



INFRASTRUCTURE



KIA IMPROVEMENT ATTRACTS MORE VISITORS **PAGE 3**

EDUCATION



STATE DONATES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CLASSROOMS **PAGE 5**

OPERATION



BAN ON ILLEGAL FISHING IS SUSTAINABLE **PAGE 6**

ART



BOARD ASKS FILM MAKERS TO GO FOR BIG SCREENS **PAGE 7**

BUSINESS **Airtime, electricity, DSTV prices rise on tax revision**

Treasury saves Sh1.5bn on Covid-19 travel ban

Oil edges higher, but posts 20pc annual drop in tumultuous 2020

Nissan motor to reduce presence in Europe as part of turnaround plan-Yomiuri paper

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Page 3



TRADE FAIR

Page 5



Peace, good governance up in New Year messages



Zanzibar President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi delivers his New Year message at the State House on Thursday. Photo: State House

By Guardian Reporters

GOVERNMENT and religious leaders from across the country have in speeches and messages to mark the arrival of 2021, reflected on the past 12 months and urged concerted efforts in the fight against corruption to accelerate the nation's economic growth.

In New Year addresses, notable religious leaders said that over the next 12 months, Tanzanians should

“You might be a minister; but you are not an expert in a particular filed. It is better to look for experts to help in executing the projects”

support the government's efforts to ensure enhanced accountability at workplaces as well as efficiency in achieving economic and investment targets.

Bishop Beatus Kinyaiya of the Catholic diocese of Dodoma in a sermon at St Paul of the Cross Parish commended the government for the social, economic and political achievements in the past year.

He urged the government and the legislators to make use of experts and ensure that projects are implemented at required standards.

“You might be a minister; but you are not an expert in a particular filed. It is better to look for experts to help in executing the projects,” he stated.

The bishop highlighted that 2020 was a good year as the World Bank categorized Tanzania as a lower-middle income country, whereas Tanzania's expectations were to gain middle income status by 2025.

What made Tanzania earn middle income status was the reinforcement of leadership ethics, imple

TURN TO Page2

Govt reaching out to young ICT innovators

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has pledged to create a conducive environment for development of young innovators in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) so that they can take charge in social and economic development.

Dr Faustine Ndugulile, the minister for Communications and Information Technology, expressed this intention at an official tour of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and the College of Information and Communication Technologies (CoICT) of the University of Dar es Salaam on Thursday.

He told his hosts that Tanzania's young innovators have been coming up with a number of ICT applications which address routine challenges in the delivery

TURN TO Page2

TRA registers record monthly tax payment

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) has collected 2.088trn/- out of the targeted 2.072trn/-, a record collection increase of 101percent in the last month of the just ended year.

TRA Commissioner General Dr Edwin Mhede told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday the historic collection has been cumulative and contributed by various factors.

He said that for the first half of the financial year 2020/21 TRA collected 9.983trn/-, an average increase in collection of 1.664trn/- per month compared to 1.5trn/- in the same period of the previous financial year, implying an 11percent increase.

The commissioner general lauded the level of compliance by taxpayers, asserting that they “have understood what it means to pay tax. They have been patriotic enough to enable us to collect such

“As we all know fair assessment of tax derives from record keeping which is the use of receipts. This is very important and should be taken into consideration by any development loving individual

amount, which is historic.”

He urged TRA officials to be patriotic in performing their duties as it is only through hard work and being friendly to taxpayers that they would facilitate the collection of record amounts.

TURN TO Page2

Minister: Stop vaccination tenders with private firms

By Guardian Reporter

LIVESTOCK and Fisheries minister Mashimba Ndaki has banned district councils from using private firms to vaccinate livestock, directing immediate termination of all such contracts.

The minister issued the order in an official tour in Shinyanga Region, where he directed that all vaccinations be provided by the ministry's experts, approved by the government.

He said that herders had raised concerns that some

of the vaccines being used by hired companies have caused negative effects on the animals.

While at the dipping site where pneumonia vaccine is administered to animals at

TURN TO Page2



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Peace, good governance up in New Year messages

FROM PAGE 1

mentation of flagship projects and investments in human development, the bishop underlined.

He called upon Tanzanians to continue thanking God for the country's prevailing peace and tranquility contrary to many other African nations, citing the recent outbreak of civil war in Ethiopia. He said in 2021, the people should continue to embrace unity and peace to foster development.

"We have had peaceful and successful elections; it is our role now to assist the government towards efforts to achieve the targeted economic development goals," the senior clergyman remarked.

He said further that in the previous year, the Covid-19 pandemic spread around the world, but God has saved Tanzanians, hence the need to continue praying to win the battle against new infections.

Evangelist Hosea Stephano of the Makedonia parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) in Mwanza Region urged Tanzanians to maintain peace, unity and solidarity in the coming 12 months.

In Bariadi District, Shinyanga Region, Father Alfred Lwamba of the St Lucas Parish called upon Tanzanians to develop a forgiving heart to attract more blessings this year.

Father Lwamba noted that through forgiveness people stay closer to God and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

Simiyu Regional Sheikh Mahamud Kalokola urged Muslims

to love one another and continue praying for God's blessings in 2021. He said loving each other promotes family cohesion and the nation's togetherness.

Zanzibar President, Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi highlighted the need for Isles residents to cooperate with the government to ensure successful implementation of planned projects, similarly urging Zanzibaris to support the government's fight against corruption and misuse of public funds.

"We are done with the elections; we have formed a Government of National Unity (GNU) as per requirements of Article 9(3) of the Amended 1984 Zanzibar Constitution which provides for power sharing in the Isles. Let us all support it because it is meant to spur economic development," the incoming leader declared.

Dr Mwinyi said that 2020 had left some bad memories among the people of Zanzibar following the collapse of the Beit-al Ajaib or House of Wonders. The collapse reportedly killed two people and injured several others.

He said Zanzibar's economy which largely depend on tourism activities was affected by the outbreak of the global respiratory disease—Covid-19.

Despite the challenges in Zanzibar, the Union has achieved a number of economic successes including Tanzania being categorized as a lower-middle income country by the World Bank, attributed this achievement to the bold leadership of President John Magufuli.



Women trading bananas at Kiwira ward in Rungwe District, Mbeya Region looking for potential customers along Mbeya-Kyela highway yesterday. Kiwira market which is located in Uporoto mountains is a major social and economic venture for women entrepreneurs. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya

Govt reaching out to young ICT innovators

FROM PAGE 1

of social and economic services but most of them are not recognized, developed and given a chance in the market.

He said that the government will come up with a procedure where innovators will have the new technologies tested without being charged for registration fees or being subjected to tax liabilities, to enable them access markets for their innovations.

"We are determined to support and develop innovations for the country's economic development as well as for the specific innovators," he stated, elaborating that local innovators would enable the government save funds when most ICT solutions are locally developed.

Improvement in the field of ICT would also boost the country's technological development and increase

the number of mobile phone and internet users, he said, appealing to the public to try locally developed technologies more often.

Tanzania had 27 million mobile phone subscribers as per September 2020 data from the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA).

COSTECH Director General Dr Amos Nungu said that Tanzanian innovators have developed over 20 ICT applications currently used in revenue collection in various districts.

Youths have also created an application that allows students to participate in an online learning program at the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) as well as an application enabling a mobile phone service provider to preserve customer information.

Prof Bernadetta Kilian, the CoICT

council's vice chairperson and the head of ICT in the college, Mussa Kisaka promised to collaborate with the government to recognize and develop young innovators.

An ICT innovator, Geoffrey Magila expressed the wish that the government assists them in securing markets in what they develop, and being able to register their own companies.

At present young innovators are compelled to use some big companies to market their innovative ICT products, he said, explaining this situation as due to lack of funds to participate in competitions of ICT tenders and auctions.

"We started being trusted by local mobile phone companies after we developed an application for a Malaysian based mobile company—AIS. We developed a system which enables them to safely keep information of their over 50 million customers,"

the innovator underlined.

The government earmarked 874m/- for development of innovators in various technological fields in the 2020/2021 financial year.

This initiative is a continuation of efforts to identify and develop technology innovators, with 231 technologies created by local youth recognized and entered in the national database.

However, during the 2019/2020 financial year, the government identified and supported 1,066 technology innovators, with 130 further assisted to enable their innovations enter the market, officials said.

There are still challenges in the collection of data from young innovators at village and ward level, a situation which contributes to insufficient understanding of technology and innovation, they added.

TRA registers record monthly tax payment

FROM PAGE 1

The taxman used the opportunity to announce that starting this month, TRA head offices will send inspection teams to check on the issuing of receipts and Electronic Fiscal Devices (EFD) to facilitate fair assessment of taxes paid countrywide.

"As we all know fair assessment of tax derives from record keeping which is the use of receipts. This is very important and should be taken into consideration by any development loving individual," he emphasised.

Dr Mhede appealed to taxpayers to demand receipts as doing so isn't a request but a legal requirement.

Out of eight big regions in tax collection Dodoma had performed very well by collecting more than 17bn/-, he remarked.

The second region for the category was Kariakoo, registering above 113-percent collections from the previous, such that TRA was now working to boost infrastructure for tax payment in the region.

He said, however, that there are

challenges in complying with TRA officers and in the use of EFDs by taxpayers.

Treasury Permanent Secretary Doto James said TRA has been doing even better since the fifth government came into office, noting that the increase in collection stems from scrupulous observation of provisions of the Finance Act.

With the New Year, the government will be more proactive to take action on those who will not be issuing receipts, he declared.

President Magufuli has on several occasions challenged TRA to work on expanding the tax base from the current 2.7 percent of the population, on the premise that TRA has the ability to persuade more Tanzanians to pay tax by formalizing their income generating activities, which requires TRA creating an enabling environment.

Tanzania's current tax base stands at 12.8 per cent for a population of nearly 60 million, compared to Kenya with an 18.5 percent tax base against a population of 40 million, experts affirm.



Mining deputy minister Prof. Shukrani Manywa talks with artisanal gold miners at Handali in Chamwino, Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Minister: Stop vaccination tenders with private firms

FROM PAGE 1

Mipa village in Kishapu District, the minister said that the pastoralists queried why some animals died and others developed tumours after being put to vaccination by experts from private companies.

"District councils will no longer be allowed to use traders to vaccinate livestock; councils should use certified ministry experts to vaccinate the livestock. If you have entered into contracts with the traders then nullify them as soon as possible," he ordered, saying further that the government "cannot pay

with people's minds like this, we cannot sit here and watch our animals dying due to improper vaccination," he emphasised.

He also visited the Mhunze cattle auction grounds where he directed the Kishapu District Executive Director (DED) to suspend the auctioning accountant, Athanas Musiba over poor supervision.

The minister said the accountant failed to document the actual number of livestock entering the auction area, thus denying the government its required revenues.

"This accountant is not honest, he has been violating the work's ethics,

for example when a person passes here with five goats, he writes three. This behavior cannot be tolerated, so I want him removed from the position because he has failed to deliver," he told the DED.

DED Emmanuel Johnson assured the minister that he is going to implement the directive, noting that he will engage the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) to investigate the allegations for further measures.

Traders at the auction grounds urged the minister to help them as they are usually forbidden to take their animals out of the auction

area before 6pm, exposing them to danger owing to an increase of hyenas in the area.

Responding, the minister directed the auction ground officials to find a way that will facilitate needs of herders and the local authorities.

"Sit down and think on the best way to help the herders and traders, as putting them here for many hours is pointless. If a trader has completed his or her activities, they can be inspected and allowed to go instead of waiting until 6pm to release them. This is not fair," he declared.

Ndaki who was accompanied by

deputy minister Pauline Gekul also inspected the construction of a modern slaughterhouse whose cost is put at 5.5bn/-, where he said that 5.1bn/- has already been spent and the project had reached 97 percent implementation.

"Once completed in February, the building will enable slaughtering 500 cattle and 1000 goats and sheep," he stated, describing it as one of the best projects aimed at improving the livestock sector.

He also directed the National Ranching Company (NARCO) to take up operations of livestock farms under the ministry so as to

develop them commercially.

Last July, the government launched a national vaccination campaign against 13 major livestock diseases in a move aimed at protecting the animals, with targeted diseases including foot and mouth disease, rabies and Rift Valley fever.

Tanzania has about 33.4 million cattle, 21.29 million goats and 5.65 million sheep on the basis of available statistics, showing that the livestock sector grew by 5 percent in 2019 and contributed 7.4 percent to the gross domestic product.



Energy minister Dr. Medard Kalemani (2nd R) inspects an electricity plant at Bulyanhuru substation in Kahama District, Shinyanga Region yesterday. Right is supervisor Amos Ashel. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Three dies after being hit by lightning in Kigoma Region

By Correspondent Deogratius Nsokolo, Kibondo

THREE people at the village of Kitahana in Kibondo District, Kigoma Region have died after being hit by lightning strikes following heavy rains in the area.

Kibondo District Administrative Secretary (DAS) Ayoub Sebabili said one of the deceased has been identified and buried but the remaining two were yet to be identified with their bodies being kept at the Kibondo District Hospital.

He also said that the heavy rains have also left 33 families homeless in the district's Kibingo village, Rusohoko Ward after their houses were destroyed by the heavy rains that were accompanied by strong winds.

Kibondo's DAS said three people were injured in the incident saying that the district is currently needing immediate support of both shelter and food assistance so as to help the victims.

According to him, the district's disaster committee had already started receiving assistance from various stakeholders.

Kibingo Village Chairman Mawazo

Gwahiye said the 15 minutes rain brought about much destruction of peoples properties and farms.

Leonia Marco, one of the victims said when the incident happened they were in the field but when they returned back home they found their house collapsed.

"I am grateful that all my children are safe after being rescued by neighbors. We are begging for the government's support as the situation is very bad in the village, we just need somewhere to stay considering that this is the planting season where people need to work in their farms," she said.

Roman Catholic Development Organization 'Caritas' has provided emergency human support including clothes and cash for the victims.

Caritas Director in Kigoma Region Benedict Gwimo said after the incident he received a request from the district's disaster committee where he immediately consulted the Bishop of the Catholic Church in Kigoma Diocese, Rev Joseph Mlola who agreed to extend the support.

Mabula instructs DEDs to manage well land departments in their areas

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development, Angeline Mabula, has instructed District Executive Directors (DEDs) across the country to ensure that they improve and supervise well land departments in their areas so as to enable them deliver required outcomes.

According to her, majority of the district leaders have been abandoning the

important departments, something which leads to workers of the departments to work in difficult environments.

In her meeting with leaders and workers of the land sector in Coast Region on Thursday, Mabula said that there were some directors who have been treating land departments as not part of the council thus leaving them unattended.

She was on a special tour to visit implementation

of various projects under the National Housing Corporation (NHC).

"Since the government decided to transfer land officers to the Ministry of Land and not district councils, the directors have taken this as an excuse which is not fair, these land departments compliments various development plans of the districts, so they should be supervised and served as other departments," Mabula said.

According to her, the gov-

ernment's order which was issued and distributed to the Regional Administrative Secretaries (RASS) clearly stated that the role of the Ministry of Lands to the employees of the department will be in terms of policy, employment and discipline but management issues will continue to remain under the council directors.

The deputy minister wanted the DEDs to change and start serving the land departments by allocating those departments with a

sufficient budget as well as equipment required in land planning so as to enable the staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

He further called on the district directors to capacitate the land departments with enough tools and budget so as to enable them to collect all chronic land tax debts in various areas.

She said that the Coast Region alone is claiming 32.8bn/- in land tax from various debtors and stressed that if the land

departments are properly empowered they can raise more revenues which will in turn help implement various development projects.

Denis Masamia, Head of Tax Unit in the ministry said that despite various strategies put by the government to improve land collections; there is still a huge task to achieve the goals.

He urged all land officials and staff to increase efforts, work in a team so

as to achieve the 200bn/- collections target for the year 2020/21.

In another development, deputy minister Mabula visited and inspected the construction of the office of the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) for East Zone in Kibaha District which is implemented by the NHC.

She commended NHC for the job well done but emphasized them to ensure that the project is completed on time.

KIA infrastructure improvement sees increasing visitors

By Guardian Correspondent, Hai

A 35 million Euro support from the Netherland government to renovate Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) has uplifted the face of the facility and enabled it receive one million passengers in the just ended year.

The changes made to the airport have attracted tourists from various countries to visit Tanzania.

Speaking on the new look by the airport, the acting Managing Director for the Kilimanjaro Airport Development Authority (KADCO) Christine Mwakatobe said currently the airport has an international look after the renovation.

"We have done some renovations on landing and parking ways as well as loading ways which have now met the required standards to let the airport operate fully," he said.

Mwakatobe said as of now the airport is more attractive because there are huge placards of the country's tourist's attraction features such as Mount Kilimanjaro and Serengeti national park.

According to the official, despite the outbreak of CoronaVirus the airport received 127,000 passengers adding that if not for the virus they have gone beyond the one million numbers to 1.5 million passengers.

The airport recently received five planes belonging to a group of billionaires who visited the country at a time. The billionaires arrived in the country in December last year and spent their days at the Ngorongoro, Manyara and Serengeti national parks.

He added that despite the increase in the number of people who come in private planes, the number of passengers who come by public airlines has also increased.

He named the airlines that bring passengers to KIA as (Royal Dutch Airlines, KLM), Ethiopian Airline, Qatar Airline, RwandAir, Uganda Air and Emirates.

Geographically KIA is the best connecting point for flights flying from terminals located in Zambia, Malawi, Congo-DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi heading to overseas destinations of Asia, Europe and the far East.

The airport was also installed with new airfield ground lighting and floodlights along the aprons, resurface the runways, and create continuous loop linking runways and taxiways to eliminate delays in landing and take-off.

Despite its modest size, Kilimanjaro International can handle aircrafts as large as Boeing 747s and Antonov 124s and features the largest aircraft hangar in East and Central Africa.

Before the pandemic, the airport was handling 15 international scheduled airlines with a number of other ad-hoc private and commercial chartered planes, Kilimanjaro Airport lists 1.2 million passengers per year, with over 45 percent of travelers being international passengers, 38 percent domestic and 17 percent transit.



Head of Information and Technology University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Mussa Kisaka briefs Communication and Information minister Dr. Faustine Ndugulile (L) on IT innovations undertaken by the university. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Minister orders NCC to resolve dispute with Mikumi-Ifakara road contractor

By Guardian Reporter

MINISTER for Works and Transport, Dr Leonard Chamuriho, has instructed the National Construction Council (NCC) to find solution to a contract dispute with the contractor implementing section of the Mikumi-Ifakara road.

Dr Chamuriho urged the officials to meet with their counterparts from the Finance and Planning

Minister to see how part of the road (66.9 kilometers) from Kidatu to Ifakara will be completed.

He was speaking here yesterday soon after inspecting the progress implementation of the project. He was concerned that such delays affect people's development especially farmers who depend on the road to transport their crops.

"The ongoing conflicts between stakeholders overse-

ing the project implementation have largely contributed to its delay. We want the remained section of the road to be completed as soon as possible," said Dr Chamuriho.

He also directed the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) to make sure all the agreements to be reached at the meeting are implemented accordingly.

TANROADS Manager in Morogoro Region, Eng Nkolante Ntije assured the minister

that all the challenges will be worked on to ensure completion of the road. He promised to submit a report on the project implementation in the coming weeks.

During his tour, the minister also inspected construction of the Dumila-kilosa-Mikumi road and a section of the Rudewa-Kilosa road (km24).

Dr Chamuriho expressed satisfaction with its implementations urging

contractors to make sure the roads are handed over to the government within the agreed period.

The two road projects are implemented by a local construction firm-'Umoja -Kilosa JV'.

The project's supervisor, Eng Robert Mwita said that despite the various challenges including the ongoing rains, the project is expected to be completed by August this year.



Energy minister Dr Medard Kalemani talks with Nyangalata small miners, where he assured them that the government will connect the area to the power grid.. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu.



Fire and Rescue Force members listen to the Administrative and Finance Commissioner, Mbaraka Semwanza (not in the picture) during the Workers' Council meeting in Dodoma yesterday. . Photo: Guardian Correspondent



The mining officer of Mirerani, Fabian Mshai talks with tanzanite stakeholders yesterday, in a meeting officiated by Simanjiro District Commissioner Zephania Chaula (seated, on his left). Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey



Primary school pupils along with secondary school students learning science subject practically at the Tanga Science Centre yesterday. .Photo: Correspondent Bonface Gideon



Dodoma Majengo market vice chairman Abdallah Mzemchawi (R) listens to complains from representatives of vendors of vegetables and fruits who trade their edibles outside the market, at a meeting held yesterday



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development deputy minister Dr. Angeline Mabula inspects Tanzania Forest Services Agency eastern zone offices situated in Kibaha in Coast region yesterday. Right is National Housing Corporation (NHC) community services and relations manager Muungano Saguya. Photo: Munir Shemweta



Zanzibar President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi joins sports groups to march from Mapinduzi Square towards Amaan Stadium yesterday. Left is First Vice President Seif Sharif Hamad and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Zuberi Ali Maulid. Photo: State House



Tigo ambassador Lucas Mhavile 'Joti' (R) hands over Itel T20 mobile phone to the winner of 'Jaza TukuJaze Tena', promotion Amina Rajab at a ceremony held in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Left is Meena Ally who is also ambassador of the campaign. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

State donates 246 mil/- for building more classrooms

By Guardian Correspondent, Rorya

RORYA district council in Mara Region has received 246,600,000/- from the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government to complete construction of 14 classrooms.

Out of the classrooms, seven are for primary schools and seven are for secondary schools.

The District Commissioner Saimon Odunga called upon citizens to contribute in the exercise saying the classrooms are expected to be used in this year.

"We commend the government for this gesture we believe that this will go a long way into facilitating the finalisation of the exercise," he said.

He named some of the secondary schools which have benefited from the support as Butiama, Bukama, Ngasaro and Adam Malima.

The DC said there was need for residents to contribute in the exercise saying the government alone cannot manage.

The DC said contributing would help in ensuring that when schools open all classrooms will be in a good environment for learning.

Last year, a total of 58,699 who passed the Primary School Leaving Examinations in 2019 were not selected to join Form One in 2020 due to lack of

classrooms.

The affected pupils were from 13 regions with Kigoma having 12,092 pupils who have not been selected and were required to wait until the classrooms are constructed.

The government directed all the respective regions with the affected pupils to make sure that the classrooms have been constructed by the end of February 2020.

The government of Tanzania funds free education up to Form Four.

In December 2020, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa directed regional and district authorities to reinforce efforts and make sure that all classroom construction projects are completed by February 28, next year so as to accommodate form one students who missed vacancies in the first selection.

Majaliwa wanted the leaders to fast track the completion of the classrooms and thus facilitate learning to the students.

