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TANZANIA TUESDAY 16 MARCH, 2021

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Govt resolves long standing land dispute



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Provision of safe water in Songea



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Construction of delivery room in Morogoro



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Cement national unity, VP implores the public

By Guardian Reporter

VICE President Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday appealed to Tanzanians to cement the country's unity at this moment, not to be frightened by rumor mongering, stressing that the country was safe.

The VP issued this appeal at Msata in Tanga Region, at a stone laying ceremony for the proposed 5.3bn/- headquarters of Handeni Rural District, then proceeded to Michungwani area where she inspected an orange processing plant.

"It's not strange for a person to fall sick. It's quite normal for a person's body



Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Tanga regional commissioner Martine Shigella (2nd-L) draw the curtains yesterday during the launch of the construction of the Handeni District Council headquarters building in Tanga Region. Photo: VPO

Two held for 10-acre marijuana farm, store

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

POLICE in Kahama District, Shinyanga Region have detained two people from Kalole village in Lunguya Ward of Msalala District in connection with a 10-acre marijuana farm and a warehouse for storage of the illicit produce.

The two – Nding'wa Masinde (54), a resident of Kalole village and Yohana Bula (25) residing at Tabora Itumbo were arrested after a police operation that led to the 10-acre farm.

Kalole Village Executive Officer Nyawaminza Migabe said the two were arrested in the police operation in collaboration with village officials.

Police also arrested Charles Lubiwa, allegedly found with an unspecified number of marijuana sticks and after interrogation he mentioned Masinde as the supplier of the lot.

"After Masinde's arrest we made an announcement to all villagers to inform them that the suspect was a

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Sugar project board has two weeks for road, power works

By Guardian Reporter

MEMBERS of the steering committee for the implementation of Mkulazi Sugar Estate have two weeks to complete road construction and power installation at the project site to enable it begin sugar production in the given time framework.

This instruction was issued yesterday by the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy Coordination, Parliamentary Affairs, Youth and Employment), Jenista Mhagama, during an inspection visit of the sugar project at farm No 217 at Mkulazi, Morogoro rural district.

The committee's delay in solving the power and roads

Nothing has been done following decisions made in November last year. Before the end of this month (March) I want to see road construction equipment in place and answers as...

challenge also delays sugar production at the factory, which has the capacity to produce 200,000 tons of sugar per year, she stated

"Nothing has been done following decisions made in November last year. Before the end of this month (March) I want to see road construction equipment in place and answers as to when power installation will start, as this is a strategic project," she told the steering committee.

The project board chairperson, Dr Hildelitha Msita said power installation was a big challenge as it involves agreement with the power utility, TanESCO, on

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RC: Drivers risk licence forfeiture

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA regional commissioner Albert Chalamila (pictured), has cautioned commuter bus drivers who were on strike in yesterday morning that they risk losing their licences if they continue with the strike.

He said the decision not to bar tricycle 'Bajaj' vehicles from operating in the city centre was taken on the consideration that it has provided employment to a good number of youths.



He threatened to revoke licenses of commuter bus drivers if they continue with the

strike, ordering government-owned vehicles including those used by security organs to carry passengers to various destinations across the region.

"Striking will not bring any positive results. I have the mandate to revoke all your licenses and direct public vehicles from the police and prisons to offer commuter transport services," the RC affirmed.

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office in Dar es Salaam is soliciting applications for multiple President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO). The following is a notice that the below NOFOs have been published on www.grants.gov:

CDC-RFA-GH21-2138: Accelerate the Scale-up and Technical Assistance of Targeted Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) Services for Greater Impact and Epidemic Control in the United Republic of Tanzania under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The application deadline is April 20, 2021.

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

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CDC-RFA-GH21-2137: Sustain and Accelerate a Comprehensive HIV Response in the United Republic of Tanzania under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The application deadline is April 20, 2021.



NMB Bank Pic CEO Ruth Zaipuna (L) pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday speaking at a ceremony held to welcome former workers of the ill-fated China Commercial Bank Limited. The Bank of Tanzania recently announced having transferred all CCBL assets and liabilities to NMB Bank Pic after the Chinese bank's operations were suspended in November last year owing to regulatory challenges. The central bank said legal procedures on how to complete the transfer were in progress and all concerned would be advised accordingly in due course. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Cement national unity, VP implores the public

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to be indisposed and contract the flu or develop a fever... This is the time for Tanzanians to be united through prayers," said Samia, without elaborating on the matter.

She urged Tanzanians to continue working hard, strengthen unity and uphold the country's stability, noting further that there were a lot of rumours circulating inside and outside the country, "but this should not unsettle Tanzanians."

"As Tanzanians, we must work together, be united and build our nation. This is high time, we, Tanzanians could concentrate on hard work. Most of the rumours you hear don't originate in Tanzania...they come from outside the country. I ask you to ignore them. If it's about prayers, pray, but all in all, we should remain united and take Tanzania forward. We're safe," the VP declared.

VP Samia is in Tanga Region for a four-day tour, where she remarked that "President John Magufuli has also sent me here to deliver greetings to you. He has emphasized hard work for all people; he wants all of us to focus on conducting activities which bring development to our country."

She assured the public that the promises made by the ruling party in last year's General Election will be implemented to stimulate development in every part of the country, urging farmers in the region to utilize fully opportunities available in the sector so as to im-

prove their livelihoods.

"District council authorities should continue setting aside enough land to attract investors from inside and outside the country to establish investment projects for the country's development," she said.

On power blues, Samia said that the government is working to ensure all areas in the country are connected to national grid power supply to support smooth development of investment projects.

Regional Commissioner Martine Shigella said they had received 7bn/- from the central government to construct three buildings for Handeni Urban, Handeni Rural and Bumbuli District headquarters.

VP Samia's remarks came four days after Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa asked Tanzanians to remain calm, saying the Head of State was healthy and faring well with his daily activities.

The premier dismissed claims in various media outlets that President Magufuli was ailing and had been flown to a neighbouring country for specialized treatment.

The premier said he had spoken with the president by phone, assuring Tanzanians that he is well.

In contrast, Chadema Secretary General John Mnyika addressed a press conference on Thursday saying the opposition party was concerned on the health and whereabouts of the president, who was last seen in public on February 27.

Two held for 10-acre marijuana farm, store

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big farmer of marijuana – the illicit drug that is banned," the official stated.

Villagers were told to stop cultivating illicit crops including marijuana and instead focus on the cultivation of maize, rice and potatoes, he said, pointing out that Kalole villagers engage in

gold mining, with marijuana users found in the mine pits close to the village. Masinde confessed upon interrogation to be cultivating the illicit crop, noting that his elder brother advised him on the farming venture as the product the market was readily available in the gold mining areas of Buswangili, Tamarare as well as Kalole.

For his part, Kalole village chairman Hamisi Misungwi, said the villagers are mobilized to eradicate marijuana farming around their village, with regular inspections of villagers' farms to ensure they were planted with legitimate crops. Ndebile Masanja, a villager, said the villagers were depressed to see many

youths in their village being destroyed, urging the government to restrict individuals seeking to cultivate the illicit crop. When contacted, Regional Police Commander Debora Magirigimba confirmed the incident, noting that she was by then out of office and expects to make a follow up.

Sugar project board has two weeks for road, power works

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the cost of installing power transmission lines "as the work was not included in Tanesco's budget."

The board had reached an agreement with the power utility to construct the 3km transmission line, where the board will provide funds which Tanesco will pay for the construction cost and recover the same from the factory's power bills when it starts operating, she explained.

Project manager Abdul Mwankemwa said poor road infrastructures leading to the Mkulazi farm has affected farming equipment, impeding sugar cane cultivation.

The project management had completed feasibility studies for the 42km road, issued a report for the Ministry of Works and Transport to take up its construction.

Clearing of the project's 250-hectare block has begun, with 80 hectares already completed, while research conducted on the soil showed that around 6,103 hectares of the Mkulazi farm, out of 28,000 hectares was fit for sugar cane cultivation.

Mkulazi Holding Company was established in 2016 for initiating small sugar factories to fill the gap of 250,009 tons of sugar annually in the country's sugar needs as a whole.

Zanzibar underscores need to review all agricultural projects

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdullah has underscored the need to review all the agricultural projects in the Isles so as to ensure that their implemen-

tation brings wider and positive outcomes to the community especially farmers.

In his tour to inspect various developmental projects in the Isles, Hemed wanted coordinators and supervisors of the projects to ensure that

they firstly assess the projects to ensure they don't affect people's incomes but rather support their development.

According to him, there are some of the projects which have been forcing farmers to pay fees during cleaning of

farms as advised by donors something which do not help the farmers but rather drag them into more vulnerable conditions.

"The government will take a closer look in all the projects in line with the costs incurred

in order to satisfy itself before commencing the implementation, we want to ensure that the projects ultimately bring productivity that will benefit the majority of people," he said.

The second VP said the government will work hard to ensure that it implements all the promises provided by President Hussein Mwinyi during the General Election campaign last year.

"We will fulfill this by sitting down and listening to people's problems including land disputes, settlements, roads, agricultural infrastructure, through this, we will get a common direction for achieving goals while solving the challenges," he said.

He however, reminded members of the public that they still have a responsibility to remain patient, work hard while the government is addressing the challenges facing them.

On electricity, Hemed urged the leadership of Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO) to organize itself commercially and guarantee people and investors with sufficient

power to stimulate development.

Addressing residents in Tunguu, Machui, KibondeMaji, Bambi Kijiwe and Bonde la Cheju villages in Central District, the Second VP said the government is aware of all the challenges and is pioneered to address them all.

He directed council authorities to continue putting in place deliberate measures to ensure that all the government revenues are collected and well spent to bring development in the country.

Central District Commissioner Marina Thomas said the government has sent water in all the 38 shehias, something which has brought relief to the dwellers and stimulated development.

She said all the villages within the district have already secured access to clean and safe water services following the increase of water projects implementations.

Marina said the success has been in line with the availability of electricity services on a large scale due to the 12 projects implemented recently benefiting the majority of the people.



Home Affairs deputy minister Khamis Hamza Chilo (2nd-R) leads heads of department under his ministry yesterday in having a meal alongside inmates at Shinyanga municipality's prison after a tour of the facility. Photo courtesy of Home Affairs ministry

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"Whoever wishes to continue offering commuter bus services will be required to apply for a license after that," he stated.

Public transport in Mbeya city was paralyzed early yesterday after commuter bus operators halted services to push the government to lock out of business the three wheeler taxis, saying the three wheelers take their passengers, thus affecting their daily income.

They also demanded that 'Bajaj' drivers be prohibited from parking near commuter bus stands within the city centre zone, a demand

RC: Drivers risk licence forfeiture

similarly rejected by the regional authorities.

Many people, including school going pupils, were stranded as the strike broke out early in the morning, spending hours waiting for buses to turn up.

Surprisingly, the commuter bus drivers were trying to restrain various other vehicles from carrying passengers, insisting that commuters must use the three wheeler taxis.

They were shouting that the law

regulating transport in the city stipulates that motorcycles and three wheelers are supposed to operate in the peripheral areas and not the city centre.

Interviewed, some city residents said the strike had affected them economically since they could not be at workplaces and offices on time.

Debora Njobelo, a resident of Isanga in the city said: "My office is allocated at Uyol, I was forced to hire a motorbike at a cost of 1,500/-

while I normally use 400/- when using public transport. There was not a single vehicle at the commuter bus stand." Debora called upon regional authorities to resolve the matter because they are spending too much money for transport and the situation was unsustainable for lowly paid workers.

Another resident, Angel Mbotwa urged the government to come up with a better arrangement for both commuters buses and Bajaj drivers to avoid conflicts, noting that Bajaj

drivers were previously operating in peripheral areas, but they are now found in bus stops along the main roads.

A commuter bus driver, Martin Mlay pointed an accusing finger at RC Chalamila, arguing that the RC had failed to help the drivers.

"The RC told us to sell our commuter buses and purchase three wheeler taxis (if it earns more) because he cannot order Bajaj drivers to stop operating in the city centre," the driver asserted.

Last week, the Tanzania Bus Owners Association (TABOA) apologized for travel disruptions which ensued after some TABOA members grounded vehicles over an e-ticketing directive.

At that time there was an agreement with the government to suspend boycott plans, with TABOA Secretary General Joseph Priscus saying that some members had delayed or completely cancelled long haul bus trips, as negotiations with government officials ended at 10 in the morning for the new position to start being relayed to TABOA members, and the terms thereof.



Lt Col Issa Chalamila, acting Commandant with the National Service camp at Mafinga in Iringa Region, briefs journalists yesterday on dairy cows kept at the camp. Photo: Correspondent Renatha Msungu

Long-standing dispute over Dar land resolved

By Guardian Reporter

LANDS, Housing and Human Settlements Development, minister William Lukuvi has resolved a land dispute between residents of Chasimba, Chatembo and Chachui in Kinondoni District and Tanzania Portland Cement Company Limited (TPCC) which has lasted years.

However, the cement manufacturing company has agreed to give back to the residents a total of 224.8 hectares out of 922.55 hectares. Decisions to give back the land to the residents followed government interventions into a dispute which was officially filed at the Court of Appeal in 2015.

Speaking to the resident on March 13th 2021, the minister informed that TPCC has agreed to give the residents a piece of land worth 60bn/-. He insisted that the government is determined to ensure justice to Tanzanians.

"Decisions not to demolish the residents' houses doesn't contravene the court ruling; it was meant to create a win-win situation," said Lukuvi noting each of the residents will now be subjected to pay 6,400/- per square kilometer.

He said each of the residents will be provided with relevant documents indicating the amount of money she/he is supposed to pay.

"The piece of land you invaded belongs to the cement factory, I have been working to resolve this conflict for five years," he added.

Minister Lukuvi di-

rected Kinondoni District Commissioner, Sipora Liana and her team to visit the area and allocate land which will be used for construction of dispensaries and schools. He said that residents at the areas would require social services near their homes.

He warned the residents to stop invading the factory land insisting to take measures against anyone who will illegally erect structures within the restricted factory area.

Kinondoni District Commissioner, Daniel Chongolo commended the minister for finding a solution to land disputes within the district. He said Kinondoni was leading with the highest number of land disputes (75 percent), but most of them have been resolved.

Chasimba resident, Semeni Charles thanked the government for finding a solution to the land dispute insisting they were living under fears of being relocated.

"We are thankful to President John Magufuli because we will now own the land legally. Our village has a total of 932 households and we have been living at the area since 2008," she stated.

According to her, they filed a case at the Court of Appeal in 2015, but the court ruled in favour of the cement factory and their houses were to be demolished.

She said the land conflict started in 2008 when the factory management accused the residents of invading an area measuring 224.8 hectares.

Association launched to stimulate innovation to meet exporters needs

By Getrude Mbago

PRODUCERS and exporters of various products in the country have a reason to smile following the launch of the national quality assurance association (NQAT) which will be closely supporting the group to produce quality products and easily penetrate the international market.

The association was launched during the closure of a two-day "national stakeholders meeting on non-tariff measures" held in Dar es Salaam late last week.

Addressing journalists soon after the launch, NQAT chairman Hamza Amir said for many years, Tanzanian producers and exporters have failed to sell their products in the international market due to poor quality.

The launch of the association will make them be able to work together to ensure that the producers invest heavily in the quality of their products for sustainable income.

He said the association will work

to promote quality culture, adherence so as to enable producers to penetrate the international market and thus reap big from the business.

Hamza said they are going to work closely with the government to ensure that more accredited labs are established in the country so as to enable producers to meet requirements and thus export their products smoothly.

"The association will play a role in setting a quality system, it will work stimulating and provide quality awareness to people; advocate for quality products, promote quality culture in the country, identify and exploit sources of income to support operations of the association, he said.

The association will involve key people and organizations such as the national authorities concerned with food safety and standards, such as the bureaus of standards and relevant ministries, chambers of commerce and industry as well as private sector representatives

such as farmers' and processors' associations, insurance companies and cooperatives

According to Hamza, a recent survey conducted by the ministry and the International Trade Centre (ITC) has revealed that lack of accredited labs in the country is making business expensive for exporters.

During the meeting, the government said that it was planning to establish accredited laboratories that can do assessment of quality which is recognized globally so as to support more producers meet requirements and thus export their products smoothly.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industries and Trade, Prof Riziki Shemdoe said that lack of the assessment centres in the country has been forcing producers to resort to foreign auditors for certification such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and Global GAP before exporting their produce, something which cost them vastly.

In his speech read on his behalf by the deputy rector of the College of Business Education (CBE), Dr Emmanuel Munisi, the PS said by establishing the centres, producers and traders will no longer have to travel abroad to seek for the accreditations.

He urged traders and exporters to join NQAT and participate effectively to ensure its sustainability.

Safari Fungo, coordinator of the Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP) said the launch of the association will facilitate and encourage Tanzanians produce quality and certified products so that they could access abroad markets, but will also see to it that they access new finances to improve themselves.

He said the International Trade Centre (ITC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Trade is implementing the MARKUP, a regional initiative aiming at improving market access to European Union (EU) and the East African region for five East Africa Community (EAC) partner countries - Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda on specific agro-industrial crop and horticultural sectors.

MPs hail Tanapa for combatting poaching

By Guardian Correspondent, Iringa

THE Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture has hailed the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) for intensifying war on poaching.

The chairman of the committee Dr Aloyce Kwezi issued the remarks during the committee's tour of Ruaha saying the move has led to an increase in the number of animals.

On areas of improvement, the parliamentary committee advised Tanapa to closely follow during this budget parliament for funds to construct the road from Iringa to Ruaha national park. "This issue should be followed up because the road to Ruaha national park is very important but is not in good conditions, therefore there is a need to put more emphasis on this because there are a lot of attractions in this park," he said.

He commended the efforts which have been taken currently to improve the road through the Resilient Natural Resource Management for Tourism and Growth Project (REGROW).


On the processing of forestry products, he said the committee would wish to see innovative technologies being used to create alternative energy sources to be distributed in other.

The parliamentary committee chairman revealed that about 662 hectares have burnt by bushfires and asked the security and defense committee in the region to control such incidents.

Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Damas Ndumbaro said the

ministry will work on and address all the issues raised by the committee.

"I thank you for the tour and directives that you have issued, as you all know this is one of the huge national parks in our country, it is bigger than some countries but it is bigger than Mtwara Region," he said.



REQUEST FOR QUOTATION: RFQ N° UNFPA/PROC/RFQ/2021/003

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Support for the Inception Phase of the UN Joint Programme on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Tanzania

Introduction
UNFPA, as the Administrative Agent of a potential Joint Programme under the UN Partnership for Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) in Tanzania, wishes to invite suitable consultancy firms to submit a proposal for supporting the Inception Phase of work in the development of this Joint Programme. The Inception Phase comprises an Induction Workshop for all key stakeholders, a Situation Analysis of Persons with Disability and a Full Proposal development.

Objectives of the Project
To support the Inception Phase of the programme, including to conduct an Induction Workshop for the UN, government, OPDs and other key stakeholders, a Situation Analysis and undertake the Full Proposal development.

Required qualifications

- At least a Master's degree (or higher level of qualification) in Disability Studies, Public Health, Social Science, Development Studies or Management.
- Minimum 10 years of work experience and specialization in disability inclusion and gender programming, including experience of implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Language:

- Fluency in written and spoken English is required.

Duration of the consultancy
Delivery dates are 12 weeks from the commencement of the assignment.

How to apply
The Request for Quotation (RFQ) template and Terms of Reference (TOR) for this consultancy are posted on the UNFPA Tanzania Country Office website accessible at <http://tanzania.unfpa.org>. Within the site the RFQ N° UNFPA/PROC/RFQ/2021/003 and TORs can be found at <https://tanzania.unfpa.org/en/submission/request-quotation-rfq-n%C2%BA-unfpa-procrfq-2021003>. Interested firms, institutions or individuals can send their application documents i.e. technical and financial proposals to tanzania.office@unfpa.org.

The deadline to submit application documents is **29 March 2021 (5 pm Tanzanian Time)**.

UNFPA is an equal opportunity employer.



U.S. MISSION DAR ES SALAAM

SOLICITATION ANNOUNCEMENT

The U.S. Mission in Dar es Salaam is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the position identified below at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Position Title: Project Management Specialist (HIV/AIDS &TB)

Solicitation Number: 72062121R10009

A copy of the complete solicitation, listing all duties, responsibilities and qualifications required, is available at: <https://tz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

HOW TO APPLY:
Effective immediately only online applications will be accepted via usaidtzlesapps@usaid.gov

Applicants **MUST** follow instructions in the solicitation on the website:

Failure to do so will result in an incomplete application.

CLOSING DATE FOR THIS POSITION: March 30, 2021

105bn/- lined up to end water woes in Songea municipality

By Guardian Correspondent,

Songea

THE government will set aside US\$45.3million (105bn/-) to improve water services in Songea municipality, Ruvuma Region.

Regional Commissioner, Christina Mndeme revealed this here on Monday when speaking ahead of this year's Water Week, which kicks off today and will end up on March 22.

RC Mndeme said that the money has been provided by

the Indian government.

"What is going on now through our Ministry of Water, is the procurement process for contractors to implement the huge project which will involve the construction of a water reservoir that will have the capacity to store five billion liters of water," said Mndeme.

The project will also involve expansion of a water treatment plant with the capacity of treating more than 51.4 million liters per day, the construction of four 18.2 million liters of water storage

tanks and the supply of pipelines capable of transporting 190.3 km of water.

When completed more than 95 percent of Songea Municipal residents will have access to clean and safe water, according to RC Mndeme.

"People who have no access to piped water, they will all benefit from this giant project. Through this venture water supply will be increased from 86.2 percent to 95 percent and that the goal is to achieve 100 percent water supply in the Songea, Tunduru and Mbinga."

She further said that the government has pumped in 7bn/- to improve water infrastructure in Songea, Mbinga and Tunduru districts of Ruvuma Region.

Mndeme said that the funds are for executing different water projects in the three districts.

"The water sector has done a great job in implementing the idea of relieving women from water-related challenges," the RC said.

Through Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) and Songea Urban

Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (SOUWASA) a lot has been done whereby the government released more than 7bn/- for investing in water sector across the region, Mndeme said.

So far, more than 5bn/- has been received and water supply in Songea District has increased from 74 percent to 86.2percent.

According to her, Mbinga District has received more than 1bn/-, which has improved water supply in the area from 52.2 percent to 70.8 percent, while Tunduru

District got over 600m/-, which increased water supply from 55 percent to 66 percent.

She however cited limited water sources for the Songea Municipality as one of the challenges that need to be addressed. This has contributed by increasing population which also increased the water demand in the municipality with a population of 353,000 people.

She said in order to address this challenge, regional office through SOUWASA has embarked in a new pro-

gramme aimed at scaling up water pipes so that people get enough water.

RC Mndeme commended RUWASA for working hard to ensure water is available in urban and rural areas across the region, with an estimated population of over 1.34 million.

RUWASA Regional manager Eng. Rebman Ganshonga said that between July 2019 and February 2021, the agency received 20bn/- from the central government in implementing different water projects.

Abattoir operators warned over poor quality of skins and hides

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THE government has said will revoke the licences of animal skimmers working

at Morogoro municipality abattoirs for negligence which leads to production of poor quality skins and hides.

Assistant director of livestock prod-

ucts, food security and nutrition at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Gabriel Bura made the statement shortly after inspecting skins and hides production at various slaughter houses within the municipality.

Bura noted that despite frequent trainings on proper skinning, some skimmers have been producing poor skins which do not meet the required market standards.

"We will take action against animal skimmers sabotaging our industry; there is a big demand for hides at established industries, but buyers do not buy the raw materials because of poor quality," he said.

He said licences were issued in accordance with the Hide, Skin and Leather Trade Act, 2008 whereas skimmers were also provided with trainings to produce quality hides. He said the government has been working to improve the leather industry including efforts directed on reviving the dormant factories.

According to the official, two leather industries have been revived: the Morogoro based Ace Leather Tanzania Limited and Moshi leather factory in Kilimanjaro Region.

"You must improve production to be able to renew your licences which will expire in August this year," said Bura, adding the licences are renewed annually.

