, tell your kids everything I said above. Try "I just learned how bad screens are for you, and now I think you should learn it too." Or: "We made a mistake in letting you use your devices too much. We're

sorry. Now, let me explain why." Tell everyone at home too.

I always remind my children to "pay attention to what you are paying attention to". I tell them that the people that "talk to them" on YouTube don't see them. They don't see that they're talking to children. And, frankly, if those TikTokers were in our house and I heard them talk that way, I would ask them to leave.

Second, be ruthless with how your children spend their time on screens. You are central to their access. No screens at sundown, but give them something else to do. You may have to bug their devices with monitoring apps and use their hours to negotiate chores if you want.

More importantly, know what they are on, when they are on it and who they are on with. The comment sections are a no-go zone.

I know books can get expensive, but reading pays off immensely.

Third is the hardest: be the screen time for your children. If you are having a conversation with them - that is high time they were not on a screen.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, I introduced my children to my hobby of playing board games. I felt it was perfect: board games were analog, cognitively challenging, and allowed us to socialise. That proved to be a success.

Board games promote literacy, teamwork, strategic thinking, and is great for boosting confidence, and learning how to fail.

Finally, maybe we can push our schools to be less reliant on digital devices and platforms. Covid-19 is over, so we can let go of our pandemic solutions. Easing them off online platforms and messaging systems would relieve the digital burden on our children, and help wean them off devices.

A new, groundbreaking study from Columbia University shows that children read better on paper than off a screen. So, maybe it will improve their grades; surely it will improve their mental health.

Does it work for us? I think it does, but it takes constant parenting - vigilance, creativity, and reinforcement - to make it stick.

I want to end by saying that I know not every parent has the time and resources we have had. I have spoken to parents who can't offer any alternatives to their children's screens. They recognize the problem and feel powerless fixing it.

Excessive screen time is bad for our children. Its effects are alarming, and we need an intervention. Parenting is exhausting. Still, know that you're not alone in the struggle: reach out, and remain focused on - and reward - the effort. The upshot will be there.

Yours truly: A parent like you.

By Wedaelli Chibelushi

Somalia piracy: Are we witnessing its return off the country's coast?

HIJACKERS are once again targeting ships off Somalia's coast and a recent spike in attacks has brought back memories from more than a decade ago.

That was when armed Somali pirates scoured the waters, forcefully boarding vessels and raking in millions of dollars by demanding ransoms.

That died down and all but disappeared once extensive security measures were put in place, but the events from the past few weeks has raised questions about whether a full-scale resurgence of piracy is possible.

What attacks have happened recently?

According to EUNavfor Atalanta, a European Union naval force responsible for maritime security along East Africa's coast, at least 14 vessels have been hijacked off the Somali coast since late November.

These include two in that month when an Iranian-flagged fishing boat was attacked and then two days later a Liberian-flagged ship, Central Park, was targeted. In both cases the crews were rescued.

US forces were involved in the Central Park rescue and later said the attackers were likely Somali and that it was "clearly a piracy-related incident".

Then in December the MV Ruen, a ship carrying a Maltese flag, was hijacked. The attackers are still in control of the vessel and 17 crew members remain stuck on board. This was the first successful hijacking off Somalia in six years, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), an influential non-profit organisation that aims to tackle maritime crime.

In January, attacks continued with the Indian navy coming to the aid of the sailors in several cases including three this week. On Friday it said it freed 19 crew members - 11 Iranians and eight Pakistanis - "who had been held captive by the Somali pirates".

What has triggered these hijackings?

Attacks on ships off Somalia appear to be opportunistic, with hijackers likely exploiting a security gap, Troels Burchall Henningsen, associate professor at the Royal Danish Defence College, told the BBC.

International forces began patrolling these waters when piracy surged between 2005 and 2012, but the focus recently moved up into the Red Sea, where Yemen's Houthi rebel group have been attacking ships, he said.

"Militarily speaking, it is such a demanding task to protect against [the Houthis'] missiles and drones. So they're not able to switch between anti-piracy and encountering drones and missiles," Dr Henningsen explained.

This theory has been echoed by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), a regional body comprised of countries in nearby East African waters, like the Seychelles and Comoros.

In a statement last week, the IOC suggested other reasons for the hijacking spike.

In the initial wave of attacks over a decade ago, some coastal fisherman turned to piracy after their livelihoods were destroyed by illegal fishing from foreign trawlers.

The IOC said current Somali fishery policy has led to another increase in foreign fishing vessels, which may again be pushing coastal Somalis into piracy.

For example, it referenced speculation that the Islamist militant Somalia-based al-Shabab group has been encouraging attacks on ships, via an alleged deal where they get a cut of ransom proceeds in exchange for providing the attackers with protection.

What do the hijackers want from the ships?

Between 2005 and 2012, pirates off the Horn of Africa raked in between \$339m (£266m) and \$413m (£325) by holding crew members hostage and demanding ransom payments, the World Bank has estimated.

Given this history, Samuel Oyewole, a lecturer at Nigeria's Federal University with an expertise in East African piracy, said that the latest set of hijackers are highly likely to be after ransoms. But at this stage it is not possible to know for sure.



The Indian Navy posted a photo of its personnel with the captured hijackers

"In most cases... the efforts of the multinational naval forces in the region actually disrupted the operations.

"So at the end of the day, we may not fully know the intention," he explained.

What has been the reaction to the attacks?

The IOC called the situation "worrying" in its statement, going so far as to urge a UN-appointed anti-piracy group to "asap" hold an emergency meeting about the attacks.

The IMB called the the MV Ruen - which has been under the control of hijackers since 14 December - a "cause for concern". IMB Director Michael Howlett told the BBC that "every successful hijacking" has the potential to encourage others to carry out attacks.

Although the assaults have caused concern within the commercial shipping industry, that concern is being "overshadowed", Dr Henningsen said.

"They are, of course, most worried about the incidents in the Red Sea because it's on a much larger scale and potentially much more dangerous.

Does this indicate a resurgence of Somali piracy?

The IOC said it considers at least six of the recent attacks could be described as acts of piracy.

When asked by the BBC how it designated the assaults of the past couple of months, the IMB said "the attacks on merchant ships are classified as piracy".

And on Tuesday EUNavfor Atalanta said the outcome of the seizing of the MV Ruen could determine whether the region will see a "resurgence".

Amid media reports that the ship's captors are demanding a ransom, EUNavfor Atalanta said the MV Ruen served "as a test to determine if piracy remains a profitable".

"Should piracy prove lucrative in this instance, the conclusion of the monsoon season may herald a resurgence in pirate activities," it continued.

However, Dr Jess Simonds, who specialises in the Horn of Africa's maritime security at the UK's University of Chester, argued that the recent hijackings must be treated on a case-by-case basis.

She pointed out that according to a UN definition, piracy takes place on the high seas, i.e. waters that are outside any country's jurisdiction. Half of the recent hijackings recorded by EUNavfor Atalanta have occurred in Somalia's territorial waters.

"What can become quite dangerous is that any attack at sea, because it's off Somalia, can be considered piracy," Dr

Simonds said.

Meanwhile, both Dr Henningsen and Dr Oyewole believe that although international naval forces in the region may be stretched by the Houthi attacks, they are currently still capable of preventing a full-scale return to the piracy of the past.

What is being done to combat the assaults?

EUNavfor Atalanta said it is "monitoring all suspected cases of piracy" and "together with its maritime security partners deployed in the area and the naval forces of regional countries, remains fully committed to not allowing the resurgence of this threat".

EUNavfor and other forces, for example from India and the US, have successfully foiled many attacks.

But, the IOC complained that EUNavfor "currently runs on a single ship by the Spanish navy" and that "except for the Indian navy, naval forces that actively contribute to counter-piracy have been substantially reduced".

Dr Oyewole told the BBC that in seeking to tackle attacks off Somalia, the international community should look to two geopolitical conflicts.

He noted that the Houthi rebels say they will stop attacking ships - and therefore drawing naval patrols from off Somalia - once Israel stops its war on Gaza. Secondly, Somalia is currently in a diplomatic row with the self-declared republic of Somaliland and Ethiopia over a controversial port deal, and any escalation may leave it less able to police piracy.

"These are issues that the international community have to pay attention to before it gets to a point where it threatens the whole," Dr Oyewole said.

Agencies

China, France see mutual benefit from bilateral economic, trade cooperation

By Shang Kaiyua

THIS year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France.

Over the past 60 years, bilateral trade between the two countries has increased by over 800 times. Today, France is China's third-largest trading partner in the European Union and the third-largest source of actual investment, while China is France's largest trading partner in Asia and the seventh-largest globally.

The economic cooperation between China and France has not only contributed to the development of both countries' economies and improved people's well-being but also injected momentum into the global economic recovery.

In recent years, French delicacies such as Bordeaux wine, Charolais beef, Bonne Maman jam, and President cheese have become increasingly popular in China. Similarly, Chinese home appliances like Midea air fryers, Bear rice cookers, Haier refrigerators, Hisense televisions, and Xgimi projectors are gradually gaining recognition in France.

China and France have strong complementarity in terms of their economies, which creates immense potential for cooperation. China has a competitive advantage in manufacturing, electronic products, and machinery, while France excels in aerospace, nuclear energy, high-end consumer goods, agricultural products, and wines. This provides both countries with vast opportunities for trade and investment.

Soumia Malinbaum, president of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry and vice president of the Paris Île-de-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry, noted that the Chinese consumer market is vast, and

China's economic transformation and upgrading in recent years has brought new opportunities for the French consumer goods and services industry.

The French Pavilion at the previous sessions of the China International Import Expo (CIIE) has garnered immense popularity. France has been invited to serve as the Guest Country of Honor for the 2024 China International Fair for Trade in Services and the 7th CIIE.

"French companies are full of confidence in the Chinese market," said French Ambassador to China Bertrand Lortholary.

According to statistics, by the end of 2021, over 6,000 French companies had been established in China, with a total investment of over \$18 billion.

As China's economy enters a stage of high-quality development and its industrial transformation and upgrading keeps advancing, the country is providing more development opportunities for French companies. In the past two years, many French enterprises have chosen to increase investment and expand their businesses in China.

In October 2022, international beauty giant L'Oréal officially laid the foundation for the world's first self-built intelligent fulfillment center in Suzhou, east China's Jiangsu province. In July 2023, the Chinese-French (Wuxi) Industrial Cooperation Park was inaugurated, with five key projects signed, totaling an investment of over \$1 billion. In September 2023, Airbus broke ground on its second final assembly line for the A320 family aircraft in Tianjin municipality. In November 2023, Faurecia under Forvia officially inaugurated its new electronics mega plant in Fengcheng, Jiangxi province.

"Investing in China is investing in the future," said Jean-Paul Agon, Chairman of L'Oréal.



An employee of China National Nuclear Corporation introduces the corporation's exhibition to the head of the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission at the 5th World Nuclear Exhibition held in Paris, France in November 2023. (People's Daily/Shang Kaiyuan)

According to a spring 2023 survey on French companies in China conducted by the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China, compared to the previous survey, member companies have shown an increased willingness to expand their businesses in China in the next three years. Forty-seven percent of them are planning to further invest in China, the survey said.

China has been the largest Asian country in terms of investment and job creation in France for three consecutive years. China's total direct investment in France stands at nearly \$4.9 billion. So far, Chinese investors have invested in over 900 French companies, employing over 50,000 local employees in France.

The Dongtai offshore wind power

project, jointly invested and constructed by Chinese and French companies, has pioneered the cooperation between Chinese and foreign enterprises in building offshore wind power projects in China.

In recent years, Schneider Electric has continuously increased its research and development investment in the Chinese market and has established five major R&D centers.

Alongside deepening cooperation in traditional fields, China and France have actively explored the potential for cooperation in emerging sectors such as green industries and clean energy. This not only promotes economic development and improves people's well-being in both countries but also enhances confidence and stability in

global economic recovery.

In terms of third-party market, China and France are pioneers in exploring new models of international cooperation. The successful collaboration between China and France in operating the Kribi Deep Seaport in Cameroon serves as a shining example. The growth of port operations has not only significantly promoted the economic development of Cameroon but also benefited landlocked African countries such as the Central African Republic and Chad.

In February 2022, China and France signed a document on the list of the fourth-round demonstration projects of developing third-party market cooperation. The list includes seven projects worth over \$1.7 billion, cover-

ing infrastructure, environmental protection, new energy and others. These projects are launched in areas including Africa and Central and Eastern Europe.

French international affairs expert Bruno Guigue said the real driving force behind cooperation between the two countries is mutual respect, mutual trust, and the recognition of the other as a true partner.

He noted France and China must continue to strengthen their economic relations by striving to build more efficient supply chains.

"By joining hands and working together, France and China can definitely achieve mutual benefits and win-win outcomes," the expert added.

People's Daily

The West's addiction to war must end in Gaza

COPENHAGEN

TWO months ago, an opinion piece I wrote, "The Cries of Gaza Reach Afghanistan," was published with the hope of reminding American and other Western leaders of how quickly wars of terror descend into wars of terror because of their disproportionate impact on civilians and the unpredictability once unleashed.

The United States and its Western alliance of 'forever wars' since 9/11 were all entered under the pretext of defeating terrorism. Instead, they strengthened the political and military standing of those they aimed to destroy while simultaneously causing unimaginable suffering for millions of civilians, including their own citizens.

According to Brown University's Cost of War Project and various other independent research groups, a catastrophic 4.5 million direct and indirect deaths are attributed to Western efforts to "defeat terrorism" since 9/11.

If Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Libya have taught us anything, it should be this.

Today, the Taliban once again rules Afghanistan, and Iraq, after years of sectarian violence resulting from the U.S. invasion has moved closer to the political influence of Iran. In Syria, Bashar al-Assad's autocratic rule remains firmly in place.

The U.S./European NATO-led air war to rid Libya of Muammar Qaddafi and usher in democracy in 2011 was so naively executed that no consideration was paid to how such a reckless, violent endeavor would ultimately trigger a civil war, terrorism, and mass migration.

In Yemen, U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's war against Houthi rebels has led to the deaths of more than 200,000 Yemenis and strengthened the Houthis to the point where, for the "first time in history, a naval blockade is being successfully enacted" by a non-state actor with "no navy and cheap, low-grade technology."

The same hubris that has blinded the West's addiction to answering terrorism with war since 9/11 is the same hubris and hypocrisy that fuels its unconditional support for Israel's war against Hamas today.

To be clear, the attacks of Hamas on October 7, like the attacks of Al Qaeda on 9/11, deserve the harshest global condemnation and a proportional, strategic response that respects international law.

It does not justify the unconditional support and shielding of Israel's punitive war on Gaza's unarmed civilian population, its civilian infrastructure, and its cultural and religious heritage while further risking the lives of the remaining Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

Moreover, this war serves no military objective for Israel and offers no strategic benefit for those aiding and abetting Israel's war from Washing-

ton, London, and various EU capitals.