The Premier admitted that thousands of children in various regions have missed the chance to join form one in January due to shortage of classrooms.

He also assured children who have missed out on the first selection that the government was working hard to make sure the construction of classrooms is completed on time for them to join secondary education in February.

VP to grace 7th Z'bar trade fair

By Guardian Reporter

VICE President Samia Suluhu Hassan is expected to grace the 7th Zanzibar Trade Fair which will bring over 340 exhibitors from inside and outside the country from January 4 to 15, this year.

According to the acting Trade and Industrial Development minister, Mudrik Ramadhani Soraga, the festival will be held at the Maisara grounds in the Isles involving various items ranging from agriculture, food and beverages, textiles and handicrafts, cosmetics as well as machineries.

He also said that the festival will also set up a platform for promoting the Blue Economy as well as having a special creative day aimed at showcasing the talents of entrepreneurs.

The trade fair will also feature cultural activities, wildlife animals and different entertainment groups throughout the occasion," he added.

He emphasized that the trade fair is important in promoting business therefore people should tap the opportunity in advancing themselves economically.

He has called for business people and companies in the country to utilize the opportunity to promote their products and thus attract new markets in the East African region.

He said that one of the objectives of the festival is to provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs and traders to meet and advertise their products and services locally and abroad in order to find reliable markets.

"This is another opportunity for entrepreneurs, business people, farmers and service providers from both private and public sectors to show, display, and sell their products. I encourage them to participate in this important event," he added.

According to him, in the last year's trade fair, a total of 398 traders and entrepreneurs from inside and outside Tanzania took part and it was estimated that sales during the event reached 955m/-.

"We expect that the Vice President Samia will officiate the Trade Fair on January 6, this year," Soraga added.

Recently, Zanzibar President Hussein Mwinyi said that his government is determined to bring about a revolution in the economy by developing the blue economy as well as strengthening service sectors including tourism, the pillar of Isles economic growth.

He spoke at a function organised by CRDB Bank for senior government officials and members of the House of Representatives at Verde Hotel grounds.

He said that blue economy is a flagship sector for the eighth phase government with deep-sea fishing, fish farming and fish processing as key areas for serious investments to support struggling fishing communities.

The government is keen to explore extensive marine resources in the Isles special economic zone, which is a fertile area for pirate fishing activities," he said.

Deputy minister calls for collaboration with PWDs

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Labour, Youth, Employment and Person with Disabilities (PWDs) Umy Nderiananga has called upon leaders of the associations of people with disabilities to work closely with the government in ensuring development of the special group.

She made the statement in Temeke District, Dar es Salaam Region during her meeting with leaders of the associations of people with disabilities which was aimed to discuss and suggest ways to improve service provision to the disabled.

She said people with disabilities across the country face various challenges, hence the need for concerted efforts to end them. She said the government values the disabled that's why it has been

working closely with their associations.

"As leaders, you are main responsibilities are to work on the challenges facing people with disabilities; you also need to work closely with the government to improve their welfare," said the Deputy Minister.

Nderiananga said the fifth phase government has been giving priority on citizen's challenges including finding lasting solutions.

The Deputy Minister challenged the leaders to establish projects that would enable PWDs to generate income. She said that PWDs are capable of doing a number of jobs including supervision of economic-viable projects.

She however called upon social welfare development officers at District levels to make sure that people with disabilities benefit with the low interest loans aimed

for special groups including women and youth. She said the law requires that 2 percent of the loans to be given to PWDs.

She urged the officers to prepare an arrangement that will enable PWDs to easily access the loans.

"There should be an arrangement for PWDs; they should not follow the normal loan application procedures since they require a special care compared to other applicants," she said.

Nderiananga underscored the need for loan beneficiaries to repay them on time for the monies to be given to other loan applicants.

"These monies are given for free, you must repay the loans to enable the districts to provide loans to many people," she added noting that Temeke District has been doing well in loan provision to the PWDs, women and youth.

Temeke District Commissioner, Godwin Gondwe said they have working on the various challenges facing PWDs through the newly established 'One Stop Jawabu' desk.

Gondwe said the district has been prioritizing issuance of loans to the special groups to enable them establish income generating activities as well as improving their welfare.

"Other districts are learning from us; we have giving loan to women (4 percent), youth (4 percent) and PWDs (2 percent). This has really helped to improve their economic wellbeing," said DC Gondwe.

Temeke District Executive Director, Lubilo Mwakabibi promised to continue working on the directives from the Prime Minister's office as well as finding solutions to the challenges facing PWDs.



Information, Culture, Arts and Sports minister Innocent Bashungwa (R) accompanied by Karagwe District Commissioner Godfrey Mheruka and Kayanga business community members look at business kiosks destroyed by fire recently. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

TAWA castigates misleading reports

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THE Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) has strongly castigated misleading reports going the rounds saying it has violated animals' rights by killing a lion while other fierce animals were left to create havoc in the communities, including elephants that killed three people in different areas in December last year.

The remarks were given here by TAWA's senior officer responsible for controlling fierce and destructive wildlife, Wilbright Munuo when speaking to reporters on the importance of wildlife protection that

ought to go in tandem with the protection of human rights and lives against wildlife.

He said due to the habit by fierce wildlife causing havoc to the communities, in December last year alone three people were killed in Nzega, Tunduru and Monduli districts.

Munuo said TAWA's decision to kill the lion at Ngwala village in Songwe District was aimed to save the lives of the people but it has been viewed as violators of wildlife rights while the decision was in accordance to Wildlife Conservation Act (No 5 of 2009).

He said the Act recognises the impor-

tance in the protection of human lives and their property against fierce animals and that TAWA employs various means to control such animals which enter people's settlements including the use of firearms. He said in order to boost human lives protection, TAWA was forced to move the animals back to the reserves whereby in December last year a total of 993 incidents of animals invading people's settlements were reported at TAWA centres, adding that 36 lions were also sent back to the reserves.

He said in May 2017 four elephants who invaded the University of Dodoma

(UDOM) were returned to the reserve without having caused any harm to the people, and in January and February last year.

He said TAWA in collaboration with the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) was able to shift 35 lions that had killed more than 100 cattle in the villages of Kwitete, Makundusi, Ihara, Robanda, Pakinyigoti, Nichoka and Bokore in Serengeti District Mara Region.

"It must be understood that TAWA performs its duties by abiding by the laws, professionally while taking into consideration human lives," Munuo said.

Z'bar president nominates Zena Ahmed Said as Chief Secretary

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has appointed Zena Ahmed Said as Chief Secretary becoming the first woman to ever hold such a position.



A statement circulated to the media on Thursday stated that Zena (pictured) will be sworn-in today at the Zanzibar State House. She takes over from Dr Abdulhamid Yahya Mzee who has retired.

The former Chief Secretary had previously worked with the retired presidents, Amani Abeid Karume and Dr Ali Mohamed Shein. He has also worked with President Mwinyi for almost two months.

Before her new appointment, Zena worked as the Permanent Secretary in the Energy ministry in Tanzania mainland and served as the Regional Administrative Sec-

retary in Tanga.

Commenting, Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) director in Zanzibar, Dr Mzuri Issa commended President Mwinyi for prioritising women to hold various leadership posts within the government.

"We are happy for a woman to hold such a position since it has been dominated by males. We are all aware that such a post requires a competent experienced individual," added Dr Issa.

She said that Zanzibaris have confidence with the President taking into consideration that he has been a public service servant for several years. She said they are expecting him to bring about changes in public service system as well as ensuring discipline and timely submission of reports.

"Women are capable of leading and bringing development changes," she added.

When announcing his cabinet last year, Dr Mwinyi said he will appoint leaders basing on their capabilities, insisting to consider gender as well as education qualifications when appointing individuals to hold different positions in the Zanzibar government.



Tanzanite filtration groups of Naisinyai in Simanjiro, Manyara Region who registered for the training of safety at work places conducted by Haki Madini on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Ban on illegal fishing is sustainable - minister

By Guardian Correspondent, Busega

Livestock and Fisheries minister Mashimba Ndaki has said the ministry has mobilised itself to ensure that the ban on illegal fishing is sustainable.

The minister gave the remarks yesterday during a visit in Simiyu Region, adding that illegal fishing was not beneficial and that the government was capable of arresting all those involving themselves in illegal fishing.

He said the ministry will ensure the control of illegal fishing is inclusive and should bear positive results, and not by

merely impounding illegal fishing gear from fishermen.

He said the ministry has also mobilised itself to provide big contribution to the national income through livestock and fisheries sectors.

He said there was no reason for a herder and fisherman to continue being poor while both produce ample raw materials needed in local processing industries.

Submitting report on the performance of the livestock and fisheries sector for Simiyu Region on behalf of the Regional Administrative Secretary,

Eng Mashaka Luhamba said a total of 282.33m/- has been collected in all six councils in the region from levies charged on fish and its products via licensing, fines for various offences in accordance with the law.

Eng Luhamba also cited challenges that included lake pirates attacking fishermen while fishing, robbing of the gears including nets and outboard motors and in some cases they even get killed.

He cited other challenges as including lack of working tools, shortage of staff in the livestock and fisheries sec-

tor and shortage of drinking water for livestock.

The government launched Operation Sangara in the 2016/2017 fiscal year which aimed at taming illegal fishing in the country's water bodies has boosted government revenue earnings.

The operation resulted in increased revenues to about 2.2bn/- between December 2017 and November 2018.

According to the ministry the revenues are an enormous from the previous annual average of 457 million/- collected during the same period in 2016/2017.



Mati Super Brands Ltd workers of Babati in Manyara Region celebrate to welcome the New Year 2021 yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Singida police holding nine over theft of items from govt institutions

By Guardian Correspondent, Singida

POLICE in Singida Region have detained nine people for theft of various items including electrical items, water taps circuit breakers, bolts and copper wire belonging to Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO) and Singida Urban Water and Sanitation Authority (SUWASA).

Singida Regional Police Commander, Sweetbert Njewike the actual value of the goods was still not known, but said he couldn't reveal the names of the suspects as investigations were still going on, adding that many more suspects were being sought.

He said all the suspects together with the stolen goods were nabbed in a special operation in various areas in the region between December 30 and 31 last year.

RPC Njewike said three incidents out of four happened on December

30 when the suspects were found with some of the items stored in their houses in Ukombozi, Minga and Ng'aida in Singida Town.

In the fourth incident, he said, the suspects were found with the stolen items at Manguamitogho area as they were moving the items from Sepuka REA Project using a vehicle with Reg. No. T 446 AYC owned by Ngiheco Electrical Contractors Ltd, based in Arusha Region.

"Initial investigations have shown that the suspects, in one way or another are engaged in the scrap metal trade, they steal the essential equipment for national development to sell them as scrap metal," said the RPC.

He called on all the people to continue cooperating with the police by providing information whenever they see signs for the commission of theft, including those engaged in stealing metal items from government institutions.

South Sudan floods displace million people as hunger and diseases loom

JUBA

NEARLY a million people in the country have been displaced or isolated for months by the worst flooding in memory, with the intense rainy season a sign of climate change.

The waters washed away crops, swamping roads and worsening hunger and disease in the young nation struggling to recover from civil war. Now famine is a threat.

On a recent visit to the Old Fangak area in hard-hit Jonglei state, parents spoke of walking for hours in chest-deep water to find food and health care as malaria and diarrhoeal diseases spread.

Regina Nyakol Piny, a mother of nine, now lives in a primary school in the village of Wangchot after their home was swamped.

"We don't have food here, we rely only on UN humanitarian agencies or by collecting firewood and selling it," she said. "My children get sick because of the floodwaters, and there is no medical service in this place."

She said she eagerly waits for peace to return to the country, with the belief that medical services will follow "that will be even enough for us".

Children use buckets to clear muddy floodwater from a dyke in the village One of her nieces, Nyankun Dhoal, delivered her seventh child into a world of water in November.

"I feel very tired and my body feels really weak," she said. One of her breasts was swollen, and her baby had rashes. She wishes for food, and for plastic sheeting so that

she and her family can stay dry.

The mud sucks at people's feet as they engage in the daily struggles to hold back the waters and find something to eat.

Nyaduothe Kun, a mother of five, said the floods destroyed her family's crops and life has been a struggle for months, with people selling their prized cattle to buy food that is never enough.

The family eats just two meals a day and the adults often go to bed on empty stomachs, she said. She has begun collecting water lilies and wild fruits for food.

She said she had little knowledge of the coronavirus pandemic ravaging other parts of the world and spreading largely undetected in poorly resourced South Sudan.

"There are many diseases living among us, so we can't figure out if

it's coronavirus or not," she said.

Instead, she fears that the makeshift water dyke around their home could collapse at any time, flooding the young children.

"Our children die in our hands"

The chief of Wangchot village, James Diang, made the decision early during the flooding to send badly affected children to the town centre after several drowned "and everything was being destroyed rapidly."

Now cattle are dying, he said, and survivors have been transported to drier areas.

Remaining residents are eating tree leaves and sometimes fish to survive, he said. Fevers and joint pain are widespread.

When there is no canoe to transport people during times that waters surge, "our children die in

our hands because we are helpless," he said.

He hopes, like everyone, for sustainable peace, and for an improved dyke so the community can have enough dry ground for planting.

The people of South Sudan put their trust in President Salva Kiir and former armed opposition leader Riek Machar to lead during this transition period, "but now they are failing us," said the government's acting deputy director in the area, Kueth Gach Monydot. "We don't have hope, we lost confidence in them."

The situation in Fangak county remains volatile, with almost all of its more than 60 villages affected by the flooding and "no response from the government," he said.

"Do you think they will plan

for other people when they have failed to implement the peace agreement?"

She had been alone at home with her four children. As with many families, her husband was away on duty in another part of the country as a soldier.

She reached the clinic by canoe after an hour of travel, seeking help for her sick child. There, she also received a ration of food.

The MSF project coordinator in Old Fangak, Dorothy I Esonwune, recalled the sight of newly displaced people sheltering under trees without mats, blankets or mosquito nets.

Meanwhile, the charity's mobile clinics were suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic, further complicating efforts to reach sick people stranded by the flooding.

'Over 370,000 children were born on New Year's Day worldwide'

By Guardian Reporter

AN estimated 371,504 babies were born around the world on New Year's Day, according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In total, an estimated 140 million children will be born in 2021. Their average life expectancy is expected to be 84 years.

UNICEF Executive Director, Henrietta Fore said: "The children born today enter a world far different than even a year ago, and a New Year brings a new opportunity to reimagine it. Children born today will inherit the world we begin to build for them—today. Let us make 2021 the year we start to build a fairer, safer, healthier world for children."

2021 will also mark the 75th anniversary of UNICEF.

Over the course of the year, UNICEF and its partners will be commemorating the anniversary with events and announcements celebrating three-quarters of a century of protecting children from conflict, disease and exclusion and championing their right to survival, health and education.

Fore added: "Today, as the world faces a global pandemic, economic slowdown, rising

poverty and deepening inequality, the need for UNICEF's work is as great as ever."

She said for the last 75 years, throughout conflicts, displacements, natural disasters and crises, UNICEF have been there for the world's children.

"As a New Year dawns, we renew our commitment to protect children, to speak up for their rights, and to make sure their voices are heard, no matter where they live," said Fore.

Globally, over half of these births are estimated to take place in 10 countries: India (59,995), China (35,615), Nigeria (21,439), Pakistan (14,161), Indonesia (12,336), Ethiopia (12,006), the United States (10,312), Egypt (9,455), Bangladesh (9,236) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (8,640).

In response to the global pandemic, UNICEF launched the Reimagine campaign, a global effort to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic from becoming a lasting crisis for children.

Through the campaign, UNICEF is issuing an urgent appeal to governments, the public, donors and the private sector to join UNICEF as we seek to respond, recover and reimagine a better, post-pandemic world.



Zanzibar Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman talks with Zanzibar Imams community at his Vuga office yesterday. Photo: SVPO

Africa battles COVID-19 second wave as vaccines expected to delay

By Ronald Kato

AFRICA is seeing a marked increase in Covid-19 cases as a second wave of infections sweeps across the continent.

Despite initial success in containing the pandemic, infections have been growing rapidly in December in a number of countries.

Authorities in 47 African countries have registered an average of 73,000 new COVID-19 infections per week since the end of November compared to an average of 30,000 new weekly cases in October, according to the

World Health Organisation (WHO).

At 2.7 million cases, Africa remains the least affected continent but concern is growing.

It's still difficult to know exactly how widespread coronavirus is on the continent, said the WHO, because testing levels in Africa are low compared to other world regions.

Some of the countries where a surge in cases has been significant include Egypt, and South Africa, whose case tally crossed the one million mark over the

weekend.

Health authorities in the country are worried that festive season travel and gatherings could result in more cases. President Cyril Ramaphosa had declared city and provincial-level lockdowns and restrictions on alcohol sales.

South Africa has also confirmed a new variant of the virus which is highly contagious.

The other countries are Morocco, Tunisia, Ethiopia and Nigeria. To slow down the virus' spread, countries are bringing back measures

such as curfews and bans on parties.

In Uganda, authorities have blamed election campaigns for driving up infections. Uganda is due to hold a general election on January 14 and opposition presidential candidates have been accused of defying a ban on huge gatherings.

The country's electoral commission on Saturday announced that campaign rallies would not be allowed in the capital Kampala and 12 other high population centres.

Vaccines still months away

Most African countries aren't expected to receive Covid-19 vaccine shipments until mid-2021.

Africa needs to secure at least 1.5 billion vaccine doses needed to reach 60 percent of the continent's 1.3 billion people, according to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. That would cost between \$ 7 and \$10bn.

Uganda, Kenya, Namibia have made orders through COVAX, a global facility created to ensure equitable access to vaccines for developing countries.



Tanzania Port Authority acting board chairman Dr. Deliphina Magere (L) hands over Kagunga port to Buhigwe District Commissioner Maiko Ngayalina on behalf of Kigoma Regional Commissioner Thobias Andengeny to implement the directive given by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa. Photo: Correspondent Pendo Thomas

Better control of crops smuggling boosts Ngara District Council revenues

By Guardian Correspondent,

Ngara

CONTROL of unauthorized routes for smuggling of food and cash crops has beefed up Ngara District Council revenues in Kagera Region from 760m/- per year to 1.5bn/-.

This was revealed here mid this week by the District Council Executive Director, R. Bahama when speaking to reporters in his office.

He said by 2016 the Council was collecting 760m/- per year due to traders using unauthorized routes to smuggle out of the country to Rwanda and Burundi cash and food crops thereby denying the council of its actual revenue.

"I formed a team of six people including councillors to identify new sources of council revenues that had not been in operation and found out that if we invest in parking fees for vehicles and charges for vehicles

those travelling to neighbouring countries via Kabanga, Murusagamba and Rusumo borders. We have been able to boost revenues from 760m/- per year to over 1.5bn/-," Bahama said.

He said in 2017 the council collected 940m/- as they increased revenue sources and in the financial year 2018/2019 they collected 1.5bn while the current financial year they expect to collect over 2bn/-.

He said despite challenges in crops smuggling, they still work together with TRA to control it and to ensure Ngara Farmers' Cooperative Union continues to collect its levies through from the crops.

Meanwhile Bahama said the Council has no shortage of classrooms this year but it has ordered building materials - 300 iron sheets and 1,200 bags of cement for the construction of 60 classrooms for secondary schools in preparation for students' enrolment for 2022.

Board asks film makers to go for big screens as piracy war ranges

By Guardian Reporter

FILM makers have been advised to sell their products in big screens to benefit from their work and combat piracy which has derailed the industry's growth for years.

Tanzania Film Board

Executive Secretary Dr Kiagho Kilonzo made the advice earlier this week at the pre-release screening of new film 'Nyara -The Kidnapping'.

According to Dr Kilonzo given the available dynamics and piracy there is no way how film

makers can make money using the old supply chain where films were released on DVDs.

"As government we agreed that we should reignite the culture of cinema going across the country and that meant that local film makers

should make films that fit the requirements of the wide screen," said Dr Kilonzo.

On the challenges of getting the right location for shooting movies he said as long as the correct procedures are followed there should not be any

obstacles.

Nyara -The Kidnapping which was launched on Tuesday this week is an action field film produced by Wanene Entertainment is set and shot at different locations in Dar es Salaam featuring the Dragon Boys.

The Ram Kasongo said it took them three years to shoot the film because they had to get it right given the fact that they wanted to showcase something that the industry has been missing.

The film which cost the

producer in the excess of 200m/- is set to be shown in theatres in Dodoma, Tanga, Arusha, Mwanza, Zanzibar and Mbeya. The director said that the reason why Nyara is starting at the Cinema is because of the new arrangements that were

put in place by the TFB.

According to the new arrangement the cinema gets 50 per cent of the revenue whereas 40 per cent goes to filmmaker and 10 per cent is retained by the film board.

SATURDAY 2 JANUARY 2021

**Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995**

Curbing land conflicts: Mapping out grazing areas a positive move

THOSE who live in fairly peaceful parts of the country might fail to understand reports that Simanjiro district has been handling more than 1000 serious land occupancy disputes each year, often within a situation of actual physical scuffles. These numbers aren't constant but each year has similar numbers, rising or falling as a matter of circumstances, but land use contentions seem to be evenly spread in all 17 wards of the district. It isn't a question of how individuals behave there, but an environmental matter first.

Simanjiro District Commissioner Zephania Chaula expressed the view that the Manyara Region district leads in numbers of serious land conflicts in the community overall. That could well be the case, but he didn't talk about cattle rustling, which means there are areas where Simanjiro has fewer sources of violence than their cattle rearing counterparts in Mara region for instance. It even became necessary to create a special police region for Tarime, when administrative efforts to contain the clashes and put off those fires proved difficult. Administrators use participatory methods, and in such cases they mostly fail.

Measures are being taken to sort out the visible part of the problem, its outer layer so to speak, as to where the boundary is supposed to pass between one village and another, or one grazing lot and another. It is a layer because at the core of the conflict is an environmental and resource sharing situation, where scarcity makes it ideal that one contending party wouldn't be there. But the other party isn't in a position to actually remove the rival side from the scene, so it resorts to widening own territory to that of

another.

Assuming that both parties respect organs of the state, mapping out grazing land between villages and even within villages helps to reduce the problem as the pretext or where the boundary passes would not be available for trespassing into someone else's grazing zone. But this works to the extent that the concerned parties don't wish to clash with government authorities in the zone, which isn't always the case. When livestock are left to feed on crops in many districts around the country, the problem there isn't boundaries.

In that case mapping out livestock rearing zones per village and portions of villages is helpful to at least remove that pretext, and when participatory instances like village meetings are still around and have the authority to order villagers what to do, it works. The trouble is when such arrangements have long since failed and unsettled people from other districts or elsewhere invade or stream into an area seasonally, and they rely on their own weapons, ability to sort things out at a remand prison. Violence breeds corruption.

