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'Stop Covid-19 testing at EAC border points'

By Guardian Reporter

AN apex business body of the East African Community has appealed to member states to do away with Covid-19 testing at border points for the region's economies to quickly recover.

This follows an intensive three-day tour by East African Business Council (EABC) officials at three border points which found long queues of truck drivers waiting for Covid-19 test results.

The team visited the Busia One-Stop Border Post (OSBP), Malaba OSBP along the Kenya-Uganda border, and Isebania/Sirari post, on the Tanzania-Kenya border.

The aim is to seek sustainable solutions to recurring truck snarls which in the past month disrupted cross border trade, occasioning loss and damage of goods worth millions of shillings.

EABC Chief Executive Officer Dr Peter Mathuki expressed this position in a statement yesterday, noting that various border points are constantly short of Covid-19 reagents and testing kits, thus igniting delays that hurt businesses and stand on the way of economic recovery.

“Testing Covid-19 at border points should come to a stop to ease congestion of trucks,” he stated, underlining that the procedure is hindering cross-border trade and reducing trade volumes

Distressed truck drivers waiting to collect their Covid-19 results are not observing social distancing or putting on protective masks, he pointed out.

“Testing Covid-19 at border points should come to a stop to ease congestion of trucks,” he stated, underlining that the procedure is hindering cross-border trade and reducing trade volumes, “just when the region is struggling to recover from the pandemic.”

The snarls disrupt the flow of goods, increasing operational costs for traders and causing wastage of large volumes of perishable goods, apart from fueling corrupt practices, the statement intoned.

Revoking the procedure will strengthen cross-border trade, making it resilient amidst a welter of shocks expected in future, and boost the competitiveness of East African goods in continental and global markets, he said.

The council's report released last month on the 'Impact of Covid-19 on Business and



Livestock and Fisheries ministry permanent secretary Prof Elisante ole Gabriel (2nd-L) briefs Agriculture minister Japhet Hasunga (L) on a fish of the tuna species when the latter visited the ministry's pavilion at the World Food Day exhibition in Njombe municipality yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.



Solicitor General shows scores in the past 2 years

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Office of the Solicitor General yesterday outlined what it said were tremendous achievements in the year 2019/20 despite being instituted just recently.

Its overall trophy was having saved 11.4trn/- after winning foreign and do-

estic cases filed against the government. The cases involved the seizure of government assets, including an aircraft seized in South Africa and then in Canada.

Solicitor General Gabriel Malata (pictured) made these observations at a capacity

EAC election observers set to arrive next week

By Correspondent Marc

Nkwame, Arusha

ELECTION observers from member states of the East African Community (EAC) for this month's general election are scheduled to arrive on Friday next week.

The EAC Secretariat said in a statement here yesterday that the former president of Burundi, Sylvestre Ntibunganya will lead the team in scrutinizing the polls.

The deployment of an EAC election observer mission is mandated by EAC treaty protocols, pursuant to the invitation of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and a decision of the Council of Ministers on observation of elections in any partner state.

The mandate of the observer mission is to observe the overall electoral environment, pre-election activities, the polling day, along with the counting and tallying of



votes, followed by announcement of results.

The mission will deploy experts in various regions of the country including Zanzibar, after a preliminary briefing session in Dar es Salaam, the statement noted.

The team draws observers from the East African Legislative Assembly, EAC ministries responsible for cooperation with other partner states, country electoral commissions, and EAC youth ambassadors, it further not-

ed. No Tanzanian citizens are included in the mission, consistent with EAC rules in the matter, it said.

EAC Secretary General, Ambassador Libérat Mfumukeko (pictured), said that the mission was being undertaken pursuant to Article 3 of the Treaty, which requires "... adherence to universally acceptable principles of democratic governance and in line with the EAC Principles of Election Observation and Evaluation."

"As the region moves deeper in the integration process with the ultimate goal of having a political federation, EAC Partner States need to standardise their governance practices and should take keen interest in each other's political and electoral processes," he asserted.

Successful and peaceful elections in Tanzania is a matter of paramount importance to the partner states as lack of peace and stability in

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CDF unveils JKT 4bn/- venture in irrigation farming, paddy, sunflower agro-processing

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Morogoro

A WING of the Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF) has embarked on a major agriculture and agro-processing initiative aimed at achieving food security and creating more jobs through agro-processing.

Implemented through the National Service, the drive which was launched here yesterday starts by construction of a massive irrigation scheme, setting up a 12,000-acre paddy plantation and an

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CDF unveils JKT 4bn/- venture in irrigation

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agro-processing factory. The more than 4bn/- project is executed at the Chita Camp of the National Service Department of TPDF in Kilombero District, Morogoro Region, based on a vast irrigation scheme, already accomplished by at least 60 per cent.

The project is set to start with the cultivation of 2,500 acres this farming season, with intention of annually expanding the cultivation acreage to reach 12,000 acres by 2025.

The Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), General Venance Mabeyo laid the foundation stone for the capital agro-processing venture, underlining that the initiative was part of a series efforts by the National Service to boost the country's food security base, and fast-tracking the pace of building an industrial economy.

He expressed the need for National Service to invest in diverse agricultural projects to contain existing shortages for crop based raw materials as well as boosting availability of staple food crops.

"Among others, the general vision for the establishment of the National Service was to complement government efforts to improve performance and service delivery in various sectors. You have enough land assets; make sure you research, innovate and come-up with equally useful agricultural projects," he directed.

He said the National Service was a paramount institution geared to enable the timely development of an industrial economy.

"We must work hard to help the nation abandon a poor trend

of importation of crop based raw materials," Gen. Mabeyo said, elaborating that we have grim statistics showing that the country is spending billions of shillings to import edible oil due to slow pace in the production of sunflower seeds. Records show that during 2019 around 413bn/- was spent for the purpose," he declared.

The TPDF commander was impressed by the work progress as he inspected it, pledging to release around 200m/- from general military funds to fast track key activities to speedily complete the wider irrigation scheme, rice processing plant and a warehouse.

Welcoming the CDF, the head of the National Service, Major General Charles Mbugu, said the project was in line with a chain of initiatives being undertaken by National Service to improve agriculture, livestock and fisheries countrywide.

He saluted the CDF for his support and efforts to ensure the project was implemented accordingly, emphasizing that the initiative will be accomplished in set time frame and quality standards.

Several income generating projects are being implemented in different National Service camps, with others in the pipeline or ready to take off, he affirmed.

"We're working round the clock to ensure appropriate utilization of the resources we have, including land, conscripts and officers to venture into wider projects for the benefit of the department and the country as a whole," he stated, praising



Chief of Defence Forces General Venance Mabeyo (2nd-L) and Chief for National Service Major General Charles Mbugu unveil plaque at the laying of a foundation stone of an irrigation-supported rice farming project and a modern rice processing plant at Chita National Service camp in Kilombero District, Morogoro Region. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

the work attitude shown by conscripts at the camp in helping to attain work objectives.

Colonel Hassan Mabena, chairman of the strategic committee on agriculture, livestock and fisheries development, said the department has developed viable strategies to push for increased production in food and cash crops, with the focus being on maize, rice, beans and sunflower.

The value of the on-going paddy irrigation scheme was estimated at 12.6bn/-, but National Service was expecting to spend

4bn/- by working with indigenous experts from the Tanzania Irrigation Commission (TIC) and the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), in particular.

Colonel Mabena, also acting head of administration at the department, said that during the 2019/2020 season, the Ifakara-based camp cultivated 1,000 acres of paddy, but fetched low yields due to some challenges.

"The last season saw each acre producing only 10 sacks, but with the new project we're looking forward to start yielding be-

tween 25 and 30 sacks per acre," he stated, noting that the future target was to attain 40 sacks per acre.

Visibly optimistic, he said that apart from ensuring National Service with abundant supplies, the ongoing project will play a vital role in imparting the farmers with best agronomic practices.

"Students from SUA and from other agro-related colleges will use the project to facilitate internship or field exercises, whereupon farmers from adjoining communities will be invited

to learn recommended methods of rice cultivation," he further noted.

The project has been designed to allow the crop to be grown in two seasons; each year, propelling vastly increased harvests.

"We're currently proceeding with construction works to install water intakes at the three rivers where the scheme will receive its waters," he said.

"The waters will automatically be directed into several major tunnels, a professional drainage system which will see all farms

irrigated accordingly," he specified.

The timely project is expected to curb the perennial challenge of flooding ravaging paddy farming in the remote area during heavy rains.

Already, National Service has established a major seed farm block at the area to germinate improved paddy seed varieties to cater for project demand, and marketing the surplus to farmers at friendly prices to push for wider production, he added.

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building session for state attorneys to improve their litigation performance.

The Solicitor General's office was reintroduced in 2018, ending the period when its functions were transferred to the Attorney General's office, starting from 1965. It was initially established to handle cases and arbitration proceedings on behalf of the government and its institutions locally and abroad.

After it came into operation in 2018, in the financial year 2019/20 it won cases with litigated values totaling 11.4trn/-, in proceedings within and outside the country, he said.

It has retrieved 106 farms seized by "people with nasty intentions" over those properties, belonging to the government, he stated.

"There are also stadiums, hotels and various houses that were taken over by unscrupulous people including the Mbeya Hotel. It is currently in the hands of the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC)," he elaborated.

SG Malata said that despite the successes, the office saw it needs to continue building capacities of advocates so as to enable them carry out their duties efficiently.

"This training is designed to increase their abilities in various areas, like information collection and case preparation, document preparation and defense skills. Other areas are writing essays and evidence, adding witnesses to testify in court, electronic evidence, the role of government lawyers, the judiciary and the society as a whole," he stated.

Amon Mpanju, the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs affirmed that the training will uplift the lawyers in discharging their duties.

"I believe that lawyers know their job very well but this training will help them gain more skills and knowledge and apply it in their work. This will also help you to be more confident to enforce the law and do it correctly," he added.



Students from various schools based in Arusha city hold placards with messages relating to children's rights as they take part in an International Day of the Girl Child march held at Suye Secondary School yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya.

'Stop Covid-19 testing at EAC border points'

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Investments in the EAC and Proposed Recovery Measures for the EAC Economies,' stated that 56 percent of businesses were affected by new cross border restrictions, noting that about 44 percent of businesses are still struggling to source raw materials to keep the businesses afloat.

EABC appealed for allowing small-scale cross-border traders especially women to freely trade within the border zones, by adhering to Standard Operating Procedures put in place by the health authorities.

EABC members were accompanied by officials of the Kenya government's EAC Affairs and Regional Development, along with council stakeholders, appealing for mutual recognition of Covid-19 certificates among the partner states.

EAC members should also deploy more personnel from government agencies at border points to facilitate trade, it added.

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any partner state undermines the milestones the region has so far achieved in the quest for integration, he emphasized.

"Therefore, we expect a successful mission and we very much believe that this will further strengthen the democratic process and advance development in the region," he said.

The mission will prepare a report that will be submitted to NEC through the EAC Council

of Ministers for consideration and implementation of recommendations. The mission is expected to leave Tanzania on 2nd November.

Prior to its deployment, the EAC mission will hold a press conference to launch its activities on 24th October, at a well known lobby on the Kivukoni waterfront area. Local and international media representatives will have an opportunity to interact with mission experts, the statement added.

2.4bn/- boreholes to supplement water supply in Dodoma city - MD

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

DODOMA Urban Water and Sanitation Authority (DUWASA) has begun drilling water boreholes in the peripheries of Dodoma city to cost 2.4bn/- to alleviate the existing water shortage.

DUWASA managing director Eng. David Pallangyo told reporters at the site of five boreholes being drilled that following the government's move to Dodoma the demand for water has increased substantially causing shortage.

He said the borehole project was a short term measure to ensure residents are adequately supplied with water while waiting for the implementation of huge water projects being earmarked in the next few years.

He said: "We shall pump water from here to the City to augment for shortage in the city, we shall drill wells to supply 3,000 cubic metres per day that will be supplied to Mwangaza, Njedengwa, Ithumwa and other areas."

He said there were also other areas

around the city where water boreholes will be drilled to strengthen water supply.

Inspecting the well, the Permanent secretary in the Water ministry Anthony Sanga said the ministry has provided 1bn/- out of 2.4bn/- requisitioned by DUWASA for the improvement of water supply in areas with acute water shortage.

He said the step was a result of increase demand for the basic commodity in the city's various areas in particu-

lar its peripheries, and added that the government has short, middle and long term plans for to solve the issue.

"Short term plan includes emergency water wells at Ithumwa area, while middle term plan is the construction of the dam at Farkwa, and the long term plan is to get water from Lake Victoria," he said.

Dodoma Regional Commissioner Dr Binilith Mahenge praised Duwasa's leadership for its efforts in solving Dodoma's water shortage.

Climate change cited on fall in tobacco production in Chunya

By Guardian Correspondent, Chunya

CHUNYA Tobacco Cooperative Union (CHUTCU) in Mbeya Region has linked the fall in tobacco production in the last farming season with bad weather caused by climate change.

CHUTCU manager Juma Mohammed said a big percentage of the tobacco produced lacked quality due to rains that was difficult for the farmers to dry.

He said in the 2018/19 farming season, the target was to produce 9.92 million tons, but only 6 million tons was produced.

"In the last season tobacco farmers incurred great loss because they spent a lot in cultivation including the purchase of input, including fertilizer that was swept away by rain water, and some who harvested were unable to dry it," he said.

He said during the period tobacco price fell from USD 1.6 per kg down to USD 1.33 and the problem was attributed to falling quality and weight of the crop.

In the circumstances, Mohamed said in this season they have made strategic preparations including the ready availability of inputs, in particular fertilizer and seeds.

He said inputs and seeds in this season will reach 7,500 farmers in 23 primary cooperatives in the district.

Some farmers in the district appealed to the government to assist them in finding reliable markets for the crop, adding that last season they hardly made any profit.

Salome Kilasi, one of the tobacco farmers called on the government to provide them with fertilizer much earlier to avoid unscrupulous agents who provide them with counterfeit fertilizer.

She also called on agricultural experts from the local council to go to the farms to identify challenges facing them and find solutions thereof.

Tanzania is second in Africa in tobacco production after Malawi. However, despite high production of tobacco, it remains a poor country and tobacco farmers are worse off while the country loses more than 61,000 hectares of forest annually due to tobacco growing and curing.

According to the Tanzania Tobacco Board production of the cash crop had been on the decline since the 2013/2014 farming season.

Production of tobacco declined from 105 million kilograms in 2013/2014 to 93 million kilograms in 2014/2015. Production of the crop also decreased from 72 million kilograms in 2015/2016 to 60 kilograms in 2016/2017 and to further 50.5 million kilograms in 2017/2018.



Seif Shariff Hamad (C), the opposition Alliance for Change and Transparency's (ACT-Wazalendo) candidate for the Zanzibar Presidency in the upcoming General Election, briefs journalists in Zanzibar yesterday shortly after having an audience with members of the Zanzibar peace committee - two of whom are with him. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Minister calls on IAA to reach out to people in informal sector

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

DEPUTY Minister for Finance and Planning, Dr Ashatu Kijaji has called on the Institute of Accountancy Arusha (IAA) to reach out for people in the informal sector in their expansion plan.

The parastatal educational institution under the ministry of Finance and Planning is opening new campuses, the next one being Dodoma campus scheduled to start in December, this year.

The Institute has, over time, developed several certificate, undergraduate, postgraduate and masters' degrees, targeting majorly people in formal employment.

This was attested by the IAA rector, Prof Eliamani Sedoyeka who said the urge to open campus in Dodoma was due to the fact that most students are from Dodoma, being government employees who moved from Dar es Salaam to the political capital

city. But speaking during a dinner meeting organized by IAA and preided over by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Job Ndugai among other guests, the deputy minister noted that the institution need to do a lot more to get closer to people.

She thanked the management for the bold decision and step to open more branches across the country, especially in Dodoma as a positive effort in support of the

government initiatives.

"We have seen great development made by the institution in providing higher learning education but need to reach out for non-formal sector" she said, adding that the good services provided by IAA should be enjoyed by all Tanzanians.

Earlier Speaker Ndugai who was the guest of honour at the brief ceremony said he was motivated by the record of the institution, noting that the decision to

open a campus in Dodoma was overdue.

He added the fee free education system adopted by the government several years ago will bring many young people to middle colleges and universities, thus the need to have more educational institutions across the nation.

"It is high time higher learning institutions focus higher, open more branches, especially in Dodoma where the population

is highly increasing" he said. He praised the management of introducing several short courses in Dodoma.

He said the parliament with over 393 members drawn from different backgrounds is likely to benefit from the courses, adding that the focus should also be on-line training.