Chief meat inspector in Morogoro Region, Joseph Kupa linked the production of poor skins and hides with a number of factors including animal diseases. He said the skin diseases which have been affecting the quality of hides include exiima and lab skin.

Chairman of the skimmers association, Mapinduzi Ernest commended the government for providing them with the training which he said contributes to improving their work. He urged the government to also educate livestock keepers on pre-slaughter factors affecting hide and skin quality which include putting permanent man-made marks on the hides for animal identification.



Telegreen Business Consultancy director Victoria Soka (R) pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday counselling businessmen from the city's Kariakoo market as part of the inauguration of Tanzania Accounting Week celebrations. To her right (seated) is Tanzania Revenue Authority officer Dunstan Masasi. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Morocco hopes for Israeli tourism boost with flights back next month

RABAT/JERUSALEM

MOROCCO hopes its improved ties with Israel and centuries-old Jewish history will help it offset some of the tourist trade it has lost to the global pandemic by bringing a surge of Israeli visitors once flights restart next month.

The two countries agreed in December to resume diplomatic ties and relaunch direct flights - part of a deal brokered by the United States that also includes Washington's recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.

"I was quite afraid to go previously, because it's an Arab country, even though I was told that tours there were fine. Now that there is peace, I think I can go without fear," said retired Israeli teacher Rivka Sheerit, 69,

who wants to see where her parents once lived and her forefathers were buried.

"When the skies reopen I plan to go," she said. Morocco was home to one of the largest and most prosperous Jewish communities in North Africa and the Middle East for centuries until Israel's founding in 1948. As Jews fled or were expelled from many Arab countries, an estimated quarter of a million left Morocco for Israel from 1948-1964.

Today only about 3,000 Jews remain in Morocco, while hundreds of thousands of Israelis claim some Moroccan ancestry.

More than other countries in the region where the issue is often taboo, Morocco has sought in recent years to recognise the Jewish role in its history. In 2010, it launched a programme to restore synagogues, Jewish cemeteries and heritage sites, and reinstated the original names of some Jewish neighbourhoods.

Though the numbers of Israeli visitors are likely to be small compared to the total pre-COVID-19 tourist flow to Morocco, it could help a sector battered by the pandemic.

Tourism minister Nadia Fettah Alaoui has said she expects 200,000 Israeli visitors in the first year following the resumption of direct flights. That compares to about 13 million yearly foreign tourists before the pandemic. Tourism revenue fell by 53.8% to 36.3 billion dirhams (\$3.8 billion) in 2020.

In the pretty Moroccan port town of Essaouira, once home to a big Jewish community and still the location of several important shrines, tourism businesses are poised for a boost.

Ayoub Soufi, who has a woodcraft shop near a Jewish museum, expects business to thrive: "We look forward to receiving more Jewish tourists after the normalisation deal," he said.

OPTIMISTIC

Though a small number of Israeli tourists already come to Morocco, many have been put off by the lack of direct flights and diplomatic ties. The head of the Israeli liaison office in Rabat, which reopened after the deal, said he expected flights to resume next month.

"This is the main reason the number of Israeli tourists will increase significantly," the liaison chief, David Govrin, said.

Morocco's tourism promotion office has commissioned a study on attracting tourists from Israel.

Henri Abizker, a Jewish community leader and businessman in Rabat who owns a travel agency organising tours for Israelis, said he was even more optimistic about the numbers, predicting up to 400,000 would come.

Morocco is attractive because of its particular Jewish history as home to pilgrimage sites, attracting tourism that could benefit specialist operators.

"Younger generations tend to be more liberal, but orthodox Jews insist on Kosher requirements," he said.

In Israel, Haim Peretz, an Israeli of Jewish Moroccan descent who now works as a tour guide, said potential tourists were mainly waiting for direct flights.

INVENTURE MOBILE TZ LIMITED

Incorporation number 116266

The Companies Act, 2002

(Section 334 (1))

MEMBERS VOLUNTARY WINDING UP

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the General Public that at a duly convened meeting of Inventure Mobile TZ Limited (the Company) company number 116266 which took place on 10 October 2020 the following special resolutions were passed:

- that in accordance with section 333 (1) (b) of the Companies Act, 2002, the company should be wound up voluntarily; and
- that the members have approved the appointment of Joseph Lyimo of Pemba House, 369 Toure Drive, Oyster Bay, P O Box 45, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania as the Liquidator of the Company.

NOTICE is hereby given to the general public and the parties concerned to submit their claims for admission within 30 days. All claims must be enclosed envelope and addressed to JOSEPH LYIMO of PricewaterhouseCoopers Limited of Pemba House, 369 Toure Drive, Oyster bay, P O Box 45, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, who is the liquidator of the Company. Claims lodged after 30 days will not be considered for admission.

JOSEPH LYIMO

Liquidator

For INVENTURE MOBILE TZ LIMITED

United Republic of Tanzania
Ministry of Water

Enabel
Belgian Development Agency

CALL FOR BIDS

CONSTRUCTION OF KIFURA WATER SUPPLY SCHEME CONSULTANCY TO SUPERVISE WATER SUPPLY WORKS

The Water and Sanitation Kigoma Region Project (WASKIRP) is inviting bids from suitably qualified consulting firms to design and supervise water supply works in Kigoma region. WASKIRP is a project jointly funded by the Kingdom of Belgium through Enabel and the Government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Water. This is a 5-year project which aims at providing sustainable water supply solutions in Kigoma region. Under one of its result areas, Enabel is now looking for a contractor to construct water a supply scheme and consultants to supervise the works in Kibondo District.

Contracts:

There are two public contracts as follows:

- Public Works Contract TAN144: Construction of Kifura pumping water supply scheme in Kibondo District.
- Public Service Contract TAN 145: Supervision Consultancy for Kifura Project.

Closing date and contract documents:

All interested entities are requested to obtain contract documents at: <https://btctanzania.wordpress.com/>. The deadline for submitting bids is February 26, 2021 before 15:00hrs. This notice is also published on the Enabel website, www.enabel.be, in the Belgian Public Tender bulletin (BDA). For any additional information contact Antoine on 0753 733 043 during working hours only.

BANK OF AFRICA
Groupe BMCE BANK

AMSCO
AMSCO CONSULTANTS LIMITED

MANAGING DIRECTOR - TANZANIA

Our client Bank of Africa Tanzania is a retail commercial bank that provides services to multinational companies, mid-size local enterprises, and small retail businesses. The Bank is a member of the Bank of Africa Group, a multinational, Pan African Bank headquartered in Bamako, Mali. The Bank seeks to fill the role of The Managing Director for the Tanzania Subsidiary.

Bank of Africa Group

- Over 35 years of growth and expansion
- Presence in 17 sub-Saharan countries and 1 in France
- 5 economic zones UEMOA, CEDEAO, EAC, COMESA and SADC
- > 2 million customers

The Managing Director will be responsible for setting and executing the overall business strategy for Bank of Africa Tanzania and translating Board and shareholder mandates to the business and representing management in the Board. The position ensures that the Bank meets its strategic objectives.

KEY FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of the Bank's strategic plans to enhance profitability and shareholder value;
- Ensure effective mobilization and utilisation of resources;
- Advise the Board on the Bank's performance;
- Ensure continuous reporting to Bank of Africa Group, and coordinate with other Group entities to achieve the objectives;
- Ensure continuous improvement in quality and value of services and products provided by Bank of Africa;
- Cultivate and encourage a productivity culture that promotes ethical practices and sound corporate governance;
- Establish, direct and manage the bank's managerial, financial and operational systems, procedures and controls to ensure that they are professional, workable and sustainable so as to enhance shareholder value;
- Provide strategic direction on new investments, business opportunities and change initiatives;
- Nurture the Bank's human resource and ensure appropriate management structures and policies are developed and implemented;
- Relationship management and networking with local and global business partners and stakeholders; and
- Provide proactive public relations and enhancing the Bank's corporate image.

PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

Academic Qualifications

- MBA or relevant postgraduate qualification
- Bachelor's degree

Professional Qualifications

- Relevant Professional qualification

Experience

- Over 15 years' experience in the banking industry with at least 5 years at senior management level
- Prior experience in managing a functional level in a large organisation/busy environment.
- Adequate knowledge of economic landscape of Tanzania and East Africa.

Key Competences

- Excellent understanding of the different areas of the bank activities: credit risk, corporate credit, treasury and finance;
- Ability to think strategically and design long term plans;
- Ability to drive change;
- Proven intellectual leadership in managing people and financial resources, ability to make people work under pressure and meet deadlines;
- Relationship management, management and communication skills;

HOW TO APPLY

If you meet the requirements stipulated, send your application to recruitment.eastafrika@amscoco-africa.com quoting the position title on or before Friday 31st March 2021. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Big relief as Masasi Hospital purchases new X-ray machine

By Guardian Correspondent, Masasi

MKOMAINDO Hospital in Masasi Town, Mtwara Region has purchased three modern medical equipment including one X-Ray through NHIF valued at 161m/-.

The equipment aimed to improve the hospital's health services.

This was revealed by the Acting Masasi Town Medical Officer Peter Majura when speaking to this paper.

Majura said the three machines were bought through NHIF loan and the funds would be repaid from the hospital's internal revenues as per agreement between NHIF and the hospital.

He stressed that apart from the X-ray machine, others were an anesthetic machine for patients undergoing minor operations and another for sterilizing medical devices used by doctors when serving patients.

He said the X-Ray machine was of high capacity as it can serve over 200 patients per day as compared to the former machine.

He said as for now the machines would be used jointly to improve service delivery at the hospital.

He said among the biggest challenges facing the hospital was the lack of high capacity X-ray machine as the existing one was of low capacity and old fashioned.

Some of the patients at the hospital, including Asha Abdallah thanked hospital authorities for continuing to improve its health services including purchasing of the new X-ray machine.

Another patient who spoke to this paper, Juma salum said in the past there was a big challenge at the hospital in accessing X-ray services but since the arrival of the new machine, the services have greatly improved.



Residents of Kimokouwa ward in Longido-Namanga, Arusha Region, witness yesterday's downloading of pipes for use in the implementation of a water project earmarked for the area. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Govt ordered to construct extra delivery room, lab at Mkambarani dispensary

By Guardian Correspondent,

Morogoro

THE Regional Administration and Local Government Parliamentary Committee has instructed the government through Tanzania So-

cial Action Fund (TASAF) to construct a maternity wing and a laboratory room at Mkambarani Ward Dispensary in Morogoro District, Morogoro Region.

The directive was given by the Committee's Chairman, Humphrey Polepole during

its visit to various projects, including the dispensary built under TASAF sponsorship.

In addition, Polepole said his panel saw the need to increase another delivery room for pregnant women due to the increase of the population in the area.

"TASAF had done great work in building the dispensary but we also instruct the government to build another delivery room, as the existing one is not adequate," he said.

He called on the ward residents to register themselves with Community Health

Fund (CHF) in order to get reliable health services as the fund has now been greatly improved.

"I have been told that only 26 people have joined with the Fund in the ward, we would like to see every resident to join to get better

health services," Polepole said.

For his part, the Deputy Minister in the President's Office (Public service and Good Governance) Deogratius Ndejemi said the government will implement all directives issued by the committee in-

cluding the construction of an extra delivery room and a laboratory at the dispensary.

TASAF has implemented a total of 19 projects in Morogoro District in its first phase including the Mkambarani dispensary project at a cost of 34.8mm/.



MANTRA
TANZANIA
ROSATOM

Mantra Tanzania Limited
2nd Floor, Masaki Ikon, Bains Singh Avenue, Masaki
P.O Box 23451, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Registration No: 29785
Tel: +255 764 700 440
e-mail: mantra@uraniuml.co.tz; www.uraniuml.com

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF A MINING CONTRACTOR FOR THE DEMONSTRATION OPEN PIT MINING AT MKUJU RIVER PROJECT

Mantra Tanzania Limited (Mantra), operating as a subsidiary of Uranium One, is focused on the potential development of a Uranium Mine at its Mkuju River Project (MRP) in the Namtumbo District of Ruvuma Region.

Now Mantra Tanzania Ltd invites eligible Mining Contractors to express their Interest (EOI) for the provision of mining services as per Scope of Work to be provided to short-listed contractors.

Interested Companies are requested, as a minimum, to submit the following;

- Detailed Company Information with Organization structure, List of workers with CVs of key personnel.
- Details of completion of similar type of contracts in the last three years and similar contracts/agreements currently under execution under headings:
 - a) Brief scope of work
 - b) Value of work in USD
 - c) Contractual Duration
 - d) Clients name

e) Contact details of the Client (Mantra may approach the client directly for the feedback).

- Details of Resources available in terms of number of manpower, equipment etc. for providing similar services
- Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) policies, procedures and statistics covering the last 4 years.
- Copies of Valid Quality Certifications / Accreditations, ISO certifications, If any
- Company's financial performance documents (Audited Balance sheets, Profit and Loss Account & cash flow statement, Auditors Report and Notes to Accounts etc.) for last 3 (three) years. Latest financial statement should not be older than 18 months on the date of submission of response to Expression of interest.
- Current Tax Clearance certificate from relevant authority.

The interested bidders should submit a soft copy of their Expression of Interest (EOI) via e-mail address; francis.rweyemamu@uraniuml.co.tz and the hard copy to the below address latest on **30th March 2021 at 16.00 hours.**

Managing Director
Mantra Tanzania Ltd

Plot No. 1520, Masaki Ikon, Bains Avenue-Masaki, P.O. Box 23451, Tel +255762700440, Dar es Salaam.

ANSAF advises govt to look for alternative markets for maize

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE Agricultural Non State Actors Forum (ANSAF) has advised the government to invest in economic intelligence to find alternative markets for its crops after Kenya banned importation of maize.

ANSAF Executive Director Audax Rukonge said over the weekend that maize is one of the most important food crops, making the country to be largest producer of maize in the East Africa region.

He said the market intelligence will give maximum choices to the country's maize exporters instead of relying on one market denying the lucrative market opportunities from the available market.

"The EAC member states including Kenya must first obey the rule and regulation set where one country exports or import crops from the neighbouring country should not be banned without visible statistics," he said.

Rukonge said Tanzania is ranked among the top 25 maize producing countries in the world in the last two decades where the production of maize accounts for more than 70 percent of the cereal produced in the country.

He said the government must increase awareness to its farmers to practice modern farming to avoid crops falling into contamination like mycotoxins.

Rukonge said it must involve all stages starting from planting, spraying pesticides, harvest-

ing, and storage and transporting to the marketplace.

The statistics show that the sector's contribution to GDP has more than tripled in the last 10 years, supported by rising cash crop production, an emerging agro-processing segment and strong domestic demand for processed food.

While in Longido District recently, the deputy minister of Agriculture ministry, Hussein Bashe said the government of Tanzania was taking the ban of maize imports seriously.

"The government is closely monitoring the ban and I can assure business people and the general public that the government will continue to protect its interests," Bashe said.

In a letter by the acting Director-General of the Agriculture and Food Authority, Kello Harasama to Pamela Ahago, the Commissioner of Customs in the Kenya Revenue Authority, said the imports should stop after a survey conducted indicated maize from the two countries is not fit for human consumption.

"The authority has been conducting surveillance on the safety of food imports into Kenya. The results from maize imported from Uganda and Tanzania have revealed high levels of mycotoxins that are consistently beyond safety limits," the letter reads.

The latest Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) East Africa Cross Border Trade report shows that 58 and 39 per cent of the imports came from Uganda and Tanzania,



Sabrina Idd of Panga la Muingereza in Kisarawe District, Coast Region, draws water from natural well yesterday. She said she was "not so sure" about the safety of the water but saw no option. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

RC gives one week to farmers and herders to vacate Wembere Valley

By Guardian Correspondent,

Tabora

AUTHORITIES in Tabora Region have called on herders and farmers who were temporarily allowed to use government owned Wembere Valley in Igunga District for their activities to voluntarily vacate the area within one week.

The government step fol-

lows reports of frequent fighting between farmers and herders that threatens their own lives.

The directive was given yesterday by Tabora Regional Commissioner Dr Philemon Sengati when he met the two sides at Makomero village to listen to them and find a permanent solution for the problem.

The RC said within the seven days given, people

conducting various human activities including those who established 13 households in the valley contrary to the laws should vacate after demolishing their dwellings.

Dr Sengati said the valley has a wide ranging interests for the country because there are flamingoes that are to be found in very few areas in the world, as well acting as filter for the water flowing into Lake Eyasi - a tourist attrac-

tion in its own right.

He added that the area was important to the nation and ought to be protected as research was currently being conducted therein for oil and gas drilling, as well as being a corridor area for the wildlife migrating to Rungwe Reserve Forest. He said his office will discuss with the Office of the Vice President (environment), and various other ministries including those

for Natural Resources and Tourism, Minerals, Water and Lands to see whether there was an area in the Valley that could be set aside for farming and livestock keeping activities.

Responding to various issues raised by farmers who had already cultivated crops, the RC assured them all those who had already cultivated various crops in the valley that their crops would be pro-

ected, and at the time of harvest they would be allowed to harvest under government's supervision.

He said the farmers have been using the farms as an excuse to enter the valley every year. The RC instructed Igunga Defense and Security Committee to ensure the farmers and herders who were temporarily allowed to conduct their activities in the valley area move out within one

week. The leader of Kilimanjaro farming Group Masandu Masanganya said they do not oppose the government's directive but they wanted to be given time to harvest their crops.

Another farmer, Kulwa Maganga appealed to the RC to help them by ensuring herders would not graze their animals in their farms when they shift away from their farms.



CONSULTANCY POSITION

Consultancy to develop National Guideline on Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)/ Investment Companies in Tanzania

UNCDF Tanzania Office, wishes to engage a suitable Tanzanian National individual consultant to develop two guidelines: (1) A standardized National Guideline for establishment and management of special purpose vehicles (SPVs) to run different Local Government Authorities (LGAs) infrastructure projects in Tanzania and (2) A generic technical guideline for SPVs to be used in different country settings globally (may be tailored to any developing country).

Contract type: Individual contract
Expected duration of assignment: up to 90 days.

Summary of Key Functions:

1. Consultations with national, local government level and other stakeholders to collect relevant information required for development of the guidelines
2. Development of appropriate options for SPVs managerial and governance structures to manage LGAs projects as per the existing requirements (e.g., for wholly owned public projects and those involving the private sector and other stakeholders)
3. Develop the 2 guidelines stated above (Tanzania national guideline and a generic guideline)
4. Develop training modules on the national guideline and conduct a ToT training session

Qualifications, Skills and Experience:

- Master's degree in any of the following areas: Economics, law, international development, investments, Commerce/finance, business or public administration, or related field.
- A minimum of 7 years of progressive relevant experience, with practical knowledge in development finance, investments, or project management.
- Experience in the development of national guidelines and other instruments on project finance, investment, PPPs, or similar assignment.
- Experience in working with central and local government actors, civil society actors and communities in developing country context
- Understanding of private sector and public sector investments, Tanzania local government laws, finance, its administration, governance, and national politics
- Relevant competency skills (communication & writing; research & analytical, and planning & management)
- Fluency in English and Swahili is required.

Mode of Application and Terms of Reference:

Interested candidates, please apply through this link: UNDP | Procurement Notices - 76327 - The objective of this assignment

You are encouraged to read the detailed Terms of Reference before applying. Deadline for submitting an application is on **30th March 2021**. Applicants are required to submit a recent CV, technical proposal, financial proposal and a letter of confirmation of interest as per the template given.

Note: After initial submission, you will be prompted to upload your resume, please upload all required documents as one file under "resume". THE SYSTEM DOES NOT ALLOW MULTIPLE UPLOADS OF DOCUMENTS.

Only Short-listed applicants will be contacted.

Plot No.421, Mahando Street, Masaki. P. O. Box 9182, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255-22-2600911 Website: <http://www.uncdf.org/tanzania> Email: local.finance@uncdf.org

Increase coverage, reporting on children rights protection, TMF urges journalists

By Getrude Mbago

THE Tanzania Media Fund (TMF) has urged journalists to increase coverage and reporting on issues which touch and promote children rights protection as well as fight against violence in the country.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam when officiating a two-day media training on children reporting at the weekend, TMF's interim executive director Fausta Msokwa said media

practitioners can contribute immensely to the reduction of violence against children, if they invest heavily in positive children reporting.

The training was organised by the newly established non-for-profit- Child Rights Media Foundation (CRMFM) with support from the Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVVF).

Msokwa said the media has an important role to play in protecting and promoting the

rights of the child through educating and informing the wider society on the issues affecting the group.

"Children are our national asset and the future of the nation, so it is our national duty to protect the best interests of children and provide them equal opportunities without any discrimination," she stressed.

She wanted media practitioners to ensure that they tell stories in a powerful, engaging and compelling way so as to bring out positive impacts in society.

"Media people have a great responsibility to change the society due to their daily work, so they have to make sure that they fight oppression and any kind of violence through writing and reporting," she said.

She however, reminded journalists to ensure that they adhere to professional ethics, rules and regulations while executing their duties.

Janeth Sosthnes, CRMFM director said the major objective of the training was to impart knowledge and skills to the journalists so as to enable them speak up about children issues for the country's development.

She noted that despite strides by the government and stakeholders to eradicate violence, there are still a number of children in Tanzania who report experiencing violence and abuse with many of them failing to receive immediate support.



INVITATION FOR THE APPLICATIONS FOR VACANT TOURIST HUNTING BLOCK ALLOCATION IN ILUMA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS (WMA) FOR THE HUNTING PERIOD STARTS JULY 2021

[Made under section 31 (7) of the Wildlife Conservation Act No.5 of 2009 and Regulation 55 (2) of WMA Regulations of 2018]

ILUMA Authorized Association of Morogoro Region is Inviting applications to conduct hunting business from interested outfitters companies in their hunting period starting in 2021. Block name, and size of the block and other information are indicated in the table below.

S/N	AA	WMA	BLOCK	SIZE IN KM SQ	CATEGORY	ECOSYSTEM	APPLICATION FEE (USD)
1	ILUMA	ILUMA	BOMA ULANGA	375.00	II	SELOUS - MIKUMI	2,000

Application forms are available at CWMAC Office located at Mikoroshini Street, Msasani Area, Dar es Salaam. **Note:** Both new tourist hunting companies and those which are already in the industry are invited. Criteria for evaluating tourist hunting companies are stipulated on the Section 9 (2) of Tourist hunting Regulations (2015)

Filled application forms, application fee bank pay in slip and all other supporting documents should be sent to the Iluma AA through postal address indicated in the table below or to CWMAC office not later than **28th March 2021**

S/N	AA MAILING BOX	AA BANK ACCOUNT
1	Jumuiya ya Hifadhi ya Wanyamapori Iluma P. O. BOX 619, IFAKARA	A/C NO. 0152261893100 CRDB IFAKARA BRANCH, MOROGORO

Interested applicants are strongly advised to visit respective block before applying. Terms and conditions articulated in the Wildlife Conservation Act No 5 of 2009, Tourist Hunting Regulations (2015) and WMA Regulations (2018) shall be observed.

For more information, please call: +255 688 968 373

Prepared by
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Deusdedit Chuwa (L), services quality and compliance manager with KCB Bank Tanzania's Morogoro branch, presents salon equipment worth 5m/- to Asia Haruna in Morogoro municipality at the weekend. She is one of the beneficiaries of bank's '2jajiri' self-employment programme, which is meant to help women entrepreneurs beat business challenges including financial illiteracy and non-inclusion as well as capital inaccessibility and lack of reliable markets. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

2000 students from twelve primary, secondary schools trained on GBV

By Correspondent James Lanka, Rombo

OVER 2,000 students from twelve primary and secondary schools in Rombo District, Kilimanjaro Region have been trained on gender-related issues in a move to curtail gender-based violence (GBV) in the area.

The week-long training organised by an NGO—Action for Justice in Society (AJISO) was in line with marking International Women's Day.

AJISO managing director Virginia Silayo said at the climax of the celebration held in Rombo that the training was also meant to promote women and children's rights, and gender equality among men and women.

"As you have witnessed today we ended up with official closing of our series of activities including week-long awareness on woman and children rights, gender equality, and testimonials from some women who are GBV's victims who got support from government and other stakeholders from different Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs),

among many others, as a part to mark International Women's Day," she said.