The DC was officiating at a ceremony to present "demarcated and secured certificates for customary rights of occupancy for grazing areas," given to seven villages of the district. It is possible as the DC said at the occasion that these customary land certificates are an ultimate solution to the perennial land occupancy conflicts haunting Simanjiro residents, but it may as well be too optimistic. Grazing lands differ in terms of their proximity to water, good grass or other needs; asking for right to pass isn't easy. The DC must set out means of solving, by consultation, auxiliary problems, not just rely on certificates.

Human rights based conservation key to protect, conserve biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety and variability of life on Earth. Biodiversity is typically a measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem level. Terrestrial biodiversity is usually greater near the equator, which is the result of the warm climate and high primary productivity. Biodiversity is not distributed evenly on Earth, and is richer in the tropics. These tropical forest ecosystems cover less than 10 per cent of earth's surface, and contain about 90 per cent of the world's species.

Marine biodiversity is usually higher along coasts in the Western Pacific, where sea surface temperature is highest, and in the mid-latitude band in all oceans. There are latitudinal gradients in species diversity. Biodiversity generally tends to cluster in hotspots, and has been increasing through time, but will be likely to slow in the future.

The world is facing an ongoing sixth mass extinction. To curb this human-caused loss of global biodiversity, many countries have made commitments to protect and conserve large areas of land in the coming decades. But the fate of the Indigenous peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendants who live on these lands remains unclear.

A new study conducted by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) in collaboration with the Campaign for Nature addresses the risks these groups face from exclusionary conservation measures and urges

decision-makers to adopt rights-based conservation approaches.

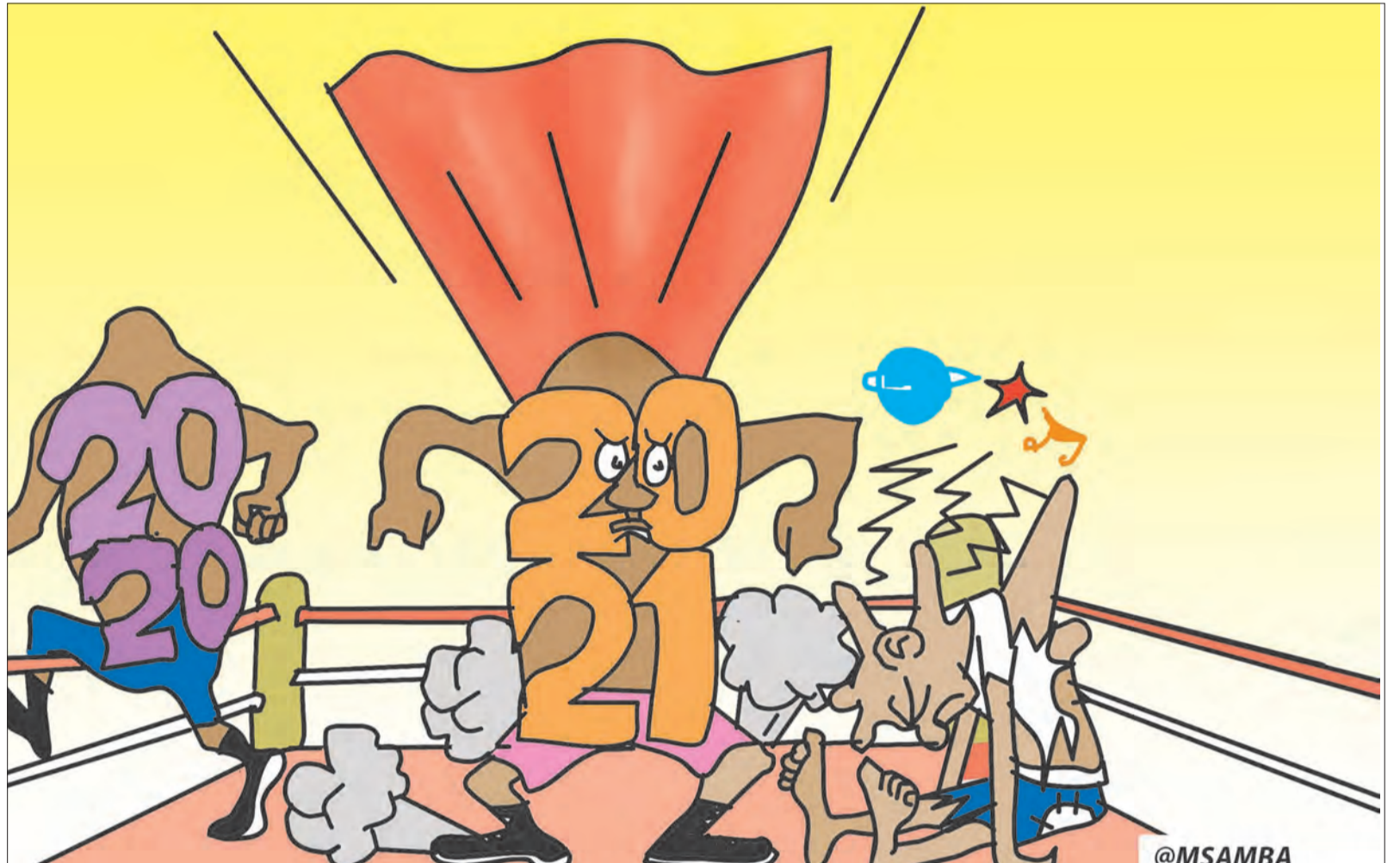
Safeguarding at least 30 per cent of Earth's land surface by 2030 is a goal in the current draft of the U.N.'s Convention on Biological Diversity post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework.

More than 1.65 billion Indigenous peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendants who live in what are referred to as "important biodiversity conservation areas" or areas that scientists say need protection to prevent biodiversity collapse.

Past approaches to creating protected areas have involved relocating people or banning access and traditional use of land from its historical inhabitants. An estimated 136 million people have been displaced in the process of formally protecting land. Using these historical models to expand conservation would be "highly contentious, prohibitively expensive and come with human rights costs that will fuel land conflicts," the report says.

The report stresses the capacity of Indigenous peoples to manage and conserve ecosystems and biodiversity effectively through techniques such as Indigenous fire management, which leads to reduced deforestation.

This new study builds on the findings of a 2018 study by RRI, "Cornered by Protected Areas," which documents human rights abuses, displacements and militarised violence committed in the name of conservation and biodiversity protection.



China and the end of poverty: Implications for Africa

By Charles Onunaiju

Just last November, China's South West province of Guizhou announced that its last nine impoverished counties have been lifted out of absolute poverty, which translated that all registered impoverished counties and areas in the world's most populous country have shaken off the pangs of poverty.

This is ten years ahead of the United Nations hypothetical deadline for lifting all humanity out of poverty, outlined in the 2020 Agenda for sustainable development. The average annual net income of the formerly extreme poor people in these counties was reported to have risen to about 1,740 USD, well above the national poverty line.

Crossing the finish line of lifting China's 1.4 billion people out of poverty well above the poverty line defined by the World Bank is momentous and quite significant beyond the border of the Peoples Republic of China. The country's poverty alleviation measures and drive towards the end of poverty was not simply built on raising the incomes of poor people but in giving them a solid foothold to meaningful livelihood.

In designing the pathway to poverty elimination the governing Communist Party of China, CPC, has outlined "two no worries" and "three guarantees" which spelt out that the fundamental criteria to measure poverty elimination must consist that poor people must not worry about food and clothing (two worries) and should be guaranteed compulsory education for their children, basic medical care and safe housing accommodation, (three guarantees).

The core criteria for assessing poverty elimination means that in addition to having sufficient income, China does not consider people to be out of poverty until they have enough food and clothing, guaranteed basic health care, access to compulsory education, and safe housing. Against the background of these vital fundamentals, the end of poverty in China despite being a milestone and epochal, acquires immense global significance and more especially for Africa, where poverty remains the most existential and potent threats to social and political stability.

China's end of poverty feat is even more significant, when it is understood that the final battle against the scourge was launched in 2013, at the assumption of the



leadership of the party and state by President Xi Jinping, who is also the general secretary of the Communist Party of China, CPC. As at then, about 100 million Chinese were still mired in extreme poverty and President Xi Jinping who himself has suffered the cruel hands of poverty took upon himself to lead the battle against the scourge that has tormented China, for millennia.

A third of his provincial visits were reported to be, to the villages and communities most ravaged by poverty and talking to poor people himself and engaging party cadres and government officials deployed to oversee the poverty reduction and elimination drive were his most passionate domestic endeavor.

On average about 10 million and more people were lifted out of poverty since 2013 and at the start of this year, only about 5.3 million people were still under the pangs of poverty. Even with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, President Xi Jinping who has always insisted that poverty relief work should be as "meticulous like doing embroidery", rather than akin to "killing fleas with a hand-grenade," restated the party and government's abiding and solemn commitment towards eliminating poverty before the end of 2020.

That intention was ultimately expected to

launch the country, into a "moderately prosperous society in all respects," well before the one hundred year anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China in July 2021.

Just last month, the party and the government honoured its solemn pledge to lift all Chinese rural impoverished residents out of poverty, the first of its kind in all human history and achieved within the shortest time. The final push to end poverty actually commenced in 2013, when the President Xi Jinping went to Shibadong, a village of mainly Miao ethnic minority in the mountains of China's central Hunan province.

There, he outlined the framework of targeted poverty alleviation and vowed to see the end of poverty in his massive country. Following this a national road map and action plan which consisted in identifying all impoverished people and the factors that led to their poverty were enumerated.

The enumeration resulted in each household or individual being given a customised poverty relief plan which consisted in getting help to start a small business, relocating families from inhospitable mountainous areas and receiving training to find job in the cities. And to accomplish this, a national system to keep track of progress and ensure

the measures were having the desired effect was designed.

To ensure that the broad roadmap and specifics of the national poverty relief did not derail, President Xi Jinping put the totality of the unified leadership of the party and its 90 million members to work. Nearly three million party cadres and public sector officials were sent from the cities and towns to villages to fight poverty at the frontline.

China still has some acute challenges to resolve, especially caused by inadequate and unbalanced development. It also has the onerous task to improve follow-up support for people minted freshly out of poverty to ensure that they are able to settle down, stayed employed, and become wealth creators.

The key implications of the end of poverty in China for the rest of the world, especially for Africa is that poverty is not a destiny to be accepted as faith but a social scourge that can be eliminated with requisite political will, focused and consistent policy framework. China's poverty relief trajectories and triumph might be a tough act to follow which was made possible by a disciplined party of integrity, unwavering in its historic mission of "serving the people whole-heartedly" and an abiding commitment to "putting the people first."

The author Charles Onunaiju is research director, Centre for China Studies

What lawyers say on road traffic victims needing compensation

By Correspondent James Kandoya

LACK of knowledge on how to deal with insurance benefits and compensation pose a big challenge and setback to victims as opposed to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Act.

Advocate of the High Court, John Seka says that the existing legal framework is still a big challenge as it has no specific laws that indicate the specific amount of money to be paid to victims of road crashes as compensation.

As a result the 'Law of Torts' is used as alternative law in courts to settle matters relating to compensation, he specifies, meaning law relating to general issues of error on the part someone, but without a coherent legal cadre.

Seka, a former president of the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) says such loopholes give insurers the option to negotiate with victims on amounts of money that can be paid as compensation.

"As a result complaints emerge from the victims because they are not satisfied with amounts given in compensation," he elaborates.

He specifies that victims of road crashes are supposed to file complaints to owners of the vehicle and driver, or owner of the vehicle and insurer or all three, as stipulated in the Motor Vehicle Insurance Act of 2002.

It must later be submitted to the office of the Ombudsman for proof of injury, supported by evidence of a traffic case to prove that the driver was careless on the road and caused an accident, including treatment expenses incurred and other related losses.

"The government needs to come up with clear



legislation specifying minimum compensation to victims of road crashes as it is done for workers compensated at their work place," he suggested.

Section 4 (I) of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Act Cap169 R.E 2002 specifies on liability of an insurer to pay compensation to a third party.

It states that "subject to the provisions of this Act, it shall not be lawful for any person to use, or to cause or permit any other person to use a motor vehicle on a road, unless there is in force

in relation to the user of the vehicle by that person or that other person, as the case may be, such a policy of insurance or such a security in respect of third party risks as complies with the requirement of this Act."

In Tanzania, the process of advocacy for 'Improved Road Safety: Legal and Policy Environment' legal review is championed by the Road Safety Civil Societies Organizations coalition, of which the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) is member and host.

Other member organisations are the Tanganyika Law Society(TLS), Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA), Road Safety Ambassadors (RSA), Tanzania Child Rights Forum (TCRF), AMEND and the Tanzania Association of People with Disabilities (SHIVYAWATA).

Yet others include the Tanzania Bus Owners Association (TABOA), the National Institute of Transport (NIT), the Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF), Safe Speed Foundation, along with individuals having expertise and

passion on road safety.

TAWLA, leading the road safety coalition, has been on the frontline to champion the advocacy of assessing the existing legal framework and make suggestions to the relevant authorities.

What the government says

Expressing government concern, the former Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Pereira Silima said claims would be made against the insurance company insuring the vehicle.

He said the third party insurance is enough to provide compensations to victims who have suffered injuries from road accidents, despite that many people do not have an idea on how to go about following up compensations.

"The government will continue to educate the public on this so that many can be compensated," he explained, affirming that although the government does not allow vehicles to operate without insurance, those that do not have, the owners are usually arraigned.

Steps taken to handle traffic offences are not different from those taken to handle civil cases, he said, pointing at the Road Traffic Act of 2002 and the Civil Procedure Act of 2002 having specified clear steps to be taken where there is a road accident, including for the driver to stop and assist the victims and report the accident to the police.

The victims can file a case in court using the law of torts to get compensation for injuries suffered, however the case must be opened within three years of the accident, a torts are

wrongdoings that are done by one party against another generally.

The injured person may take civil action against the other party for compensation for pain, suffering, medical bills and other expenses incurred as a result of the wrongdoing.

Compensation is a means to accountability, for all those responsible for reported accidents and deaths to operate carefully, and it is also an important recognition of the devastating financial losses many people suffer due to these crashes.

The loss of a family's breadwinner and the costs of medical treatment, not to mention persistent psychological trauma, are disasters that affect multiple members of a family over extended periods of time.

Many of these losses are clearly quantifiable, and procedures and guidelines have been established in many countries for estimating claims. There is no reason, other than lack of political will, interviewed lawyers said.

Tanzania Insurance Brokers Association (TIBA) president Amir Kiwanda noted that insurance claims processing normally requires all important documents, which often makes it cumbersome for claimants who are not conversant with the procedures.

"Most victims are unaware of procedure, documents and related issues needed to complete the entire process of compensation," he said.

Insurance consultants are crucial in the process of filing claims to insurance companies as these issues may escape victims requiring high compensation.

How China overcame trials for a bullish 2021

BEIJING

The Chinese word for "crisis" (wei ji) is composed of two characters: "danger" (wei) and "opportunity" (ji), and the wisdom to avert a crisis is always somewhere in between.

As the new year kicks off, the very "danger" from 2020 has largely departed China, where the extraordinary year ended with a newly-approved vaccine -- a further step to tame the pandemic -- and the completion of investment agreement negotiations with the European Union -- a boost to world economic recovery.

Despite the unpredictable outbreak of the coronavirus, the unprecedented recession worldwide, and the unhinged bully from the outside, China became the first major economy in the world to register positive growth, and its GDP is expected to exceed 100 trillion yuan (about 15.38 trillion U.S. dollars) in 2020, a solid ground to embark on a new journey of modernization in a new year that marks the centennial of the governing Communist Party of China (CPC).

But it was quite an unintended story at the beginning of 2020, as an unknown pathogen, whose exact origin and jump to humans have yet to be scientifically concluded, was in circulation.

It was the annual peak travel season for hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens. People fell sick and many tragically succumbed to what later became known as the COVID-19 pandemic. Those were confusing and agonizing days for everyone and led to sleepless nights for the Chinese leadership.

Resolute action followed. In an unprecedented but crucial move, Wuhan, a megacity of 11 million, cut off outbound flights and trains. Residents across China voluntarily complied with social



Employees produce ventilators at Mindray Bio-Medical Electronics Co., Ltd., a medical device manufacturer based in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province, March 31, 2020. (Xinhua/Liang Xu)

distancing requirements. The world's second-largest economy nearly came to a halt -- a loss of 150 billion yuan in economic output every day, but a price worth paying as human lives are of the utmost importance. Medical workers, scientists, community workers, volunteers, construction workers and many others jumped to action.

"Greatness is forged in the ordinary, and heroes come from the people. Every single person is remarkable," Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a televised New Year speech on Thursday.

Under decisive leadership from Beijing, China prevailed in the battle against the epidemic. The local transmission of coronavirus all but vanished, to the extent that

a domestic vaccine trial is now infeasible as there are insufficient numbers of patients. The trials are well underway in cooperation with some foreign countries.

The industrial output was the first to rebound from the shock. Its manufacturing proved reliable for not only China but also other countries, particularly when the need for masks and ventilators presented itself. Nearly 300 million Chinese students returned to campus in September, free from fear.

That does not come easily. Beijing used extraordinary policy tools, including an additional one trillion yuan in deficit spending, one trillion yuan in special treasury bonds and 2.5 trillion yuan in tax and fee cuts.

The government rolled out incentives and long-term plans to unleash the potential of its domestic demand, with 400 million middle-income earners, an anchor for the economy to offset downward pressure. China has also acted more forcefully to stabilize employment -- keeping the world's biggest population in work is vital for stability, socially and economically.

The epidemic was not the only battle that China fought in 2020.

The country was also racing against the clock to reach the historical feat of eradicating absolute poverty. In 2020, all of China's nearly 100 million impoverished rural residents living below the current poverty line have shaken off poverty after

eight years' efforts.

China is still the largest developing country in the world. The decisive victory against poverty is the beginning of an even more challenging and promising drive: socialist modernization.

Externally, the year 2020 has witnessed the U.S. administration's increased hysteria toward China, piling one unreasonable sanction on another, targeting Chinese companies and officials and daydreaming about a decoupling.

Beijing responded with a firm and commensurate counteractions, and, most conspicuously, with greater reforms and openness to the outside world.

China has become European Union's largest trading partner, while Beijing and Brussels ushered a "balanced, high-standard and mutually beneficial" -- in the words of President Xi -- bilateral investment treaty in the year's end. China's business environment, as measured by the World Bank's Doing Business reports, has risen sharply for two consecutive years.

The more blockades and suppression China faces, the more it must insist on open cooperation, Beijing reasons.

More evidence of China's unrelenting promise to participate includes the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership trade deal, bringing 15 economies and 2.2 billion people into the world's largest trading partnerships.

However, a bumpy ride is ahead. Han Wenxiu, a senior economic official, said while economic growth for 2020 and 2021 would average around 5 percent annually, the numbers are good but the days aren't necessarily so; on the micro-level, many small and medium enterprises still need supports; and some of provincial-level regions have a current shortfall in the basic pension fund.

Thinking ahead and playing the long game has been characteristics with Beijing. In late October, a key CPC meeting proposed key outlines for China's next five years and its vision for 2035, mapping out critical targets identified by leadership.

Among them are the upgrading of manufacturing, breakthroughs in core technologies, coping with an aging population, and resolving systemic financial risks. "Stay vigilant in times of peace," a Chinese saying teaches.

The Chernobyl moment predicted for China at the beginning of 2020 did not materialize. Extraordinary hardship had allowed the Chinese people to demonstrate their resilience with more confidence in their way of life and the country's governance model.

2021 is also the year that will see China formulate and begin to implement the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development -- "embark on a new journey to fully build a modern socialist country," Xi said on Thursday.

China, a country of 1.4 billion -- one-fifth of the world's population -- has seen light in the tunnel through the pandemic. And its peaceful development by putting overwhelming emphasis on improving the living standards and happiness of its own people -- rather than looting, colonization, or wars -- stands as a promising alternative path to others in the world.

The eventful year has also been a reminder of the importance of a community with a shared future for humanity. It has become clear that people's lives and prosperity depend on unknown strangers in far-off corners of the world.

In the words of British poet John Donne, "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

XINHUA

Our priority at this time must be to save lives

By Cyril Ramaphosa

In just four days from now, we will be ushering in a new year. This is traditionally a time of festivity and celebrating.

Unfortunately, for us here in South Africa and for others around the world, there is little cause for celebration this year.

On Sunday, we passed the mark of more than one million confirmed coronavirus cases in our country.

Nearly 27,000 South Africans are known to have died from Covid-19.

The number of new coronavirus infections is climbing at an unprecedented rate.

More than 50,000 new cases have been reported since Christmas Eve.

The majority of new cases are emerging in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape.

Infections are also alarmingly on the rise in Limpopo.

Infections are on the rise in part because, as humans, we are social beings and have a need to socialise with one another.

We feel the need to visit friends and family, we attend religious services and we go to parties.

But this is a time of heightened danger in the face of a global pandemic.

Across the world countries are having to take drastic measures to curb new waves of infections.

We will all have heard that there is a new variant of Covid-19 that is now well-established in our country.

As our scientists study this variant - called 501LV2 - and its spread, it appears that it may be more contagious than the virus that drove the first wave of infections.

The rapid rise in infections is being fuelled by so-called super-spreader events, including like end-of-year functions, family and social gatherings, and music and cultural events.

This is a cause for great alarm, and points to an extreme lack of vigilance over the holiday period.

We have let down our guard, and unfortunately we are now paying the price.

We have not been wearing masks. We are not washing our hands or sanitising.

And we are not keeping a safe distance from others.

We have continued to host and attend social gatherings and events that in many cases flout public health regulations.

As has been the case previously, social gatherings substantially increase the risk of transmission.

Venues are often poorly ventilated and their permitted capacity is being exceeded.

Hand sanitiser is not being used, and masks are being worn to gain entry, only to be taken off once inside.

In these same social gatherings, the consumption of alcohol in restaurants, in nightclubs and taverns has contributed to risky behaviour like not wearing masks and not observing social distancing.

Excessive alcohol consumption is also driving up the number of trauma cases in our hospitals.

According to the data we have, with every relaxation of the restrictions on the sale of alcohol, the number of trauma cases reporting at our hospitals has increased.

These trauma cases are putting an unnecessary strain on our already stretched public health facilities.

Our hospitals, both private and public, are already close to full capacity in a number of provinces, and ICU beds are either full already or rapidly filling up.

In the Eastern Cape, for example, the number of hospitalisations and in-hospital deaths has now surpassed the numbers witnessed in the first surge earlier this year.

Several provinces are hard at work to prepare additional beds, ventilators and oxygen to respond to this increase.