Prof Sedoyeka noted that the institution offers 50 different certificate, diploma, degree and masters courses, explaining that

plans are underway to start PhD courses.

He further stated that the institutions offers over 400 short courses in Arusha, Babati and Dar es Salaam campuses while the Dodoma campus is to start in December, 2020.

He added that the student population is 5000 but is likely to increase to 8000 in the next intake. He added that currently, two thirds of the students' populations are public servants.

Ministries, stakeholders unveil plans to improve dairy sector

By Guardian Reporter

THE Ministry of livestock and Fisheries has unveiled plans which will engage other ministries and stakeholders in improving the dairy sector and raise per capita milk consumption.

Permanent Secretary, Elisante Ole Gabriel made the remarks yesterday during the commemoration of the World Food Day which was held at national level in Njombe Region.

According to him, the ministry is currently preparing proposals that will involve the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) as well as various stakeholders in order to implement the 'Milk Drinking Program' in all schools in the country.

According to him, the move aims to ensure that by 2025, every primary school has a milk drinking programme as well as raise individual consumption of milk from the current 54 litres per year to 100 litres.

He said that the joint efforts will also help to strengthen food and nutrition security as well as income to smallholder producers.

The PS pointed out that currently, Tanzania produces over 2.7 billion litres of milk, where the local demand for unprocessed milk is low, with milk consumption per capita estimated at 54 litres while the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends consumption of 200 litres per year.

Ole Gabriel noted that Tanzania is the second largest country in Africa with a large number of livestock having 33.4 million cattle, 21.29 million goats, sheep 5.65 million, 83.28 million chickens, 2.14 million pigs and 657,389 donkeys.

"The cattle we have were in the year 2019/20, been able to produce 3.01 billion litres of milk of which, 2.1 billion litres of milk are from native cattle and 0.9 billion litres are from modern cattle. In addition, 701,679.1 tons of meat were produced in the year 2019/2020 compared to 690,629 tons produced in 2018/2019," he said.

He further said that from the year 2015/2016 to 2019/2020, Tanzania has successfully established 17 new meat processing factories thus making the country to have a total of 99 factories for processing milk, animal feed and meat.

"In addition, the average milk processing has increased from 167,520 litres in 2015/2016 to 203,600 litres per day in 2019/2020. Similarly, we currently have about 221 milk collection centres," he said.

The PS further said that the milk consumption promotion now focuses mostly on children whereby several campaigns and programmes have been implemented to achieve the goal. "As of September 2020, a total of 89,922 students from 210 schools have benefited from the 'school milk project' in 10 regions which are Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Tanga, Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Mbeya, Njombe, Morogoro, Mwanza and Mara. In the project a total of 12 million litres of milk worth 19.24bn/- have been spent on various periods from 2006 to 2020," he said.

He added: "For the year 2020/2021 milk consumption programmes will be implemented in 30 schools in the country from 210 schools that were previously implementing the project. The regions that are currently implementing the initiative are Kilimanjaro (School 24), Iringa (School 2) and Mbeya (School 4) in collaboration with Parents and Processors."



Salum Mwalimu, the opposition Chadema's running mate for the Tanzanian Presidency in the upcoming General Election, addresses a campaign rally in Mpanda, Katavi Region, on Thursday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Shein: Trust CCM candidates on development

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein has urged Micheweni residents in the Indian Ocean archipelago to vote for CCM candidates in the forthcoming October general election to realise their development ambitions.

Dr Shein who is the party's Vice Chairman in Zanzibar made the remarks in Micheweni, North Pemba Region when addressing a campaign rally. He said for the region to achieve its targeted development ambitions, residents should make no mistakes by voting for candidates from other political parties.

He said that CCM presidential candidate for Zanzibar, Dr Hussein Mwinyi is a talented leader with the ability to bring about development changes in the Isles. He said

Dr Mwinyi will take over from where his government has ended.

"We must all vote for Dr Mwinyi, he is a teacher and a doctor by profession, he has all the qualities of a good leader," he said adding that the candidate has a good knowledge of the Union is he is likely to further cement it.

The President also called on the residents to maintain the prevailing peace and unity especially during this time when the country prepares for the elections.

CCM presidential candidate for Zanzibar, Dr Hussein Mwinyi commended the seventh phase government for successfully implementation of the party's 2015/2020 election manifesto.

He said the government under President Shein has managed to improve provision of social services such as education, health

and infrastructures. He said that most of the health facilities are equipped with modern medical equipment as well as essential drugs.

Dr Mwinyi said if elected the president of Zanzibar, he will recognize the Shumba port in Pemba and construct a modern fish market at the area.

He said the Micheweni hospital will also be upgraded as well as constructing more health facilities and workers houses. He promised to employ more doctors including specialists for all the hospitals in Pemba.

"My government will purchase modern fishing boats to be given to fishermen so that they can be able to conduct fishing activities in deep waters of the Ocean," he noted.

Tanzanians go to the polls on October 28

to elect union president, president of Zanzibar, members of parliament, members of Zanzibar's House of Representatives and Ward Councilors.

Apart from Mwinyi, there are 14 other candidates in the race namely Said Soud (AAFP), Juma Ali Khatib (ADA TADEA), Hamad Rashid (ADC), Mfaume Khamis (NLD), Ali Juma (CHAUMA), Issa Muhammed Zonga (SAU), Ameri Said Ameri from Demokrasi Makini and Hamad Muhammed Ibrahim of UPDP.

Others are Hussein Juma Salim from Tanzania Labour Party (TLP), Mohamed Omar Baharia from the Union for Multiparty Democracy (UMD), Shafiq Hassan Suleiman (Democratic Party), Khamis Faki Mgaui (NRA), Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad (ACT Wazalendo) and Othman Rashid Khamis from CCK.

Adhere to professionalism, Mbeya court officials urged

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

JUDICIARY officials in Mbeya Region have been directed to adhere to professionalism and application of the laws when serving people, including provision of justice to enable them hold the important Pillar of State in high esteem.

The call was given early this week by senior judge of the High Court of Tanzania, Mbeya Zone Dr John Utamwa at the inauguration of Uyole Primary Court in Mbeya City, built at a cost of 448m/-.

The court building was previously gutted by fire in 2018 destroying all property therein including court documents and furniture and whose cause is still unknown.

Dr Utamwa said some rulings made by some court officers often create bad relationship between the Judiciary and citizens even to the extent of causing breach of the peace.

"This court's former build-

ing was gutted by fire in 2018, whose cause gives me suspicions, probably it was caused by bad relationship or bad management of cases, I call upon you to abide by professionalism in your work, said Judge Utamwa.

He also called on the people served by the court to participate in safeguarding the court's infrastructures and other public institutions.

High Court of Tanzania Administrative Officer for Mbeya Zone Rajabu Singana said the court serves 14 wards of Mbeya City and it was gutted down many cases got stuck.

He said 656 files of cases that were still in progress were lost, adding that investigations conducted by the police said it was burnt down by people who had cases against them.

Mbeya Resident Magistrate Denis Luwungu said the construction of the court will enable more than 652 new cases to continue being heard and that out the number 27 were for marriages and inheritance.



Mohamed Mchengerwa, CCM's candidate for the Rufiji constituency parliamentary seat in the upcoming General Election, addresses a campaign rally at Nchumbi village yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

South African president unveils economic recovery plan

CAPE TOWN

PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa on Thursday unveiled an economic recovery plan which envisages a massive rollout of infrastructure throughout the country.

"Our infrastructure program will focus on social infrastructure such as schools, water, sanitation and housing for the benefit of the our people," the president told a joint sitting of Parliament.

The focus will be placed on

critical network infrastructure such as ports, roads and rail that are key to the country's economic competitiveness, according to Ramaphosa (pictured).

South Africa has taken steps to remove the constraints that have over time hampered infrastructure delivery over a number of years.

Infrastructure has immense potential for stimulate investment and growth to develop other economic sectors and create sustainable employment

both directly and indirectly, said Ramaphosa.

The country, he said, has developed a robust pipeline of projects that will completely transform the landscape of cities, towns and rural areas.

By the end of June 2020, the country had 276 catalytic projects with an investment value of 2.3 trillion (about 139.4 billion U.S. dollars), according to Ramaphosa.

Moreover, a list of 50 strategic integrated projects and 12 spe-



cial projects was gazetted in July 2020, he said.

These catalytic projects have

been prioritized for immediate implementation with all regulatory processes fast-tracked, enabling over 340 billion rand in new investment, said Ramaphosa.

Those that are already in construction will see the future phases brought earlier for implementation, including some human settlements projects, which have already received bulk financing to unlock them, he said.

To ensure that there is active implementation of the infra-

structure program, the country has established Infrastructure SA and the Infrastructure Fund with the capacity to prepare and package projects, according to the president.

This approach has already encouraged the private sector investors to help build capability for infrastructure delivery within the state and to develop blended financing models, he said.

The Infrastructure Fund will provide 100 billion rand in catalytic finance over the next dec-

ade, leveraging as much as one trillion rand in new investment for strategic infrastructure projects, Ramaphosa said.

He said the second intervention in the recovery plan is the rapid expansion of energy generation capacity.

"We are accelerating the implementation of the Integrated Resource Plan to provide a substantial increase in the contribution of renewable energy sources, battery storage and gas technology," the president said.



This defective sewage chamber right in the middle of the road near the main mixed-goods market in Dar es Salaam's Mwenge suburb has been intermittently spewing stinking effluent for months now, clearly endangering public health. Correspondent Sabato Kasika's roving camera captured the scene yesterday.

WB Group to provide over US \$50 billion in grants to help extend large net positive flows to poorest people in fragile nations

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Bank Group is expected to provide over US \$50 billion in grants or highly concessional credits by June 2021 to help provide large net positive flows to the poorest in most fragile countries.

This is due to the recession caused by the outbreak of Covid-19 but in advanced economies the impact is less severe than it was feared. In most developing economies, it has become a depression, especially for the poorest.

In his address at the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting on Wednesday, the World Bank Group President, David Malpass said that extreme poverty may rise by 150 million people by 2021.

"Our latest economic and poverty data show that desperate inequality is being caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and economic shutdowns," he noted.

Malpass added: "Soon after our spring meetings, we were able to launch health emergency programmes in 111 countries and begin a surge in our grants and highly concessional lending that will reach the limits of our capital structure and commitment authority."

The WB President also announced that early this week, the bank's Board approved a package of up to US \$12 billion to expand and fast-track Covid-19 response for the purchase and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, tests and treatments.

In March this year, the G20 endorsed

a vital debt relief program for the poorest countries, giving people a ray of hope.

The Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) helped to increase fiscal resources for over 40 countries and created more transparency on the overwhelming debt burden.

"Our goals for debt relief in the spring meetings were clear - fiscal savings for the poorest countries, greater debt transparency, and a path forward for countries in debt distress. We're making progress but not nearly enough," he said.

He however said that some core DSSI-related problems are still unresolved, notably lack of participation by private creditors and incomplete participation by some official bilateral creditors.

He said the DSSI defers payments into the future but doesn't reduce them. Interest charges compound quickly on the deferred amounts, leaving countries with even more debt.

The DSSI has been a stopgap to provide fiscal resources and greater transparency while a longer-term solution for the debt crisis can be developed.

"The tendency in past debt crises is for countries in debt distress to go through a series of ineffective debt re-scheduling that leaves them weaker. Creditors may eventually allow them to get to a debt reduction process, but at a tremendous cost to the poor. We need to work better and faster this time," Malpass noted.

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Morogoro

Seed agency launches modern lab to oversee seed quality

THE Agriculture Seed Agency (ASA) has launched a modern internal control seed quality laboratory to facilitate professional monitoring of seeds produced from its farms across the country.

Constructed under the auspices of the Expanding Rice Production Project (ERPP), the equipped facilities at Morogoro-based ASA headquarters is projected to play a vital role in spurring production and productivity of quality improved seeds.

ERPP also aims to increase rice produced and marketed in targeted areas of Morogoro Region and in Zanzibar, leading to improved

rural incomes and food security.

Speaking during an event to inaugurate the laboratory, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture Gerald Kusaya, said availability of the seed quality laboratory was among chain of plans by the government to modernize the country's agriculture sector.

Kusaya said, "Today, we're happy that at least construction works for this laboratory has been finalized at the intended extents."

He explained that the parent ministry is currently looking forward to make sure that modern facilities are installed at the laboratory in order to enable it dispense activities at

high technological levels.

"Since the government gears to improve production and productivity of all food and cash crops that flourishes in the country, a need for modern laboratories and equipments to enable innovations, verification and checking of varieties of improved seeds and other inputs becomes vital," he said.

The PS said the government is currently working round the clock to contain the challenge of shortage of improved seed challenging experts at ASA to work tirelessly in cooperation with their counterparts from the private sector in order to ensure that farmers

are supplied with enough seeds for all the crops.

"The country's development greatly relies in this sector. It is high time you work hard and more vigilant to ensure further develop the sector," he insisted.

Kusaya also launched two new tractors, made Valtra from Brazil with HP 95 capacity which associates implements such as plough, planters and boom sprayers.

ASA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Sophia Kashenge, extended her sincerely gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance for listening and timely respond to

their challenges.

She said the two tractors make a total of five new tractors with 95 to 125 HP Capacity bought within two years.

"We have seen some positive performance and responses from our farm supervisors, the work has become easier because back in 2017/18 we had few and old tractors that we used in three different farms located in three regions. We are now aiming to have tractors in each farm," she explained.

Kasenge added: "We have also increased the number of farms to eleven. The agency is in a process of renovating some of the old tractors while looking for more funds to purchase more tractors."

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Masatu kutoka
Arusha



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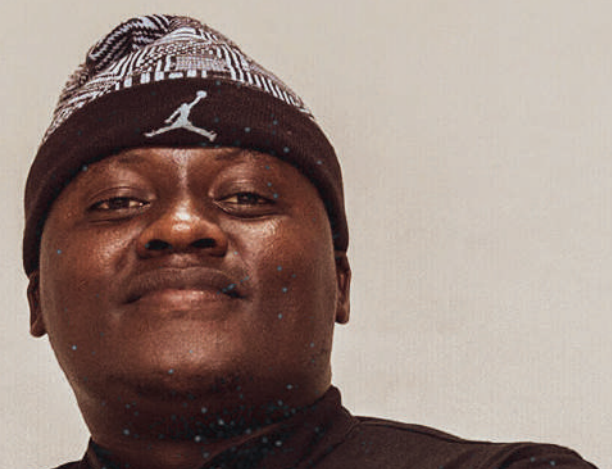
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Chemba and Kondoa residents relieved of years of water woes

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

A CROSS Section of villagers in Chemba and Kondoa districts may now have a reason to smile after starting to obtain the precious liquid, thanks to the ambitious projects currently being undertaken by Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA).

RUWASA is implementing three separate projects in Chemba and Kondoa districts of Dodoma Region, which include the Ntomoko Water Project and water project at Mapango Village as well as Tumbelo water project in Kondoa district.

Recently, RUWASA officials made a working tour to inspect the three projects, where it came to a limelight that the Ntomoko water project which was on standstill for long time had started yielding positive results as residents started getting clean water.

At Kinkima village, Chemba district, residents were seen queuing in large numbers fetching water as they paid their tributes to the government for implementing a project that had stalled for many years.

According to Chemba District acting RUWASA Manager, Engineer Robert Maganga, the project had started in 1970s but it later stalled.

However, on February last year, RUWASA signed a new contract with a Chinese Company, China Railway Seventh

Group (CRSG) to implement the project at a contract price of 2.2bn/-, according to Eng Maganga.

"Currently the project is on pilot and we believe that after completion the project will benefit three villages in Chemba and Kondoa districts respectively, he said.

"We were walking long distances to seek for the life-living liquid but now we thank the government that we can have water, even if it just comes out after every one or two weeks," said Amina Salum, a resident of Kinkima village.

A survey by The Guardian in the village witnessed long queues at different centres with water pumps as residents scrambled for the precious liquid.

"Old women who come here to fetch water face a difficult time as they are pushed by the young men and women so we request that the authorities put up proper measures so that they don't get disturbances," said Zainab Ahmed a resident of Kinkima village.

However, Kinkima Village Executive Officer, Shafii Mungu said that after RUWASA hands over the completed project to the village authorities, proper arrangements would be made to have them receive the service without any chaos.

According to Eng Maganga, Plans were also afoot for the construction of a major Kisangaji dam in Kondoa district which will help to supply water to 17 villages of both districts.



Work at the site of suburban Dar es Salaam's long-stalled Mbezi Luis bus terminal project in progress, as found earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

More Lake, western zone girls 'opting' for science subjects

By Felister Peter, recently in Mwanza

PARTICIPATION of girls in learning science in secondary schools within Lake and Western zones is increasing following stakeholders' involvement in encouraging them to choose the subjects as well as changing their attitudes that arts subjects are simpler.

