

NATIONAL



Kandodo giving her remarks

Government for Zero-Malaria by 2030

/ James Mwale

IN a bold stride towards a healthier future, the government of Malawi is leaving no room for mediocrity in the fight against Malaria by setting a precedent in disease control and prevention in its vision of achieving a zero Malaria record by 2030.

The Minister of Health, Khumbize Kandodo recently said, it is possible for the country to be

free from Malaria cases by 2030 if respective stakeholders followed the World Health approved recommendations.

She made the remarks in the area of Senior Chief Nthondo, in Ntchisi district where she presided over this year's Commemoration of World Malaria Day.

She said: "I was in Japan recently and I learned with awe that they last registered a Malaria case in 1962.

This raised an awakening in me that our friends have so far been doing everything right in efforts to eliminate the pandemic. So where exactly are we missing it. We could achieve a Zero-Malaria record by 2030 if we abided by the right strategies."

She said losing in the fight against Malaria must never be an

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Chakwera's Export Vision for Malawi

/ By Memory Kutengule Chatonda

MALAWI'S ECONOMY thrives on the potential of its agricultural sector, a cornerstone that accounts for more than one third of the country's GDP and over 80% of its export earnings as per research.

Yet, the current production levels have not been meeting the full spectrum of opportunities that global markets offer. As the country stands in the point of economic transformation, increasing production for export is not just an option but a necessity.

It is for this, reason that the government of Malawi is relentlessly putting in place different policies, projects and initiative to promote its private sector to maximize the country's export abilities.

Recently, President Dr. Lazarus Chakwera affirmed his government's commitment in creating a conducive environment for the private sector to increase their production and enhance the



Chakwera Kicks Off 34th Trade Fair

Picture by: Abel Ikiloni

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Comment

by Malawi Today

It's time we take farming as business

PRESIDENT DR. LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA, recently, opened the 34th Malawi International Trade Fair in Blantyre under the theme: 'Boosting Malawi's export capacity through enhanced production'.

Malawi being an agro - based economy, the theme for this year's trade fair resonates well with the message that the president has been preaching about taking farming as business. The country has been over relying on imports with little being done to increase export earnings which in turn depletes the scarce foreign currency.

As a country there's a big need for seriousness in farming so that we can produce enough for exportation. The efforts that government has put in establishment of mega-farms to increase production and promotion of irrigation schemes across all the regions, should be a plus on the efforts that the citizenry would put in farming.

Malawi will only develop if we manage to sell our goods and services outside the country to increase export earnings. The President said the country was making strides in tobacco production and sales, saying the achievement could also be extended to other cash crops.

As a country, we need to change our mindset as over dependency on rain-fed agriculture and use of hoes for farming will not take us anywhere.

We, at Malawi Today, commend the government's effort in encouraging Malawians to take farming seriously so that we move from depending on imported products to self - reliance on most items including food stuff.

Malawi launches bold initiative to empower women and girls

By Leonard Masauli

MALAWI has initiated a new three-year social protection programme aimed at empowering the most vulnerable women and girls across nine districts in the country to alleviate extreme poverty.

In a press release by Unicef recently, the 'Social Protection for Gender Empowerment and Resilience (SP-GEAR) or 'Amai Titukuke', programme aligns with the Malawi National Social Protection Strategy (MNSPS) and the Social Cash Transfer Programme, alongside targeted socio-economic empowerment activities.

It is indicated that this endeavor, spanning from 2024 to 2026, is set to benefit over 500,000 individuals.

Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Jean Sendeza, graced the launch programme on Wednesday,



Picture courtesy of Omol

Unicef Representative - Omol highlighted importance of inclusive social protection

April 24, at St. Martins Primary School in Mayaka, Zomba.

"This initiative represents a significant stride in addressing the unique challenges faced by women and girls in Malawi. It acknowledges their pivotal role in society and aims to enhance their socio-economic status while bolstering resilience to crises and disasters.

"The programme seeks to increase access to

social services pertaining to behavioural change, nutrition, early childhood development, sexual reproductive health, and the prevention of gender-based violence across the nine targeted districts," said Sendeza.

Unicef representative Shadrack Omol highlighted the importance of inclusive social protection in safeguarding children's rights and ensuring their dignified upbringing.

With more than 20 percent of Malawi's 19.6 million population living in extreme poverty, disproportionately affecting women and girls, this initiative holds paramount importance.

Combining efforts from the Malawi Government, UNICEF, the European Union, the Government of Ireland, and other partners, a total of \$26.5 million (about K46 billion) has been mobilized to address the challenges hindering women's access to economic opportunities and essential social services.

Notably, the EU contributes \$23.6 million (about K41 billion), with an additional \$2.9 million (about K5 billion) from Ireland.

Among its objectives, the programme aims at strengthening government policies, strategies, and capacity for effective implementation of social protection interventions.

The programme is expected to collaborate with district and local structures to empower women and girls through various platforms, including savings and loans groups, early childhood development centres, and community victim support units.

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Chakwera opens 34th International Trade Fair

country's export earnings.

Chakwera made the remarks at Chichiri Trade Fair Grounds in Blantyre during the official opening of the 34th Malawi International Trade Fair.

He said for a long time, the country has been relying on imports with little being done to increase export earnings which slowly but surely led to the depletion of foreign currency.

"The future of our country is to encourage the private sector to sell their goods and services outside the country to increase

export earnings. However, this has not been the case for a long time.

"For instance, in March last year, import volume was US\$177.7 million while this year during the same month, import volume increased to US\$194.4 million. This means the problem is too huge. So, this tendency of using the forex for importing goods without replacing it through exports is retrogressive," he said.

Chakwera said it is against this background that when he ascended to presidency, his

government has been doing everything possible to turn around the situation.

"Among other efforts that my government is taking is establishment of mega-farms to increase production and also promotion of irrigation schemes across all the regions. One thing that has been affecting farming is over-dependency on rain-fed agriculture and hoes.

"We want farmers to take farming as a business so that they can increase their production for export earnings," he said.

Chakwera was delighted to see that the country is making strides in tobacco production and sales, saying the achievement can also be extended to other cash crops.

He, therefore, urged the private sector to work in collaboration with government for them to continue benefiting from government policies and other opportunities such as Africa Continental Free Area and COMESA.

Minister of Trade and Industry, Sosten Gwengwe, said his ministry has undertaken several strategic initiatives including protecting and supporting local manufacturing companies in their production drive.

Government for Zero-Malaria by 2030

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option especially now that all efforts from both government and partners have concentrated towards achieving the Malawi 2063 Agenda.

Speaking at the event, World Health Organisation's National Professional Officer for Malaria, Dr. Michael Kayange, echoed the need for continued collaborative efforts especially by abiding to WHO recommended

interventions like adhering to vaccinations, sleeping under disinfected mosquito nets, and receiving early treatment to the pandemic.

"As we renew our commitment to fighting the pandemic today, we need to pay serious attention to the strategies and the World Health Organisation approved interventions.

"We also need to strive to



achieve and sustain optimal coverage of the interventions, with 80 percent and above, countrywide. We can forget about registering Zero-Malaria by the said target if we are below optimal coverage, and indeed if we can attain but fail to sustain it," he said adding that so far, Malawi was below the optimal coverage at 60 percent.

Taking turns in their remarks,

both Chairperson for the District's Council, Arnold Kapolo and Senior Chief Nthondo, reaffirmed continued commitment to the fight against the pandemic by among other interventions, encouraging and enforcing adherence to the WHO recommended strategies.

This year's commemoration was held under the theme: "Advancing Health Equity, Gender Equality, and Human Rights".

Strategic plan 3 to strengthen health sector

/By Sellah Chunda & Gift Chiponde

THE Malawi government has recently launched the third edition of the Malawi Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP3).

This plan outlines the objectives strategies, and activities necessary to build upon the progress achieved during the implementation of the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2.

The HSSP 3 is motivated by Malawi 2063's vision of self-reliance and outlines how the health sector will contribute to the human capital development and mindset change pillars of this vision.

Minister of health, Khumbize

Kandodo Chiponda described the launch of Malawi Health Sector Strategic Plan 3 and the Health Financing Strategy as a propeller to enhance and promote the quality of Health Service Delivery in the country.

She made the remarks recently, at Sunbird Capital Hotel in Lilongwe during a press briefing on the launch of Malawi Health Sector Strategic Plan 3.

She said among other things, the Strategic plans will help increase life expectancy, reduce high mortality rate and maternal mortality rates reduce HIV prevalence and enhance health infrastructure development and services.

The minister emphasized that the plan will help improve health services at community level and provide health workers with necessary and readily available equipment. Additionally, the Plan will turn Health Centres into Community Hospitals to provide integrated health services and care and the Digitisation of the health systems.