Silayo further noted that, before the colorful event held over the weekend that was graced by the Moshi District Commissioner, Mwangi Kundiya who represented Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner (RC), Dr Anna Mghwira, and Rombo DC, Dr Athumani Kihamia they had a week-long awareness training on GBVs, gender equality and women and children rights, among many others whereby they had reached a total of 2939 girl students and 2846 male students.

"During the awareness training, we learned that rapid increase of early pregnancies and number of cases related to the gender-based violence (GBV) as well as children's rights abuse which are said to have been fueled some parents from the district who shifted from their home villages different urban areas for green pastures, abandoned their kids to their elders in their home villages who cannot take care of them," she explained.

She added: "The problem of

the increases in the number children's rights abuses in Rombo district including raping and child pregnancies is very high in the district, and I recommend the role played by AJISO in creating awareness to the members of the community as well as providing legal aid support and empower women and people with disabilities to overcome the problem."

AJISO launched a project in Rombo to curb the problem in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the district including teachers, the district court, police gender desk, Ward Executive Officers (WEOs) Village Executive Officer (VEOs), students, parents/guardians, community Development Officers (CDOs), paralegals and social workers, among many others, who pledged to work with them very closely to curb the problem.

DC Kundiya said that men are also victims of gender-based violence but most of them feel ashamed to report them to the authorities, appealing them to report to them for the sustainable good livelihood.

ZFDA destroys 20 tonnes of fake drugs

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Food and Drugs Agency (ZFDA) has destroyed 20 tonnes of various kinds of drugs that were found to have been manufactured without adhering to proper procedures and imported into the Isles by Unguja Pharmacy.

The drugs were found in the pharmacy's warehouse at Mwanakwerekwe area after good citizens tipped the agency of their existence.

ZFDA chief Inspector Mwadini Ahmada Mwadini said the consignment from India did indicate the name of the manufacturer, which was against the laws and procedures governing manufacturing of drugs for human use.

He said the medicines that had already been distributed to various pharmacies could have affected the health of users.

The destruction of the condemned drugs was done at Kikungwi under the supervision of environmental protection officials to ensure the health of supervising officials and other people living in the area.

Mwadini advised the Zanzibar Government to construct a special incinerator for the destruction of unfit drugs for human consumption.

Head of Environmental Protection Operations Subira Thabit said before any exercise for the destruction of goods, especially drugs, great precautions are needed and guidelines are always given in conducting the operations safely.

Apart from the destruction of the condemned drugs, ZFDA said other steps were being taken against the importer, Unguja Pharmacy to serve as warning to other traders with similar fraudulent intentions by importing counterfeit goods.

Tarime district court set to hear defamation case facing freelance journo

By Correspondent Ambrose Wantaigwa, Tarime

THE Tarime District Court will this Thursday continue hearing a defamatory case against a freelancer journalist—Samson Chacha alleged to publish false information in a daily tabloid 'Habari Leo'.

Before Resident Magistrate, Veronica Mgendi, a resident of Sirari town, Sinda Geteba through his lawyer, Dominic Chacha alleged that the journalists published false information in the newspaper, stating that Geteba was involved in tax evasion.

It was alleged that the article was published on page 17 of the newspaper's issue of June 24, 2020 claiming that the complainant was arrested by officials from the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) at the Sirari border while driving a vehicle loaded with smuggled goods.

"We have filed a lawsuit asking the court to order my client to be paid 100,000,000/- as compensation for the harm he has suffered after publication of the information," stated Chacha.

The lawyer claimed that his client had suffered injuries as a result of the false publication which includes being expelled from a company he was working with. He claimed that Geteba was also suspended as a member of the Buriba village government.

Chacha told the court that he will present all the evidence to prove his client's claims. He further claimed that Geteba's image in the community has been tarnished.

However, the accused had earlier denied the allegations claiming he was not responsible for the final copy of the published article.



We have filed a lawsuit asking the court to order my client to be paid 100,000,000/- as compensation for the harm he has suffered after publication of the information,

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA MINISTRY OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS



CALL FOR INTERVIEW

The Chairman of the Nomination Committee for Appointment of Members of the Fair Competition Tribunal is hereby announcing the names of applicants who have been short-listed to appear for an oral interview which will be conducted on 24th and 25th March, 2021 at Dodoma VETA Furniture Factory Conference Room, 1st Floor, Dodoma Office.

Wednesday, 24th March, 2021

S/NO.	NAME AND ADDRESS OF INTERVIEWEE	TIME
1.	Nelly Stella Kaisi, P.O. Box 65033, Dar es Salaam.	9.00 am – 9.30 am
2.	Khalifa John Kiango P.O. Box 80223, Dar es Salaam.	9.30 am – 10.00 am
3.	Yustus Adam Mkinga, P.O. Box 78409, Dar es Salaam.	10.00 am – 10.30 am
4.	Raphael B.T. Mgaya, P.O. Box 20356, Dar es Salaam.	11.00 am – 11.30 am
5.	Donald L. Chidowu, P.O. Box 2502, Dodoma.	11.30 am – 12.00 noon
6.	Boniface Gissima Nyamo-Hanga, P.O. Box 71358, Dar es Salaam.	12.00 noon – 12.30 pm
7.	Prof. Honest Prosper Ngowi, P.O. Box 20266, Dar es Salaam.	12.30 pm – 01.00 pm
8.	Dr. Hanifa T. Massawe, P.O. Box 9, Morogoro.	01.00 pm – 01.30 pm
9.	Edward Peter Chuwa, P.O. Box 9422, Dar es Salaam.	02.00 pm – 02.30 pm
10.	Ramadhani Ally Maleta, P.O. Box 8766, Dar es Salaam.	02.30 pm – 03.00 pm
11.	Nzinyangwa Edward Mchany, P.O. Box 2857, Dodoma.	03.00 pm – 03.30 pm
12.	Felix M. Ngamlagosi, P.O. Box 78038, Dar es Salaam.	03.30 pm – 04.00 pm
13.	Gregory Leopold Ndanu, P.O. Box 76849, Dar es Salaam.	04.00 pm – 04.30 pm

Thursday, 25th March, 2021

14.	Jonathan Andrew Njau, P.O. Box 8317, Dar es Salaam.	09.00 am – 09.30 am
15.	Dr. Theodora Nemboyao Mwenegoha, P.O. Box 35093, Dar es Salaam.	09.30 am – 10.00 am
16.	Dr. Eventius Mugyabuso, P.O. Box 3375, Dar es Salaam.	10.00 am – 10.30 am
17.	Godfrey Shirima, P.O. Box 62150, Dar es Salaam.	11.00 am – 11.30 am
18.	Stella Salha Bwimbo, Dar es Salaam.	11.30 am – 12.00 noon
19.	Allen Crony Kasamala, P.O. Box 9150, Dar es Salaam.	12.00 noon – 12.30 pm
20.	John Ignace Kitauli Laswai, P.O. Box 42806, Dar es Salaam.	12.30 pm – 01.00 pm
21.	Dr. Onesmo Michael Kyauke, P.O. Box 4110, Dar es Salaam.	01.00 pm – 01.30 pm
22.	Dr. Eliamani Isaya Laltaika, P.O. Box 77588, Dar es Salaam.	02.00 pm – 02.30 pm
23.	Bernard Otieno, P.O. Box 378, Geita.	02.30 pm – 03.00 pm
24.	Kitandu Paulo Ugula, P.O. Box 2890, Dodoma.	03.00 pm – 03.30 pm
25.	Dr. Neema Bhoke Mwitwa, P.O. Box 307, Mwanza.	03.30 pm – 04.00 pm
26.	Dr. Godwill George Wanga, P.O. Box 3478, Dar es Salaam	04.00 pm – 04.30 pm

All interviewees have to take note of the following:

1. Must report at the exact time as indicated above
2. Must bring with them their Original Academic Certificates
3. Two recommendation/reference letters for each applicant should reach the undersigned before the interview date
4. Each interviewee will have to incur transport costs, meal and accommodation expenses.

All applicants whose names do not appear in the above list should consider themselves unsuccessful and we thank them all for showing interest of working with us.

Public comments in writing, if any, are invited on the suitability of the above candidates to serve as Members of the Fair Competition Tribunal to reach the undersigned on or before 23rd March, 2021. Any such comments received will be treated as confidential.

Chairman
Nomination Committee
The Fair Competition Tribunal
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The Guardian

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

Yes, indeed, prison labour is not for hire

A CHANGE of culture is now being conducted in the Prisons Department and it is evident that they are finding it difficult to get the right bearings for the exercise. The latest indication is the issuing of a directive where prison chiefs who are used to deploying inmates for paid labour on private establishments as part of income generating and self-reliance drives will have to look for other alternatives henceforth.

The government has had to issue this directive banning such practice, some penal institutions took it up.

The use of penal labour for economic activities outside the parameters of a penitentiary is fraught with legal, regulatory and moral issues which defy consensual solutions and instead the only way out is to disband the practice. A prisoner is in the first place someone who can't work for wages, just fulfill a daily quota of work meted out by prison warders, in which case a labour transaction of that nature is by definition undocumented, as it doesn't involve wage negotiations. Nor is it evident or assured that the proceeds thereof will go to fund prisoners' welfare like improving the food they get, or habitats provided.

There are also reports that the department was sending prisoners to work on nation-building undertakings, which by another regard is more acceptable than providing prisoners for hire by private institutions and individuals. Still there are lingering questions as to how prison labour features in the costing for the public undertakings, except for Prison Department projects. As a different mode of accounting is envisaged, using prison labour raises clear issues of probity.

In addition, there is a policy and finally, disciplinary issue on the part of Prison Department top officials to stick to the president's directive,

namely that prisoners ought to feed themselves as they have the body ability to do so. The second parameter is building staff and work premises for the Department, while the government supplies other materials, assuming that they haven't produced other goods which are sold and generate money for other procurement needs. In that sense prisoners' labour can be used by a private contractor if such contractor is building premises (houses, offices) of the Prisons Department, if the prior budgetary arrangements exclude a breadth of wage costs in the overall construction plan, its cost outlays.

Home Affairs Deputy Minister Khamis Hamza Chillo told a high level meeting of heads of departments and agencies under the ministry that inmates' labour is governed by specific work procedures, thus heads of prisons must abide by these procedures. Doing something else would be in violation of some of the laws, for instance making available prison labour so that an entrepreneur cuts costs in what he is producing, or in a construction project ostensibly for a fee paid to the Department. It is clear that this kind of sourcing of labour is tantamount to cheating on product costs, hence an act of theft on the public.

There are also a number of international conventions on the matter, where issues of human rights and fair competition tend to interact, as exports to the United States under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) expressly forbids underpaid labour. A company exporting to the US and is deemed guilty of grossly underpaid labour is barred from accessing the AGOA market. Competition requires the use of correctly hired and remunerated labour, which excludes using prisoners.

African governments need policies to safeguard wildlife

In many parts of Africa, the main demand for illegal wildlife comes from the consumption of bushmeat. Wild animals are a preferred source of protein and primates are considered a delicacy. It is believed that up to 40,000 monkeys are killed and eventually consumed each year in Africa alone via smuggling. Many primates are killed by bushmeat hunters, who supply to markets all over Africa, Europe, and the United States.

Wildlife smuggling or trafficking involves the illegal gathering, transportation, and distribution of animals and their derivatives. This can be done either internationally or domestically. Estimates of the money generated by wildlife smuggling vary, in part because of its illegal nature. Wildlife smuggling is estimated at \$7.8bn to \$10bn a year, according to the U.S. State Department. The U.S. State Department also lists wildlife trafficking as the third most valuable illicit commerce in the world. The illegal nature of such activities makes determining the amount of money involved incredibly difficult. When considered with illegal timber and fisheries, wildlife trafficking is a major illegal trade along with narcotics, human trafficking, and counterfeit products.

Products demanded by the trade include exotic pets, food, traditional medicine, clothing, and jewelry made from animals' tusks, fins, skins, shells, horns, and internal organs. Smuggled wildlife is an increasing global demand; it is estimated that the US, China, and the European Union are the places with the highest demand.

International wildlife trade is causing declines of over 60 per cent in the abundance of species on the planet, say scientists who call for more research on the impacts of this severe threat across the world. The scientists, including those from the University of Sheffield in the UK found that wildlife trade is causing declines of around 62 per cent in the abundance of species, with endangered species suffering losses of over 80 per cent.

Although there are policies managing trade, the study, published in the journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, warned that without enough research on the effects of wildlife trade these policies cannot claim to safeguard species.

According to the researchers, at least 100 million plants and animals are internationally trafficked each year and the international wildlife trade is said to be worth between \$4 to \$20 billion per year.

Citing some examples, they said wildlife trade continues to impact the decline of African elephants due to the ivory trade and the demise of pangolin species across Africa and Asia.

The research called for better protective measures for threatened species and management of trade with trade still driving declines of 56 per cent in protected areas.

"Thousands of species are traded for pets, traditional medicines, and luxury foods, but how this impacts species' abundances in the wild was unknown," said David Edwards, Professor of Conservation Science at the University of Sheffield.

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The invisible generation holding the key to Africa's future food security

By Esther Njuguna-Mungai

It has become accepted wisdom that young Africans are turning away from agriculture, but in reality, this only tells half of the story.

Food security across the continent may well be under threat because growing numbers of young people are leaving rural areas, but it is also under threat because the right support is not reaching those who have little choice but to remain.

In my conversations with East African communities during the past 18 months, I have learned that one of the most likely groups of youths to persist in family farming is young girls, who, for one reason or another, have been unable to complete their education.

For girls and women, education is the best route to better prospects, greater equality and empowerment to control their own life choices. But how can young women become empowered if their personal, social or cultural circumstances prevent them from staying in school and all but force them into farming?

Researching this question reminded me of a classmate of mine, who stopped coming to lessons in Grade Five when she became pregnant. This scenario kept repeating itself as I finished my primary school, proceeded to high school and

eventually to university, and when I met them later, these young women were mothers, while I was still a "youth".

Efforts to support this group are often defined by an understanding of youth as aged 15 to 24. Yet this can be problematic for young teenage girls, who acquire different identities when they marry and/or become mothers at an early age. They no longer identify as - nor are seen by others - as "youth", but they also do not fit within the "adult farmer" profile.

So, when researchers and development practitioners design projects and programs that target either the "youth" or the "farmers", there is a chance that we are using language that inadvertently excludes them.

The fortunes and prospects of this generation are nevertheless inextricably linked to agriculture, and so the route to empowerment for them - and their daughters - is also linked to the route to greater food security.

For many rural girls and young women, agriculture is often their only option to make a living, while their contribution goes under-estimated and under-appreciated. As a critical target group for agricultural improvements, governments, NGOs and research institutes must work together to reach this invisible generation and allow them to fulfil their potential.

The first step is to recognise that far from turning away from agriculture, many young women - and men - are in fact tied to agriculture and as such, will be central to driving transformation in Africa's food systems.

In particular, it is young women who are the unseen force behind agricultural production. Not only do women provide at least 40% of the work in agriculture, they also tend to assume responsibility for household nutrition, making them vital gatekeepers to food security. And they sup-

port food and nutrition security all while navigating barriers to land access and control, in cultures where land rights for women are mainly transacted through marriage while land inheritance is culturally reserved for the "boy child".

Despite their substantial contribution to agricultural work, young women are mainly casual wage earners or they are often limited to low-value activities like tending to livestock and weeding smallholdings, and often miss out on the training or support that would, over time, allow them more control of and access to resources to improve productivity.

The next step is to identify ways to provide this missing targeted support, and key to this is to redefine and better understand what it is to be "youth" in rural contexts.

Part of this will depend on recognising the established cultural and institutionalised processes for reaching adulthood in different contexts, and then developing the strong partnerships at the national, regional and local levels to navigate them.

This will require engaging with young women directly to understand what they require in terms of support with childcare, flexible training and accessible investment, for example.

Finally, by working with young people to understand their needs, countries can develop - supported by organisations like CGIAR - youth strategies to better direct resources and research towards improving agriculture in a way that benefits and harnesses African youth.

This might mean prioritising agricultural enterprises that offer higher returns for young women, whether high value crops, livestock types or strategic feeds and forages. It could also mean developing accessible forms of financial services that reflect gen-

der differences, for example, the fact that young women typically handle small amounts of money, do not have bank accounts and may not have asset collateral.

Not only does this support women to achieve financial independence now, but it lays the foundations for sustainable food systems for the next generation of men and women.

This is why the CGIAR GENDER Platform is uniting an alliance of gender researchers to produce the evidence, develop the methods and foster the partnerships needed to place young women and mothers front and centre of African agriculture.

One of the young women who might have benefited is my friend from Grade Five. While I continued with my education, she became a mother and a young farmer who needed to support her family. Given the chance, my friend, and other young women like her, could benefit from education and support that serves her specific needs as a mother in a rural household.

Overlooking this group of young rural women is both denying them a second chance of empowered adulthood and holding back agricultural development in Africa.

Young women and girls in rural areas will still be working in agriculture in 10 or 20 years' time. Not only does this group deserve better, more equitable support, they represent Africa's best route to greater equality and food security.

- Dr Esther Njuguna-Mungai is a CGIAR gender specialist with the International Livestock Research Institute.

NBI organises webinars to build consensus on Nile cooperation

By Guardian Reporter

THE Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia is organising a string of webinars for the 6th Nile Basin Development Forum (NBDF) under the theme 'Rethinking Regional Investments in the Nile Basin'.

The Nile Basin Development Forum is a science-policy dialogue organised by the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) with its Member States - Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, The Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Eritrea participates as an observer.

It has been held since 2006 and brings together stakeholders from across the Basin and around the world to build consensus on the Nile cooperation agenda and the way forward for the sustainable development and management of the Nile Basin.

NBI Secretariat Executive Director, Prof Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla said: "The theme of the 6th NBDF:

"Rethinking investments in the Nile Basin is very timely taking into account that the Nile riparians, building on the work of NBI over the past more than two decades, are moving towards a new approach to regional/basin planning and investment agenda."

Prof. Abdalla said that the goal of the NBDF is to enhance transformative processes and projects that will contribute to NBI's shared vision: to promote socio-economic benefits for the people and countries of the Nile Basin.

Ethiopian Minister for Water, Irrigation and Energy Dr. Eng. Seleshi-Bekele, called on citizens of the Nile to participate in the event, saying: "I encourage all friends of the Nile to take part in the 6th NBDF webinar series, which Ethiopia is privileged to host."

The webinars will last for nearly two months from March 9 - April 29, covering all critical six sub themes of the NBI strategy - water security, energy security, food security, en-

vironmental sustainability, climate change adaptation, and transboundary water governance.

The webinars are organised under various themes including Water Resources Management; Water-Energy-Food Nexus; Environment and Wetlands; Water and Climate and Transboundary Water Governance.

The Forum will bring together multi-stakeholders from within and out of the Nile Basin including government officials in Nile Basin countries, Members of Parliament, water resource managers, environmentalists, economists, development partners, academia and researchers, to deliberate on opportunities and challenges of Nile cooperation.

Other stakeholders are river basin organisations, regional, continental and international organisations, civil society, private sector as well as media practitioners.

The Nile Basin Development Forum will be held virtually due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and is be-

ing organised with support from the European Union, the German Federation Government through GIZ, World Bank and Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA).

On the sidelines of the Nile Basin Development Forum will be the Nile Media Awards in recognition of journalists that have published outstanding articles that tackle issues concerning the Nile Basin.

Traversing about 6,695 kilometers, the Nile is one of world's longest rivers, feeding millions and giving birth to entire civilizations. The river is a major source of water for the Nile Basin countries.

Water, energy and food are inextricably linked and are essential for human well-being, poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The close interrelationships amongst these resources therefore call for our balancing of the act of exploitation to ensure sustainability for our future generations, for we are, but only stewards of these resources.

How to achieve peace in Afghanistan

GENEVA

There is much expectation about US President Joe Biden's Afghanistan strategy to end the United States' longest war effectively. So far, he continues to rely on Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the Special Envoy for Afghanistan, appointed by Mr. Trump.

The initial statements issued by the White House, State Department, and Defense Department seemed promising. However, some highlighted that they ignored an essential element: the Afghan people's wish about their future!

Following the latest visit of Ambassador Khalilzad to the region, various assumptions have emerged. It seems that he still pushes for a transitional government formula with the participation of Afghan chiefs and the Taliban, a new version of an old strategy that never proved efficient!

It may be futile to invoke details of what has transpired or speculate about President Biden's intention on Afghanistan. However, an overview of the challenges will help define a sound solution, allowing foreign troops to regain their country in the most dignified manner and the Afghan people to dispose of its future.

As of the end of the 18th century, Afghanistan became the battleground for controlling central and south Asia between superpowers. Their "great game" and the ineptness of Afghan rulers who quickly succumbed to the "divide and rule" policy never permitted this country's population to evolve as a nation.

Therefore, understanding the Afghan puzzle is laborious. So far, those who intervened in this eternally fragmented country, more recently the British Empire and the Soviet Union, never grasped fundamental hindrances. Both lost their glory as a result of their uncalculated decisions. The Biden administration must not rush and consider national challenges, regional impediments, and international hurdles to find a lasting, workable, and sustainable solution.

National Challenges

A significant source of eternal conflicts in Afghanistan is an unequal historical treatment of its diverse populations by their governments. Effective equal rights and opportunities and good-governance constitute the basis of a peaceful future. Some fundamental national challenges are as follows:

1 - Afghanistan has always been ruled based on kin, ethnic, religious, and relationship considerations. Meritocracy has hardly been a concern to those in power. This has been a significant reason for the failure of international support strategies so far. Nepotism, cronyism, and tribalism, unless addressed immediately, will be a devastating deterrent element for any positive action.

2 - Since the takeover of power by Communists in 1978, atrocious crimes against humanity have been committed by various regimes, warlords, Mujahidin chieftains, and more specifically, the Taliban and their Islamic State and Al-Qaeda associates. Without a truth and reconciliation process, it would be difficult for any peace effort to achieve its objectives.

3 - While Afghanistan is a country with defined borders and recognized status in major international and regional arenas, Afghans never constituted a nation. Without acknowledging this fact and undertaking a robust nation-building program, Afghanistan will remain a plaything in the hands of foreign adversaries.

4 - Afghanistan's post-Taliban constitution was drafted without considering decades of profound political, social, and economic transformations in the country. It did not satisfy the aspirations of the population. A substantive reform of the current constitution can only improve the chances of durable peace in the country.

5 - Despite efforts undertaken by the international community, Afghanistan is affected by rampant corruption. It has gangrened all layers of central and provincial government institutions and even the private sector, hampering efforts to rebuild and reconstruct



Women impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic wait to receive cash assistance from the World Food Programme in Kabul, Afghanistan. File photo

the country. A comprehensive good-governance and ethics framework, policy, and action plan for public and private sectors must be agreed upon and put in place instantly.

6 - Since Mr. Hamid Karzai was propelled to Afghanistan's leadership and despite trillions of US dollars granted to various Afghan governments, the expected development path is unsatisfactory. Leaders have not been capable of defining where their country would be in a year, ten years, or thirty years from now. It is extremely urgent that Afghanistan's leadership clearly describes short-, med-, and long-term political, social, and economic plans for the country and elaborate the appropriate action strategies so that the population comprehends the sacrifices that are still needed to attain peace and prosperity.

7 - For decades under King Zaher Shah, Afghanistan benefited from a recognized neutral status that helped the country position itself as an unbiased element of the "great games"! Subsequently, it received development aid, particularly from the United States, major European countries, the Soviet Union, India, and the People's Republic of China. The forceful change of regime by Daoud Khan from kingdom to republic with the help of Soviet-trained military officers annihilated Afghanistan's privileged neutral status. Therefore, it is in the interest of this country to regain its neutrality in the international arena and stay away from the "new great game" battles.

8 - Since 2009, elections have been marred with an unacceptable level of corruption and mismanagement. The population has lost trust in the democratic process and does not believe in the elections' outcomes. This is a significant handicap for the country's future political, social, and economic development and peace and serenity prospects. Without a solid and unbiased election law, rules and procedures, and honest people in charge, there will be no future for democracy in Afghanistan.