Through the More and Better Midwives for Rural Tanzania (MBM) project which was implemented by Jhpiego, the number of girls participating in learning science subjects in secondary schools in eight regions of Mwanza, Kagera, Mara, Simiyu, Shinyanga, Kigoma, Tabora, and

Geita has increased tremendously.

Through the just-ended five years project, secondary schools in the respective regions were assisted to introduce science clubs whereas science teachers were also capacitated. The clubs were meant to improve students' interest in science subjects.

The project trained 96 secondary school science teachers with a focus on nursing and midwifery career choice in order to sensitize girls to undertake science subjects as a prerequisite for a nursing course.

To attain its goal which includes ensuring that women

and children in rural and hard to reach areas of Tanzania have access to skilled midwives, the project gave scholarship to 112 nursing and midwifery students.

A total of 28,338 secondary school students have been reached by the project through its outreach activities.

Sarah Shaban, a Form Three student at Capri - Point secondary school in Mwanza acknowledge the MBM project insisting that it is through the established clubs, she was inspired to learn science subjects.

"Our club has a total of 15 students, among them, 9 are men and 6 boys. I would wish to become a pharmacist in future,"

said Sarah calling upon fellow secondary school students to go for science subjects since their not harder as some people think. Jesca Bavuna is a future nurse midwife from Capri - Point secondary school, she said: "When officials from the MBM project came to introduce the science club at our school, there were very few girls learning the subjects, but the number has now gone up."

Jesca added that through the MBM project that she has been able to develop interest in science subjects as well as a desire to become a nurse with specialization in dealing with pregnant mothers and ensure their safety

during childbirth.

"I was previously considering science subjects as the most difficult; through the project I was encourage to pursue them and I am now confident of passing the subjects in my national Form Four examinations next year," said the Form Three student.

Nurses and midwives account for nearly 50 percent of the global health workforce. Africa and South East Asia are said to have the largest needs of nurses and midwives.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the world will need an additional 9 million nurses and midwives

by the year 2030 to be able to attain the Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being.

Speaking during an event to mark the end of the project, Director of Preventive Services in the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Dr Leonard Subi commended the stakeholders' contribution in reducing child and maternal mortality in the country.

The number of maternal deaths has now dropped to 2,000 per year compared to 11,000 in 2015.

MBM Project Manager, Dr Julius Masanika said the project

has managed to reduce the nurse midwives staffing gap in Lake and western zones from 54 percent in 2016 to 41 percent.

The project was funded by the government of Canada through the Global Affairs Canada to a tune of 10 million Canadian Dollars (over 16bn/-).

It was implemented by Jhpiego in partnership with Amref health Africa, Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) and Tanzania Midwives Association (TAMA). It covered 20 health training institutions and 19 in-service training clinical practice sites in 19 districts within targeted eight regions.

Ex-political parties registrar urges NEC to work for free, fair elections

By Correspondent Enock Charles

FORMER registrar of political parties, John Tendwa has urged the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to demonstrate integrity and stand for justice of all parties so as to ensure a free, fair and transparent election, come October 28, 2020.

Addressing participants at the meeting organised by the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) in Dar es Salaam, Tendwa urged the electoral body to be fair and ensure that candidates reap what they truly deserve.

He said that the meaning of democracy during general elections is to let people choose their own best without being interfered by anything.

Tendwa urged NEC to ensure that it supervises this year's election as per the county's constitution, regulations and all-important guidelines so as to provide room for citizens to freely vote for leaders of their choices but also enable political parties to have equal opportunity for self-

promotion.

"The Commission should avoid decisions that favour a single party but rather maintain equality throughout the election period. Every decision which the commission takes should not intend to suppress opposition parties," Tendwa said.

The former registrar further urged journalists to uphold professionalism and make sure that they get reliable information before disseminating to the public.

He further called upon the citizens not to hesitate to participate in the election campaigns so as to listen to the candidates' policies and priorities and thus make wise choices.

Tendwa's statement has come at the time where some candidates including the Presidential aspirants face various challenges including being banned from conducting election campaigns.

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) had announced August 16, 2020 as an official date for the political parties to start campaigns

for presidential, parliamentary and councillorship seats. The campaigns will end on October 27, 2020.

About 29 million Tanzanians have registered to vote in this year's election, compared to 23 million voters registered in 2015, according to NEC.



The Commission should avoid decisions that favour a single party but rather maintain equality throughout the election period. Every decision which the commission takes should not intend to suppress opposition parties



Dar students join fight against teenage pregnancies, early marriages, sextortion

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

SOME of the primary, secondary and university students in Dar es Salaam have pledged to team up in the fight against abuse, unwanted pregnancies and sextortion to attain their educational goals.

They were speaking recently in Dar es Salaam at a two-day forum organised by the Youth Forum for Women's Youth Activists (YFF) in collaboration with the Tanzania Gender Network (TGNP). The forum was meant to empower school girls with better skills on gender-based violence (GBV) in their localities.

Girls claimed that although they have the potential to achieve much and contribute to

the nation's development, they cannot achieve their full potentials due to GBV, which are in different forms—physical, mental, social or economic abuse against a person because of that person's gender and includes violence that may result in physical, sexual or psychological harm and suffering to the victim.

Happiness Mbise from Ardhi University said that to address the problem, there should be deliberate efforts by stakeholders, parents and the government to provide reproductive health education in schools.

She also suggested for the forum leaders to organise a series of meetings in every region so as to educate the girls on the impact of child marriage.

"We shouldn't leave this matter to the government alone, we must come together and discuss the matter as a national agenda," she said.

Hanifa Pinto from the University of Dar es Salaam said that sexual corruption still exists in universities and work places. She advised girls to be bold enough to win the war against such kinds of abuses.

Zawadi Kondo, also a student at the University of Dar es Salaam called upon fellow students in second and third years to assist newcomers so that they don't fall in the same trap.

There are a number of factors contributing to early pregnancies and child marriage which includes lack of education and accurate information on reproductive health.

Saada Shifta is a teacher at Kipunguni Primary School who observed that some of the GBV issues are caused by poor parenting at home.

She said: "As teachers, we meet with a number of challenges which are related to GBV and some of them are related to poor parenting at home. "We're encouraging parents to play their role on this matter if we're to stop GBV."

Director of the Binti Salha Foundation—a civil society organization dedicated to the rights of education and child health Salha Azaz urged leaders of the forum to ensure they actively participate in the fight and the provision of adequate reproductive health education in the community.

Chairman of the Tanzania Youth Agenda Institute, Rogers Fungo, urged the youth to work tirelessly so that they attain their life dreams.

The forum was developed by the Tanzania Gender Network (TGNP), whereas the Programme Officer, Florah Ndaba urged youth in the country to be part of the fight.

"I encourage youth from all walks of life, schools and colleges to aspire and be part of YFF. The forum is open to all young women in Tanzania," said Florah.

She called upon youth organizations to cooperate with members of the forum in various decision-making meetings including international forums to join forces in defending the young girls.

UNAIDS, Reckitt Benckiser donate hygiene packs to networks of people living with HIV

By Getrude Mbago

THE United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and Reckitt Benckiser Group plc (RB) yesterday handed over hygiene equipment worth 435m/- to support networks of people living with HIV/AIDS in the country.

The support which consists of 10,000 packs of dettol soap and Jik surface cleaners were handed over to the National Council of People living with HIV and AIDS (NACOPHA), the Tanzania Network of Women living with HIV and the Network of Young People living with HIV (NYP+).

Speaking during the hand-

ing over event in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Sachin Varma, Country Manager for RB, East Africa said that the initiative to donate the hygiene packs is part of the company's "Fight for Access Fund" project which aims to improve access to health, hygiene and nutrition for all.

"In an effort to increase access to infection prevention, we are inspired by our Fight to make access to high quality hygiene a right, not a privilege. By partnering with UNAIDS, we can reach groups of people who need access to our high-quality hygiene products the most. Brands like Jik play a critical role in promoting hygiene and surface disin-

fection," he said.

He said that the packs will be distributed in eight regions across Mainland Tanzania. Another 2000 packs will be distributed in Zanzibar by the Zanzibar Association of People living with HIV/AIDS (ZAPHA+).

"These hygiene packs we are donating will go a long way in helping these vulnerable sections of society to stay safe. Dettol has been in the forefront of prompting proper handwashing techniques and this has become even more prevalent now to prevent potential pathogens, including novel coronavirus, which spread through person to person contact," said Patrick

Mpaso, RB Country Manager, Tanzania.

NACOPHA Chairperson Leticia Mourice Kapela commended UNAIDS and RB for the support which is going to benefit thousands of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

"NACOPHA appreciates the initiatives and efforts of the government and partners in the successful response to Covid-19. We acknowledge the receipt of the hygiene kits and other preventive gears to our community. We urge all to follow prevention guidance from the Ministry of Health to prevent the new spread of Covid-19."

Kapela noted that many peo-

ple living with HIV in Tanzania belong to vulnerable groups without access to necessary resources and information to protect themselves from infectious agents, including coronavirus and other pathogens. These include people in remote locations, in underserved communities and in densely populated urban communities.

Dr Leo Zekeng, UNAIDS Country Director for Tanzania hinted on the note that although there is very limited evidence that people living with HIV are at an increased risk of acquiring coronavirus or of becoming more ill from it, many people living with HIV have other health condi-

tions which include Tuberculosis, heart disease or lung disease, which are known to make people susceptible to more severe Covid-19 disease.

"It is important that communities are empowered to take care of their health and that of others; that we put people at the center and leave no one behind," Dr Zekeng said.

UNAIDS encourages people living with HIV to take precautions to prevent COVID-19 and to reach out to their health-care providers to ensure they have adequate stocks of essential medicines. This includes following World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines of washing

and/or sanitising hands, practicing social distancing, and seeking health care if one is ill.

Joan Chamungu, Executive Director of the Tanzania Network of Women living with HIV/AIDS said: "Women and children living with HIV are always at risk. However, people with low immunity and whose immune systems have declined, appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill after contracting the pathogen. This includes people living with HIV who are not accessing ART services, PL-HIV with comorbidities (such as HIV/TB), and adults and children living with HIV who do not have suppressed viral load."

Public sensitised on the efficient use of water, sanitation and hygiene in schools

By Guardian Reporter, Kisarawe

A call has been made to Tanzanians to promote water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools as well as reminding pupils on the importance of hand washing.

Hand washing with clean water and soap for 20 seconds is one of the simplest and effective ways to prevent people from non-communicable diseases.

A charity organisation—WaterAid Tanzania on Thursday joined the international community in marking the Global Hand washing Day (GHWD) which is celebrated on every October 15 by partnering with Kisarawe District in Coast Region to spread the word on the importance of hand washing.

The GHWD encourages action to promote and sustain hand washing habits.

Founded by the Global Hand washing Partnership in 2008, GHWD aims to help communities, advocates, and leaders spread the word about hand washing with clean water and soap while providing a platform for sustained action at a global, regional, and national level.

Themed 'Hand Hygiene for All' this year's GHWD is focusing on scaling up hand hygiene through increased a multi sector approach to partnerships, a stronger enabling environment, and robust supply and demand for hand hygiene facilities and supplies.

Interim Country Director, WaterAid Tanzania,

Anna Mzinga said: "To support hand washing, we have provided two hand washing facilities and 1000 boxes of liquid soaps to Chanzige A and Chanzige B primary schools in Kisarawe District. The benefits of hand washing with clean water and soap are for everyone, everywhere."

Mzinga said that although access to soap and water is just an important first step, but it complements the hygiene behaviour change and make it a long-term habit and norm.

She insisted the need for stakeholders to come together to support the government's efforts in improving sanitation and hygiene services to ensure that all citizens are able to practice the important hygiene behaviour.

"We have always been promoting hand washing with soap and water as part of our on-going water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions and hygiene behaviour change programming. We are now scaling up our efforts to improve hand washing with soap. This is the moment we all need to act together to change people's hygiene behaviours," she noted.

Mzinga said that the organisation will continue to support the government in its efforts to prevent the spread of non-communicable diseases and aims to sustain good hygiene behaviours through behaviour change campaigns conducted in partnership with 'Nyumba ni Choo' and Behaviour Change Ambassador Mrisho Mpoti.

Kisarawe District Administrative Secretary, Mwanana Uwesu commended WaterAid Tan-



National Council for Technical Education (Nacte) official Dr Geoffrey Oleke (C) briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam on Thursday on academic year 2020/2021 enrolments for diploma and degree studies in the institutions it oversees. He is with head of admissions Dr Twaha Twaha and head of teachers registration Yohana Matadi. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

zania for the support which she said would help to promote a hand washing habit among the students.

He said through donated facilities, pupils will frequently wash their hands, and thus protect themselves from diseases.

"A health pupil can attend to learning sessions in class every day; we really appreciate you for the hygiene education you have provided to our pupils," said Uwesu.

She however used the occasion to call upon Kisarawe residents to make sure they

fix hand washing facilities at their homes.

Acting District Education Officer (Primary), Salehe Segumba said the donated hand washing facilities will help in protecting pupils against a number of diseases.

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Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

Having poverty-free world is no big deal, given will-power

IN 2004, the former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev told world leaders: "We are all agreed that poverty is the key problem of our times."

He called it "a political problem" since the world had enough resources to solve it - if decisions to solve it were taken. "But the problem has not been solved. It's becoming more acute and political will is needed," Gorbachev told the World Political Forum.

Africa can pull itself out of poverty and become an information and communication technology centre. The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is an international observance celebrated each year on October 17 throughout the world.

In 1992, four years after Fr. Joseph Wresinski's death, the United Nations officially designated October 17 as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Born to immigrant parents, he grew up poverty and experienced social exclusion.

Fr. Joseph Wresinski established major landmarks throughout his life in the fight against the worst forms of poverty, in collaboration with the very poor themselves and other partners.

Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.

Poverty is not having enough material possessions or income for a person's basic needs. Poverty may include social, economic, and political elements.

Absolute poverty is the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter. On the other hand, relative poverty occurs when a person

cannot meet a minimum level of living standards, compared to others in the same time and place. For example, a person who cannot afford housing better than a small tent in an open field would be said to live in relative poverty if almost everyone else in that area lives in modern brick homes.

Many governments and non-governmental organisations try to reduce poverty by providing basic needs to people unable to earn a sufficient income.

These efforts can be hampered by constraints on government's ability to deliver services, such as corruption, tax avoidance, debt and loan conditionalities and by the brain drain of health care and educational professionals. Strategies of increasing income to make basic needs more affordable typically include welfare, economic freedoms and providing financial services.

Meanwhile, the poorest citizens of middle-income countries have largely failed to receive an adequate share of their countries' increased wealth.

Fundamentally, poverty is the inability of having choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society.

Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity.

Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life.

Africa can grow more cassava than it needs, so why is it not doing so?

THE United States African Development Foundation (USADF) is celebrating a decade of its Feed the Future campaign, which enables partner organisations to target the root causes of poverty and hunger. Its work has been focused on the most marginalised communities, where there are concentrations of poverty and hunger - with all the attendant social and health problems, including 'stunting', when children who are undernourished before their fifth birthdays will never be able to achieve their full mental or physical potential.

The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in collaboration with the Pennsylvania State University based in the United States of America USA, have launched Nuru (Swahili for Light), an artificial intelligence (AI), phone-based disease diagnostic application to tackle the challenge of diagnosing the plants being affected by viral diseases.

The technology recognises leaves damaged by the disease known as cassava mosaic disease (CMD), the cassava brown streak disease (CBSD) and by green and red mites. The cassava part of this app was developed here in Tanzania to control the cassava diseases, and since Tanzania is a country where cassava diseases are very important, it has been a focus country for efforts to popularize Nuru.

This has been done through working with farmers and extension staff in Mkuranga District, as well as training farmers, extensions and seed inspection officers in different parts of the country, as well as through demonstrations of the technology at NaneNane exhibitions.

The team has made many improvements in the performance and accuracy of NuruAI in detecting the diseases and pests. In this regard, NuruAI has been found to outperform trained extension officers in diagnosing cassava diseases.

NuruAI has been used to monitor cassava diseases in 19 African countries with Tanzania, Kenya, and Ivory Coast as hotspots.

An important feature of Nuru is that its advice section provides a link to the SeedTracker application through which farmers can identify the nearest source of healthy planting material of improved cassava varieties.

There are currently more than 400 cassava seed entrepreneurs in Tanzania who are part of this network, and this number is set to increase to more than 1,000 in the next few years.

Planting resistant varieties is the best way to control diseases of cassava, and Nuru and SeedTracker working together provide Tanzanian farmers with the tools to identify the diseases and access the resistant varieties to control them.