She also revealed that districts like Lilongwe and Blantyre will also benefit from the plan, allowing them to have District Hospitals which they have lacked for a long time.

"The declaration states that every national budget must contribute 15 percent of the national budget to promote the well-being and livelihoods, which as a country we have managed to be at 12 per cent which is a good gesture in health promotion," she said.

She said the government was committed to providing all services in Malawi with the partnership of the private sector for specialised diseases for robust health service delivery.

The minister also said that her ministry is committed to providing health services to all Malawian nationals and foreigners on Malawian soil.

Executive Director for Malawi Equity Health Network (MEHN), George Jobe, Commended the government for the current allocation to the Ministry of Health which he said is close to the Abuja declaration and the aspirations of Universal Health Coverage.



Malawi High Commissioner to Kenya, Callista Mutharika

Continental, global summits vital for Malawi's development

/By Patricia Kapulula

MALAWI HIGH COMMISSIONER TO KENYA, Callista Mutharika, says summits such as the Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health (AFSH) are important for countries like Malawi which rely on agriculture as major forex earner.

She told Malawi journalists in Nairobi, Kenya recently, ahead of the AFSH Summit which focused on developing Agriculture in African countries.

Mutharika said it was important for Malawi to take part in such engagements as the country, despite relying on agriculture, does not manufacture fertiliser hence the need to engage with different stakeholders at continental level in securing such agricultural commodities as fertiliser.

"This was an opportunity for our President to come to Kenya to commit himself and speak to different development agencies that can help us in securing fertiliser and getting advice on what Malawi needs to do," she said.

IN April, President Lazarus Chakwera was in Nairobi, Kenya for the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) Summit to identify key priority areas for financing in Africa and advocate for an ambitious replenishment of IDA resources, crucial for supporting transformational development objectives across the continent.

President Chakwera also attended the AFSH Summit, which brought together all relevant stakeholders to highlight the crucial role of fertiliser and soil health in stimulating sustainable pro-poor productivity growth in African agriculture and to agree on an African Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan as well as the Soils Initiative for Africa.

In June 2006, African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government endorsed the Abuja Declaration on Fertiliser for the Africa Green revolution, a continental strategy to reverse the worrying trend of poor productivity of the African soils.



Picture by: Sellah Chunda

Programs Manager at SESA, Emmanuel Chitambuli

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Government committed to alleviate unsustainable population growth

By Andrew Phiri

AMONG the issues that Malawians should focus on for mindsent change is population growth. malawi's population is gowing at an alarming rate hence a need to discuss and talk about it.

THE deputy Director for Civic Education in the Ministry of Local Government, Unity and Culture, Lawrence Useni, recently, said government is committed to provide dialogic platforms where community members should discuss various factors that contribute to Malawi's rapid population growth.

The remarks come on the sidelines of a Malawi Wanga program dubbed Pabwalo, a television and radio play which is aimed at promoting citizen engagement for proactive participation on issues of national development at Bvumbwe in Thyolo district.

He observed that lack of job opportunities among youths and limited access to medical services in some hospitals across the country are among major factors that contribute to alarming population growth as shown by



Picture by: Andrew Phiri

Government will continue providing dialogue platform to citizens.

National Statistics Office 2018's population figures which puts the country's total population at 18 million.

"One of the issues that came out of the discussion is early marriage. Many youths do not have stable income generating activities.

He said that currently, government is rolling out various initiatives under the Ministry of Youth such as loans through National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF) and

vocational skills through TEVETA among others so that the youths should have something to do. He advised the youths to utilise the programmes.

Useni called on parents, guardians and other relevant authorities and sectors to provide proper guidance on the youth on the right time to get married.

"We are also calling upon parents to take an active role in advising the youths on the right time for marriages and we believe this will help the government and

Civil Society Organizatios to work effectively on various programs," he said.

Chairperson for Bvumbwe Area Development Committee, Maulidi Kawere, said MBC and Directorate of Civic Education's Pa Bwalo was a timely initiative, adding that the initiative has the potential to provide opportunity to youths to speak out their concerns on matters of national interest.

One of the youths in the district, Dickson Makaya, concurred with Maulidi saying there was need for the Ministry of Local Government and MBC to sustain the initiative for public and policy makers interest if the youths were to effectively contribute to Malawi 2063 Agenda.

"Government should strive to reachout to people in the rural areas where many are facing socio- economic challenges such as hunger and poverty. I believe that most challenges that are hindering this country to develop are in rural areas," he said.

Centre for Social Concern, Economic Governance Officer, Agness Nyirongo applauded government for rolling out the initiative.

She called on government and its partners to take extra efforts in investing in health and education sectors, saying the two are key to national development.

CISANET commends World Bank for food response support

By Sheminah Nkhoma

CIVIL SOCIETY AGRICULTURE NETWORK (CISANET) says the provision of US\$57.6 million from the World Bank to the government of Malawi holds immense potential to alleviate the suffering of Malawians severely affected by the ongoing food crisis.

The CISANET Board Chairperson, Herbert Chagona, recently highlighted that Malawi has faced a lot of challenges as such the support will help the country deal with food shortage.

"As CISANET we advocate for prioritizing the allocation of the majority of these funds directly to provide support to those mostly affected by food crisis. This includes ensuring that the funds are directed towards essential needs such as



Picture by: Sheminah Nkhoma

Hebert Chagona, CISANET Board Chairperson

food aid, agricultural support and infrastructure for resilience building initiatives," said Chagona.

He said Malawi must move beyond short term solutions and

work towards implementing lasting measures to address food insecurity.

He, therefore, pleaded for transparency and accountability as a mechanism that must

be established to track disbursement and utilisation of the funds so that it reaches the intended beneficiaries.

"While we appreciate World Bank's support, we emphasise the importance of transparency and accountability on utilisation of the funds, prioritising support for those in need and implementing long term solutions to address food insecurity in Malawi.

In a press statement dated April 26, 2024, World Bank will provide US\$57.6 million as immediate support for millions of Malawians severely affected by the ongoing food security crisis.

This comes after President Dr Lazarus Chakwera declared state of disaster on March 23, 2024 in 23 districts in the country.



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Enhanced food security through Fish farming

By Tawonga Moyo

FISH is greatly consumed in the country and demand for it doesn't seem to decline at any time of the year.

The never-ending demand, however, puts pressure on the country's lakes, as noted by David Mbamba, Centre Manager for Mzuzu Aquaculture Centre, which is located in Mzuzu's Chimaliro area.

The Centre focuses on conducting research in areas of fish breeding, fish grow-out which involves growing fingerlings to larger sizes for consumption, and feed development which focuses on finding the best feed which farmers can be using to feed their fish for quality produce.

Mbamba said investing in aquaculture development and providing knowledge to people on its benefits was one way of easing the pressure on Malawi's lakes.

"It is impossible for our lakes to cater for the growing population and aquaculture acts as a supplement for providing fish to people," he explained.

The Manager noted that the

Centre has Green Houses which enables fish breeding throughout the year and prevents fish from dying due to low temperatures.

Mbamba urged Malawians to develop an interest in aquaculture development, observing that the country has a lot of idle land which could be utilized for fish farming.

"People should know that there is profit in aquaculture. We want Malawians to be exporting fish as our country has good water and land resource which is what is needed for aquaculture to thrive," he said.

A fisherman, Ambros Madope who hails from the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Mwase in Likoma and plies his trade along the shores of Likoma Island agrees with Mbamba.

He noted that if fishermen get introduced to aquaculture, it would contribute to the growth of the trade as they currently ply their trade only when the lakes are open for fishing.

"As fishermen, we comply with the directive not to fish during breeding season. When it comes to fish farming in ponds, most fishermen here in Likoma have no



People harvesting fish at one of Mzuzu Aquaculture Centre's fish ponds

Picture courtesy of Mzuzu Aquaculture Centre



Mhango - I am gaining knowledge on fish breeding.

Picture by: Tawonga Moyo

idea what it entails.

We only hear about it but no one has ever given us the details of the processes involved. It's important that we get to learn about it too as it seems to be a good method," Madope pointed out.

Mzuzu Aquaculture Centre provides people with hands-on training on fish farming, including fish feed formulation and currently has 40 students enrolled at the institution.

One of the students at the Centre, Timale Mhango said she developed an interest in aquaculture with an aim of extending the knowledge to her fellow youth so that they could find something to do and be self-reliant.

"I am gaining knowledge on how to breed fish which I will eventually sell to make profit. At this centre, I am learning that I can breed a lot of fish in a short period of time and make so much profit.