In seeking to wipe out Hamas, all that Israel and its supporters led by the United States are doing is wiping out Gaza. In 100 days, Israel has succeeded in decimating 4 percent of Gaza's population. Ninety thousand men, women, and children in the Gaza Strip have been killed, seriously injured, or disappeared. 75% of those killed are women and children (Source: Euro-Med Monitor), not Hamas fighters.

If Gaza was called an open-air prison before this war, now it's an open-air graveyard. A closer look at the 4 percent shows an even bigger tragedy unfolding by the minute. Unchallenged by those who are supplying it with arms and political cover, Israel is targeting Palestinian healthcare workers, humanitarian relief specialists, journalists, artists, poets, civil society activists, and educators, along with their families. As if the killing of Gaza's children and its brightest wasn't enough, Israel, through the collaboration of its Western allies, is also obliterating Gaza's residential and public service infrastructure.

According to a Wall Street Journal satellite imagery survey, "Israel has bombarded and destroyed 70 percent of homes in Gaza." According to the W.H.O., "none of Gaza's 36 hospitals are functioning," and universities, including its primary medical teaching college, have been blown up by the I.D.F. Even places of worship, mosques, and churches, historically places of refuge during times of war, haven't been spared the wrath of the Israeli-Western assault on Gaza.

Investigations conducted by The Washington Post and Truthout state, "Israel has deployed over 22,000 U.S. produced bombs on Gaza including 2,000-pound 'bunker bombs' which experts warn are not meant for densely populated areas as well as white phosphorus produced by munitions manufacturer, the Pine Bluff Arsenal, in the U.S. state of Arkansas (source: Arkansas Times) and supplied to Israel by the U.S. government over the years.

Despite massive protests in major U.S. cities calling for a cease-fire, President Biden has bypassed Congress on two occasions to get even more weapons to Israel. The U.K. and Europe, for their part, have also continued to supply key weapons to Israel since the start of the war (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) despite loud calls from their citizens for an immediate cease-fire.

When asked about these atrocities, the only reply from Israeli, American, British, and European officials is, "Do you condemn Hamas?"

The answer should always be yes, but Hamas's crimes against Israeli citizens on October 7 are not a license for Israel and the West to kill, maim, and displace the entire unarmed civilian population of Gaza.

Furthermore, Israel's reasoning that Hamas is using the civilians of



Sa'ada, Yemen. Aftermath of a Saudi airstrikes. Credit: Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

Gaza as human shields and, therefore, justified in deploying any form of military action it deems necessary is not war but a crime against humanity. It's also a disingenuous argument meant to create a fog of war repeated with criminal negligence by countless U.S., U.K., and European leaders and government officials.

It's hard to imagine today, but the suffering being inflicted upon two million Palestinians and the remaining 132 Israeli hostages in Gaza, fatefully connected by history, geography, and the tragic events of October 7, will eventually come to an end.

Perhaps the historic ruling by the International Criminal Court of Justice (I.C.J.) will prevail, but this could take months. In the meantime, the atrocities being committed on Gazans will intensify, and the plight of the Israeli hostages will enter an even darker, more desperate stage.

The ruling of the world's highest court this past week, while legally binding, doesn't have the power of enforcement.

Furthermore, the court's order to Israel to "take measures which prevent further harm on Palestinians" without actually ordering a cease-fire fails to take into consideration the entrenched and sick appetite for war that exists between the world's political elites, who are not only providing their unconditional support for Israel's war on the civilian population of Gaza, but participating and profiting from it.

According to EuroMed Monitoring, "Since the I.C.J.'s ruling, Israel has maintained its rate of killing in Gaza" with either no or muted reactions from Western leaders. The fury but also the inertia of powerful states, regardless of political governance and persuasion, is virtually impossible to stop once their war machines are set in motion. It's no different for Israel.

It took the United States twenty years to end its war in Afghanistan and almost ten years in Iraq. It still maintains counter-terrorism operations with Saudi Arabia in Yemen despite the deadly impact on Yemeni civilians. Europe continues its unwavering support for continued war in Ukraine for no reason other than political arrogance.

Russia, for its part, despite its upper hand in Ukraine, continues to fight with devastating consequences for both Russians and Ukrainians. So, why should Netanyahu and his war cabinet be counted on to rein in their war in Gaza? Like their militarily powerful peers, Israel's war-mongering has no bounds.

The entire population of Northern Gaza is now internally displaced, forced by Israel to move south towards Rafah on the Egyptian border. Despite the I.C.J.'s ruling, Israel has intensified its ground operation towards Rafah, where hundreds of thousands from the North of Gaza are already taking refuge on the outskirts of the city, living for weeks in a harsh desert landscape.

If Israel continues its violent push into Rafah as it has warned Egypt it plans to do, the entire population of Gaza will be trapped in a tiny corner of the desert with no protection and no safe passage out.

Those who survive the daily air strikes are now dying of hunger, disease, and injuries left untreated because of the destruction of Gaza's health care system.

Two million people are now also forced to endure the extreme traumas of trying to survive without any viable shelter, food, clean water and sanitation, electricity, and safe passage while surrounded by constant air and ground bombardment, snipers, drone attacks, the cold and rain of winter and perhaps worse of all the inaction of world leaders who have it in their power to end Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza and, now it's frightening assault on the civilian population of the West Bank, where Hamas isn't even in power.

Only the United States, specifically President Biden, is uniquely positioned to pressure Israel to respect each of the I.C.J.'s rulings. Perhaps, given its reliance on war as an answer to every foreign policy challenge since 9/11, the United States has forgotten it also has something called soft power—something it has sorely neglected the past twenty years.

The easiest way for President Biden to prove that he and the United States are still committed to international law is by announcing his personal support for an immediate cease-fire and showing proof that he's pressuring Israel to

do the same. He will also need to push for a robust and independent humanitarian assistance effort without any interference from Israel at either border crossing into Gaza.

Of course, all of this assumes that President Biden is willing to stop listening to the impenetrable wall of aides and advisors he's created around himself and start seeing with his own eyes the scale of the suffering and the dire risks of a wider, regional war that is already endangering American lives.

According to a confidential source with extensive U.S. foreign policy experience, the deadly attack on U.S. troops on the border between Jordan and Syria this past week "exhibits how even the projection of U.S. military power serves to fuel conflict rather than mitigate it."

For totally preventable reasons, now the families of these American soldiers can join all the Palestinian and Israeli lives torn apart by the sheer insanity of this preventable war and unfolding humanitarian disaster.

Above all, President Biden needs to start hearing the calls of his fellow citizens, including the many thousands of Jewish Americans, who are demanding that their taxes and their nation not be used to wage yet another senseless war in their names.

A failure to do so will have unimaginable consequences not just for Israelis and Palestinians but for the world.

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	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	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	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	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	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)
22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)		22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Malaria vaccine highly effective in young children - new research

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

A MALARIA vaccine which has been developed with the help of Oxford University scientists is up to 78 percent effective in the youngest children, new data suggest.

Last year, the R21/Matrix-M vaccine was recommended for use by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

New data from a phase 3 trial in African children confirms the jab is effective and safe.

Researchers immunised more than 4,800 young children in a trial in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali and Tanzania and found on average 78 percent efficacy in the five to 17-month age group over the first year.

"The Lancet study on R21/Matrix-M phase 3 trials marks a significant advancement in our battle against this global threat," said Adar Poonawalla, of Serum Institute of India.

The experts say that so far, no other vaccine has reported more than 55 percent effectiveness in the same age group.

According to the findings, published in The Lancet, a booster dose at a year maintained good efficacy over the following six to 12 months.

The overall efficacy was between 68 percent and 75 percent for children aged five to 36-months-old.

So far, 25 million doses have been manufactured and made ready for roll-out by the Serum Institute of India (SII) in the next three to four months.

Significantly increased immune responses to the vaccine, and slightly higher vaccine efficacy, were observed in five to 17-month-olds compared to 18 to 36-month-olds, supporting planned vaccine deployment initially from five months of age in African children.

can children.

Malaria is the largest cause of death in young African children, with 600,000 dying every year.

Two vaccines have recently achieved and completed WHO pre-qualification, and initial deployments are starting early this year.

Prof Adrian Hill, chief investigator of the R21/Matrix-M phase 3 trial, said: "The continued high efficacy of this new vaccine in field trials is very encouraging, and consistent with the high efficacy and excellent durability observed in a smaller four-year phase 2b trial."

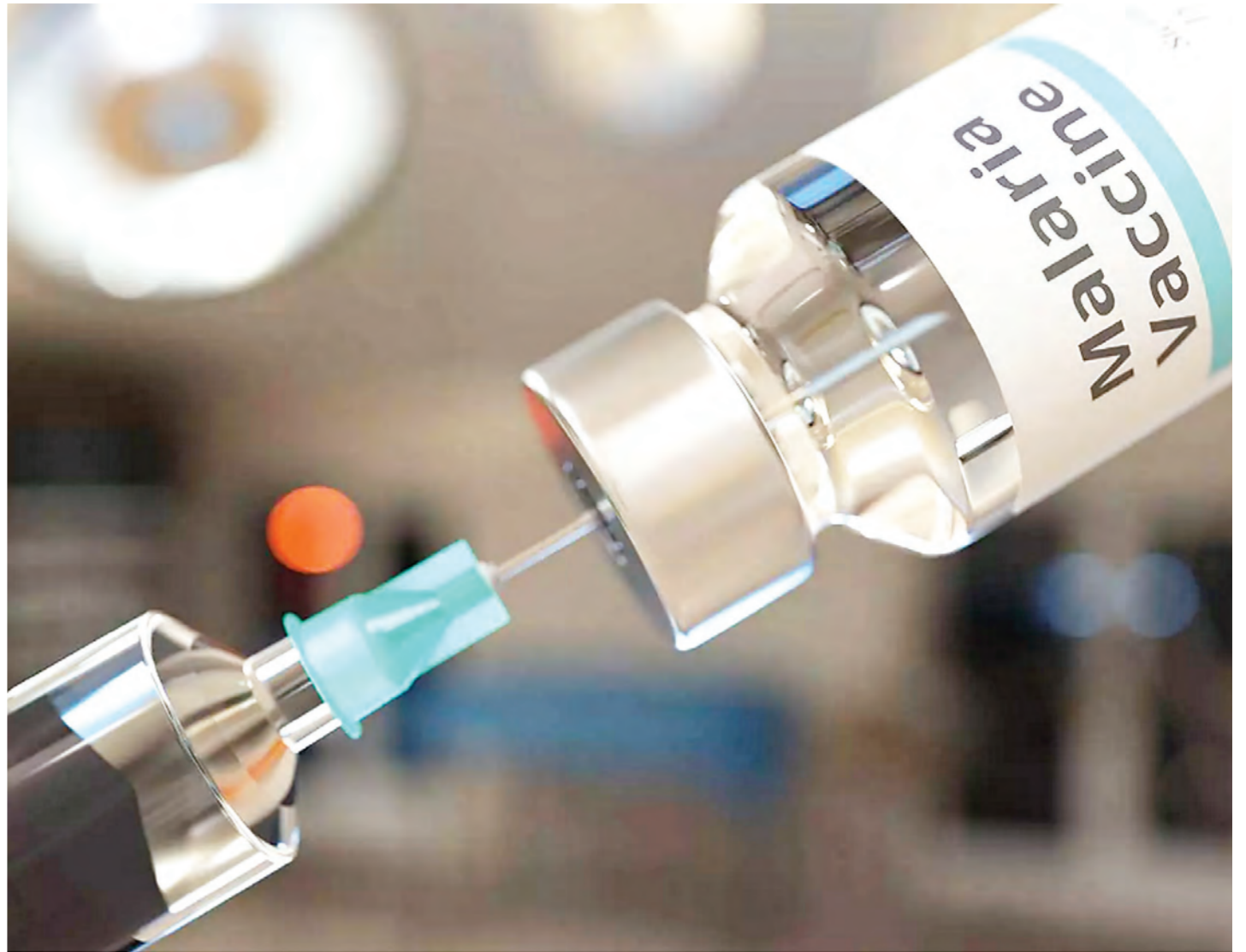
Audrey Duncanson, innovations transition manager at Wellcome, said: "Malaria still remains a huge global health risk for nearly half of the world's population, with the burden of this disease predominantly in African countries causing approximately 600,000 deaths in children under the age of five years.

"The results from this recent phase 3 trial of the malaria vaccine, R21, holds huge potential for a transformative impact on malaria in children. "This is an important step towards getting a highly effective, safe, readily accessible affordable vaccine to protect children from malaria in African countries."

Poonawalla added: "The Lancet study on R21/Matrix-M phase 3 trials marks a significant advancement in our battle against this global threat.

"We are dedicated to making this vaccine available, especially in Africa, where malaria poses a substantial threat to millions of lives, bringing us closer to a malaria-free world."

The vaccine is cheap, costing between US2 (£1.65)



and USD4 (£3.30) per dose.

At least 28 countries in Africa plan to introduce a WHO-recommended malaria jab as part of their national immunisation

programmes.

Matrix-M adjuvant is manufactured by Novavax AB and provided to SII for formulation into the final vaccine drug product.

An adjuvant is an ingredient used in some vaccines to enhance the body's immune response, which helps them to work better.

Antarctica mysteries to be mapped by robot plane

By Georgina Rannard

A TEAM of scientists and engineers has landed in Antarctica to test a drone that will help experts forecast the impacts of climate change.

The autonomous plane will map areas of the continent that have been out of bounds to researchers.

It has been put to the test in extreme weather around Wales' highest peaks.

Its first experiment will survey the mountains under an ice sheet to predict how quickly the ice could melt and feed into global sea-level rise.

Scientists want to understand Antarctica better but they are limited by the existing technology.

Strong winds, below-freezing temperatures and sudden storms are common. These dangerous conditions, as well as dark winters and the need to transport pilots and large amounts of fuel, put limitations on use of traditional crewed planes.

The British Antarctic Survey developed the new drone with UK company Windracers to be easily repaired if something goes wrong.

The drone was tested in Llanbedr, Eryri (also called Snowdonia) in north Wales - a stand-in for the difficult weather and terrain of Antarctica.

During a practice run in strong winds with rain lashing the airfield, engineer Rebecca Toomey explained that the drone can fly to remote areas without concerns for pilots' safety.

It can carry 100kg of cargo up to 1,000km. Instruments including radar and cameras are loaded in the back of the drone and on its wings. Its route is programmed in and an engineer monitors the flight from a computer.

Rebecca will operate the drone from Rothera base in Antarctica, but eventually the British Antarctic Survey hope to fly it from the UK.

