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To Salvage Economic Crisis: Dr. Samura Kamara urges unity, collaboration

MPs, paramount chiefs impressed with Leone Rock Metal Group



Dr. Samura Kamara and Leader of APC in Parliament, Hon. Cherico

Dr. David Sengeh crowned as best minister



Real GDP growth declined from 3.8% (2017) to 2.8 (2022)
CPI inflation rose 15.3% (2017) to 37.1 (2022)
Expenditure increased from (6.4 trillion or 23.5% of GDP to 12.5 trillion or 28.4% of GDP (2021)
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The Wage Bill increased from Le 1.89 trillion (6.9% of GDP) in 2017 to 4.3 trillion (8.1% of GDP) in 2022
Public Debt Stock to GDP increased from 69% (2017) to over 90% (2022) bringing the economy into a risk of debt distress due to increased domestic borrowing which putting the economy on the brink of actual debt distress
Total public debt is equivalent to over USD3.0 billion

Cont. Page 4

QNET IS NOT AN OVERSEAS TRAVELLING BUSINESS

8,468 perish trying to reach Europe

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PERSONAL GLIMPSES

I was in the North-Eastern city of Makeni last weekend to publicly support and endorse the equally public declaration of Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara as "The Face and Flagbearer" of the App Peoples' Congress (APC) Party at the next Presidential elections on June 24th, but time and circumstances did not allow me to have elaborated on my reasons for considering him as the most suitable and most fitted person to clinch the Flagbearer Ticket of the APC Party, hence this piece. And those reasons could be summarized as under:

Commitment

He is the candidate that has demonstrated the highest unwavering commitment to purpose. He was the very first to declare his intention to continue the crusade of liberating the country from the clutches of the SLPP immediately after they were given governance in 2018. His determination and resilience to champion the cause of the masses is unrivalled. For example at the time many escaped to seek solace offshore in a desire to evade the wrath of what has now passed off as the intolerant era of a clearly despotic regime, Dr. Samura Kamara he remained in the country throughout, identifying and afflicting himself with the afflictions of the downtrodden and persistently molested and harassed APC supporters until time and circumstances would afford him the opportunity for transforming their lot through the ballot box. That time and opportunity is now.

Scrutiny

Over and above all of that DR. SMWK and I have shared values especially in areas on (a). Integrity (2). Probity and Accountability. In my entire life, I have never supported anything or anyone that is tainted.

In the entire post-independent political history of this county, no other personality seeking public office has been subjected to such intense, concerted and excruciating scrutiny by all the law enforcement agencies of this Republic combined and emerged as unscathed, as Dr. Samura Kamara. For the past four uninterrupted years if we did not hear of Dr. Samura Kamara being investigated for stealing Puff Cakes, we would hear that he is being investigated missing Pounded Yam. Not a single one of those investigations and or prosecutions have been satisfactorily concluded to have found him derelict in his responsibilities, but from all of which he has emerged as Clean as a Whistle; As Straight as an Arrow and As Shiny and Pristine in Character as a New Pin.

What more positive character traits and proven leadership and administrative competence can the citizens of any country be looking for in

Why I Bankole Johnson endorsed Dr. Samura Kamara's declaration for the APC flagbearership and the presidency of Sierra Leone

anyone to help their country rise like a phoenix from the embers and ashes of unbridled governance maladministration and the lapses Sierra Leone has suffered in the last almost five years?

Leadership Competence

To his detractors Dr. Samura Kamara has always been a suspect. But to us his admirers including of course our moral guarantors the International Community, Dr. Samura Kamara has always been a reservoir of respect and leadership competence. And that is exactly why in his entire life whether in or out of Sierra Leone and in-between political dispensations, he was never unemployed for years like many others.

But what I have discerned from all of his challenges is that it was the hand of God preparing and strengthening him for the greatest of responsibilities of governing this country. After all as peoples in Yuroba land would say: "It is only the tree that is blossoming ripe fruits that the people will always be throwing stones at".

"Debul"

In paraphrased Biblical speak, if "Crucify him" should always follow every loud "Hosannah", then it should be logical that every initial "Crucify him" will also ultimately end in a loud "Hosannahs". And Dr. Samura kamara having surmounted all his "crucify him", it is the expectant "Hosannahs" which his detractors do not wish to hear but that should now naturally follow. And that is inevitable because to us believers, God + 1 Person = Majority. And insofar as the Presidential aspirations of Dr. Samura Kamara are concerned, nobody can stop that now. In fact in the innermost hearts of the SLPP the writing is already on the wall and since last Sunday 12th, most of their senior party cadres have developed bowel looseness "bcos dem dae frade am lek debul".

"Weaponized"

Fellow Sierra Leoneans in general and Comrades of the mighty APC Party in particular, even if you have not been in-country since April 2018, you definitely must either have read, or been told of the excruciating hardship people are experiencing and the level of depravity of lives attendant upon that hardship. Our depravity has continued to be worsened by a climate of palpable poverty, heightened further by an intense feeling of hatred, suspicion and recrimination by Sierra Leoneans for Sierra Leoneans.

Never before in the history of this

country has our political fabric been so polarized and replete with raw/brazen intimidation by agencies that are supposed to guarantee citizens their fundamental constitutional freedoms. In other words, those same institutions have been "weaponized" and used against mainly opposition elements so as to silence them perpetually. Harassment and mass sackings of peaceful and law abiding citizens from their contractual and tenured appointments either simply because of their ethnocentric backgrounds or political convictions have become a norm, thus accelerating poverty, diseases and lawlessness within communities. In a few cases, citizens were herded into rooms to listen to their names being recited from a well prepared "Master Sack List", reminiscent of the way names of Jews were recited from Schindler's List before they were led away to Camps in Dachau and Bergen Belsen for execution. The only difference here was that those whose names were axed from their employment were allowed to go home alive, but into permanent unemployment thereafter.

Reverse

Again never before in the history of this country have citizens been so perplexed and yearning for redemption, and the only person I know and believe to have the zeal, leadership competence and strategy to reverse this untenable trend to:-

- Restore patriotism and induce cohesion within our national fabric
- Heal the divisions that has characterized our politics in the last five years
- Promote political stability to engender and attract Foreign Direct Investments so as to create massive employment opportunities for our teeming youths
- Reduce teeming youth population of idlers and under-age street hawkers that should otherwise be taking Classes
- Eliminate institutionalized corruption, end the continued capture of State institutions by the

Executive and to stop using them as weapons against political opponents

- Guarantee us a Nation State of Sierra Leone devoid of ethnocentric biases and in which

Constitutionality and the rule of law will jealously safeguard the safety and security of citizens if given the opportunity to do so, is Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara.

Fellow Sierra Leoneans in general and Comrades of the APC in particular, if in five years our country could degenerate this low, what do you think would happen to this country if the

SLPP are allowed to govern for another five years? We will be chastised with whips and in typical Sierra Leone speak: "Kondo go eat Ihm Mamma"!! And I bet you it shouldn't be long before our local restaurants will either begin to include "Kush" in their MENU a desserts, or that Homosexuality begin to be taught as a Core Courses in our Secondary Schools. I pray to God Almighty we do not deteriorate any worse.

Phenomenon

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. A mother monkey will never advise her baby monkey to "hold tight" when jumping through branches, but she will dutifully advise it to always "look down" before springing across. In the same way I can only warn my fellow Sierra Leoneans to please "look and think" well before voting this coming Sunday at our National Delegates' Conference in Makeni and at the June 24th Presidential polls to ensure that in both instances, the choice of Dr. Samura Kamara as the Flagbearer of the APC Party and President of Sierra Leone thereafter is prioritized. Thankfully unlike as in 2017 when questions were asked about his proper identity, the name - Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara - is now a phenomenon - reverberating in every nook and cranny of this Republic and even beyond.