The efforts of the virus team are being complemented by the cassava breeding team that has been developing new, improved cassava varieties that are resistant to the viral diseases and are high-yielding and retain the traits treasured by their users such as taste, texture, and color.

In addition, the agronomy team is developing the best recommendations for growing cassava. These include identifying the best planting dates, fertilizer combination, and which crops to best intercrop.

With all these efforts in place, the cassava farming community is assured of flattening the cassava virus curve.

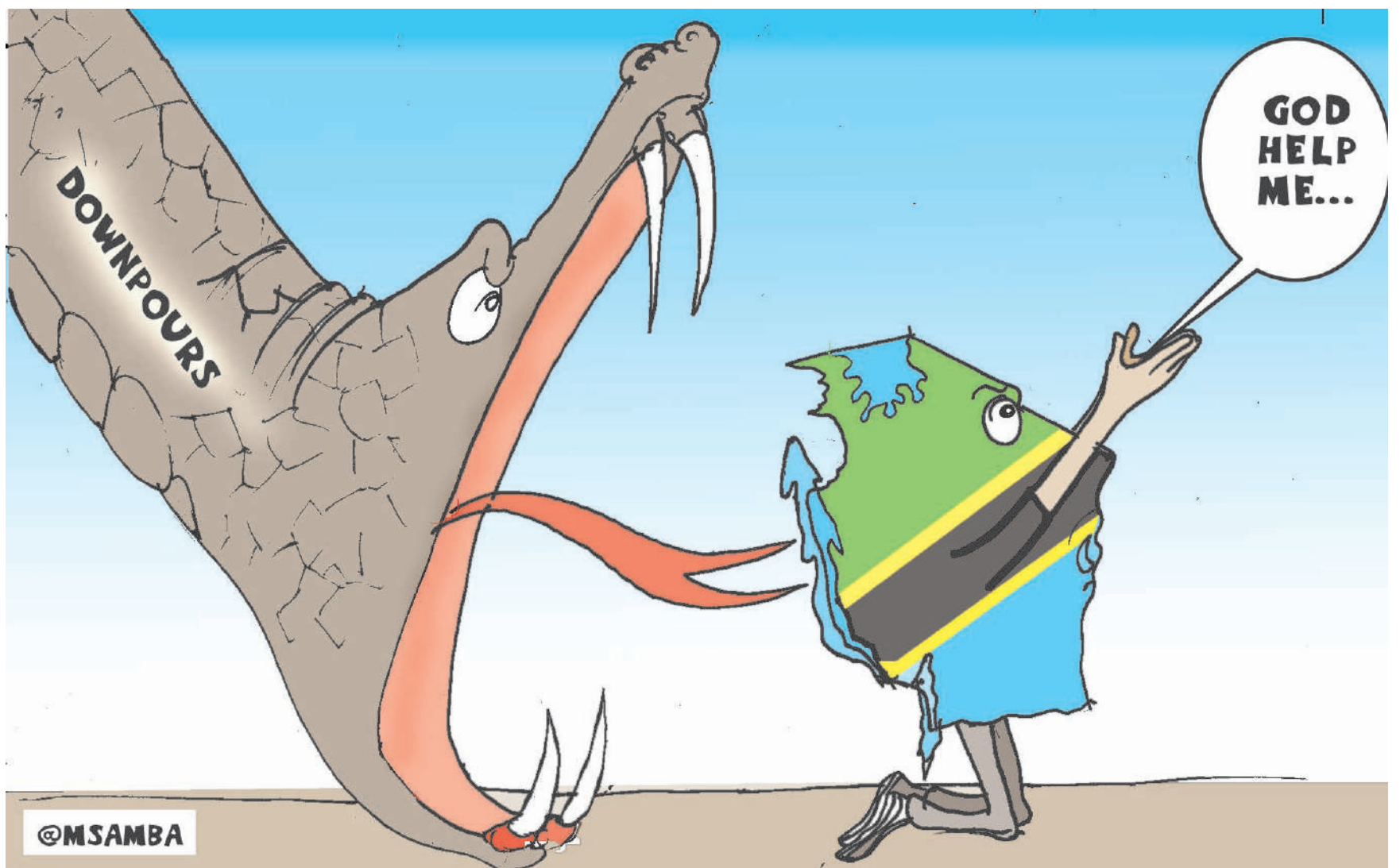
Researchers at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and their partners have been working on many angles to find innovative solutions to sustainably control the spread of the two major virus diseases, cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD), to save the crop and the food and income of millions of farmers in Africa and even in Asia.

Leading the efforts is James Legg, plant virologist at IITA-Tanzania, who recently shared the progress and successes of these efforts in a virtual seminar titled "Teams, Whiteflies, Viruses, and More" held at IITA Eastern Africa Hub, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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Nigeria at 60: Is the nation truly 'together'?

By Shola Oyeyipo, Tofe Ayeni, Nicholas Norbrook and Ruth Olurounbi

AS Nigeria gets set to mark her diamond jubilee as a political entity, the fact is not lost on anyone that at no time has the nation been this divided along ethnic and religious lines. The sideshow is the seeming controversy on whether or not the logo designed to mark the 60th independence anniversary of the nation was plagiarised. The main act is the message the logo was meant to portray and convey to a beleaguered people, who have had to face a constant exploitation of their fault lines by a rapacious political elite.

The message in the independence logo is: "60 Years Together". In the actual sense of the word, the nation has been together as one entity. Since independence, the nation has not broken up despite political and ethnic centrifugal forces pulling her from different angles.

What has contributed to this was the lopsided nature of the federation at independence. As at 1960, the nation had three regions: Western, Eastern and Northern Regions. While they were three in number, the sizes were so disproportional.

The North, in size, was twice the size of the other two put together. And when the three gladiators that were leaders of the ethnic groups that made the three regions were to form parties, they formed it along their ethnic and tribal lines.

For instance, Sir Ahmadu Bello formed the Northern People's Congress (NPC); the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo formed the Action Group (AG), while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe formed the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC).

The crisis that erupted after the general election of 1964 was what triggered the crisis in the Western Region, which claimed many lives and properties and ultimately led to the civil war of 1967 to 1970. Even before then, the Mid-Western Region was carved out of the Western Region. Many, till today, still feel if any region was to be divided into two, it was the Northern Region and not the Western Region.

Real or perceived, the thinking has been that of a federation where certain parts are favoured over the others. For instance, the Middle Belt has always insisted on having a distinct identity from the core north. They have always claimed that they are a separate political and ethnic entity and hence should not be classified as being part of the North.

Two major developments have tended to back this position. In 1976, with General Yakubu Gowon being toppled



via a military putsch a year before, there was a failed coup, which though claimed the life of General Murtala Mohammed on April 13, 1976.

Majority of those, who planned this coup were officers of the Middle Belt extraction, led by Colonel Buka Suka Dimka. The person that would have ultimately become the head of state was General Ilya Bisalla, who was executed alongside Dimka and many others in April 1976 for the role in the failed coup of the previous month.

In 1990, there was another failed coup led by Major Gideon Orka, also of the Middle Belt extraction. In fact, in their coup speech on Sunday April 22, 1990, they announced the ostracising of five core northern states of Sokoto, Kano, Borno, Kaduna and Katsina. Again, the coup failed but a statement had been made. While the election of June 12, 1993 was meant to further heal real or perceived ethnic wounds, the annulment of the election by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, threw the country into a political impasse that many still believe the nation has not recovered from.

Business mogul and multi-millionaire, MKO Abiola was on the cusp of victory before the annulment of the election. The crisis that followed was not mitigated until 1999, when the nation, for the first time, had two presidential candidates of the same ethnic stock - Olusegun Obasanjo and Oluwemi Falae. Obasanjo won and spent eight years.

Fast-forward to 2015, and retired General Muhammadu Buhari, after three failed attempts, finally made the Presidency ostensibly buoyed by the help he got from the highly sophisticated business and political elite as well as the intelligentsia of the Southern zone of the country. They gave Buhari massive push and also backed this up with

him winning in five of the six states of Southwest and other parts that make up the zone.

While many expected Buhari to rally the country together, reverse has been the case. No leader has mismanaged the nation's ethnic and religious diversity like Buhari since independence. From heavily lopsided appointments to treatment of the Fulani herdsmen crisis with very obvious kid's gloves, Buhari has even disappointed most of his loyal fans with the way he has gone about the business of governance.

Thus, as the nation is set to mark her 60th independence anniversary, there has never been any time call for a break-up has been this strident. Some elements in the West are clamouring for Oduduwa Republic and are even saying they would "declare" on October 1.

The call for the resuscitation of the defunct Biafra Republic has remained and is being championed by Nnamdi Kanu, self-styled self-determination campaigner, who has built very strong followership among young Igbo sons and daughters. Yet, all these might not have been necessary if there has been a conscious attempt to heal wounds and build bridges that unite.

This is why many would be wondering if indeed, the nation is truly "together" at 60?

Anyone imprudent enough to try to sum up the first 60 years of a nation and then project into the future had best start with a caveat: there are many Nigerias, both today and tomorrow.

Lagos State tomorrow could be the buttress of a West African corridor of prosperity stretching through Abidjan to Accra. Kano, once a great city of the north but now on its knees, gains hope

from its native son Aliko Dangote and his plans for agriculture.

The Niger Delta's challenges of oil production and pollution are not the challenges of the Middle Belt, with its herderfarmer clashes. So what do the experts think? In The Africa Report's 24 September digital event with vice-president Yemi Osinbajo - with an audience of CEOs, diplomats, analysts and concerned citizens - we offered three scenarios for Nigeria's trajectory: perilous, stumbling about in the middle, or on the right track.

Our audience of more than 600 participants in 79 countries - 250 logging in from Nigeria - split into rough thirds. Just 22% argued the country is on the right track, while 33% said the journey is perilous.

Let's take the happy pill first. No one denies the difficult history of the country, including a civil war from 1967 to 1970 that entrenched an ethno-nationalist split between north, west and south. This led to a period of northern-dominated military rule, culminating in the grotesque corruption and violence of dictator Sani Abacha in the 1990s. What came after, however, was a flowering of democracy and livelihoods. The fightback included historical figures such as the Ransome-Kuti family and Chief MKO Abiola.

President Olusegun Obasanjo's first post-military democratic government turned a page: debt writeoffs, the telecoms liberalisation, banking-sector consolidation and the birth of a class of entrepreneurs supported by a 'backward integration programme', which gave local players protection from global market forces in exchange for shifting from importing sugar and cement to producing it.

Bottom of Form
Yes, progress has been a jagged line, particularly in policy. The reformist Petroleum Industry Bill has been stuck for a decade, pushing oil production down nearly each year since 2010. But there have been some leaps forward. The Local Content Act of 2010 led to the growth of a serious domestic oil industry - Seplat and Oando are just two of a crop of indigenous energy companies, something that other African oil producers cannot match.

Another great obstacle - infrastructure last refreshed in the 1970s - is being addressed. Nigeria has also finally recently removed subsidies on petrol and caps on electricity tariffs. The first will save the country up to \$5bn according to Budget, a transparency NGO. The second is helping to keep lights on - "eye-wateringly expensive, but working 18 hours a day," says one resident of Lagos.

German foundation, YWCA sensitise Tandale adolescents on youth health, goals initiative

By Beatrice Philemon

As the world marked the International Day of the Girl Child 2020, both adolescent girls and boys are being advised to utilise adolescent-friendly health services in their residential localities to avert teenage pregnancies among girls, as it is one of the barriers to girls' education and a cause deaths for some of them.

In a bid to prevent teenage pregnancies as well as help both meet their dreams and enjoy their rights to education, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has embarked on a program aimed at encouraging adolescents to take up a six month programme, 'Our Health, Our Goals' program.

So far the program is being implemented by YWCA in Dar es Salaam with funding from the Arusha based branch of the German international development organization, Deutsche Stiftung-Weltbevölkerung (DSW).

The YWCA programme manager, Idda Swai outlined the programme at an event to mark the International Day of the Girl Child 2020 at Tandale health centre.

"Right now we are conducting an advocacy campaign to sensitize youths in all areas to go to nearby adolescent-friendly health centres to access training on friendly sexual and reproductive health. The idea is to avoid teenage pregnancies, get the right information from health experts and obtain advisory services that respond to their sexual and reproductive health needs and work to prevent potential deaths," she says

The event involved more than 100 adolescent girls and boys from Tandale ward, where the medical officer in-charge was present, as were the district reproductive and child health coordinator, the social development officer, the ward executive officer and ward chairman, along with other YWCA officials.

Through adolescent friendly health centres, they will be trained on how to prevent teenage pregnancy, life skills, effects of drugs use, family planning, the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy,

physical changes that normally occur in adolescence and other issues relating to sexual and reproductive health.

"We have decided to introduce this program after discovering that the majority of adolescent girls and boys are not aware about reproductive health matters, which in turn increases teenage pregnancy rates," she says

For her part, the district reproductive and child health coordinator, Edith Mboga told the gathered adolescents to use the skills acquired during the training, entice others to use adolescent friendly health services to avert teenage pregnancies.

They were tasked to be ambassadors to train friends and models to peers to learn from them so that they can meet their dreams.

She called on girls to make out visions to reach university level because educating a girl is to educate a family, society and a whole nation. Teenage pregnancies are not accepted, she emphasized.

"As we mark the International Day of the Girl Child 2020, it is important to remind young girls that no profession is exclusive for men. We encourage girls to study science subjects at school and even venture into technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses at university as an important vehicle towards having more women in such professions," she said

She expressed gratitude to President John Magufuli for introducing free education, urging girls to use this opportunity to study science subjects as by sending a girl to school, she is far more likely to ensure that her children also receive an education.

"Right now there are so many schools and education is free starting from primary to secondary level.

Please study hard and show people that girls can study like boys and have good performance in what they study."

"Furthermore, if you like school, make sure your health is good. Teenage pregnancy is not accepted and when you reach 14 years old, get vaccinated against cervical cancer," she further



Tandale local government chairman Khatibu Kibwana (R, standing) has a word with adolescent girls and boys on the effect of teenage pregnancies. This was at an event to mark International Day of the Girl Child held at Tandale health centre in Dar es Salaam at the weekend.

urged.

Despite that education is very important for every child whether a boy or a girl, some communities still discriminate against the education of the girl child.

Dar es Salaam region has 67 health centres where adolescents can access the right information and various health services, where 27 are government health centres.

"If adolescent girls along with boys will not get the right information at the right time, the girls will get diseases, fail to meet their dreams and teenage pregnancies will continue to rise," she said.

Medical officer in-charge Neema Nkya was happy to witness there were so many youths attending that event. "I hope you will continue to come to our health centre to get education on reproductive health and right health services free of charge," she observed.

Tandale adolescent girls and boys need to give their peers brochures that they were handed during the training, read the leaflet and visit in health centre for adolescent-friendly health services.

Social welfare officer Ainess Charles appealed to adolescent girls to make an effort to be aware of their rights especially when they encounter incidents of gender based violence.

YWCA in collaboration with the German foundation embarked on this initiative to help adolescent girls and remove obstacles to enjoying their rights to education.

"We call upon girls and women in Tandale ward to report gender-based violence if they encounter it to help them assert their rights," she says.

Right now rape, sexual harassment, fiscal and emotional violence are the leading GBV incidents for adolescent girls and women at Tandale ward, averaging between 40 and 70 percent of all reported cases to Tandale Health Centre and the police gender desk, she said

"The situation at Tandale ward for girls and women is not safe because for fiscal violence I normally get 10 cases per week, Emotional violence has five cases reported per week, while sexual harassment chalks up so many incidences resolved at family level or quashed by moves organized by family members," she stated.

For her part, the YWCA human resource and operations manager said that the NGO is working with the district council health management team in sensitizing youths to use health centres that offer adolescent-friendly health services.

"Friendly health services can play an important role in helping adolescent to stay healthy and complete their journey to educated adulthood," she says.

"We need to pay attention to the health of adolescents for this age group and giving them right information and services because can help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases," she added.

Tanzania, Kenya top East Africa in ATU contest on Covid-19-focused innovations

NAIROBI

TANZANIA'S Placidius Rwechungura has emerged among finalists of the ATU (African Telecommunications Union) Africa Innovation Challenge 2020. The 35-year-old topped the East Africa region alongside fellow contestant Abdinoor Yerrow from Kenya.

Rwechungura's innovation is an android App that allows farmers to get connected with each other as well as with experts. The platform is also critical for farmers to plan, monitor, analyse and manage all farm activities easily by enhancing networking - including with farm experts, farm input suppliers, markets and financial institutions.