It also uses much less fuel than traditional planes - 10 barrels compared to 200 on one research flight - reducing the environmental impact of scientific research on the planet.

The data it collects will be processed at the British Antarctic Survey headquarters in Cambridge.

Scientist Tom Jordan explains that some of it will feed into a model of the continent called BEDMAP2 that shows the

complex shape of the land under the ice. Drawing a question mark over parts of the map, he explains that large areas of Antarctica are still unmapped because no-one has ever been able to get there.

"You can see the mountain ridge under the ice here and here. Does that continue across? Are parts under sea level? I don't know," he says.

"This survey work is really exciting because it's a proper blank in the map."

Antarctica's vast ice covers huge mountain ranges - some the size of the European Alps - and trenches and valleys. Some

areas are below sea level.

It is vital that scientists understand this topography because it determines how quickly the ice will melt.

An ice sheet exposed to warming waters will probably melt more quickly. But if complex mountains block its path, it will decline slower, Tom says.

In its first experiment, radar on the drone will fire radio waves at an ice sheet called Fuchs Piedmont. Some will go into the ice sheet, hit the ground at the base and bounce back. The drone will listen for those reflections and use them to draw the shape of the land.

"It builds up this picture - going line by line. This is another thing that drones are great for - doing things that are really boring," he explains.

Current models of global sea-level rise from melting ice sheets have wide margins, but with a better understanding of Antarctica's topography, Tom says scientists can make more accurate predictions.

"That will help us plan the future," he says. The first flights will be in the next few weeks. Other experiments include surveys of marine life like krill, which are a vital part of the food chain, and surveys of envi-

Hindu woman doctor confident of victory in Pakistan election

PESHAWAR

A woman medical graduate from the Hindu community is making waves, as she is the first minority woman to contest the Pakistan Parliamentary election for a general seat, and she does so in the face of deep-rooted religious traditions and wealthy political opponents.

Dr Saveera Parkash (pictured), a nominee of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) for the February 8 polls, is sure of her victory despite her religion.

"I have been witnessing the support that I am getting from the Muslim-dominated district of Buner in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province," said Parkash.

"My slogan is addressing issues of pollution, women's empowerment, gender equality, female representation, and their health issues, in addition to ensuring respect for all religions," she elaborated.

Born to a Christian mother and Hindu father, she has lived in a Muslim-dominated community; therefore, interfaith harmony is on her wishlist.

"Interfaith harmony is extremely significant because we have seen enmity among different religious sects on flimsy grounds."

"We have to inculcate a sense of brotherhood among all schools of thought and pave the way for lasting peace in the area. We have to respect our religious places and shun differences, as all religions advocate peace and harmony," she says.

Candidates in Buner, one of the 36 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that remained thick with militants from 2007 to 2010, are likely to witness

a hard contest as the women and youngsters have shown support for the first-ever minority female candidate.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, one of Pakistan's four provinces, has 145 elected members, 115 regular seats, 26 reserved for women, and 4 for non-Muslims.

Pakistan is home to 4.4 million Hindus, which is 2.4 percent of the total population.

Her father, a medical doctor and late leader of the PPP and twice Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated by militants in December 2007 in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, inspire her, she says.

"While my ideal is Mother Teresa, my main focus will be women's education. The overall literacy rate is 48 percent, but only 25 percent of females are literate; therefore, I want to spread awareness about the importance of women's education," she says.

Additionally, it is very important to end favoritism and nepotism and ensure merit in the appointment of teachers, especially women.

After completing medical education in July 2022, she saw the issues women visiting hospitals faced and decided to enter politics instead of continuing her career as a doctor, as she believed issues needed to be resolved at the policy level.

"We need more women doctors, nurses, and paramedics to encourage female patients to visit hospitals. Currently, the number of female health workers is extremely low, due to which most of the women don't come to hospitals because they don't want to be seen by male doctors," she says.

"My big advantage is that I belong



to a middle-class family, and the people will vote for me because I am approachable to my electorate."

The promotion of women's rights is her main objective.

"We have to scale up awareness regarding

women's rights to property inheritance and their right to education. I sense victory in the polls, as I know the people listen to me and would reject opponents for their bright future."

So, how does she feel the run-up to the election is going?

"In our district, 75 percent of voters are under 30, and they are well-informed about the issues they are facing. I may be lacking wisdom and knowledge compared to senior politicians, but my sincerity will lead to my success," says the 25-year-old, who routinely wears a headscarf.

Because she is trying to reach a young electorate, her campaigning includes the wide use of social media, apart from the traditional approaches of public meetings and house-to-house canvassing.

Highlighting corruption is also part of her election campaign.

At the moment, she is concentrating on a smooth run-up so she can win popular support in her constituency.

"Voters in my constituency call me 'sister' and 'daughter,' which gives me immense strength," she said.

Parkash said she wanted to follow in the footsteps of her father, Oam Prakash, a retired doctor, and serve the people.

Securing a space for women is vital for development, as they have been suppressed and neglected in all areas.

She said "serving humanity is in my blood" due to her medical background, highlighting that her dream to become an elected legislator stemmed from having experienced poor management and helplessness in government hospitals as a doctor.

Most people in the area endorse her candidacy, regardless of her Hinduism or political affiliation. Voters appreciate her bravery for challenging traditional policies.

The Election Commission of Pakistan makes it mandatory for all political parties to award 5 percent of seats to women in general seats.

Political analyst Muhammad Zahir Shah, at the University of Peshawar, said that Parkash has created history by contesting the general election.

"We have been seeing women becoming members of the assembly on reserved seats. They don't contest elections but are nominated by parties on the basis of the seats they win in the election," Shah said.

In the past, some women have fought elections, but they were Muslim; therefore, they don't draw as much media and public attention, but the case of Parkash is unprecedented.

She is well educated and belongs to the Hindu community while standing for vote in an area where 95 percent of the voters are Muslims.

"She is contesting on the PPP's ticket, which isn't a popular political party, but it seems that she will make her presence felt during the electioneering," Shah said. Already, she has hit headlines, and if the election takes place in a fair and transparent manner, there is a greater likelihood that she will emerge victorious," he said.

Music from Africa rising on global charts, with help from TikTok

LOS ANGELES

WHEN the biggest names in music gather on Sunday for the industry's top honors at the Grammy Awards, they will hand out a new trophy for best African music performance.

The prize reflects the growing popularity of Afrobeats, and other music from the continent, which is gaining a global audience with help from social media platforms such as short-form video app TikTok.

Afrobeats originated in West Africa, primarily Ghana and Nigeria, though the term is often used as a catch-all for various music styles coming from Africa. It features percussion rhythms mixed with various genres from rap to jazz, R&B and others.

Modern Afrobeats "has a feel-good groove to it," said Heran Mamo, R&B and hip-hop reporter at Billboard magazine, which created a US Afrobeats chart in 2022. "It's bound to reach a wider audience because it already contains a little bit of everything for everyone."

On Spotify, Afrobeats music was streamed 13.5 billion times in 2022, up from 2 billion in 2017.

In another milestone, Nigerian singer Burna Boy became the first

African artist to sell out a US stadium when he played New York's Citi Field last summer.

Musicians in the running for the new Grammy on Sunday include Tyla, a 22-year-old South African singer. She hit the top 10 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart with the danceable Water, an example of a genre known as amapiano, a jazz- and piano-infused sound.

A TikTok executive in South Africa had noticed Tyla gaining attention in her local market back in 2020, and reached out to her with tips on how to maximize her presence on the app.

Water was released in July 2023, after Tyla signed with Sony Music Entertainment's Epic Records.

By September, TikTok users were replicating Tyla's dance moves in the #WaterChallenge. To date, 1.5 million videos have been created using the song, and the #WaterChallenge hashtag has been viewed 1.8 billion times, according to TikTok.

"I think that TikTok has played the role of incubator, but also the distributor to the billion-plus global users and it's just really landed," said Ole Obermann, global head of music at TikTok.

Tyla's success illustrates the power of TikTok and YouTube to help artists find fan bases around the world, a role once reserved for mu-

sic labels.

"The proliferation of streaming along with new social media platforms (e.g. TikTok) has accelerated artist discovery, and have provided new mediums for artists to grow their fan bases globally," Bank of America Securities analyst Jessica Reif Cohen said in a research note predicting media trends for 2024.

For US teenagers, TikTok ranks as the second-most common music discovery source behind YouTube, according to a recent MIDiA Research survey that showed 45 percent of 16- to 19-year-olds found new music through the platform.

Other Afrobeats artists who found audiences on TikTok include Nigerian rapper Rema. He collaborated with Selena Gomez for a remix of his song Calm Down, which hit No 3 on the Billboard Hot 100 and won an award for best Afrobeats at MTV's Video Music Awards last September.

TikTok is helping to forge new connections between US and African artists. Obermann said he played a short clip of a song called Ojapiano from Nigerian musician Kcee for Ryan Tedder, a songwriter and lead singer for the band OneRepublic.

Tedder liked the sound so much that he immediately reached out to



Rema(L), and Selena Gomez accept the award for best afrobeats for "Calm Down" during the MTV Video Music Awards on Sept 12, 2023, at the Prudential Center in Newark, NJ. AP

Kcee, who jumped on a plane from Lagos to Los Angeles two days later so the pair could make a remix of the song. Obermann hopes the soon-to-be-released remix will give new life to Ojapiano, a combination of ama-

piano and a Nigerian flute called Oja, and keep fueling the Afrobeats craze.

"This is going to be a big, growing genre," Obermann said.

Zambia cholera: Families grieve as infection kills loved ones

By Kennedy Gondwe

I met Andrew Kazadi just after his 26-year-old nephew died of cholera at a treatment centre in Zambia's capital, Lusaka. He looked deeply traumatised.

"We have been told to look for a coffin but if we delay, they'll bury him just like that," Mr Kazadi said, in comments reminiscent of some of the restrictions governments imposed during the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, cholera, a bacterial infection caused by contaminated water or food, is wreaking havoc in Zambia, with more than 15,000 cases and close to 600 deaths recorded, mostly in the hotspot of Lusaka, since the beginning of the rainy season in October.

And as clouds gathered over the skies before another downpour, Mr Kazadi said: "We have to hurry to get

a coffin."

I met him outside the 60,000-seater Heroes Stadium, which has been turned into a treatment centre with about 800 medics attending to patients from across the country.

The sound of the wailing sirens of ambulances is constant. Patients are brought in or taken for burial after succumbing to the disease.

For Mr Kazadi, to see the lifeless corpse of Charles, his sister's son, came as a shock.

Charles suffered a bout of diarrhoea and was vomiting. He was taken to a clinic, where the family was told he had cholera.

He was then transferred to the stadium - normally a venue for football matches - where he died eight days later.

"Our expectation was that he would

be fine with the passage of time. We are really grieving as a family," Mr Kazadi said, pointing out that his nephew has left behind a three-year-old.

But in a sign of the family's deep faith, he added: "When someone is sick, we commit everything into God's hands - that person can either die or survive. With all the challenges we have gone through, we just have to thank God."

In line with government regulations to curb the spread of the disease, Charles' corpse was wrapped in a body bag, before being placed in the coffin by men wearing protective gear. The family was not allowed to touch the body to protect them from the risk of infection. Only five relatives were allowed to attend Charles' burial.

The government's guidelines are similar to those of the World Health

Organization (WHO), which advises that families should handle the body as little as possible, and burials should preferably take place within 24 hours.

"Gastrointestinal infections [like cholera] can easily be transmitted from faeces leaked from dead bodies," the WHO says.

Sadly, some families in Lusaka are going through a trauma different from that of the Kazadis.

They do not know the fate of their loved ones, as overstretched health workers have been unable to tell them about their condition - or whether they are even alive.

They include Eunice Chongo, who told me that her 34-year-old son, Boniface, was brought by ambulance to the stadium about a week ago, but she has not heard anything about him since then.

"All I want is for the government to tell me the truth about the whereabouts of my son," Ms Chongo said, looking distressed.

The government has set up a call centre, urging people like Ms Chongo to report missing family so that they can help trace them.

Zambia has experienced cholera outbreaks at least 30 times since 1977, with the charity WaterAid saying the latest one is the worst since 2017.

This is despite the fact that the government pledged in 2019 to eliminate the disease by 2025.

WaterAid's Zambia director Yankho Mataya said the government would not meet its goal "without greater investment and improved co-ordination to address the root cause - lack of access to clean water and decent sanitation".

Research published in 2019 showed that a staggeringly high number of Zambians - 40% - lived without adequate clean water, while as many as 85% lacked access to proper solid waste management.

The coordinator of Zambia's Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit, Gabriel Pollen, said data was still being collected to assess what progress had been made since 2019 to improve water and sanitation facilities.

"The numbers are quite alarming, and we do see here reluctance on the part of communities in terms of hygiene," he said.

The cholera hot-spots in Lusaka are poor neighbourhoods, known locally as compounds, where people live in slum-like conditions.

Often pit latrines are built too close to shallow wells, from where drinking water is drawn.

When it rains, the water level rises, along with the risk of human waste contaminating the water - and poor drainage causes this water to flood homes.

To fight the disease, a raft of measures have been introduced by the government, including a ban on the digging of shallow wells, and the selling of food in unhygienic conditions.

In a speech earlier this month, President Hakainde Hichilema promised also to upgrade poorly planned informal settlements, and to prevent new ones from emerging. Some young people were "hanging around and doing nothing" in cities and towns instead of moving to rural areas to farm, the president said.

"There is so much land in the villages. There is clean water. We can build nice homes in the villages, which are not polluted," he added.

While the government may see the decongestion of cities as a long-term solution, its priority right now is to prevent the further loss of life through a vaccination campaign.

It received about 1.6 million doses earlier this month, and has so far administered the large majority of them, mostly in Lusaka.

"The response has been overwhelming. We are just worried whether we will be able to cover the hotspots with the doses we have," Health Minister Sylvia Masebo said, at a public briefing.

But she said there was some hesitancy, including among some religious groups.

Ms Masebo did not go into details, but some are known to believe that vaccines make them spiritually impure.

To them, her message was: "Please let us not be swayed by such beliefs. We all know that true religion aims at safeguarding the health of believers."

Ms Masebo also identified vaccine hesitancy in another group - young men.

Again, she did not go into details, but appeared to be referring to the fact that some of them believe they do not need to be vaccinated as they have a strong immune system.

Other men have been drinking more beer, as they believe it kills the bacteria which causes cholera.

In what appeared to be a message directed at them, Ms Masebo said people should spend their money on chlorine - which kills bacteria in water - rather than beer.

But Ms Masebo will have to repeat the message much more, before changing the beliefs of the young men who are increasingly frequenting the beer halls of Lusaka.

BBC



An oral cholera vaccine has been given mostly in the capital Lusaka

RADIO One RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

Table with 7 columns: MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME, TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME, WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME, THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME, FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME, SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME, SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME. Each column lists a schedule of radio programs and their durations.