Regional Impediments

Afghanistan is situated in a very volatile region of the world. For centuries neighboring powers crashed with each other and caused unforgivable tragedies. Below are some of the significant regional impediments to the Afghan crisis:

a - Regional rivalries, particularly the Indo-Pakistan and Saudi Arabia-Iran tensions, affect Afghanistan and have prolonged the conflict and discord among the population, transforming the country into a battle-

ground for proxy wars. There are historical, religious, political, and strategic rationales that have pushed Afghanistan into this situation. Among all the neighbors, Pakistan has heavily facilitated harboring, training, and supporting terrorist movements, mainly the Taliban. There must be a clear understanding among regional powers to immediately spare this country from bearing further the burden of defending diverse foreign interests. More specifically, Pakistan must agree on an honest commitment of non-interference in internal Afghan affairs and end their support to the Taliban or any other subversive organization.

b - Exploitation of resources, in particular minerals and water, constitute a major source of discord. Moreover, climate change has affected Afghanistan to the extent of destroying its agriculture. Any effort by Afghanistan to exploit its water faces powerful neighbors' fury, deteriorating the atmosphere for an amicable understanding and peaceful coexistence. Regional power must recognize Afghanistan's vulnerability and assist overcome the difficulties through exploitation of their own natural resources.

c - Internal challenges of regional powers, particularly claims of autonomy or independence by the peoples of Baluchistan, Kurdistan, Yemen, and Kashmir, affect Afghanistan. There are reports of Afghans dispatched to fight in Kashmir, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere. Often ethnic and religious motivations are the driving force for such insanity, resulting in the lack of unity within Afghanistan. Regional powers must restrain from using Afghans as foot soldiers for their interests.

International Hurdles

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world has become multipolar. In the absence of sound morality, there is a bitter competition for global political and economic leadership. The four years of the Trump administration unmasked glimpses of some's ambitions to dethrone the United States from their leading positions.

While Europe is a stand-alone power and the Russian Federation rises from the ashes of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and India are undeniably the future centers of political and economic gravity.

The Middle East and Central and South Asia are the battlegrounds for a "new great game". Therefore, the leading international hurdles for Afghanistan are as follows:

(i) Western powers have been shaken by the

repeated failure of their policies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and many other countries, particularly in Africa. As a crushing tool, social media allows people to have numerous instantaneous information portals that reveal the difference between rhetoric and realities. This fact enables other powers, notably the People's Republic of China, to ascertain and strengthen their stand in the international arena. Afghanistan seems to remain the playground for such competition that could last decades.

(ii) Afghanistan is no more a priority for the international community. Other emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic or an eventual conflict between important rivals in the world arena can make it even more irrelevant. It is, therefore, vital for the country to find lasting peace in a reasonably not distant future.

(iii) The horrendous terrorist attacks on the United States in Nairobi, Darussalam, Aden, and, more specifically, New York and Washington were perpetrated by Al Qaeda, whose leadership sought protection with the emerging Taliban movement in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Islam, a religion of peace and mercy, was used as a pretext for their inhuman actions. "Islamic terrorism" inflicts misery on people in Asia, Africa, Europe, and elsewhere. The image of Islam is tarnished durably. Islamic countries and Afghanistan, in particular, must undertake unsurmountable efforts to bridge a sustainable trust among all peoples of faiths.

The way forward

Afghanistan has been "an inspiration" for terrorist organizations for decades. However, it can be a significant source of regional and international stability too. It all depends on how the Biden administration shapes its strategy to bring lasting peace in this country with the firm assertion that they accomplished the objective of defeating terrorism in this country. Therefore, Afghans implore President Biden and his team to consider the following:

A - Learn from past mistakes of the US governments. The 5 December 2001 Bonn Agreement, an understanding among political traders, was a quick fix and did not bring peace and security. Another deal involving a selected number of chieftains with the Taliban's inclusion may be an immediate "success," but it would be a significant long-term disaster. A repeat of the mistake of 1992 that led to the sharp rise of international terrorism and direct attacks on the United States will cause devastations of much larger scales. The United States must not rush and earnestly seek the view of the Afghan people about their future. Effective durable peace in Afghanistan will strengthen the trust in American leadership.

B - Since 2002, the Afghan leaders proved inept, corrupt, and lawless. They cannot handle national challenges, regional impediments, and international hurdles surrounding their country. It is time to empower a new generation of young, competent, and incorruptible leaders within the country.

C - The United States and its allies must opt for a transitional government between five to seven years, formed by the new leaders who sound the population and address the national challenges and embark with regional and international powers to agree on a neutral and peaceful future for Afghanistan.

D - Initiate a new inclusive peace process, conducted by the transitional team with the support of regional and international powers, following which an honest and transparent election would be conducted under international monitoring. No transitional government member would be eligible to have substantial public office in the future. They can form an Ethics and Good-governance Council to scrutinize the future governments and private sector actions and take immediate corrective measures in cases of breach of ethics.

Peace in Afghanistan signifies the defeat of terrorism. Bringing terrorists and corrupt leaders to forge a future for this country will signify yet another immense failure.

IPS

New plastics regulations in Mauritius might likely have severe unintended consequences

By Karen Van Der Wath

The government of Mauritius have proposed bold new measures to curb plastic waste. The intentions behind the mooted regulations are commendable.

But we are firmly of the view that, if implemented as per the timelines, logistics and technicalities, the proposed policies for the management of PET Plastic Waste could have a negative impact on the various stakeholders -namely, manufacturers, importers, retailers and consumers at large.

Non-biodegradable pollution is a serious problem the world over, and regulators are finding ways to address this. The European Union says that, by 2030, all plastic packaging within the trading bloc must either be reusable or recycled in a cost-effective manner.

According to authorities, demand for recycled plastics in Europe has grown four-fold since 2015, leading to

the creation of 200,000 new jobs.

Corporates all over the world are taking action too. Nestlé, one of the world's largest food and beverages companies, plans to make 100 per cent of its packaging recyclable or reusable by 2025, while also reducing its use of virgin plastics by one-third over the same period.

The firm is also committed to bringing sustainable packaging to preserve purity to their consumers protected, always taking into consideration the innovation and sustainability of their packaging. For instance, the S.Pellegrino product portfolio features a variety of different packaging materials for different purposes, favouring recyclable materials such as PET (polyethylene terephthalate), glass and aluminium.

In order to increase the sustainable sourcing of their bottles, they are supporting the use of recycled PET (rPET) where it is technically feasible and when the feedstock is available. S.Pellegrino is com-

mitted to using 35 per cent rPET by 2025.

South African retailer Woolworths is meanwhile working to ensure that all of its packaging is either reusable or recyclable by next year - 2022.

Mauritius, on the other hand, is however seriously considering how it can bring an end to plastic waste on the island - and rightly so. Nevertheless, the regulations in the pipeline are out of step with global best practices and might have serious unintended consequences.

A few weeks ago, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change published draft regulations for the management of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and containers generated by the food and beverages industry.

From as soon as October this year, a very complex deposit-refund system will come into effect - if the legislation is passed. This will entail surcharges on products that rely on PET packaging, with a rebate given to the consumer

when the bottle or container is returned.

We-Recycle agrees with the deposit-refund system as part of 'extended producer responsibility'. By placing a reasonable economical value on each piece of used PET packaging, linked with a proper collection system for used PET bottles, the country's plastic waste collection and recycling rates will vastly improve by creating a mindset shift amongst consumers - as has been observed in other markets all over the world.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a strong advocate of this approach.

Meanwhile, with effect from February next year, authorities will ban the use of PET for beverages where the bottle or container has a capacity of less than 1 litre. In the long term, the use of plastic (HDPE) for packing in the food and beverages industry will be banned altogether.

This roadmap gives food and beverages producers, importers and retailers just a few

months to achieve what other nations hope to achieve within a decade.

The rules would be seriously difficult to adhere to. For one thing, the country's retail sector is dominated by small shops, most of which do not have the resources needed to be compliant to the deposit-refund system or the logistics for it.

The collection infrastructure for both imported and locally produced PET bottles subject to the deposit-refund system also need to be carefully planned and put in place as the current informal recycling collection system in Mauritius will not be able to cope with the increased volume of PET bottles available for recycling.

The deposit-refund system will negate the need to ban PET bottles with a capacity of less than 1 litre - as all PET bottles will be recycled, irrespective of its size or whether they are imported or not.

As other countries and regions have shown, there is no quick fix when it comes to plastic packaging. The shift

away from HDPE requires the establishment of new packaging facilities and manufacturing processes, and this will take time.

In our view, the best solution to the world-wide plastic problem would be to ramp up our recycling industry and create a sustainable circular economy, in which waste is eliminated by reusing resources.

This will require a targeted nationwide education programme - with the private sector playing an important role - as well as financial incentives that prompt changes in consumer habits. This is why we are in favour of an expansion of the 'extended producer responsibility' framework.

Recycling groups across Africa, Europe and Asia are taking innovative approaches to the creation of a circular economy. In Tanzania, Arena Recycling collects plastic waste from beaches in Dar es Salaam to produce building materials for the construction of affordable houses, toilets and other amenities.

Encouragingly, progress is already being made in Mauritius. NGOs such as We-Recycle, Mission Verte and New Invaders Club have reported a significant increase in the volumes of PET bottles collected from their bins. This shows that public awareness is on the rise.

Make no mistake, the private sector, governments and society at large are all aligned on the need to reduce and ultimately eliminate plastic waste by recycling more.

The move towards a circular economy, with recycling and the reuse of resources at the core, would accelerate the shift to a low-carbon economy - and create jobs. In a way, the focus here should be on RRRRT - that is, refusing, reducing, reusing and recycling.

Carbon & energy management consultant Karen Van Der Wath is President of We-Recycle Mauritius. She filed this dispatch from the country's capital, Port Louis.

Vaccines raise hope as COVID-19 continues to ravage Middle East

CAIRO

IRAQI nurse Safaa al-Din Kareem compares the China-donated Sinopharm vaccine as a “lifesaving guard” for the war-torn country.

“The vaccine came at the right time,” said Kareem, who has been working at Iraq’s Medical City, the country’s largest medical complex, to vaccinate health workers with the Chinese vaccine. Iraq is among many countries in the Middle East which are under the combined challenges of a fragile health system and the difficulty in obtaining vaccines amid the continuous spread of COVID-19. In the face of production shortfalls and distribution disparities across the globe, China’s vaccine aid and exports have been offering the region a ray of hope.

Over a year after its outbreak in the Middle East, the COVID-19 pandemic is showing no signs of slowing down despite various controlling measures. The total number of confirmed cases has recently surpassed 10 million in the region, with some countries experiencing new peaks in infections.

Turkey, the hardest-hit country in the Middle East, has been witnessing a surge in COVID-19 cases recently. Over 2.87 million cases have been reported in the country, including some 42,000 variant cases. Iran has a tally of over 1.74 million cases. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called for stricter border controls last month, warning that another wave of the pandemic could hit the country. For countries still struggling in prolonged wars and deep-rooted conflicts, the pandemic is adding to the suffering of local peoples.

In Iraq, the COVID-19 curfew was extended last week due to surging cases. In Lebanon, economic and political crises compounded by the pandemic have put the country under great pressure. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization’s Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, said in a press conference last month, “In our region, where people and health-care institutions suffer constantly with war, natural disasters and diseases, this virus has demanded all our efforts.”

On Dec. 30, 2020, the first batch of China’s Sinovac vaccine arrived in Turkey. In mid-January, Turkey launched its vaccination campaign after 14 days of testing on the Chinese jabs.

“I got my two shots and felt minor side effects such as a headache. It is a big relief to know that this vaccine will eventually prevent me from being hospitalized and even death,” said Ayser Akinci, a Turkish pensioner aged 83. “All of my friends got this vaccine which is for us a real life saver at this point, we are grateful to those who have developed it,” she said.

Besides Turkey, China’s vaccine exports have arrived in such Middle Eastern countries as Morocco, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and China has



offered vaccine aid to countries including Egypt, Iraq and Algeria. In an effort to make vaccines global public goods accessible and affordable for all, China is ready to continue to promote equitable global distribution.

In early March, Iraq managed to kickstart its national vaccination campaign with a batch of China-donated vaccines administered to frontline health workers. Asraa Abbas, a nurse in her 30s, said she felt very happy after receiving a shot at a time when everyone in hospitals was put in constant danger. “The Chinese vaccine not only came to save me, it came to save my whole family.”

Besides its availability, Chinese vaccines have been winning confidence in the Mid-

dle East with their efficacy and safety. Turkey announced on March 5 that the Sinovac vaccine has an efficacy of 83.5 percent against COVID-19. In December 2020, The UAE said interim analysis of the phase III trials proved the Sinopharm vaccine to be 86 percent effective. “Vaccines are the only hope to curb and control the spread of the virus,” said Magdy Badran, a professor of virology and member of the Egyptian Association of Immunology. Badran said the most important thing is that vaccines should be safe, effective, affordable and available, and “the Chinese vaccines are exactly so.”

As many Middle Eastern countries are pinning high hope of overcoming the pandemic

on Chinese vaccines, further vaccine cooperation is expected between China and the region.

Nadhun Ali Abdullah, a political expert with Arab Forum, a Baghdad-based think tank, said “China repeatedly announced its readiness to make its vaccines available to other countries,” which is in line with its aim “to build a community of health for all by expanding access to vaccines for developing countries.” Upon the arrival of the China-donated vaccines on March 2, Iraq’s Ministry of Health said the country wants to purchase more

Chinese vaccines to meet the urgent need.

China has provided and is providing the vaccine aid free of charge to 69 developing countries in urgent need, while exporting vaccines to 43 countries, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a press conference on the sidelines of China’s annual “two sessions” on March 7. China will continue working with others in unremitting efforts to completely defeat the pandemic, Wang pledged

Xinhua

Extent of violence against women during pandemic exposed

JOHANNESBURG

COVID-19 restrictions exposed women and girls to heightened abuse - revealing the conditions in which gender-based violence became the shadow pandemic on the continent, a recent webinar attended by parliamentarians from Africa and Asia heard.

Gift Malunga, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) country representative for Zambia, told delegates that during the lockdown in Zambia, 90% of calls to traditional hotlines between March and May 2020 were related to intimate partner violence.

Malunga was talking at the webinar facilitated by the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) and supported by UNFPA-JTF. This was the second event to enable inter-continental sharing of information on implementing ICPD25 commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar’s theme emphasised gender-based violence (GBV) during lockdowns.

Asahiko Mihara, a member of parliament and Deputy President of Japan-AU Parliamentarians Friendship League, opened the forum by noting that women, as frontline workers, played a crucial role in managing the pandemic. However, the reallocation of resources, including SRH services, could be detrimental to global and national efforts to improve women’s health, he said.

Malunga said while even before the pandemic sexual and gender-based violence was high, with one in three women on the continent having experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence, the pandemic exacerbated this. Services for sexual reproductive health were disrupted, and as a result, the UNFPA expected long-term consequences, including, according to a study, 7 million unintended pregnancies every six months.

The study also estimated that an additional 18 million child marriage cases could occur due to disruptions of programs to prevent female genital mutilation and child marriage. Transactional sex increased as poverty increased.

When girls dropped out of school, “they become more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, even to teenage pregnancy, to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and child marriage,” Malunga said.

“This perpetuates the cycle of poverty. COVID-19 affected women who worked in the informal sector as they had been pushed out of work. When more vulnerable to poverty, they also experienced more GBV in their homes.”

The eastern Southern Africa region recorded spikes in GBV, child marriage, and teenage pregnancies across all countries. In addition, child marriage was on the rise. Malawi recorded an 11% increase in teenage pregnancies and an additional 13 000 cases of child marriage from January to August 2020, compared to 2019.



In Zambia, during partial lockdowns, there was increased exposure to GBV, and a study conducted in December 2020 showed that 30% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 experienced domestic violence.

There was also an increase in transactional sex, Malunga quoted a respondent:

“Child marriage is on the increase because parents have become poorer and can’t afford to provide adequately for their children. Lack of income and prolonged closure of schools are the major causes of the increase in child marriage. This is more common in large families where hunger is more pronounced.”

She called on parliamentarians to advocate for an enabling environment for women and girls. She said while many countries had great policies and strategies, problems arose with implementation.

Sam Ntelamo, Head of the Sub Office International Planned Parenthood Federation (AR) Sub-Office to the African Union & UNECA, called on the delegates to support the AU’s recently launched gen-

der equality and women empowerment strategy.

He said that because of circumstances, even civil society found itself hampered because of restrictions imposed during the pandemic - this included not being able to reach those in need because of a loss of funding.

Ntelamo said CSOs implored governments to address women and girls’ needs, especially in rural and remote areas. These areas needed time-sensitive services such as voluntary termination of pregnancies. Governments should guarantee access to assistance and protection of women survivors of sexual violence, trafficking, and other exploitation.

Justine Coulson, Deputy Regional Director, UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office, reiterated the call asking parliamentarians to consider what was needed to halt the trends.

She said it was also critical to look at the impact on the youth, which ranged from school and university closures, loss of employment, heightened food insecurity, and accessing health ser-

vices. South Africa, Namibia and Botswana were already among some of the world’s most unequal countries despite being middle-income countries, and this inequality had increased during COVID-19.

The webinar attended by about 50 parliamentarians from Botswana, Cameroon, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Tchad, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Also present were delegates UN affiliates, the Southern African Development Community, and the AU.

IPS

132-yr-old tomb of Ngoni tribe chief now turns into tourist attraction hub in Songea

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THE presence of a circular tomb where Chief Nkosi Mharule bin Zulu Gama of the Ngoni tribe who died in 1889 has become one of the popular tourist attractions in Songea District, Ruvuma Region.

Located in Mbingamharule village, the tourist site receives many visitors from South Africa and as far as Europe, USA. Most of the visitors go there through various difficulties including pilgrimage and rituals.

What amazes many who visit the tomb is the story that after his death, Nkosi Mharule was buried according to the customs and traditions of South African chiefs.

An 87-year-old Christian Ngonyani, a traditional elder in Mbingamharule village says the village was named after the chief who came from South Africa and ruled from 1847 to 1889.

He says the customs and traditions of those days required that when the chief died, he must be buried with two persons alive and that this was a command of the traditional government and no one objected.

According to Ngonyani, many of those who were buried alive by the chief were those who were acquainted with and worked closely with him.

However, he says people in the area have been going there on pilgrimage every year to the grave, which is two kilometers from the village, and that the relatives of Chief Mharule from South Africa often come to perform rituals at the tomb.

"I remember last year the Mharule clan from South Africa came to witness the inauguration of Chief Nkosi Imanuel Zulu Gama VI who is the current chief of Ngoni," he recounts.

According to Ngonyani, for anyone who wants to visit the tomb, there are some customary procedures, which need to be followed such as carrying cassava flour, maize, and sorghum which is made by a grandmother in the village.

After arriving at the tomb, the leader of the area communicates with the dead chief in the indigenous language before calling those who perform who kneel on the grave and mourn with the traditional prayers.

Ngonyani narrates: "After prayers, chickens or goats are slaughtered on Chief Mharule's grave. Surprisingly, when a goat is slaughtered, it



does not shout, after slaughtering one, it pours all the flour on the grave."

However, he says when you arrive in the morning on the grave you do not see blood or flour as it's believed that all being eaten and that that is a sign of acceptance for all the troubles of some-

one who went to pray for in the grave.

Ngonyani's aide, Agnes Ngonyani also says: "We're receiving many visitors to Chief Mharule's grave from as far as Europe, USA and some African countries who are going through various difficulties including pilgrimage and rituals."

"I have been sending ordinary people, traditional healers, tourists, and patients to pray at the Chief's grave and succeed," she says, calling tourism stakeholders and the government to venture into the hefty promotion of the area.

NGO gears up to empower marginalised young women

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE campaign for female education NGO (CAMFED) in collaboration with other stakeholders is set to reach out to at least 828,906 marginalised young women and students in four years time.

The international non-governmental, non-profit organisation (NGO) whose mandate is to eradicate poverty in African through education of girls and empowering young women has so far empowered over 360,000

girls in the past five years.

Speaking here during the NGO's annual general meeting and launch of the 2021-2025 strategic plan, Camfed -Tanzania national director, Lydia Wilbard said their main focus was to see every child is protected, respected and valued in order to grow up to turn the tide of poverty.

"Our mission is to help tackle poverty and inequality by multiplying education opportunities for girls and empowering young women to become leaders of change"

she said. She said that since its establishment in 2005, Camfed -Tanzania has supported more than 683,439 children to attend schools, with a focus on marginalised girls at the secondary school level and 1,580 tertiary students were supported.

According to her in 2019 316,196 secondary students had been supported through the philanthropy of women leaders in the Camfed.

A total of 26,376 young women who have completed secondary school with Camfed's support have joined the

Camfed association of women leaders.

Women under the association are provided with leadership and entrepreneurship training, and volunteer programmes. These initiatives help them build important skills and knowledge that empower them to improve future opportunities for themselves as well as their families and communities.

Speaking while opening of the meeting Camfed board of director chairperson, Jeanne Ndyetabwe said the organisation supports young women

throughout their primary and secondary schools' years, into economic training and further education, and onto leadership, as role models, activists and philanthropists.

She noted that while it planned to reach out to 1,000,000 girls in the last five years, it surpassed the target reaching 360,000 vulnerable girls in some 39 district councils in the nine region where it operates. Camfed operates in Morogoro, Dar es salaam, Iringa, Tanga, Coast, Mwanza, Shinyanga, Tabora and Singida

regions. She added that the organisation plans to empower at least 19200 girls with entrepreneurial skills and link them with various stakeholders in efforts to get capital.

"Our bursaries enable thousands of girls to attend secondary schools with interventions aimed at improving participation and learning among all children in partner schools," she said.

One of the Camfed beneficiaries from Chalinze, Coast Region, Eva John said before entering the programme,

she used to do casual jobs in efforts to buy school uniforms and books. Eva who joined the programme while in Form One added that after completion of secondary education, she got entrepreneurial training from Camfed that has helped her start business.

She currently owns three hectares of pineapple plantation, six hectares of paw paw plantation, a shop and supports 13 marginalised girls who are in secondary schools.

Mobile app halves vaccinating time to curb rabies in Africa

By Moses Michael-Phiri, Blantyre

A mobile phone app is helping veterinarians to halve the time it takes to complete dog vaccination programmes in Malawi and could help curb rabies threat in African cities, a study shows.

The app known as World Veterinary Service Data Collection installed in mobile phones facilitates tracking of veterinary teams working remotely, collection of data and efficient coordination of vaccination teams in near real time.

Rabies transmitted by dogs kills almost 60,000 people each year globally, with most cases affecting Sub-Saharan Africa and India, according to another study. The WHO, World Organization for Animal Health and Food and Agriculture Organization have set the elimination of dog-mediated human rabies deaths by 2030.

Researchers using data collected through the app were able to modify Malawi's Blantyre City rabies dog vaccination campaign to achieve vaccination of over 70 per cent of all the dogs in the city in nearly half the time and staff resources compared with previous campaigns.

"Achieving at least 70 per cent dog vaccination coverage annually is crucial for rabies control," says Stella Mazeri, lead re-

searcher and veterinary epidemiologist at the UK's University of Edinburgh. "But it is often impossible to achieve [that] without employing expensive and labour-intensive door-to-door vaccination approaches."

The study, published in the February issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), assessed methods of mass dog vaccination that affect urban vaccination campaigns required to eliminate rabies in poor-resource settings such as Malawi.

Most successful vaccination programmes with coverages greater than 70 per cent have been dependent on a combined static point and door-to-door vaccination approaches that are expensive and time consuming, researchers say.

Thus, Mission Rabies, a charity organisation, collaborated with Blantyre Society for the Protection and Care of Animals and the University of Edinburgh to apply a data-driven approach using the smart phone app between 2015 and 2017 to record data on rabies vaccinations and access global positioning system locations.

Dagmar Mayer, Mission Rabies country manager in Malawi, says that they were able to increase the numbers of drop-in centres within around 800 metres of owners' homes from 44 to 77.