Winning the top prize was North Africa's Mai Nagy, who will be taking home USD5000 for her innovation, a virtual science laboratory that allows students to conduct science experiments virtually. The innovation, she says, has been structured to respond to the fact of the Covid-19 pandemic having forced the shutdown of schools in many African countries.

"Today, students lose the benefit of carrying out experiments in school laboratories. Our innovation seeks to fill this gap," said Nagy, defending the initiative.

The competition was launched by ATU, a Nairobi-based specialised communications agency of the African Union, and is chiefly meant to identify and support young African innovators who have developed innovations useful for benefiting the fight to contain Covid-19 and possibly other emergency situations in Africa in the future.

The ATU believes that investments and commitments in ICT will be the fastest way to support economic growth and bring more Africans into the fast-growing Digital Economy.

The event's chief guest was Joseph Mucheru, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs. He expressed his approval for the competition's format and referred to ICT as an important driver for social and economic development, noting: "As an ICT community, we have chosen to be part of the solution at a time when the problem is too dominant."

His sentiments were underscored by a representative of the title sponsor, Huawei Group Vice President Tao Hou, who said: "If we can build more networks, digital skills and content, we can reduce inequality in Africa - enabling those in remote areas, or the disadvantaged, to access quality education and healthcare".

He called on local developers to come up with local solutions to local problems, highlighting Huawei's efforts on the continent with OpenLabs, Huawei Cloud and Huawei's AppGallery as tools at their disposal.

Hou also noted that Huawei is determined to enhance digital skills through initiatives such as the DigiTruck in Kenya and school-based programmes in Senegal and South Africa so that all Africans can benefit from these winning innovations.

Also awarded at the ceremony was Kenya's Abdinoor Yerrow, who bagged USD3000, and Cameroon's Bequerelle Matem Sap Mbou (USD1000).

Yerrow's submission, a mobile application designed to bridge the language barrier in learning, enables rural learners to access basic literacy and numeracy in their local dialects. The entry was awarded second position.

Mbou's entry, which came third, is an electronic kit that helps protect crops from damage caused by animals. It works by emitting ultrasound which is annoying for animals but is inaudible and without effect on humans.

ATU Secretary General John Omo, speaking at the forum, thanked the Challenge partners for their support and affirmed that the Union was keen to pursue cooperation with institutional investors, bilateral or multilateral providers of finance, and other sources to further support the competition's winners.

"Our aspiration is to be as helpful as possible in identifying, testing and highlighting innovative adaptation approaches with potential to be replicated and scaled," he said.

Other than title sponsor Huawei Technologies Company Limited, the Challenge attracted the partnership of Intel Corporation, GSM Association, the International Telecommunications Union and Egypt's Communications and Information Technology ministry.

Intel Corporation's Government and Policy Director for Africa, Dr Bienvenu Agbokponto Soglo, expressed Intel's desire to sustain its relationship with the Challenge winners beyond the award ceremony.



"Our shared experience in the recent months in combating Covid-19 has been extraordinary," he said, adding: "It is our conviction that enabling and accelerating access to digital infrastructure through extensive partnerships will support this fight." he said.

Dr Soglo was also the head of the evaluation committee. His sentiments were shared by Wadé Owojori, Director of the GSMA Innovation Fund.

The event also recognised the top two participants from each of the regions of Africa. Those awarded in this category include Yasmin El-deeb (Egypt), Kudakwashe Clinton Nyamhuka (Zimbabwe), Mouhamadou Lamine KEBE (Senegal), Tiisetso Masilo (Lesotho) and Olusegun

Globally, telecoms/ICTs have become a pillar in preparedness and response with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Adegun (Nigeria). Egypt's Communications and Information Technology, Amr Talaat, delivered a recorded speech. He agreed with his counterpart from Cameroon, Libom Li Likeng Minette, that it was of utmost importance for the winners "to build partnerships that will help realise accessibility of their innovations".

Germany defends curfews and travel bans amid outcry from businesses

By Jill Petzinger

HELGE Braun, the chief of staff at the chancellery in Berlin, has defended the government's decision to tighten restrictions again amid a surge in new coronavirus infections in Germany.

"We are now right at the beginning of a second wave," Braun told public broadcaster ARD.

He said that the government wants to keep the economy functioning and keep schools and kindergartens open, which is "why we have to be a little stricter where the chains of infection are primarily spreading - namely, celebrations and unfortunately also through travel."

He said that the ban on people from high-risk areas of Germany going to other states for vacations, and staying in hotels, is a "real emergency measure".

Germany recently saw new cases surge to over 4,000 a day on several days, mirroring tallies not seen since April.

According to Johns Hopkins University data, the country has had 326,309 cases and 9,626 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. But the government has warned that if measures to contain the rise are not implemented now, cases could quickly spiral upwards.

The decision by the majority of Germany's federal states to ban domestic travel from high-case areas, or force those from risk areas to provide a negative test and quarantine in hotels, has provoked an uproar in the hospitality industry.

Germany is on the cusp of a two-week autumn school holiday break, and hoteliers risk losing huge amounts of money from cancelled trips. The German Hotel and Restaurant Association said that it expects lawsuits to be filed any of these days against the ban on accommodation for travellers from risk areas.

"I assume that legal proceedings will be brought here in the next few days. Is the measure appropriate, necessary and also proportionate in the legal sense? If it is not, it is illegal,"



said the association's managing director Ingrid Hartges in an interview with Bild newspaper.

Berlin mayor Michael Müller meanwhile planned to raise the topic of the accommodation bans at a meeting

with Angela Merkel.

A number of Berlin bar owners have also filed a complaint against the city's new 11 p.m. curfew for bar and restaurant owners, claiming that it will kill their businesses.

The curfew was implemented after Berlin was declared a risk area, with more than 50 infections per 100,000 inhabitants over a seven-day period.

"The curfew could even worsen the situation since, if all bars, restaurants and clubs close at the same time, it could lead to crowds of people, who may then move in groups to non-licensed locations," said Lutz Leichsenring from the Berlin Club Commission.

"We need restrictions that enable economic activity instead of preventing it," said Clemens Fuest, president of Germany's Ifo economic institute.

The Ifo said that the increase in confirmed cases of coronavirus infections is also in part down to increased testing.

"The October figures cannot be compared directly with April's," Fuest said, adding: "The infection rate is indeed worsening, but not as much as a direct comparison of the new infections today and during the first wave suggests."

• Agencies

What we can learn from the most successful Covid-19 bubbles

By Erik Ofgang

FROM a local theatre group to the National Basketball Association (NBA) in the US, bubbles are increasingly proving to be an effective strategy for allowing the show to go on.

For instance, staff at the Berkshire Theatre Group desperately wanted the show to go on. Theatres across the globe began cancelling their productions in March but Alex James, the company manager of the rural Massachusetts theatre group, says she and her co-workers were determined to find a safe way to stage a show in the summer.

One of her colleagues came across a story about how Tyler Perry Studios planned on shooting four of its shows by creating a "Covid bubble". During production, each show's cast and crew would quarantine at the company's Atlanta studio complex, creating a protective pod that would hopefully ensure that people wouldn't catch Covid-19 and spread it.

This bubble idea appealed to the Berkshire Theatre team. "We thought that for a cast of a show that would be our best bet," James says.

Since March, various types of Covid bubbles have popped up across the globe. They have ranged from large - enclosing vast sections of countries - to small, two or three families teaming up and assuming each others' risk.

In Connecticut, an assisted living facility owner paid his staff to live at the facility from late March until the end of May in order to protect his older residents.

The NHL (US National Hockey League) and NBA (National Basketball Association) both resumed their seasons late in the summer by having players enter bubbles. The latter two bubbles have received significant praise for their apparent success.

NHL players and staff isolated within bubbles in Edmonton and Toronto, Canada, where cases of the virus are relatively low. The NBA's bubble was meanwhile established at Disney in Orlando, Florida - a state where the spread of the virus was rampant and thousands of people were being infected each day of the summer.

Even so, both sports bubbles have succeeded and the hockey and basketball leagues have avoided the positive coronavirus cases that have hampered athletes in the MLB (Major League Baseball) and the NFL (National Football League).

Many public health experts applaud bubbles as a way to resume some aspects of society even as cases surge. "For community institutions, there's a responsibility to strive for that bubble ideal as much as possible," says Stephen Kissler.

A research fellow in the department of immunology and infectious diseases at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, he says that when done right a bubble can be a boon socially: "We are still able to play sports, and we are still able to have plays and art."

The Berkshire Theatre Group designed its bubble strategy in conjunction with medical experts at Berkshire Health Systems, a nearby hospital and healthcare group, and the Actors' Equity Association, a union representing more than 51,000 actors and stage managers.

Thanks to these efforts, the group's production of *Godspell* was the first musical in the US since Covid-19 entered the country to be approved by the Actors' Equity Association. The production ran from August 7 to September 20 at the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Throughout rehearsals and the show's run, cast members lived together in a former bed and breakfast facility owned by the theatre company. They remained mostly sequestered from the world, only interacting with each other and select theatre staff members who were also quarantining.

During shows, audience members had to wear masks and sat more than 25 feet away (because the performers were singing, Equity officials and Massachusetts health officials wanted extra distance).

Performers were allowed to get takeout and make essential trips to places such as the grocery store or pharmacy while masked, but they were not permitted to dine out or visit family and friends without socially distancing.

Of course, experts say these precautions and those employed within other bubbles limit - but do not eliminate - risk. "There's no bubble that's perfectly contained. There's always going to be some leak somewhere," Kissler says.

He elaborates: "People need to be fed. And so you need to have people who are bringing in food. There are always opportunities for transmission there. Making sure that those opportunities are as minimal as possible is really important."

To help address this, the NHL had categories for different people who entered the bubble. Players and team and league staff were labelled Category One and Two and lived within a fenced-off



secure zone.

Others were labelled Category Three and Four lived off-site and entered the secure area but had minimum interaction with players. These included hotel security, housekeeping staff and others.

Melissa Hawkins, an epidemiologist and director of the public health scholars programme at American University, says bubbles are a good risk reduction strategy that she likens to safe sex education versus abstinence education.

"The only way to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases or infections is to not have sex, we agree on that," she says, adding: "But abstinence-only approaches don't work."

The risk involved in bubbles is why frequent testing is a vital part of an effective bubble strategy. Those in the bubble at the Berkshire Theatre were tested three times a week. "We really got to know the people who did the test," James says.

Geographic bubbles

Canada's "Atlantic bubble" encapsulates four provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Though essential workers can cross into and out of the region, and people moving there can enter after appropriate quarantine, it is mostly closed to the outside world.

Though restrictive, the bubble was designed to enhance freedom within its boundaries, says Susan Kirkland. The head of public health and epidemiology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, she has lived within the bubble since it went into effect in July.

"The intent was that there could be movement and flow across all four provinces, and perhaps it would revive some of the economic activity because a large economic driver in the Atlantic region is tourism," Kirkland says.

She adds: "For the Atlantic residents, there are still some requirements. You might have to stop at borders and go through forms and checklists and things like that, but there's no requirement to quarantine."

So far the strategy has been a tremendous success. As recently as some two weeks ago, there were only six confirmed cases of the virus in the four provinces - less than one case per 100,000 people.

People continue to wear masks and to exercise caution, and life is far from normal within the bubble, but those who do venture into the world can do it with confidence that their chances of infection are low.

New Zealand is another large area with notable success in establishing a protective bubble from the virus and, as with that island country, Kirkland says geography has certainly played a role in the Atlantic bubble's feasibility.

She says that there are limited roads into the region, so setting up checkpoints is feasible: "It's not like the border between Canada and the US where there are hundreds and hundreds of entry points."

Luck and low-density population also helped. "We had the advantage of low infection to begin with," Kirkland says, adding: "We have a lot of rural communities. Our cities are large but not that large."

David M. Studdert, a professor at the Stanford University schools of law and medicine, says more than 20 US states have enacted interstate travel restrictions - but there are no checkpoints or roadblocks and little evidence of widespread enforcement of quarantine requirements.

Even with limited enforcement, these rules have encountered opposition. Kentucky's orders that everyone entering the state self-

quarantine for 14 days was suspended by one court, while in Maine an alliance of campground and restaurant owners have challenged the state's self-quarantine mandate for visitors.

"There is a constitutional right to travel interstate in the US. That's a pretty well-established freedom," says Studdert, who was the lead author of a recent *New England Journal of Medicine* perspective that examined how courts will handle challenges to state travel restrictions.

He elaborates: "In constitutional law, there are different levels of scrutiny that a court can apply. If they apply the most stringent level of scrutiny, what's often referred to as strict scrutiny, it's extremely hard for the government to win in that situation."

According to Studdert, in this instance, courts would normally apply strict scrutiny because it's a constitutional protection.

He warns, though: "But there's another body of law that says in public health crises governments, essentially, get a fairly free hand and you shouldn't apply that strict level of scrutiny."

Studdert says that beyond the law, for society it's "a social value question really, whether you would prefer to have your travel restricted, and then have more freedoms in other daily activities... Or whether you would prefer to have open borders, but yet need to really clamp down all across the country or a state or region?"

Though Studdert is of the view that bubbles can be a valuable strategy in these times, he says that it's not a bad thing that the US courts are scrutinising these rulings.

He notes: "It is one of those tools like so many tools of public health that if you wanted to use it as a pretext for something else, like keeping poor people out of your state, or restricting benefits, that would be easy to do."

As with so much about Covid-19, even effective geographical bubbles have their potential downsides. Kirkland notes that the low spread of Covid-19 within the Atlantic Bubble may be "a bit of a blessing and a curse. Because although we've prevented Covid it also means that virtually all of the population is at risk of getting Covid because they have not developed any immunity".

Kissler, from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, says a consensus has emerged among experts from history and models that for pandemic-causing respiratory illnesses, large-scale bubbles delay - but do not prevent - the virus from spreading.

"It just sort of pushes the epidemic down the road a little ways. And that's because it's so difficult to maintain those boundaries on that sort of scale," he says.

He adds that New Zealand has defied this history so far, and delaying the viruses spread is not without benefit: "By delaying an epidemic, you have more opportunities to

develop treatments and to institute other public health measures."

The smallest bubbles

On the opposite end of the bubble spectrum are the bubbles that two or more households form. These have also been dubbed quaranteams or pods.

Whatever you call them, Hawkins, from the American University, is a proponent. A mother of four, she says her family joined a pod with another family because of their mutual childcare needs and also so that children in both families could socialise. During the summer, the children spent most of their time outdoors but now the families alternate the houses hosting remote school days.

Some families have created bubbles with several different households, but Hawkins says that if too many people join the pod, you get a "leaky bubble".

Regardless of their size, bubbles are often only as strong as their weakest member - which is why everyone in them has to be on the same page, and trust and mutual accountability are vital.

"We are in constant communication," Hawkins says, adding that those who enter a bubble together need to be willing "to have difficult and challenging conversations".

Hawkins' family and her friend's family started their bubble in May and will continue it through the winter. "I think it's important to double down on our quaranteam, given that there are going to be fewer opportunities to be outside because of the cold weather," Hawkins says.

She adds: "It's also a good time to reevaluate and reassess the guidelines; the bubble was starting to get leaky this summer. Since there will be flu and other respiratory infections circulating this winter, along with the coronavirus, we will be relying on the shared guidelines of our quaranteam."

Trust is also what made the bubble for Berkshire Theatre Group's production of *Godspell* work. Isabel Jordan, a 21-year-old performer studying dramatic arts at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, was cast in the show after auditioning via Zoom.

Jordan reports that everyone involved was mindful that what they did could serve as a model for other theatres to return to the stage, and they took care to be safe for each other and for the theatre world in general.

"There wasn't any moment during this process that I thought someone was going to break the bubble," she says, adding: "I think artists have a deep care for one another and truly, truly want to look out for each other. I felt safe all the time."

• Report originally run in *Elemental*, a Medium publication on health and wellness. Erik Ofgang is co-author of "The Good Vices: From Beer to Sex, the Surprising Truth About What's Actually Good for You."

World Food Day: Call for concerted efforts to make Africa food secure

By Correspondent Emmanuel

Ntiringanya

AS the World Food Day 2020 is celebrated on October 16, 2020, about 821 million people in the world are hungry, of whom 256.1 million are in Africa, according to the 2019 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The same report indicates that Africa is the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment, as almost 20

percent of its 1.2 billion populations go hungry.

Given the problem, One Acre Fund-Tubura, an agricultural development organization serving more than 600,000 farmers- has been supporting farmers to increase their farm productivity, earn more income, and contribute to the achievement of food security for all.

One Acre Fund-TUBURA supplies financing and training to help smallholders grow their way out of hunger and build lasting pathways to prosperity.