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya Radio One [Social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter] Radio One

BoT projects 5.2 pc growth in Q1, 2024

By Guardian Reporter

The Bank of Tanzania (BoT) is projecting an economic growth of 5.2 percent during the first quarter of this year, and 5.5 percent for the whole year.

The growth is expected to be driven by public and private investment, reforms to improve business conditions, a rebound in tourism activities and favourable weather.

"The ongoing adequate rainfall in many parts of the country is expected to provide impetus to the growth projection," said the central bank's monetary policy report for January 2024, issued on Friday last week.

According to the report, inflation is forecast to remain low and stable, at around 3.2 percent, below the target of 5 percent.

Food inflation is projected to be low, driven by adequate domestic food supply, it says.

Owing to the liquidity conditions and increase in foreign exchange inflows from tourism, traditional crops, gold and loans and grants, the depreciation of the exchange rate moderated and is expected to remain stable.

"The risks to output and inflation projections are mainly the ongoing geopolitical tension, OPEC+ decision about oil production, and monetary policy stance in advanced economies," the central



bank noted.

According to the report, the global growth is projected to remain weak and varying across countries in the first quarter of 2024.

The growth projection is attributable to ongoing geopolitical tension, tightened fi-

ancial conditions, and lagged impact of monetary policy tightening.

"Inflation is forecast to continue declining in many countries. In advanced economies, it is projected to fall but might remain above the target of 2 percent in most coun-

tries. Therefore, the direction of monetary policy in these countries is uncertain," the report says.

"Some central banks might uphold monetary policy tightening, albeit at a lesser extent than before, while others could leave the policy rates

unchanged."

The price of oil is projected to fall, but this outlook is dependent on OPEC+ decisions about production, geopolitical tension, and demand, while the price of gold is projected to remain high at around US\$1,900 per troy ounce.

'Mipango' Institute spending 11bn/- on four new buildings

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE Institute of Rural Development Planning (IRDP) is working to complete the construction of four new building blocks.

To gobble over 11bn/- upon its completion, the project which incorporates academic and student's hostels focuses to improve and widen accommodating roofs and training infrastructures.

Speaking over the weekend during an exclusive interview with The Guardian, the Institute's Deputy Rector, Planning, Finance and Administration, Prof Canute Hyandy, said the ongoing project entails construction of at least four modern storey eco-friendly hostels.

He informed that the construction of three major hostels has completed, with the capacity to roof between 250 and 270 students each, while the construction of the other accommodation structure is at advanced stage.

The Don said at its Dodoma headquarters, the Institute has the capacity to accommodate a total of 1,132 students at a go in its hostels, the low capacity in reflection to the high level of students' enrolment.

"We're working out several initiatives to ensure we expand our student's accommodation capacity to between 2,500 and 3,000 by 2025," he unveiled.

He detailed that the project being continuing at the Institute's Miyuji campuses at the fringe of Dodoma Capital City, entails installation of two modern classrooms with capacity to harbour 200 students each, an equipped Information Technology (ICT) office, Toilets (IT), as well as

Ramp stairs and modern lift, all at the ground floor.

The first floor is installed with two special studio rooms, to absorb 200 persons each at a go, together with 22 toilets.

"As per the project's design, the second floor will have a single studio room, expecting to roof a total of 200 students, and a special computer room," Prof Hyandy informed.

At the third floor, the vital project will construct 38 offices, each to harbour 76 staffs at a go, a seminar room (with 100-person capacity), 11 toilets and tea room.

Due to the ongoing high volume in student's enrolment at the institute, now at 10,000, he said the college is currently engaging the stakeholders from the private sector to help offering safe and standard accommodation services.

"Most of students are currently sheltered at the hostels from the private operators, our key role is just to ensure their services are meeting our set standards," he insisted.

He said the Institute was receiving students, especially girls, of below 20 years, hence a need to ensure they're being accommodated at safe structures, for the sake of security and good morals.

The institute which will in this month celebrate 45 years anniversary since its inception under the supervision of the formal education minister, Bishop Simon Chiwanga is a corporate body established by the Parliamentary Act No. 8 of the 1980s.

Since its establishment, IRDP has been shaping destinies in planning and research methodologies, focusing on the future prosperity of its students.

Tigo edges 'rivals' in communication KPIs

By Faustine Felician

THE Tanzania Communications Authority (TCRA) report has shown that Tigo Tanzania is the overall winner for the best network among all mobile telecom networks in the country for the year 2023.

In its fourth quarter report, 2023 released last month, TCRA declared Tigo as a leading network, after evaluating more than 280 cases of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all mobile telecom service providers in the country.

Tigo emerged as the overall winner in the indicators measured from October to December last year.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Tigo's Chief Commercial Officer, John Sicilima, the success they have achieved is the result of the company's strategic investment in improving and expanding the network over the past two years.

He said the company decided in 2022, to invest more than 1trn/- within five years to improve its network infrastructure.

"This enabled the launch of the

fastest 5G technology as well as upgrading all sites to 4G technology in all regions of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, we must admit this investment has significantly improved our digital system and our network structures," said Sicilima.

He said that the information about the success they got as the internet with the best internet in the country for the fourth quarter of the year came a few days after the company received the prestigious Ookla award for being the fastest internet in the country, the award they received in December last year.

"As a company, we will continue to improve our operations in order to provide Tanzanians with the best telecommunications service, we thank TCRA for their report which will give us a clear picture of what we need to do," he said.

The head of TCRA's information department, Semu Mwakyanjala, speaking to this newspaper, confirmed the release of the report showing the mobile companies that performed well in the fourth quarter of 2023, which started from October to December.

LONDON

The global oil market is looking increasingly local as militant attacks in the Red Sea and surging freight rates make supplies from closer to home more attractive.

A slump in tanker traffic through the Suez Canal is spurring the beginnings of a split, with one trading region centered around the Atlantic Basin and including the North Sea and the Mediterranean, and another encompassing the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

There's still crude moving between these areas – via the longer and costlier journey around the southern tip of Africa – but recent buying patterns point to disconnection.

Across Europe, some refiners skipped purchases of Iraqi Basrah crude last month, according to traders, while buyers from the continent are snapping up cargoes from the North Sea and Guyana. In Asia, a jump in demand for Abu Dhabi's Murban crude led to a spike in spot prices in mid-January, and flows from Kazakhstan to Asia are down sharply.

Crude loadings from the US to

Red Sea danger is spurring global oil buyers to go local

Asia, meanwhile, plunged by more than a third last month from December, ship-tracking data from Kpler show.

The fragmentation will not be permanent, but for now it's making it tougher for import-dependent nations like India and South Korea to diversify their sources of oil supply. For refiners, it limits their flexibility to respond to rapidly changing market dynamics and could eventually eat into margins.

"The pivot toward logistically easier cargoes makes commercial sense, and that will be the case for as long as the Red Sea disruptions keep freight rates elevated," said Viktor Katona, lead crude

analyst at data analytics firm Kpler. "It's a tough balancing act choosing between security of supply and maximizing profits."

Oil tanker transits through the Suez Canal were down 23 percent last month compared with November, Kpler said in a note released Jan. 30. The drop was even more pronounced for liquefied petroleum gas and liquefied natural gas, which fell 65 percent and 73 percent, respectively.

In product markets, flows of diesel and jet fuel from India and the Middle East to Europe, and European fuel oil and naphtha heading to Asia have been most affect-

ed. Asian prices of naphtha, a petrochemicals feedstock, hit the highest in almost two years last week on fears it would become tougher to source it from Europe.

The impact of the Red Sea attacks is feeding through to oil prices via higher transport costs, which is encouraging refiners to go local where they can. Rates for Suezmax crude tankers from the Middle East to Northwest Europe have jumped by around half since mid-December, Kpler said. Global benchmark Brent crude is up around 8 percent over the same period.

Meanwhile, the delivered cost of oil to Asia from the

US, where production is surging, rose by more than \$2 a barrel over a three-week period in January, according to traders involved in the market.

"Diversification is still possible, but it comes at a higher price," said Giovanni Staunovo, a commodity analyst at UBS Group AG. "Unless it can be passed onto the end consumer, it would cut into the margins of refineries."

The situation in the Red Sea isn't expected to lead to a long-term rearrangement of oil flows, but it's also difficult to see a resolution of the conflict in the near term. Instead, there's a significant risk of more disruptions, particularly after the Houthi strike on a tanker carrying Russian fuel late last month. That attack was noteworthy as the Iranian-backed militant group had previously indicated that Russian and Chinese ships wouldn't be targeted.

"Geopolitics are not good for trade," said Adi Imsirovic, director of consultancy Surrey Clean Energy. "If I was a buyer, I would be on my toes. It's a hard time for refiners, especially Asian refiners, who need to be more flexible."

Exim to continue enhancing financial services, says CFO

By Guardian Reporter

Exim Bank Group has said will continue to support various sectors of the economy and fostering sustainable development in the country, through enhancing financial services to individual and businesses in Tanzanians.

Shani Kinswaga, the bank's Chief Finance Officer (CFO), said this during presentation of the group's financial

highlights for 2023 over the weekend.

She said the bank's Loan and Advances portfolio experienced remarkable growth, rising from 1.2trn/- in 2022 to 1.5trn/- in 2023, representing a notable 22 percent increase.

In terms of assets, Exim saw significant growth in Total Assets, increasing from 2.4trn/- in 2022 to 3.0trn/- in 2023, demonstrating a remarkable growth rate of 26 percent.

"This accomplishment further solidifies the bank's strong financial position and reinforces its ability to provide a solid foundation for its operations," she said.

Beyond its financial success, Exim remains dedicated to its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which have contributed to its positive performance, according to Kinswaga. The bank's investment in and support

of various social and community initiatives contribute to the socio-economic development of the country.

In terms of infrastructure, the bank upgraded its core banking system to a more resilient and robust infrastructure during the year. The new system was designed to deliver a seamless banking experience, enabling customers to conduct their financial transactions with ease and peace of mind.

"The upgrade reaffirmed our unwavering dedication to evolving beyond traditional banking norms," he mentioned. The CFO also expressed his gratitude to the bank's dedicated team, loyal customers, and supportive shareholders, stating, "Our collaborative efforts, along with our commitment to innovation, customer-centricity, and responsible banking practices, have been the foundation of our success. We

will continue to prioritize innovation, customer-centricity, and responsible banking practices to drive sustainable growth and create long-term value for all stakeholders."

Of notable significance is the bank's growth in Profit Before Tax surged from 67.8bn/- in the previous year to a remarkable 92.2bn/- in 2023, representing an impressive growth rate of 36 percent.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support African farmers

By Guardian Correspondent

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has announced the launch of a groundbreaking project titled "Making effective bio-inputs work for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa" (BioSSA).

The project, according to a statement issued yesterday, is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and aimed at empowering smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa with innovative bio-inputs.

This groundbreaking strategic collaboration is a first in Africa and is poised to accelerate progress, ensuring the successful development and deployment of bio-input innovations that will positively impact smallholder farmers across Africa.

In the words of Bernard Vanlauwe, Deputy Director General, Research for Development, "BioSSA represents a critical step towards em-

powering African smallholder farmers with innovative tools to enhance their productivity and resilience in the face of climate change. By harnessing the power of bio-inputs, we can unlock the potential of African agriculture, empower millions of farmers, boost food production, and build a more resilient future for the continent."

The project's initial phase will focus on collecting evidence to assess the effectiveness of candidate microbial strains. Over the subsequent stages, the project will strategically shift its focus towards identifying deployment pathways, culminating in the development of innovative bio-input products.

The project strategically targets two pivotal crop categories: grain legumes comprising soybean, cowpea, and Phaseolus bean, and the cluster of roots, tubers, and bananas, including cassava, yam, and banana/plantain.

These crops underpin food security and serve as critical sources of income generation



for millions of smallholder farmers across the African continent.

Leveraging the extensive expertise and established breeding programs at IITA for these crops, BioSSA is poised on a solid founda-

tion, setting the stage for substantial success in agricultural transformation.

African smallholder farmers face many challenges, including degraded land, unpredictable

weather patterns, and resource constraints. These factors contribute to low-input agriculture, characterized by limited fertilizer use and poor yields.

Nitrogen (N) and phospho-

rus (P) deficiencies are widespread across the region, further hampering agricultural productivity and food security.

The goal is to unleash the potential of bio-inputs—microbial-based products that improve soil health, increase nutrient availability, enhance crop yields, boost farmer incomes, and improve the efficiency, productivity, and profitability of African smallholder farming systems in the face of a changing climate.

In response to concerns about the cost and environmental impact of traditional fertilizers, BioSSA focuses on microbial inoculants as a promising alternative. The project adopts a stage-gated approach, with initial testing and validation of microbial strains in sub-Saharan African conditions. The subsequent focus will shift to product development and exploring effective deployment pathways to benefit the fields where innovation is most needed.

BioSSA's key outcomes include identifying and validating microbial strains, understanding bio-input science, developing user-friendly and affordable products, and building partnerships and capacity. This com-

prehensive approach seeks to create a sustainable bio-input ecosystem in Africa, prioritizing the needs of smallholder farmers and driving positive transformation in agricultural practices.

"Investing in bio-inputs holds immense potential to improve food security and livelihoods for millions of smallholder farmers in Africa. BioSSA's focus on evidence-based development and farmer-centric solutions aligns perfectly with our commitment to driving sustainable agricultural transformation," concluded Bernard.

Facilitated by IITA through a dynamic public-private partnership (PPP), the project is designed to boost productivity and enhance resilience in response to climate change.

BioSSA, implemented through this collaborative model and with esteemed partners such as Adaptive Symbiotic Technologies (US), AphaBio (Belgium), Azotic Technologies (Canada), Embrapa (Brazil), Groundwork BioAg (Israel), Switch Bioworks (US), and UCLouvain (Belgium), is positioned to accelerate progress and bring positive impacts to smallholder farmers across Africa.

Airtel records 8.7 pc revenue growth in East Africa

NAIROBI

Airtel Africa has reported 8.7 percent revenue growth in East Africa in reported currency to \$1,227 million, and grew by 21.2 percent in constant currency.

East Africa region comprises of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia.

According to the company's financial highlights, the constant currency growth was made up of voice revenue growth of 14.7 percent, data revenue growth of 30.9 percent and other revenue growth of 23.9 percent.

The differential in growth rates is primarily contributed by the average devaluation in Zambian Kwacha (22.7 percent), Malawi kwacha (21.5 percent) and Kenya shilling (21.1 percent).

Voice revenue grew by 14.7 percent in constant currency, driven by both customer base growth of 10.7 percent and voice ARPU growth of 3.5 percent.