Fellow Sierra Leoneans in general and APC Comrades in particular, in the presidency of Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara there will be no "Winners"; there will be no "Losers". No "Victors"; no "Vanquished". As a matter of fact he has committed himself to running an all-inclusive non-reprisal governance administration devoid of vengeance, revenge and recriminations. Over and above all dignity will be restored to the Office of the First Lady within the Office of the Presidency and without compromising her respect, there shall only be one "Excellency" in this Republic - restricted of course to the person that was elected into that sublime office. Two Captains cannot be in charge of a single Ship!!

Recommendation

Fellow Sierra Leoneans in general and Comrades of the APC Party, it is on that note that I am again proudly and boldly recommending Dr. Samura Kamara to your most serious consideration for election, both as the face and Flagbearer of the All Peoples' Congress (APC) Party this coming Sunday 19th, and also for the June 24th 2023 Presidential elections thereafter as the next duly elected President of the sovereign Republic of Sierra Leone.

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LOCAL NEWS

From Cover

Exchange Rate (Leone to the US Dollar) unprecedented depreciation of the Leone from 2017 to 2022 stands at 147%

On Sunday, February 12, at the APC Northern Region headquarter in Makeni, Dr Samura Kamara formally declared his intent to lead the main opposition All Peoples Congress (APC). In addition to the frenzied euphoria of electoral victory for candidate and party, there's a certain feeling of impatience among ordinary people and an urgency towards the general elections. The message was clear; the country has suffered unprecedented good governance and economic reversals and the main opposition, which has endured tremendous suppression and persecution, is rebounding and poised to take power in a way no one imagined. The negative economic indices and their real effect of biting hardship appear to have inspired a sheer determination and doggedness by the rank and file of the APC. Former ministers, members of parliament and councilors past and present, leaders of members of other political parties graced the occasion in such huge numbers that the event looked like a party convention. Newly elected officials from the various districts and regions, who would eventually become delegates to vote (at the NDC), attended along with busloads of supporters and with all manner of banners endorsing Kamara's candidature.

Kamara led the APC into the polls in March 2018 after a selection process which some of his 'challengers' were unhappy with. Owing to that fallout, the APC has put itself through a period of agitation, litigation and reforms, resulting in a new constitution and 'Court Ordered' conventions. It is through those rigorously conducted conventions that the new crop of leaders were elected at the levels of the Ward, Constituency, District, Regional, and 'Special Organs'. Those elections laid the basis for the Party's National Delegates' Conference (NDC), slated for next week, where its 'national officers' and the party's standard bearer will be elected.

So far, no less than six aspirants have declared for the leadership of the APC. This indicates that despite his incumbency, Samura Kamara is up against an internal opposition that could not be ignored. This fact is not lost on the man widely presumed to once again emerge as leader of the main opposition. Kamara's declaration past Sunday was a clear demonstration of strength of support but critically also, of readiness to lead both in terms of the content of his address and the deftness in the way the event was organized. This comes on the back of the incumbent Sierra Leone's Peoples Party (SLPP)'s desperation for re-election. The President Maada Bio - led SLPP government as explored every tactic in voter suppression and in its fierce persecution of the APC and its leaders. Even the APC ordinary supporters have not been spared of the intimidation, harassment, detention,

confiscation of their small businesses and destruction of their livelihoods. Not surprisingly, Samura Kamara's message emphasized on internal party reconciliation, peace, unity and collaboration as the only path through which the APC could unseat the ruling SLPP.

"...We should be responsive to the urgent need for a united and focused APC... to effectively hold this government accountable and (to) win the 2023 elections," he said. Kamara also made the point that "there could be no unity in the APC without genuine reconciliation and understanding that put the party's interest above all other considerations." In an apparent reference to his competitors, he urged for collaboration in the overall interest of the APC. "We are on the verge of the NDC, so it is imperative that we put personal ego aside and walk the APC to State House."

Without a doubt, the major issue for these elections is the cost-of-living crisis which imposes the need for proven experienced leadership able to effectively handle the Sierra Leone's desperate economic situation. There appears to be a consensus among Sierra Leoneans that the nation cannot afford another five years of the current economic failure - a day added to the misery of the SLPP tenure will be a disaster for the suffering masses! No one could be more aware of this reality than the man who has bestridden the economic landscape of Sierra Leone for over three decades. Apart from his earlier middle level roles in the Bank of Sierra Leone in the early 80s; between 1990 and 2014, he served as Sierra Leone's Financial Secretary, Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone and as minister of the Finance and Economic Development. During this period, he led several economic reforms and tax initiatives, including the establishment of revenue generating institutions such as the National Revenue Authority (NRA), the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT). The presumptive APC presidential candidate was also integral to the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) II and spearheaded the PRSP III. His leadership of the nation's economy has been credited for the stability and growth of a wide range of macro-economic fundamentals.

However, Kamara's reading of the current governance and economic situation is damning. "...the Bio-led Sierra Leone Peoples Party Government is leaving behind most of our institutions and infrastructure in a terrible state of decay and shame; there is increasing insecurity and the quality of life of the vast majority of our people has considerably deteriorated; our collective image and national esteem has plummeted whilst the economy has sunk rapidly into vicious depth due to incompetence and mismanagement,"



Dr. Samura Kamara and Leader of APC in Parliament, Hon. Chericoco

he said.

But it was not more so what he said than what he did not say. In a power point presentation titled, "Sierra Leone - Macroeconomic Performance (2008 - 2022)," which was shared during his declaration event, Samura Kamara backed up his assessment of the economy with the figures which laid bare the magnitude of the economic crisis facing Sierra Leone.

Real GDP growth declined from 3.8% (2017) to 2.8(2022)

CPI Inflation rose 15.3% (2017) to 37.1 (2022)

Expenditure increased from (6.4 trillion or 23.5% of GDP to 12.5 trillion or 28.4% of GDP (2021)

In 2022, total expenditure amounted to 13.7 trillion nominal terms (25%.8) of GDP

The Wage Bill increased from Le 1.89 trillion (6.9% of GDP) in 2017 to 4.3 trillion (8.1% of GDP) in 2022

Public Debt Stock to GDP increased from 69% (2017) to over 90% (2022) bringing the economy into a risk of debt distress due to increased domestic borrowing which putting the economy on the brink of actual debt distress

Total public debt is equivalent to over USD3.0 billion as at end 2022

Exchange Rate (Leone to the US Dollar) unprecedented depreciation of the Leone from 2017 to 2022 stands at 147%.

And he did not just criticise, he offered assurances that he was ready to take and build back the country, unite its people and move speedily to alleviate the suffering of the masses by salvaging the economy which he said had collapsed under the current SLPP leadership. To achieve this, Kamara acknowledged good governance, together with accountability and probity, as fundamental requirements. He also expressed the view that there is a need to bring about a fair, just, secure and orderly management of public affairs in such a way that the rule of law is upheld and that institutions could work in accordance with their mandates.

"We will effectively support public institutions to be better able to institutionalise democracy and the rule of law, and shall build a public service that is fit for purpose.... There is a need to build a country where if you show up, step up, work hard, you will have your fair share of its wealth; a country in which hard work pays, and cutting corners does not. A country in which no matter the tribe or where you come from, you will be rewarded based on merit, not on whom you know; a country in which every young person can hope, and aspire, and reach his or her full potential right here in Sierra Leone."