Our frontline healthcare workers, who have put their lives on the line over the past nine months to care for the ill, are becoming infected in higher numbers.

They are exhausted, and they are struggling under the strain of the second wave.

During the month of December,

4,630 public sector health employees contracted Covid-19, bringing the total number infected since the start of the pandemic to over 41,000.

On Sunday, I saw a social media post from a doctor in one of our facilities, which I would like to share with you, because it captures the situation that our health workers face.

He writes:

"Half our consultants have Covid. More than half my colleagues had Covid or are currently in quarantine."

"Hospital is FULL. No oxygen points. Private hospitals are FULL. Not accepting more patients. No beds anywhere."

"And this is not yet the peak."

"Guys. We are all going to pay for your inability to be responsible with our LIVES."

These brave men and women, who have kept our hospitals and clinics open and running through their resilience, courage and professionalism are now at even greater risk than before. They are themselves almost at breakpoint.

They could lose their lives. More families will mourn. All because of our actions, and our failure to take responsibility.

We are at an extremely dangerous point in our fight against the pandemic.

Unless we act now and unless we act decisively, the number of new infections will far exceed what we experienced during the first wave and thousands more people will lose their lives.

On the recommendation of the National Coronavirus Command Council, and after consultation with provinces and metro mayors, Cabinet has decided to put the country on an adjusted Level 3 from Level 1 with immediate effect.

Several of the level 3 regulations are being strengthened to further limit the potential for transmission, while doing everything possible to keep the economy open.

We have adjusted the restrictions that will apply at level 3 based on the lessons we have learned through our response to date.

There are four main reasons for this step:

Firstly, we want to minimise the risk of super-spreading events even further. As the number of people with active infections rises, there is a greater risk of an infected person without symptoms being present in a gathering and spreading the virus.

Secondly, we want to decrease unsafe interactions between people.

Thirdly, we want to increase the implementation of our five key prevention measures - social distancing, masks, hand hygiene, symptom-checking and testing.

Fourthly, we want to decrease the burden on health care services so that resources can be directed to meet the needs of Covid-19 and other patients.

Under the adjusted level 3 regulations:

- All indoor and outdoor gatherings will be prohibited for 14 days from the date hereof, except for funerals and other limited exceptions as detailed in the regulations, such as restaurants, museums, gyms and casinos. These will further be set out by the Minister in regulations and will be reviewed after that period.
- Funerals may not be attended by more than 50 people with social distancing.
- Every business premises must determine the maximum number of staff and customers permitted at any one time based on our social-distancing guidelines and may not exceed that limit.
- The nationwide curfew will be extended from 9pm to 6am. Apart from permitted workers and for medical and security emergencies, nobody is allowed outside their place of residence during curfew.
- Non-essential establishments - including shops, restaurants, bars and all cultural venues - must close at 8pm. The list of these establishments will be released shortly.

We now know that the simplest and most effective way to reduce transmission of the coronavirus is to wear a cloth mask that covers the nose and mouth whenever in public.



President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Until now the owners and managers of shops and public buildings, employers and operators of public transport have had a legal responsibility to ensure that everyone entering their premises or vehicle is wearing a mask.

But given the grave danger our country now faces, the adjusted level 3 regulations will make every individual legally responsible for wearing a mask in public.

From now on it is compulsory for every person to wear a mask in a public space. A person who does not wear a cloth mask covering over the nose and mouth in a public place will be committing an offence.

A person who does not wear a mask could be arrested and prosecuted. On conviction, they will be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both a fine and imprisonment.

This is a drastic measure but is now necessary to ensure compliance with the most basic of preventative measures.

We remain particularly concerned about the elderly and those with co-morbidities and ask that they do their utmost to protect themselves from the virus, especially minimising their contact with other people.

One of the more difficult areas of regulation relates to the sale of alcohol.

The liquor industry is a major employer and an important contributor to our economy.

Our priority at this time, however, must be to save lives.

Reckless behaviour due to alcohol intoxication has contributed to increased transmission.

Alcohol-related accidents and violence are putting pressure on our hospital emergency units.

As we had to in the early days of the lockdown, we now have to flatten the curve to protect the capacity of our healthcare system to enable it to respond effectively to this new wave of infections.

In such a scenario, every piece of medical equipment, every hospital bed, every healthcare worker, and every oxygen tank is needed to save lives.

Therefore, under the strengthened regulations:

- The sale of alcohol from retail outlets and the on-site consumption of alcohol will not be permitted.
- The prohibition on consuming alcohol in public spaces like parks and beaches remains.
- Distribution and transportation will be prohibited with exceptions that will be explained by the minister.
- These regulations may be reviewed within the next few weeks if we see a sustained decline in infections and hospital admissions.
- In effect, the adjusted Level 3 regulations will keep the economy open while strengthening measures to reduce transmission.
- With a few exceptions, businesses may continue to operate as long as all

relevant health protocols and social distancing measures are adhered to.

Night clubs and businesses engaged in the sale and transportation of liquor will not be allowed to operate.

The Level 3 restrictions will remain in place until 15 January 2021.

These measures will be reviewed at that time on the basis of the state of the pandemic in the country.

When I last addressed you, I indicated that in managing the pandemic we would follow a differentiated approach that took into account the rise in infections in particular municipalities.

Municipalities defined as hotspots will be subject to additional restrictions until there is a clear and sustained decline in infections.

Following a review of the latest available data on infections and hospitalisations, and consultations with affected provinces, Cabinet has decided that 22 districts be declared coronavirus hotspots.

In the Eastern Cape, these are Chris Hani District, Buffalo City, Amathole District, Alfred Nzo District and the OR Tambo District. These are in addition to Nelson Mandela Bay Metro and the Sarah Baartman District, which have already been declared hotspots.

In KwaZulu-Natal, these are eThekweni, Umgungundlovu District, Ugu District, Harry Gwala District, King Cetshwayo District and Ilembe District.

In Gauteng, the West Rand District, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg are declared hotspots.

In the Western Cape, the West Coast District, Overberg District, Winelands District, Cape Town, Central Karoo District are hotspots. This is in addition to the Garden Route District.

In the North West, Bojanala District is declared a hotspot area.

And in Limpopo, the Waterberg District and the Capricorn District are declared coronavirus hotspots.

When I last addressed you we announced that certain beaches in our country would be closed on certain days and others would remain open.

As the infections continue to rise Cabinet on the advice of the National Coronavirus Command Council has decided that all beaches, dams, lakes, rivers, public parks and public swimming pools in hotspot areas will be closed to the public with effect from tomorrow.

National and provincial parks and other parks where access control measures and entry limitations are already in place may remain open to the public.

Those living in the hotspot districts are strongly encouraged to minimise their travel within the district to essential travel so as to minimise contact with other people.

Travel to hotspot districts should be avoided if possible.

The stark reality is that every single district in this country has the potential to become a hotspot unless

we observe the current preventative measures.

As we intensify our efforts to prevent further infections, we continue to work to ensure equitable access to an effective Covid-19 vaccine.

As we have reported before, South Africa is part of the global pooled procurement initiative co-ordinated by Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility, commonly known as COVAX.

We can confirm that we have signed off on the agreement with COVAX and the Solidarity Fund has made the initial payment of R283 million to the facility.

We are grateful for the support we continue to receive from the Solidarity Fund across all areas of our Covid response. We should remember that the Solidarity Fund is a multisectoral funded initiative having received funding from government, a number of individual South Africans, various institutions including political parties as well as business corporations.

We are part of the first group of countries that will receive an allocation of vaccines from COVAX. We have been advised that we should expect the vaccines in the second quarter of 2021.

We are also having parallel bilateral discussions with a number of vaccine manufacturers, and will make further announcements once firm agreements are in place.

As a country we need to build a strong partnership between the government and business sector to augment the resources required in financing the additional vaccines necessary to achieve herd immunity.

Engagements to this effect are at an advanced stage and we urge the private sector to continue their participation in this endeavour.

We are working to secure a sufficient supply of vaccines in the shortest possible time to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

Until then, we have no choice but to observe the highest degree of vigilance, and to protect ourselves and others in every way that we can.

We each have a responsibility to wear masks, wash or sanitise our hands, and keep a safe distance from others.

We must remember that this virus is carried through the air, and that we must therefore avoid what has been described as the three Cs - closed spaces, crowded places and close contact with others.

This virus takes advantage of our over-confidence.

Because we feel healthy now, we think we cannot get sick.

Because they seem fine, we believe that nothing bad can happen to our loved ones.

As older people, we think it is okay, we are healthy, so we can still go to big religious services, to funerals and socialise with our friends.

As young people, we may feel strong and invincible and believe that we are immune to becoming infected because we are young.

As a result, we let down our guard. We take risks.

Many of those who have been infected with the virus, or who have lost their friends and family in recent months, will tell you how much they regret not taking these precautions when they had the chance.

We can only weather this storm if we immediately and fundamentally change our mindsets.

Compliance with the health regulations should not be simply about fearing the wrath of the law.

It should not be about reluctant observance or peer pressure.

This is about common sense.

It is about taking responsibility for our own health and the health of others.

It is about protecting our mothers and fathers, our grandparents, our siblings, our children, neighbours and friends.

Wearing a mask is not about your personal choice or your own appetite for risk. Instead, it is about protecting others.

If you wear a mask, and the person next to you does not, then you are not protected.

Only if everyone wears a mask can we protect all of us from infection.

By now, each of us knows someone who has been affected by this pandemic in some way.

There is none among us who can claim we have not heard of anyone becoming ill, or dying. This is a crisis that affects us all.

The sooner we understand that it could very well be us in that ambulance speeding by, or us in that hospital bed, or us being buried at that funeral, the sooner we come to the reality of what we are facing right now.

If we did not understand it before, we should now see just how quickly a situation can change for the worse.

The new year is upon us.

Our children will soon be going back to school.

Places of learning will reopen so we can resume our studies.

We will want to get back to work, to earning, and to looking for work.

We want life to resume.

We all have plans, hopes and dreams for 2021.

Perhaps the greatest of them all is the simplest.

We wish for the new year to bring better health, stability and prosperity for ourselves and our families.

We want it to be better than the year that has passed, and that was filled with such hardship.

This can become our common reality if we return to the spirit of solidarity that we have displayed throughout 2020.

We can and will defeat this pandemic, but only if we each play our part.

If you experience any mild symptoms, such as a fever, a dry cough or tiredness, isolate yourself immediately and cancel any plans that you might have had.

If you have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, fever, cough, loss of smell or taste, seek medical attention while minimising contact with others.

Download the Covid Alert SA app and get notified if you have been in contact with someone who tests positive.

The app has already notified many thousands of people of their potential exposure to the virus and has prevented further transmission.

If you have been exposed, quarantine yourself immediately.

I know that most of you have heard this all before.

But I say it again because it is the only way we can keep ourselves and one another safe.

If we all rigorously adhere to basic precautions, we will see an immediate decline in infections and hospital admissions.

This New Year's Eve will be different from any we have experienced before.

Several South Africans have suggested that we should celebrate the dawn of the New Year in a different way.

They have suggested that instead of parties, let us spend time with those closest to us.

There have been a number of suggestions in social media that instead of fireworks, let us each light a candle.

Let us each light a candle in memory of those who have lost their lives, in tribute to those on the frontline who are working tirelessly to protect us from harm, in appreciation of the great sacrifices that have been made this past year, and in the confidence that the year ahead will bring health, peace and hope to our people.

I will light a candle in Cape Town at exactly midnight on New Year's Eve in memory of those who have lost their lives and in tribute to those who are on the frontline working to save our lives and protect us from harm.

I ask that you join me wherever you are in this very important symbolic gesture.

Let us continue to work as one nation, united and determined.

We have done it before. We can do it again.

There will come a day when this pandemic will be over.

On that day, we must be able to look one another in the eye and say: 'We gave it our all, we each played our part, we worked together as one nation, and we prevailed.'

May God Bless South Africa and protect her people.

Zimbabwe braces for impact as weakening Chalane sweeps in

HARARE

ZIMBABWE braced for impact on Thursday as Cyclone Chalane swept in from Mozambique, although with reduced severity.

Hundreds of people - some still living in temporary accommodation after the devastation of Cyclone Idai two years ago - were evacuated to higher ground in Manicaland province.

Mutare and Bulawayo city authorities issued alerts for their residents.

The Meteorological Services Department said Chalane's impact would be less severe than originally feared after it was downgraded.

In an early morning update on Wednesday, it said the former tropical storm is "expected to rapidly dissipate, with wind-speed reducing from the current 50 knots to 25 knots" as it tracks westward over the hills of Manicaland during the next 12 hours.

The Met warned that rains, particularly in Manicaland on the border with Mozambique, would result in "reduced visibility and flash flooding in areas with poor drainage as well as along river basis."

"Mudslides and landslides



as well as collapse of walls due to excessive moisture remain probable, thus monitoring your immediate environment is essential," the weather service warned, while urging people to stay indoors.

Edgar Seenza, the Manicaland provincial development director said they had evacuated 121 people around Mutambara Mission and St Patrick's High

School.

"Chipinge, Chimanimani and Mutema started receiving rains early morning today. However, some people from Chimanimani preferred not to go to the evacuation centres saying they would rather go to relatives in areas they consider safe. A bus is on standby in case they changed their minds," Seenza said Wednesday.

After forging a path toward Madagascar last week, Chalane has become the first land-falling cyclone of the season in the southern Indian Ocean.

Chalane tracked across the island of Madagascar over the weekend as a tropical depression, bringing areas of heavy rain and gusty winds to the region.

On Monday, Chalane emerged

over the Mozambique Channel and into an environment conducive for tropical development. Warm waters and a lack of vertical wind shear allowed the storm to strengthen into a severe tropical storm by Monday night.

The main threat from Chalane across Mozambique will be heavy rainfall, stated AccuWeather Lead International Meteorologist Jason Nicholls. However, the storm will be moving at a decent pace, so widespread rainfall totals are forecast to be around 50-100 mm.

These rainfall totals were expected over central Mozambique and into Zimbabwe with the highest totals following the centre of the storm from late Tuesday night though Thursday.

Gusty winds are also expected across Mozambique and Zimbabwe as Chalane forges a path inland with the strongest winds occurring near the coast where the storm made landfall on Wednesday morning.

Flash flooding will be possible from near landfall and inland into Zimbabwe along the storm's track, even after it weakens below tropical storm intensity.

African free trade bloc opens for business, but challenges remain

By Guardian Correspondent

AFRICAN countries began officially trading under a new continent-wide free trade area on Friday, after months of delays caused by the global coronavirus pandemic.

But experts view the New Year's Day launch as largely symbolic with full implementation of the deal expected to take years.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to bring together 1.3 billion people in a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc that will be the largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization.

Backers say it will boost trade among African neighbours while allowing the continent to develop its own value chains. The World Bank estimates it could lift tens of millions out of poverty by 2035.

But obstacles - ranging from ubiquitous red tape and poor infrastructure to the entrenched protectionism of some of its members - must be overcome if the bloc is to reach its full potential.

Trade under the AfCFTA was meant to be launched on July 1 but was pushed back after COVID-19 made in-person negotiations impossible.

However, the pandemic also gave the process added impetus, said Silver Ojakol, chief of staff at the AfCFTA's secretariat.

"We saw the impact on our economies of the disruption of imports due to the pandemic," he said. "So there's actually been an increase in political will to boost intra-African integration."

Every African country except Eritrea has signed on to the AfCFTA framework agreement, and 34 have ratified it. But observers such as W. Gyude Moore - a former Liberian minister who is now a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development - say the real work begins now.

"I would be surprised if they can have everything set up within 24 months," he told Reuters. "For long-term success, I think we'll need to look at how long it took Europe. This is a multi-decade process."

Historic challenges including Africa's poor road and rail links, political unrest, excessive border bureaucracy and petty corruption will not disappear overnight.

And an annex to the deal outlining the rules of origin - an essential step for determining which products can be subject to tariffs and duties - has not been completed yet.

Meanwhile, 41 of the zone's 54 member states have submitted tariff reduction schedules.

Members must phase out 90% of tariff lines - over five years for more advanced economies or 10 years for less developed nations. Another 7% considered sensitive will get more time, while 3% will be allowed to be placed on an exclusion list.

Finalising those schedules and communicating them to businesses must be done quickly, said Ziad Hamoui of Borderless Alliance, a group that campaigns for easier cross-border trade.

But efforts to implement the deal will also likely face resistance from countries' domestic interest groups. Fears of losing out to more competitive neighbours initially made some countries, including West African giant Nigeria, sceptical of the pan-African project.

Still, proponents of the zone are confident that initial steps towards its implementation will already allow member states to double intra-African trade by 2025.

"Economic integration is not an event. It's a process," said the AfCFTA secretariat's Ojakol. "We must start somewhere."

'Africa actively working to secure COVID-19 vaccines'

By Special Correspondent

THE African continent has been actively working to secure vaccines against the novel coronavirus amid a surge in case numbers, the director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has said.

Africa CDC head, John Nkengasong urges countries to prepare for efficient, timely vaccine delivery amid plans to start vaccinations in April.

At a press briefing, Nkengasong said that starting in April "we will begin to see an active vaccination program in the continent."

He also commended African Union chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa for being on the forefront advocating for the vaccine.

Nkengasong said it was important for African Union member states to prepare now to deliver vaccines in an efficient and timely manner.

He urged against getting into a "moral crisis" on where the vaccines are stocked in the developed world while Africa struggles to obtain the shots.

African countries have deployed various innovative means to prepare for the vaccines, he added. "We remain hopeful that international cooperation will prevail. The number-one lesson I have with regards to the virus is that cooperation and partnership works."

There are over 2.7 million



confirmed coronavirus cases on the African continent, with more than 2.27 million recoveries and over 64,700 deaths, according to the latest figures from Africa CDC.

"The same public health measures we have been applying are still relevant in tar-

geting the variant," he said, referring to a recent mutated strain of the coronavirus that was first reported in the UK. Nkengasong added that Africa CDC had uploaded an online vaccine strategy document.

On Wednesday, the World Health Organization's (WHO)

Africa office called on African countries to boost surveillance as new coronavirus variants emerge.

WHO Africa said African countries should also boost analysis through the African genome sequencing laboratory network to detect any new

mutations and strengthen efforts to curb the pandemic.

In September, the WHO and the Africa CDC launched a network of laboratories to reinforce genome sequencing of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Africa.

Uganda seeks \$976m for building, repair of railway

By Jonathan Kamoga

UGANDA is seeking over \$976 million to finance the rehabilitation of major sections of its century-old metre gauge railway - a project expected to be completed in the next five years.

After failing to get the \$2.3 billion standard gauge railway project off the ground in 2017, the government decided to rehabilitate the old me-

tre gauge railway.

According to Stanley Sendegeya, the managing director of Uganda Railways Corporation, the finances once available, will be used to upgrade existing railway lines, construct damaged ones, purchase locomotives, wagons and engines.

Among the routes earmarked for rehabilitation is the busy Kam-

pala-Malaba line which connects the capital city with Kenya at Malaba border crossing and will cost up to \$402 million to rehabilitate.

The government has secured a \$57.3 million loan from the European Union to upgrade and reconstruct the Tororo-Gulu line which hasn't been in use for decades. This line offers better access to South Sudan,

with goods collected at the logistics hub in Gulu which together with the railway line are currently under construction.

Other sections earmarked for either construction or rehabilitation are the Gulu-Pakwach line which will connect to the country's oil rich region and to northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Advertisement

The other line is the Kampala-Kasese, which will connect to the mineral rich Rwenzori area and parts of western DR Congo, to be rehabilitated at a cost of \$610 million. The project also seeks to extend passenger services after the acquisition of new coaches to two different routes away from the single one, which is currently running.

"In the next five years, we expect those places to be serviced by the metre gauge railway as long as the financing is secured," Sendegeya told The EastAfrican.

The funding needed is currently unavailable but Sendegeya said the government is willing to partly fund the project while looking for development partners.

Uganda is also stepping

up its capacity to handle large volumes of cargo on Lake Victoria since exporters and importers of goods between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are increasingly opting for it.

Traders move goods between the ports of Mwanza in Tanzania, Kisumu in Kenya, Jinja and Port Bell in Uganda.

Sendegeya said the increasing freight volumes

being moved on the lake creates the need for better facilities at both Port Bell and Jinja. Last year, Uganda upgraded the Port Bell pier and the connecting railway line with Jinja now on the cards.

The Jinja port currently handles fuel exports from Kisumu while Port Bell handles exports like steel products, cement and vegetable oils.

From recession to she-cession: How governments can help female workers stay afloat

BY ELISA MARTINUZZI

It was one of the most widely telegraphed risks at the onset of the pandemic: women, who seemed to suffer less from the Covid-19 disease, would probably pay a steeper economic price than men. The clues were hiding in plain sight. Women make up a larger share of workers in industries that ground to a halt, and they typically shoulder more of the unpaid labor at home. It would be a greater challenge for them to both keep their jobs and carry on working.

Although this “she-cession” has been very real, there is reason to be hopeful. Some countries were more successful than others in keeping women employed, shedding light on the effectiveness of policies such as making child care affordable and targeting support to hard-hit sectors. If policymakers want to hasten a Covid-19 recovery, they will need to expand some of these efforts.

According to the UN, which has been monitoring government responses to the crisis in its Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, few policies specifically target women. Out of the 1,300 or so so-



Women wearing protective face masks have their details checked by Israeli border policewomen in Jerusalem. AMMAR AWAD/REUTERS

cial-protection and labour-market measures adopted by about 200 countries, fewer than one in five are “gender sensitive,” in they consider women’s economic security and responsibility for unpaid care. The consequences have been clear.

Look at the EU. Notwithstanding the hundreds of billions of dollars in stimulus – equivalent to more than 10% of annual GDP in the bigger economies – employment dropped

significantly in the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors, where women make up more than 60% of the workforce. Female unemployment in the bloc now stands at 8.1%, whereas for men it is 7.2%.

Even when women are able to keep their jobs, many are forced to cut back on their hours because of an increase in caregiving and schooling responsibilities. Analysis by the International Labour Organi-

sation, which has studied monthly wages across 28 European countries, shows that even with earnings subsidies, women on average suffer a 6.9% decline in wages as a result of working fewer hours, compared with a 4.7% decline in men’s wages between the first and second quarters. Previous crises have shown that once someone steps out of the job market, it can take years before they get back in.

The gaps are widest in some of Europe’s leading economies. In Germany, the 8.6% decline in women’s wages in the first half of this year was almost twice that for men. In the UK, women saw earnings decline by 12.9%, nearly double the drop for men.