"Besides that, I would like to extend the knowledge to my fellow youth so that we do not only rely on office work for our survival," she added.

Another student, Rosalio Mang'anda praised government for establishing the Centre saying it provides hands-on experience for youth to learn about aquaculture.

"Aquaculture is not a common practice, although fish is among the relishes which most Malawians eat on a day to day basis. With the expertise I am gaining here, I plan to build my own fish pond and provide fresh fish to communities," he remarked.

Mang'anda called upon the youth to be open in exploring aquaculture, saying there was great benefit in it.

Mzuzu Aquaculture Centre, which has 28 fish ponds with a total area of production of about 7.1 hectares boasts of its ability to produce enough fingerlings to supply to both northern and central regions.

The Centre was opened in 1987 by a European Union (EU) funded project which was then known as Central and Northern Region Fish-farming.

In 1995, government took over the project and the area of production which was then at 1.6 hectares was expanded to 7.1 hectares.

Picture by: Tawonga Moyo



Improved shed for Lozi market

/By Wongani Mkandawire

PLYING trade at Lozi Trading Centre in the area of Traditional Authority Mwadzama, 10 kilometres North of Nkhonkhotakota, has not only been an awful experience during the rainy season but also a deadly activity as business activities are carried out in the edges of the all-time tied-up M5 Road.

Accommodating over 400 vendors, the market continues to welcome several people from different parts of Nkhonkhotakota and surrounding districts, who are establishing diverse forms of business, all responding positively due to Lozi's geographical and economic opportunities.

Mumuniya Suwedi, who sells tomatoes at the market, said that due to the lack of a proper market facility, he has been operating under the scorching sun and along the road due to lack of space, a

situation he said poses a challenge to his sales, quality, and life span of his tomatoes.

"Lack of proper market facility and space has been a great barrier to my business as you know that tomatoes are highly perishable and lose quality quickly. Operating without a permanent place in this market is a challenge and has contributed to the diminishing status of my business," Suwedi laments.

Chairperson of Lozi Market, Chinkhwazala Mndota, echoes Suwedi's sentiments adding that it has always been a difficult scenario to collect revenue from vendors at the market as most of them were operating without sheltered benches.

"It has been very hard as chairperson to encourage vendors to be paying a daily market levy because of the situation here. Most vendors including fresh fish traders have been

complaining of consistent losses as a result of unfavourable business environment at the market site," Mndota says.

However, a sigh of relief has emerged following the completion of construction works of a K26.9 million modern market shed at Lozi Trading Centre by the Nkhonkhotakota District Council under the District Development Fund (DDF).

The council received funds from the government of Malawi for the implementation of earmarked developmental projects in the district.

Nkhonkhotakota District Council's Director of Planning and Development, Davis Kavalo, expresses optimism that the completion of the project will bolster economic activities at the market.

"We have finalized everything at the site and handed over the facility to the vendors for the operations to commence. We



Lozi Market Shade structure

Picture by: Wongani Mkandawire

expect that business activities are going to improve and contribute to economic growth among the small-scale business persons," says Kavalo.

The Government of Malawi

funds local councils to assist them in the development of required infrastructures at the district level to enhance public responsiveness and service delivery to communities.

New Ntambanyama market to boost businesses

/By Yamikani Yapuwa

BUSINESS operators around Ntambanyama market in Thyolo district have high hopes that the construction of market structure under Governance to Enabled Service Delivery (GESD) World Bank funded programme will boost their profits as the structure will give capacity for sellers to serve customers with all varieties of goods.

Speaking to Malawi News Agency recently, Chairperson for the market, Wyson Unyolo said the new market structure has been built in a modern way because it has various sections that can accommodate all types of business.

"This market once opened will serve many people for example, communities from Semu, Chimbeta, Njobu and Mpeni villages with varieties of businesses like vegetables among others." He said.

Unyolo added that currently people are selling their merchandise along the road exposing both vendors and customer to accidents that can



One of the areas where debris slows electricity generation

Picture by: Yamikani Yapuwa

happen along the road.

He however pleaded with the district council to fast track the opening of the market for people to start benefiting.

One of the fruit sellers from Traditional Authority (TA) Changata Mary Mokowa hailed the council for constructing the modern market which will

provide them with safe space for business.

"Currently, my business does not realise more profits because when weather conditions are harsh, I am forced to leave the place because there is no shed to protect me," said Mokowa.

On his part, Barbershop operator Maxwell Mulinde said

he anticipate his daily earnings to rise from K5,000 to K8,000.

Village Headman Semu from TA Khwethemule said the new market sets a milestone to wealth creation among people in his community.

"We are very grateful to government for giving us this market and as community

leaders, we will ensure that there are strong measures that will protect the structure," he said.

The newly constructed Ntambanyama market is among the GESD major developments such as school blocks, rehabilitation of irrigation schemes among others that are being done in Thyolo district.

Men cautioned against women with mental illness

By Linda Likomwa

IT'S very unusual. people are expected to think as humans and dogs as animals. for men to stoop so low and decide to sleep with mentally affected women in the streets is not only embarrassing but bizarre. phalombe district Social Welfare Office has expressed concern over men who continue to impregnate women with mental illness saying this is accelerating cases of abandoned children in the district.

In an interview recently, Acting Social Welfare Officer, Stanley Gundeni, said his office started receiving cases in 2021 and so far nine have been reported.

He said the situation has led some of the women to abandon their children at the hospital

soon after giving birth.

"Three women run away from the hospital soon after giving birth abandoning their children. We had to take them to Chisomo Children's Home at Bvumbwe in Thyolo for care; two children have been adopted at Chiringa and one died during the adoption process," said Gundeni.

He said most of the women impregnated are those who cannot speak and are illiterate which makes his office difficult to trace the perpetrators.

Gundeni has since asked government and Civil Society Organisations to support his office in constructing a home so that children can be taken care of within Phalombe than sending them to other districts.

In random interviews, most people said beliefs are fueling such tendencies saying others think sleeping with a mentally challenged woman grows their businesses grow hence getting rich.

One of the men in the district, Mabvuto John, said he was once told by his friend to sleep with a mentally challenged woman for his business to do well.

He said this shows that most men are doing it with other purposes than quenching their sexual desire.

He noted that children raised by women with mental illness cannot grow well since they lack parental care like providing basic needs and sending them to school.



Picture by: Linda Likomwa

Acting Social Welfare Officer Stanley Gundeni

Traditional leaders in the community gatherings to avoid further abuse of women with mental illness and their children.

Malawi Tourism Council urges private sectors' participation in MITE day

By Elia Chibwe

TOURISM exhibitions present a unique and dynamic platform for private sectors to showcase their products, offering an invaluable opportunity to engage with a global audience.

Such exhibitions at events are crucial as they allow companies to highlight the distinctiveness and quality of their products which in so doing directly contribute to brand recognition and customer engagement.

Realising the importance of tourism exhibitions on the private sector in the country, Malawi Tourism Council, urged people in the private sector to use Malawi International Tourism Expo (MITE) as an opportunity to showcase their products to the local and international buyers.

Speaking during the 5th edition 2024 MITE celebrated under the theme "Takulandirani" in Lilongwe, the Executive Director for Malawi Tourism Council, Memory Momba

said the event gives an opportunity to all private sectors including domestic tourism.

"As a council we would like to encourage you to say this expo is for us the people in private sector. This is the only opportunity that we have in a year, almost every April we are able to showcase the products. Let us make use of this opportunity," Kamthunzi said.

She added that starting from 2023, they have always been promoting domestic tourism.

Kamthunzi further said the objectives of the event have been achieved this year as more operators across the country have showcased their products, offering to the public and buyers.

"This year we have achieved our objectives, all establishments that showcased their products have been able to interact with the buyers that came through, there was also a special day open for the public. A lot of people came to appreciate the products

that different tourism enterprises offer here in Malawi," she said.

In a separate interview, Creative Director for Queen Tenge, Linda Zamaere said the event played a great role in increasing collaboration and brand awareness.

"For business people it is always good to be part of a special event because this enables us to network with other companies and other participants. This has also increased collaboration and brand awareness and a big patronage at our shops," Zamaere said.

She further appreciated the growth of fashion industry in Malawi, saying for several years people did not see fashion as a career.

Products, Marketing and Communications Manager for Sunbird Tourism, Widdey Nsona said it was a great opportunity to network and meet different potential clients.



Memory Momba Kamthunzi

"Those who missed the event, next year they should definitely come. It is a great opportunity to make new connections and network with buyers and different potential clients," Nsona

said.

Malawi International Tourism Expo is held every year in every April. This year it was held from 25th to 27th April with the theme "Takulandirani"

Getting to know

Dr. Michael Usi, **Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change**

/ By Leonard Masauli

TELL us you have never heard the name Michael Usi only if you just jetted into Malawi or your love for Radio and other forms of media is too low.