The presumptive APC presidential candidate urged his party and the country to make informed choices on polling day. "We must make a choice for growth, for prosperity, for democratic freedoms, and for national cohesion. We must make a choice for competence and for sympathetic leadership. We must make a choice for a leader that understands the challenges our nation is facing and has the experience and proven track record to lead the design and delivery of the solutions to those challenges....," he said.

In the 2018 elections, the APC hemorrhaged considerable support particularly in Kambia in the Northeast and in Kono in the East owing to Kande Yumkella's National Grand Coalition (NGC) and former APC vice president Samuel Sumana's Coalition For Change (C4C). Both parties have lost their vibrancy and are largely in disarray. The upcoming elections in June 24 will therefore be a stiffly contested two-horse race between the main opposition APC and the incumbent SLPP. Public opinion may be on the side of the opposition but beyond the fanfare and the public endorsements, there is evidence of voter suppression and an uncanny use of the security forces in favour of the ruling party. Electoral victory for the APC would therefore be assured only if its leaders work together, if it organized itself very well in a way that it could protect its votes and ensure every ballot counts.



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LOCAL NEWS

QNET IS NOT AN OVERSEAS TRAVELLING BUSINESS

Ever since QNET was incorporated in Hong Kong as a business enterprise some 25 years ago, the most spurious lie and misconception peddled against QNET is that the organization is engaged in overseas travelling.

That narrative is deceitfully parroted by detractors and impersonators, aimed at using the name of the organization for selfish gains and thinking that they are derailing the efforts or tarnishing the name of a worldwide renowned and legitimate business.

Contrary to the wishes of unscrupulous detractors, it should be categorically stated that QNET does not engage in any overseas travelling whatsoever and does not facilitate the travelling of Sierra Leoneans to overseas.

Most relevant to Sierra Leone at this point is clearing the misconceptions and setting the records straight, given the fact that QNET does not offer any products related to "travel assistance with immigration services, or even overseas jobs in exchange for payment" of any kind.

Additionally, QNET has nothing to do with travel assistance for immigration, visas, and overseas job offers in exchange for payment. The abundant availability of travelling programmes to the Middle East for work has led to a mad rush of people showing interest and unsuspectingly, they are consequently swindled by fake and deceitful agents posing as legitimate business people.

It should be emphatically stated that these people are not part of the QNET business network and anyone caught using the name of the organization to conduct dishonest and deceitful business with members of the public must be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the laws of Sierra Leone.

Mel Adjoussou, Esq., Qnet Regional Counsel for Sub-Saharan Africa QNET has similarly stated that those fraudsters who want to spoil the hard-earned image of QNET as a legal, trusted and legitimate business must be apprehended by the police and charged to court for fraudulent conversion.

For assurance purposes, he asserted that if anyone has encountered fraudulent activities being carried out in the name of QNET, that person must contact QNET immediately at africa.supportcentre@qnet.net.

Lawyer Adjoussou reveals that QNET adopted a business model that combines the two principles of major industries which involve E-Commerce and the direct selling of products, as according to him, any individual who chooses to purchase the product will have the opportunity to become an Independent Representative (IRs).

The IRs he furthered, would earn commissions from the sale of the products which must be in line with compensation plans and went on to note that QNET normally conducts business by way of Licensing agreements through a local representative serving

as an agent.

"We have been shipping products to Sierra Leone and a few years ago some Sierra Leoneans decided to become distributors or independent representatives of QNET products. They earned commissions on the products sold at the end of the day", he discloses.

It should be noted that QNET actively enforces strict regulations/policies that IRs must comply with in their day-to-day operations when marketing QNET products. To guarantee the legitimacy of business transactions IRs must be legally entitled to work in their country of residence and must conduct their business dealing in accordance with all local laws and regulations.

QNET does not encourage cross-border movements and IRs are made to commit to QNET's Policies and Procedures which govern their ethical behaviour while marketing its products. IRs are trained on QNET's ethics and professionalism periodically.

To manage the expectations of prospective people interested in QNET business, it is important to note that direct selling is not a get-rich-quick scheme. QNET makes it very clear on its website www.qnet.net and all its marketing materials that the QNET Business Opportunity does not guarantee any income and results are commensurate with the effort put in by the IR.

That notwithstanding, in the last 25

years, hundreds of thousands of people around the world have benefited from QNET products and services and have been empowered to become entrepreneurs using direct selling business opportunities.

The company offers diversified business varieties. QNET offers products in the form of Holidays, Wellness, Watches & Jewellery, Home & Living, Education, Health, Personal Care & Beauty and Technology product categories. At the moment, QNET can boast of product sales in more than 100 countries and is actively present in more than 25 countries through offices and agencies.

QNET is a socially-responsible company and through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm, RYTHM (Raise Yourself to Help Mankind), it has implemented many empowering and life-changing social responsibility projects and activities across the West African sub-region.

QNET keeps supporting a social intervention that helps provide education to young deaf and blind children through sports and social inclusion activities. When Covid-19 hit hard, QNET provided personal protective equipment to hospitals and security agencies and supplied needy households with food items and essentials. QNET has been the official direct selling partner of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) club competitions on the African continent since 2018. QNET is also the Direct Selling partner of Manchester City Football Club.

Afrimoney Dishes out millions of Leones to subscribers as Valentine's Gifts



As a way of showing love, care, and affection, the management of Afrimoney on 'Valentine's Day' has given out valentine's gifts to its subscribers that are worth millions of Leones.

Valentine's Day is observed every year on February 14th in remembrance of St. Valentine. Globally, People use the day to share candy, flowers, and other gifts as an expression of their love for someone special to them.

In a special Valentine's Day radio program, the Chief Executive Officer of Africell Sierra Leone, Mr. Shadi Gerjawi disclosed that the idea to give gifts to Afrimoney subscribers was to show their love and affection to them,

adding that, they are not just subscribers but to demonstrate to all their subscribers that they have played immense contributions to the success of Afrimoney operations in the country. As

a way of giving more accolades to their subscribers, Mr. Gerjawi emphasized that the Afrimoney subscribers are not just ordinary subscribers but are the support pillars on which Afrimoney operates.

The Chief Executive Officer of Africell added that, due to the priceless contributions of their Afrimoney subscribers, they have dedicated a whole radio program to interact as well as to put smiles on the faces of their subscribers. He said that through the Afrimoney system, they have been able to contribute immensely to the financial inclusion of the country and create more jobs for people in the country.

He further stressed that now, people do

share love due to workload or other engagements but the Africell family through their Afrimoney service have taken the golden opportunities to share the love with their subscribers by putting smiles on their faces through the Afrimoney valentine's gift.

Expressing their joy as lucky winners, the subscribers applauded Afrimoney for thinking about them as well as showing them love on such a special day. Some of them revealed that because of the gifts they have received from Afrimoney they will celebrate Valentine's Day in a grand style. The lucky winners encouraged Afrimoney to continue serving them as well as bringing innovative ideas to them.





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LOCAL NEWS

By Mohamed Lamin Massaquoi,
Information Attaché Sierra Leone
Embassy, United Arab Emirates

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday 14 February 2023 - Sierra Leone's Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Dr. David Moinina Sengh, has received the Best Minister Award in the World, as part of the ongoing 10th edition of the World Government Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

With the theme: "Shaping Future Governments", this edition was attended by political leaders, experts and innovators, during which they discussed possible ways of shaping future government policies. In the audience during the Award ceremony were three African Presidents.

According to the citation: "The Award recognises the exceptional efforts of Government Ministers by demonstrating excellence in the public sector, implementing successful reforms and inspiring Government leaders and service providers to promote innovation within their domain to better serve the needs of their citizens."