Perhaps of greatest concern is the rate at which women have been dropping out of the labour force altogether. Several advanced economies – including the US, Canada and Japan – have seen the gap widen between active men and women in the labour force. One survey in Europe found that 4% of women who lost their jobs during the pandemic stopped looking for work, compared with just 1% of men. Previous crises have shown that once

someone steps out of the job market, it can take years before they get back in.

The silver lining is that some governments have stepped up, directing support to child care and female-dominated sectors and helping women maintain paid work.

In the UK, child-care centres are exempted from paying property taxes until end-2021, and the government has granted child-care tax credits to families. Measures such as these, which have prevented centres from closing and ensured families can afford care, helped women keep their jobs, according to a study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Given the high price of child care for preschool children, offering subsidies is particularly useful as the pandemic hits incomes. UK retail, hospitality and leisure businesses are also eligible for cash grants of as much as £25,000 in the northern hemisphere spring, which help companies retain staff. Financial support has been extended to help businesses weather recent lockdowns.

In Australia, where 16 of the 36 policy measures taken are gender sensitive, the government also pro-

vided free child care to about 1-million families, and when it suspended the programme in July, it attracted significant criticism. Norway doubled paid time off for taking care of small children to 20 days. The country’s gender gap in labour force participation has declined during the pandemic. Meanwhile, Canada has vowed to present a national child-care plan in the 2021 budget.

More work needs to be done. According to Simeon Djankov, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute, governments need to finance a further expansion of child care or working mothers will continue to be forced to abandon their jobs and stay at home. This would only deepen gender inequality and slow an economic recovery. It is much harder to re-enter the labour force once you are out.

What’s more, some jobs (think high street retail) may never come back after the pandemic. So a recovery will depend on workers being able to retrain for other industries such as technology. Women especially will take the time and support to make this on. The livelihood of the next generation is at stake.

AGENCIES

Former girls’ circumciser becomes ward councillor

By Correspondent Daniel Sembeya

Most research has identified culture as the main socially constructed obstacle to gender and political empowerment and women’s political participation in particular. Indeed, attitudes, beliefs, and perception of gender and sexual roles determine women’s position in all spheres of life particularly politics.

If the society holds a negative viewpoint on women’s ability, then the likelihood that women get chance to hold important positions in such a society becomes minimal.

Since its establishment several years ago, TGNP has been working collaboratively with the government and other key players to implement the national strategy on gender and development.

It has been doing this by empowering women so as to enable them participate fully and equally with men in decision making at different levels.

The newly elected councillor for Kylene Ward in Tarime Urban, Mara Region, Rhobi Ryoba acknowledged that without the continuous education awareness offered by TGNP and other activist groups on the negative effects and impacts of the Female Genital Mutilation she couldn’t become a councillor.

“Before contesting for the position I am currently serving, I used to circumcise girls (practicing female genital mutilation (FGM) from 2001 to 2016,” she noted.

She further revealed: “These were the most challenging days in my life. I re-

member to stop continuing doing this after I started going to the church, my conscience pained me of the many lives I was destroying.”

Ryoba has also mentioned that strictly measures imposed by the government by naming FGM as a gender based violence, was another reason that forced her to stop practicing circumcision to young girls.

She said that her journey to leadership started after seeing that their area was faced with poor infrastructures, there were no good schools, women were economically and financially poor because they lacked collateral that would enable them access loans from banks and financial institutions.

According to her, the population in her ward is 9,833 people, amongst them 4,300 are women.

Her motto as a ward councillor is “Women can in every situation. Adding:

“I thank our current President John Magufuli for inspiring leadership not only for men but also for women.”

She has promised that during her five-year tenure as a councillor she would ensure health centres and schools that offer quality education are constructed. On top of that she has vowed to encourage women and young girls to vie for political positions in future elections.

“I thank TGNP for offering us this leadership and mentorship training. I have learnt various ways on how to analyse data and identify challenges facing my voters and how to solve them through



Newly elected and nominated councillors from Mara Region in a group photo with Tanzanian National Parliament Retired Speaker Anna Makinda during leadership and mentorship training that was organised by TGNP last week in Dar es Salaam. The training brought together councillors from nine regions in Tanzania Mainland. Photo: Daniel Sembeya

participatory process with other players and the community at large,” she explained.

Another elected Councillor for Mji Mpya Ward in Morogoro DC Emmy Kiula said that before becoming a councillor she was an entrepreneur.

She said through the support of her late husband and other community members she became a local executive leader from 1999 to 2009.

She first became a ward councillor in the 2010 general elections, up to 2015. This is the third term being elected as a

ward councillor. Her motto is “solidarity and love for a better tomorrow.”

Before I became a leader in my area there was lack of infrastructure, poor education, few development projects, and the area was literally dormant.

As a councillor I have done plenty developments to my people in the ward. Through her influence they have managed to construct a secondary school known as Mji Mpya Secondary School, a health center with a labor ward. And have established a strong health foundation for unborn children and their mothers.

“My expectation is to build a community that works together and diligently to solve their problems despite political differences so as to attain high goals and prosperity.”

Meanwhile, Kiula has thanked TGNP for organising the mentorship and leadership for the newly elected councillors.

“During this training I have learned how to identify community challenges, how to follow project planning procedures, to identify various needs of the people depending with the groups they belong to.”

For her part, Mariam Msoka, an elected councillor for Uru Northern Ward in Kilimanjaro Region said;

“Before becoming a ward councillor, I was a village council member at Uru Northern for five years. I contested for a local executive leadership position in 2010, and won. Later the community members urged me to con-

test again I took the challenge and won again for another five years up to 2015. This is the third time I am serving in this position.”

“I was driven to enter into politics by my fellow women who knew my ability to lead, I was teaching empowerment issues to various women and youth groups in my community and that earned me the community trust, so it is the people who gave me a dream to lead,” Msoka revealed.

She said that as a woman leader she has been facing a lot of challenges such as discrimination and opposition from men who think that women can’t lead.

However, she said what has been her encouragement was the trust the community has invested in her. “Through all these years I have developed a strong motto “If empowered, women can, and if not they also can.”

She further explained that when she was elected a ward councillor she built a village office, which she has been using for years to train women who were now taking loans from banks and financial institutions and as a result have become financially independent.

“My current target this term is to rehabilitate school infrastructures, and ensure quality education is offered in my area which will support our young girls achieve their dreams.”

“I thank TGNP for this training, my leadership skills have improved and I never thought about planning but as of now am going to create a five year-work plan for my

area which will help me set my goals,” she promised.

Tanzania is committed to women participation and political empowerment by having signed and ratified a number of international and regional instruments that promote and protect gender equality.

Being the mother law, the constitution of Tanzania has undergone several amendments to ensure adherence to the international and regional commitments to gender equality in all spheres of life.

Like many other legal documents, the constitution recognises the general international principle of the 1948 UDHR in Article 12(i) that all human beings are born free, and are equal. Articles 21, 66, 67 and 78 of the Constitution are specific to gender equality and women representation in political and electoral processes.

Article 21 (1) provides that every citizen of the United Republic is entitled to take part in matters pertaining to the governance of the country, either directly or through representatives freely elected by the people, in conformity with the procedures laid down by, or in accordance with, the law.

Subsection (2) states that every citizen has the right and the freedom to participate fully in the process leading to the decision on matters affecting him, his well-being or the nation. These provisions are in line with most of the international and regional instruments.

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 161 00--

IN this puzzle you have no clues, only a list of words that all fit into the grid. The Guardian have given you a head start

CROSSWORD

3 LETTERS: ORE, CRY, ICE

4 LETTERS: LOAD, SOME, AIDE, GOLD, MALL, ODDS, RACE

5 LETTERS: DODGE, ADAPT, SEMEN, ACRES, CHEER

6 LETTERS: ASSIST, EMPIRE, AGENDA, ENDURE, MAIDEN

7 LETTERS: MANDELA

8 LETTERS: CLIMATES

10 LETTERS: SUGARCANES

WORD-FIT

1 Young nation in Africa

2 female reproductive cells

3 a church decree

4 a tripod frame used to support an artist’s canvas

5 a donkey

6 to choose, to pick

7 a chemical substance soluble in water, sour in taste, that reddens litmus paper

8 a literary composition expressing personal observation

9 Judges in sports

10 thought

11 something forming a border

1 a thick soup

2 a strong wish

3 freehold tenure based on uninterrupted possession to awake

4 the exchange of goods for money

5 the middle

6 responded to something

7 lake Victoria in Kenya

8 fear, horror

9 a soft lustre on a surface

10 one of many narrow bones surrounding the chest

11 money charged for something

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD: 3 ORE, 4 LOAD, 5 DODGE, 6 ASSIST, 7 MANDELA, 8 CLIMATES, 10 SUGARCANES

WORD-FIT: 1 KENYA, 2 OVUMS, 3 DECREE, 4 TRIPOD, 5 DONKEY, 6 PICK, 7 LITMUS, 8 ESSAY, 9 JUDGES, 10 THOUGHT, 11 BORDER

BUSINESS

Treasury saves Sh1.5bn on Covid-19 travel ban

NAIROBI

Taxpayers saved Ksh1.513 billion on travel, training and hospitality perks for civil service in the three months to September last year in the wake of restrictions imposed to curb spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reports from the local press states that according to the Controller of Budget (CoB) report, taxpayers spent Ksh3.5 billion on travel, trainings and hospitality in the period, down from Ksh5.01 billion in similar period last year.

Allowances paid to civil workers for attending trainings and seminars fell 84 percent to Ksh109.2 million in the period, from Ksh683.7 million in the three months to September last year, the highest drop for the three perks in the period.

Travel allowance for local and foreign trips fell to Ksh2.67 billion from Ksh3.53 billion in similar period a year earlier, while hospitality allowances fell to Ksh726.9 million from Ksh806.1 million.

The fall came in the wake of curbs imposed to check spread of Covid-19 where State offices cancelled trips and seminars.

Kenya suspended international passenger travel, closed schools indefinitely, shut down bars and golf clubs and imposed a daily dusk-to-dawn curfew as well as banning public gatherings to curb the spread of the virus.

The pause in meetings denied national government and parastatals staff opportunities to boost their wages through perks such as mile-

age, sitting and subsistence allowances earned from local and foreign travels.

"Some budget items recorded low levels of expenditure, which was attributed to the impact of Covid-19 mitigation measures adopted by the government to curb the spread of the disease," Controller of Budget Margaret Nyakang'o said in the report.

"The expenses included travelling, training and hospitality activities which are usually significant spending budget items by Ministries Departments Agencies."

Senior civil servants earn up to Ksh22,000 for a day's stay in Naivasha, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nairobi, Kilifi, Lamu and Kwale – explaining why these towns have become popular with government retreats.

The lowest-cadre worker travelling to these towns is entitled to a Ksh4,200 allowance daily.

Senior civil servants earn Ksh18,000 per day for retreats held in Nyeri, Eldoret, Kericho, Kakamega, Kilifi, Embu, Nanyuki, Nakuru, Lodwar and Garissa. The lowest-ranking officials earn Sh3,500.

President Uhuru Kenyatta announced a phased easing of the restrictions in July that included resumption of foreign and domestic flights.

Treasury said restrictions on meetings, travel and trainings for civil servants will remain in the coming months as part of reducing the country's spending on non-core items.



The National Treasury building. File photo.

Airtime, electricity, DStv prices rise on tax revision

NAIROBI

THE cost of basic goods and services such as electricity, airtime, cooking oil, detergents and pay TV subscriptions has from yesterday increased by margin with the restoration of Value Added Tax (VAT) to 16 per cent from 14 by the revenue collection body.

The increase in consumer goods prices comes after Parliament voted to end tax cuts put in place in April last year to cushion the economy from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic from January 1, a move aimed at plugging revenue shortfalls but investors said it would hamper a recovery.

Top companies like Safaricom, Kenya Power and Multi-Choice are forced to adjust their product prices in line with the VAT increase.

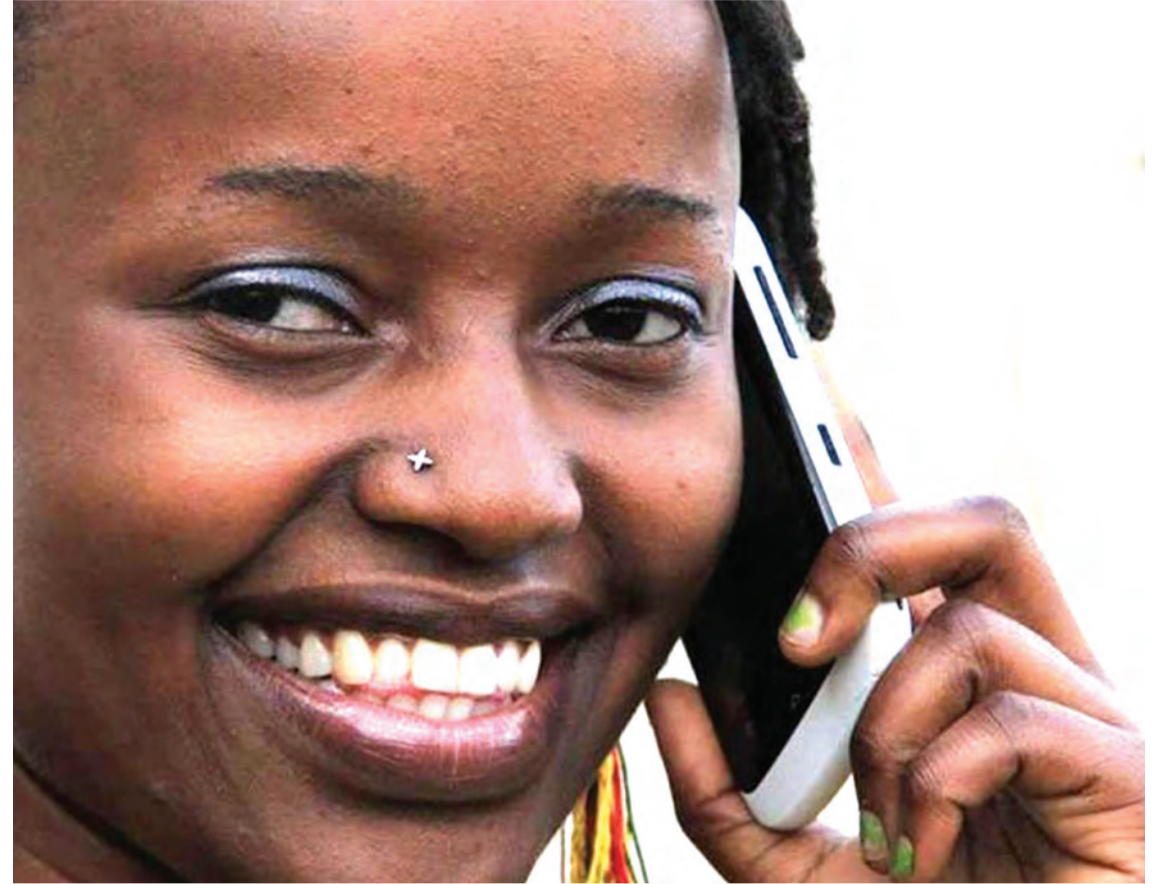
Among the goods that will attract the higher VAT are newspapers, books, phones, electronics, computer hardware and software.

The price adjustment comes at a time when workers will get a cut on their net earnings from tomorrow with the withdrawal of income tax reliefs imposed in April last year.

The vote in favour of halting the tax cuts means a reduction of five percentage points to the income tax rate for top individual earners and corporations will be reversed to 30 percent, translating to a pay cut for workers earning more than Ksh50,000/-.

However, Parliament voted to keep one of the relief measures. Kenyans earning less than Ksh24,000/- will still be granted 100 percent tax relief, to ease the pain from the impact of the coronavirus economic fallout.

The tax reliefs were geared at lowering the cost of basic goods while providing workers with additional income for spending



A lady talking on phone. File Photo.

to boost consumption, which was expected to boost sales for retailers, traders and other players in the supply chain.

Lawmakers who opposed the tax cut reversal said the pandemic had not subsided and Kenyans still needed help.

Kenya's economic output declined in the second quarter for the first time since the 2008 global financial crisis. The tourism and agriculture exports, the main hard currency earners, have taken big hits.

The Treasury says the tax reliefs were no longer sustainable, citing persistent revenue collection shortfalls which have slowed implementation of government programmes.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani estimated on December 4 the exchequer will

have foregone about Ksh65 billion/- between April and December as a result of reduction of maximum income tax to 25 from 30 percent and a cut on VAT to 14 from 16 percent.

Looking at price adjustment, Companies have adjusted prices of their products effective tomorrow, putting pressure on inflation which has remained within the upper limit of 7.5 percent set by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK).

The cost of electricity will rise after the two percentage increment in VAT kicks in, hitting families and businesses recovering from depressed earnings as a result of the pandemic blows.

Homes which, on average, consume power worth Ksh1,000/- monthly, will pay nearly Ksh20/-

more from yesterday.

Safaricom subscribers are, on the other hand, set to lose additional credit and Internet bundles they have enjoyed since April last year.

For example, customers buying Ksh100/- airtime will no longer get additional Ksh2/- of talk time when the telco adjusts its prices in line with the rise in VAT, while those buying data bundles worth Ksh2,900/- for home use will lose Ksh58/- additional Internet.

MultiChoice, the South Africa-owned pay television firm, has already informed clients the cost of watching its channels will rise by up to Ksh100/- on reinstatement of the general VAT levy to 16 percent, months after increasing prices by more than five percent from last August, citing rising operation costs.

Oil edges higher, but posts 20pc annual drop in tumultuous 2020

NEW YORK

Global crude prices edged higher on Thursday but lost more than a fifth of their value in 2020, as lockdowns to combat the novel coronavirus depressed economic activity and sent oil markets reeling.

Still, Brent and U.S. crude benchmarks have more than doubled from April's nadir as producers cut output to match weaker demand. News of coronavirus vaccine distributions also bolstered prices in the fourth quarter, helping futures recover to the highest in about 10 months.

On the last trading day of 2020, Brent rose 17 cents to settle at \$51.80 a barrel. U.S. West Texas Intermediate rose 12 cents to set-

tle at \$48.52 a barrel. Brent fell 21.5% for the year, with WTI falling 20.5%.

Prices for 2020 bottomed in April as fuel demand collapsed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and after a price war between oil giants Saudi Arabia and Russia. WTI plummeted to a record low negative-\$40.32 per barrel, while Brent fell to \$15.98 barrel, the lowest since 1999.

From there prices drifted higher and took off once vaccine optimism hit the market.

"The first half was remarkable and unprecedented with a steep move lower and a snapback rally," said John Kilduff, a partner at Again Capital Management in New York. "Then it was like watch-

ing paint dry for several months through October."

Though prices have climbed the last two months, additional lockdowns have weighed again on fuel demand and a new, highly infectious variant of the virus has raised alarms.

A monthly Reuters poll on Thursday showed oil prices are not expected to make much progress in 2021.

And the demand outlook for fuel still remains murky. U.S. gasoline futures fell 17% for the year, while U.S. heating oil futures dropped 27%.

Some commodity markets, including spot Asian LNG and silver, were ending 2020 on a strong note, with recovering demand

and widespread stimulus packages buoying prices. Rollouts of vaccines to combat the virus and trillions of dollars' worth of fiscal support were expected to boost investment and spending in 2021.

U.S. natural gas futures posted their biggest yearly gain since 2016, helped by record liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports.

U.S. stock indexes were set to end 2020 with solid gains. [MKTS/GLOB]

The next major oil price driver will come Monday as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia, a group known as OPEC+, plan to debate boosting crude output from February.

Nissan motor to reduce presence in Europe as part of turnaround plan-Yomiuri paper

TOKYO

NISSAN Motor is planning to further reduce its presence in Europe and outsource the sales and manufacturing of its cars to alliance partner Renault, the daily Yomiuri newspaper reported on Friday.

As part of its global turnaround plan, which is reversing a rapid expansion led by the ousted former chairman, Carlos Ghosn, Nissan will cut its distribution channels in thirty countries, mainly in East Europe. It is also planning to close its Avila plant in Spain and convert it into a warehouse, the report said.

However, the referred report didn't provide details of the scale of the outsourcing. Calls to Nissan's public relations office went unanswered on

Friday, a public holiday in Japan.

The Japanese motor company is currently moving its operations away from Europe and shifting its focus to China, the United States, and Japan.

Nissan, which expects to post a record operating loss of 340 billion yen (\$3.25 billion) in the year to March 31, is cutting production capacity and model numbers by a fifth and aims to slash operating expenses by 300 billion yen over three years.

The company's three-way alliance with Renault and Mitsubishi Motor was plunged into uncertainty in 2018, when Ghosn was arrested on financial misconduct charges, which he denies. He later fled Japan while being monitored by law enforcement and awaiting trial at his residence.



Exclusive: Drugmakers to hike prices for 2021 as pandemic, political pressure put revenues at risk

NEW YORK

Drugmakers including Pfizer Inc, Sanofi SA, and GlaxoSmithKline Plc plan to raise U.S. prices on more than 300 drugs in the United States on Jan. 1, according to drugmakers and data analyzed by healthcare research firm 3 Axis Advisors.

The hikes come as drugmakers are reeling from effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has reduced doctor visits and demand for some drugs. They are also fighting new drug price cutting rules from the Trump administration, which would reduce the industry's profitability.

The companies kept their price increases at 10% or below, and the largest drug companies to raise prices so far, Pfizer and Sanofi, kept nearly all of their increases 5% or less, 3 Axis said. 3 Axis is a consulting firm that works with pharmaceutical groups, health plans and foundation on drug pricing and supply chain issues.

GSK did raise prices on two vaccines - shingles vaccine Shingrix and diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine Pediarix - by 7% and 8.6%, respectively, 3 Axis said.

Teva Pharmaceuticals Inc hiked prices on 15 drugs, including Austedo, which treats rare neurological disorders, and asthma steroid Qvar, which together grossed more than \$650 million in sales in 2019 and saw price hikes of between 5% and 6%. Teva hiked prices for some drugs, including muscle relaxant Amrix and narcolepsy treatment Nuvigil,



Customers wait in the pharmacy department at a Target store in the Brooklyn borough of New York. File photo.

as much as 9.4%.

More price hikes are expected to be announced on Friday and in early January.

In 2020, drugmakers raised prices on more than 860 drugs by around 5 percent, on average, according to 3 Axis. Drug price increases have slowed substantially since 2015, both in terms of the size of the hikes and the number of drugs affected.

The increases come as pharmaceutical companies

like Pfizer are playing hero by developing vaccines for COVID-19 in record time. The hikes could help make up for lost revenue as doctors visits and new prescriptions plummeted during the global lockdown.

Pfizer plans to raise prices on more than 60 drugs by between 0.5% and 5%. Those include roughly 5% increases on some of its top sellers like rheumatoid arthritis treatment Xeljanz and cancer drugs

Ibrance and Inlyta.