Food security is a state in

which "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

According to WFP, 38.2 per cent of Rwandans continue to live below the poverty line and almost one fifth is food insecure. Levels of stunting among young children remain very high, at 35 per cent.

WFP says that Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, with 89 per cent of rural households practicing small-

scale farming.

However, poor rainfall, drought, floods and the limited amount of land that is suitable for agriculture, alongside pests and diseases, continue to pose risks to food security.

In line with addressing such issues, One Acre Fund-Tubura has been training farmers on erosion prevention and control.

"In partnership with the Rwanda Agriculture Board, we delivered trees to farmers for free. Trees are so important to deal with climate change and to protect our soil," indicated

Evariste Bagambiki, Communications Specialist at One Acre Fund-Tubura.

As an agricultural development organisation, One Acre Fund - Tubura supplies farmers with various quality inputs they need to grow more food and earn money.

It provides such farm inputs for voluntary purchase to farmers, delivered within walking distance of farmers' homes.

Because access to quality seeds and fertilisers has been a constraint for smallholder farmers, One Acre Fund - Tubura developed a system

whereby farmers get the fertilisers and seeds on credit, and they repay over the entire growing season.

"As farmers repay, we reinvest those funds back into Rwanda and into serving more farmers," Bagambiki said.

In line with ensuring a healthy diet, the Bagambiki observed that "at One Acre Fund, we believe that farmers also need to be healthy. Among the agricultural products, we provide farmers with vegetable seeds. We also provide fruit trees to ensure a healthy diet."

It also trains farmers on the

latest agricultural practices and how to sell any surplus harvest.

In addition, it offers other products on credit, like solar lights, which improve quality of life.

Although it is not the only input, low use of fertiliser is a key impediment to increased agricultural productivity and hence farm income in Africa, reiterated a 2018 study by African Fertilizer Financing Mechanism called "Promotion of Fertilizer Production, Cross-Border Trade and Consumption in Africa"

Report: Forests underrated as allies in curbing rural poverty

By Special Correspondent, Illinois

POVERTY is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Globally, one in 10 people lives on less than \$1.90 per day. If current trends continue, the World Food Programme predicts the number of hungry people will reach 840 million, or one ninth of the world's population, by 2030.

Poverty eradication has therefore found a place at the top of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

"End poverty in all its forms everywhere" is the first Goal of this Agenda, which is supported by all 193 UN member states. The international community is now stepping up efforts to achieve this goal, especially in response to the severe setback caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The zoonotic nature of the Covid-19 virus has also illustrated the urgency to reduce human pressure on nature.

One way to relieve this pressure and alleviate poverty is to recognize and further optimize the critical role of forests and trees as allies in the fight against poverty. In the long run, losing forests means losing this fight.

This is the central finding of a new global assessment report entitled, "Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and

Limitations." The report is the product of a two-year investigation by a global panel of experts, chaired by associate professor Daniel C. Miller of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Miller says, "Forests and trees are critical to the well-being of many of the world's poor people who have been able to harness the goods and services they provide to manage risk, especially in the face of crises. To secure and improve this important function, we need to adequately protect, manage and restore forests and to make forests and trees more central in policy decision-making."

The study consolidates available scientific evidence on the wide range of contributions forests and trees make to curbing poverty and on the effectiveness of diverse forest management policies, programs, technologies, and strategies. It does so based on an understanding of poverty not only in terms of money, but also as an obstacle that keeps people from attaining a certain level of well-being and participating fully in society.

"This global assessment comes at a critical time. More extreme weather events associated with climate change, widening inequality, and the spread of infectious diseases,



Women in Malawi commonly fetch and carry firewood, a basic resource in their daily lives

among others, are making an already insecure situation worse for the poor. It is therefore essential to review the role of forests in development in general, and in achieving poverty eradication, in particular," says Hiroto Mitsugi, Assistant Director-General, FAO, and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

The report concludes forests and trees can substantially im-

prove human well-being and curb global poverty, although these benefits are unevenly distributed.

In many forest and wildlife-rich countries in Africa, for example, timber and tourism are major contributors to national economic accounts, but the benefits may not accrue at the local level and, worse, local communities may bear the cost of these activities through environmental degrada-

tion and restricted access to protected areas.

The panel also finds forests and trees specifically contribute to the well-being of the poor as they face profound global changes, such as climate change and the spread of infectious diseases, including Covid-19. Forests and trees provide the most vulnerable with access to goods and services, helping the poor to cope with uncertainty and

even move out of poverty.

However, inadequate land use policies and programs place an unequal burden on the poor, prompting the panel to recommend tailored policy to fit specific contexts.

"Our global assessment examines a variety of policy and management measures implemented by governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector for their potential and limitations to alleviate poverty. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, we have found that some of the strongest evidence for poverty reduction comes from agroforestry systems, community forest management, ecotourism, and forest producer organisations, among others," Miller says.

The report launches online in a webinar format October 15 at 9 a.m. CT, two days ahead of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, one day ahead of World Food Day, and on the International Day of Rural Women. All these official days underscore the urgent need for action.

The Global Forest Experts Panel (GFEP) on Forests and Poverty, led by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), is an initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

Kagera RC warns health officers against involving in bribery

By Correspondent Mutayoba

Arbogast, Bukoba

KAGERA Regional health officer, Nelson Lumberi has warned ward health officers alleged to illegally demand and collect money from vulnerable people during health inspection visits.

Lumberi made the directive at Bilele primary school in Bukoba municipality during the commemoration of the Global Hand Washing Day. The day which is commemorated annually on October 15, is a global advocacy day dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding about the importance of hand washing

with soap as an effective and affordable way to prevent diseases and save lives.

"I have received several complaints from people with some of them saying that ward health officers have been commanding them to pay up to 10,000 to cover transport expenses for the officials, which is contrary to work-

ing ethics," he said.

According to him, the health officers have a responsibility to visit households and business centres to inspect toilets, dumps and other areas to make sure the environments are clean in efforts aimed to prevent diseases.

"These officers are not allowed to demand funds from the

citizens to cover their transport expenses because this is part of their job," he insisted.

Careen Respicus, Bukoba municipal assistant health officer urged all health workers to live up to their professional oaths; observe ethical rules when conducting their duties so as to deliver best services to the community.

The GHWD encourages action to promote and sustain hand washing habits.

Founded by the Global Hand Washing Partnership in 2008, GHWD aims to help communities, advocates, and leaders spread the word about hand washing with clean water and soap while providing a platform for sustained

action at a global, regional, and national level.

Themed 'Hand Hygiene for All' this year's GHWD is focusing on scaling up hand hygiene through increased a multi sector approach to partnerships, a stronger enabling environment, and robust supply and demand for hand hygiene facilities and supplies.

Turkey, Africa: Strong partners in post-pandemic times world

By Alen Lapan

WITH strong collaborations over the last decade, Turkey and African countries have used the last week's business forum to weigh in on ways to overcome the impediments to the bilateral ties due to the pandemic

The Turkey-Africa Economy and Business Forum last week was the latest example showcasing the value Turkey attaches to countries across the continent and its efforts to develop and deepen relations there.

This time the agenda looked somewhat different as the two sides met to discuss the course of their relations during and after the coronavirus pandemic.

"We organized the Turkey-Africa Economy and Business Forum to evaluate the opportunities to do business in Africa during and after the pandemic, reach new markets and potential buyers, establish new commercial and investment partnerships and reach projects and financing tools," Berna Gözbaı, coordination chairperson of the Foreign Economic Relations Board's (DEİK) Turkey-Africa Business Councils, told Daily Sabah in an interview.

Gözbaı said the meetings discussed new areas of partnership to further develop mutually beneficial economic

relations.

She highlighted that the attendees held negotiations with-in different industries, including finance, health, technology, science, industrialization, infrastructure, investments and entrepreneurship.

During the two-day online event, public and private actors from Turkey and Africa discussed the impacts of the pandemic on two-way trade flows, discussed models necessary to manage businesses through the outbreak, strategies for reviving economies and finding solutions in a post-pandemic world.

The "Turkey-Africa: Strong Partners in Post-Pandemic World" forum, organized by DEİK, brought together high-level officials from the African countries, African Union (AU), African Development Bank, different private sector institutions, trade and industry chambers as well as company representatives and entrepreneurs.

In his speech at the event, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan encouraged both sides to not allow the negative aspects of the pandemic affect the strong momentum of relations.

Erdoğan said long-lasting efforts have enabled the trade volume with the continent, which stood at only \$5.4 billion (TL 42.4 billion) in 2003, to reach \$26.2 billion in 2019.

"We have to take it (trade volume) to over \$50 billion in a few years," he stressed.

Target markets

To reach the target set by the president, Gözbaı said they were consistently holding negotiations, meetings and business forums.

There has been no major disruption in activities despite the pandemic, she noted, stressing that they had brought together nearly 2,300 company representatives with over 1,000 African entrepreneurs in a virtual environment.

Countries such as Ethiopia, Morocco, South Africa and Kenya are among the 17 target countries set by the Turkish Trade Ministry for 2020-2021, she added.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania, are also among the 28 countries the ministry has identified as priority markets, Gözbaı said.

"As business councils, we will continue to pursue commercial diplomacy activities to improve our trade and investment relations."

The African continent has been holding a crucial place in Turkey's foreign policy, particularly since the early 2000s.

"Turkey's political and economic relations with the coun-



Container ships wait to load and offload goods in port during a 21-day nationwide lockdown aimed at limiting the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in Cape Town in this Reuters photo taken on April 17, 2020.

tries of the African continent have increased exponentially especially in the last 10 years with initiatives to increase inter-country awareness," Gözbaı said.

She cited several reasons contributing to this, including Turkey starting to operate diplomatic missions and trade consultants in almost every African country, flag carrier Turkish Airlines increasing destinations and the expansion of the state-run Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TIKA) network.

Gözbaı particularly stressed that President Erdoğan and the top management's correct reading and analysis of the rapidly growing global interest in Africa also holds an important share in this.

Turkey's Africa opening policy

The foundation of Turkey's Africa policy in the new Republic was set in 1998, during the time of then-Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, although historical ties date back to the Ottoman Empire.

The relationship took shape in 2005, which was declared the Year of Africa by Ankara and Turkey was accorded observer status by the AU the same year.

In a reciprocal move, the AU declared Turkey its strategic partner in 2008, and relations between Africa and Turkey gained momentum when the first Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit was held in Istanbul that year. Representatives from 50 African countries participated in the summit.

The Turkish government's priority to engage with Africa has helped facilitate the growth of business and trade relations. It came with a strong commitment that focused on direct aid, infrastructure and transportation projects, as well as mutually beneficial economic partnerships.

All this was backed by Ankara's strengthening of its diplomatic links to countries across Africa. It has come to a point where Turkey has increased the number of its embassies on the continent to 42 and commercial counselors to 26.

It enjoys free trade agreements with five African countries and agreements with 13 countries preventing double taxation.

The Turkish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular have started to invest as African markets have become more accessible.

The government has also used development aid to help facilitate commercial interactions. Turkey's image and presence have been enhanced by the engagement of private companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Turkish schools.

Increasing commercial cooperation

Turkish companies have been undertaking major projects across the continent and have had a critical role in overcoming the infrastructure and superstructure deficiencies in Africa.

"The absolute development of energy, infrastructure and transport is imperative for the existence of raw material resources and their delivery to all need markets. Our country entered the African continent, especially North African countries, many years ago with the contracting sector. Our country provides employment on the continent with investments, build-operate-transfer projects and increases commercial cooperation in all areas," Gözbaı said.

Erdoğan said the total value of projects undertaken by Turkish companies across Africa has reached approximately \$70 billion, adding the market value of Turkish investments across the continent has exceeded \$6 billion.

Besides, Turkey has helped to create a significant number of jobs in Africa, unlike some other countries that bring their own workers to the continent.

Even Erdoğan stressed the Turkish firms' contribution to generating local employment and production in the countries they are operating.

"Turkish investors, who meet most of their workforce needs locally, did not make the mistake of importing workers from abroad like many foreign companies. More than 100,000 African laborers have gained employment opportunities thanks to Turkish investors," he said.

Opportunities in gas sector can help revive Mozambique's relations with Germany

JOHANNESBURG

MOZAMBIQUE and Germany have a special relationship that was formalised when the then German Democratic Republic established diplomatic links with the then newly independent Republic of Mozambique in 1975.

Since then, a great many Mozambicans have been educated in Germany, while another 20,000 were employed in Germany as contract workers.

Since the 1980s, Germany has spent more than USD 1 billion in development aid to Mozambique. This is doubtless laudable, but this relationship must evolve to change focus away from aid and towards investment - in response to the numerous opportunities in gas development and other sectors.

German companies need to invest in the development of new gas prospects, in the servicing of the existing developments, and in the building of a petrochemical sector in Mozambique.

Germany boasts a strong petrochemical industry that can take advantage of the opportunities in Mozambique with Africa's USD 1.2 billion population providing a ready market for such an industry.

This will ultimately lead to a win-win situation for both countries. It will not only help to generate economic growth but will also ensure the creation of decently paying jobs, skills developing apprenticeships and the transfer of technology to Mozambique.

Gas is fast establishing itself as a pivotal player in the global energy transition dynamics as nations seek to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other air pollutants.

The realisation that developed economies like Germany and fast-growing economies like China can only realistically meet their emission targets without forgoing economic prosperity by adopting gas as a major source of energy has put countries with large gas resources like Mozambique in the focus of investors.

The share of gas as a primary source of energy has been steadily growing since the 1990s, and this trend is expected to continue. In China, gas now accounts for over 7 per cent of primary energy use from about 1 per cent in 1990. In Germany, gas accounts for 27 per cent of primary energy use from about 15 per cent in 1990.

Germany's demand for gas is projected to con-



tinues its rapid growth as the country steadfastly continues to implement its in energy transition strategy known as the Energiewende as adopted in 2010. According to the plan, greenhouse gas emissions are expected to fall by at least 80 per cent in 2050 when compared to 1990.

Gas is currently Germany's second most important energy source after oil. The country imports nearly all of the gas it consumes - from Russia (40 per cent), Norway and the Netherlands with only 5 per cent sourced domestically.

Domestic production of gas is expected to run out within the next decade, setting Germany up for even more imports from outside. There is, therefore, a consensus in the country that even more gas resources must be secured from abroad to ensure the country's economic growth prospects are real-

ised. But plans to source more gas from Russia have earned the German government heavy criticism, including from Germany's American allies who see this as leading to an over-dependence on Russia and creating a potential national security threat to Germany.

Thus, diversifying Germany's sourcing of gas by embracing new producers like Mozambique presents an attractive proposition for Germany as a nation generally and German companies in particular.

Mozambique holds 100 trillion cubic feet of proved natural gas reserves, ranking 15th globally. However, the country is still largely underexplored.

As the government continues to encourage exploration, it is likely that the number and volume of proven reserves will increase in the coming years to rival those of more established

gas frontiers.

Oil Majors Total, ENI and Exxon are leading development efforts expected to initially cost a combined USD 30 billion. Committed off-takers include EDF of France, Tokyo gas of Japan and Centrica of the UK, all of which have committed to being off-takers for the next two decades.

Notable, however, is the absence of German companies either as operators or as major off-takers, this despite the fact that Germany is one of the world's largest gas importers.

"It is time for German companies to play a greater role in the development of Mozambican gas industry. Germany needs gas and, in exchange, our companies can provide investment capital, technical know-how, technology and education," says Sebastian Wagner, Executive Chairman of the German African Business Forum.

At the 'Compact with Africa' summit held in Berlin in November last year, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced the creation of a USD 1.1 billion investment fund. This fund and other institutions in Germany like the KfW development bank offer various instruments to ease German investments in Mozambique. However, there is an increasing realisation that such government initiatives to invest in Africa in general and in Mozambique in particular are best implemented by channelling the funds through private sector German and Mozambican companies.

In a recent online conference organised by the German African Business Forum, Chancellor Merkel's personal representative to Africa, Günter Nooke, called on German companies to take advantage of these opportunities.

Now more than ever, both countries must take the opportunities presented by the development of gas to strengthen their special bond.

Mozambique exports to Germany currently stand at USD 270 million yearly and are dominated by aluminium. This amounts to just 3 per cent of total exports.

According to African Energy Chamber senior vice president Verner Ayukegba, there is room for growth and a significant demand for German technology and investments in Mozambique.

"Mozambique is one of the most prized investment destinations in Africa at the moment. Mozambican companies are prepared to partner with their German counterparts to service the nascent gas industry," according to the AEC executive.

"We have a golden opportunity here to strengthen both countries' economies whilst at the same time making significant strides towards the reduction of greenhouse gases with the promotion of gas consumption to the detriment of heavier pollutants like coal," noted Ayukegba.