Dr. Sengh was among ten other ministers, who were nominated after a global due diligence conducted by PWC, which also included the public opinion through social media, a jury of international experts and key figure representatives of international organisations and the private sector to select the winner. The Award was presented by High Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin

Dr. David Sengh crowned as best minister

Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

Shortly after receiving the Award, Dr. Sengh said that he was excited that the recognition would help to motivate school-going children in Sierra Leone and all other stakeholders in the education sector to do more. He noted that the commitment of President Dr. Julius Maada Bio allowed him to carry out his mandate with ease, adding that Sierra Leone's investment in education had been coupled with priority on making sure that the poor, disabled, vulnerable and even those in remote areas were all catered for.

"When everyone is included and when we use technology to provide solutions for our students, everyone benefits and the system gets better. So, as we innovate and solve problems within the education system, we must think about those who are most excluded because when we build systems that work for them, everyone benefits," he said.

Sierra Leone's Ambassador to the UAE, Rashid Sesay, who was also part of the event, emphasized that the recognition was a proud moment for every Sierra Leonean and a testament that the great efforts of His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio to provide affordable education for all was being recognised across the globe.

Other notable participants in this year's edition of the World



Government Summit, included His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, President Macky Sall of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, President Abdel

Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, Madam Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and Madam Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organisation.

8,468 perish trying to reach Europe

More than 8,400 Europe-bound migrants perished at sea while attempting to cross the Mediterranean over the past four years, a charity said Tuesday.

Save the Children said in a report that about a half million people crossed or attempted to cross the Mediterranean to Europe since 2019. Of those, 8,468 people died or went missing in the Mediterranean, the charity added.

Analyzing data from the U.N. refugee agency, the charity said deaths at European borders were partly blamed on "the increasing trend of European governments forcibly, illegally and often violently stopping refugees from entering their territory and even abducting and expelling those who have arrived."

The 40-page report cited a 2021 warning by the U.N. refugee agency that "asylum was under attack at Europe's borders" and that pushbacks were being "carried out in a violent and apparently systematic way."

The report mentioned pushbacks of migrants trying to reach Spain from Morocco; Greece from Turkey; and Italy from Libya and Tunisia.

Pushbacks are unlawful under international and European Union law, as they violate the right to seek asylum



FILE - Migrants aboard a rubber boat end up in the water while others cling on to a centifloat... - Copyright © africanews Valeria Mongelli/Copyright 2021 The AP. All rights reserved

and the legal principle that prohibits the return of anyone to a place where they would risk persecution, torture or deadly threat.

In its report titled "Safe for Some," the charity accused European countries of having "double standards" in dealing with Middle Eastern and African migrants and

those who fled Ukraine over the past year. Save the Children said over 8 million migrants — 40% of them children — from Ukraine were allowed into Europe since Russia's invasion of the country last February.

"It doesn't need to be this way," said Daniel Gorevan, senior advocacy adviser

at the charity and the report's author. "A new European approach — one which puts the rights of all children at the heart of asylum policies — is possible."

Tens of thousands have attempted to cross the Mediterranean to Europe from North African countries that have become hubs for migrants fleeing poverty and wars in Africa and the Middle East, seeking better lives in Europe.

Libya has been a major transit point for migrants since the country descended into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime leader Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

Human traffickers have benefited from the chaos in Libya, smuggling in migrants across the country's lengthy borders with six nations. The migrants are then packed into ill-equipped rubber boats and other vessels and set off on risky sea voyages.

European countries have in recent years pushed Libyan authorities and the coast guard to detain and intercept migrants attempting to cross European shores.

More than 24,680 were intercepted and returned to Libya, where they were held in detention centres rife with abuses, according to the U.N. migration agency. Such abuses include forced labour, beatings, rapes and torture — practices that amount to crimes against humanity, according to U.N.-commissioned investigators.

LOCAL NEWS

MPs, paramount chiefs impressed with Leone Rock Metal Group

On February 12, 2023, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee of Mines and Mineral Resources paid a visit to the Kingho Mining Company in Tonkolili District, a subsidiary of Leone Rock Metal Group (LRMG), to conduct oversight and understand the relationship between the mining company and the community stakeholders. Members of Parliament, the Company's management team, Paramount Chiefs, other local stakeholders, and journalists were part of the oversight visit and subsequent meeting held thereafter. Following a cordial welcome from LRMG management and staff, the members of the Committee of Mines and Mineral Resources, local stakeholders and representatives from various media houses were given an overview of the company by Ing. Samuel Kamara, Compliance Manager of LRMG. During his presentation, Ing. Kamara started with a brief summary of the company profile; "The company was first established in Sierra Leone in July 2010 and currently holds 4 Large scale Mining Licenses (Kingho Mining License, Northern Mining, CKH, and Mass Energy) with six years of operation and management rights to the 192 km Railway and Pepel Port". He further stated that the cumulative investment of LRMG in Sierra Leone over the years exceed \$US 595,707,020.65 and the company's current activities are; Mining, Processing Haulage, and Export of Iron Ore. He noted that the company achieved a fully integrated supply chain by April of 2021. To the applause of everyone in the hall, he confirmed that the company successfully exported 5.896 million tons of Iron Ore in 2022 and put the current human

resource capacity (employees) at 3,664. The presentation ended with highlight of the company's five-years plans and immediate investment of \$US230 million to commission the construction of a beneficiation plant in March 2023 that will process the saprolite material to produce 62% Iron concentrate over the next 30 years with high revenue and employment potential for Sierra Leone. To the excitement of the audience, he reiterated that the company has invested a total of \$US 785,000 in 2022 alone in various community development ranging from CDA payments, CDAP project implementation and CSR activities. In addition, the presentation clearly articulated LRMG's proposal to the government for the expansion of the railway and Pepel Port within a period of 2 years that will allow multi-user bulk commodity transportation and export for all companies along the rail corridor. This expansion will generate over 700 jobs and help stabilise the economy with increase mineral and bulk commodity export for the benefit of the Government and people of Sierra Leone.

Speaking during the visit, the Chairman, committee on Mines and Mineral resources in Parliament Hon. Lamina thanked the Kingho Mining Company (KMC) a Subsidiary of the LRMG for the warm reception noting the purpose of the oversight visit. Hon. Emmerson Lamina started by invoking SO 2 noting that the standing order gives power to parliament as to what language to communicate during deliberations. He briefed the MP's and stakeholders presents on the significance of the mining industry in advancing the development agenda as outlined in Section 7(1a) of Sierra Leone's 1991 Constitution. He noted it is mandated



for a cross-section of Hon. Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Mines & Mineral Resources to conduct oversight visitation with Management and Local Stakeholders within any mining concession to have first-hand information on mining activities, and visual assessment of the Company's operation from Local Stakeholders perspective with regards to Community Resettlement program, Environmental compliance, surface rent, CDA and the general peace within mining communities.

Hon Saa Emmerson Lamina expressed his happiness and satisfaction over the presentation done by Ing. Kamara emphasising his admiration for the rapid transformation of the KMC mining project that has led the company to commence export of 62% Iron Ore within a very short time of its operation, that will contribute significantly to the economic growth of Sierra Leone and create lots of jobs for the youths. He expressed delight over the vertical integration plans of the company that will eventually move the company from DSO mining to steel production that will mark the beginning of industrialisation in Sierra Leone and boost for the foreign exchange reserve.

The Chairman and all visiting MP's were very impressed with the cordial relationship between the company and the community stakeholders. One of the visiting Hon MP also a member of the committee, thanked the company for the warm welcome and admonished the community stakeholders to take good care of the company as it is the first time they have visited a mining company that has a very good communication link

with their stakeholders and involves them all in their plans.