The new campaign vaccinated more than 70 per cent of the more than 40,000 dogs in the city in 11 days compared with 20 days in a previous approach that did not use the app, the study says, adding that it also required 904 staff days instead of 1,719.

"Analysing data collected for each dog seen at door-to-door showed that only few dog owners are willing to walk more than 1,500 metres to bring their dogs for their rabies vaccination," she said.

Children under 15 are at the highest risk due to their close interaction with dogs, the species responsible for up to 99 per cent of rabies cases, according to the WHO. "Annual mass dog rabies vaccination campaigns are therefore crucial in reducing the rabies burden in dogs and in turn reduce the risk of rabies in humans," says Mazeri.

John Pirate Kothowa, chief animal veterinary officer in Blantyre District, where the study was implemented, said

"We are achieving a high number of dogs in half the time than in the previous campaigns. We believe this can be scaled up to national level."

Kondwani Chiumia, chief laboratory technician at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, says



that the study provides data-based evidence for the veterinary and health sectors to curb rabies by helping to locate hotspots in communities.

"The health sector further needs to actively participate in rabies testing," Chiumia explains.

Mazeri adds: "We believe this approach will be useful

as a template for designing successful vaccination campaigns in other African cities, in a cost-effective manner, ultimately reducing the rabies treat to humans."

Rural-urban migration 'cut bush burning, air pollution'

By Special Correspondent

HARMFUL emissions of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) were reduced in 13 African countries in recent years, bucking the trend of increasing air pollution, as rural to urban migration led to a decline in agricultural burning, a study suggests.

Researchers say that Africa has about 70 per cent of burned areas globally, with the practice of bush burning – setting fires during dry seasons to clear land – particularly common in north equatorial Africa. The region is home to over 275 million people and spans 15 countries including Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Sen-

egal, South Sudan and Uganda.

"That would suggest that there are likely also some decrease[d] air pollution-related health problems in that region during the dry season," said Jonathan Hickman, Columbia University.

The study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences last week assessed air pollution seasonal fires and population growth in the grassland region of north equatorial Africa during November to February from 2005 to 2017.

Researchers used satellite data and imagery to measure the amounts of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)

gas as a measure of air pollution. They also used satellite imagery to measure burned areas.

"Our study finds that there is a decline in NO₂ of 4.5 per cent in that region during that time of year," said Jonathan Hickman, lead author of the study and a researcher at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies at the US-based Columbia University.

"That would suggest that there are likely also some decrease[d] air pollution-related health problems in that region during the dry season, but we do not have any specific evidence for this."

A report by UNICEF indicates that

air pollution is a growing challenge in Africa, with deaths in Africa from outdoor air pollution rising from 164,000 in 1990 to 258,000 in 2017.

Biomass burning contributes greatly to the release into the atmosphere of NO₂, a harmful pollutant linked to health issues such as lung and respiratory diseases.

According to the study, economic and demographic data showed that decreases in NO₂ were linked to areas where populations and economic activities had increased, leading the researchers to suggest that rural to urban migration might have contributed to the decline in NO₂.

Hickman added that the study was

conducted because Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing rapid changes such as urbanisation that have implications for air quality but has not been the focus of scientific study.

BPP in-article ad

Hickman said that the study did not examine population dynamic changes within countries.

"We did not explicitly consider what countries are experiencing improvements in the paper," Hickman clarified. "Instead, we focus on the productive grasslands."

Leonard Amekudzi, an associate professor and provost of the College of Science at the Kwame Nkrumah

University of Science and Technology, Ghana, who was not involved in the study, told SciDev.Net that the study provides accurate but limited information.

"Nitrogen oxides are not the only air pollution gases in the atmosphere linked to population explosion," he explained, citing other gases such as carbon monoxide and sulphur oxides.

Amekudzi added that the season November to February used for the study is only applicable to West Africa, and that "the burning could even go beyond March in Sahelian regions in the West and part of central Africa".

The day Prof Evelyne Isaack Mbede amazed Dar girl students...

By Correspondent Deogratias Mushi

As part of the commemoration of International Women's Day in Tanzania early last week, the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) organised storytelling sessions for secondary and university girl students.

TGNP Executive Director Lilian Liundi says that these are popular storytelling sessions popularly known in Kiswahili as 'vilinge', which employ techniques that facilitate dialogue and discussion such as group work, research, group discussions, discussion and video watching.

The main goal is to ensure that the lives of women and other vulnerable groups in society are improved and that violence against them is fought fiercely.

TGNP usually runs storytelling sessions to give women the opportunity to share their experiences - successes as well as challenges - in their communities.

"We are more interested in capacity building, to ensure that the women we train are empowered to better address the gender and developmental challenges they face in their daily lives. We also teach them how to improve their lives by joining credit centers in their respective areas," says Liundi.

It was against that background that female students from four Dar es Salaam-based universities and as many secondary schools were invited to the Wednesday (March 10) session so that they could have the chance to learn from some reputable women who have registered success in their lives.

The students were from the University of Dar es Salaam, Ardhi University, Institute of Transport and the Institute of Finance Management as well as Makumbusho, Misititu, Kitunda and Mabibo secondary schools.

One of the women invited to share her life story, Prof Evelyne Mbede (pictured) from the University of Dar es Salaam, stunned participants with a stimulating story that has contributed to what she has achieved academically.

A native of Njombe in southwestern Tanzania, world-acclaimed geologist Prof Mbede told the students that she has established strong credentials for research in basin tectonics and earthquake risks.

This soft-spoken professor served as Director of Science and Technology in the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology for ten years - from 2007 to January 2017. She is a member of the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) and a fellow of the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS).

The students at the storytelling



session, held at the TGNP offices at Mabibo in Dar es Salaam, were impressed upon learning that Prof Mbede earned her PhD in 1993 from Berlin's Technical University and later served as the first woman Dean at the University of Dar es Salaam's College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

The professor, who was also once chairperson of the International Commission of Earth Scientists in Africa (ICESA), told the students, most of whom have a passion for - or are actually pursuing - science subjects: "I decided to dedicate my life to science during my childhood, and you can also do the same. Science is not difficult, as you don't have to cram a lot of things like in other subjects."

She added: "My father was a primary school teacher. We used to listen to BBC programmes and read scientific and geographical magazines. It was then that I started thinking that I should pursue science subjects right to university, something you can as well do."

Thanks to her father, the professor was guided into taking advantage of education opportunities offered to women in Tanzania, just like is the case today.

Some 66.3 per cent of women scientists, in fact, still experience the influence of the gender bias in their participation in the science, engineering and technology industry.

But Mbede's father had an open mind, and this gave her better chances for herself alongside helping her to make a difference for Tanzania in her later life. Let us not forget, Tanzania is on the United Nations list of middle income countries, but it was once included in a longer list of 66 nations identified as lagging in science and technology.

Talking about Tanzanian women scientists, Prof Mbede mentioned the importance that her affiliation to OWSD had during her political activity.

"I joined OWSD very early after my PhD, and that gave me the opportunity to establish good interactions with women from East African countries," she said.

She cited working for the government, in the policy-making section first and then her affiliation to TWAS as two "very important steps" - "as this enabled me to interact with an ever-rising number of all manner of people".

She said her experience was that most Tanzanian women who succeed in science eventually land good careers.

She noted, though, that one problem is in the starting numbers - "in that the percentage of women in the biological sciences is fairly good, but when it comes to the physical sciences, the problem becomes bigger".

Statistics on higher education show that, despite a

moderate increase in enrolment in universities and colleges during the last ten years, the percentage of women in science remains limited to approximately 30 per cent.

This divergence increases all the more in higher education and policy-making positions, and girls currently in universities need to handle this very carefully, Prof Mbede said.

"During my ministerial mandate, I struggled to fill more positions and get equal opportunities for women," she recalled.

She underlined to policymakers the importance of having women scientists in decision-making processes, "because if non-experts are left to decide on women's behalf, the risk is that these people won't understand why they should invest funds in one activity rather than in another".

Before moving to the realm of policy-making, Prof Mbede was a hugely active scientist, working on volcanic zones, doing geological prospecting, monitoring earthquakes and offering advice to communities living in the seismically active areas of northern Tanzania.

Additionally, she was often engaged in discussions related to the environment, including at international events.

Today, after her experience at the Communication, Science and Technology ministry, she is working as an associate professor in Earth sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Her experience in politics and science has vastly broadened her perspective on how Tanzania should use its scientific workforce, both locally and internationally, by building teamwork.

"The seismology unit of our department is part of a wider team whose members include a whole Energy minister and people from various other groups," she said, adding that she is involved in advising the government about the seismic risks.

The professor continues to train people living in highly tectonic areas such as the Rungwe Mountains. Whenever there is a seismic event, she rushes to wherever the respective earthquake-stricken area is to make sure that people are not affected by the aftershocks.

International collaborations are an important part of her research activities, and her work with the government brought her even closer to a wide range of science diplomacy initiatives.

Tanzania is in the core of Africa, Prof Mbede explains, saying she routinely shares experiences with other nations and also often consults with foreign countries' cabinets, foreign ministries, UN agencies

and a global, international environment.

She says finding financial support for research was not difficult in Tanzania during her ten years' experience working for the government.

She recalls that Tanzania has been extending a substantial amount of funding for research, noting that in 2007 the budget for research was less than one billion Tanzanian shillings, but it has now been increased up to 30 billion shillings.

Accordingly, she would like to see a bigger number of girls using that "window" to pursue science and fight hard enough to make it as world-class scientists.

With its sights set to the future, the Tanzanian government is now allocating funds not only to research but also to human resource capacity development. Increasing research capacity is part of the national agenda: funding now goes into human resources, for postgraduate fellowships, and also into mobilising research and laboratories, offering Tanzanian women scientists a better research environment.

"We also receive funds from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and support from the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education that is known as NUFFIC as well as from various international research funding agencies," Prof Mbede revealed.

Regarding her scientific career, she said: "At the time I was elected to TWAS, I was in the government and therefore I didn't have enough time to do research."

She adds, though, one thing "certainly hasn't changed" even as she returns to research: "I am still committed to science as a form of public service, and to having a positive impact - and that is why I would seriously like to see more women and girls being involved in scientific studies".

Incidentally, the professor is the recipient of the 2019 TWAS-C.N.R. Rao Award for Scientific Research for her significant contributions to Earth science and reduction of natural disasters.

She was specifically honoured for her studies on volcanoes and seismicity in a region of geological importance - the exposed outcrops of the East African Rift Valley.

RADIO ONE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE



23.00 HRS

TIME

05.00 AM

06.00 AM

06.30 AM

06.50 AM

07.00 AM

7:10 AM

07.15 AM

07.25 AM

07.40 AM

08.00 AM

08.10 AM

09.00 AM

09.10 AM

09.20 AM

09.30 AM

10.00 AM

10.03 AM

10.10 AM

13.00 HRS

13.10 HRS

13.30 HRS

16.00 HRS

16.03 HRS

16.30 HRS

18.30 HRS

19.30 HRS

20.00 HRS

20.10 HRS

21.00 HRS

21.05 HRS

22.00 HRS

22.15 HRS

TUESDAY

PROGRAMME

HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I

AMKA NA BBC

NIPASHE

MATANGAZO

NEWS BULLETIN

MATANGAZO

TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI

UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI

KUMEPAMBAZUKA II

HABARI NYEPESI

KUMEPAMBAZUKA III

HABARI ZA BIASHARA

MATANGAZO

BRAND TALK

KUMEPAMBAZUKA SHERIA

NEWS BRIEF

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

YALIYOMO YAMO

NEWS BULLETIN

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

DJ SHOW

NEWS BRIEF

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOJA YA LEO

DIRA YA DUNIA BBC

SPOTI LEO

NEWS BULLETIN

UCHUNGUZI KAMILI

NEWS BRIEF

DURU ZETU

NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS)

AFRO TIZII

FAHARI YA MSIKILIZAJI // THE LISTENERS PRIDE



TUESDAY	
05:00-09:00HRS	MORNING JAM
09:00-13:00HRS	LETE RAHA
13:00-14:00HRS	DW-RADIO
14:00-16:00HRS	CLUB 101
16:00-18:00HRS	DALA DALA
18:00-18:10HRS	HABARI
18:10-21:00HRS	BOZOUK TIME
21:00-22:00HRS	SPORTS
22:00-00:00HRS	DALA DALA (marudio)
00:00-04:00HRS	LETE RAHA (marudio)
04:00-05:00HRS	SPOTI (marudio)

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 171 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

WORD-FIT

CROSSWORD

3 LETTERS: ART, HUT, RIB
 4 LETTERS: COST, TING, LEAD, TASS, STAR, ROME, UNIT, (7 WORDS)
 5 LETTERS: ASIDE, DOORS, TSARS, SKULL GRATE (5 WORDS)
 6 LETTERS: ENDURE, ARREST, BEAGLE, SERENE ASSIGN (5 WORDS)
 7 LETTERS: MEXICAN
 8 LETTERS: HARANGUE
 10 LETTERS: CALAMITIES

CLUES: Across

1 able to operate independently
 5 a list of meals
 7 a tripod frame used to support an artist's canvas
 8 Chief city of Jordan
 10 the whole quantity
 11 an inlet
 13 group of musicians playing together
 15 an enzyme which breaks down RNA into smaller molecules
 17 afflicted
 19 the chief male character in a book
 20 the chemical element of atomic number 68

Down:

1 an unspecified amount
 2 former monetary unit of India
 3 a thing that is borrowed
 4 an instrument for sewing
 6 community of Muslims
 7 festival of the Christian church celebrating the resurrection of Christ
 9 unusual
 12 ended, stopped
 14 person who donates something
 16 beard in Kiswahili
 17 exclamation expressing triumph
 18 a kind of rock in which metal is found

SOLUTIONS

WORD-FIT: T Y R R H E N I A N, A E E N, M E A N A W A S H, E P O E M S W, M S O F E W, C A R E E R, L A S, M I N T L E A S T, N A A G R, A D A P T O R S, D I N E E V, D A S I S E T S E

CROSSWORD: N E W S P A P E R S, A A O H, M A I D A S S E S, E T O A S T B, O E D E M A K, A M C, O B E Y E S T E R, A O H E, A L L U S I O N A, B L A T U S, A G H O S T S E

By Magezi: 0755429240 telixmagezi@gmail.com



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Spike in new virus cases risks Africa GDP growth, AfDB says

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OUTLOOK & ANALYSIS
FMO, FinDev Canada and OeEB support critical food supply in Africa

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Reach out to customers with better digital services, bank urged



By Correspondent Felix Andrew

THE government has asked Mwalimu Commercial Bank (MCB) to improve its efforts in reaching digital services to its customers.

The directives were issued in Dodoma by the Minister of State in President's Office Regional Administration and Local Authorities, Selemani Jafo when launching the Mwalimu Visa card and digital services.

"Can you lower down costs so as to enable more teachers to access loans since they are most affected with the bad loans provided in the streets," he said, adding that there are some teachers who were affected with higher interests' loans and others failed to attend class sessions at their respective schools hence suspended due to bad loans.

Minister Jafo also asked the bank to have a strategy of recruiting more customers starting with teachers and other communities.

Bank's board chairman, Francis Ramadhani, said one of their priority was to improve digital services and reach more customers.

He said the bank has launched banc assurance services that help customers in case they face any challenge and make compensation during catastrophe events.

Secretary-General of Tanzania Teachers Union, Deus Seif wanted all teachers to join the bank which would enable them to access loans with affordable interest rates.

He said in order to avoid being cheated and take loans from unknown people, the bank would enable them to access loans at affordable interest rates.

Late last year, MCB entered into a partnership with Airtel Tanzania which aimed at promoting financial inclusion in the country.

The Commercial manager for Mwalimu Commercial Bank Plc, Ombeni Kaale was quoted as saying the bank has allowed its teachers and other customers to take full control of the way they bank by designing a self-service channel with simple functionalities to make it easy to use and enable the majority of Tanzanians who finds it difficult to visit branches to have access to bank's services at their conveniences.

Coca-Cola initiative empowers more than 2 million African women

By Smart Money Reporter

THE Coca-Cola Company and its partners are proud to celebrate exceeding their 5by20 goal by enabling the economic empowerment of more than 6 million women around the world. About 34% (just over 2 million) of those women enabled by the 5by20 program live and do business in Africa.

The 5by20 goal aimed to assist women entrepreneurs across the Coca-Cola value chain - agricultural producers, suppliers, distributors, retailers, recyclers, and artisans - overcome challenges when establishing and growing their business.

By providing access to business skills, financial services, assets and support networks of peers and mentors, women entrepreneurs are enabled to overcome social and economic barriers and succeed as entrepreneurs, while also helping create sustainable communities.

The Coca-Cola Company executed 5by20, a global initiative implemented across 33 countries in Africa, where locally relevant initiatives were rolled out.

The 5by20 goal was ambitious, and Coca-Cola knew that it could not achieve the goals alone. Over the last 10 years, Coca-Cola worked with countless partners, including bottling partners, civil society organisations, government stakeholders, other private sector actors and generous financial grants from the Coca-Cola Foundation to recipients within its Women's Entrepreneur Empowerment priority giving tier.

The Coca-Cola Foundation has funded some of the 5by20 initiatives, and the Coca-Cola system

has worked with several partners to implement over 300 programs in 100 countries to provide women entrepreneurs with business skills training, mentoring networks, financial services and other assets to help enhance their businesses and lives, as well as provide more for their families.

Women's empowerment and progress against all the Sustainable Development Goals require the collective effort of governments, civil society, NGOs and private sector organisations. Over the last 10 years, Coca-Cola worked with countless partners who helped bring the aspiration to life. Partnerships with organisations, such as UN Women, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), Department for International Development (DFID), USAID, International Finance Corporation (IFC) MercyCorps, TechnoServe, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Hand in Hand Southern Africa, and several other regional and local partners were critical to the success of the 5by20 program.

In 2012, the Coca-Cola Company signed a global agreement with UN Women to enable the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs in three pilot countries, which included South Africa. At the end of the four-year partnership in South Africa in December 2016, over 25 000 women micro-entrepreneurs had received business skills, leadership training, mentoring and peer networking skills as well as access to finance.

wKennedy School Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, through this program, the entrepreneurs increased their

revenues by 40% on average and increased their confidence and leadership abilities within their communities.

In Kenya, a partnership with the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) established in 2014 and rooted in a shared interest in creating a fair equitable environment to help women overcome barriers and build sustainable businesses, aimed to empower 1 million women through entrepreneurship training and access to capital investment. At the end of 2020, nearly 800 000 Kenyan women were empowered through the initiative.

In Nigeria, in partnership with the UK Department for International Development Girls Education, we launched the Educating Nigerian Girls in Nigeria Enterprise (ENGINE) value program, which aimed to strengthen the educational and economic oppor-

tunities of the Nigerian girl-child. Nearly 13 000 young girls and women benefitted from this program. We also entered into a partnership with the Lagos State Government Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) to train 1 000 women in Lagos state on financial literacy and communications skills. "[On] this International Women's Day, we celebrate surpassing our goal to reach 5 million women, but we know that there is still work to be done," said Patricia Obozuwa, Vice President, Public Affairs, Communication, and Sustainability Coca-Cola Africa.

"Women entrepreneurs continue to face major hurdles hindering their successes, and we acknowledge that our work must therefore continue, particularly given the significant socio-economic disruption created by the pandemic in so many communities around the world".

The Coca-Cola Company is a global organisation but a local business and deeply rooted in the local communities we proudly serve. We thrive as communities prosper and numerous studies from the United Nations and academic institutions have repeatedly proven that investment in women spurs economic growth and promote sustainable development.

"By investing in women's economic empowerment over the past decade, we have created shared value in hopes of a better-shared future, enabling improved livelihoods for women, their families and their communities, while inclusively expanding our business," said Obozuwa.

"We are proud about the ripple effects that these programs have had on the millions of lives we have touched and will continue to have over the years to come."



Kilombero Sugar planning 584bn/- factory expansion

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

KILOMBERO Sugar factory in Morogoro Region expects to spend more than 584bn/- for the factory expansion, the work of which would begin May this year and would take two years and three months to complete.

The factory that has been providing economic benefits to small sugar cane farmers has of now 66,000 such farmers enabling the factory to produce between 550,000 to 600,000 tonnes of sugar per year.

In 2018/2019 season alone the factory produced 629,000 tonnes valued at 65bn/-.

Speaking during the visit at the factory at the weekend by Tanzania Investment Centre's (TIC) Managing Director Dr Maduhu Kazi, the Kilombero Sugar Company managing Director Guy Williams said the aim for the expansion was to increase the country's sugar production.

"Expansion work is expected to take two years and three months to complete beginning May this year as soon as we obtain the building permit, and in the new factory we plan to generate 10MW extra electricity that would go into the national power grid. It will be the biggest sugar factory in East Africa," said Guy Williams.

He told Dr Kazi about challenges they have been facing, but said these have to be solved before they finalise expansion work.

"As I said earlier, the implementation of this project is an issue that entails cooperation, and we shall do our best in so far as our position would allow, will provide that cooperation within the existing procedures," said Dr kazi.

Artisanal gold miners in Chunya in need of communication gadgets

By Guardian Correspondent, Chunya

SMALL-scale miners in Chunya District, Mbeya Region have decried over poor communication technology in the mining sites, saying the situation impels them to use pipes as a means of communication.

"We're forced to use pipes to communicate with our colleagues who are deep down the mine pits due to lack of proper communication technology," one of the artisanal miners Benard Mwalukasa

told the deputy minister for Communications and Information Technology, Eng. Kudo Mathew, who visited the area yesterday.

Mwalukasa appealed to the government to support them with communication gadgets to easy mining activities.

The miner said in the past they were not going down as they do now, a situation that compels them to go deeper to between 70m and 100m, "but the challenge now is poor communication technologies

taking into accounts that mobile communication in the area is also poor."

"That's why we're asking the government to help us with at least radio call because at the moment we have to install pipes from the top of the mine pit to help us communicate between those who are inside the pits and those who are at the top," another miner, Yotham Mwangupila said.

He described communication as an important aspect in the mining

industry because sometimes mines collapse and without modern communication tools it becomes difficult to rescue people.

Responding miners' requests, Eng. Mathew urged the miners to buy telecommunications equipment because it has a responsibility of putting up communication infrastructure.

"Buy telecommunications equipment because you are earning a lot of money from this extraction activity and so you must create a

friendly working environment," he told the artisanal miners.

He said the government continues with the construction of communication infrastructure to facilitate communication for the people and urged the miners to seize the opportunity.

Chunya District Commissioner, Mayeka Saimon urged telecommunications service providers to visit the people in their areas regularly to resolve communication problems that they

face.

He said the act of the people in need of communication is an opportunity for the telecom companies to expand their services to areas of need, including Chunya District where major economic activities are agriculture and mining.

He said even online financial services are a problem in those areas, asking mobile phone operators to put agents in those areas to serve the people.

Covid-19: Absa Group 2020 earnings down by 7 per cent

By Francis Kajubi

THE Covid-19 outbreak has consistently affected Absa Group Ltd annual performance as it registered a decline of 51 percent in normalised headline earnings to R8billion (1.248trillion/-) after impairments nearly trebled to R20.6 billion (3.211trillion/-) for the year 2020.

Announcing the financial annual report yesterday, Daniel Mminele, Absa Group Chief Executive though normalised earnings sharply declined but a slight relief was realised in improvements of revenue that topped with an increase of 2 percent to R81.40billion from R79.96billion of the previous year.

According to him earnings and returns improved materially in the second half of the year 2020 as lockdown restrictions eased, particularly in South Africa, which accounts for more than 80 percent of the group's earnings.

Mminele underlined that as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were implemented across countries last year, Absa moved swiftly to adopt remote-working, implement payment relief measures for clients, and to launch initiatives to support the communities it serves, while ensuring operational and financial resilience.

"Absa responded decisively to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic downturn. We supported our staff, customers and communities through a difficult period and produced a resilient financial performance in a very challenging operating environment;

We also successfully completed our separation from Barclays and reviewed our strategy to ensure that it continues to be relevant in the context of rapid changes in the operating environment," said Mminele.