However by reading this we shall let you know more about the new Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change.

Born in 1968, Dr. Usi attended his Secondary School at Mulanje Secondary School in Mulanje District before embarking on his tertiary education journey which saw him attain a Diploma in Clinical Medicine from Malamulo Medical College; a Bachelor's Degree in Administration with Andrews University in the United States; a Masters Degree in Strategic Planning with the University of Derby (USA); another Masters Degree in International Development with the same Andrews University (USA) and a PhD in Development of Strategy for Youth Development Through Education from the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom.

An Adventist by faith, Dr Usi is married and has two children.

He worked for Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Malawi for 26 years in various portfolios, rising to the level of Country Director. As Director, he was responsible for the organization's growth in program profile ranging from education, HIV/AIDS, and Youth Empowerment, among others.

Dr Usi is a playwright and actor famously known for his role as 'Dr. Manga' in the film Dr. Manga. In the absence of national TV in Malawi, he gained popularity by acting on radio plays on MBC Radio 1.

Dr. Usi began making feature films, and his works centered on topical issues in Malawi, reflecting the social and political realities facing Malawians. He was also the director of the MBC TV series

'Tikuferanji' (Why Are We Dying).

Aside his political ambitions and achievements all together, Dr. Usi is involved in efforts to build the film industry in Malawi and constantly advocates for the growth of the industry.

On February 6 2019, Dr Usi joined mainstream politics when Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima, leader of the United Transformation Movement unveiled him as his running mate for the May 21 tripartite elections.

He would lateron be named Minister of Tourism by President Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, a position through which he registered a number of achievements including guiding the ministry in the conceptualization and development of bankable tourism development projects towards turning Malawi into a bustling tourist destination.

Under his leadership, in April 2022, the ministry launched the National Tourism Investment Master plan, which is a 20-year tourism investment plan containing 104 projects in tourism hotspots of which 10 have already undergone feasibility studies for implementation within 10 years.

The Minister also pioneered the commercialization of traditional dances as a way of instilling a sense of pride among Malawians in their culture, and as a way to ensure that Malawians are earning decent incomes by performing their traditional dances. This is also a way of promoting cultural tourism

And not to forget, under him the ministry also launched the Chongoni Resource/training Centre in Dedza as well as Malepe/Zoa Falls tourist attraction centers as a way of attracting local and international tourists but at the same time improving the livelihood of surrounding

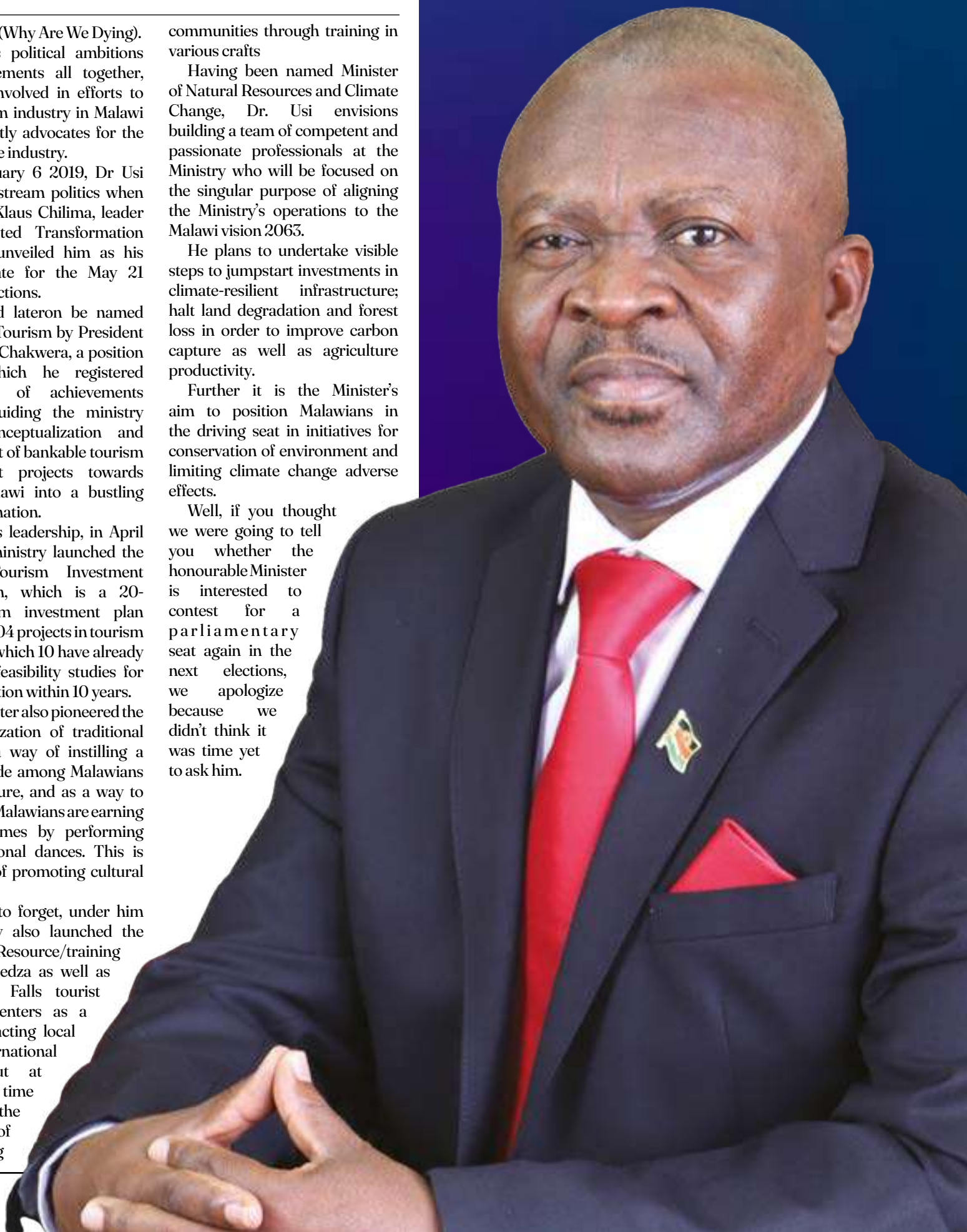
communities through training in various crafts

Having been named Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change, Dr. Usi envisions building a team of competent and passionate professionals at the Ministry who will be focused on the singular purpose of aligning the Ministry's operations to the Malawi vision 2063.

He plans to undertake visible steps to jumpstart investments in climate-resilient infrastructure; halt land degradation and forest loss in order to improve carbon capture as well as agriculture productivity.

Further it is the Minister's aim to position Malawians in the driving seat in initiatives for conservation of environment and limiting climate change adverse effects.

Well, if you thought we were going to tell you whether the honourable Minister is interested to contest for a parliamentary seat again in the next elections, we apologize because we didn't think it was time yet to ask him.



A former BBC sports journalist who claimed he was unfairly dismissed for whistleblowing has lost an employment tribunal.

/ BBC

IAN STRINGER was employed by BBC Leicester in 2008 after he appeared on the BBC's show *The Apprentice*.

A tribunal heard how he believed he was unfairly dismissed in 2022, for what the BBC said was misconduct.

Presiding judge Kimbra Welch has dismissed Mr Stringer's unfair dismissal claims in a written ruling.

Mr Stringer brought both an automatic unfair dismissal claim for whistleblowing and an ordinary unfair dismissal claim against the BBC.

The tribunal in Leicester heard that Mr Stringer, who became the station's Leicester City reporter, was suspended in September 2021 and sacked the following year.

He had been dismissed after bosses raised concerns about his use of social media and his failure to declare the "gift" of a car.

Mr Stringer argued that a BBC investigation was "defective" and that he had

been "treated differently" to others - including former England footballer and BBC television presenter Gary Lineker.

The hearing was told Mr Stringer had, during the disciplinary process, compared his actions with those of Lineker, who, he said, had relationships with commercial entities outside the BBC.

Employment Judge Welch

had explained in her ruling how Mr Stringer had complained to an area manager about an incident in July 2021.

He claimed his line manager had forced another journalist to break Covid rules "provided" by the BBC and the government.

Mr Stringer said his colleague had been told to "come in and present a show", despite having been in contact with someone with Covid.



Picture from: BBC



Picture from: BBC

US names Kenya major ally as Russian influence grows in Africa

/ Patrick Keddie

US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN has named Kenya as a major non-Nato ally, making it the first sub-Saharan African country to receive that designation.

Mr Biden announced the move during a three-day state visit by Kenyan President William Ruto.