The Regent Chief of the Simira Chiefdom, John T. Kamara, the Paramount Chief of the Dansogoi Chiefdom, PC Alimany B. Y. Koroma, and Hon. PC Musa Jalloh, the paramount chief of the Sambaia Chiefdom in the Tonkolili district, thanked President Bio for changing the mining laws to give local stakeholders the ability to be part of mining decision-making. All stakeholders expressed their willingness to support the company as Leone Rock Metal Group has done so much community development in just 2 years than previous companies did not achieve in 10 years of their operation.

One of the host Members of Parliament, Honourable Rose Mary Bangura, spoke about the company's positive relationships with traditional leaders and requested that the government gives them all necessary support and protect their investment which will encourage the company to continue with developments in these communities.

The parliamentary committee on mines and mineral resources members promised to update the government on the satisfactory outcome of the visit. According to a representative of the committee in his vote of thanks, "we will not blindly support LRMG, but we will not also sit back and let anyone violate the company rights. As a committee, we want the laws of Sierra Leone to be obeyed, and we want to have a company like LRMG for all the good reasons as we have heard and see here today for ourselves."



Farmer sentenced six months for unlawful possession of 'Kush'

By Mohamed J. Kargbo

Magistrate Mark Ngegba has sentenced forty-six (46)-year-old Lansana Dumbuya or alternatively pays a fine of NLe1,0000.

The accused was in court on two count charges of unlawful possession of drug contrary to Section 48(1) of the Pharmacy and Drugs Act 2001 and possession class 'A' drugs without

reasonable excuse, contrary to Section 17 of the Pharmacy and Drug Act 2001.

The charges were read out to him and he pleaded guilty as charged.

It was alleged that the accused person on November 29, 2022 at N06 Mockomock Street, Hastings in the Western Rural district of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was found in possession of three (3) wraps of Kush

and class 'A' drugs to wit four (4) tablets of Tramadol without lawful authority.

The exhibit officer, Mohamed Yusif Jalloh, attached at the Exhibit Store, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) said on the above said date, he received the items from Sergeant 10646 Fofanah for safe keeping. He produced and tendered the said

exhibits in court to form part court records.

Meanwhile, defense council submitted that the accused didn't waste the court's time, but pleaded guilty to the offense.

He asked the magistrate to temper justice with mercy because the accused person was a first offender and that he has learnt his lesson.

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LOCAL NEWS BSL launches 'be sure be aware' public campaign

By Ishmael Dumbuya

The Bank of Sierra Leone has yesterday, 15th February, launched the Financial Consumer Protection Guidelines at the Radisson BLU Mammy Yoko Hotel.

The guidelines are meant to categorically spell out the rights, responsibilities and roles of consumers in the banking sector.

In his keynote address, the Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone, Professor Kelfala Kallon stated that consumer protection makes markets work for both businesses and consumers.

"Consumers need to be able to obtain accurate and unbiased information about the services they provide. This enables them to make the best choices based on their interests and prevents them from being mistreated or misled by businesses," he said.

The governor went on to state that consumer banking is fundamental to the balance and diversification of businesses, noting that the 'Banking Consumer Protection Principles apply to the activities of banks operating by way of a license and dealing with persons who are, or may become consumers.

"It also applies to the activities

of any third party engaged by the banks for outsourced activity."

The governor climaxed by appreciating and thanking his staff and other partners for drawing up the banking guidelines as it will serve as a spring board for banking activities and financial consumer protection precedents.

The Chief Executive Officer, Priority Solutions Ltd, Sebastian Okutu, in his goodwill message, commended everyone that was involved in drafting up banking principles and guidelines.

He said it was very much pertinent for consumers to be educated on their rights and responsibilities regarding the banking operations and transactions.

In his closing remarks, the deputy governor, BSL, Sheikh A.Y. Sesay, thanked everyone for attending the launch.

He continued that their mandate as a national bank is to educate and raise awareness on the rights of consumers. He added that contained in the guidelines are a lot of consumer benefits, such as, loan collection etc.



Convict gets 5 years imprisonment for house breaking

By Ibrahim Kabba Turay

One John Alie Sankoh was yesterday convicted and sentenced to five years imprisonment for house breaking, contrary to the laws of Sierra Leone.

The accused was arraigned before the court on one count charge of house breaking and larceny contrary to section 25 (1) 2 of the Larceny Act 1916 and Section 13 (a) of the Larceny Act 1916.

The accused on 29th September, 2020, in Freetown, entered into the house of the complainant and stole therein properties and money of the total value of two million three hundred and fifty thousand Leones, property of Samuel Karankey Conteh.

Delivering the judgment, Justice Mordred Sesay said the accused on

the night of the incident was seen by the complainant daughter at the back of the compound at around 2am.

He said when he shouted, the accused also shouted and subsequently removed his clothes and defecate on it.

He said the prosecution has proven their case beyond all reasonable doubt against the accused person.

In her plea of mitigation for and on behalf of the accused, defence R.S Bangura, from the Legal Aid Board, also stressed that the accused is a young man with a lot of potential, thus pleading with the presiding judge to temper justice with mercy.

She added that the accused must have learnt his lesson while on remand at the Pademba Road Male Correction Centre.

MPs extol new North-West Electoral Commissioner

By Jariatu S. Bangura



The Committee on Appointment and the Public Service on Tuesday approved Albert Samba Kanu as the new Electoral Commissioner for the North-West region.

During her contribution, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay commended the president for bridging the regional gap by nominating a northerner to serve the country. She said the percentage of women from the North both in

Parliament and other sectors is minimal; therefore the nominee should make sure to bring in more women in the next parliament by implementing Section 58 of the Public Elections law.

She recalled that the nominee did well whilst at the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT), which shows that he can perform well and that he should go and keep making the difference as a Commissioner for the North-West.

Hon. Alusine Kanneh said the nominee should make sure to deliver and do the best for everyone, noting that the job is difficult to carry out as it is every stressful but hope that he will perform as expected.

He said he should think about the nation and make sure that the country remains peaceful.

Hon. P.C Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III said they were hoping and praying that they have divine direction as the peace of the country lies in their hands.

He said every Sierra Leonean will make his or her way to do the right thing for peace to prevail once they are appointed to serve in the ECSL.

He said as the first Commissioner to head the North-West, he should perform much more than expected and do things right.

Hon. Mark Mahmoud Kalokoh noted that the nominee was going to an institution that needed rehabilitation and that he should ensure that the right things be done to gain the confidence of the nation.

He said the peace of the country is in their hands as officers of the Electoral Commission.



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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

Kenyan Senator ejected from parliament over alleged 'period stain'

A Kenyan senator is reported to have been sacked from parliament after attending a session while wearing a white suit stained red in an apparent menstrual activism campaign.

Gloria Orwoba, of the ruling coalition, is due to table a motion on a bill to provide free sanitary pads on Wednesday as part of efforts to end period poverty. According to reports, senators disrupted Tuesday's afternoon session to draw the Speaker's attention to Ms Orwoba's "inappropriate dress code".

But the senator protested saying: "I am shocked that someone can stand here and say that the House has been disgraced because a woman has had her periods." Speaker Amason Kingi ordered the senator to go change her clothes before she could be readmitted to the chambers.

"Having periods is never a crime... Senator Gloria, I sympathise with you that you are going through the natural act of menstruation, you have stained your wonderful suit, I'm asking you to leave so that you go change and come back with clothes that are not stained," the BBC quoted speaker in a report.

Outside the chambers, Senator Orwoba confirmed the report to journalists saying "unfortunately I have been kicked out because I'm on my period and we are not supposed to show our period when we are on our period and that is the kind of period stigma girls and women are having outside..."