The customer base growth was largely driven by expansion of both increased network coverage and the increasing scale of the distribution network.

Voice ARPU growth of 3.5 percent was supported by increase in voice usage per customer by 6.4 percent to 410 minutes per customer per month partially offset by the interconnect rate reduction in Tanzania and Rwanda.

Data revenue grew by 30.9 percent in constant currency, largely driven by data customer base growth of 25.7 percent and data ARPU growth of 3.3 percent.

"Our continued investment in the network and expansion of 4G network infrastructure helped us grow both the



data customer base and usage levels. 95.1 percent of our East Africa network sites are now on 4G, compared with 89.8 percent in the prior period," the company said over the weekend.

Furthermore, the company said has 679 5G sites in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In Q3'24, 4G customers accounted for 54.3 per-

cent of our total data customer base and contributed to 77.2 percent of total data usage.

Q3'24 total data usage per customer increased to 4.9 GB per customer per month, up by 16.0 percent, and 4G data usage per customer reached 6.8 GB per customer per month.

EBITDA increased to \$603m, up

by 18.8 percent in constant currency. EBITDA margin at 49.2 percent, declined by 98 basis points in constant currency.

Decline in Q3'24 EBITDA margin was largely driven by rising energy costs over the period in key markets which has negatively impacted margins by approximately 200bps.

Operating free cash flow was

\$426m, up by 21.9 percent in constant currency, due largely to EBITDA growth, partially offset by increased capex which increased due to phasing of deployment.

According to the report, total Airtel Africa customer base grew by 9.1 percent to 151.2 million.

The penetration of mobile data and mobile money services continued to rise, driving a 22.4 percent increase in data customers to 62.7 million and a 19.5 percent increase in mobile money customers to 37.5 million.

Constant currency ARPU growth of 10.0 percent was primarily driven by increased usage across all segments.

Mobile money transaction value increased by 41.3 percent in constant currency, with Q3'24 annualised transaction value of \$116bn in reported currency. Revenue in constant currency grew by 20.2 percent, with Q3'24 growth accelerating to 21.0 percent.

Reported currency revenues declined by 1.4 percent to \$3,861m. In Q3'24, reported currency revenues declined by 8.3 percent as currency devaluation (primarily the Nigerian naira devaluation) continued to impact reported revenue trends.

All segments continued to deliver double-digit constant currency growth.

Across the Group mobile services revenue grew by 18.6 percent in constant currency, driven by voice revenue growth of 11.2 percent and data revenue growth of 28.5 percent. Mobile money revenue grew by 31.8 percent in constant currency.

Kenya bank raises daily ATM cash limitation

NAIROBI

Co-operative Bank of Kenya has raised its daily ATM [automated teller machine] withdrawal limit by 50 percent to Sh60,000, as banks start reviewing their daily transaction ceilings to reflect the reduced spending power among customers.

The weakening Kenyan shilling has left customers worse off given that they need more money to buy the same amount of goods.

The purchasing power of the Sh1,000 note, for instance, has fallen by nearly half in the past decade, which means that it can only buy half of what it bought ten years ago.

Co-op Bank has informed the customers of the review, the first in nearly a decade, that will enable those who need to withdraw amounts above Sh40,000 to use the over 600 ATMs across the country, instead of lining up at branches.

"Dear client, for your convenience, we have increased the total amount of money you can withdraw on our ATMs from Sh40,000 to Sh60,000 per day," said the Nairobi Securities Exchange-listed bank in a message to customers.

Co-op Bank in February 2015 doubled the limit to Sh40,000, citing the need to relieve pressure from branches.

The limit per transaction will, however, be at Sh40,000 as the ATM limit, meaning that a customer requiring Sh60,000 will have to carry out two transactions.

Co-op Bank's limit per transaction on its digital platform, M-Co-op Cash, is at Sh70,000. The bank's move mirrors that of Standard Chartered Bank Kenya which in February 2019 raised its daily ATM withdrawal limit from Sh40,000 to Sh60,000 with a maximum withdrawal per transaction set at Sh40,000.

KCB Bank Kenya and Equity Bank Kenya currently have a daily withdrawal limit of Sh50,000, with a Sh40,000 limit per maximum transaction.

Stanbic Bank Kenya's daily limit is at Sh40,000, with the same figure being the maximum per transaction.

Smaller withdrawals mean the customers have to go to the ATMs more frequently, besides increasing the cash handling costs.

Customers withdrawing money via ATMs incur a cost of Sh36 per transaction, made up of banks' commission and excise duty.

Many banks allow customers to withdraw at the ATM above the general cash value limits but this requires that they apply and get approval first.

Such arrangements are however still subject to the Sh40,000 limit per transaction, meaning that one will make multiple withdrawals to get their desired cash.

The ATM limit helps in the efficient operation of the machines so that they do not get emptied too quickly while the card limit is usually necessary to limit the damage on one's account in case of fraud.

Absa Group seeks to expand into China with new office

JOHANNESBURG

Absa Group yesterday announced its physical expansion into the People's Republic of China with the opening of a new non-banking subsidiary in Beijing.

The non-banking subsidiary is now open, with the official launch event in Beijing on 8 May 2024. At a signing ceremony in Johannesburg, South Africa today, attended by Enoch Godongwana, the Minister of Finance of South Africa and Chen Xiaodong, the Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Absa Group showcased the continued growth of its international footprint alongside its commitment to fostering new opportunities between Africa and China.

The new office will enable Absa Group to offer local support to Chinese clients and

stakeholders to conclude transactions across the African continent, helping to support clients' needs, goals, and ambitions. This is part of a wider commitment from Absa to expand its operations with international representative offices in strategic markets and offer deep expertise in African markets to its overseas clients.

"We're thrilled to add our office in China to our global footprint," commented Arrie Rautenbach, Group CEO of Absa Group. "Today's announcement reinforces our ambition to grow our international strategy particularly as China is such a strategically important market for Africa. Our expansion into this dynamic market represents an exciting opportunity to unlock new avenues of growth and prosperity for Africa and China."

The China-Africa investment

relationship has flourished over the past few decades, with China emerging as the continent's largest bilateral trade partner. This has been fuelled by Chinese investment in Africa's vast natural resources and infrastructure projects, creating huge commercial opportunities for both regions.

"Our presence in China will help to firmly establish Absa's capability to provide general advisory services to clients based in China for concluding transactions across the African continent, offering us new opportunities with our clients in the region", says Charles Russon, CEO of Absa Corporate & Investment Bank.

"Establishing our base there will not only give us a physical presence in the region but also help us to meet the needs of our clients operating in this rapidly growing market."



WORLD

Joe Biden seen winning South Carolina Democratic primary

WASHINGTON

MULTIPLE US media organizations on Saturday night projected President Joe Biden has won the 2024 South Carolina Democratic presidential primary, the first official primary for the party.

The Associated Press, NBC News and others made the projection less than half an hour after the polls were closed. Biden's easy victory follows his support for an unprecedented decision by the Democratic National Committee to prioritize South Carolina as the initial voting state over New Hampshire in the presidential primary.

Biden resurrected his 2020 presidential campaign after a strong primary performance in South Carolina, where African American voters play an outsized role in Democratic politics.

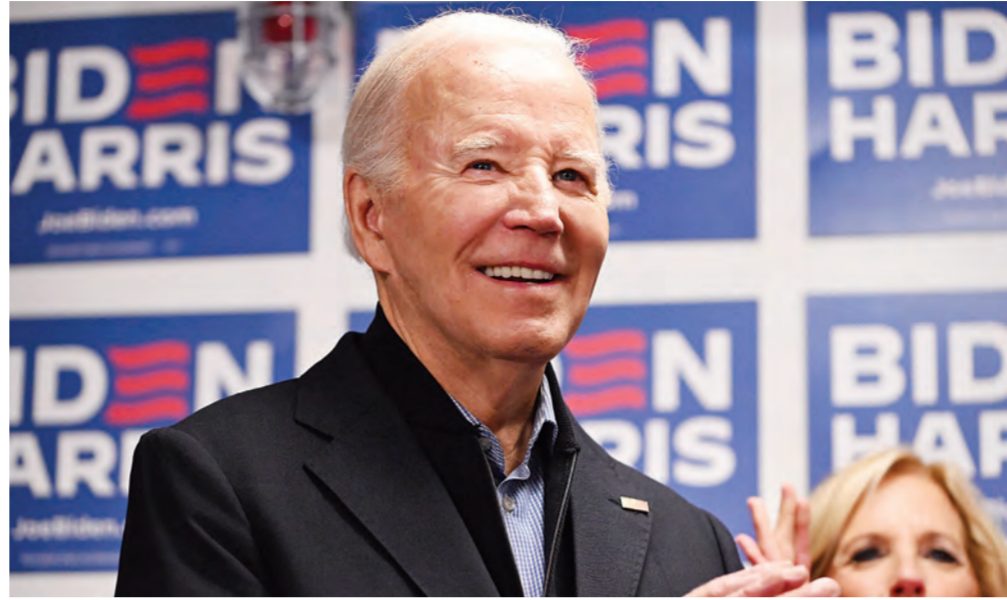
That victory set him on the path to the Democratic nomination and the White House.

The president's campaign had dedicated significant resources to boosting voter turnout for Biden, seeking to mobilize Black voters, who are crucial to the Democratic vote in South Carolina.

Biden, who entered the South Carolina contest as the overwhelming front-runner, defeated the other long-shot Democrats on South Carolina's ballot, including US Representative Dean Phillips and author Marianne Williamson.

According to a vote tally by CNN, Biden has secured 96.8 percent of the votes already counted, while Williamson and Phillips received 1.8 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively.

A combined 55 delegates were in play in South Carolina, and they will be dis-



US President Joe Biden speaks at the Biden for President 2024 campaign headquarters on Saturday in Wilmington, Delaware. AFP

tributed proportionally according to the results. To secure the Democratic nomination, a candidate must accumulate close to 2,000 delegates in total.

According to a recent Emerson College Polling survey, the economy is the "most important issue" facing South Carolina, at 40 percent, followed by immigration, education, threats to democracy, healthcare, crime, housing affordability, and abortion access.

"In 2020, it was the voters of South Carolina who proved the pundits wrong, breathed new life into our campaign, and set us on the path to winning the Presidency," Biden said on X, formerly Twitter.

"Now in 2024, the people of South Carolina have spoken again and I have no doubt

that you have set us on the path to winning the Presidency again -- and making Donald Trump a loser again," he said.

Republicans kicked off their voting season with the Iowa caucus in January, followed by the primary in New Hampshire. Former US President Donald Trump won both contests, leaving Nikki Haley, the former United Nations ambassador and onetime South Carolina governor, as his lone challenger in the GOP race.

The US presidential primaries will last through June. The Republican National Convention, in which delegates will officially select the party's presidential nominee, will be held in July, while the Democratic National Convention will take place in August. The 2024 Election Day falls on Nov 5.

Lisichansk shelled with Western weapons – Russian Foreign Ministry

MOSCOW

KIEV'S terrorist attack on Lisichansk's residential areas was, according to preliminary reports, conducted with the weapons provided by Western countries, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a statement, posted on the ministry's website.



"According to preliminary information, the strike was carried out with Western weapons," she said. "Another terrorist attack is a 'thank you' from Kiev extremists for the 'generous' financial support by the European Union countries."

Zakharova (pictured) pointed out that EU citizens must know what their taxes are used for, as "they are used for purchasing lethal weapons systems and for sending them to the Kiev regime that uses them to kill civilians."

"This (the strike on Lisichansk - TASS) is new proof of the criminal nature of the Kiev regime, its kingpins on Bankovaya (a street in Kiev that houses Ukraine's government institutions - TASS) and the fact that the Ukrainian armed forces, as Russian President Vladimir Putin indicated, have completely evolved into a terrorist organization," the diplomat said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said that Russia "will notify international organizations of another terrorism act committed by Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky's gang."

"We expect the concerned international organizations to promptly and unequivocally condemn the crime committed by the Kiev militants," she added.

The Ukrainian armed forces conducted a strike on Lisichansk's bakery on Saturday afternoon. Twenty people were killed and ten more were wounded. It was reported that up to 40 civilians might have been under the rubble.

Health ministry: Palestinian death toll in Gaza tops 27,200

GAZA / CAIRO

THE Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has risen to 27,238, the Hamas-run Health Ministry said on Saturday.

A total of 66,452 Palestinians have been wounded since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas conflict on Oct 7, 2023, ministry spokesperson Ashraf Al-Qedra said in a statement.

During the past 24 hours, the Israeli army killed 107 Palestinians and wounded 165 others, according to Al-Qedra.

In the early hours of Saturday, at least 24 Palestinians, including children and women, were killed as Israeli airstrikes and artillery bombardments struck houses in the Gazan cities of Deir al-Balah and Rafah, according to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry held phone talks on Saturday with his Norwegian counterpart Espen Barth Eide, discussing the

humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the challenges facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

The two ministers stressed "the importance of mobilizing resources and international support to intensify the delivery of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip as soon as possible and remove impediments hindering its flow into the Strip," the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

They agreed to continue consultation and coordination "to support efforts aimed at containing the crisis and curbing its humanitarian repercussions on the Palestinian people."

Shoukry and Barth Eide also addressed the challenges facing UNRWA in carrying out its relief tasks following the decision of a number of states to suspend their funding to the agency, "which would further exacerbate the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip."

The two top diplomats empha-



Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) and French President Emmanuel Macron pose for a photo during their meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, April 6, 2023. XINHUA

sized the key role played by UNRWA in distributing aid in Gaza and dealing with various aspects of the humanitarian crisis in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

A number of UNRWA donors, including Canada, Australia, Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, Estonia, Japan,

Austria and Romania, have recently joined the United States in pausing funding for UNRWA after Israel accused several employees of the agency of involvement in the attack of Gaza-ruling Hamas on southern Israel on Oct 7 last year.

On Saturday, the Norwegian foreign minister wrote on social media

platform X that "we cannot abandon the Palestinian people. Norway stands fast to our commitments. I urge fellow donor countries to reflect on the wider consequences of cutting UNRWA off."

Agencies

Panama supports Morocco's autonomy plan for Western Sahara

RABAT

PANAMA has said that it supports Morocco's Autonomy Plan as the basis for a just and lasting solution to the Western Sahara dispute.

Panama reaffirmed its position in a joint declaration signed at the end of a bilateral meeting held in an online conference between Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Bourita and his Panamanian counterpart Janaina Tewaney Mencom.

In the joint declaration, Panama also stressed that it considers the UN as the "appropriate mechanism" to bring all parties to discuss a political solution and an agreed-upon political solution to end the dispute.

Panama recalled the importance of advancing the political process on the international level, taking into account in a "serious and respectful" manner the UN Security Council resolutions to identify points of convergence.

During the event, both countries also reiterated their willingness to boost their bilateral ties.