It is the first such visit to Washington by an African leader in more than 15 years and comes as Russia and China have expanded their influence across the continent.

Several governments in the Sahel region and western Africa have also fallen to military coups, leading to the removal of co-operation missions with western nations.

The extension of major non-

Nato ally status will allow Nairobi to engage in closer security cooperation with Washington and obtain more sophisticated US weapons.

Doing so is "a fulfilment of years of collaboration," Mr Biden said at a joint news conference with Mr Ruto at the White House on Thursday.

Kenya has emerged as an important security partner to the US in East Africa, and is also part of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group coalition, which meets to coordinate on how to arm Kyiv against Moscow.

The strengthening of its US alliance come as Washington faces setbacks in other areas of Africa.

DRC army foils 'coup attempt' as gunmen target State officials homes

/ By Patrick Ilunga (The East African)

THE army in the Democratic Republic of Congo says it foiled an attempted coup after gunmen tried to attack homes of senior government officials, including that of President Felix Tshisekedi.

It said gunmen in military uniform entered the Palais de la Nation, the residence of the President in Kinshasa, vowing to uproot President Tshisekedi and Vital Kamerhe, a close ally of the Congolese President, and the sole candidate for the Speaker of National Assembly.

Witnesses reported fierce gunfire as the assailants raised the flag of Zaire in places around

the Palais de la Nation (State House). Zaire is the former name of the DRC.

The Congolese army said this was "an attempted coup d'état that was nipped in the bud by the defence and security forces", according to Maj-Gen Sylvain Ekenge, the spokesman. The attempt was carried out by "Congolese and foreigners who were put out of action, including their leader", he added.

"Pending a detailed report on the incidents that took place in the commune of Gombe on the night of Sunday 19 May 2024, we would like to reassure the national and international community that our defence

and security forces promptly restored public order, which had been disrupted by armed men.

"The population is therefore urged to remain calm and to go about their business freely", declared Peter Kazadi, Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Interior and Security.

The incident awoke Kinshasa very early. Images of the assailants are currently going viral on social media.

They show an armed man in military uniform with a Zaire crest and flag shouting: "Félix, get out, we soldiers are tired of suffering. Today, we wake up with a new country. We can no



DRC President Felix Tshisekedi

longer continue with Félix or Kamerhe".

The man was later identified as Christian Malanga. He claims

to have grown up abroad. The fighting claimed several lives, but the official toll is not yet known.

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Pictures by: Kondwani Magombo

CZ disaster-hit households find solace in CRI

By Kondwani Magombo

A

T the age of 84, Veronica Sintchaya has a deceiving gait and agility of a 50-year-old. She's a retired teacher, having bidden farewell to chalk, board, and duster in 1996, three years after she lost her husband in 1993.

Upon retirement, Sintchaya went to settle at her home village, Chimpesa, Group Village Headman Kumitete, Traditional Authority Onga, Chiradzulu, where she's a member of a small scale farmers' club called Nthambi.

During a recent media visit, the octogenarian's shared secret to her enviable fitness, even at 84: "A balanced diet, comprising the six food groups and, most importantly, a 'decent' breakfast in form of porridge."

But during the 2023 consumption year, Sintchaya did not have the luxury of having as much balanced meals, and as much 'decent' breakfasts due to Tropical Cyclone Freddy, which eroded the old woman's cropland away and left her with too little to live on.

"It was one of the worst disasters I've ever witnessed," explained Sintchaya. "Most of our crop fields were washed away just a couple of weeks ahead of harvesting period."

The senior citizen was not alone in this predicament; scores of people in her village, and Chiradzulu as a whole, suffered the same blow and they were left with very little, or nothing at all, for their survival.

But this 2024 consumption season, Sintchaya, like many others in her club, is among thousands of smallholder farmers in the district who have beaten the El Nino odds and they have harvested enough

maize to get them beyond the next consumption year.

The old woman, alone, has yielded 20 bags of the staple grain, including yellow maize, and she is happy to have restored her favourite breakfast back on the daily menu.

All this abundance is courtesy of Crisis Response Initiative (CRI), a one-year window that the government of Malawi

"I plan to use the money from selling 10 bags of shelled groundnuts to buy fertilizer and boost my harvest using the Mbeya method next year."

- Yakobe



useholds



Happy with CRI - some of the members of Nthambi Club

successfully created in 2023 with funds from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

The project is initially aimed to support 73,850 rural farmers (among them 50 percent women, and 25 percent youth) that were highly affected by the Tropical Cyclone Freddy in three Sustainable Agriculture Production Programme (SAPP) districts of Blantyre, Balaka, and Chiradzulu.

According to the project's documents, IFAD pumped US\$5.06m (MK8.68bn) into CRI to complement government's effort of ensuring that the targeted rural farmers are able to access inorganic fertilizer through the Affordable Input Programme (AIP).

The development saw the identification and formation of clubs in the affected areas through the Ministry of Agriculture structures, for them (clubs) to access fertilizer, seed (maize, soybean, and maize), and livestock (goats, chickens and rabbits), depending on assessment of individual club members' needs.

The 20-member Nthambi Club got six bags of fertilizer (three NPK and three Urea), and 100kg of maize seed, including thikinya (yellow maize).

Since the fertilizer was not enough for the 20 members, with the help of Martha Sitolo, Agricultural Extension Development Officer (AEDO) for



Zingeni - CRI has brought smiles on the faces of rural farmers in Chiradzulu district

Thumbwe Extension Planning Area (EPA) under which the Nthambi Club falls, the club produced more bags of organic fertilizer popularly known as Mbeya.

"From the three bags of NPK, and the three bags of Urea, we produced 15 bags of NPK, and 15 bags of Urea, and we shared amongst ourselves such that each member got 35kg of each type of fertilizer," explained the youngest member of the club, Chimwemwe Bakali, 23.

Like Sintchaya, the oldest member of Club, Bakali, a form 3 student at Masalani Community Day Secondary School in the area, has, this 2024 consumption season, harvested 20 bags of maize from a 0.5ha piece of land using the Mbeya fertilizer.

"I'm very excited with my harvest," explains Bakali, who had been left to look after a family home and siblings in 2023 as the parents were residing in Blantyre



Sintchaya - happy with her harvest



Sitolo (AEDO) CRI has done wonders to the rural farmers' lives

where they were working.

"Before the Cyclone, I used to get a maximum of 15 bags from the family's total cropland, most of which was affected by Cyclone Freddy. After the cyclone, last year, our yield dropped to less than 5 bags, but with the use of Mbeya this year, I've harvested 20 bags of maize, just on a 0.5ha piece of land!"

Such stories of success are also shared by the rest of the members of Nthambi Club, including the chairperson, Rhoda Kazembe, who also speaks highly of the Mbeya fertilizer and accompanying new technologies that the AEDO, Martha Sitolo, equipped them with.

Elsewhere, within Thumbwe EPA in Chikamgwere Village, GVH Kunitete, TA Onga, members of another club, Mlambe, have all the reasons to stand and walk tall as the groundnut seed they received

from the CRI project has promised a good harvest.

According to the AEDO, every member was given 30kg of groundnut seed which can give each one of them at least nine bags of shelled groundnuts.

One such happy members of Thumbwe Club is Maria Yakobe who is expecting to get not less than 10 bags of shelled groundnuts from her 0.3ha piece of land.

"The 10 bags of shelled groundnuts will give me a lot of money, enough to enable me buy a number of bags of fertilizer and multiply it using the Mbeya method, and make a kill of a harvest next year," Yakobe outlines her plans.

Some clubs under Thumbwe EPA received goats while some got chickens in a pass-on program to reach out to as many rural farmers, who were affected by Cyclone Freddy, as possible.

According to the Sitolo, the clubs are all doing fine and the benefits of the CRI project are in plain sight for all to see.

"We are also training the club members to go into loans and savings practice so that, come next growing season, they should be able to buy more fertilizer and other related inputs with the proceeds from the savings," explained the AEDO.

According to Director of Agriculture Services (DAS) for Chiradzulu district council, Cyclone Freddy washed away 14,000ha of the district's 50,000ha cropland; thousands of livestock; property and lives.

Over 3,000 hard-hit households from the district's three EPAs; Thundwe, Mombezi, and Mbulumbuzi, were identified to participate in the CRI project, and they have all registered success in their various interventions – be it livestock, or crops, according to Zingeni.

"The households that are participating in CRI's various interventions are doing fine," explained Zingeni. "For instance, we are expecting a yield of 4,000MT of maize from CRI participating households – that is on top of the estimated 30,000MT of maize that we are expecting from the district as a whole," he added.