Kenyan minister Gloria Orwoba - Copyright © africanews @Pads4Education

Idris Elba on Bond role and potential of African storytelling

Speaking Tuesday (Feb. 14) at the World Government Summit, British actor Idris Elba commented rumours that he'd take over as James Bond.

Speculation have been running wild since Daniel Craig took his leave with the 2021 No Time To Die film. Elba's focus is on upcoming Netflix film based on the BBC series "Luther".

"The movie comes out. We've been working on the television show for about ten years, and so the natural ambition is to take it to the big screen and so we're here with the first movie. And, you know, a lot of people talk about another character that begins with J and ends with B, but I'm not going to be that guy. I'm going to be John Luther. That's who I am."

John Luther will return in select theatres then on Netflix in March. While in Dubai, Idris Elba also talked about the

power of storytelling, especially in bringing forth an African perspective to the world.

"I believe that Africa, especially as a continent, needs to hold a narrative change in narrative the way I think the world is viewed Africa, for a very long time needs a shift." "How do we do that? Well, the media doesn't help. The media concentrates on conflict. Okay. But the media is also a storyteller. Government in Africa could really help the continent by operating policy to allow the young people to be bolstered into an industry."

In recent weeks, Elba has appeared at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he and his wife Sabrina Dhowre Elba received an award for their work on food security in Africa. Elba also has worked as an anti-crime ambassador with his "Don't Stab Your Future" initiative in the United Kingdom.

Rising seas threaten exodus of 'biblical' scale, warns UN chief Antonio Guterres

The UN Secretary-General warned Tuesday that global warming could force a mass exodus "on a biblical scale" as people flee low-lying communities and called for legal frameworks to be implemented in preparation, especially for refugees.

"The danger is especially acute for nearly 900 million people who live in coastal zones at low elevations -- that's one out of ten people on Earth," Antonio Guterres told the UN Security Council.

"Low-lying communities and entire countries could disappear forever... We would witness a mass exodus of entire populations on a biblical scale," he said.

It is not only small island states at risk as sea levels rise, he added.

Countries such as Bangladesh, China, India and the Netherlands are all in danger, Guterres said, while "mega-cities on every continent will face serious impacts" -- from Cairo to Jakarta to Los Angeles to Copenhagen.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says sea levels rose by 15-25 centimeters (6-10 inches) between 1900 and 2018. If the world warms by just two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to the pre-industrial era, then those levels will rise again by 43 centimeters by the year 2100.



Antonio Guterres, UN secretary-general - Copyright © africanews ED JONES/AFP or licensors

But if it warms by three or four degrees Celsius, sea levels could rise by as much as 84 centimeters, the IPCC says.

The problem must be addressed "across legal and human rights frameworks," Guterres warned. Rising sea levels means shrinking land mass, he said, which could drive possible disputes over land and maritime space.

"The current legal regime must look to the future and address any gaps in existing frameworks," including in international refugee law, he said.

It must also provide for the future of states that face losing their land territory completely.

Guterres said the Security Council has a "critical" role to play in addressing "the devastating security challenges arising from rising seas."

The issue has been controversial in the past: In 2021, Russia vetoed a resolution linking climate change and global security, which was supported by the majority of the Council members.

Tanzania bans children's books on sex education for violating cultural norm



President of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan signs a book upon arrival during the extraordinary Summit of East African Community Heads of State in Burundi - Copyright © africanews TCHANDROU NITANGA/AFP or licensors

The Tanzanian government has banned from schools several children's books on sex education, accused of contravening "cultural and moral standards" in this East African country where homosexuality is criminalized.

"We are banning these books from schools and other educational structures because they are contrary to cultural and moral standards," Education Minister Adolf Mkenda told reporters on Monday from the capital Dodoma.

Among the books banned is "Diary of a Wimp: Greg Heffley's Logbook," a series of American graphic novels that have sold millions of copies worldwide.

The government did not specify why it was targeting this "diary" featuring a teenager, but it assured that inspections were being conducted in public and private school libraries to ensure that it had been removed.

The minister also included in this first list of "unacceptable" books a textbook on sex education and books mentioning LGBTQIA groups.

Last week, the head of state Samia Suluhu Hassan called on student leaders to be wary of "imported cultures" from abroad. "If you are Tanzanian, live according to our culture," she told them.

In Tanzania, homosexuality is punishable by a minimum sentence of 30 years to life imprisonment.

At least 73 migrants 'presumed dead' after shipwreck off Libya

Dozens of migrants are believed to have died in a shipwreck off Libya, with only seven survivors found so far, the United Nations said Wednesday. "At least 73 migrants are reported missing and presumed dead following a tragic shipwreck off the Libyan coast yesterday (Tuesday)," the UN's International Organization for Migration said.

The boat carrying 80 people had departed Qasr al-Akhar, some 75 kilometers (46 miles) east of the capital, Tripoli, and was heading to Europe.

So far, 11 bodies have been retrieved by the Libyan Red Crescent and the local police, IOM said.

At least 73 migrants are reported missing and presumed dead following a tragic shipwreck off the Libyan coast yesterday according to @UNmigration in Libya.

The boat, carrying around 80 people, reportedly departed from Qasr Alkayar on 14 February heading to Europe.

And the UN migration agency said that "seven survivors who made it back to Libyan shores in extremely dire conditions are currently in the hospital."

The central Mediterranean remains the world's deadliest migratory sea crossing.

The latest tragedy brings the number of deaths there since the beginning of this year alone to 130, IOM said.

According to the agency's Missing Migrants Project, more than 1,450 migrant deaths were recorded on that route in 2022.

And more than 17,000 deaths and disappearances have been recorded there since 2014.

"This situation is intolerable," IOM said.

"Concrete action by states is needed to increase search and rescue capacity, establish clear and safe disembarkation mechanisms as well as safe and regular pathways to migration to reduce dangerous journeys."

Travelling bus fights digital illiteracy in Liberia

In northern Liberia, a yellow bus is travelling from school to school to teach students how to use computers.

The idea is the brainchild of Jeremiah Lloyd Cooper, a 38-year-old information and telecommunications technician.

The project began last November and so far the founder claims it has reached 1,000 students.

"I graduated from high school actually with no basic computer basis knowledge."

I didn't even know how to power on a computer, but I went on to choose to study information technology at University level. And I was humiliated the first day that I got into the computer lab; my finger got frozen on the keyboard. I didn't know how to type and it was humiliating, you know, I experienced. So ever since then, my dream has been to be able to extend computer literacy to children graduating from high school," said Jeremiah Lloyd Cooper, founder of the mobile computer lab.

The project is funded by the United Nations Development Fund, UNDP, through Jeremiah's start-up "New Breed Tech Hub".

The objective is to reach not just schoolchildren but also women.

"For each time we reach this new community, the momentum is high. Students are eager, they want to



New Breed Tech Hub start-up bus teaches digital skills to schoolchildren in northern Liberia - Copyright © africanews

learn and they even wish for more of our mobile computer lab reaching them frequently, let's just say frequently", admits computer trainer, Martin B. Payedoe.

"It's a computer teaching organization that has come to enlighten our minds on computer knowledge. They're helping us to learn about the computer and how to do our works fast on computer," said student Allen M. Koleh Jr.

According to the World Bank, Liberia is one of the least developed countries in the world, and is also lagging behind in terms of internet: only 26% of its population used it in 2020, compared to 70% in South Africa or 90% in Australia.