He said since the outbreak earlier last year, Absa waived various transaction fees and provided insurance premium relief, while temporarily extending credit cover to include a wider definition of 'loss of income' events.

Approximately R54.4billion in payment relief was extended to corporate and investment banking clients during



Daniel Mminele, Absa Group Chief Executive.

the year under review. This included interest and capital moratoriums, covenant concessions and extensions of maturity dates on expiring facilities.

Speaking on top of positive trends realised by the group apart from revenue increment of two percent, Jason Quinn, Absa Group Financial Director said that the registered net interest income growth of 5 percent stands to set a bright future with the bank's structural hedge release of R2.6 billion to the profit and loss statement to partially offset more negative impacts. Operating expenses remained well-managed, with a decline of 2 percent.

"I was really pleased with our 7 percent rise in pre-provision profit as this is an important indicator of positive underlying performance. I believe

that we have appropriately prioritised balance sheet strength balanced against selective targeted growth during these uncertain times," said Quinn.

According to him, the group will focus on several areas for better acceleration in this year and on that includes developing and nurturing a more entrepreneurial culture, creating more competitive digital, data, technology and innovation capabilities and leveraging strategic partnerships to create market leading capabilities.

"To deliver against our refreshed strategy, Absa will invest in strategic capabilities including leadership, a more modernised technology architecture that powers digital transformation and in creating an execution model that promotes faster innovation," he added.

Amena Arif is appointed IFC country manager for East Africa and Malawi

By Guardian Reporter

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, has appointed Amena Arif (pictured) as its new Country Manager for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, and Malawi, effective immediately. In her new role, Arif will help IFC strengthen the private sector, create jobs and opportunities, and help

businesses and economies in the region recover from the effects of COVID-19.

A Pakistani national, Arif, joined IFC in 2012 after building a career in commercial banking with Citibank and ABN AMRO Bank. She led IFC's debt and equity investment transactions working with financial institutions in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. Most recently, Arif served as IFC's Country Manager for

Sri Lanka and the Maldives, based in Colombo, where she helped grow IFC's portfolio and deepen its impact.

As IFC Country Manager for East Africa and Malawi, Arif will be based in Nairobi.

"I am excited to take up this new position at IFC and look forward to working in such a dynamic region. East Africa's private sector has proved resilient, including through the COVID-19 crisis, but it can be an even more powerful engine of growth going forward, delivering equitable and sustainable growth. IFC and its partners are well positioned to support the private sector through the challenges together," said Amena Arif.

Arif holds an MBA from the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan. She succeeds Manuel Moses, who moved to a new role outside IFC after successfully serving as IFC East Africa Country Manager for five years.

"On behalf of IFC, I welcome Amena to her new role in East Africa and Malawi," said Jumoke Jagun-Dokunmu, IFC's Regional Director for Eastern Africa.

"Her combination of skills and experience will prove invaluable in a region that has made excellent progress strengthening its private sector, but that today faces numerous challenges, including from COVID-19 and climate change."

IFC's focus in East Africa includes bridging infrastructure gap in housing and healthcare, improving transport and energy infrastructure, boosting agricultural productivity, and supporting businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in post COVID-19 recovery phase.

Steeprise in new virus cases risks Africa GDP growth, AfDB reports

By Special Correspondent

AFRICA'S economic recovery could be jeopardised by a resurgence of Covid-19 infections in 2021 according to the latest Economic Update released by the African Development Bank last week.

In its latest forecast, AfDB projects real GDP in Africa to grow by 3.4 percent in 2021, after contracting by 2.1 percent in 2020. Recovery will be underpinned by a resumption of tourism, a rebound in commodity prices and a rollback of pandemic-induced restrictions.

However, uncertainty surrounding this positive growth outlook for Africa is high. This week, the continent is expected to surpass four million Covid-19 infections since the first confirmed case in February 2020, according to estimates by the World Health Organisation. Over 106,000 lives have been lost so far.

The continent's prospects largely depend on its access and ability to effectively deploy therapeutics and vaccines in the coming months.

"We are looking at growing back with greater economic resilience and making sure that growth is inclusive of young people and women," said AfDB president Akinwumi Adesina (pictured). However, he underscored the

need for the continent to secure more vaccine doses for at least 60 percent of its population – needed to achieve herd immunity.

"The issue of vaccine justice is important...we must develop our pharmaceutical capacity..." he said, adding that the bank will be helping the continent to upgrade its pharmaceutical capacity.

Failure to access and deploy vaccines, Dr Adesina argued, would complicate economic recovery on the continent as countries would face barriers and restrictions on travel.

The report also shows that the pandemic has caused a surge in government financing needs in Africa. AfDB estimates that African governments needed additional gross financing of about \$154 billion in 2020 to respond to the crisis.

The average debt-to-GDP ratio in Africa is expected to climb significantly in the short to medium term. Although the average debt-to-GDP ratio, a standard measure of debt sustainability, had stabilised around 60 percent of GDP between 2017 and 2019, it is projected to increase by 10 to 15 percentage points by 2021.

"We need international frameworks for managing debt," said Joseph Stiglitz, a professor at Columbia University.



Layoffs push thousands into defaulting Helb loans

NAIROBI

ABOUT 106,443 former university students have defaulted on their Higher Education Loans Board (Helb) in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic that triggered layoffs, business closure and freeze in hiring.

Helb data tabled shows loan accounts in default increased by 35,561 in the six months to December with the defaulted loans increasing 55 per cent or Sh3.7 billion to Sh10.4 billion in the period when the virus ravaged corporate Kenya.

This highlights the struggle faced by beneficiaries who were making repayments on the strength of their payslips and cash flow from their businesses for those in self-employment.

Loan defaulters have weakened the Helb's ability to support university and technical college students, prompting allocation cuts and requests for Sh8.6 billion additional funding from the Treasury.

"As at December 2020 Sh10.4 billion was held by 106,443 loanees, a sharp rise from the Sh6.7 billion held by 68,882 loanees as of June 30, 2020, mainly attributed to retrenchment as a result of Covid-19," said Helb chief executive Charles Ringera.

Helb matured loans stood at Sh45 billion, giving the agency a non performing ratio of 23 per cent – which is higher than the banking average of 14.1 per cent.

Helb is supposed to be a revolving

fund in which beneficiaries who have completed studies pay back the loans to support a fresh group of students.

This has, however, not been the case in an economic setting that is plagued by a hiring freeze on the back of sluggish corporate earnings.

The number of formal jobs the economy generated fell to a seven-year low in 2019 and is expected to dip further due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lawmakers are pushing to increase the grace period for Helb loans repayment to five years after graduation, to allow beneficiaries time to stabilise financially.

Currently, beneficiaries start repayment one year after completing studies or risk blacklisting with credit reference bureaus for defaulting. The short repayment period has been linked to the growing list of defaulters at the Helb.

The beneficiaries are expected to clear their loans within four years, a pointer of how the jobs market plagued by layoffs and freeze in hiring plans has hit young employees.

Young workers between the ages of 20 and 29 years accounted for over 60 per cent of the lost jobs last year, according to data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS).

The jobs report reflected a grim period for workers and businesses during the peak of Covid-19 restrictions covering travel mass gathering and a dusk-to-dawn curfew.



US\$1million for financial inclusion - African Development Bank

ABIDJAN

THE Board of Directors of the African Development Bank has approved a grant of \$1.024 million for artificial intelligence, from Africa Digital Financial Inclusion Facility (ADFI) to enable systems to process customer complaints on behalf of the national banks of Ghana and Rwanda and the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission of Zambia.

The grant resources are from the special fund of the Africa Digital Financial Inclusion Facility (ADFI), a financing vehicle to accelerate digital financial inclusion across Africa.

The project will establish a complaints-handling system for the financial regulators, using multi-lingual chatbots and artificial intelligence that will interface with key financial service providers in the three countries.

The system will incorporate key local languages for ease of use, record customer complaints, including audio complaints from those unable to read and write and track their resolution.

The project is expected to yield three results: improve the tracking of customer complaints made to financial services providers; strengthen the support for marginalized groups, which will build confidence in the use of financial services; and improve the collection of consistent data to be used for the development or improvement of consumer-protection policies.



“Facilitation of sound policies and regulations, including those that enhance consumer protection and catalyze financial inclusion, is a key mandate for ADFI.

With the proliferation of digital financial services, the financial industry needs innovative mechanisms for customer recourse and tracking for regulators. The Sinitic project

is one such solution,” said Sheila Okiro, ADFI’s Coordinator.

The system will be developed by Sinitic Africa in collaboration with BFA a leading consultancy firm specializing in human-centered design and DFS regulation. Sinitic Africa is a subsidiary of Sinitic Inc., a financial technology firm based in Canada.

The two companies

have already worked together to develop and successfully deploy a similar project for the Philippines’ central bank.

The Sinitic solution will be deployed in the three target countries in the following languages—Kinyarwanda, Swahili, French and English in Rwanda; English and Nyanja/Chewa in Zambia; and English and Twi in Ghana.

FMO, FinDev Canada, OeEB support critical food supply in Africa

By Special Correspondent

FMO, FinDev Canada, and OeEB have announced a \$115m syndicated loan facility that will allow Agri Commodities and Finance (ACF), one of the main trading companies of Export Trading Group (ETG) to improve and expand its operations in Africa.

FMO acted as lead arranger in this syndicated facility that will indirectly support an estimated 600,000 smallholder farmers and the communities, while also contributing to more sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural practices across the continent.

Pieterneel Boogard, Director Agribusiness, Food, and Water of FMO, said: “We are very pleased to strengthen our commitment towards ETG’s mission and empower small holder farmers across Africa for a brighter future. ETG’s impact and success contribute to a stronger African agricultural sector, which will reduce poverty of smallholder farmers in Africa and improve their overall wellbeing through ETG’s sustainable and climate-smart programmes focused on agriculture and agro-processing. We are proud to have arranged this facility along with our fellow DFIs.”

“The growth of ETG has been impressive and its contributions to the transformation of African agriculture equally so,” added Paulo Martelli, Chief Investment Officer of FinDev Canada.

“By participating with other development finance institutions, such as FMO from the Netherlands and OeEB from Austria, we are helping ETG move to the next level of its development. The facility will help make agriculture and food production in Africa more efficient, more sustainable, and more beneficial to everyone.”

ETG was established in 1967 as an independent African-based commodity trader.

Since then, it has grown to become one of the world’s largest and fastest-growing integrated agricultural conglomerates with operating entities located in more than 50 countries.

Its activities cover the entire farm-to-table value chain including procure-

ment, warehousing, processing and/or manufacturing of finished food products, transportation, and distribution of fast-moving consumer goods.

ETG owns and operates more than 120 processing plants and over 450 warehouses across the globe, with a storage capacity exceeding 2.5 million metric tonnes.

The Group imports and exports a basket of commodities to and from 49 countries. ETG’s African footprint comprises of 26 countries, including several least-developed countries.

“We are proud to join forces with ETG who has played a crucial role in agricultural development in Africa over the past decades”, said Sabine Gaber, Member of OeEB’s Executive Board.

“Supporting smallholder farmers is especially important in light of the ongoing pandemic and growing effects of climate change. With this financing we can support agricultural supply chains which contributes to food and job security for populations in need.”

The syndicated loan facility will allow ETG to strengthen and expand its operations across the agricultural value chain.

Improved processing capacity and logistics will lead to less post-harvest crop loss and food waste.

These improvements will not only support the livelihood of existing farmers, but also create an estimated 5,000 new jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

With 35% of the jobs to be created in the continent’s least-developed countries and 50% being taken up by women, this will further contribute to SDG 10.

In addition, this working capital loan will support access to critical food supplies across Africa.

Anish Jain, ETG’s Chief Treasury Officer, said: “We are fortunate to have likeminded partners such as FMO, FinDev and OeEB that are as passionate about Africa and its people. ETG was built on the fundamental of elevating farmers’ livelihoods and bridging supply chain and infrastructure gaps in Africa. This facility will provide ETG with the necessary support to emphasize our efforts and augment our impact.”



SA marine tourism businesses desperate for people to get right back in the water

JOHANNESBURG

COVID-19 has dealt a bad hand for the tourism industry in South Africa. For those tour operators that appeal almost solely to international travellers, there is still a long road to recovery ahead.

Take shark cage diving, for instance. This activity is hugely popular with foreign tourists but isn’t something that typically draws locals into the water. Just one Cape Town business lost, conservatively-speaking, an estimated R40 million in revenue in the past year.

Zile de Kock, executive marketing manager of Marine Dynamics Shark and Whale Tours, said their business relied 100% on tourism.

“In all the years of operating in this sector, we never expected that something like this would happen. It hit the business in the worst way imaginable,” she said.

De Kock said it didn’t matter how restrictions change - they need international tourists to come back to the

country.

“We hosted some locals in December, but we have discounted our rate so much to attract them that we don’t make a profit at all.”

She explained that locals tend to be more inclined to spend money on dining out and accommodation over activities. Shark cage diving is an expensive operation to run, so it’s a pricey activity for locals.

De Kock shared that Marine Dynamics is technically fully operational, but only going out on the water if and when they get bookings. They have survived so far by cutting every cost possible to keep operational expenses low. However, if the business does not pick up, their future looks bleak.

The aim is to implement a more diverse range of trip offerings that are more suitable for the local market, including affordable activities and packages.

“This is the time for locals to enjoy our country and get the best out of it.

This is the cheapest they will ever be able to do all these amazing things. We are basically charging under cost. It will never be cheaper to live like a tourist.

“We rely on people to come on our trips. We do shark cage diving, which is highly sought-after by international visitors, but we also offer whale watching and the opportunity to see the Marine Big Five (sharks, whales, penguins, seals and dolphins) up close,” she said.

She said the lack of tourists impacted the vital research and conservation work that they do, as this is funded by tourism.

“We do important work to protect bronze whaler (or copper) sharks from poaching. Not only have we not had income for this, but we haven’t been able to go out on the water frequently to keep up with what is happening,” she said.

The company has, however, seen some uptick in local bookings for its key conservation projects, the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary.

VIEW FROM THE TOP



WORLD

Regular booster vaccines are the future in battle with COVID-19 virus, expert says

CAMBRIDGE

REGULAR booster vaccines against the novel coronavirus will be needed because of mutations that make it more transmissible and better able to evade human immunity, the head of Britain's effort to sequence the virus's genomes told Reuters.

The novel coronavirus, which has killed 2.65 million people globally since it emerged in China in late 2019, mutates around once every two weeks, slower than influenza or HIV, but enough to require tweaks to vaccines.

Sharon Peacock, who heads COVID-19 Genomics UK (COG-UK) which has sequenced half of all the novel coronavirus genomes so far mapped globally, said international cooperation was needed in the "cat and mouse" battle with the virus.

"We have to appreciate that we were always going to have to have booster doses; immunity to coronavirus doesn't last forever," Peacock told Reuters at the non-profit Wellcome Sanger Institute's 55-acre campus outside Cambridge.

"We already are tweaking the vaccines to deal with what the virus is doing in terms of evolution - so there are variants arising that have a combination of increased transmissibility and an ability to partially evade our immune response," she said.

Peacock said she was confident regular

booster shots - such as for influenza - would be needed to deal with future variants but that the speed of vaccine innovation meant those shots could be developed at pace and rolled out to the population.

COG-UK was set up by Peacock, a professor at Cambridge, exactly a year ago with the help of the British government's chief scientific adviser, Patrick Vallance, as the virus spread across the globe to Britain.

The consortium of public health and academic institutions is now the world's deepest pool of knowledge about the virus's genetics: At sites across Britain, it has sequenced 346,713 genomes of the virus out of a global effort of around 709,000 genomes.

On the intellectual frontline at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, hundreds of scientists - many with PhDs, many working on a voluntary basis and some listening to heavy metal or electronic beats - work seven days a week to map and then search the virus's growing family tree for patterns of concern.

Wellcome Sanger Institute has sequenced over half of the UK total sequenced genomes of the virus after processing 19 million samples from PCR tests in a year. COG-UK is sequencing around 30,000 genomes per week - more than the UK used to do in a year.

MUTATION LEADERBOARD

Three main coronavirus variants - which were first identified in Britain (known as



Scientists work at a laboratory where they sequence the novel coronavirus genomes at COVID-19 Genomics UK, on the Wellcome Sanger Institute's 55-acre campus south of Cambridge, Britain on Friday. REUTERS

B.1.1.7), Brazil (known as P1) and South Africa (known as B.1.351) - are under particular scrutiny.

Peacock said she was most worried about B.1.351.

"It is more transmissible, but it also has a change in a gene mutation, which we refer to as E484K, which is associated with reduced immunity - so our immunity is reduced against that virus," Peacock said.

With 120 million cases of COVID-19 around the world, it is getting hard to keep track of all the alphabet soup of variants, so Peacock's teams are thinking in terms of "constellations of mutations."

"So a constellation of mutations would be like a leaderboard if you like - which mutations in the genome that we're particularly concerned about, the E484K is must be one of the top of the leaderboard," she said.

"So we're developing our thinking around that leaderboard to think, regardless of the

background and lineage, about what mutations or constellation of mutations are going to be important biologically and different combinations that may have slightly different biological effects."

Peacock, though, warned of humility in the face of a virus that has brought so much death and economic destruction.

"One of the things that the virus has taught me is that I can be wrong quite regularly - I have to be quite humble in the face of a virus that we know very little about still," she said.

"There may be a variant out there that we haven't even discovered yet." There will, though, be future pandemics.

"I think its inevitable that we will have another virus emerge that is of concern. What I hope is that having learned what we have in this global pandemic, that we will be better prepared to detect it and contain it."

Agencies

West's actions have precipitated regulation of cyberspace, says Russian diplomat

MOSCOW

BY their actions the Western nations have only precipitated regulation of the internet sphere, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Sunday.

"It was them to precipitate what we have been stopping short of doing for quite a long time. We felt embarrassed about the necessity to impose regulative measures in the cyberspace. In what concerns American internet monopolies," she said in an interview with the Voskresny Vecher (Sunday Evening) with Vladimir Solovyov program on the Rossiya-1 television channel.

"We kept on thinking how it might be taken, whether we would violate any principles. No, we will not because they were violated long ago by the collective West," she stressed.

According to the Russian diplomat, internet monopolies and the Western political establishment behind them, in particular Washington, NATO, Brussels, "are being guided only by their own interests, political considerations and unwillingness to conduct fair competition."

"They are demonstrating immoral conduct in the web establishing monopolies, ignoring their own legislation, international law, and, of course, our Russian laws," she said, adding that Russia is drafting a package of documents and bills to protect Russian journalists, the mass media, and the public.

G7's interference in Hong Kong affairs absurd and futile

BEIJING

THE Group of Seven's (G7) statement on China's decision to improve Hong Kong's electoral system goes against facts and exposes the group's hypocritical nature.

To close the loopholes in Hong Kong's electoral system and prevent anti-China disruptors from endangering Hong Kong's stability and security, the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, on Thursday adopted a decision that was passed by an overwhelming majority vote.

In their statement, foreign ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the high representative of the European Union, expressed "concerns" over that decision. Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland in 1997, how to design and improve the electoral system in Hong Kong has been China's internal affair, in which foreign countries have no right to interfere.

China has been committed to implementing the principles of "one country, two systems," "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong," and a high degree of autonomy, which has ensured that Hong Kong compatriots enjoy rights and freedoms that were impossible under British colonial rule.

It is widely recognized by the world community that a country should be governed by patriots, a principle that all countries, including the G7 members, followed when designing their political systems.

With China's move to improve Hong Kong's electoral system, those who are unpatriotic and do not love the city will find it a pipe dream for them to enter Hong Kong's bodies of power and other parts of the administrative structure. However, it does not mean that Hong Kong's political life will not tolerate different views and voices.

Patriots in the opposition camp can still stand for election and be elected in accordance with the law. Hong Kong's Legislative Council will be more broadly representative, and different voices, including criticism of the government, will be heard in the council. As is known, some G7 countries have played a disgraceful role in Hong Kong for a long period in an attempt to disrupt and contain China's development.

They never stop fanning the flames, meddling in politics, or even gloating over rioters' violence seen in Hong Kong over recent years. With external forces indulging anti-China disruptors in the name of "freedom" and "democracy," Hong Kong can barely maintain normal order, not to mention long-term prosperity and stability. Brimming with absurd rhetoric that is purely imaginary and fabricated to confuse the international community, the G7 once again disregarded China's claim of its stance, and seriously violated the United Nations (UN) Charter and the basic norms of international relations.

The announcement seems to serve to pump up their agents in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the G7's hypocritical statement cannot change the mainstream consensus of the international community to support the Chinese government in taking effective measures to safeguard Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. During the ongoing 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council, a Belarusian representative delivered a joint speech on behalf of 70 countries, emphasizing that Hong Kong affairs are China's internal affairs and should not be interfered in by external forces.

More than 20 countries made respective remarks in support of China's position and measures on Hong Kong-related issues.

Xinhua

WHO-China team: Search for early virus cases should go on

BEIJING

THE World Health Organization (WHO) and China joint team has suggested continuing to look for possible early cases in a wider range around the globe.

Liang Wannian (pictured), a member of the WHO-China joint team, made the remarks at a briefing to European diplomats on the origin of the novel coronavirus on Friday.

Liang said that China overcame the pressure of domestic epidemic prevention to work with the WHO to do the research of tracing the origins of the novel coronavirus. Chinese experts and the WHO experts worked together in Wuhan from Jan. 14. to Feb. 10 this year.

They visited nine places, including Wuhan Jinyintan Hos-

pital, Huanan seafood market, and the Wuhan Institute of Virology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The team also visited and talked with local medical workers, lab researchers, scientists, market managers, community workers, recovered patients, and families of medical workers losing their lives in the epidemic, he added.

The joint study has achieved positive outcomes and reached some findings and conclusions, thanks to efforts from the two sides, Liang said.

Firstly, a coronavirus with high similarity to the novel coronavirus in gene sequences occurs in bats and pangolins. But the similarity is still not enough to make it a direct ancestor of the novel coronavirus. Other species all could be potential natural hosts.



Secondly, the first case in Wuhan got sick on Dec. 8, 2019. The Huanan seafood market could be an outbreak site and amplifier of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Thirdly, the virus was found in environmental tests at the Huanan seafood market after its closure, especially in its aquatic product stalls. The coronavirus at the market might have been introduced

through channels such as infected people, contaminated cold chain products, and animal products, but it is still uncertain.

The COVID-19 virus is "the most likely" to be introduced through an intermediary host species, "likely" to be introduced through direct transmission or cold-chain food, and "extremely unlikely" to be introduced through a labo-

ratory incident, according to the joint study.

In terms of future study, Liang said that the joint study proposed four suggestions, and the first one is to expand globally unified database, including molecule, gene sequence, clinic, epidemiology, animal monitoring and environmental monitoring data.

The second suggestion is to continue to look for more possible early cases in a wider range around the globe.

The third one is that scientists around the world should search animal species that may become virus hosts in many countries and places, not limited to bats, and the last one is to further understand the role of cold chain and frozen food in virus transmission.

Xinhua

Russia's Eurovision pick Manizha aims for victory in Rotterdam

MOSCOW

MANIZHA, the singer who won Russia's national selection to perform at the 2021 Eurovision, aims to achieve nothing but a victory, she said in an interview with TASS yesterday.

Manizha will represent Russia at the competition which will be held in Rotterdam in May 2021 with a song entitled Russian Woman.

"As for the placement in the contest, I am gearing up for a

victory," she said. "Let's see how the performance will be judged. Of course, it is a challenge. A person born in Tajikistan goes to the Eurovision Song Contest with a song Russian Woman."

The artist stressed that her morale is in perfect shape. "I am a fighter essentially," she explained. "For quality and for everything to look and sound cool. It is important to preserve self-irony in Russian Woman so that it can be perceived by not just the Russian audience but

the foreign one as well. Believe me, the multiculturalism that is present in this song, in my manifest if you like, is inherent in many countries and nationalities."