Within the additional 4,000 MT of maize that CRI households will contribute to the district's grain stock is the IMT (twenty 50kg-bags) for the 84-year-old Sitnchaya, the oldest member for Nthambi Club.

Perhaps, the little contribution – yet huge at individual level – explains the excitement that Sithaya displayed on the day the media team visited the Club,

"I'm short of words: With my plentiful thikinya stock, I'm able to take my breakfast porridge every day, and this has also improved my sight!" explained the senior citizen of Chimpesa Village.

"Cyclone Freddy left us in dilemma, but CRI has rescued us: the new task that we have, now, is to consume the food that the project has heaped on us!" said the old woman lightly, her face awash with joy.

ADVERTISING RATES

Item	(MK)
Black and White	
Quarter Page	107,500.00
Half Page	192,150.00
Full page	330,750.00
Column rate per CM	300,000.00
Colour	
Quarter Page	162,400.00
Half Page	218,400.00
Full Page	420,000.00
Front Strip (5cm x 6cm)	168,800.00
Back Strip (5cm x 6cm)	168,800.00
Inside Strip (5cm x 6cm)	121,900.00
Column Rate per CM	750.00
Customer Specified	
Double spread Colour	828,800.00
Double spread Black and White	659,750.00
Classified	
Rate per word	116.00
Minimum of 10 words	1,120.00
Poster (11cm x 9cm)	14,000.00
Picture (3cm x 1 column)	3,150.00
Inserts	
A3 insert per copy	40
A4 insert per copy	18

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P16

**Winter Bush
Festival to
celebrate nature on
Independence Day**

Picture courtesy of Jetu

71
Year Old
Jetu

**Becomes
Malawian
Music
Sensation
with Viral Hit
'Chakwaza'**



Social Media reacts to Malawian Super Star Granny Jetu

By Priscilla Phiri

IN an astonishing twist of fate, A 71 years old woman, Christina Kholiyo, popularly known as Jetu, has taken the Malawian entertainment industry by storm.

Jetu, who hails from Bangwe in the heart of Malawi's vibrant city, Blantyre, has released another Amapiano single dubbed 'Chakwaza,' a term that she has used in the song in reference to money, on 28th April, 2024.

Jetu's message in the song that has taken her to stardom is clear: she's too busy making 'Chakwaza' to entertain past flames as the track spins a tale of a woman's rise to self-sufficiency and the return of a regretful ex.

The music video which was directed by her grandson, popularly known as Emu Dee, has by far reached thousands of people, attracting 819K views on YouTube and a lot of reactions from both local and international viewers on multiple social media platforms.

Fans from across the globe have taken to social media to express their admiration of the music video. "I can't count how many times I've replayed this superstar's video," says one fan. "Ride on mama Jetu, love from Nigeria," cheers another.

The video has even caught the attention of Tee Tee, a Botswana-born YouTuber based in the USA, who praised the video on his Channel (Sounds Like Fun) by saying the fashion and dance are remarkable and inspiring.

He added that: "I would like to be able to do what I love at an old age, this video deserves to go viral, big up to Malawi."

Yet, amidst the positive reactions, some have voiced concerns about Jetu's age and her grandchildren's intentions by saying she is too old to be in the entertainment industry and some echoing sentiments that the granny is being used to gain a fan base and money.

In a heartfelt response, Jetu dismissed these doubts, affirming that her happiness and zest for life predate her fame.

"The spotlight has simply added a sparkle to my already joyful existence," she declares.

On his part, Emu Dee stands by his grandmother, inviting fans to embrace Jetu's choices.

"Our bond goes beyond business; it's about joy and togetherness," he asserts.

Jetu's story is a testament to the timeless nature of talent and the universal language of music. It's a reminder that age is but a number, and passion knows no bounds.

As Jetu continues to shine, she not only entertains but also inspires, proving it's never too late to chase your dreams and make a mark on the world.



Let Jetu enjoy the lifestyle she chose-Emu Dee

FAST FACTS

REAL NAME:

Jetu's real name is Christina Kholiyo.

AGE:

She is 71 years old.

HOMETOWN:

Jetu hails from Bangwe, a locality in Blantyre, one of Malawi's vibrant cities.

MUSIC GENRE:

She has made a mark in the Amapiano genre, a style of house music that emerged in South Africa.

POPULAR SINGLE:

Jetu's popular single is titled "Chakwaza," which was released on April 28, 2024. The term "Chakwaza" in the song refers to money.

MESSAGE IN HER MUSIC:

"Chakwaza" tells a story of self-sufficiency and moving on from past relationships, with a focus on Jetu being too busy making money to entertain past flames.

Winter Bush Festival to celebrate nature on Independence Day

By George Mponda

ORGANISERS of the Winter Bush Festival, which will be held at Ntchegzo Gardens in Mzuzu from 6 to 7 July, said this year the event will celebrate the beauty of nature during the winter season.

Speaking in an interview recently, Festival Director Vincent Mudolo said the festival will feature a variety of activities such as live music performances, art exhibitions, music workshop, food vendors, hiking and interactive experiences that showcase the unique culture and traditions of the region.

Mudolo said: "This is the third time the Winter Bush Festival is being held. It has become an annual event which brings together people from all walks of life to enjoy the winter festivities and create lasting memories.

"As for the artists set to perform, we have a diverse lineup of talented musicians and performers. Some of them are Merchah, Trappybeats, Mzuzu Mafia, Twnda, DJ Thando, Fingerprint Band, Mazani and more headliners to be announced soon," he added.

He urged people to patronise the festival and experience the magic of winter in a truly unique and immersive setting.

"Whether you're a nature lover, music enthusiast, foodie, or simply looking for a fun and memorable experience, the festival has something for everyone. Join us in celebrating the beauty of the season and creating unforgettable moments with friends and family," he explained.

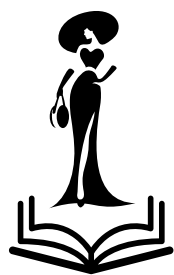
'Obeba' hit maker Merchah, a Mzuzu based artist who is set to perform at the event, said he is excited to be performing at the festival for the second time.

"The sounds of nature provide the foundation for crucial aspects of the music industry and this makes our connections with music and nature inseparable. People should turn in large numbers to experience this unforgettable event," Merchah said.

This year, the Winter Bush Festival is being sponsored by The Diamond Standard, Adventures with Colby, Newwave, Run North and Mikozi and will be held under the theme 'Connecting people through nature'.



Mudolo - The festival will celebrate beauty of nature in winter season



FASHION BOOK

with Nandie Mambucha

Is AI Effortlessly Taking Up The Creativity of Fashion Designers?

T

HE fear of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology possibly taking over jobs, mostly the creative industry is gradually increasing. AI which in full is Artificial Intelligence refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.

Speaking of which, the just ended Met Gala 2024, AI generated fashion designs looks of celebrities, were more creative comparing to the actual designs fashioned by well known designers of the world.

The Met Gala that brings forward VIPs and celebrities as guests is known to be one of the biggest fashion events on the worlds fashion fundraising calendar. On the first Monday in May each year, in United States of America, New York hosts this charity or fundraiser event from which proceeds go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute.

The media is always on the look out to give updates on the glamorous and eye catching looks of the night. These iconic looks on events like these are made possible by top notch fashion designers, makeup artists and hair stylists, who work tirelessly to produce a look that will go viral, or be the best of the night.

Based on each year's Met Gala theme and dress code, fashion designers come up with different designs of outfits, hair styles, bags, shoes even jewels to complement different looks of celebrities attending. Through the Met Gala, fashion designers have made names, win awards, and influenced fashion trends. This year's Met Gala official dress code, which was "The Garden of Time", made fashion designers showcase their creativity mostly on floral and botanical styles.

Usually celebrities are spotted live at the event, and pictures circulate on media platforms thereafter. However, this year was quiet different, because images of celebrities created with AI, dominated social media platforms, grabbing people's attention, sparking debates, and making people conclude the best dressed, not knowing their judgment is based on fake images.

A lot of people were fooled with these viral fake images, because indeed AI made designs matching the theme, though it was later discovered to be untrue, as people realized some celebrities in the images did not attend the event. Despite the absence of some celebrities like Katy Perry, Lady Gaga and Rihanna at the annual Met Gala in New York, people were astonished with the creativity of AI over human.

The question still remains, is Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology surpassing human creativity? Should we say AI has the potential to replace human creativity? Though designers require human skills and judgment, scientific scholars argue that AI designing industry can increase efficiency, reduce costs, and unlock creativity, ultimately revolutionizing the fashion world. They say AI is a good tool for artists to explore new ways of doing things, in the creative industry.