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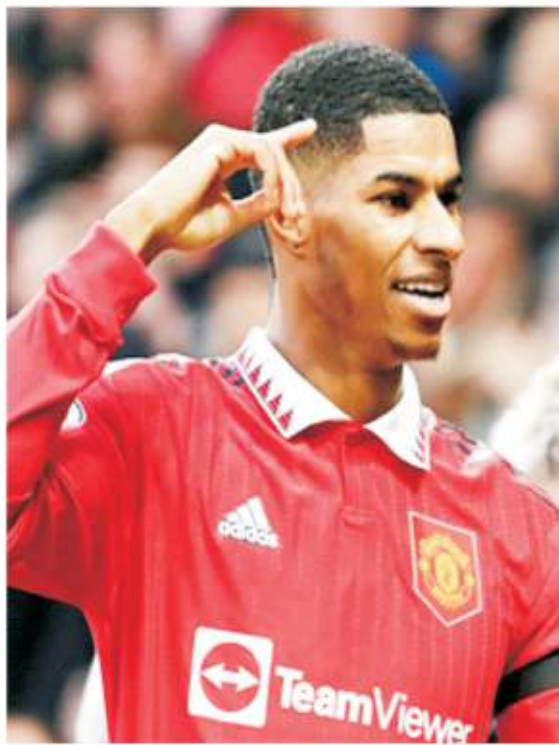
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INT'L SPORT

Bayern Munich are reportedly keeping tabs on in-form Manchester United star Marcus Rashford ahead of the summer transfer window. The German giants are in the hunt for a goalscorer as they look to replace Robert Lewandowski, who left for Barcelona in the summer. According to Sport Bild, Bayern have been keeping an eye on Rashford on the back of his impressive World Cup campaign with England in Qatar, where he scored three goals in five appearances. Rashford also has 21 goals to his name for the season at club level for United – one effort short of matching his personal best – and has netted 13 times through 16 appearances since the World Cup.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: In December, Manchester United chose to activate the one-year

Bayern Munich eyeing transfer swoops for Marcus Rashford amid Man Utd star's hot-streak at Old Trafford



extension clause for Rashford which ties him to the club until 2024. Bayern are aware that the 25-year-old will likely command a huge fee this summer, and may wait to see if the opportunity to sign him as a free agent arises instead. However, it has been reported that United are eager to tie Rashford down to a new long-term deal later in the year. Bayern are not only focusing on Rashford, with the Bundesliga champions also keen

on Tottenham captain Harry Kane, who is also approaching the final year of his contract with the north London club. The forward will be in action against Barcelona in the Europa League on Thursday, while Bayern will face Borussia Monchengladbach in the Bundesliga this weekend after beating Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League. <https://www.goal.com>

Iranian-American billionaire Jahm Najafi 'is lining up a £3bn takeover of Tottenham with a bid expected in weeks'

Iranian-American billionaire Jahm Najafi is reportedly preparing a group of investors to launch a £3.1 billion (\$3.75bn) takeover bid for Tottenham, according to two people with direct knowledge of the plans.

The Financial Times report that Najafi - who is chair of MSP Sports Capital - is working with a consortium to prepare the structure of the huge bid and the group is expected to approach Spurs owner Joe Lewis and chairman Daniel Levy in the coming weeks.

The bid is set to be factored so that Najafi and MSP would put forward 70 per cent of the capital, while others would contribute the remaining 30 per cent - with these backers likely to come from the Gulf, and particularly Abu Dhabi.

A £3.1bn bid for the club consists of the club's equity being valued at approximately £2.5bn, before adding about £610m of the club's current debts.

However, Sportsmail understands that Spurs are not the only club Najafi is interested in buying or has looked at - and that he is and has considered investing at another Premier League team too.

The news of a potential takeover is likely to be welcomed by Spurs fans as it would see the end of the unpopular ownership of ENIC.

ENIC is connected to Lewis and Levy and they purchased a 26 per cent from Lord Alan Sugar for £21.9million back in 2000, which has since risen to 85.5 per cent.

Their time in charge of the club has been praised for the development of a new stadium, efficient financial management and Spurs regularly qualifying for the Champions League and finishing in the top echelons of the Premier League.

However, with the club's last title being a League Cup in 2008, Spurs fans have become increasingly frustrated at what they perceive is a lack of ambition from the ownership and there have been increasing protests against the club's hierarchy in recent times.

Levy is the face of the club, with Lewis a silent owner and based out in the Bahamas.

Spurs are an attractive proposition to investors as a member of the 'Big Six' and the club reported revenues were £444m for the year ending June 2022 - an £83m rise on the previous year.

MSP - which was founded by former sports agent Jeff Moorad and Najafi - previously considered making an investment in Everton and held initial discussions.

Najafi was even photographed at Goodison Park for last month's game against Southampton, which was notable for the fact Everton's board of directors had been advised to stay away owing to threats to their security.

The Najafi-led group's desire to purchase the club has reportedly been enhanced by the potential real estate and development rights that would be possible through ownership.

A key part of the club's development over recent years has been the diversification of their income, with the stadium hosting concerts, NFL games and even heavyweight boxing fights, among other high-profile events.

Najafi would become the latest US billionaire to join the ranks of Premier League owners after both Chelsea and Bournemouth were



taken over by American owners last year. The 60-year-old - who moved to the US from Iran at the age of 12 - graduated with a Masters in Business Economics from Harvard University after he had previously completed a BA in Economics and Development Studies from the University of California.

Involvement at Tottenham wouldn't be his first foray into sport, with Najafi until recently a vice-chair of NBA side Phoenix Suns, while he is also a governor on the board of the NBA.

He also has a stake in the McLaren F1 team, after he invested in collaboration with MSP and UBS O'Connor LLC.

They originally invested \$248.5m which gave them a 15 per cent shareholding, which had since increased to 33 per cent by the end of 2022 and he is now vice-chairman of McLaren Racing.

Najafi is CEO and owner of Najafi Companies, a private investment and equity firm that has involvements in sports, media, technology, consumer and real estate throughout the world.

They tend to invest in lower-profile or fast-changing sectors and are highly-selective on what companies they put their money into.

Back in 2021, Najafi's net worth was valued at £2.9bn (\$3.5bn).

Regarding his personal story, Najafi arrived in the US from Iran at the age of 12 without speaking any English and taught himself by watching TV, including the NBA - which began his love for the sport.

He has not forgotten his humble beginnings, with Najafi serving on several philanthropic boards and civic organisations.

The businessman also founded Social Venture Partners Arizona which is another philanthropic fund, while he also formed Mission Advancement which outlined his commitment to diversity and equality.

Along with his wife Cheryl, he also committed \$10m to the NBA Foundation to help 'drive economic empowerment for Black communities through employment and career advancement'.

The interest in Tottenham comes at a time when both Manchester United and Liverpool are up for sale by American investors.

If a deal was to go through, it would mean that Spurs would become the 11th Premier League team currently owned by an American.

Antonio Conte's side are currently in fifth place in the Premier League and two points off the top four.

On Tuesday, they lost the first leg of their Champions League last-16 clash with AC Milan 1-0, while they are also in the fifth round of the FA Cup. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football>

Aboubakar: Ronaldo tried to stop me leaving Saudi club



Cameroon captain Vincent Aboubakar has said Cristiano Ronaldo tried to talk him out of leaving Al Nassr, following the Portuguese star's arrival at the Saudi club.

The 31-year-old, who had six months left on his Al Nassr contract, was fully aware that a foreign player would have to be sacrificed for the five-time Ballon d'Or winner.

Despite the former Man United and Real Madrid star attempt to stop him from leaving, Aboubakar opted for a return to Turkish side Besiktas by signing a two and a half years in January.

"We talked a bit and his [Cristiano's] opinion was that he wanted me to stay - I told him no, that I will leave for family reasons," Aboubakar told Talents d'Afrique on Canal+.