Pfizer said it had adjusted the list prices of its drugs by around 1.3% across all products in its portfolio, in line with inflation.

"This modest increase is necessary to support investments that allow us to continue to discover new medicines and deliver those breakthroughs to the patients who need them," spokeswoman Amy Rose said in a statement, pointing in particular to the COVID-19 vaccine the company

developed with Germany's BioNTech SE.

It said that its net prices, which back out rebates to pharmacy benefit managers and other discounts, have actually fallen for the last 3 years.

France's Sanofi plans to increase prices on a number of vaccines 5 percent or less and will announce more price increases later in January, spokesperson Ashleigh Koss said.

Bitcoin touches record above \$29,000, extending 2020 rally

NEW YORK

The price of Bitcoin topped \$29,000 on Thursday for the first time, with the digital currency almost quadrupling in value this year amid heightened interest from investors big and small alike.

The world's most popular cryptocurrency touched \$29,300 before pulling back, most recently down 0.67%

at \$28,774.36. It has surged by nearly half since breaking \$20,000 for the first time on Dec. 16.

Bitcoin's potential for quick gains, as well as expectations it could become a mainstream payment method, has attracted demand from larger U.S. investors, as well as from traders who normally stick to

equities.

"You can buy a stock like Amazon, you can buy a stock like Apple, and you know what you got," said Dennis Dick, a proprietary trader at Bright Trading LLC. "Bitcoin you really just have digits on a screen and you're really hoping that the guy behind you sees it as being worth more than what you

just paid for it, so it's a purely speculative view," he said.

Still, intrigued by the story behind bitcoin and the traction it was getting with institutional investors, he put 1% of his net worth into a bitcoin fund around five weeks ago, which has doubled in value since then, and he sold half on Thursday.

"When you double your money within five weeks, if you sell half of it, I figure now you're playing with the house's money," he said.

Recent gains have taken bitcoin's market capitalization past \$536 billion, according to industry website CoinMarketCap.

Electric vehicle maker Tesla to deliver China-made Model Y SUVs this month

BEIJING

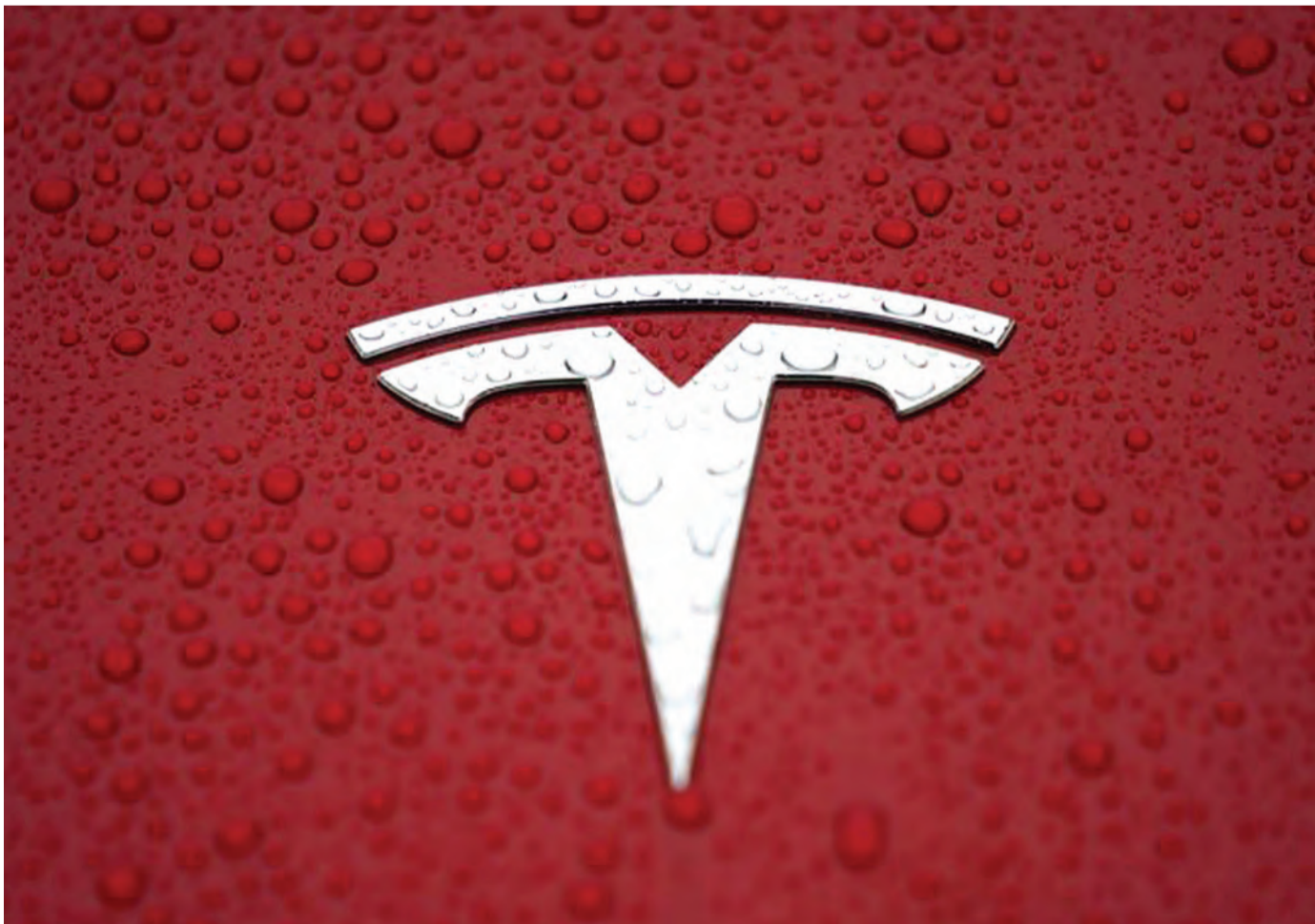
Tesla Inc said on Friday it has started selling China-made Model Y sport-utility vehicles (SUV) and will deliver them to customers this month, as the U.S. electric vehicle maker expands sales in the world's biggest car market.

China, which offers hefty subsidies for electric vehicles as it seeks to cut down on pollution from petrol or diesel cars, is key to Tesla's global strategy. It is expanding its Shanghai car factory, where it also builds its Model 3 sedans. In October, it started exporting Model 3 vehicles to Europe.

It is also adding manufacturing capacity for EV chargers in Shanghai and expanding its sales and service network around the country. It sold over 20,000 vehicles in November.

The starting price of a Model Y in China is now 339,900 yuan (\$52,091.95), according to its China website.

Tesla's rivals in China include Volkswagen AG, BMW as well as local startups such as Nio Inc, Xpeng Inc, and Li Auto Inc, which all have electric SUV models. (\$1=6.5250 Chinese yuan renminbi)



A Tesla logo is seen at a groundbreaking ceremony of Tesla Shanghai Gigafactory in Shanghai, China. File photo.

U.S. crude output drops in October as demand falls further

NEW YORK

U.S. crude oil production was down more than 2 million barrels per day (bpd) in October from earlier this year, as weak prices and tepid demand due to the coronavirus pandemic weighed on output, a government report showed on Thursday.

The report suggested that crude demand in the world's largest economy remained below the highs of earlier this year, and production was largely flat since cuts began in the spring.

Total U.S. oil demand in October was down by 2.15 million bpd, or more than 10% below the same month a year earlier. The decline was sharper than the 9.5% seen in September.

Output has fallen from a record-high monthly average of 12.86 million bpd in November, 2019. Production dropped sharply in May as low demand and prices forced widespread drilling cuts.

Oil output dropped by 442,000 barrels per day to 10.42 million bpd in October, the latest month for which data was available. The losses were led by declines in the offshore U.S. Gulf of Mexico, according to the Energy Information Administration report.

Storms that month caused offshore production shut-ins, contributing to the losses. Still, even without the Gulf declines, production remained below pre-pandemic levels.

Top onshore producers Texas and North Dakota reported modest gains in the month as some producers brought into production wells that had been shut, as prices improved.

Meanwhile, U.S. natural gas production for October was 99,568 million cubic feet a day, down from 100,221 in September.

Exxon signals up to \$20 billion writedown to overwhelm 4th-qtr gains in oil, chemicals

HOUSTON

Exxon Mobil Corp signaled in a regulatory filing that higher oil and gas prices and improved chemicals margins would aid fourth quarter results, but the gains would be overshadowed by an up to \$20 billion asset writedown.

The largest U.S. oil producer has posted losses in the first three quarters of 2020 on an ill-timed spending increase that collided with a downturn in fuel demand and prices. It faces a proxy fight next year by an activist investor calling for deeper cuts, new directors and a re-focusing on cleaner fuels.

The filing after the market closed on Wednesday showed Exxon expects higher prices will sequentially lift its oil and gas operating results by between \$200 million and \$1 billion. That business suffered a \$383 million operating loss in the third quarter.

The filing also signaled another operating loss in refining, but higher chemicals margins drove operating profit in that unit by between \$200 million and \$400 million. In the prior quarter, refining posted a \$231 million loss while chemicals turned a \$661 million profit.

The writedown of mostly natural gas properties was previously estimated at between \$17 billion and \$20 billion and the filing narrowed the range of the impairment charge.

Exxon last year began providing a snapshot of its key businesses after the end of each quarter to give investors insight into operations. Many of those prior updates led Wall Street to lower profit During the final quarter, the company outlined plans for deeper cost cuts that will chop capital spending by at least \$10 billion this year and next, and the first stages of a 15% workforce reduction that will continue through next December.

Adjusted fourth-quarter loss could hit \$3.47 billion, or 61 cents per share, according to Refinitiv IBES data, compared with a year-earlier profit of \$5.69 billion, or \$1.33 per share.

Exxon posted the details after the market close. Its shares finished up 33 cents at \$41.60 but are down 41% year to date.

WORLD

In dueling New Year messages, Trump reflects while Biden looks ahead

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump in a New Year's Eve message reflected on his accomplishments in office, calling them "historic victories," while his successor, President-elect Joe Biden, struck an upbeat tone in looking ahead to 2021.

After weeks of vowing to win his fight to remain in office, Republican Trump said in a video posted on Twitter: "We have to be remembered for what's been done."

Trump, who has yet to formally concede his November election defeat to his Democratic rival, returned to Washington early from his Florida resort amid a fight with Congress over a defense bill and coronavirus aid checks.

Speaking from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, Biden paid tribute to healthcare workers and encouraged people to get vaccinated in a brief appearance with his wife, Jill Biden, on the long-running ABC special "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest 2021."

"I'm absolutely, positively confident - confident - we're going to come back and we're going to come back even stronger than before," said Biden, who takes office on Jan. 20.

He repeated his call for vaccines to be distributed more quickly.

Trump, who had COVID-19 in October, frequently played down the severity of the pandemic and oversaw a response many health experts have criticized as disorganized, cavalier and sometimes ignored the science behind virus transmission.

But in his remarks he noted that the United States has produced a COVID-19 vaccine in record time and he had correctly predicted it would come before the year ended.

The United States has been one of the countries worst-hit by COVID-19 and leads the world in fatalities, with more than 340,000 deaths officially attributed to the virus.

Trump was originally scheduled to attend a New Year's Eve party at his Mar-a-Lago resort.

The White House has given no reason for why he returned to Washington early, but it coincides with Trump's fight with Congress over his veto of a major defense bill and his demand for increased COVID-19 stimulus checks, as well as a spike in tensions with Iran.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in the chamber, dealt a likely death blow on Wednesday to Trump's bid to boost coronavirus aid to Americans, declining to schedule a swift vote on a bill to raise relief checks to \$2,000 from the \$600 included in a \$892 billion relief package



President Donald Trump

passed by Congress earlier this month.

TENSIONS WITH REPUBLICANS

Trump's fellow Republicans in Congress have largely stuck with him through four turbulent years, but he lashed out at them in recent days for not fully backing his unsupported claims of election fraud, rejecting his demand for bigger checks and for moving toward the veto override.

McConnell on Thursday again rejected a vote on a standalone bill that would increase the stimulus checks, calling it "socialism for rich people" and "a terrible way to get help to families who actually need it." The bill was passed by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives on Monday.

McConnell also said there should be nothing controversial about approving the \$740 billion National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which Trump vetoed because it does not repeal certain legal protections for tech companies.

"We've enacted an annual NDAA for 59 straight years and counting," McConnell said. "In the next few days - the easy way or the hard way - we're going to do our job once again. This body will fulfill our responsibility to the men and women who protect our country." The House voted to overturn Trump's veto on Monday. The Senate will convene again on Friday at Noon EST (1700 GMT) for a rare New Year's Day session in which lawmakers are expected to cast the first of two procedural votes aimed at overriding the veto. If that succeeds, the Senate is expected to hold a second procedural vote on Saturday followed by a final vote on passage.

Republican Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri has said he will object to Biden's victory when Congress convenes to officially tally the Electoral College votes on Jan. 6, which could trigger a lengthy debate in the Senate but has no chance of overturning the results. CNN reported that some 140 Republicans in the House are expected to engage in similar tactics.

Agencies

With little ado, a divided United Kingdom casts off into the Brexit unknown

LONDON

THE United Kingdom left the European Union's orbit on Thursday, turning its back on a tempestuous 48-year liaison with the European project for an uncertain post-Brexit future in its most significant geopolitical shift since the loss of empire.

Brexit, in essence, took place at the stroke of midnight in Brussels, or 2300 London time (GMT), when the United Kingdom ended the de facto membership, known as the transition period, which lasted 11 months after it formally left on Jan. 31.

For five years, the frenzied gyrations of the Brexit crisis dominated European affairs, haunted the sterling markets and tarnished the United Kingdom's reputation as a confident pillar of Western economic and political stability.

After years of Brexit vitriol, one of the most significant events in European history since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union passed with little fanfare: The United Kingdom slipped away, serenaded by the silence of the COVID-19 crisis.

Supporters cast Brexit as the dawn of a newly independent "global Britain", but it has weakened the bonds that bind England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland into a \$3 trillion economy.

"This is an amazing moment for this country," Prime Minister Boris Johnson, 56, said in his New Year's Eve message. "We have our freedom in our hands and it is up to us to make the most of it."

As EU leaders and citizens bade farewell, Johnson said there would be no bonfire of regulations to build a "barren basement Dickensian Britain" and that the country would remain the "quintessential European civilization".

But Johnson, the face of the Brexit campaign, has been short on detail about what he wants to build with Britain's "independence" - or how to do it while borrowing record amounts to pay for the COVID-19 crisis.

His 80-year-old father, Stanley Johnson, who voted to remain in 2016, said he was in the process of applying for a French passport.

Life's trials and tribulations reason to shed vanity, focus on crucial matters, says Putin

PETROPAVLOVSK-KAMCHATSKY

THE trials of life are unavoidable, but they urge one and all to turn an attentive ear to the voice of conscience, to brush off vanity and to focus on the matters of the greatest importance, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in his customary New Year address to the nation. The residents of the Kamchatka Peninsula were the first audience in Russia to hear his message minutes before midnight.

"True, the formidable novel coronavirus has changed and turned upside down the customary mode of life, work and studies, it forced a revision of and amendments to many plans. In our world, the trials of life are unavoidable. They urge us to turn an attentive ear to the voice of conscience, to brush off vanity and to focus on the matters of the greatest importance," Putin (pictured) said.

He added that he was referring to "the gift of human life, the family, our mothers and fathers, our grandpas and grandmas, our children - both little kids and grown-ups - our friends and colleagues, disinterested assistance and the common energy of acts of kindness - large-scale deeds of national importance and small ones, too, within each neighborhood, street and house, but nevertheless no less significant."

"Trials and misfortunes will certainly vanish. As they always do. But there will remain with us everything that makes us noble and strong: love, mutual understanding, trust and support," Putin said.

"I would like to wish that all hardships of the outgoing year sink into oblivion, while all the very best that we have gained, and the potential each person has displayed remains with us forever," he added.

Putin said that "today it is very important to have faith in oneself, not to retreat in the face of hardships, and to take care of our unity, which is the basis for our successes in the future."

"I am certain that together we shall overcome everything, restore and establish normal life, and push ahead with renewed energy to handle the tasks facing Russia in the coming third decade of the 21st century," he concluded.



Xi: Triumphs epic written by the people

BEIJING

THE Chinese people have written an epic of disease control with their unity and strength throughout the extraordinary year of 2020, and they will create a more splendid future through hard work as they have always done, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, expressed sympathy to COVID-19 patients and greeted the heroes in the fight against the pandemic in his New Year's address.

Xi highlighted the contributions made by doctors, soldiers, scientists, community workers, volunteers and builders, young or old, in overcoming difficulties together.

The heroes have carried out their missions at the cost of their lives, protecting the people with their love and building a strong screen to safeguard lives, Xi said.

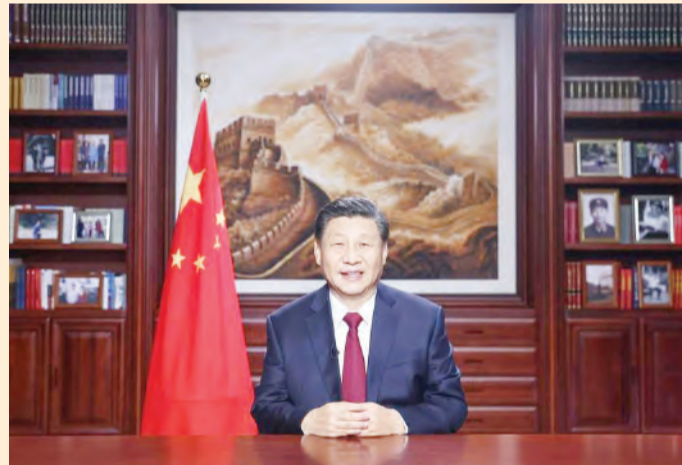
"Everyone is amazing," Xi said, adding that he was proud of the great nation and people.

The president recalled the major achievements of economic and social development in the past year, when the country completed its 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-20) and mapped out the blueprint of its 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25).

Xi said China has taken the lead among major economies to achieve positive economic growth, and the country's GDP is expected to reach the new stage of 100 trillion yuan (US\$15.29 trillion) in 2020.

The president noted rising grain production for 17 consecutive years and major scientific steps such as the Tianwen 1 Mars probe, the Chang'e 5 lunar probe and deep-diving manned submersible Fendouzhe, or Striver. Construction of the Hainan free trade port has also picked up steam, along with China's plan to further open up its economy.

The country defeated severe flood disasters, and flood



President Xi Jinping delivers a New Year speech on Thursday evening in Beijing to ring in 2021. (XINHUA)

losses were kept at a minimum through the joint efforts of the military and people, Xi said.

Xi said that when he inspected 13 provinces and municipalities during the year, he was glad to see the people implement disease prevention measures prudently, waste no time in resuming work and production and spare no efforts to promote innovation.

China has made historic

achievements in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and secured decisive victory in poverty reduction, Xi said.

Through eight years of sustained work, China has lifted all 100 million rural poor out of poverty under the current standard, Xi said, adding that he has been impressed by the people's spirit of hard work and the poverty alleviation officials'

contributions when he visited poverty-stricken areas.

Xi encouraged the nation to make further efforts to achieve rural vitalization and common prosperity.

Mentioning his trips to Shenzhen, Guangdong province, and Pudong New Area in Shanghai, the two early pilot areas for the country's reform and opening-up, Xi pledged greater steps to deepen reform and boost opening-up.

Xi also recalled his phone conversations with leaders of other countries and his participation in video link meetings, saying that all nations should join in fighting disease and making Earth a better home.

Xi noted that 2021 is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC.

He said upholding the people-centered philosophy and remaining true to its original aspiration, the Party definitely will lead the Chinese people to achieve national rejuvenation.

Xinhua

AU, UN urge Sudanese actors to ensure safe, orderly drawdown of Darfur peacekeeping mission

ADDIS ABABA

THE African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) on Thursday urged all Sudanese actors to ensure a "safe and orderly drawdown" of the joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission in the country's Darfur region.

In a joint statement, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on all Sudanese actors to ensure a safe and orderly drawdown of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) over the next six

months and the ensuing period of liquidation.

The statement came as the joint mission officially ended mandated operations on Thursday and the government of Sudan will take over responsibility for the protection of civilians in the area.

The establishment of "this

unique hybrid mission was a historic undertaking, through which both organizations and a number of troop and police contributing countries and donors have been engaged in collective efforts to protect civilians and help build peace in Darfur," the statement said.

The AU commission chair-

person and the UN secretary-general reiterated their commitment to continuously assisting the government and people of Sudan in consolidating the gains made in the peace process and implementing the National Plan of Action on Civilian Protection.

Xinhua

Foreign businesses stay optimistic about Chinese market

FOREIGN direct investment (FDI) into the Chinese mainland, in actual use, hit 98.7 billion yuan (\$14.38 billion) in November, up 5.5 percent year on year, according to statistics released by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) on Dec. 15.

This marked the eighth consecutive month for the country to witness positive growth in FDI.

A recent survey done by the British Chamber of Commerce in China indicated that 44 percent of British businesses planned to increase investment in China in 2021. Similar sentiment is also shown in a U.S.-China Business Council report which said nearly 70 percent of the council's member companies expressed optimism about market prospects in China over the next five years. The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China also disclosed in a survey

that more than 40 percent of interviewed Japanese enterprises said they would expand their businesses in China in the next one to two years.

The trust of foreign businesses in China comes from the steady growth of the Chinese economy. As a major economy that is first in the world to put COVID-19 under control and resume production, China has showcased its economic resilience and vitality, which contributed a major part to foreign businesses' confidence in the Chinese market.

In November this year, China's Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI), non-manufacturing business activity index, and comprehensive PMI output index reached 52.1 percent, 56.4 percent and 55.7 percent, respectively, all exceeding the threshold for nine consecutive months.

The total profits of industrial enterprises above designated size nationwide from January to October expanded by 0.7 percent from a year ago, marking the first positive growth in the year.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Economic Outlook released earlier this month projected that China will be the only major economy to record a positive performance this year, which coincides with the statement made earlier by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The remarkable economic performance of China is a major reason for its strong attraction to global market entities.

The trust of foreign businesses in China comes from the country's continuous efforts to

lift its business environment. China enacted the foreign investment law and its implementing regulations, comprehensively canceled the approval and registration of foreign enterprises in the business field, and amended the Measures for the Handling of Complaints from Foreign-invested Enterprises. China's continuous efforts to build a market-oriented, law-based, and internationalized business environment have won high recognition from the international society.