At the Met Gala2024, AI-created fashion designs were more creative than those of some of the world's top designers.



ACHIKUMBE

Peter Nyakhuwa



WORD SEARCH

Types of Food

K	A	E	T	S	B	A	E	C	U	T	T	E	L
R	T	A	E	A	U	L	A	E	R	E	C	S	S
V	E	L	I	T	T	E	H	G	A	P	S	A	H
E	N	N	A	H	T	O	F	D	N	B	A	L	A
G	A	A	T	U	E	G	A	A	L	U	E	A	M
E	D	T	N	P	R	E	S	E	A	R	A	D	I
T	I	U	R	F	A	E	T	R	I	G	O	N	H
A	O	N	I	O	N	B	F	B	T	E	O	G	O
B	O	T	A	V	K	R	O	P	D	R	D	R	T
L	L	S	E	L	D	O	O	N	A	S	S	A	D
E	F	N	T	U	N	A	D	C	A	T	H	V	O
S	L	E	U	E	M	T	A	L	G	N	A	Y	G
R	O	L	L	S	P	M	R	V	G	A	M	M	S
R	A	D	I	S	H	T	V	D	I	N	N	E	R

- ONION
PORK
BURGERS
FAST FOOD
- RADISH
MACARONI
LETTUCE
VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
HAM
FRUIT
TUNA
- SPAGHETTI
BUTTER
ROLLS
TV DINNER
- HOTDOGS
STEAK
GRAVY

BIZZARE

The Whispering Baobab

In the heart of Malawi, where the warm winds whistle through the majestic Thuma forest, there stood an ancient baobab, its trunk as wide as a hut and its branches reaching out like the arms of spirits.

The villagers of the nearby settlement of Salima whispered tales of the tree, believing it to be the dwelling place of ancestral spirits.

One moonless night, a curious young man named Chikondi decided to brave the darkness and visit the baobab.

The elders warned him of the Mfiti, the witches that were said to roam the land when the sky turned black, but Chikondi's heart was set ablaze by the thrill of the unknown.

As he approached the tree, the air grew thick and the silence was broken only by the rustling of leaves.

The baobab stood before him, its bark etched with the passage of time, and Chikondi felt the weight of countless eyes upon him.

He reached out to touch the tree, and as his fingers grazed the rough surface, a chill ran down his spine.

The whispers began, soft and indistinct, like the fluttering of moth wings. They grew louder, forming words in a language long forgotten, speaking of secrets buried deep beneath the red earth.

Chikondi tried to pull away, but his hand was stuck, as if the tree itself refused to let him go. The whispers turned to wails, and the darkness around him seemed to close in. In his panic, he glimpsed figures moving in the shadows, their eyes like glowing embers, their mouths agape with silent screams.

With a desperate tug, Chikondi freed himself and fled, the wails of the baobab echoing in his ears. He ran through the night, his feet pounding the earth, but as dawn broke, he found himself standing at the very spot where his journey began, as if the land itself had conspired to keep him tethered to the cursed tree.

Exhausted and bewildered, Chikondi finally made his way home, the morning sun casting long shadows behind him.

He never spoke of what he heard that night. But sometimes, when the wind howls through Thuma forest and the night is at its darkest, the villagers swear they can hear the faint whispers of the baobab, calling out to those who dare to listen.



Picture from

LITERARY CORNER

#ShortStory

Old Hero



/Leonard Masauli

IN the heart of the bustling shantytown of Machinjiri, amidst the shadows of corrugated iron roofs and the whispers of the wind, lay an old bar known as The Rusty Anchor. It stood weathered and worn, a relic of times long past, its wooden beams creaking with each gust of wind.

One stormy evening in the early 1920s, as rain pounded against the tin roof and thunder roared like a fierce lion, The Rusty Anchor found itself a haven for weary souls seeking refuge from the tempest. Among them was an old man named Mwase, weathered by time yet possessed of a spirit unyielding as the iron skies above.

Mwase sat hunched over a table, nursing a mug of tepid beer, his gaze drifting into the distance. He had seen much in his lifetime, surviving the trials of poverty and the injustices of the world. But

tonight, fate had something else in store for him.

As the storm raged on, three shadowy figures stumbled through the door, their faces obscured by the darkness. Mwase tensed, his hand instinctively reaching for the old pistol tucked beneath his tattered coat. He knew trouble when he saw it, and tonight trouble had found its way to The Rusty Anchor.

The intruders advanced with drunken swagger; their intentions clear as the lightning that illuminated the night sky. They leered at the only other patron in the bar, a beautiful young woman with eyes like emeralds and a spirit untamed.

Sensing her peril, Mwase rose from his seat, his weathered face a mask of determination. With a steady hand, he raised his pistol, its metal gleaming in the dim light. The thunder outside seemed to echo his resolve, a silent promise

of retribution.

"Leave her be," Mwase growled, his voice a low rumble like distant thunder. "Or face the consequences."

The intruders hesitated, taken aback by the old man's courage. But their hesitation was brief, replaced by drunken laughter as they advanced, their intent unchanged.

With a steady hand and a heart unyielding, Mwase took aim and fired, the shot ringing out like a crack of thunder in the stillness of the bar. One by one, the intruders fell, their cries drowned out by the roar of the storm outside.

In the aftermath, as the rain subsided and the dawn broke through the clouds, The Rusty Anchor stood silent once more. But amidst the wreckage and the echoes of the night, one thing remained unchanged - the courage of an old man, and the silent thunder of his resolve

#POEMS

Triumphant sailing errand

/By Elia Chibwe

In the bright faces with beautiful chuckles
We sighed the relief of joy
Like a cymbal sound
like incredulous intruders
Strangers passed over our heads
We tend to parry

In the smile faces with beautiful chuckles
We sorbed in the tears of joy
Like limping on burning charcoals
Like stolen cheques
Bright faces turn into watery mountains
We tend to wipe

In the bright faces with beautiful chuckles
Elating and blissful hearts were threatened by
natural forces
Like forces of strong army
Like storms of devastation
It came with the personal names
We tend to parry

Bracing for Winter

/By Leonard Masauli

In Malawi's green and fertile lands,
The rains bid farewell, their final dance,
Soft whispers of the season's end,
As winter's breath begins its trance.
Majestic clouds disperse and fade,
Revealing skies of endless blue,
The maize fields rustle, golden laid,
A testament to cycles true.

The lakes reflect the changing light,
From sunlit gold to silver chill,
Fishermen's nets in morning bright,
Now cast in twilight's gentle still.
Baobab trees, with arms outspread,
Embrace the dusk, the coming cold,
Their shadows long, their leaves now shed,
In stories ancient, silent told.

Children gather, fires ignite,
To warm their hands and share the lore,
Of seasons past and future bright,
In Malawi, hearts prepare for more.



Picture by:

Al Ahly and Esperance: North Africa's Football Dominance

By Mahfoud Amara- THE CONVERSATION AFRICA

AL AHLY AND ESPERANCE, based in Cairo and Tunis respectively, exemplify the dominance of North African clubs in African football. With Al Ahly boasting 11 CAF Champions League titles and Esperance securing multiple victories, their success is no coincidence.

These clubs thrive due to their financial strength, effective management, and extensive fan bases. Their influence extends beyond the pitch, shaping strategic decisions at the Confederation of African Football (CAF) level.

The roots of their dominance lie in various factors, including rich histories, dedicated fan bases, financial and political support, and robust domestic leagues. Unlike many African clubs reliant on player exports, Al Ahly and Esperance prioritize local development, contributing to their sustained success.

AL AHLY:

Founded in 1907, Al Ahly is revered as the "club of the people." With 43 Egyptian Premier League titles and 39 Egypt Cup wins, its domestic dominance is unmatched. Boasting a budget of approximately \$100 million, Al Ahly invests in top-tier facilities and operations.

The Cairo International Stadium, its home ground, accommodates 75,000 fans and hosts matches for 19 national

team players.

ESPERANCE:

Established in 1919 during Tunisia's fight against French rule, Esperance embodies national pride. With 30 Tunisian League titles and four CAF Champions League victories, it symbolizes Tunisian identity and resilience. The club's colors, red and gold,

hold significance in Tunisian sports lore.

The success of Al Ahly and Esperance underscores the importance of local development and institutional support in African football. Their models offer valuable lessons for other clubs striving for continental prominence.



Esperance Sportive de Tunis wins CAF Champions League



Al Ahly won the CAF Champions League previously

Grandmother becomes oldest international cricketer

BBC Sport Journalist

A grandmother of three plans to "play as long as possible" after recently becoming the oldest ever international cricketer.

Wicketkeeper Sally Barton made her debut in Gibraltar's second T20 international against Estonia at the age of 66 and 334 days.