Agencies

Vitamin D for COVID-19: New study shows promise

By Markham Heid

THE study's findings were significant - "spectacular" even, in the words of at least one expert analyst.

A team of doctors at Reina Sofia University Hospital in Córdoba, Spain, split 76 newly admitted Covid-19 patients into two groups. One group got the standard treatment at the time, which included a cocktail of antibiotics and immunosuppressant drugs. The second got the same standard treatment - plus a drug designed to raise vitamin D levels in the blood.

Among the 26 hospitalised people who received standard care alone, fully half went on to the intensive care unit (ICU) because their disease had worsened. Two of them died.

However, among the 50 people who received the vitamin D treatment on top of standard care, only one person ended up in the ICU. None died.

In their study write-up, published this month (October) in the Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology,

the Spanish researchers explained that their experiment was a "pilot" study that requires follow-up work. But they also pointed out that theirs was not the first piece of evidence linking vitamin D to a reduced risk for severe respiratory infection - far from it.

"Vitamin D supports a range of inborn antiviral immune responses while simultaneously dampening down potentially harmful inflammatory responses," says Adrian Martineau, PhD, a clinical professor of respiratory infection and immunity at London's Queen Mary University.

Martineau was not involved with the Spanish study, but he has published several papers on vitamin D for the treatment and prevention of viral infections. In a 2017 research review, which appeared in the journal BMJ, he and his co-authors concluded that taking a daily or weekly vitamin D supplement is associated with a reduced risk for respiratory infection - especially among those who have low levels of the vitamin in their blood.

Martineau and others say it's very possible - though not yet confirmed - that a vitamin D supplement could provide a

measure of protection against SARS-CoV-2 and Covid-19.

Vitamin D and war on the coronavirus

Thanks in part to Martineau's work on vitamin D and respiratory infections, the "sunshine vitamin" - so called because the human body requires UV (ultraviolet) light to make it - has been the focus of Covid-19 research almost since the start of the pandemic.

During the spring, several groups identified apparent associations between low levels of vitamin D and increased Covid-19 risks. Since that time, others have replicated their work.

For a study published this September 17 in PLOS One, researchers found that a person's risk for a positive SARS-CoV-2 infection is "strongly and inversely" associated with blood levels of vitamin D.

Taken together, these findings suggest that adequate vitamin D levels may help prevent a SARS-CoV-2 infection and also keep infections that do occur from growing worse. The mechanisms that may explain vitamin D's benefits are numerous. For example, macrophages are helpful white blood cells that play a number of virus-clearing roles. "Vitamin D deficiency impairs the ability of macrophages to mature," says Petre Cristian Ilie, PhD, a Covid-19 investigator and research director at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the UK.

Ilie further explains that vitamin D may increase levels of certain cell enzymes that help repel the coronavirus.

There's also evidence that the presence of vitamin D may dampen elements of the immune system that are involved in the so-called cytokine storm that is associated with severe Covid-19. These are just a sampling of the many ways in which vitamin D may protect against SARS-CoV-2.

"Even before the coronavirus pandemic, I think there was good evidence to support taking vitamin D supplements," says Walter Willett, MD, a professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, Willett has been investigating the relationship between vitamin D and Covid-19. "The evidence that low vitamin D levels are a risk factor for severe Covid-19 is not definitive, but many lines of research suggest that this is likely," he says.

He points out that African Americans and other people of colour, owing to their elevated levels of melanin in the skin, require more sun exposure than lighter-skinned individuals to produce like amounts of vitamin D.

"We know from national surveys that Black people living in the US have about 17 times higher rates of severe vitamin D deficiency than White people," he says.

Black Americans have also experienced disproportionately high rates of severe Covid-19. While many other factors contribute to these inequalities - including differences in income, work and healthcare access - Willett says that it is "highly possible that low vitamin D levels can explain part of the huge disparities in severe Covid-19 infection".

Research from Europe has found that countries hit hardest by Covid-19 - such as Spain and Italy - have a higher prevalence of vitamin-D deficiency than countries with populations that tend to be sufficient in the vitamin.

It's also worth noting that the burden of deadly Covid-19 appeared to dip during the sunnier summer months in the US, the UK and elsewhere.

There are many plausible explanations for this drop that have nothing to do with vitamin D or sun exposure - including improved clinical management of the disease. But some researchers have speculated that populationwide increases in sun exposure during the summer, and consequently improved vitamin D status, may have contributed to the disease's apparent softening.

Not everyone is convinced

For all vitamin D's promise, some experts say that the sunshine vitamin may turn out to be fool's gold. "I'm as excited as anyone about vitamin D, but I'm not ready to jump on the bandwagon," says Mark Moyad, MD, the Jenkins/Pokempner director of preventive and alternative medicine at the University of Michigan Medical Centre.

Moyad is among the world's leading authorities on the risks and benefits of supplements. He reels off a number of potential confounders or complicating factors that could eventually squelch the current enthusiasm for vitamin D.

"As you gain weight, vitamin D goes down because it's sequestered in adipose tissue," he explains. He adds that, in fact, almost any disease that is associated with metabolic dysfunction or inflammation tends to drive down the blood's quantity of

vitamin D.

And so it's possible that low vitamin D is simply a marker of health issues - such as obesity and Type 2 diabetes - that are known to make Covid-19 worse, he says.

Similarly, some researchers have posited that vitamin D is an indicator of adequate sun exposure, which they say may provide a number of health benefits that are frequently misattributed to vitamin D.

Furthermore, Moyad points out that some researchers have failed to find correlations between low levels of vitamin D and an increased risk for Covid-19 - including among people of colour.

Even if it turns out that vitamin D plays a role in moderating some aspects of SARS-CoV-2 infection or disease, it's not a certainty that swallowing the vitamin as a supplement will do any good. "We've been trolled and teased before by these sorts of correlations, and we've paid the price," he says.

To illustrate his point, Moyad describes the decades of promising research that linked low vitamin D levels to bone weakness. But when, for a 2019 JAMA study, people took high daily doses of vitamin D for three years, their bones actually got weaker - not stronger.

While the known risks of taking moderate amounts of vitamin D as a supplement are minimal, the JAMA study's findings - as well as the findings of many other past vitamin studies - show that there can be unexpected and often unwanted consequences associated with supplement use.

For those who want to raise their vitamin D levels safely, Moyad says that the best way to do so doesn't involve a pill. "Eat right, stop smoking, get some exercise, get outside in the sun, lose weight," he says adding. "The healthier you are, the more your vitamin D levels will rise naturally."

For those dead set on taking a vitamin D supplement, he recommends taking no more than 600 to 800 IU per day, which is the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommended daily amount for children and adults.

Martineau - the London-based respiratory disease expert - offers similar advice. Based on some of his recent work, he says that daily doses of vitamin D in the 400 to 1,000 IU range appear to be safe and effective for the prevention of infections.

A report originally published in Element, a Medium publication about health and wellness. Markham Heid is a health and science writer.

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 145 00--

WORD-FIT

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

3 letters: NEO, EGO, ERA,
4 letters: TANA, SHOE, BOAR, IDEA, KINO, INLY, NUER,
5 letters: MKAPA, AMUSE, ANELE, NEATH, ABUSE, TETRA, EGAD, CREED, INURE
6 letters: KEEPER, INDICT, TYRIAN
7 letters: SULCATE, DUTEOUS,
8 letters: SUPERIOR,
10 letters: MWAI KIBAKI

CROSSWORD

1 deepest lake in Tanzania
2 a nitwit, jerk
3 First woman
4 cut up meat into very small pieces used as an affectionate form of address
5 the place where Adam and Eve lived
6 relating to or tending to arouse sexual desire
7 a deep, wide defensive ditch surrounding a castle typically filled with water
8 a navigational device in an aircraft or vehicle
9 core
10 salary

WORD-FIT SOLUTIONS

NEO, EGO, ERA, TANA, SHOE, BOAR, IDEA, KINO, INLY, NUER, MKAPA, AMUSE, ANELE, NEATH, ABUSE, TETRA, EGAD, CREED, INURE, KEEPER, INDICT, TYRIAN, SULCATE, DUTEOUS, SUPERIOR, MWAI KIBAKI

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

1 Tanganyika
2 idiot
3 Amelia Earhart
4 mince
5 Noah's Ark
6 seduce
7 moat
8 altimeter
9 nucleus
10 wage

BUSINESS

STUDY

COVID-19 risk may be lower for people with type O blood, recent research shows

COPENHAGEN

People with blood type O are less likely to become infected with Covid-19, the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, according to two new studies published in the journal *Blood Advances*. They are also at lower risk of severe Covid-19 outcomes, such as organ failure, and even death.

Scientists have been investigating a potential link between blood type and vulnerability to Covid-19 for many months, and this latest evidence supports previous findings.

A preprint study published in March this year suggested that people with blood type A have a higher risk of acquiring Covid-19 compared with non-A blood groups, while another study published in June found that blood type O seemed to be more resistant against Covid-19 infection.

First study: Denmark
In this study, researchers analysed data from a Danish health registry that included more than 473,000 patients who were infected with Covid-19 between 27 February 2020 and 30 July 2020. After controlling for certain factors, they found fewer patients with blood type O, compared with patients with blood types A, B, and AB.

The researchers also point out that they did not find any significant difference in rate of infection between A, B, and AB blood types. They also controlled for ethnicity, as blood group distributions differ among ethnic groups, and maintained that fewer people with blood type O tested positive for Covid-19.

"It is very important to consider the proper control group because blood type prevalence may vary considerably in different ethnic groups and

different countries," said study author Torben Barington, MD, of Odense University Hospital and the University of Southern Denmark.

"We have the advantage of a strong control group - Denmark is a small, ethnically homogenous country, with a public health system and a central registry for lab data - so our control is population-based, giving our findings a strong foundation."

Separate study: Canada
Researchers of this study found that Covid-19 patients with blood groups A and AB had an increased risk of severe clinical outcomes, compared to patients with blood groups O or B.

In this study, researchers investigated data from 95 critically ill, hospitalised Covid-19 patients in Vancouver, Canada, who were admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) between 1 March 2020 and 28 April 2020. A total of 38 patients had blood types A or AB, and 57 had blood types O or B.

They wrote that patients with blood groups A or AB were more likely to require mechanical ventilation (34, or 84%) versus those with blood group O or B (35, or 61%), which means that their risk of lung injury from Covid-19 was greater. More than this, the research team also found that more of these patients required dialysis for kidney failure.

The researchers also wrote that their study's findings are congruent with a recent study of 1,980 Covid-19 patients that also demonstrated a link between ABO blood type and disease severity. However, both studies' authors note several limitations that warrant consideration, and suggest further research to confirm these findings and enhance scientists' understanding of blood type association to Covid-19 severity.



Blood groups samples in test tubes.

COMPETITIVENESS

Africa's fashion business is using new and traditional methods to drive sustainability

LAGOS

While public health experts and pundits speculate over a possible second wave of Covid-19 and the frantic race to find a vaccine forges ahead, creative industries are forced to do what they do best - reinvent.

Local fashion industry insiders across Africa are exploring new sustainable solutions, and tapping into more traditional ones, that will enable them to stay afloat financially as well as protect the environment.

The biggest concerns over unethical practices in Africa's fashion landscape is the heavy dependence on imported garments and materials from Asia and the West which often contain traces of hazardous chemicals as well as the use of plastics and toxic chemical dyes that may include bleach or lye residues that could end up in natural or municipal water sources.

The global fashion industry has been harming the planet for decades. After the oil industry it's the world's worst polluter. It relies on water-intensive production, uses toxic dyes, and the extensive air-polluting travel associated with fashion shows also set bad records.

Leveraging its 22-year legacy as one of Africa's most prestigious fashion entities, South African Fashion Week is now branded as the "business of ethical fashion" under the vision of its founder and chief executive, Lucilla Boozyen, going digital to re-imagine fashion shows.

Instead of a traditional show where thousands of people are packed into a venue, fans can now watch the October show on SAFW's web platforms, which has a collective following of 600,000 social media users.

"It can be more economical to not have an audience - big runways with extensive lighting and good sound...



Nigerian fashion designer, Samson Soboye and his models at Berlin Fashion Week.

the costing around hiring or setting up a venue that can house so many guests is not sustainable," says Boozyen.

SAFW's next show scheduled for Oct. 22 to 24 will be a non-traditional, environmentally-friendly digital experience staged at the Mall of Africa in Midrand, Johannesburg. The show will use a fraction of the lighting typically used, smaller sound systems, smaller teams, and a minimum number of models which Boozyen said would reduce the event's carbon footprint.

At this stage it's still unclear whether Africa's other top shows will be in a position to execute traditional runway events this year with the uncertainties of the pandemic. Nigeria's Arise Fashion Week pushed back its event from April to October. Past editions brought celebrities like André Leon Talley and Naomi Campbell to Lagos. Glitz Africa Fashion Week will also hold in October in Accra, Ghana.

Organizers of Dakar Fashion Week and Kampala Fashion Week postponed their shows and have yet to announce new dates.

In April, Lagos Fashion Week rolled out "Woven Threads" across its social media platforms. The three-week digital presentation included photo slide shows, live talks, and workshops all organized under the supervision of founder Omoyemi Akerele, whose goal was to explore textile and traditional craftsmanship as a way to promote sustainable clothing production.

Anifa Mvuemba, the 29-year-old Congolese designer of Hanifa, received much acclaim for her Instagram Live virtual runway show in May that featured Clo3D-designed digital models. Show clips generated more than a million views and stirred dialog on how catwalks can adapt during and after the pandemic.

Made-to-order

Online fashion entrepreneurs are also thinking about sustainability. The UK-based online African fashion retailer Jendaya does not use plastic and has recently procured recyclable, reusable cardboard-like packaging material.

Banker-turned fashion entrepreneur, Ayotunde Rufai, says he supports African designers who work on a lighter scale to produce collections in smaller batches. "African designers have always practiced sustainability. African designers are more resourceful when using fabric. They're careful to minimize waste."

"Sustainability is a darling word now in the industry," Rufai said, "but African designers have always practiced sustainability. African designers are more resourceful when using fabric. They're careful to minimize waste. Made-to-order is more common and the African fashion market is not as seasonal as the mainstream Western market."

The mainstream industry which entails popular retailers and well-known brands pumps out more than 100 billion garments through mass wholesale manufacturing every year to keep up with the fashion seasons. It's a wasteful system known as "fast fashion" and millions of pounds of clothing gets discarded in landfills. In contrast, African fash-

ion designers tend to take a slower, more intentional approach through made-to-order business models which reduce the chance of surplus stock and is more economical for smaller companies.

Made-to-order is now recommended by environmentalists and business analysts as the future of sustainable fashion, though it has long been a tradition in Africa. "Africans are sustainable by necessity because they don't have the access to resources that Westerners have. So, they have consistently practiced sustainability methods whether they knew it or not," said Amira Rasool, founder of the New York-based online store and wholesale showroom known as The Folklore.

Homegrown industries

Another major proponent of eco-friendly, sustainable practices is prioritizing local production and sourcing which requires countries to have an ecosystem conducive to local business. But many homegrown fashion industries within Africa do not have the capacity to meet domestic demands for apparel and accessories. However, that was not always the case.

Some African countries once had large textile sectors. Nigeria had the largest with more than 180 textile mills. In 1945, Kenya had 75 textile and clothing establishments. The textile sector, peaking in 1984, became the second largest employer after the civil service with 52 operating mills for fabric and yarn production.

GREEN-BRANDS

Stella McCartney's eco-style legacy: 5 fashion brands putting environmental concerns first

ABU DHABI

Sustainability pioneer Stella McCartney earned her environmental chops in 2001, when she launched her eponymous label. The British designer committed to never using fur or leather, instead developing new and innovative alternatives.

Now, the label has solidified these ideals further, with its spring / summer 2021 show that closed Paris Fashion Week. Titled A-Z Manifesto, recycled and deadstock materials - such as off-cuts and surplus fabrics - were used to reaffirm the label's promise to be as ethical and sustainable as possible.

Championed by Generation Z and millennials, environmental issues and cruelty-free products have shot to the top of consumer wants, as shoppers increasingly demand brand transparency. With this sector expected to make up 60 per cent of all luxury spending within the next six years, brands are wisely sitting up and taking notice.

Having been widely lambasted when she launched her

label, McCartney is seemingly having the last laugh, as history proves she was on the right track all along. Now, as other brands scramble to align themselves with shifting consumer demands, we look at five labels rethinking the traditional fashion model.

Emergency Room

Since 2018, this Beirut label has been repurposing fabric, bedsheets and even curtains found in the markets around Lebanon into one-off unisex pieces. Founded with the aim of being an example "of how the fashion industry should actually be operating", it has streamlined its design process to offer a limited number of styles, designed to be worn by both genders.