The two countries agreed to continue promoting relations with the perspective of implementing a roadmap reflecting the determination of both countries to act jointly on the international stage in the service of their common interests.

They also emphasized the importance of multilateral cooperation in intensifying efforts in areas of common interest, such as trade, education, health, and sustainable development.

Morocco's Autonomy Plan has been earning support from a growing number of countries that identify the Moroccan initiative as the most serious and credible political solution to end the dispute over Western Sahara.

Countries supporting the initiative frequently renew their positions, stressing the viability and credibility of the Moroccan proposal.

Last week on January 25, the Gambia reiterated its unwavering support for the initiative as well as for Morocco's territorial integrity.

The Gambia made its declaration from Dakhla, southern Morocco, reiterating support and endorsement of the Autonomy Plan as the "only credible and realistic" solution to the dispute over Western Sahara.

More than 100 countries have expressed a similar sentiment, endorsing Morocco's autonomy plan as "a serious and credible basis" aimed at achieving a realistic political solution to end the dispute.

Agencies

UN commits to provide technical training for Somali security forces

MOGADISHU

THE United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) which has been actively supporting Somalia in enhancing the capabilities of the security forces, has committed to provide technical training for the local forces during the transition period.

The UNSOS which is providing logistical field support to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) said in

a joint statement issued on Saturday in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, that the training will ensure the sustainable operation and maintenance of the equipment for the security forces.

"As UNSOS, our commitment to supporting both ATMIS and the Somali government remains steadfast. We stand ready to support Phase Three of the drawdown and provide the needed logistical support," Officer in Charge of UNSOS Qurat-Ul-Ain Sadozai said.

Sadozai stressed the successful handover of the seven military bases this week and commended the part-

nership between ATMIS, the Somali government and UNSOS while pledging continued support and collaboration.

Both ATMIS and UNSOS announced the completion of Phase Two drawdown, which involved reducing the troop count by 3,000 soldiers.

ATMIS transferred seven military bases to the Somali government and closed two others. Somalia's National Security Advisor Hussein Sheikh-Ali lauded the AU, UN and international partners for their sacrifice and dedication in pursuit of peace and security in Somalia.

"ATMIS is ending and we are pro-

gressing towards a future where Somalia's safety and security will be self-sustained, without ATMIS," Ali said. "We thank the African Union for your sacrifices to Somalia."

To the international community and partners, we thank you for standing with us in the fight to keep our country safe and secure. I want to assure the public that this drawdown is real, and it is happening," he added. Sam Okiding.

ATMIS Force Commander lauded the exceptional teamwork by the drawdown tripartite committee - ATMIS, the Somalia government and UNSOS - for successfully completing

both Phase One and Two.

"Our collective efforts have been significant in drawing down a total of 5,000 troops in both Phase One and Two. We will soon start preparations for the next phase, Phase Three, to reduce our numbers by 4,000 troops in June.

I am confident in our continued success based on our united and cohesive approach. For us, failure is not an option," Okiding said.

Xinhua

THE UK's armed forces will not be ready for a "high-intensity" war unless shortages in personnel and equipment are rapidly addressed, MPs have warned.

The Commons defence committee said personnel were leaving faster than they could be recruited, and the "offer" to them had to be improved.

A "vicious cycle" needed to be broken to allow the UK to face "increasingly challenging" threats, it added.

Increasing recruitment and improving retention was a priority, the MoD said.

Last month, General Sir Patrick Sanders, the head of the Army and outgoing Chief of the General Staff, called for the country to train a volunteer "citizen army" ready to fight a land

UK armed forces not ready for high-intensity war, MPs warn

war, warning that an increase in reservist numbers alone "would not be enough".

He highlighted the threat from Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, and pointed to steps being taken by other European nations to put their populations on a "war footing".

Sir Patrick has previously argued for the need for a larger Army, whose professional ranks now number around 73,000, compared with around 100,000 in 2010.

The cross-party defence committee's report, "Ready for war?", found that, while it was a "matter of national pride" that whenever the armed forces were asked to act, they found a

way, "overstretch has negatively impacted high intensity war-fighting readiness due to the sheer pace of operations and other commitments".

The MPs said they were "increasingly concerned" about a "crisis" in the recruitment and retention of both regular personnel and reservists, with operational demands making recovery and training harder to achieve.

As a result, the committee said, "it is unsurprising that more people are leaving the Forces than joining them".

While acknowledging the problem and planning to address it, the government was not yet moving at the necessary

pace to do so, it added.

A Ministry of Defence (MoD) spokesperson said: "Increasing recruitment and improving retention across the services is a top priority.

"Our armed forces are always ready to protect and defend the UK, and we continue to meet all operational commitments."

Another area of concern highlighted was that the £1.95bn allocated for boosting ammunition stockpiles in last year's Budget might be used to meet existing shortfalls in resources, rather than to replenish and increase capabilities.

£50bn is being spent on defence this year, the MoD spokesperson said, adding that spend-

ing on defence equipment has increased to £288.6bn over the next decade.

The MoD aims to raise defence spending to 2.5% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

"Difficult choices"

The MPs urged the MoD to reconsider and produce a breakdown of the allocation of money promised in the Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023 Budgets.

The committee also called for improvements in procurement processes to increase the UK's industrial capacity and production of munitions, both in the context of the Ukraine conflict and any future war.

This should include retaining

retired equipment "even half-way viable for regeneration", it said.

Former defence procurement minister Sir Jeremy Quin MP, who chairs the committee, described the armed services as a "world-class fighting force", whose personnel demonstrated "immense bravery and flexibility, responding to a range of crises and threats worldwide without hesitation, never wavering in their commitment to protecting our nation".

But, he said, "a steady, continuous drip of operations and ongoing commitments", together with a drop in retention and a period of low recruitment - which needed to be tackled "head on" - was undermining the country's military readiness.

Sir Jeremy said the govern-

ment must "start making difficult choices: either invest fully in our military or recognise that proper prioritisation of war-fighting will mean less availability for other tasks".

Speaking just days before Sir Patrick, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps told the BBC the UK needed to be prepared for "a more dangerous world".

He warned of growing risks posed by countries including China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, as well as terrorist groups.

However, when asked when the government would meet its target of spending 2.5% of national output on defence, he said he could not give an exact date, adding that the target would be met "when economic conditions allow". Agencies

US attacks in Syria, Iraq escalate regional tensions

DAMASCUS

THE US strikes on both Iraq and Syria to curb Iran's influence pose a significant threat to peace in an already volatile Middle East, and are likely to exacerbate tensions in the region, Syrian experts say.

As many as 23 fighters, including nine Syrians, were killed in the US attacks on Iranian strongholds in Syria's eastern province of Deir al-Zour on Friday night and into Saturday morning. While 16 people, including civilians, were killed by the US airstrikes on the paramilitary Hashd Shaabi forces in Iraq.

Following the attacks, the Syrian Foreign Ministry on Saturday lashed out at the US administration, accusing Washington of being a primary source of global instability.

In a scathing statement, the ministry said the US military forces are threatening international security and peace through attacks on nations, peoples, and sovereignty, and escalating conflicts in the Middle East.

The ministry accused the United States of attempting to revive terrorist activities in the region, emphasizing its consistent role in escalating conflicts in the already volatile Middle East.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry summoned the US charge d'affaires in Baghdad to protest against the US airstrikes in western Iraq, said a statement by the ministry.

The US charge d'affaires received a protest note, in which Iraq expressed

its rejection and condemnation of the US airstrikes that targeted Iraqi security forces as well as civilian sites in the Akashat and al-Qaim areas, according to the statement.

The note stressed Iraq's rejection of making its territories an arena for settling scores between conflicting countries, saying "our country is not the appropriate place to send messages and show force between opponents," said the statement.

Experts say that the attacks, purportedly a response to the drone attack that killed three American soldiers in Jordan on Jan 28, signify growing tensions arising from the Gaza conflict and a shared objective between the US and Israel to curtail Iran's influence in the region.

Osama Danoura, a political expert based in the Syrian capital Damascus, said the attacks are consistent with a pattern of conduct that the US has adopted.

Instead of addressing the Gaza conflict diplomatically and politically, the US has escalated the conflict through hostility, endangering peace in the already volatile Middle East, he said, adding such actions undermine international peace by prolonging the confrontation in the region and beyond.

"The latest escalation only worsens the situation," Danoura noted, adding the US attacks are giving opponents of American forces in Syria more motivation to resist and drive out the occupying forces. The US has made a mistake in seeking its ultimate goal and the way it is currently handling the situa-



US soldiers patrol an area in the town of Tal Hamis, southeast of the city of Qameshli in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh governorate, on January 24, 2024. AFP

tion, and "will inevitably face the consequences of their actions," he said. Danoura pointed out that the US attacks will inadvertently benefit terrorist groups like the Islamic State (IS), as the fighters targeted by the attacks are responsible for combating the remaining members of the IS in the region.

These operations have given these groups a chance to come back to life and regain control of the area where they were previously hiding and operating cautiously, he said.

Following the US attacks, the Syrian Defense Ministry on Sat-

urday said the move, which it said lacked any justification, was an attempt to weaken the Syrian army and its allies in their fight against terrorism.

Meanwhile, Russia strongly condemned the US strikes on Syria and Iraq and is seeking an immediate review of the emerging situation through the United Nations Security Council, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani also condemned the recent strikes by the United States on targets in Syria and Iraq.

Kanaani said the US strikes were in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and Syria, as well as international laws and the United Nations Charter.

Muhammad al-Omari, another Damascus-based Syrian political analyst, said that the US attacks were evidence that Washington was attempting to use force to destroy a threat or undesired group.

The US seeks to entangle Iraq in internal political conflicts, sowing the seeds of discord and chaos in the country, which is yet to recover from the 2003 invasion by the US-led coalition, he said.

"This aggressive action has placed the region in a highly volatile state. We are now just one step away from direct confrontation, and any mishandling could push us over the edge," Al-Omari warned. **Xinhua**

Medvedev says NATO 'playing with fire' with latest military exercises

MOSCOW

MOSCOW has no plans to attack any NATO country, something that is clear as day to anyone with an ounce of sense in the West, Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev wrote on the VKontakte social media platform.

Commenting on NATO's Steadfast Defender 2024 exercise, the largest since the end of the Cold War, he noted that this was "playing with fire in a very dangerous way."

"We don't plan to attack any of the bloc's members. This is clear to all reasonable people in the West. However, if they get carried



away playing and encroach on our country's integrity, they will immediately receive an appropriate response," Medvedev pointed out.

According to him, "it will mean one thing - a big war that NATO won't be able to dodge."

NATO's Steadfast Defender 2024 exercise is being held in Europe from February to May.

Thirty-one member states and NATO hopeful Sweden are taking part in the drills.

The bloc's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Javier Colomina said in an interview with the Armenpress news agency that the drills are aimed at deterring Russia, which the alliance views as a threat.

Xi extends Spring Festival greetings to all Chinese

TIANJIN

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping has extended Spring Festival greetings to all Chinese people during his inspection tour in north China's Tianjin Municipality from Thursday to Friday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, wished Chinese people of all ethnic groups, compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese good health and happiness in the Year of the Dragon, and the motherland prosperity. On Thursday morning,

Xi visited a village in Xinkou Town in the municipality's Xiqing District. From late July to early August last year, extreme rainfall hit northern China, causing anomalous floods in the Haihe River Basin, and a large area of land in the flood storage and detention basins in Tianjin was inundated. Briefed about the impact of floods on the city and district, Xi walked into greenhouses to check the growth of vegetables. He asked the farmers in detail about the restoration of greenhouses and the reseeded and sales of vegetables.

Xi then visited a villager's home, where he chatted with four generations of the family. He inquired about the family's losses during the disaster, their post-disaster production and income, and carefully tallied the numbers during the talk.

Stressing the importance of ensuring the people's livelihoods, Xi said the issue is always on the mind of the CPC Central Committee as well as Party committees and



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, extends Spring Festival greetings to Chinese people of all ethnic groups, compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese while visiting an ancient cultural street in north China's Tianjin Municipality, Feb. 1, 2024. Xi visited people in the northern city of Tianjin ahead of the Spring Festival and made an inspection tour in Tianjin from Thursday to Friday.

governments at all levels. He also expressed the hope that villagers would make their own efforts to rebuild their beautiful homes.

Before Xi left the village, the villagers gathered around and greeted him. Xi said he was happy to see the successful restoration of life and production and that winter heating had been ensured for the residents.

Since last year, the country has been hit by natural disasters such as floods, typhoons, earthquakes, landslides and snowstorms, Xi said, adding that he is keeping a close eye on them.

As the Spring Festival approaches, Xi, on behalf of the CPC Central Committee, extended his sincere regards to all those affected by disasters and those at the forefront of post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.

On Thursday afternoon, Xi went to an ancient cultural street and visited distinctive local shops, learning about the products, their sales, and the development of traditional culture.

Speaking of the importance of carrying forward fine traditional Chinese culture in realizing Chinese modernization, Xi asked Tianjin to better preserve and utilize blocks with historical and cultural interest.

In Chinese culture, the upcoming lunar year will be the Year of the Dragon, and the

dragon symbolizes bravery, progress, boundless vitality, and auspiciousness, conveying optimistic aspirations for the future, Xi said, encouraging the residents to embrace the new year with confidence and strive toward an even better life.

On Friday morning, Xi visited the Peking-Tianjin Campaign Memorial Museum, where he underscored the necessity of studying and frequently reviewing the history of China's revolutionary war.

The revolutionary traditions should be carried on and the fighting spirit should be strengthened, he said. On Friday afternoon, Xi was briefed by the Party committee and the government of Tianjin about their work, and affirmed the achievements that Tianjin has made in various areas.

Xi urged Tianjin to focus on the central work of economic development and the primary task of high-quality development, and write its own chapter in advancing Chinese modernization.

As a base of research and development for advanced manufacturing, Tianjin should be a pioneer in developing new productive forces, Xi said.

He called for sci-tech and industrial innovation and the development of high-end, smart and green manufacturing.

Tianjin should coordinate with Beijing to promote sci-tech innovation and the integration of the two cities' industrial systems, Xi said. Reform and opening up is the fundamental force that propels the development of all causes, Xi stressed.

He called on Tianjin to make further progress in improving the basic systems underpinning the market economy, developing a new system for a higher-standard open economy, and promoting regional integration and innovation in mechanisms and institutions that support Beijing-Tianjin urban integration.

Tianjin should also make an in-depth exploration into its historical and cultural resources, and strengthen the protection of its historical and cultural legacies as well as cultural resources related to the Party's heritage, Xi said.

Tianjin should act on the principle that a city should be built by the people and for the people, said Xi, adding that efforts are needed to expand basic public services, safeguard people's well-being and boost the sense of fulfillment among the people.