"He asked me where my family was, I told him they are in France and so I prefer to go to Turkey, it's closer."

"And he told me 'it's better, if your family is really far away, it's more complicated'. I was firm, I wanted to leave."

Aboubakar, who scored twice at the 2022 World Cup including an historic strike against Brazil, had joined Al-Nassr in July 2021 from Besiktas.

Despite scoring 13 goals and providing

six assists in 39 appearances for the Riyadh outfit, he admitted it was only logical to depart following the arrival of Cristiano.

"I left a little angry because it was not easy," he added.

"When Cristiano arrived, [Al Nassr] coach Rudi Garcia called me into his office and told me that normally an international player has to leave, it's either me or Jaloliddin Masharipov [from Uzbekistan], either me or Pity."

"I told him that I already wanted to leave before and, honestly, as Cristiano was coming, my playing time would be reduced and it was better for me to leave."

"I had offers, including one from Besiktas. They wanted me to stay until the end of the season. I said 'no honestly president I prefer to leave'."

"It was a bit complicated but finally they let me go."

Aboubakar finished top scorer at the delayed African Cup of Nations on home soil in February 2022, by producing eight goals, the best tally since 1998 when Benni McCarthy (South Africa) and Hossam Hassan (Egypt) got seven apiece.

Nine months later, he stole the headlines in Qatar by scoring an "outrageous" goal for Cameroon in their Group G match against Serbia at the World Cup.

He also scored a late winner against Brazil for Cameroon to claim historic 1-0 win but his goal was not enough to send them through and he was sent off for removing his shirt in the goal celebration.

Aboubakar had starred in the final of the 2017 Nations Cup, netting Cameroon's second goal to seal a 2-1 win over Egypt and a fifth continental title for the Indomitable Lions.

The former Lorient and Valenciennes striker has 39 goals in 95 appearances for his Central African nation.

<https://www.bbc.com>



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Date of Issue:	9 th February 2023
Date of Closure:	22 nd March 2023

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation through the Government of Sierra Leone has received funding from the Global Fund and intends to use part of the proceeds to finance the contracts for the Supply and delivery of Non-Financial Incentives, X-Ray Machine Batteries and Misc. Health facility Supplies to the Directorate of Primary Health Care (DPHC), National Malaria Control Programme and National Leprosy and Tuberculosis Control Programme for which this invitation for bid (IFB) is issued.

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation of the Republic of Sierra Leone through its sub-structure – the Integrated Health Projects Administration Units (IHPAU) now invites sealed tenders from eligible Bidders or their authorized representatives for the supply of the under-listed goods, packaged into Lots. Bidders who wish to bid, shall have the option of submitting a bid on any or all lots.

A brief description of the items as follows:

Lots	Description	Quantity	Bid Security Amount (NLE)
1	Supply and delivery of high -quality rain gears, rain boots, torch lights, backpacks, T -shirts, medicine doxes and ID Cards.	Assorted	287,100.00
2	Supply and delivery of plastic cups, plastic spoons, crushers and plastic buckets.	Assorted	29,928.00
3	Supply, delivery and installation of X -Ray Machine batteries.	20	9,500.00
4	Supply and delivery of Original Laptop Computers and Backpacks.	68	121,992.00

Tendering will be conducted through the **International Competitive Tendering** procedures as specified in the National Public Procurement Act, 2016 of Sierra Leone and is open to all Tenderers from eligible source countries.

Interested eligible tenderers may obtain further information from the Procurement Department of IHPAU/MOHS through bomassaquio@mohsihpau.gov.sl and copy the Team Lead aujalloh@mohsihpau.gov.sl, or in person from 09.00hours to 12.00hours and 13.00hours to 17.00 hours' local time each working day. The period allowed for requesting bid clarification is fourteen days (14) prior to the deadline for submission of bids.

A complete set of tender documents may be purchased by interested Tenderers on submission of a written application to the **Team Lead/ Funds Management Specialist, Integrated Health Projects Administration Unit, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 23 Cantonment Road, Off King-Harman Road, Freetown** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of five hundred New Leones (NLe500.00) only. The method of payment will be by direct deposit to the Single Treasury Account at the Bank of Sierra Leone:

Account Name: NPPA Revenue from sales of Bidding Documents
 Account Number: 0111003981
 BBAN: 000001011100398165

Alternatively, the potential bidders will also have the option to pay for the bidding document in any of the Transit Accounts at the following Commercial Banks:

Bank Name: Union Trust Bank
 Account Name: Revenue from sale of Bidding Sub Treasury
 Account No: 210113253-01
 BBAN No: 00-4001113253120144

Bank Name: Sierra Leone Commercial Bank
 Account name: Revenue from sale of Bidding Sub Treasury
 Account No: 003001081791112183

Bank Name: Rokel Commercial Bank
 Account Name: Revenue from sale of Bidding Sub Treasury
 Account No: 02-011012428
 BBAN No: 00200100210124286

The Procurement Unit will hold a pre-bid meeting on Wednesday 8th March 2023, 10:00am at the IHPAU conference room, ground floor, 23 cantonment road, off King Harman Road and/or through videoconferencing via Zoom, which shall be open to prospective bidders. Sealed tenders must be clearly marked on the outer envelope, indicative of the lot or lots that the tenderer is interested in and delivered in the tender box on the ground floor of the address above on or **before 12:00 noon on the 22nd March 2023**. All tenders must be accompanied by the credentials detailed hereunder:

- Ø **A Business registration certificate;**
- Ø **Bid Security issued by a reputable commercial bank in Sierra Leone;**
- Ø **A valid tax clearance certificate;**
- Ø **A valid NASSIT clearance certificate;**
- Ø **Assigned Integrity Pact;**
- Ø **Assigned and duly stamped bid form;**
- Ø **Delivery schedule and brand names of supplies; and,**
- Ø **Certificates for similar contracts performed.**

Tenders will be opened in the presence of the tenderers' representatives, who choose to attend at the **Conference Room of the Integrated Health Projects Administration Unit, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 23 Cantonment Road, Off King Harman Road, Freetown** on 22nd March 2023 at **12:00 Noon** (Local time).

Electronic tenders will not be permitted. Late tenders will be rejected and returned unopened to bidders.





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Ski Vision College, Kadco, ATUL, Kings Beverage support Roll Ball Game in Sierra Leone



One of the leading ICT institutions in Sierra Leone, Ski Vision College, has in collaboration with Kadco, ATUL and Kings Beverage supported the introduction of Roll Ball game in Sierra Leone. On Sunday, players from all across the country participated in a Roll Ball game competition sponsored by the four Indian own businesses supported the introduction of Roll

Beach in Freetown. Speaking on behalf of the four sponsors, Munish Sharma, who is the Director of Ski Vision College, said they have a lot of games in India and that Roll Ball is among the lots that they wanted to introduce in Sierra Leone, so that players can participate in international competition.

"We want to contribute to the development of the country and we want to develop the game here in Sierra Leone to match with international standards. This is a testament of our commitment to corporate social responsibility and enhance the physical capacity of the youth," he said. He promised that they will

continue to support the game and ensure that it becomes popular in Sierra Leone as it is in India.

President of the Roll Ball Association in Sierra Leone, Noel Williams, thanked the Indian business who sponsored the game.

"We are proud enough to have sponsors that made the day a success. The youth have talents but need sponsorship so that they can showcase their talents," he said.

He said the Roller Skate which is used to play the Roll Ball is very expensive and that they were very much grateful that the sponsors were able to provide for each and every player who participated in the competition.

Meanwhile, managements of ATUL, Kings Beverage and Kadco also expressed their determination to continue supporting the game and as well continue to contributing to the development of Sierra Leone.