"The words 'too old' just aren't in my vocabulary," Barton told BBC Sport.

"I never thought I would play international cricket in my sixties, but it goes to show that you should not let anyone tell you it is time to stop playing sport."

Barton eclipsed the previous record for an International Cricket Council (ICC) sanctioned match which was held by

Portugal's Akbar Saiyad.

Mozambique-born Saiyad was 66 years and 12 days when he played a T20 for the Portuguese against Finland in 2012.

The three-match series between ICC Associate members Gibraltar and Estonia - won 3-0 by the former - was the first time the British Overseas Territory had played a women's T20 international.

Barton is nearly three decades older than Gibraltar's next most senior player with some members of the team still teenagers.

"We play on an artificial pitch in Gibraltar so the bounce can make wicketkeeping tricky at times, but I've developed my unique style," she said.

Rashford & Henderson left out of England squad

By Alex Howell- BBC

MARCUS RASHFORD and Jordan Henderson have been left out of Gareth Southgate's provisional 33-man England squad for Euro 2024.

Manchester United forward Rashford, 26, has struggled for form this season, scoring seven goals and managing two assists in 33 league appearances.

Rashford played in seven England games this season before being left out against Belgium in March, and has now been omitted from Southgate's training squad.

Henderson joined Al-Ettifaq in Saudi Arabia from Liverpool last summer but left them to join a



Henderson(L) & Rashford (R)

struggling Ajax side in January.

Southgate continued to pick him following his move to the Saudi Pro League, though he was booed by some England fans on his first game back in the country,

against Australia at Wembley in October, which the England manager said at the time "defies logic".

Henderson was in the squad for March friendlies against Brazil

and Belgium but did not play.

ENGLAND PROVISIONAL SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Dean Henderson (Crystal Palace), Jordan Pickford (Everton), Aaron Ramsdale (Arsenal), James Trafford (Burnley).

Defenders: Jarrad Branthwaite (Everton), Lewis Dunk (Brighton), Joe Gomez (Liverpool), Marc Guehi (Crystal Palace), Ezri Konsa (Aston Villa), Harry Maguire (Manchester United), Jarell Quansah (Liverpool), Luke Shaw (Manchester United), John Stones (Manchester City), Kieran Trippier (Newcastle), Kyle Walker (Manchester City)

Midfielders: Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool), Conor Gallagher (Chelsea), Curtis Jones (Liverpool), Kobbie Mainoo (Manchester United), Declan Rice (Arsenal), Adam Wharton (Crystal Palace).

Forwards: Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid), Jarrod Bowen (West Ham), Eberechi Eze (Crystal Palace), Phil Foden (Manchester City), Jack Grealish (Manchester City), Anthony Gordon (Newcastle), Harry Kane (Bayern Munich), James Maddison (Tottenham), Cole Palmer (Chelsea), Bukayo Saka (Arsenal), Ivan Toney (Brentford), Ollie Watkins (Aston Villa).

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Rehabilitated community ground gives hope to Mchinji football

By Vincent Khonje

THE rehabilitated Mchinji Community Ground has rejuvenated hope for Mchinji football development, as it has brought in a proper arena for football.

Decorated with a new VIP stand, standard grass pitch, change rooms, a proper perimeter fence and ablution blocks, the ground gives football enthusiasts hope that it can be home to football development in the district.

Eliya Phiri, coach for a local team Kanalero Football Club, said having a proper football field in the district is a plus for football advancement.

“The rehabilitation gives us a big opportunity, especially on the pitch which now has grass; this will reduce injuries. There is also a chance that established teams from elite leagues can come and play here, and this will motivate the young players who will learn a few things,” said Phiri.

He urged the authorities to take care of the pitch and make sure it is always green.

District Sports Officer Martin Panyanja echoed Phiri’s sentiments, saying the facility meets the standards and will be used perfectly to expose talent and developing talent in the district.

He however put emphasis on revenue collection.

“There is a potential that we have met some of the required standards and this gives us a chance to have big matches in the district. This will boost revenue collection as a council and hope to have more revenue collected,” said Panyanja.

Mchinji Council Chairperson Dorothy Musa said she was optimistic that football will be advanced in the district.

“Currently, the ground has all the relevant facilities a football ground must have. We believe hidden talent will be unearthed,” said Musa.

Commenting earlier when he toured the ground, Ministry of Sports Infrastructure Development Officer, McMillan



Picture by: Vincent Khonje



Pictures of Mchinji football ground



Mwale, said he was pleased the council had heeded the suggestions given throughout the rehabilitation.

“I am glad that the football ground has all the necessary

facilities as per our advice. The structure now has the standard facilities,” said Mwale.

The rehabilitation of the community ground was done through two funding windows

in performance-based grants (PBG) under the Governance to Enable Service Delivery (GESD) and District Development Fund (DDF).

The ground, which will

benefit thousands of football-loving people, used funds from GESD for the construction of VIP stands, upgrading the pitch, and installing solar-powered water tanks.

ACB, NAM signs MOU to fight corruption

By Arkangel Tembo

IN a significant move to combat corruption within netball, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the Netball Association of Malawi (NAM) have solidified their commitment through a groundbreaking Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This partnership marks a pivotal moment in the fight against corruption, as both institutions pledge to collaborate extensively.

Under the terms of the MOU, the ACB and NAM will engage in a multifaceted approach to tackle corruption. This includes raising awareness about anti-corruption measures, enhancing capacity through training programs, and jointly formulating policies aimed at rooting out corruption both

within the sport and through its influence.

Abigail Shariff, President of NAM, emphasized the indispensability of collective action in combating corruption, affirming NAM's full support for ACB's initiatives. "NAM is fully committed to adhering to ACB's policies, facilitating resource mobilization, cooperating closely in investigations, and empowering netball players to achieve self-reliance," stated Shariff.

In her address, ACB Director Martha Chizuma underscored the significance of leveraging netball's wide-reaching platform in the fight against corruption. Chizuma reiterated ACB's unwavering stance against corruption within the sport,



ACB and NAM officials at the MOU signing

emphasizing a zero-tolerance approach towards offenders.

The MOU signing ceremony, held at ACB offices, drew attention from key stakeholders

in Malawian sports governance, including representatives from the Malawi National Council of Sports and the Malawi Olympic Committee. This collaborative

effort signals a unified front in safeguarding the integrity of netball and promoting transparency within the sporting landscape.

Kukoma Diamonds ups thirst to defend title

By Arkangel Tembo

THE RAINBOW PAINTS Blantyre and District Netball League kicked-Off three weeks ago and already the defending Champions,Kukoma Diamonds have showed the hunger to defend the title with some classy perfomance and positive results.

Captain,Jessica Sanudi says they are set to defend the title and attributed their six star performance to good preparations.

"We had good preparations during off season and thats why you see that we have kicked off the season on a high note,"said Sanudi.

Kukoma Diamonds have managed to prune their fellow giants Giants formerly known as Imosys. The cooking oil sponsored ladies won by 35-26 baskets.

Sanudi described their victory as a good sign for good results to come.

"We are a focused club with well focussed players and we are not leaving any stone unturned. We know it will not be easy

because most teams will come hard on us but Diamonds are Diamonds,"She said.

Despite seeing most of their influential and experienced players leaving like Towera Vinkhumbo,Caroline Ngwira and Shiella Dimba,Diamonds were not shaken as they managed to win the title last season.

Vinkhumbo and Ngwira are in the United Kingdom,while Dimba joined Prison Sisters after securing a job.

"We will soldier on and with lots of players being promoted from our reserve side the future looks bright," She said.

Some of the experienced players,who have remained with the team are centre Bridget Kumwenda and Sanudi.

Blantyre and District Netball League General Secretary,Annie Hanjahanja said they are impressed with the perfomance of teams so far in the League.

"We are going into the third week but I can proudly tell the nation that as organisers of the League we are impressed



Kukoma Diamonds in their previous game

and looking forward to more entertaining netball," She said.

She however,urges people to patrironise the League in their large numbers.

"We need people to patrironise these games and appreciate the talent from our girls,"said Hanjahanja.

Rainbow Paints,who are the sponsors of the League increased the sponsorship package from K12 million in the 2023 season to K100 million from the 2024 season to the 2029.

This means the annual sponsorship package is at K20

million.

Blantyre and Districts Netball Committee Chairperson Vitumbiko Gubuduza hailed the sponsors for the move.

She said this would increase the intensity of competition and empower players economically.

Picture by: Arkangel Tembo

SPORTS



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Rehabilitated
Mchinji Community
Ground reopens



Picture by: Arkangel Tembo

Kukoma Diamonds Intensifies Quest to Retain Title

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