Stressing the importance of ensuring people's security and livelihood needs, supply of goods and energy, as well as social harmony and stability, Xi said that efforts should be made to ensure a joyful and peaceful Spring Festival.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee, accompanied Xi on the inspection tour. **Xinhua**

Iran's Raisi: Successful satellite launch proof of sanction failure

TEHRAN

IRANIAN President Ebrahim Raisi said on Saturday the successful launch of 11 satellites over the past 30 months showed that the sanctions against his country had failed.

Raisi made the remarks at a ceremony to mark the National Space Technology Day in the Iranian capital Tehran, during which he hailed Iran's achievements in the space industry despite the sanctions against the country, according to a statement published on the website of his office.

"The enemies sought to stop the Iranian nation's progress and isolate the country by imposing sanctions, but 11 space launches in the past two and a half years proved that the Islamic Republic of Iran has managed to doom the sanctions and plots aimed at isolating the country to failure," Raisi was quoted as saying.

Raisi added the country's accomplishments in the space industry were manifestations of "turning the sanctions and threats into opportunities" by Iranian youths, experts, academics and armed forces, stressing that Iran's space technology ranking has risen from 45th to 10th in the world as a result of these efforts.

The Iranian president highlighted the necessity to accelerate and increase the country's launch of satellites as well as to con-

tinue the development of infrastructure in the space industry.

Speaking at the same ceremony, Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology Isa Zarepour said the incumbent administration planned to launch into orbit from Iranian territory a satellite belonging to another country by the end of its term in 2025, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

He added the country also sought to put its satellites into the geosynchronous equatorial orbit (GEO), which is 35,786 kilometers above the Earth's surface, noting that the Iranian government planned to turn its space industry into an economic one to generate revenues.

On Jan 28, Iran simultaneously sent three indigenous satellites into space for the first time in its history, the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported.

The satellites were launched to an elliptic orbit with a minimum altitude of 450 kilometers above the Earth's surface, said the ISNA report.

The US sanctions on Iran intensified after Washington's unilateral withdrawal in May 2018 from a nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was signed between Tehran and world powers, as the US tried to exert "maximum pressure" on the Islamic republic.



A handout picture made available by the Iranian presidential office on Feb 2, 2024, shows Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi greeting the crowd during his speech in city of Minab, southern Iran. AFP

The Guardian

SPORT

Coach Masanche explains what went wrong for U17 women team against Zambia

By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

TANZANIA U17 Women's National Team head coach Hilda Joseph Masanche admits her side made costly defensive mistakes as they slumped to a devastating defeat to Zambia on Saturday.

Serengeti Girls lost 5-0 to Zambia at Lusaka's Nkoloma Stadium in the first leg of the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup Qualifiers, first-round game.

A brace from skipper Zangose Blessings Zulu and a goal from Zaliya Mwanza gave the home side a comfortable lead in the first half.

Second-half goals from striker Bwalya Chileshe and substitute Ruth Muwowo put the result beyond Serengeti Girls.

After the game, Masanche admitted they conceded too many goals and blamed the result on poor marking and decision-making for her side's downfall.

"It is a bad result for us because we have conceded many goals. Technically, marking was the major issue. We committed many mistakes. Our opponents were able to use space, especially through long balls that they dropped behind the defence line. We conceded a majority of the goals that way.

"In the end, we had many chances. Some of which were clear, but our strikers failed to use them. If we look at the whole game technically, there are things to work on, but a lot in those areas I identified," she said.

Adding: "We will hold a meeting to analyse important areas that had problems in order to fix



Tanzania U17 women's national football team players and their Zambian counterparts fight for the ball during their FIFA U17 World Cup Women's Qualifiers 2024 first-round match held at Nkoloma Stadium in Lusaka, Zambia on Saturday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TFF

them. We also developed those areas where we were better. It's not that the game was so bad, because most of the goals that happened were our own mistakes. That's why I said there are areas that we will go to work on to correct the mistakes that happened.

"If you look at the first goal, the second goal, they all used our defender's back position. Those places where you find that we can be two

against one or one on one, but what kind of decisions can you save, those were the problem areas."

Serengeti Girls will host Zambia at Chamazi Complex in the second leg of the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup Qualifiers, first round on Saturday.

The aggregate winner will face the aggregate winner between Uganda and Cameroon in the third round of the qualifiers.

The third round of qualifiers is

scheduled between May 10 and 12, with the return legs set for May 17-19, 2024.

The final round will officially take place between June 7 and 9 for the first legs.

The best three teams that win after the fourth round will qualify for the 2024 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup to take place in the Dominican Republic.



MultiChoice Tanzania's Head of Marketing, Ronald Shelukindo, speaks during the launch of the 'Panda Tukupandishe' promotion for DStv customers in Dar es Salaam on Saturday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

DStv launches 'Panda Tukupandishe' promo

By Guardian Correspondent

DStv Tanzania has announced a special promotion for its customers known as 'Panda Tukupandishe' in which, for two months, it will be upgrading its customers' packages.

The promotion enables DStv customers who meet the criteria (discontinued customers, continuing customers and new customers) to have the opportunity to pay for the package and be upgraded by being given a package above what they paid for for a specific time.

Speaking during the launch of the promotion on Saturday in Dar es Salaam, Hilda Nakajumo, MultiChoice Tanzania's Head of Customers Value Management, said: "At DStv, we're committed to bringing you the best value, especially in these economically challenging times.

"Our campaign is more than an offer; it's a testament to our mission to enrich your life with top-tier entertainment. Upgrade today and join us in celebrating a new year filled with more of what you love."

According to Hilda, the step up offer is open to all active, disconnected

and new DStv Compact Plus, Compact, Shangwe, Bomba and Poa customers for absolutely free from 01st February to 31 March, this year.

The promotion means that the DStv Poa customers who upgrade to DStv Bomba will be boosted to the Shangwe package while those on DStv Bomba and upgrading to Shangwe will be elevated to Compact.

DStv Shangwe subscribers stepping up to Compact will enjoy the Compact Plus package while DStv Compact users upgrading to Compact Plus will experience the full world of DStv Premium.

She said new Compact Plus customers upgraded to Premium will have access to channels like M-Net, increased SuperSport channels, and more, while new Compact customers boosted to Compact Plus can explore a variety of channels including Me, M-Net Movies 3 and CBS Justice.

"Those boosted to the Shangwe package will enjoy channels like Universal TV, BBC Lifestyle, Cartoon Network and SuperSport LaLiga. This is your chance to experience the best of DStv," she said.

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

TO raise the sports sector in the secondary school, St Mary's has built a modern sports stadium including a football field at the school.

This was revealed over the weekend in Dar es Salaam by the school's principal, Reza Ntipoo, during an event to congratulate the students who got Division One in the recent Form Four results.

He said the school has realized that sports are important to bring out various talents of students, and that is why they decided to build modern playgrounds to nurture talents.

"We have modern football pitches, handball, netball and we will continue to strengthen sports in our schools because when a student participates in sports, even his mind becomes active," he said.

"In our Form Four results, we got Division One, Division Two and a few students with Division Three so we have seen how sports contribute to encouraging students to



Upcoming hip-hop artist Charles Nyoni performs during the ceremony to congratulate the St Mary's Mbezi Beach High School's students who got Division One in the recent Form Four results. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JOSEPH MWENDAPOLE

be active in the classroom," added Ntipoo.

He said the school has planned a special time for students to participate in various sports such as football, handball, volleyball and scouting.

"The school, apart from doing well academically, has been doing well

also in sports because we nurture various talents, and we have seen the importance of sports

"We do not take sports matters lightly because we know that sports are an economy and there are people who earn billions through talents in various sports," he said.

"And we are very grateful to the school leaders for supporting us in sports and in these stadiums we have built. They have installed large floodlights like those used in large sports stadiums, which help students to practice even at night," he said.

Coach Dabo expresses patience and optimism on mini transfer signings

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AZAM FC head coach Youssouph Dabo has admitted that it will take some time for his new three foreign signings to adapt to the league and team due to their young age and culture.

The Chamazi-based side are currently without congested fixture, playing friendly games as they prepare for their Dar es Salaam Derby against Simba slated at CCM Kirumba in Mwanza this week.

The ice-cream makers signed three foreign players in the January mini-transfer window to bolster their squad. They signed two Colombians in Franklin Navarro from Cortuluá and Yeison Fuentes from Leonel FC all from the second division.

Following injuries of number one and two goalkeepers, Ali Ahamada na Iddrisu Abdulai, who will be out till the end of the season, Azam signed Mohamed Mustafa at the end of the season from El Merreikh of Sudan.

Coach Dabo said the technical bench will do everything in their power to integrate them into the squad but it will need a collective unit to achieve the feat.

"For Mustafa will be easy because he has been playing in the continent for a long time. He is from Africa which makes it easy for him to adapt quickly, but for Navarro and Fuentes with their young age, coming all the way from Colombia, it will need some time.

"They are real good players with

a bright future and we will make sure they excel and help the team. But you have to know that there is a new culture, food, weather and even language. With all of these factors they need time to adapt and everyone around Azam FC is responsible for their development," said coach Dabo.

The Senegalese gaffer said he aims to build high intensity in matches ahead in quest to clinch the NBC Premier League title that it was lastly won on a decade ago by the club.

"We are on top of the league log, but that's not enough as teams are closing the gap and with many games in hand which is not to our advantage. We have to play with high intensity and discipline, but treat every game as a final for us to achieve our goal.

"My players have to be aggressive and that is something I will demand in every match going forward. We have a tough match coming on Friday and we have to put our preparations into practical when we resume

league duties."

Azam FC played a friendly match on Saturday winning 3-0 against Zanzibar envoys Mafunzo FC with Suleiman Abdul alias Sopus, Adolf Mtasingwa and an own goal from Baraka Abdallah

Azam lead the league having 31 points after 13 games and level on points with Yanga who also claimed 31 points in 12 games while their Friday's opponents Simba SC have 26 points from 11 games in the third place.

At AFCON, Ivory Coast sacks its coach, then stuns its way through soccer's wildest tournament

By Henry Bushnell

IVORY Coast's AFCON dream was dying, slowly and painfully on Saturday, just as it already had 12 days before. The sun had set on Bouaké, the country's second-largest city, and on the Ivorian national team's Africa Cup of Nations run. They were down a man and a goal to Mali in the quarterfinals. Stoppage time neared. And that's when Simon Adingra pounced.

This, it seems, is when Les Éléphants always pounce. It was the third time in two weeks they stumbled toward elimination, toward embarrassment, then survived. They sacked their coach after a 4-0 group-stage loss to Equatorial Guinea. They trailed Senegal, an African soccer giant, with 10 minutes remaining in the Round of 16.

But they have tapped into magic on home soil, as the hosts of this biennial continental championship.

And they have tapped into the innate madness of the maddest soccer tournament in the world.

They equalized against Senegal, then won on penalties Monday. Five days later, Adingra gave them life and 30 minutes of extra time. And in the 32nd of those 30 minutes – in the second minute of one added on – Oumar Diakité flicked in a stunning winner.

The stadium erupted. The entire country erupted. Diakité ripped off his shirt, earning a second yellow card, reducing his team to nine men. Nobody cared.

They hugged and ran aimlessly. They prayed and jumped deliriously. They cried and felt things they'd surely never felt before.

At the final whistle, Ivorian players and staff sped onto the field. Malian opponents surrounded the referee, and instigated a shoving match. Mali coach Eric Chelle crouched and wiped away tears, as an assistant doused the back of his boiling neck with water.

And all around them, delirium reigned. Glorious delirium.

Welcome to AFCON.

There is nothing quite like it, this summit of a soccer-crazed continent, this meeting of countless different religions, races and cultures, all connected by a silly little ball and a beautiful game.

Twenty-four teams came to the Ivory Coast in January. Dozens of European-based stars traveled south to take part. And just about none of them performed as expected. Upsets have become the norm. "The Africa Cup of Nations has its own logic," as the saying goes. But still, the 2024 edition has felt consistently illogical.

On the first full day of the tournament, Equatorial Guinea held Nigeria; Mozambique drew (and nearly beat) Egypt; Cape Verde took down Ghana.

Throughout group play, World Cup mainstays stumbled. Namibia topped Tunisia. Mauritania beat Algeria, which crashed out without a single win. Ghana also exited without two points.

By the quarterfinals, all five 2022 World Cup participants and all eight 2021 AFCON quarterfinalists had been eliminated – a first in major tournament history.

And then there were the hosts, Ivory Coast.

A 2-0 win on opening day calmed Ivorian nerves. The atmosphere around the country felt festive. But a 1-0 loss to Nigeria dampened it. Then on Matchday 3, a simple task turned into a nightmare. Ivory Coast didn't even have to beat Equatorial Guinea, the world's 152nd-most populous country, to advance to the knockouts; it simply had to draw. But it conceded a goal before halftime; then another in the 73rd minute; then again in the 75th, and yet again in the 88th.

Two days after their humiliating defeat, the Ivorian Football Federation fired head coach Jean-Louis Gasset, just as any favorite would after a calamitous third-place group finish.

What made this situation unique, though, was that, technically, the Elephants hadn't been eliminated.

AFCON's forgiving format granted hope. Four of six third-place teams would advance to the Round of 16. The Ivorians, with three points and a minus-3 goal differential, needed two of the remaining five groups to produce a third-place finisher worse than them – which seemed unlikely, until Mozambique scored twice in stoppage time to shock Ghana, leaving those two Group B teams stranded on two points.

So the Ivorians – the team, the people, their collective dream – needed one more helping hand.

They perked up the following day when Cameroon, on one point in Group C, went down 2-1 to The Gambia in the 85th minute; then sunk as Cameroon came back to win 3-2.

They held onto hope for one more day, eyeing Group E – but Mali couldn't find a goal against Namibia, and both advanced, along with South Africa, ahead of the hosts.

Group F offered one last chance. Fans gathered for watch parties, admirably optimistic. And finally, when a lone Morocco goal left Zambia and Tanzania on two points apiece, those fans spilled out into the streets of Abidjan, jubilant.

Five days later, under a caretaker coach, their team rallied to upset Senegal.

Five days after that, a first-half red card turned a quarterfinal against Mali into an uphill battle. In the 76th minute, Dorgeles Nene – a Malian midfielder with Ivorian roots – made the hill a mountain.

Yahoo!sports

Last-gasp AFCON triumph for I. Coast, S. Africa also reach semis

ABIDJAN

OUMAR Diakité was the hero as hosts Ivory Coast staged another remarkable salvage operation on Saturday to reach the Africa cup of Nations semi-finals, and South Africa later joined them.

A brilliant back-heel by the substitute in added time at the end of extra time in Bouake gave the Elephants a 2-1 victory over Mali, who dominated much of the quarter-final and scored first.