Manizha

Russian singer of the Tajik origin Manizha Sangin, 29, is an independent musician, author and recording artist, music vid-

eo director and activist fighting against domestic violence. She has been made a UN Goodwill Ambassador for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

According to the singer, Russian Woman is a "song about transformation of woman's self-awareness in Russia in the last several centuries." She noted that the Russian woman "came an amazing path from a peasant's log hut to the right to vote and be elected (one of the

first in the world), from factory workshops to space flights. She was never afraid of countering stereotypes and assuming responsibility."

The 65th edition of the Eurovision Song Contest will be held in Rotterdam between May 18 and 22 under the slogan of 'Open Up.' Organizers announced their intention to bring artists together on one stage but with all the necessary security measures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

China to incorporate education programmes promoting eco-civilisation into national education system

CHINA is going to advance ecological civilization education in schools and incorporate education programs promoting ecological civilization into its national education system, according to a recent action plan issued by Chinese government.

The action plan, which is aimed at leading the whole society to a strong commitment to the values and philosophy of ecological civilization, and furthering efforts to set up an action system involving all sectors of society for ecological and environmental governance, was jointly released by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), the Ministry of Education, and other four related departments.

The country will make efforts to boost the development of relevant disciplines, strengthen the cultivation of high-level talents in ecological and environmental protection, and actively promote the establishment of laws and norms on ecological civilization education, said the action plan.

According to the document, China will raise the awareness of ecological civilization among people from various sectors of society and improve their scientific literacy in environmental protection by strengthening social education on ecological civilization, intensifying publicity and education on ecological and environmental laws, and launching ecological civiliza-

tion education activities for families, and in communities, factories, government organs, and villages.

In fact, China has carried out themed activities nationwide since 2018 to encourage all sectors of society and the public to take part in the building of a beautiful China by adopting simple, moderate, green and low-carbon ways of life and production, according to an official from the MEE.

Since the launch of these activities, the country has witnessed increasing channels for public participation in environmental protection and growing enthusiasm for jointly building a beautiful China. At the same time, a paradigm of publicity for

ecological civilization has basically taken shape.

The newly issued action plan arranges key tasks covering six aspects of relevant work, including enhancing ecological civilization education and promoting participation of all sectors of society in ecological and environmental protection, the official said.

Besides, the document contains plans for ten special activities, including workshops, volunteer services, and brand building activity, according to the official, who noted that by issuing the action plan, the country intends to intensify efforts and realize the vision where everyone cares

about, supports, and takes part in ecological and environmental protection.

Moreover, the action plan also specifies the roles of Party and government organs, enterprises, non-governmental organizations, and social organizations to promote the participation of all sectors of society in ecological and environmental protection.

The six departments will supervise and evaluate the implementation of the action plan on a regular basis, in a bid to sum up experience and promote successful models so as to provide good examples and guidance for various sectors of society to promote the building of ecological civilization.

People's Daily

Biden's gender council to promote gender equity and equality in US

WASHINGTON
U.S. President Joe Biden has created a White House council to push for more women's rights, while overseeing the government's commitment to gender equity and equality.

The Gender Policy Council will work with all cabinet secretaries and submit an annual report to the president to measure progress on prioritizing gender equality across the government.

It is a reformed version of the White House Council on Women and Girls set up under former President Barack Obama and later disbanded by Donald Trump's administration.

Biden has said that he wants gender equality to be front and center of his new administration's policies.

"Too often, they have done so while being denied the freedom, full participation, and equal opportunity all women are due," said Biden in a statement when he issued an executive order establishing the council on the International Women's Day, which falls on March 8.

"There is so much work to do to ad-

dress the systemic barriers that have held women and girls back here in the United States and globally. Because the truth is those barriers have stood for far too long," said Jennifer Klein and Julissa Reynoso, co-chairs of the Gender Policy Council, in a message posted on the White House webpage on Friday.

"We'll work closely with the Office on Violence Against Women at the Department of Justice to end gender-based violence against women, girls, and LGBTQ+ people," read the message.

Clay Ramsay, a researcher at the center for international and security studies at the University of Maryland, noted that the first Gender Policy Council was within former President Bill Clinton's White House. However, it was less institutionalized and never received permanent standing.

"This version of the council has a budget and a small staff and will be harder to get rid of after Biden," Ramsay told Xinhua.

The purpose is to have gender ques-



U.S. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris (L, Front) is sworn in as the 49th Vice President of the United States in Washington, D.C., the United States, on Jan. 20, 2021, becoming the first female and woman of color to hold the nation's second-highest office. (Xinhua)

tions always be on the checklist when the White House is working to formulate a policy.

"Women need not be an afterthought who get considered after a new policy's effects on women become evident," Ramsay said.

Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Darrell West told Xinhua Biden wants to make sure women have opportunities for advancement, adding that the president is putting major financial resources toward the issue.

"By putting the force of the federal government behind this effort, the president will ensure that others take this seriously," West said.

Biden has a laundry list of items of his agenda, which includes fighting against gender-based violence, decreasing maternal mortality and tacking on an amendment for equal rights to the U.S. Constitution.

As a part of his COVID-19 stimulus, the president has also discussed a number of proposals for women, which include a minimum wage hike, child care subsidies and paid family leave.

Latest data showed the COVID-19 pandemic has hit women the hardest -- 2.5 million women left the workforce in 2020 compared with 1.8 million men. The U.S. Department of Labor's February jobs report found Black and Hispanic women showed the greatest declines in labor force participation.

Xinhua

Moscow warns Kiev against using force in Donbass – diplomat

MOSCOW

R U S S I A warns Ukraine against attempting to carry out further de-escalation or using force in Donbass, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said during Friday's briefing.

"I would like to warn the Kiev regime and the hotheads that are serving it or manipulating it against further de-escalation and attempts to implement a forceful scenario in Donbass," she said, commenting on the statement of head of the Ukrainian delegation to the Contact Group for settlement in Donbass Leonid Kravchuk on some "radical steps" of Kiev if Russia refuses to recognize itself as a conflict side in eastern Ukraine.

The rhetoric of Ukrainian officials "gives reason to think about the true intentions of Kiev in this historical period," Zakharova pointed out. "Once again, we call on the Ukrainian government to stop coming up with some new agreements, new documents, and to finally start duly adhering to its obligations under the Minsk Agreements."

The spokeswoman stressed that Ukrainian officials regularly try to cover up their inaction and blatant sabotage of agreements reached earlier on settlement in eastern Ukraine with accusations against Russia and attempts to pass the buck. "At the same time, Kiev is trying to convince everyone that Moscow is allegedly a conflict side and that it allegedly has some obligations within the Minsk Package of Measures," she added.

Agencies



Merkel's CDU party suffers heavy setbacks in two state elections

BERLIN

GERMANY'S ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party suffered heavy setbacks in two state elections on Sunday, an inauspicious start in the key election year which is expected to produce a successor to Chancellor Angela Merkel (pictured).

The votes in the southwestern states of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate are the first of seven elections in Germany this year, including a federal election set in September.

The CDU garnered 23.6 percent of the vote, down from 27 percent in the last election, in its strong-

hold Baden-Wuerttemberg, while the Greens won 32.4 percent according to the preliminary report reported by local broadcaster ARD.

In Rhineland-Palatinate, the CDU got 26.8 percent of the vote while the Social Democratic Party (SPD) gained popularity by securing 36 percent of voter support, the exit poll showed.

CDU General Secretary Paul Ziemiak said the party "had wished for better results," but its national popularity has been waning due to the recent mask procurement scandal and its coronavirus policies.

Two members of parliament, one from CDU and another from its Bavarian sister party Christian So-



cial Union (CSU), were exposed by local media that they had cashed in on the pandemic by brokering face mask deals.

What's more, the Germans were also frustrated with Merkel's conservative-led coalition over a slow vaccination progress due to supply shortages and excessive bureaucracy.

At the federal level, the CDU has witnessed its support rate decreasing from almost 40 percent last summer, when Germany was praised for its efficient measures in containing the pandemic, to around 33 percent this month.

Some analysts fear the loss in state elections could trigger chain

reactions to the September federal election.

Since Merkel said she will not be running again as candidate for German chancellor, the rivalry within the conservative bloc to succeed her has been in the spotlight.

The negative results in the state elections could deal a blow to CDU Chairman Armin Laschet and help CSU's leader Markus Soeder. Both two are deemed as right for the job.

The CDU and the CSU operate as a political union in the federal parliament and will decide together in the coming months on their common chancellor candidate.

Xinhua

China to speed up upgrading of transport system

CHINA will build a multidimensional transportation network that is convenient, cost-effective, green, intelligent and safe by 2035, said a comprehensive transport blueprint recently unveiled by the country.

The high-quality network will connect major cities and counties across the country, as well as foreign destinations, according to the blueprint.

A national 1-2-3 travel circle and a global 1-2-3 logistics circle will take shape by 2035. With the national travel circle, inter-city commute can be completed in one hour, and it will only take around two hours to get from one city cluster to another. Besides, travelers can reach major domestic cities within three hours. The global 1-2-3 logistics circle will enable one-day delivery to domestic destinations, two-day delivery to neighboring countries, and three-day delivery to major global cities.

China's Minister of Transport Li Xiaopeng introduced that the overall mileage of the transport network will reach 700,000 kilometers by 2035, including 200,000 kilometers of railways, 460,000 kilometers of roads and 25,000 kilometers of waterways. A total of 27 coastal ports, 36 inland river ports, around 400 civil aviation airports and 80 logistics hubs will be estab-



A vessel is docked at a container terminal of the Guangzhou Port, Nansha District, Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, Feb. 13. File Photo

lished. Besides, 100 cities will be built into transport hubs to improve a logistics network that faces the world.

All types of transport are expected to be developed in an integrated manner, Li said. The country will also promote the development of transport infrastructure and service network, the synergetic development of regional transport, and the integrated development of transport with tourism, modern manufacturing, courier and modern logistics sectors.

Besides, China will ensure higher quality of its transport by making the sector safer, smarter and greener, the minister noted. Wang Zhiqing, Vice-Minister of Transport in-

troducted that China will have a 160,000-kilometer expressway network and 300,000 kilometers of national highways.

According to him, the country's expressways will link all county-level regions and areas with more than 100,000 people and serve around 90 percent of county-level regions, upon completion.

The national highways will connect all county-level regions and above and border road ports, Wang noted, adding that all county seats, except those in some remote areas, will be connected to national highways within a 15-minute drive, to expressways within a 30-minute drive, and to railways within a 60-minute drive. China will build a railway net-

work consisting 70,000 kilometers of high-speed railways and 130,000 kilometers of tracks for trains running at normal speed. Liu Zhenfang, director of the National Railway Administration of China, said China will build a high-speed railway network with "eight vertical and eight horizontal" corridors as the main body, as well as a regular railway network with multiple vertical and horizontal corridors as the major frame.

Besides, the country will also accelerate the building of a national comprehensive aviation system centering on clusters of world-level airports and international aviation hubs, in which regional hubs serve as the backbone and non-hub and regular airports are an important complement.

Ma Junsheng, director of the State Post Bureau of China, noted that developed multidimensional transport would lead to better development of the postal and courier industry. According to him, the bureau will build around 80 postal hubs at three levels. General postal services will become more equitable and express delivery more intelligent, he said. Besides, customized services will also be improved, the director noted.

People's Daily

UK government opens new offices in Scotland in effort to boost union

LONDON

BRITAIN'S cabinet office will set up a "second flagship HQ" in Glasgow as the government plans to move some of its operations to Scotland, ministers announced yesterday, at a time when support for Scottish independence is running high.

Ties between Scotland and the rest of Britain have been badly strained by a much-criticized COVID-19 pandemic response and Brexit, which a majority in Scotland opposed.

That has worsened for many Scottish the sense that policies designed in London don't represent their views and make their day-to-day lives harder.

The cabinet office, which oversees the running of the government machine, said it was creating a new headquarters in Glasgow, while the foreign office planned to create 500 new jobs at an existing office in East Kilbride.

"Not only will this bring new jobs and investment to Scotland, it will strengthen the diversity of the UK civil service, ending the Westminster knows best approach to policymaking and ensuring



Britain's Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Scottish voices shape everything we do," Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove said in a statement.

In total, 1,000 more jobs would be located in Scotland over the next four years. The exact functions to be shifted to Scotland were not set out.

More of the government's 400,000-plus employees are based in London than any other city, although there has been a long-term push to locate more of these jobs elsewhere to challenge the perception of London-centric policymaking.

Polls show more people in Scotland support independence than want to remain part of Britain.

Scottish nationalists are pushing for an independence referendum to be held after this May's Scottish parliament election, but British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said such votes should happen only once in a generation.

In a referendum in 2014, Scots voted 55 percent-45 percent to remain in the United Kingdom.

Agencies

CANBERRA

TENS of thousands of women gathered outside Australia's parliament and towns and cities across the country on Monday to take part in rallies calling for gender equality and justice for victims of sexual assault.

The March 4 Justice rallies were spurred by a recent wave of allegations of sexual assault, discrimination and misconduct in some of Australia's highest political offices.

Women wore black to signal "strength and mourning", carried banners with slogans including "Shatter the silence. Stop the violence" and joined "We will not be silenced" chants.

Protesters in Melbourne carried a metres-long white banner bearing the names of all the women killed in Australia from gendered violence since 2008, while those outside Par-

Women rally in Australia to demand gender violence justice

liament House in Canberra prepared to deliver two petitions demanding change.

A delegation of organisers rejected an invitation to meet with Prime Minister Scott Morrison in private, while leaders of the major opposition political parties came out to join the crowds.

"We've come to his front garden," Janine Hendry, one of the organisers, told Reuters outside Parliament House. "We are 200 metres from his office and it's not appropriate for us to meet behind closed doors especially when we are talking about sexual assault which does happen behind closed doors."



A woman holds up a placard during a protest against sexual violence and gender inequality in Melbourne yesterday. (AFP)

A spokesman for Morrison said there was a standing offer for a private meeting and declined to comment further. Recently reported scan-

dals include rape allegations against Attorney-General Christian Porter, who has strongly denied the alleged 1988 assault, saying it sim-

ply did not happen. Porter lodged defamation proceedings in Australia's Federal Court on Monday against the Australian Broadcasting Corp (ABC) over a news article on the alleged rape, his lawyer said. The ABC did not immediately respond to the legal action.

A senior political adviser for Morrison's Liberal Party has also been accused by several women of rape or sexual assault. The man has not been named, nor commented publicly on the allegations. The public anger over the government's handling of alleged incidents of sexual assault mirrors the sentiment

on display in London over the weekend, where protests were held following the killing of 33-year-old Sarah Everard, who disappeared while walking home at night-time.

In Australia, women gathered not only in major cities, but also in smaller centres like the seaside town of Torquay, where protesters lined up on the beach to form the word "justice".

Deirdre Heitmeyer, aged 68, said she drove for more six hours to attend the protest outside Parliament House. "I can't believe we have to still do this. We were out in the 1970s calling for equality and

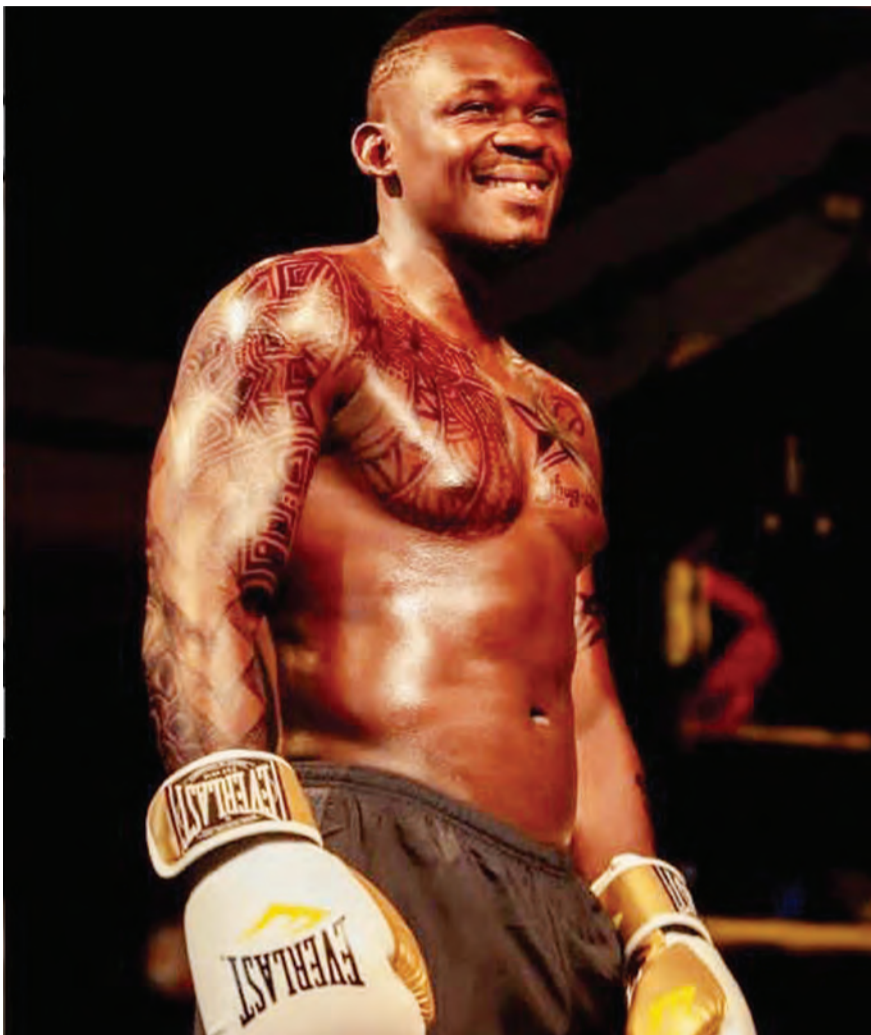
we are still here," she told Reuters.

The allegations involving people in Morrison's government and political party are expected to dominate parliamentary proceedings over the next two weeks.

Both Porter and Defence Minister Linda Reynolds - who has been criticised for failing to report an alleged rape of one of her former staff members by another - are both on sick leave.

Reynolds on Friday apologised "unreservedly" and reached a financial settlement with her former staff Britanny Higgins over the latter's allegation of rape by the unnamed former Liberal Party employee in Parliament House. Reynolds had called Higgins a "lying cow" in front of staff, a comment she said referenced comments by Higgins related to her treatment after the alleged assault, not the assault itself.

Agencies



Twaha Kassim

Kassim to take on Congolese pugilist in international fight

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIAN professional pugilist, Twaha Kassim alias 'Kiduku', is expected to fight Congolese Tshibangu Kayembe in an international, non-title fight set to take place at Ubungu Plaza in Dar es Salaam on March 19.

Kassim, who has long been passionate about taking on compatriot Hassan Mwakinyo, currently the leading boxer in Super Welterweight in Tanzania but in vain, will face the DR Congo pugilist Kayembe in the 10-round bout.

Should he emerge victorious, Kassim, currently a two-and-a-half-star boxer, will improve his record and if he succumbs to loss, the bout will add more points to Kayembe, a one-star boxer who was beaten by Mwakinyo several months ago.

Kayembe lost by points after all three judges' points were in favour of Mwakinyo.

Judge Sakwe Mtulya gave Mwakinyo 119-109 points win, Abdallah Necho gave the boxer same score, Anthony Rutha ruled 116-112 in favour of Mwakinyo in the fight, which had female referee, Pendo Njau, officiating it at Mlimani City Hall.

Despite the defeat, Kayembe, who was not active before trading blows with Mwakinyo, returned to the ranks and became the 284th boxer out of 1650 boxers in the Super Welterweight division in the world and the third boxer in the list of seven boxers in DR Congo in his weight.

The boxer will face Kassim in the bout and, if the former emerges victorious, he will rise twice in his division's rating due to Kassim surpassing the Congolese in quality and world ranking.

"I am ready to win this fight and as I said my dream is to return to the top three in Tanzania, so only victory will get me to that rank," Kassim noted.

The Morogoro-based pugilist was earlier ranked second at the domestic level, a position which is currently held by Ibrahim Mgendera.

Kassim said after his recent international fight in Egypt, where he was beaten by points, he did not stop training. "I knew about another fight with Kayembe so when I came back I didn't stop training, I went to my camp to get fit for this fight, I'm ready and I promise a big victory for my fans," Kassim said.

The bout's promoter, Ernest Mopao, disclosed there will be six other bouts the same day.

In some of them, Yonas Segu will take on Malawi's Hannock Phiri in a World Boxing Federation (WBF) African Championship in Lightweight division.

Saidi Mundi will fight Ben Sajjab of Uganda, Twalib Tuwa will trade fists with Mohamed Pesa, Hassan Ndonga will take on Hamza Iddy, Charles Chiala will trade jabs with Mohammed Kashinde, Emmanuel Elias will spar with Justin Mohammed and Naj Isike will face Halima Bandola.

Dismissal of Yanga coach a reflection of harmful perfectionism in football

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

IT recently surfaced in the news that Yanga head coach, Cedric Kaze, has been unceremoniously given the heave ho.

The move to oust Kaze came as a shock to many football observers and it definitely set tongues animatedly a-wagging.

In my book, the decision was unfathomable in its wisdom but upon deeper reflection on the matter, it appears to be one more sign of the destructive perfectionism which is presently rife in football not just here on the home front but across this expansively vast world.

Indeed, this pernicious perfectionism has become so ingrained in global football culture to the harmful extent that it is rarely questioned but in fact has become the accepted order of the day; the 'new normal' so to speak.

This particular affliction ailing football today assumes its ugliest form especially where aristocratic football sides are concerned.

In this damaging 'new normal' prevalent in global football today, time-honored virtues like patience have been ruthlessly chucked out of the window in favor of the distinctly unrealistic and particularly questionable value of instantaneous success, which, lest we forget, severely handicaps the clear-eyed decision-making process of literally every aristocratic club jockeying for coveted honors on the world football landscape.

Indeed, just to illustrate the



Cedric Kaze

sheer ludicrousness and scornful folly of the destructive perfectionism negatively affecting football today, we would do well to recall the early years of the legendary ex-Manchester United boss, Sir Alex Ferguson, at the iconic Old Trafford stadium.

After being thrust into the hot seat of the Red Devils in 1986, Sir Alex was forced to endure an especially lean, trophy-less four-year spell as the Manchester United boss.

Indeed, the fiery Scot, whose thirst for success knew no bounds, picked up his very first trophy as Manchester United's manager in the 1990-

1991 season in the form of the treasured F.A Cup.

However, after savoring the joyous taste of his first trophy success, Sir Alex never looked back and the rest, as we say, is history.

Interestingly, a germane question thus arises: what would have unfolded had the upper echelons of Manchester United's officialdom at the time moved to dispose Sir Alex of his services?

Needless to say, if the Red Devils had fired Sir Alex during those fruitless early years, they would have missed out on having the most decorated, successful and celebrated Brit-

ish manager of all time!

Ergo, it is long past time to restore patience as one of the most cherished virtues in football, which, I might add, would restore some sorely needed sanity as well to the world's most popular sport.

Let us now stride forward. In another football development, this time regarding the continent, a significant and monumental change has just occurred at the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

Indeed, CAF can now boast of having a new president in the form of the South African billionaire Patrice Motsepe, who succeeds the former president Ahmad Ahmad, whose reign towards the end was tainted by a corruption scandal.

One of Motsepe's overarching ambitions is to project continental football onto a global stage.

While this is an entirely commendable ambition, the new CAF president would do well to bear in mind that there are also other pressing affairs which require his attention too.

These include rectifying the historically saddening underinvestment in women's football and really tackling the maladministration in CAF and in other areas of the continental football scene.

Having said all that though, it can only be hoped that Motsepe's spell as the CAF president will yield the ripe fruits of transformative and glorious success both on and off the pitch.

Yanga now need to step up performance in Premier League, Federation Cup - Mwambusi

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi



Yanga's interim coach, Juma Mwambusi.

YANGA's interim coach, Juma Mwambusi, has stressed that they need to strategize according to the incoming competitions, with well organized plans to ensure they achieve their intended goals.

Mwambusi, who left Yanga in January this year to get treatment, has been reinstated to serve the team after the club's leadership sacked the technical bench led by Cedric Kaze because of poor results in this season's Vodacom Premier League.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Mwambusi said the first thing he planned to do was meet all the players on Monday (today) and negotiate with them to set the same strategies.