The World Bank said in a July publication titled "China's Doing Business Success: Drivers of Reforms and Opportunities for the Future" that China has witnessed an unprecedented improvement in its business environment. An investigation done by the American Chamber of Commerce in China (AmCham China) also

found that 12 percent more respondents indicated a substantial improvement in China's investment environment, compared with those from a year ago. The trust of foreign businesses in China comes from the country's constant measures to expand opening-up. China is currently accelerating the establishment of a "dual circulation" development pattern in which domestic economic cycle plays a leading role while international economic cycle remains its extension and supplement, so as to make steadier steps toward high-quality opening-up.

Items on China's national negative list have been cut from 40 to 33; the Hainan free trade port has been constructed; a master plan was unveiled to build three new pilot free trade zones (FTZs) in Beijing, Hunan and Anhui; efforts are being made to expand opening-up in financial and other sectors. **People's Daily**

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African free trade bloc opens after years of talks

By Agencies

THE first goods will begin to flow under an Africa-wide free-trade pact yesterday, the culmination of more than five years of negotiations on cutting cross-border tariffs.

The accord comes to fruition at a time when trade tensions are rising across much of the rest of the world. The 55-nation African Union will mark the occasion in a ceremony that comes just hours after the UK leaves the European Union's single market and a new post-Brexit trade agreement enters into force.

Africa could be the world's biggest free-trade zone by area when its treaty becomes fully operational by 2030. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to bring together 1.3 billion people in a US\$3.4 trillion economic bloc that will be the largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization.

The accord "will fundamentally change the economic fortunes of our continent," South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who holds the AU's rotating chairmanship, said in a speech on Thursday. "It is the start of a new era of trade between African countries, when the continent will produce the goods and services it needs, when its economies will grow, industrialize and diversify, when it will realize the great potential of its abundant natural resources."

Trade under the AfCFTA was meant to be launched on July 1 but was pushed back after COVID-19 made in-person negotiations impossible.

However, the pandemic also gave the process added impetus, said Silver Ojakol, chief of staff at the AfCFTA's secretariat.

"We saw the impact on our economies of the disruption of imports due to the pandemic," he said. "So there's actu-

ally been an increase in political will to boost intra-African integration."

Intra-African trade fell to 14.5 percent of the total in 2019, from 15 percent the year before. The free-trade pact could bolster the proportion to 22 percent, and commerce within the continent could rise to more than US\$231 billion even if all other conditions remained unchanged, the African Export-Import Bank said in a report published on Dec 15. Internal shipments accounted for 52 percent of total trade in Asia and 72 percent in Europe, according to Afreximbank data.

The accord seeks to lower or eliminate cross-border tariffs on most goods, facilitate the movement of capital and people, promote investment and pave the way for a continent-wide customs union.

All but one of the 55 nations recognized by the African Union have signed to join the area and more than half have ratified the accord. Eritrea, which has a largely closed economy, is the sole hold-out.

The formation of the trading bloc could cushion the region against continuing coronavirus-related uncertainties and escalating trade tensions, as well as lessen its exposure to adverse terms of trade and price cycles for commodities, Afreximbank said last month.

Historic challenges including Africa's poor road and rail links, political unrest, excessive border bureaucracy and petty corruption will not disappear overnight.

And an annex to the deal outlining the rules of origin - an essential step for determining which products can be subject to tariffs and duties - has not been completed yet.

Meanwhile, 41 of the zone's 54 member states have submitted tariff reduction schedules.

Members must phase out 90 percent of tariff lines - over five years for more



The African Heads of States and Governments pose during African Union (AU) Summit for the agreement to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area in Kigali, Rwanda, on March 21, 2018. PHOTO / AFP

advanced economies or 10 years for less developed nations. Another 7 percent considered sensitive will get more time, while 3 percent will be allowed to be placed on an exclusion list.

Finalising those schedules and communicating them to businesses must be done quickly, said Ziad Hamoui of Borderless Alliance, a group that campaigns for easier cross-border trade.

Still, proponents of the zone are confident that initial steps towards its implementation will already allow member states to double intra-African trade by 2025.

"Economic integration is not an event. It's a process," said the AfCFTA secretariat's Ojakol. "We must start somewhere."

CHINA-AFRICA TRADE POTENTIAL

On the same day as trading under the AfCFTA began, the China-Mauritius Free Trade Agreement, the first free trade agreement that China has signed with an African country, also entered into force.

Meanwhile, African leaders and businesses are eyeing greater potential of trade with China.

"The AfCFTA implementation will further tap business opportunities that China is enjoying with Africa," said Jacob Makambwe, Secretary General of the Southern Africa Cross Border Traders' Association in Zambia.

Dina Mufti, spokesman for the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry, said that

Ethiopia is keen on attracting more Chinese investments despite the fact that Chinese firms are already the largest investors in Ethiopia.

"Africa needs to learn from other global trading blocs, which grew their economies through partnerships. Those partnerships bring technology, fiscal capital, people, and knowledge," Yoofi Grant, chief executive of the Ghana Investment Promotion Center, told Xinhua.

"Although partnerships need to be broad and global in nature, a partnership with China, in particular, is critical, looking at the role of Chinese investments in bridging the infrastructure gap on the continent," said Grant, adding that "we see a lot of roads, railways, and bridge projects in Africa financed by the Chinese."

WHO approves Pfizer-BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine

NEW YORK

THE World Health Organization issued its first emergency-use designation for a COVID-19 vaccine, making the Pfizer / BioNtech the first immunization to receive a green light from the Geneva-based body. The move could allow more countries to import and distribute the vaccine, which has already been cleared for use in the US, UK and Europe.

Global tally

The global COVID-19 death toll has surpassed 1.8 million while the number of coronavirus cases reported worldwide topped 83.3 million, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Pfizer

Pfizer Inc. said the second dose of its COVID-19 vaccine should be delivered to individuals within the recommended 21-day period, calling into question a decision by the UK to space out the dosing regimen.

The UK decision not to hold back any of its vaccine supply is aimed at quickly reaching as many high-risk people as possible. Under the government plan, second doses could be administered as many as 12 weeks later, longer than the three-week timing determined as optimal by Pfizer's late-stage studies and the four weeks suggested for the shot developed by Moderna Inc.

Pfizer said Thursday that people should get their shots on the recommended schedule, warning that "there is no data to demonstrate that protection after the first dose is sustained after 21 days." Agencies

Shibadong village is a big stage for me

BY SHI LINJIAO

I was born in Shibadong village, Huayuan county in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture of Hunan in 1996. The village, boasting green mountains and lucid water, once suffered poverty, distancing us from a well-off life.

It was in 2013 that the idea of "targeted poverty alleviation" was raised in our village and spread to the rest of the country, bringing drastic changes to numerous poverty-stricken villages. I'm also one of the beneficiaries.

Back in 2015, when I was about to take the college entrance exam, I hoped to major in art as a child who had always been enthusiastic about singing. However, my father passed away at the critical stage of my exam, which aggravated the economic burden of my poor family.

Fortunately, the targeted poverty alleviation policies enabled my mother to afford the education of me and my siblings. As a result, I had my dream come true - being accepted to Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, and paid the tuition with student loan.

The colorful college life opened a new door for me, a kid from a Miao village in west Hunan. I studied, practiced and opened my mind with great eagerness. After graduating in 2019, I found a job in



Tourists visit Shibadong village, Huayuan county in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture of Hunan, April 25. (File Photo)

Changsha, capital of Hunan province. However, I was so concerned about the development of Shibadong village that I always dreamed about it. Therefore, I decided to quit my job and start my own business in my hometown.

Given the increasingly fast internet in the village, which is fully covered by wireless network, as well as the banks and e-commerce service stations established there, I made up my mind to help villagers sell local specialties via livestream marketing.

At first, I felt huge pressure due to the unstable commodity supply, and the lack of capital and experience. Thanks to the guidance offered by the units for pair assistance and work teams for poverty alle-

viation, I showcased the sceneries, food, custom, architectures, and Miao embroidery of Shibadong village, and shared the stories of local farming. I soon gained popularity on livestreaming platforms and my village became known to more and more people.

I always receive compliments on the sceneries of my village when I'm doing livestream shows, and I have to say that the village indeed changed a lot, in a better way. The per capita income of the village rocketed to 15,000 yuan (\$2,293) from less than 1,700 yuan in 2013, and the village also gained over 12 million yuan from collective economy projects. Villagers are not only running agritainment facilities, but also enjoying dividends

from kiwi fruit orchards and mineral water business. As a resident in the village, I feel very happy and proud.

Today, as more and more young people are returning the village, I feel gladder about my choice back then. Shibadong village is a big stage for me. I believe that thriving countryside will lead to a thriving nation. The people of my generation will definitely inject vitality to Shibadong village, and contribute our own strength on the path to a prosperous life.

(Shi Linjiao is a resident from Shibadong village, Huayuan county in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture of central China's Hunan province.)

Xi, Putin vow to boost Sino-Russian ties in New Year greetings

BEIJING

CHINESE President Xi Jinping said Thursday that he stands ready to maintain close contact with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in various forms in a bid to lead their countries towards deeper comprehensive strategic coordination and practical cooperation in various fields.

Xi made the remarks when exchanging New Year congratulations with Putin, adding that in doing so, greater benefits will be brought to the two peoples and more positive energy injected into the turbulent and changing world.

In his message, Xi, on behalf of the Chinese government and people, extended sincere greetings and best wishes to Putin and the Russian people.

Noting that 2020 is an extraordinary year, Xi said the Chinese and Russian people have helped each other and worked together in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, writing a new chapter of good-neighborliness and friendship between the two countries.

In 2020, Xi said, the two sides launched the China-Russia Year of Scientific and Technological Innovation program, promoted the steady development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation under the condition of regular COVID-19 prevention and control, and achieved new progress in aligning the construction of the Belt and Road with the Eurasian Economic Union.

China and Russia also jointly celebrated the 75th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations, demonstrating their firm determination to safeguard international fairness and justice, and making new contributions to building a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for mankind, Xi added.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) awards his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin

Xi said he and Putin in the past year have had several telephone conversations, jointly attended a series of multilateral summits via video link, had in-depth exchange of views on China-Russia relations and major international and regional issues, and reached new and important consensus, which the Chinese president speaks highly of.

Noting that the upcoming year is of special significance to bilateral relations, Xi said the two sides, centering on the theme of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, will vigorously promote the idea of a lasting friendship between the two countries, and envisage and enrich the development of China-Russia relations in the new era.

On the same day, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin also exchanged New Year greetings.

Xinhua

Scourge of gun violence in US is living nightmare

IN March last year, Jack Young, then mayor of Baltimore, Maryland in the U.S., urged residents to put down their guns after a shooting incident.

"We cannot clog up our hospitals or their beds with people who are being shot senselessly because we're going to need those beds for people who might be infected with the coronavirus," Young said.

Since the beginning of last year, the pressing problem of frequent violent crimes in America has been becoming more salient due to multiple factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession, societal breakdown and increasing political uncertainty.

The problem of violent crimes in America is long-standing, and fre-

quent mass shootings have become a defining feature of the U.S.

At present, the U.S. population accounts for only 5 percent of the world's population, yet 31 percent of the world's mass shooting incidents in public places have happened in the country. In 2019, 39,052 people died from gun-related violence in the U.S.

The "Crime in the United States, 2018" report released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2019 showed that in 2018, an estimated 1,206,836 violent crimes occurred nationwide. The number of violent-

crime victims aged 12 or older in the United States was 3.3 million in 2018, rising for three consecutive years, according to the "Criminal Victimization, 2018" report released by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2019.

"This seems to be the age of mass shootings," commented USA Today.

Due to the severe pandemic, violent crimes in some U.S. cities have risen dramatically. There were more than seven violent shooting incidents in Chicago every day on average in 2019, resulting in 2,255 injuries and 452 deaths, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. Last

year, 3,619 people had been shot in the city as of Nov. 9.

Citing data from the police department, CNN reported that New York City had recorded about 1,300 shootings since the beginning of this year, up 94 percent over the same period in 2019.

The Washington Post pointed out that a survey of 67 big-city police departments in the U.S. found an aggregate 28.7 percent increase in slayings and 10.6 percent rise in aggravated assaults in these cities in the first nine months of last year. The rampant violent crimes in America are inevitably

traced to the scourge of gun violence. Strangely enough, the U.S. Congress has rejected more than 100 gun control proposals.

It should be noted that the surge in gun sales across the U.S. and an increase in the number of first-time gun buyers this year are worsening the risk of violent crimes and making it harder to solve the problem.

In the first 10 months of last year, more than 15.4 million guns had been purchased in the U.S., according to statistics from the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) in the U.S. The

NSSF predicted that gun sales in the country would hit a record high in 2020.

A new survey found that about 110,000 people in California purchased a firearm this year, including 47,000 first-time gun owners, out of their concerns over violence and civil unrest amid the COVID-19 pandemic, said the Los Angeles Times.

Obviously, too many guns have become a serious issue in the U.S. and the scourge of gun violence in America has become a living nightmare.

The U.S. has fallen into a vicious circle. On the one hand, violent crimes caused by guns are on the rise. On

the other hand, growing shooting incidents have prompted more U.S. people to buy guns.

Poor governance in the U.S. is obvious to all. CNN pointed out that the fact that the life of American people couldn't be basically guaranteed has greatly increased the crime rate.

The surging crime rate in America is an inevitable result of a combination of the long-standing social conflicts, which have intertwined during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, protests against racism and police violence have intensified conflicts between Americans and law enforcement authorities and between local governments and the federal government, leading to more violent crimes.

People's Daily

Namungo FC gets financial support from SportPesa Tanzania

BY GUARDIAN REPORTER

SPORTS betting firm, SportPesa Tanzania, has handed over cash totaling 23.3m/- to Vodacom Premier League side, Namungo FC, so the outfit can perform well in this season's CAF Confederation Cup.

The Lindi-based side has made it to the second tier of club tournaments in Africa's first round.

The squad is set to take on Al Hilal Obeid of Sudan in the return leg of the round at the latter's venue, slated for January 6.

The first round clash between the teams, which took place at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam a week back, saw Namungo FC cruise to 2-0 victory over Al Hilal Obeid.

The Tanzanian outfit now needs a draw in the away return leg to progress to the play off stage.

SportPesa Tanzania Director of Administration and Compliance, Tarimba Abbas, disclosed the financial support is solely for the club's preparation for the Wednesday clash.

Abbas stated the cash will see to it Namungo FC purchase return tickets for their trip to Sudan, as well as meeting other expenditures heading into the match.

He noted he believes Namungo FC will emerge victorious in the tough return leg.

"SportPesa Tanzania, in the firm's efforts to value sports promotion, has handed over cash

to Namungo FC to see to it the outfit meets some of expenses heading into the duel, which include cash for purchasing return tickets for players and officials," he said.

"It is a little cash but we believe it will greatly help Namungo FC shape up for the coming clash."

"We hardly have doubt about Namungo FC's prowess, we believe the club will get good results and progress to the next stage of the continental tournament."

"SportPesa Tanzania's support for Namungo FC targets to see to it sports make headway domestically, for that matter, we will continue offering sponsorship the way we do to Simba SC and Yanga."

Namungo FC's Chairman, Hassan Zidada, said: "We are pleased to get this sponsorship from SportPesa Tanzania, it is a valuable backing."

"This sponsorship will help us purchase return tickets and meet other expenses heading into the return leg against Al Hilal Obeid, which will take place in Sudan."

"Soccer needs plenty of cash, therefore, we believe this sponsorship will greatly help us prepare for the match, which promises to be tough."

"I appeal to other firms to back various football outfits, given soccer is part of entertainment and it is a sport which commands great following."



SportPesa Tanzania Director of Administration and Compliance, Tarimba Abbas (R), presents a dummy cheque of 23.3m/- to Namungo FC's Chairman, Hassan Zidada, in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The cash gears towards seeing to it Namungo FC prepares adequately for the squad's CAF Confederation Cup first round's return leg against Al Hilal Obeid of Sudan, slated for Wednesday in Khartoum. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SPORTPESA

Farid Mussa: What fans ought to expect from him in 2021?

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL

MWEBE

WHEN Young Africans SC (Yanga) announced the capture of Farid Mussa in August, 2020, they believed the then out of contract CD Tenerife's wide attacker will take the former to the next level.

Even though a lot of Tanzania's senior national soccer team "Taifa Stars" supporters were disappointed to see the country's another foreign-based player return to the local league, Yanga were excited about Mussa.

Despite the high reported sign on fee, the Jangwani Street outfit's fans indicated the club had not only made the right decision to opt for the Taifa Stars' winger, but also found someone to share the final-third burden with Congolese, Tuisila Kisinda, who had been signed from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) soccer giants, AS Vita club, the same month.

Four months later, however, and it is not wrong to say the big-money acquisition has not delivered on his promise, having started in only six matches out of the 18 played by Yanga in the league.

He has made five more appearances from the bench to make it 11 games so far for Yanga.

At first it was reported he fell out with the sacked head coach Zlatko Krmpotic but the fact that Thursday's Premier League match against Tanzania Prisons was only his fourth league start under Burundian tactician, Cedric Kaze, shows even the latter is not absolutely convinced by one of the club's marquee signings.

Prisons' game was a squan-



Yanga's midfielder, Farid Mussa. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

dered opportunity. He was ineffective in the one hour he played in the duel, which ended in 1-1 draw.

Hosts Prisons set out to frustrate Yanga and they did just that until Mussa was replaced by Deus Kaseke who injected quality that led to the much needed equaliser.

Undoubtedly, the New Year will be of great significance to the 25-year-old, as he strives to win back his place in Kaze's side.

Back in August anyone who had intimated the wide forward

would not be in Yanga's starting XI by would have been dismissed as a person with little knowledge of football.

Soccer fans were talking of a Tanzanian international who had been in Spain for four years.

Assessing his stats after the mid-season it is only fair to say Mussa is not yet the key player Yanga imagined he would become at the club that is hungry to end a three-year trophy wait.

In 2021, Mussa has to show the sort of form and consistency, ir-

respective of the competition for places in Yanga's forward line.

He cannot afford to play second fiddle and see his stock take an unredeemable plunge in the second half of the season.

Congo Brazzaville striker Férébory Dore, aged 31, is reportedly in talks to join Yanga as a free agent in a move that adds more competition in the striking department.

Indeed, this was not the scenario Mussa imagined when he signed, but the addition of well travelled Burundian, Said Ntibazonkiza, incoming signature of Dore, who has 10 goals for Congo Brazzaville's national team, and Burkinabe Yacouba Songme's continued ascent do not bode well for the New Year.

At the moment Yanga can afford to march forward without Mussa but he has a two-year contract to run and on good wage.

Given the scale of the investment, both parties have to give this every opportunity to work.

Given the first XI attacking quality Yanga are building to wrestle away the title from Simba SC, it is safe to say getting into the front three would not be easy for the 24-year-old when everyone is fit.

Unless Mussa really changes, he could remain a bit-part player in Kaze's team.

The former Azam FC winger should still have a lot of credit in the bank but the goals and assists need to come soon to silence the inevitable speculation.

He needs to raise his game. He needs to respond to the added competition for places.

Geita Gold FC boosts quest for promotion to 2021/22 Premier League

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL SIKAPUNDWA, MOROGORO

GEITA Gold FC's leadership has disclosed the team seeks to go for intensive preparation for their remaining First Division League (FDL) fixtures, seeking to get good results in the games and nail a spot in the 2021/22 Mainland Premier League.

The side was yesterday set to confront Fountain Gate FC in the FDL clash at the former's venue in Geita.

Geita Gold FC crashed out of the

third round of this season's Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC), suffering 1-0 loss to top flight team, Mtibwa Sugar, in a duel which took place in December last year.

The Geita squad's head coach, Fred Felix 'Minziro', said the game against Mtibwa Sugar was crucial for his outfit's preparation for the FDL tie with Fountain Gate FC.

Felix pointed out the clash boosted his players' fitness, apart from helping him come up with different techniques and tactics to be deployed in the game against Fountain Gate FC.

"The loss was a lesson for us, it helped us improve fitness and shape up for the FDL games," he noted.

He stated: "We did not field our players, midfielders Geoffrey Manyasi and Chilo Mkama, and goalkeeper John Mwande, in the ASFC clash, we rested them so we can field them in the FDL tie with Fountain Gate FC, we are looking forward to an entertaining match against our opponents."

He said he has no doubt with his squad's competence, noting his team put good performance

throughout the game against Mtibwa Sugar.

He stated his team at some point dominated possession, executed penetration passes and showed composure.

Geita Gold FC's skipper, Joseph James, promised soccer enthusiasts in Geita the outfit will post victory over Fountain Gate FC.

James pointed out Geita Gold FC had aimed at showcasing entertaining football and impress their fans, who are eager to see the team win promotion to the Mainland Premier League.

Sky is the limit for Dar amputee football player

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

FOOTBALL is the one of sports disciplines which command great following in the world. This game can bring harmony, peace and unity in communities.

People with disabilities in Tanzania happen to have a strong passion for soccer, in comparison with their fanaticism for other sports.

Football involving people with physical disabilities, known as amputee football, is, in Tanzania, regulated by the Tanzania Amputee Football Federation (TAFF).

The federation, under president Peter Sarungi, hosted the amputee football league that began on October 4 this year at the Jakaya Kikwete Youth Park in Dar es Salaam.

This unique football is different from the one involving able bodied persons, given amputee football involves teams comprising seven players each, six outfield players and one goalkeeper.

Amputee football players use crutches to play the ball.

Outfield players have lower extremity amputations, and goalkeepers have an upper extremity amputation.

Outfield players use loftstrand (fore-arm) crutches, and play without their prosthesis.

The Guardian spoke to one of the players making the national amputee football team, Tembo Warriors, Athumani Kiyanga, who also plays for the L.S.L Amputee Football Club. Excerpts:

Question: Can you give us your brief introduction?

Answer: I am Khalfan Athuman Kiyanga, I am aged 25 and I'm the fifth child in a family of six children.

I was born in Tabora, I got my primary education at Salvation Army Primary School in Dar es Salaam from 2003-2009 after which I studied at Pugu

Secondary School from 2010-2013.

Q: Were you born with this disability?

A: No, I was born completely healthy with no leg disability but in 1999, at the age of eight, I had a train accident that left me paralyzed and doctors had to cut my leg.

Q: How did this situation affect your life?

A: My smile vanished because I knew I would neither be able to do anything nor complete my dream of playing football.

My dream was completely shattered by the accident and my happiness faded away.

Q: When did you begin to play football?

A: I began playing football in the fifth grade at Salvation Army Primary School and I continued playing the sport until I went to Pugu Secondary School.

Q: Why did you choose football and not any other sport?

A: Football is a sport that fascinated from my childhood days, I loved it before I had the accident and I always played football.

Q: What challenges are you facing in amputee football?