Ivory Coast-born Nene Dorgeles put Mali ahead on 71 minutes against the host nation, who were reduced to 10 men just before half-time when Odilon Kossounou was sent off.

But another Ivorian substitute, Simon Adingra, levelled in the 90th minute to take the pulsating west African showdown into extra time.

Then, with the quarter-final seemingly set to be decided by a penalty shootout, Diakité back-heeled a drive from a teammate past Mali goalkeeper Djigui Diarra.

Diakité, who had been yellow-carded earlier, took off his shirt when celebrating, leading to a second caution followed by a red card.

Victory came at a high price as suspensions rule Diakité, Kossounou, captain Serge Aurier and Christian Kouame out of a semi-final against the Democratic Republic of Congo on Wednesday.

"After this kind of match,



Ivory Coast's forward #14 Oumar Diakite (C) takes his jersey off as he celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's second goal during the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2024 quarter-final football match between Mali and Ivory Coast at the Stade de la Paix in Bouake on February 3, 2024. Photo: AFP

there are no real things to explain, it is just emotions," said Diakité, who plays for French Ligue 1 outfit Reims.

"My joy was so great that I forgot that I had a yellow card. It was a mistake on my part. Even if I am not there, we can do the job (reach the final).

"With this goal, I think I put happiness on the faces of every Ivorian fan at the stadium. No words can describe how I'm feeling now, but I'm happy.

"We knew it was going to be a complicated match, but we made it difficult for ourselves. Our mentality played a key role in this triumph.

- 'Supporters incredible' -

"Our supporters are incredible and we had no option but to give our very best and seek victory,

even if the red card before mine made it difficult."

Victory maintained the dominance of the Elephants over the Eagles in AFCON tournaments – it was their fifth win from 1994 with one other meeting drawn.

The last time Ivory Coast reached the semi-finals was in 2015 in Equatorial Guinea, and they defeated DR Congo 3-1 before going on to win the tournament a second time.

Ivory Coast scraped into the knockout stage this time as the last of the four best third-placed nations and then trailed holders Senegal for 82 minutes before snatching an equaliser.

They went on to win the last-16 clash on penalties, only to play second fiddle to Mali in the next round before staging an amazing

comeback. Mali contributed to their downfall by squandering a chance to take an early lead when Adama 'Noss' Traore had a penalty saved by Youssouf Fofana.

Several Malians could face disciplinary action as a group, including red-carded captain Hamari Traore, surrounded the Egyptian referee after the winning goal, forcing the official to push some away.

Meanwhile, South Africa goalkeeper Ronwen Williams saved four penalties in a shootout as his country beat Cape Verde 2-1 in a shootout after a 0-0 draw following extra time in Yamoussoukro.

Bryan Teixeira was the only Cape Verdean to score from the spot while Teboho Mokoena and Mthobi Mvala netted for South Africa.

South Africa are back in the semi-finals for the first time since 2000, when they lost to then co-hosts Nigeria, their opponents in Bouake on Wednesday.

Cape Verde could have won the match in added time at the end of regular time when Gilson Tavares broke through, but Williams pushed his shot on to the post and the ball was cleared.

On Friday, Nigeria edged Angola 1-0 through an Ademola Lookman goal and DR Congo came from behind to beat Guinea 3-1 with a late Arthur Masuaku goal from a free-kick sealing success.

Nigeria, who can claim on reigning African Player of the Year Victor Osimhen, have won the AFCON three times, Ivory Coast and DR Congo twice each and South Africa once. AFP

Williams heroics take South Africa into Cup of Nations semi-finals

ABIDJAN

GOALKEEPER and captain Ronwen Williams was the hero with four saves in the shoot-out as South Africa beat Cape Verde 2-1 on penalties to reach the Africa Cup of Nations semi-finals on Saturday after a goalless draw in their last-eight tie.

Williams had already come up with one vital stop at the end of normal time and the match went to penalties as it finished 0-0 after 120 minutes in Yamoussoukro.

He then produced a remarkable performance to keep out penalties by Bebe, Willy Semedo, Laros Duarte and Patrick Andrade as South Africa – who themselves failed to convert two spot-kicks – progressed to a last-four showdown with Nigeria on Wednesday.

"We were not lucky because we had a very good keeper today. If you can stop four penalties it is not luck anymore," said South Africa coach Hugo Broos.

"He did not only that, he also saved us two minutes before the end with a player who was alone in front of him, so yes he was man of the match. I think you could choose nobody else."

The 32-year-old Williams, of Mamelodi Sundowns, refused to accept all the credit for his heroics however, instead giving a nod to the South African



Ronwen Williams' heroics earned South Africa a place in the Africa Cup of Nations last four. AFP

backroom team.

"I give credit to the analysts. They prepare me, they cut so many videos. We study the clubs. I study them as well, I try to pick up trends," he said.

"My phone is full of penalty clips so it is credit to the analysts for doing the work because it is not easy to get footage of some of those players because they play all over the world."

South Africa go through to their first AFCON semi-final since what can be termed as their glory days, when they won the title as hosts in 1996, were runners-up in 1998 and then finished third in 2000.

- Cape Verde coach 'proud' -

Meanwhile, Cape Verde go home at the end of a campaign in which they won a Cup of Nations knockout tie for the first time, although they will

regret their poor performance in the shoot-out after having the best chances during the match itself.

"I think in some way we deserved to be in the semi-finals," said their coach, Pedro 'Bubista' Brito.

"I am proud of my team,

I think we have had an excellent campaign. We always played to attack, were well organised when we didn't have the ball, and showed that a small country like us can compete.

"The people of Cape Verde must be proud of

what we have done."

Approaching the Charles Konan Banny Stadium along the deserted wide avenues of Ivory Coast's capital, it was hard to avoid the sensation that the main event was happening elsewhere, in Saturday's other quarter-final 100 kilometres further north in Bouake.

The stadium was almost entirely empty at kick-off although fans, many of them wearing the orange of Ivory Coast's national team, did start flooding in as the game went on.

Those who were absent at the beginning did not miss much, and it took until just after the hour mark for either team to have a clear opportunity.

The chance fell for Cape Verde, with Joao Paulo Fernandes playing in Garry Rodrigues, who could only

shoot straight at Williams.

Jovane Cabral hooked a shot over from an inviting position in the 78th minute, and extra time began to feel inevitable.

Yet Cape Verde could have ended it before then when substitute Gilson Tavares Benchimol was played in, but his thunderous shot was tipped onto the underside of the bar by Williams.

It took South Africa until the second minute of extra time to seriously trouble Vozinha, the Cape Verde goalkeeper producing two fine saves from efforts at point-blank range in quick succession, first from Mihlali Mayambela, then from Evidence Makgopa.

Onto the penalties they went, and Williams made the difference.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Last-gasp AFCON triumph for I. Coast, S. Africa also reach semis

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Matola delighted with Simba SC's victory over Mashujaa



Simba Sports Club striker Freddy Michael Kouablan (2nd L) battles for the ball with Mashujaa players during their NBC Premier League match at Lake Tanganyika stadium on Saturday. Simba won 1-0. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

By Correspondents Seth Mapoli & Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA Sports Club assistant coach is pleased with the team's 1-0 win over Mashujaa FC, even in the face of apprehension about the adverse pitch conditions that posed a challenge to their desired playing style.

Despite the initial concerns, the tactician demonstrated resilience and determination, ultimately achieving victory.

The match unfolded at Lake Tanganyika in Kigoma, highlighting the team's ability to adapt and succeed under less-than-ideal circumstances.

Matola's satisfaction stems from the players' commendable performance, overcoming obstacles and securing the win.

"The biggest issue is the pitch, but we are happy we've been able to secure three points. With upcoming games and a tight schedule, we'll prepare diligently for any situation," Matola added.

"Our players delivered everything we asked them to do. From get go we wanted to get an early goal and see how we can hold into the win and preserve our energy. We have heavy fixtures and we have to close gaps with second and first places.

"The pitch wasn't conducive to our style of play, so we had to play long balls in order to reduce risks around our zone and try get something from the strategies we had in attack," said the former midfielder.

Matola echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the significance of strategic planning by the technical bench amidst a demanding schedule.

"With the upcoming games and the way the schedule is planned, the load is very big. But as a technical bench, we have planned to prepare well in any situation for this schedule," he affirmed.

The decisive goal came in the 19th minute through a penalty kick expertly executed by Saido Ntibazonkiza, following a foul committed by Zuberi Dabi of Mashujaa FC on Kibu Denis, as deemed by referee

Nassoro Mwinchui.

Reflecting on the intense clash, Mashujaa FC coach, Abdallah Mohammed "Barres," acknowledged his players' commendable performance, emphasizing their adherence to instructions.

Despite the element of luck not favoring them, Mohammed expressed gratitude for the positive changes witnessed in the team, stating: "I am very grateful to my players. My boys fought hard, and they adapted well to our game plan."

Simba SC captain Mohamed Hussein, known as Tshabalala, admitted that the match against the well-organized Warriors was far from easy.

Despite dominating the game, the focus was on securing the result and three crucial points. Tshabalala remarked: "In the first half, we played very fast, but in the second half, we slowed down to pro-

tect our results and conserve strength for the next match."

Tshabalala extended gratitude to Simba SC fans in the Kigoma region, recognizing their support. As Simba SC looks ahead, the team remains focused on maintaining their momentum and tackling the challenges posed by the tight schedule in their pursuit of success this season.

After completing 11 matches, Simba SC boast an impressive record, securing victories in eight of the games they've played.

Their performance includes two drawn matches and a solitary defeat, positioning them with 26 points in the Mainland Premier League standings.

However, they currently trail behind Azam FC and Young Africans.

As they gear up for their 12th match tomorrow, scheduled to kick off at 04:00 East Afri-

can time, Simba SC will face Tabora United in a fixture set within the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium.

The upcoming game presents an opportunity for Simba SC to further solidify their standing in the league and close the point gap with the leading teams.

The anticipation is high as Simba SC takes to the field, aiming to continue their winning streak and make strides in the league standings.

The clash against Tabora United is a crucial moment for the team to showcase their skills and determination in pursuit of success in the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium.

In their last match against Mashujaa, Aishi Manula returned in goal for Simba SC and new signings Babacar Sarr and Fredy Kouablan all started for Simba while Fabrice Ngoma missed the game due to illness.

TONIGHT @ 9:00

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ
12:00 KIPENGA XTRA
13:00 Zote Kuntu
13:30 Kaili Za Wana
13:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
14:00 SKONGA (r)
14:30 Planef Bongo (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Akili & Me
15:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
16:00 Zote Kuntu
16:55 Dondoo Za Michzo
17:00 SSELECT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 Kaili Za Wana
18:30 #HASHTAG
19:00 EATV SAA 1
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 5SPORTS
22:00 Zote Kuntu
23:00 Kurasa
23:05 EATV SAA1 (r)

5Sports

The week's local and international sporting events as well as in-depth analysis of the biggest sporting highlights of the week are covered on 5sports.

eastafrica RADIO

05:00 Supa Breakfast
09:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planef Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
19:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Simba Queens awarded victory, three points for forfeited JKT game

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA Queens' postponed match against JKT Queens has been deemed a forfeit by the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Women's Football Committee.

Simba Queens will earn the victory and three points for the match, which was originally scheduled for January 8 but postponed because hosts JKT Queens did not show up.

Under FIFA rules, the opponent of a team that forfeits a game is given a 3-0 victory and three points in the league standings.

Hosts JKT Queens protested the change of venue from their preferred home base of Major General Isamuhyo stadium in Mbweni to Chamazi Complex.

They argued that the change of venue did not adhere to league regulations.

According to multiple reports, TFF had instructed all the Dar es Salaam teams to use Chamazi Complex as demanded by broadcasting partner, Azam Media.

Despite attending the pre-match meeting they did not show up at Chamazi where Simba Queens and match officials turned up for the league game.

TFF announced yesterday that JKT Queens has been fined three million shillings (3,000,000) and deducted five points after the Women's Football Committee satisfied itself that the team received information about its game against Simba Queens that was supposed to be played January 8, 2024 at Azam Complex, Chamazi.

The TFF's statement read: "The committee is satisfied beyond doubt that JKT Queens Club received information about the relevant game to be played at Azam Complex, Chamazi before the day of the game and on the day of the game on January 8, 2024.

"During the match preparation meeting (MCM), the Chairman of the Session reminded all parties about the venue and time. After going through the match information, the Committee has deducted JKT Queens five points and slapped a fine of three million shillings (3,000,000/-) in accordance with Rule 32.1-3 of the Women's Premier League 2023 Edition.

"The Committee has awarded Simba Queens team three points and three goals in accordance with Rule 18.45 of the Women's Premier League Edition 2023. The Committee has also banned the Secretary General of JKT Queens, Duncan Maliyabwana, from being involved in football activities for a period of twelve (12) months in accordance with Rule 32.1.5 of the Women's Premier League Edition 2023."

Before the points deduction, JKT Queens led the table with 21 points from seven games, two more than second placed Simba.

They now drop to second place level on points with CEASIAA Queens but boasting a superior goal difference.

Yanga's Miguel Gamondi hits out at Kagera for time wasting

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans head coach Miguel Gamondi criticised Kagera Sugar for their negative tactics and labelled Fred Minziro's side as playing old school football as the NBC Premier League holders were held to a frustrating goalless draw on Friday.

Gamondi's men had the chance to topple Azam with a win, but failed to make their dominance count.

Azam remain top of the NBC Premier League table on goal difference albeit having played one more game than Young Africans.

The biggest flashpoints of a fiery game saw Kagera Sugar goal controversially ruled for offside in the first half while there were ten minutes of added time in the second

half.

"In the first half we did not do enough to score. We created only one or two chances. They could have scored in two counter attacks.

"However in the second half we played much better. We created opportunities but not enough to win," he said.

The former Wydad and Mamelodi Sundowns coach was unhappy with some aspects of Kagera's play in a game that saw referee Ally Simba issue four yellow cards in the last ten minutes.

He said: "We paid for the lack of competitive games. A lot of players like Khalid Aucho, Max Nzegeli did not play competitive games for a long time. Unluckily the last fifteen minutes weren't a football game, the other team went down on every ball. I

think it is not good even for Tanzanian football to give an image like that."

"Play football. It is fairplay. You can win, lose but do fairplay. This is old school football. What can I do? The referee was okay. I am not complaining about the referee, he only allowed this type of wasting time. It is bad for football.

"We clearly did not deserve to win. We did not play like we wanted to play as champions. We need to correct the mistakes and wait for the next game."

Gamondi and his charges have another chance to reclaim top spot from Azam when they host Dodoma Jiji at Chamazi Complex this evening in another rescheduled NBC Premier League game.



Miguel Gamondi

Flexibles by David Chikoko