"I look forward to meeting the players and having a session with them to set our strategies towards Premier League matches, FA Cup and plan how to do well," he said.

The former Mbeya City head coach said he will have his own strategies that he will combine with the ones put by the leaders, who will also need to listen to

them in order to get good results.

Mwambusi said he has already reached agreement with the club in his interest to continue to serve his job properly.

Winning the VPL's silverware is one of Yanga's goals, but soon their dreams began to melt away due to poor performances in second round matches, in which the squad seems to get more draws than wins.

However, Yanga are still in a good position in the Premier League, they are enjoying the driver's seat in the tournament.

The team have recorded 50 po from 23 fixtures, notching victory in 14 outings, drawn eight and lost one.

Their result in the last few matches made fans desperate for the championship race and feared the side's rivals Simba might move to the top spot.

The Msimbazi Street-based team, placed second in the Premier League after notching 46 points in 20 games, are yet to battle it out in three fixtures, which could see them move to the top if the post win in all ties.

Ladies night: Beyoncé, Swift make history as others win big

NEW YORK

FEMALE performers including Beyoncé and Taylor Swift had a record-making night at the 2021 Grammy Awards, a jam-packed but socially distanced show highlighted by live music sorely absent during the pandemic era.

Four women won the top four prizes Sunday, including Swift, who became the first female performer to win album of the year three times. Beyoncé – with her 28th win – became the most decorated woman in Grammy history.

H.E.R. won song of the year and Billie Eilish picked up her second consecutive record of the

year honor, telling the audience that best new artist winner Megan Thee Stallion deserved the award.

Though women have won all top four awards in the past – including Eilish's sweep last year – it marked the first time four separate and solo women won the top four honors.

"I feel like there's been a lot of female empowerment and lots of women winning awards tonight. And so it's been absolutely amazing to just be alongside all that, to feel that energy," Dua Lipa, who won best pop vocal album, said backstage.

Swift won the top prize with "folklore," the folksy, alternative

album she released as a surprise last year. She previously won album of the year with "Fearless" and "1989."

Beyoncé walked into the show with 24 wins and picked up four honors, including best R&B performance for "Black Parade," best music video for "Brown Skin Girl" as well as best rap performance and best rap song for "Savage," with Megan Thee Stallion.

"As an artist I believe it's my job, and all of our jobs, to reflect time and it's been such a difficult time," Beyoncé said onstage as she won best R&B performance for "Black Parade," which was released on Juneteenth.

Dar es Salaam clubs set to take part in FIBA Zone 5 tournament

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF) president, Phares Magesa, has confirmed the federation's inclination to field outfits in major continental tournaments this season.

The domestic basketball governing organ is untry is intending to field teams in the forthcoming FIBA Zone 5 tournament to be held in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi in May.

Tanzania will be represented by four teams in both men and women disciplines.

According to TBF secretary general, Michael Mwita, Oilers and DB

Panthers will be the country's flag bearers in the men's discipline while DB Lioness and JKT Stars will represent the country in the women's discipline.

The FIBA AfroBasket 2021 Pre-Qualifiers got underway on January 14 across three African cities.

Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Burundi and Kenya will battle it out for regional supremacy.

Mwita appealed to the flag bearers to get prepared for the event and look for clearance of their domestic and international players.

He moreover urged the teams to look for sponsors for their smooth participation in the tournament,

noting each team will be required to meet internal transport and accommodation expenses.

The events include Women's AfroBasket Qualifiers, U-18 Boys & Girls camps, and 3X3 (Three on three) AfroBasket Qualifiers.

However, there have been ongoing discussion with sports well-wishers from Canada and America to allow many Tanzanian young players go there to sharpen their skills.

Mwita opined it is important for Tanzania to send many young talents to countries which have earned success in the game so as to sharpen skills and get exposure.

Ramos returns amid doubts over future as Madrid face Atalanta

MADRID

SERGIO Ramos returned for Real Madrid on Saturday but the bigger question is whether he is back for good.

After two months out with a knee injury, Ramos played an hour in Madrid's win over Elche, with the plan to blow away the cobwebs ready for a start against Atalanta in the second leg of the Champions League on Tuesday.

His availability should be a significant boost for Madrid, who have a 1-0 advantage from last month's first leg in Italy and will be confident of being Spain's first, and perhaps only, survivor in the tournament's quarter-finals.

And yet Ramos's reemergence has been pinpointed less as a boost to his team than a bolstering of his case to stay, every week he was absent another blow to his hope for a contract extension beyond the summer.

Madrid president Florentino Perez has reportedly offered Ramos a two-year deal with a 10 per cent pay cut or a second option, the continuation of his current wages but for only one more year.

Ramos wants two more years on the same wages, with the possibility to add a third.

"There is a lot of uncertainty," Ramos said on Thursday.

"I would like to be able to say something but there is nothing new. I'm only thinking about coming back from injury and to finish the season in the best possible way. There is nothing new about the renewal."

Ramos's pedigree is not in doubt given he is probably the greatest defender of the modern era, certainly the most successful, and while there have been lapses in recent years, his contribution to Real Madrid is still considerable.

When they marched to the La Liga title last season, Ramos was their most important player.

"I hope the Ramos thing will be fixed as soon as possible," Zinedine Zidane said last week.

But he also turns 35 at the end of this month and a parting this summer would offer immediate relief for a club now seeking financial recovery.

- 'Relationships for life' -

Real Madrid's revenue last season fell by almost 50 million euros, a figure that is expected to worsen again for the current season, when the absence of fans will have lasted an entire campaign.

There has been a political tension too between Ramos and Perez, a power battle that has erupted in moments of crisis. Neither will want to lose face in this fight.

But perhaps most importantly, Real Madrid find themselves again facing a question of how to evolve, of where the balance lies between retaining current stars and making space for new blood.

Ramos is the embodiment of that debate, the most iconic and charismatic figure of an era almost gone, who is also the most outspoken and most expensive.

For him, the discussion is about performance. "Santiago Bernabeu said there are no young or old players only good and bad," Ramos said. "I can perform for three, four or five more years, if my body supports me."

AFP

Pele congratulates hat-trick hero Ronaldo for 'breaking my record'

RIO DE JANEIRO

PELE on Sunday congratulated Cristiano Ronaldo for 'breaking his record' of goals scored in official matches.

Portuguese star Ronaldo hit a hat-trick for Juventus in a 3-1 Serie A win over Cagliari to bring his total to 770 goals.

The 36-year-old took to Instagram to tell his 270 million followers he could now claim the record, having matched Pele's 767 on March 2.

"I'm filled with joy and pride as I acknowledge the goal that puts me on top of the World's goalscoring list, overcoming Pele's record, something that I could never have dreamed of while growing up as a child from Madeira," Ronaldo wrote.

Brazilian great Pele, 80, wrote on Instagram to his 5.8 million followers: "Congratulations on breaking my record of goals in official matches."

"I admire you a lot, I love watching you play and this is no secret to anyone."

"My only regret is not being able to give you a hug today."

"Cristiano life is a solo flight. Each makes his own journey. And what a beautiful journey you are having!"

Pele -- the only player in history to win three World Cups -- has claimed to have scored 1,283 goals in total, including in unofficial matches.

Ronaldo's goals include 668 for club sides -- five with Sporting Lisbon, 118 for Manchester United, 450 for Real Madrid and 95 for Juventus. He has also scored 120 for Portugal.

Some media however put Czech Josef Bican on 805 goals, ahead of both Ronaldo and Pele.

Former Brazilian striker Romario also claims to have scored 1,000 career goals including unofficial matches. Other sources attribute 772 to him.

AFP

Arteta proves why his Arsenal 'project' will 'bang'

LONDON

THIS was a victory for Mikel Arteta as much as Arsenal. An afternoon that began with Arsenal facing unexpected disciplinary issues ended with victory over a Tottenham Hotspur who had Erik Lamela sent off after scoring a contender for goal of the season.

The irony will not be lost on Arteta, who decided to drop club captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang after the striker reported late to their London Colney training base on Sunday morning. It was a contentious call, one made more seismic by Aubameyang's recent form -- nine goals from his past 12 appearances -- and the identity of their opponents, buoyed by recent results and a sense that Son Heung-Min, Gareth Bale and Harry Kane were finally forming the formidable triumvirate widely anticipated earlier in the campaign.

As it turned out, Son left the field with an injury after 20 minutes, Bale was substituted before the hour mark and Kane was anonymous aside from a late flurry in which he had a goal ruled out for offside and hit the post with a late free kick.

Spurs didn't deserve anything from this and that is to Arteta's considerable credit. Aubameyang is an influential figure in the



Mikel Arteta engineered Arsenal's come-from-behind north London derby win over Tottenham on Sunday. (Agencies)

Gunners' dressing room and the manager will have known the implications of leaving out his talisman at such a late stage. The Gunners were also fighting fatigue after making a 3,000-mile round trip to Athens for their Europa League last-16 first-leg engagement at Olympiakos while Spurs played Dinamo Zagreb on the same night in north London.

Yet Arsenal were the more energetic throughout, aside from the final frantic 10 minutes or so when Spurs finally decided to break the conservative Jose Mourinho mould and go on the offensive. And so as it turns out, Arteta could make his point on Aubameyang and still win three points.

"I made what I thought was the right decision and we draw a line there

and now let's move on again," he said. "We know how important Auba is for us and for the club and that's it. It's been dealt with, now let's move on."

"For me, [off-field standards] are the foundation and the platform that we can build something medium and long-term that is sustainable and that can bring us joy and happiness. Without that, I don't believe that it would happen. That's why I keep talking about it and acting about it."

Arteta was rightly criticised in December's reverse fixture for falling into Mourinho's trap, conceding two goals on the counterattack as individual errors undermined their general play. Here, they controlled proceedings for long periods, denying Kane space whenever

he dropped deep to link the play, and constantly causing the visitors problems, most notably down the left-hand side as Kieran Tierney and Emile Smith Rowe gave Spurs right-back Matt Doherty a torrid 90 minutes.

Arteta has wanted to get Smith Rowe and Martin Odegaard, on loan from Real Madrid, into the same team to give Arsenal more creativity and they were highly influential here, offering far more than Spurs' more-celebrated forwards could muster.

They were aided by an early injury to Son, who limped off after 20 minutes. The South Korea international admitted last month that he was feeling tired and the accumulation of matches appears to have taken its toll.

Robbed of Son's speed on the break, Kane struggled to influence the game and Spurs were indebted to a moment of superb brilliance by Son's replacement, Lamela. Lucas Moura played a short pass behind the Argentine and the latter improvised with an impudent Rabona finish that arrowed into the far corner. Sergio Reguilon, Spurs' closest player, ran off in celebration with his hands on his head in disbelief.

It was Tottenham's only shot on target of a first half that Arsenal thoroughly dominated. Smith Rowe had already hit the crossbar with a dipping 25-yard effort and he later set up Cedric Soares to hit the post after Alexandre Lacazette had declined a chance to shoot. A minute before half-time, Tierney crossed from the left and Odegaard was free in the box, his shot flicking off Toby Alderweireld and rolling past Huge Lloris.

"We played really bad in the first half," Mourinho told Sky Sports afterward. "The 1-1 was not a fair reflection of the first half. We were poor. Defending bad. No intensity or pressing. Some important players hiding. Really bad."

Lost in the noise surrounding Aubameyang's appearance on the bench were other significant calls, choosing Cedric over Hector Bellerin at right-back, leaving Nicolas Pepe out until a hamstring problem for Bukayo Saka prompted

his inclusion at the interval. And it was Pepe's incisive 64th-minute pass that led to the match-defining moment, Lacazette controlling and slicing his shot horribly wide as Davinson Sanchez came in to tackle.

Referee Michael Oliver awarded a penalty for the contact, and with Aubameyang still off the field, Lacazette converted. He is now the fifth Arsenal player to score 10 or more League goals in at least four consecutive seasons after Ian Wright, Dennis Bergkamp, Thierry Henry and Olivier Giroud.

Lamela was sent off after two yellow cards in six minutes, the second a needless aggressive palming off Tierney with an arm to his face. Mourinho wanted a second yellow card for Granit Xhaka after he fouled Moura in a similar central position on the pitch but they seemed to need a sense of injustice to stir them into life, a damning indictment of just how flat they were to that point.

Spurs still hold the upper hand in the table, but this was a blow to their hopes of gate-crashing the top-four conversation, while Arteta has a result to back up his assertion earlier in the week that his "project" will "bang" in the months ahead. That bold claim needs tangible evidence to look credible and here, in more unlikely circumstances, was it.

ESPN

Solskjaer's most crucial week at Man United begins with a win

MANCHESTER, England

OLE Gunnar Solskjaer will be talking a lot about "progress" between now and the end of the season: how much Manchester United have made, whether it's enough and how they take the next step forward. It will be an easier conversation if this week goes well, and United started a crucial seven days with a narrow 1-0 win over West Ham United at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Hopes of finishing the season as Manchester City's nearest challengers strengthened, Solskjaer's team now move on to competitions they can still actually win -- first to AC Milan in the Europa League and then to Leicester City in the FA Cup. Finish second in the Premier League and win a trophy and Solskjaer will save himself a summer of debate about whether United are on the right track. Bow out of both the Europa League and the FA Cup before the international break and the same old questions about the direction of the club will resurface.

The first leg of what is a crucial run of three games has been safely negotiated, and with nine league games to go, United are nine points clear of West Ham in fifth. The risk of being dragged into a battle for the top four is subsiding and the focus now can be on bettering last season's third-place finish and winning a trophy.

"This week was always going to be massive," said Solskjaer after-



Manchester United's win over West Ham helped consolidate their place in the Premier League's top four. (Agencies)

wards. "We want to improve on last season and get to a final and move up the table. This week was always going to be about how we recovered after a massive disappointment after a late equaliser [against Milan on Thursday]. You never know how that can affect you but the attitude was spot on."

"We're starting to build some momentum in the league and open the gap further to West Ham. It's a big week for us."

Victory over West Ham was not particularly pretty but it has given United some momentum at the start of a pivotal week. Solskjaer has ambitions greater than the Europa League and the FA Cup, but after four straight semifinal defeats, pressure is growing on the Norwegian manager to win something.

Progress in Europe is not guaranteed after a 1-1 draw with Milan at Old Trafford and they

will need to score at least once in the San Siro on Thursday if they want to reach the quarter-finals of the Europa League. At Leicester on Sunday there is a place in the semifinals of the FA Cup up for grabs, and United's prospects for the final stretch of this season will look a lot brighter if they are still in the hunt for trophies when the players return from international duty

in the first week of April. In the Premier League, United have more points and have scored more goals than at the same stage last year, but this season needs silverware to add some shine.

In his programme notes ahead of West Ham's visit, Solskjaer wrote about being "harder and harder to beat." The numbers back him up with United losing just one of their past

23 league games and recording four consecutive Premier League clean sheets for the first time since Solskjaer took over. Harry Maguire was particularly good against West Ham.

The trick now is to go from not losing to winning more often, because they are not the same thing. Only Manchester City have lost fewer league games than United this season, but the Red Devils have drawn nine times and they will need those extra 18 points if they want to bridge the gap with Pep Guardiola's champions-elect.

Becoming more clinical in front of goal would be a good start.

West Ham didn't manage a shot on target but were only beaten here because of Craig Dawson's own goal in the second half -- the 15th goal they have conceded from set pieces this season. Mason Greenwood, Marcus Rashford and Bruno Fernandes will all feel they could have

been on the scoresheet. Solskjaer will hope they're saving the killer instinct for the cups.

"We've had four clean sheets now in the league straight up and that's always a foundation," he said. "We want to score goals. I feel we're getting back to where we can, it was only a week ago we beat City 2-0. We don't wanna be greedy, no one can score four or five goals in every game in the Premier League, you've got to earn it. The foundation with the clean sheet, attitude, desire, that's there, and we always back our players to create enough to score goals."

Ahead of a pivotal week, Solskjaer says United are going in the right direction. Follow up victory over West Ham with wins over Milan and Leicester to stay on course to lift a first trophy of his reign and supporters won't just have to take his word for it.

ESPN

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Arteta proves why his Arsenal 'project' will 'bang'

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TONIGHT @ 9:00

NIRVANA

EATV TUESDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 MPYA
12:30 Masi Kilaani (r)
13:00 Wanawake Live (r)
13:30 Kaili Za Wana
14:00 DK 10 za Mwanamizi
14:30 Bball Kings Highlights (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 #SPORTS (r)
16:30 #HASTAG
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNews
18:30 Music/Seap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)

eastafrika RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Namungo FC seeks to edge Pyramid FC in CAF Confederation Cup

By correspondents Joseph Mchekadona & Ismail Tano

TANZANIA'S Namungo FC's officials state their squad is prepared for tomorrow's CAF Confederation Cup group stage encounter against Egyptian giants Pyramid FC at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Namungo FC's information officer, Kindama Namlia, noted the team were, until last weekend, in camp preparing for the game and they are looking forward to registering good results.

Namlia said all players are in good shape ahead of the game, except for defender Haruna Shamte who will miss the match due to a second yellow card he was shown during the clash against Raja Casablanca of Morocco.

He said the tomorrow game will not be played at their usual venue, Azam Complex, as the continental football governing body has directed that all CAF games from this stage should be played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium without supporters.

Namlia said playing at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium will not distract them from winning the match.

"We are preparing well for the game, CAF has directed that from today (Sunday) onwards, all games under its jurisdiction be played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, we were used to play at Azam Complex as our home ground."

"The change will not affect us in any way as we have played and won many games at the facility, we are looking forward to posting good results on Wednesday," he said.

In an interview on Sunday, Namlia said the Egyptians were expected to be in the country the same day. "They are expected to be here today (Sunday), I have not checked with my colleagues to know whether they have arrived or not," he said.

Namungo FC's head coach, Hemed Suleiman 'Morocco', speaking after his team returned from Morocco where they lost 1-0 to Raja Casablanca, said he will rectify the weakness his charges showcased in tie.

"We played well, but there were some mistakes which we made, we will work on them before playing our next game against Pyramids of Egypt. We have to work hard so that we can register good results on Wednesday," he said.

If Namungo FC is to beat Pyramids FC, the former must prepare well as the Egyptians, coached by Argentinian Radolf Martin, are coming from 3-0 thrashing of Zambia giants Nkana FC.

In the Premier League, Namungo are placed 10th with 28 points from 18 fixtures played.

In the past three league matches, the Lindi-based side beat Mwadui FC 1-0 and the club also won by the same margin against Kagera Sugar.

Namungo FC beat Angolan giants C.D. Primeiro de Agosto 7-5 on aggregate in the tournament's first round.

Namungo FC has good players who are good at dictating match, including keeper Razak Balora, Edward Manyama, Steven Sey and Lucas Kikoti.

Pyramid FC has a good squad made up of a mixture of young players and experienced players.

The players to watch in the team are keeper Sherif Akramy who has always been steady.

In the past two games he has conceded one goal when his team beat El Obour Sporting 4-1 in Egyptian League.

Other key players in the squad include Mahmoud Wadi, Ali Gabr, Mohamed Farouk, Nabil Edmad and Islam Issa.

Simba SC all out to make it to CAF CL quarterfinals



Simba SC's head coach, Didier Gomes da Rosa.

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA'S Simba SC's officials say their team must emerge victorious in the CAF Champions League's clash against Sudanese side, Al Merriekh, if the former are to remain in contention for the showpiece's last eight place.

Simba SC hosts the Sudanese side at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam today.

The two sides met a week ago in Khartoum and the game ended in a goalless draw.

The results saw Simba SC still clinging on to the Group A's top spot with seven points.

Simba SC's information officer, Haji Manara, noted his side must collect the three

points today to remain on top of the group and make their quarterfinal dreams a reality.

"We have to treat our Tuesday game with care, it will be a difficult match, but we must play to win so that our chances of reaching the quarterfinal

stage of CAF Champions League are real," he said.

He said they must compensate their last week's goalless draw with the Sudanese with a win today.

Simba SC's tactician, Didier Gomes, noted: "Like I said at the beginning of

this campaign it is a must for us to collect all points at home. We had a goalless draw against them away and must compensate with home win."

The CAF announced that today's clash must be played without fans and Manara said it is painful for Simba, but they are well prepared as their players are used to playing without fans.

"It is a new experience to our fans, but our players are used to playing without supporters, they did that in so many games, the only thing our supporters should do is to remember the team in their prayers and wish the team good luck," he said.

Simba SC will be without ever present and influential defender, Paschal Wawa, and central midfielder, Taddeo Lwanga, who are suspended after picking second yellow cards in Sudan.

The two are some of Simba players who have played each and every match since coach Didier Gomes took over as the club's head coach.

However, Gomes has enough replacement for the two as he can use Jonas Mkude in Lwanga's place and Kennedy Juma as a replacement for Wawa.

"We will miss them a lot but we have players who will cover up their places," the tactician stated.

The French man said he took his time to study his opponents and he is confident that they will get the desired results.

He said he said he will change the approach so as to win the game.

Caravans cricketers thrash Shree Kutchi Leva in 2021 Kazim Nasser tournament

By Guardian Reporter

CARAVANS' cricketers have opened their campaign in the 2021 Kazim Nasser Memorial League (KNML)'s Division A impressively given they posted six-wicket victory over Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Centre (SKLPSC) in Dar es Salaam last weekend.

The SKLPSC started to bat in the Group B clash, which took place at Anadil Burhani oval, and were bowled out for 98 runs in 18.3 overs.

The team were to a great extent below par at the crease and had to put much trust in key batsmen, Vinesh Gorasiya, Naran Vekariya and newly recruited Khalil Rehemtullah, to eventually end with the total.

Rehemtullah sought to make his experience count for the SKLPSC in his first stint at the squad, ending with 16 runs which consisted of a boundary.

Gorasiya and Vekariya chipped in with 14 runs apiece, whilst Anil Pindoriya ended two runs short of double digit figure, clearing the boundary once.

They had to contend with a shaky start in their pursuit of a good total, following opener Dinesh Rabadiya's early dismissal, with the batsman making his way back to the pavilion once he executed two knocks.

Gorasiya and Vekariya sought to help their outfit boost the total with good knocks, the two nevertheless could not stay longer at the crease.

Cravans' Jitin Pratap Singh and Kassim Nasser had impressive bowling spells and played crucial role in keeping the SKLPSC in check.

Singh had most wickets for Caravans, given he ended his spell with four and conceded 22 runs in four overs.

Nasser's four-over spell saw the experienced spinner notch three wickets, concede seven runs.

Issa Safari was as well impressive, notching two wickets, giving away 16 runs in 2.3 overs.

Needing 99 runs to emerge victorious, Caravans batted zealously, reaching the target in 12.2 overs and dropping four wickets.

Opener Manoj Kumar's early dismissal could not frustrate the side's chase, as the other top order batsmen, Singh, Nandakishan Pottachira and Nasser, made certain of the victory.

Pottachira, who had opened the innings with Kumar, had an impressive innings given he scored 33 runs which included six fours and a sixer.

The in-form Singh made the most of his experience, executing solid knocks which had the batsman posting 33 runs which consisted of five fours.

Nasser chipped in with 20 runs which included three fours. Gokul Das and Nansib Kelvin later ensured Caravans secure the emphatic victory with solid partnership.

Vinesh Gorasiya and Jayantilal Pindoria recorded two wickets apiece in SKLPSC's vain attempt to prevent from mounting a successful chase.

Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) organizes the annual tournament in a bid to boost promotion of the game in the country.

Harab Motors Company, Shamsu Pharmacy, and Swepac Imports International are the tournament's sponsors.

The tournament is also backed by Imports International, 3M Pharmacy and Funcity that will present free vouchers to players in divisions B and C events' knockout stages.



Caravans cricket side's all-rounder, Kassim Nasser (L), receives man of the match prize from Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA)'s Chairman, Premji Pindoria, after the outfit's Kazim Nasser Memorial League (KNML) Division A clash against Shree Kutchi Leva Patel Sports Centre (SKLPSC), which took place in Dar es Salaam last weekend. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DC

Flexibles by David Chikoko

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