A: People do not believe I can play football because since I had the accident, playing with my able bodied teammates has been a bit of a challenge because they feel like I'm going to get hurt.

Q: How did you resolve the challenge?

A: By engaging with some of my teammates who played, motivated me and believed that I could still play football. I got the motivation after joining the Salvation Army Primary School in 2003.

Q: Who inspires you the most in the



Khalfan Kiyanga pictured with a top goal scorer's honour he got in Confederation of African Football (CANAF) 2019 Amputee Football Championship held in Angola. PHOTO: COURTESY OF KHALFAN KIYANGA

sport and why?

A: Cristiano Ronaldo inspires me the most, this is because he is a player who knows what he is doing in every step of his career in and off the field.

He takes good care of his body at his age and then he is a man who knows where the goal is and unleashes powerful shots on goal.

Q: Which team did you start playing for?

A: I only played for regular school teams at primary and secondary levels, I also played for my class' team at Pugu Secondary School.

Q: Which team are you playing for now?

A: I'm playing for the L.S.L Amputee Football Club and I started playing for

it in 2018 after TAFF was registered with National Sports Council (NSC).

Four amputee football outfits were later formed and I was selected for the L.S.L team.

Q: Which position do you play on the field?

A: I'm playing as a forward. We have only six people in our game's structure and the goalkeeper is seventh player, so, we can use a system consisting of two players in defense, three in the midfield and one in the final third, where I normally play.

Q: What success have you achieved in your career in amputee football?

A: First of all, earning the national amputee football team Tembo Warriors' call up is one of the joys I had

waited for.

I have been the best scorer in my club in three seasons. In the national team I have been the best scorer twice and I have also won the top scorer prize once in a competition held outside the country.

Q: How many awards have you received so far?

A: I have won three awards, I have won two of them in the amputee soccer league in Tanzania in 2018 and 2019.

I laid my hands on the third award in the Council for East Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) amputee football tournament in 2019, in which I was the showpiece's top goal scorer.

I won the fourth award the same year in the Confederation of African Football (CANAF) tournament, which took place in Angola, I was the tournament's top goal scorer.

Q: Do you have an agent?

A: At the moment I do not have any-one supervising me but I welcome any-one who would like to be my agent to work with me.

Q: What are challenges facing amputee football?

A: Fans do not come to support us when we play, this is a little annoying because they do not come regularly, for example in the 2018 amputee football league, there were very few fans turning up for matches.

There are only a few amputee football supporters, who are actually the sport's stakeholders.

Sometimes a person does not have transport to get to the gym so he has to get on a bus, it is difficult so the person does not reach the gym on time.

We are forced to encourage that person to take part in training.

Q: How is your team prepared to defend silverware in this season's amputee football league?

A: We are well prepared and I believe we will retain the top honour because we have good coordination and good cooperation when we are on the field.

Q: What are your expectations for the future?

A: I look forward to playing professional amputee football because in 2018 I was lucky enough to go for trials in Turkey after emerging as the top scorer in the league.

Their league is big and they have enough support which is why I want to go and play in the Turkish league, mind you that there are no Tanzanians who plays professional amputee football.

Q: Are there efforts made in promoting amputee football?

A: We are organizing and playing matches on the streets to promote the sport and encourage our fellows with disabilities to come and play with us, they will be trained.

After the completion of the Mainland Tanzania Amputee Football League, we have to select players for the national amputee football team which will play in 2022 Amputee Football World Cup in England.

We, therefore, have to find the best national team.

Q: What would you want to tell people with disabilities, who love the game but are hesitating to participate in it?

A: I just tell them to come and join us, work hard for their talents so that they can be successful, I'm a living testimony of achievement in amputee football.

Q: What would you want to tell Tanzanians about amputee football?

A: They should support us as they do for able bodied football players. They should actively play part in the game's promotion and show us cooperation. When they give us support, we are going to be encouraged to do better.

'Hope not to repeat mistakes': 10 years after World Cup fiasco, Domenech back in dugout

PARIS

RAYMOND Domenech was unveiled as the new boss of struggling French Ligue 1 side Nantes on Thursday, 10 years after his rollercoaster reign as France coach ended in a player strike and World Cup humiliation.

"I'm happy, it's a real pleasure... maybe I understand your problems better, I hope not to repeat my mistakes", he told journalists.

The 68-year-old Domenech was in charge of Les Bleus from 2004 until the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

The tournament was an utter fiasco with temperamental striker Nicolas Anelka sent home, players striking in response before the team was knocked out in the first round.

That was the last time Domenech coached a team.

If that was an excruciating experience for the combative Domenech, the next six months will be just as testing with Nantes down in 16th place in the table, three points above the relegation trapdoor.

"The objective is to bring pleasure, to offer something coherent to this team," said Domenech who has not coached at top-flight club level since a five-year spell at Lyon from 1988-1993.

"Through what we are going to show on the field, I hope that we will bring ev-

eryone together.

"I'm not worried, I want things to go well on the pitch, we are moving forward, we are training, the players are strong in spirit, they are happy, with a lot of joy and desire."

The club's fans, however, may need convincing.

When he arrived for training on Wednesday, he was greeted by a band playing circus music with a 'ringmaster' taking aim at him and club owner Waldemar Kita.

Players were compared to goats.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Kita Circus! The Kita Circus brings you some new amazing new acts," boomed a member of the 'Brigade Loire' supporters' club to a background of deafening music.

"Raymond Domenech will explain to us his vision of football, what will make us laugh on the upcoming weekends."

Domenech insisted Thursday that he was unperturbed by the hostility.

"At all clubs there are problems. There are worries everywhere. If everything was rosy, you'd have nothing more to write," he told reporters.

"I don't know anyone at this club who does not want it to work, everyone wants it to work."

Domenech's first match in charge will be on January 6 at home against Breton rivals Rennes.

New Year's resolutions for soccer in 2021

BY LEANDER SCHAERLAECKENS

IT'S hard to remember a more difficult year for the sport of soccer than 2020. Certainly, it never faced as many simultaneous crises as it did in the last 12 months – a pandemic that halted play for three months, the ensuing financial blows, an overdue reckoning with racism, a backlog of games in an already-overscheduled calendar.

But there are opportunities in these hardships as well, a chance to change the sport for the better. So here are some New Year's resolutions for soccer.

Soccer should rearrange its priorities

Let's start big. Soccer needs a rethink. Its model, which is to say the lack of one, inevitably ends in clubs attempting to devour themselves, and each other. Without any guardrails on their spending, especially now that UEFA's Financial Fair Play has turned out to be utterly toothless, soccer clubs big and small are unrelentingly tempted to put every last penny into their first team. And while that's understandable on its face, soccer is far too fickle a business to operate without a safety net.

Which is of a piece with a separate issue: the lack of solidarity. Without a strong superstructure to buttress the game – because UEFA and FIFA really only seem interested in enriching themselves and trading power for favors – there is nothing knitting the clubs' interests together. It's little wonder, then, that the big fish keep threatening to break away.

At some point, the sport will have to understand that the health of one re-rounds to the health of all. Does the Premier League need the fourth-tier League Two? No. But the Premier League needs the Championship. The Championship needs League One. And League One needs League Two.

It's all interconnected. And that should be reflected in the way the entire business is conducted. More money should be shared. More emergency funds should be set aside in a common pot for emergencies.

For the good of everyone. Soccer needs a kind of New Deal.

Less emphasis on transfers



The burden of extinguishing racism in soccer has fallen to players like Raheem Sterling. That's unfair, and it's past time something changed. (Agencies)

Soccer isn't the only sport in which the agents wield outsized power. But it is just about the only one where they constitute the propulsive force behind transactions. Players are constantly moving from one team to the next. Because every time they do, agents get paid. The game's super-agents stand to make tens of millions of euros from single transactions at the high end of the market. So they keep the

revolving door spinning.

But all those moves aren't always in everybody's best interests. And they lead to an enormous leakage of money from the game into the pockets of agents. But curbing the agents' power is complicated. And a needle must be threaded between players' ability to bargain for the money they fully deserve – avoiding bad ideas like a salary cap – and stopping

the enormous payouts to representatives who bring little to the table.

Especially in a time when the still-huge transfer expenditures in the summer market felt incomprehensible when set to the backdrop of layoffs and furloughs of staff and salary reductions or deferments for players.

Transfer speculation is good fun, but the actual transactions aren't necessarily good for the sport.

Take burden of anti-racism activism off players

The lack of institutional support for social activism never ceases to startle in soccer. The governing bodies go through the motions, actually doing as little as possible about the sport's entrenched racism problem. The leagues aren't much use either, not doing much beyond sanctioning ubiquitous pre-game kneeling.

So it is left to the players to take a stand. And they have had to reinvent themselves and reimagine what they could do with their platforms.

But it's hardly fair for them to have to fight more or less on their own, not when there are so many different issues to address. It shouldn't fall solely to them to fight the good fight. The clubs, leagues, federations and confederations have to do more.

Less is more

It was already well-established that soccer players are asked to play far too many games. But when the three-month layoff scrunched up the calendar further, players began to hit their breaking point. Injuries have been rampant and the soccer has suffered from all of those tired legs.

Soccer should have taken a paring knife to its schedule a long time ago, but at least the pandemic created cover for some big, bold reform.

We don't need this much soccer. More soccer doesn't equate to better soccer, no matter the financial incentives to keep coming up with new competitions. Let's make the games more compelling, and count for more, by having fewer of them.

Leander Schaerlaeckens is a Yahoo Sports soccer columnist and a sports communication lecturer at Marist College.

Cavani banned over 'negrito' social media post

LONDON

MANCHESTER United forward Edinson Cavani has been banned for three matches and fined £100,000 for using a racial term in a social media post, the Football Association announced on Thursday.

The 33-year-old summer signing produced a match-winning display at Southampton on November 29, providing an assist for Bruno Fernandes before netting a two goals in a 3-2 comeback win.

Cavani posted a social media message on Instagram shortly after the match, replying to a message of congratulations using the Spanish term "negrito" (small black person).

The Uruguayan swiftly deleted the post and issued an apology after being made aware of the connotations, with the player releasing an apologetic statement saying he was "completely opposed to racism".

But the FA has now punished the striker after he admitted breaching FA Rule E3.

"A comment posted on the Manchester United FC striker's Instagram page was insulting, abusive, improper and brought the game into disrepute," the FA said in a statement.

"The post also constitutes an 'aggravated breach'... as it included reference, whether express or implied, to colour and/or race and/or ethnic origin," the statement added.

Manchester United issued a statement saying Cavani was not aware his words could have been misconstrued and "sincerely apologised" for the post and to anyone who was offended.

"Despite his honest belief that he was simply sending an affectionate thank you in response to a congratulatory message from a close friend, he chose not to contest the charge out of respect for, and solidarity with, the FA and the fight against racism in football," the club said.

United said they hoped the independent regulatory commission appointed to decide the sanction would make it clear in its written reasons that the former Paris Saint-Germain player "is not a racist, nor was there any racist intent in relation to his

post".

Meanwhile, Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo has been charged with improper conduct by the Football Association over comments he made about referee Lee Mason.

The Portuguese was highly critical of the official after his side's Premier League match against Burnley on December 21.

The FA said in a statement: "Nuno Espirito Santo has been charged with a breach of FA Rule E3 in relation to their Premier League match against Burnley FC on Monday December 21, 2020.

"It is alleged that comments made by the head coach during a post-match interview constitute improper conduct as they were personally and/or bring the game into disrepute."

Nuno has until January 5 to respond to the charge, the FA said.

The Wolves boss took aim at Mason after the Burnley match, which ended in a 2-1 defeat for his side.

"The referee does not have the quality to whistle a game in the Premier League," he said.

He added: "I just don't want to see him more – that's what I told him. I hope he doesn't whistle a game of ours again because all the games we have with Lee Mason are always the same."

"He cannot control the players, the players are constantly arguing – both teams. With all the other referees the game flows, there's dialogue. He's just not ready to do it."

Nuno has said he would only apologise for the timing of his comments not for his "words and thoughts".

"I never ever will judge or question the integrity of a referee," he said. "I never did it and I will never do it in my life."

"What I said is about the ability of the referee, what I felt and what I saw in the match and previous matches."

Post-match comments about a referee's performance are permitted under FA regulations provided they do not imply bias, attack an official's integrity, are not personally offensive, prolonged or particularly unreasonable.

AFP

Erling Haaland back in action as Bundesliga returns from mini-break

BERLIN

BORUSSIA Dortmund striker Erling Braut Haaland is expected to make an eagerly awaited return from injury as his side look to battle back into the Bundesliga top four with a win over high-fliers Wolfsburg on Sunday.

The prolific Norwegian prodigy has missed the last four league games and the last seven in all competitions after picking up a hamstring injury in early December.

Yet the 20-year-old returned to team training this week, and Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc confirmed that he would be back in action this weekend.

"Erling's recovery has gone well. We are working on the assumption that he can play against Wolfsburg," said Zorc.

Haaland's return is timely, with his side in desperate need of a win after a miserable run of form before Christmas saw them drop to fifth in the table, eight points behind leaders Bayern Munich and two behind Sunday's opponents Wolfsburg.

Dortmund sacked coach Lucien Favre after they were thrashed by promoted side Stuttgart in mid-December, before suffering a shock away defeat to minnows Union Berlin in their second game under caretaker boss Edin Terzic.

Defeat to Wolfsburg would see Dortmund lose four home league games in a row for the first time in 20 years.

"The most important thing is that we start well and end well," said Haaland, who has scored 17 goals in 14 games in all competitions this season.

In a season squashed by the coronavirus pandemic, many Bundesliga clubs have had just a week off in the shortest winter break in the league's history.

Yet after their pre-Christmas cup tie was postponed until January, champions Bayern have had an extra week to recov-

er and are expected to waltz past struggling Mainz on Sunday and defend their two-point lead at the top of the table.

Second from bottom and without a win in six games, Mainz parted ways with both their coach and sporting director over Christmas. Huddersfield boss Jan Siewert will take the reins as interim coach against Bayern.

There has also been a changing of the guard at bottom club Schalke, where new coach Christian Gross will take charge of his first game away to Hertha Berlin on Saturday.

Former Tottenham and Stuttgart coach Gross has been charged with leading Schalke out of danger and ending their miserable winless streak of 29 games.

Having not won since last January, the seven-time German champions are now just two games away from equalling Tasmania Berlin's unwanted record of 31 games without a win, set back in 1966.

One to watch: Manuel Neuer

Fresh from his coronation as the world's best goalkeeper, the Bayern stop-



per is just one game away from equalling Oliver Kahn's club record of 196 Bundesliga clean sheets, a milestone he has been chasing in vain for more than two months.

If he fails again to reach Kahn's mark against Mainz, Neuer will have gone nine league games without a clean sheet for only the second time in his Bayern career.

Key stats

150 - RB Leipzig will celebrate their

150th Bundesliga game when they take on Stuttgart on Saturday. They have won 80 of them so far, more than any other German club at the same milestone.

50 - Weeks since Schalke's last Bundesliga win in January last year. The league's bottom club are just two games away from equalling Tasmania Berlin's unwanted record of 31 games without a win.

10 - Goals Erling Braut Haaland has scored in his eight league games for Borussia Dortmund this season. The Norwegian is set to make his first appearance in a month against Wolfsburg.

Fixtures (all times 1430 GMT unless stated)

Today

Werder Bremen v Union Berlin, Arminia Bielefeld v Borussia Moenchengladbach, Cologne v Augsburg, Eintracht Frankfurt v Bayer Leverkusen, Hoffenheim v Freiburg, Hertha Berlin v Schalke (1730), Stuttgart v RB Leipzig (1930)

Tomorrow

Borussia Dortmund v Wolfsburg, Bayern Munich v Mainz (1700)

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

**New Year's resolutions
for soccer in 2021**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Frustrated Deus Kaseke laments Yanga stalemate

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

HOSTS Tanzania Prisons set out to frustrate Yanga and they did just that during Thursday's Vodacom Premier League (VPL) showdown involving the two clubs, which took place at a muddy Nelson Mandela Stadium's pitch in Rukwa.

The tightly contested game, which ended in 1-1 draw, brought an end to Yanga's six-game winning streak in the VPL, much to the disappointment of the team's midfielder Deus Kaseke.

Yanga remain top of the Premier League, nine points clear of second-placed Simba SC.

Simba SC, the VPL defending champions and Yanga's age old rivals, though, boast of three games in hand, and will fancy their chances of closing the gap.

Simba, who have not dropped points since November 7 last year, would go level on points with the VPL leaders if they beat Namungo FC, Azam FC and Dodoma Jiji FC.

Kaseke said he and his teammates were frustrated not to come away with three points after the one-all draw with Prisons.

Despite Yanga having fought back to draw after trailing for more than 20 minutes, he felt this was two points dropped rather than one gained.

He disclosed: "We definitely lost something today because to triumph in the title race you have to win every match that

you can, so one point for us is not good."

It rained just before the match in Rukwa, leaving the pitch in poor condition. However, Kaseke refused to blame the state of the Nelson Mandela Stadium's pitch for Yanga's draw.

He said: "We both played on the same pitch in this stadium, I think we were not lucky because we camped on their goal. We had opportunities but weren't able to make the most of them."

"These are the kind of stadiums which you will meet in Tanzania especially when it rains. So it's a matter of looking at how we can play in stadiums like these. I believe the coach has seen how to play in rainy conditions."

The midfielder, who has also got senior national team "Taifa Stars" call up, is having a good season at Yanga, he has scored four goals so far for the squad.

In Yanga's encounter with Prisons he injected quality after replacing the ineffective Farid Mussa in the second half.

Kaseke flicked the ball to Michael Sarpang in the build-up to Said Ntibazonkiza's equalizer, highlighting his growing importance to the team.

Yanga will switch their attention to the 2021 Mapinduzi Cup, as they travel to Zanzibar to take part in the annual tournament, which is to be contested by eight other clubs including Azam FC, Simba SC, Mtibwa Sugar and Namungo FC.



Yanga's midfielder, Deus Kaseke. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

Mtibwa Sugar, Mbeya City FC new coaches in Premier League spotlight

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

NEWLY-appointed Mtibwa Sugar's head coach, Thierry Hitimana, leads his charges for the second time today when they face hosts Ruvu Shooting in the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) in Coast Region.

Hitimana, who previously coached Namungo FC between 2018 and 2020, was unveiled as the new Mtibwa Sugar boss two weeks ago.

He will be keen on having his club avoiding a second successive loss, having fallen down to Dodoma Jiji FC in his debut.

Ruvu Shooting will be aiming at spoiling the party for Hitimana at Mabatini Stadium, as they look to consolidate their place in the top six in the VPL.

They are currently placed fifth in the domestic top flight's table after registering six wins and seven draws in their opening 17 matches of the season.

Coach Boniface Mkwasa's charges come into the match on the back of a 2-2 draw away with Azam FC on December 18, with Fulgence Zulu Maganga and Joseph Martin scoring equalizing goals for the side.

Victory will see Ruvu Shooting reclaim third spot in the log.

Elsewhere, Mbeya City will fancy their chances of ending their five-game winless run against a free-falling Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC.

All eyes will be on Mbeya City FC's Ugandan coach, Mathias Lule, who is winless in his first five games



Mbeya City FC's new head coach, Mathias Lule.

in charge since taking over from interim coach, Mathias Wandibwa, last month.

The KMC FC has hit a poor run and this fixture has taken on massive proportions given the club's recent form.

They have lost four consecutive matches to slide down to 11th spot in the standing.

Speaking ahead of the game, KMC FC's head coach, Habib Kondo, has made it clear he wants nothing but victory to avoid slipping into the relegation zone.

He said: "We aim for nothing but victory, we are aware our hosts are also desperate for maximum points but they should for-

get about winning."

They will draw inspiration from their last visit to Mbeya City FC which they won 1-0 thanks to a winning strike from departed striker Charles Ilanfya.

They also comfortably won 4-0 in the reverse fixture at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Sunday has a single

game, with Gwambina FC hosting Biashara United at the former's venue, Gwambina Stadium, in Misungwi.

The hosts will take on the visitors with revenge on their mind following a 1-0 loss to the latter in the reverse fixture played in the opening day of the season in September last year.

Pamba FC set to rope in seven new signings

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

FIRST Division League (FDL) club, Mwanza's Pamba FC, has said the squad is in the process of recruiting seven players in different positions to help the team get good results in their remaining fixtures.

The outfit's Chairman, Aleem Alibhai, stated a report issued by the team's head coach, Ulimboka Mwakwingwe, has recommended the registration of seven players to be done during this season's mini transfer window.

Alibhai said Mwakwingwe recommended the signing of two strikers, one attacking midfielder, one central defender and two wingers. He said five of them will be signed on loan basis.

In the 2020/21 FDL standing, Pamba FC is placed at the top of Group B with 18 points.

Pamba FC, winners of the then Union League, has won six matches in the 2020/21 FDL Group B to get hold of the group's top spot.

They notched victory over fellow Mwanza sides, Mbao FC and Alliance FC, Tabora's Rhino Rangers,



Mwanza's Pamba FC players pictured prior to participating in their recent First Division League (FDL) clash against Geita Gold FC, which took place in Geita.

Geita Gold FC, Fountain Gate FC of Dodoma, and Arusha FC.

The Mwanza team lost one match, losing 1-0 to Kitayosce FC. The FDL Group B leaders have scored 12 goals and conceded three.

Pamba FC is now looking forward to preparing for the outfit's FDL match against Dar es Salaam's Transit Camp FC, which was expected to be played at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

After the Transit Camp FC clash,

Pamba FC will travel to Kagera Region for the club's 2020/21 Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC) third round match against Kagera Sugar, to be played at Kaitaba Stadium on January 6.

In other ASFC's third round fixtures, slated for January 5, Dar es Salaam's Friends Rangers will have a date against Eagle Stars FC, Mbao FC will be away to Njombe Mji FC, Fountain Gate FC will take on Rhino Rangers in Tabora.

In some of other duels which will take place in the day, Cosmopolitan FC will lock horns with Tunduru Korosho in Tunduru, Pan African will be away to Biashara United, KMC FC will lock horns with Lipuli FC in Dar es Salaam, while Ruvu Shooting will face Mlale FC in Coast Region.

Some of the following day's games in the competition will have Milambo FC locking horns with Mbuni FC, Arusha FC will confront Kiluvya FC in Arusha, Kurugenzi FC will play Kitayosce FC, Dodoma Jiji FC will take on Hollywood FC in Dodoma.

Meanwhile, Mbao FC head coach, Ammy Ninje, has said his outfit is now searching for a manager who will take charge of the outfit's academy.

Ninje disclosed the manager who will have the duty of leading and managing the club's progressive academy.

The coach stated the academy's manager will be responsible for delivering and implementing the strategic plan for the academy and provide leadership to staff.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