Relying on the fabric to make each piece unique, antique lace bedsheets have been remade into loose kimonos, while children's duvet covers are turned into reusable face masks. Despite being one of the many labels affected by the Beirut blast, it is still committed to supporting NGOs throughout Lebanon.

The Giving Movement



Gucci has now launched a shop with re-sale company The RealReal to sell past season pieces and extend the life of each product.

Founded in Dubai during the height of the pandemic, this start-

up is built on an ethical, recycling model. Offering sports-inspired activewear, the fabrics have been designed from scratch to offer technical properties while staying as sustainable as possible, including hoodies made from fast-growing, water-efficient bamboo instead of cotton. In addition to reducing the carbon footprint of every garment it makes, for every purchase, The Giving Movement donates \$4 to certified charities.

Another Dubai company, Thaely is an all-vegan sneaker brand which uses only recycled plastic. The new label offers classic-looking shoes that are made using 15 plastic bags and 22 plastic bottles per sneaker - even the rubber sole is ethically sourced. Determined to never send a pair of its sneakers to landfill, shoes can be returned to the company, where they will be either properly recycled or refurbished and sent to deprived children in India to reuse.

Founded in 2017, British-

Bulgarian label Chopova Lowena has already bagged a coveted LVMH prize for its innovative approach to womenswear. Using only repurposed vintage cloth and deadstock fabrics, it creates startlingly original one-offs that are winning plaudits worldwide. Combining unusual elements such as metal eyelets, checked wool cloth and leather, the results offer clever solutions to breathing new purpose into materials that have been discarded as waste.

It is not often a multi-million dollar company boasts sustainable credentials, yet Italian luxury house Gucci has added another notch to its belt for its recent partnership with resale company The RealReal. Launching a shop filled with old season stock from Gucci consignment stores and redundant press samples, this marks a new way for the house to handle its old stock, redirecting it away from landfill and extending its life in the booming pre-worn market.

POWERHOUSE

Contemporary African photographers that are changing perceptions

ADDIS ABABA

Things have changed drastically since Malick Sidibé first gave us his unique portraits in the 1970s of local Malians wearing bellbottoms and boubous. The new

African photographers are using modern, digital methods to give their work a unique gravitas and vision. They are capturing striking images of everyday life that are being seen all over the world.

Kadara Enyeasi from Lagos became well-known for his striking black and white portraits from his Human Encounters series in 2014. He originally studied architecture, before turning

his talents to photography. His self-portraits are an intimate way of perceiving himself and interpreting the environment that he lives in. Recently Enyeasi's work has progressed into social documentary, with a

particular interest in the way people on the streets gesture and interact with one another. He feels that particularly in Lagos people put on more of a show, rather than being their natural selves. Enyeasi often takes

fashion commissions from brands in Ghana and Nigeria, juxtaposing colours and textures, and experimenting with silhouette.

Nadine Ijewere
Nadine Ijewere's photography work focuses

on diversity and the identity of the soul. She is heavily inspired by her Nigerian/Jamaican heritage trying to create a new standard of beauty. Whether she is shooting analogue or digital, the photos are beautifully

composed and thought out. It is important for a photographer to know the difference between analogue and digital, both in terms of technique but also choosing what is appropriate for the picture.

INNOVATION

At 280 rand a piece, shoppers can use H&M's new in-store recycling machine

JOHANNESBURG

After a Netflix Patriot Act episode hosted by Hasan Minhaj exposed the "ugly truth of fast fashion" and aired the dirty laundry of retail stores that practice greenwashing, it seems the industry is starting to clean up its act in more tangible ways.

Earlier this year - in what might be considered to have been heeding the call from this exposé to slow down their fast fashion production - the consistently on-trend store launched a collection of dreamy dresses made entirely from recycled or sustainably sourced material, such as organic cotton, Tencel or recycled polyester.

The collection featured pieces in blends made from at least 50 percent sustainably sourced materials, as H&M expressed that "it is a collection of dresses for today in materials made for tomorrow."

But even with such efforts, considering the fact that the secondhand clothing market has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, drop-off bins such as those of H&M's global garment collection drive (amongst others), are no longer sustainable. It was time then, for innovative measures in sustainability to be taken up a notch. Introducing... Loop.

H&M now offers customers in Sweden the possibility to transform unwanted individual garments into new fashion favourites - instead of donating them like old times - with the help of a new garment-to-garment recycling system they've named 'Loop' (yes, that's three 'o's).

H&M South Africa caveats that Loop is not a replacement for their garment collecting initiative, saying:



H&M's garment-to-garment recycling machine has been launched in Sweden.

"We are very proud of the work we are doing with our local partner Clothes to Good, a local social enterprise based in Pretoria that gives preloved fashion items a new life."

With regards to Loop, the international retailer says: "We are committed to closing the loop on fashion and this machine visualises to customers that old textiles hold a value and should never go to waste," the fashion brand states.

For 100 Swedish kronor (approximately R190), members of

H&M's loyalty club can use Loop to transform their old garment into a new favourite. For non-members the fee is 150 Swedish kronor (about R280), with all proceeds going to projects related to research on materials.

This machine recycles old clothes into brand new ones. Unveiled by clothing brand H&M, 'Loop' opened in H&M's Drottninggatan store in Stockholm on 12 October. Loop works by cleaning the garments and shredding them into fibres, then spinning that...

Loop opened to the public in one of H&M's Drottninggatan stores in Stockholm on 12 October 2020. This is the first time this garment-to-garment recycling system is shown in store by a fashion retailer, and H&M is proud to soon offer customers the opportunity to watch this container-sized machine recycle their old textiles into something new.

The Swedish retailer declares that this is part of a bigger plan, as their ambition is to become fully circular and climate positive, and

they are working on many exciting projects to reach this goal. "We must innovate materials and processes while inspiring customers to keep their garments in use for as long as possible," their media statement reads.

Pascal Brun, head of sustainability at H&M, says: "We are constantly exploring new technology and innovations to help transform the fashion industry as we are working to reduce the dependency on virgin resources. Getting customers on board is key to achieve real change and we are so excited to see what Loop will inspire."

Well-known for their Conscious range - an eco-friendly offering of seasonal styles - H&M continues to aim to lead the change towards a sustainable fashion industry, given that in 2013, they became the first fashion retailer with a global garment collecting program. By 2030, the retail giant aims for all its materials to be either recycled or sourced in a more sustainable way - a figure that for 2019 was at 57 percent.

So how does Loop work?

Loop uses a technique that disassembles and assembles old garments into new ones. The garments are cleaned, shredded into fibres and spun into new yarn, which is then knitted into new fashion finds.

Some sustainably-sourced virgin materials need to be added during the process, and they work to make this share as small as possible. The system uses no water and no chemicals, thus having a significantly lower environmental impact than when producing garments from scratch.

JUNK-MUNCHING

Lockdown: It's burgers, chicken top in markets

NAIROBI

Kenians consumed lots of fast foods during the Covid-19 related lockdowns, a new report shows. In the second edition of Jumia's Kenya Food Index Report, chicken was the most ordered food in the country in the period between March and August, followed by burgers and pizza. European cuisine was a distant fourth.

"Fast food category, the most popular, is growing due to affordable price, convenience and fast delivery. We also have a mix of good local and quick service restaurant brands present in the market," said Jumia Food Chief Commercial Officer Shreenal Ruparelia. The Jumia report further indicated that the spread of Covid-19 led to increase in online shopping, with most consumers making their first online purchases during this pandemic.

A jump of 30 percent of online consumers in Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya was witnessed during the lockdown period. The Jumia report highlights the rapidly changing consumer behaviour toward online channels and the shifts are likely to stick on the post-pandemic era.

"Kenya leads in internet penetration in Africa at 87 percent and with great smartphone adoption (84 percent Jumia Food orders from Mobile phone - Jumia Food App 65 percent). The youthful tech savvy population average has greatly aided in e-commerce adoption," said Ms Ruparelia.

Enhanced availability of popular vendors in the country have also played a big role in raising awareness about the convenience of online shopping platforms such as Jumia Food and its competitors Uber Eats, Glovo and Yum. Babanyama-Choma was the top popular local vendor (non-international brands) followed closely by Marita's Bhajias, Swahili Plate and Wok on Wheels on Jumia Food.

Players in the market continue to adopt various strategies to expand their fast food market share, increase profitability and remain competitive. The report was released during the ongoing Jumia October Food Festival. Nairobi tops the list of cities with most demand for online delivery followed by Casablanca (Morocco), Lagos (Nigeria) Kampala (Uganda) and Abidjan (Ivory Coast).

ENTERPRISING

Woman begins baking business after surviving COVID-19 and losing job



Zanele Ngcoko iced's cake.

CAPE TOWN

Zanele Ngcoko, also known as "Chef Zan" in Gugulethu, Cape Town, was diagnosed with Covid-19 in May after she had trouble breathing.

"I'd take five steps but it would feel like I'd taken like one hundred steps to get to the bathroom," she told News24. At the hospital, x-rays of her chest revealed that she had pneumonia in her lungs and she was sent to the Groote Schuur Hospital for a Covid-19 test.

"It felt like I was literally dying in that moment, you know, when they tell you because there are so many family friends that have passed on due to Covid," she said. She spent nine days recovering at an isolation facility set up at the Lagoon Beach Hotel and when she returned home, her employer, told her she would be retrenched. Ngcoko worked as a chef at a catering company.

She said she expected the news and because of this, came up with a back-up plan. "I knew that I will not be a burden to anyone, I will not struggle. I know people always want food. You know, people are born every day. There are birthdays every day," she said.

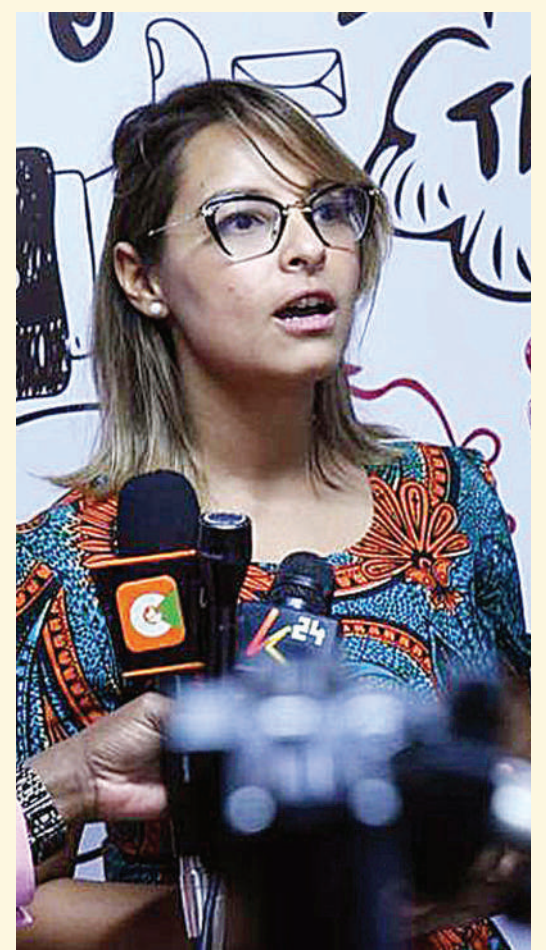
She started baking and selling cakes when she lost her catering job

in June. She baked a birthday cake for her eldest son and her family was so impressed they asked her to bake cakes for them too she said. She posted pictures of her cakes on Facebook and soon the orders were "rolling in."

Orders "The journey started there. I made a second cake. I made a third cake which was [for] my sister's 30th birthday and then orders started flowing in... since the 21st of June I think I've done about 60 to 70 cakes," she said. Ngcoko is dreaming even bigger and wants to open her own coffee shop and bakery in Gugulethu.

"There's no place that I know that has a coffee shop in Gugulethu... when you need to have a meeting, you need to take a taxi to town or Claremont," she said. Ngcoko says she knows her business is going to grow.

"When I reflect on the journey of Covid, it's life-changing. It's like getting a second chance in life... do whatever you aspire to do when you have a chance to do it," she said. In times of uncertainty you need journalism you can trust. For only R75 per month, you have access to a world of in-depth analyses, investigative journalism, top opinions and a range of features. Journalism strengthens democracy. Invest in the future today.



Jumia Food chief commercial officer Shreenal Ruparelia during the launch of Jumia Kenya Food Index 2020 on Thursday.

INVESTMENT

Clean energy startup EasySolar completes a \$5 million Series A financing

MONROVIA

Easy Solar, the West African energy startup just completed a US\$5 million Series A debt-equity round to scale its operations and launch new products across Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Easy Solar was founded in 2016, as an innovative distribution company that plans to integrate underserved communities to the national grid. The company hopes to make energy and financial services affordable to residents who

have limited access.

Thus far, Easy Solar has distributed energy to over 450,000 people creating 600 clean energy jobs with far-reaching distribution networks stretching to the last mile. The company provides a wide range of

energy solutions from small solar lighting lanterns to mobile charging stations. They also distribute pico solar home systems such as fans, TVs, and other systems designed for commercial, residential, and industrial centers.

Easy Solar plans to raise her stake in the region with the \$5 million Series A round that comprises a \$3 million equity investment from FMO, Acumen, Dutch entrepreneurial development bank, and a \$2 million debt facility from

TRINE.

The company plans to expand further into West Africa while delving deeper into the markets they currently operate in. They also intend to bring in more investors to the table and scale the C&I activities that

answer to the growing needs of farms, offices, factories, hospitals, and schools across West Africa.

FMO's venture programme manager Marieke Roestenberg detailed how off-grid companies deliver affordable, clean,

and reliable energy without investing in grid infrastructure. In a market like Sierra Leone with low electrification rates and limited clean energy alternatives, Easy Solar's business model is highly relevant.

WORLD

AMERICA'S CHOICE 2020: Trump and Biden attack each other in dueling town halls over coronavirus, other issues

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden held competing town halls at the same time on Thursday night via different TV networks, attacking each other over issues ranging from the pandemic response, the QAnon conspiracy theory to the Supreme Court expanding.

Answering questions from voters at the ABC town hall in Philadelphia, Biden slammed Trump for downplaying the threat of the coronavirus that has infected more than 8 million people and killed 216,000 in the country as of Thursday. "He (Trump) missed enormous opportunities and kept saying things that weren't true," said Biden, calling for a "national standard" to stop the spread of the virus.

"It is the presidential responsibility to lead," Biden stressed, referring to Trump's remarks earlier this year that "the governors can do what they need to do; not my responsibility."

The former vice president said if he

wins the White House, he would take a coronavirus vaccine if one became available and would urge governors and local officials to press their constituents to take it as well.

Trump, speaking at an outdoor town hall in Miami aired by NBC News, claimed that he and his administration "have done an amazing job" in combating the virus, sneering at Biden for spending months off the campaign trail as the pandemic went rampant.

"We're a winner," the president said. "We have done an amazing job. And it's rounding the corner. And we have the vaccines coming and we have the therapies coming." "Relative to the rest of the world we have the worst death rate," said moderator Savannah Guthrie. "I have things right here that will tell you exactly the opposite," Trump noted.

A new ensemble forecast published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday projects up to 240,000 COVID-19 deaths in the United States by Nov. 7.

The new cases per day are currently

on the rise in 44 states, while deaths per day climb in 30 states, NBC News reported on Thursday.

Trump, who tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 1, said at the town hall that he couldn't remember whether he had been tested for the coronavirus on Sept. 29, the day of the first presidential debate. He also refused to directly answer the question about whether he supported a "herd immunity" strategy to handle the pandemic, which would allow more people to be infected with the virus.

Trump also declined to denounce QAnon, a far-right conspiracy theory baselessly claiming Democrats are part of a global pedophile ring among various false accusations.

"I just don't know about QAnon," Trump said when Guthrie pressed him on his recent retweeting of a discredited claim by QAnon believers that former President Barack Obama had staged the killing of Osama bin Laden.

Asked whether he supported increasing the number of Supreme Court justices, Biden, for the first time in public, said he will have a clear stance on the issue before the Nov. 3 Election Day, while reiterating that he was "not a fan" of the concept.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said in his home state Kentucky on Thursday that the Senate Republicans had enough votes to confirm Trump's pick, Judge Amy Coney Barrett, to the high court before the Election Day, local media reported.

"I'm open to considering what happens from that point on," Biden said at the town hall. "Depending

on how they (the Republicans) handle this." Questioned by a voter about the "hypocrisy" of Republicans moving to confirm a Supreme Court nominee in an election year after refusing to do the same in 2016, Trump made the same argument Democrats made then: presidents are elected "for four years, not for three years."

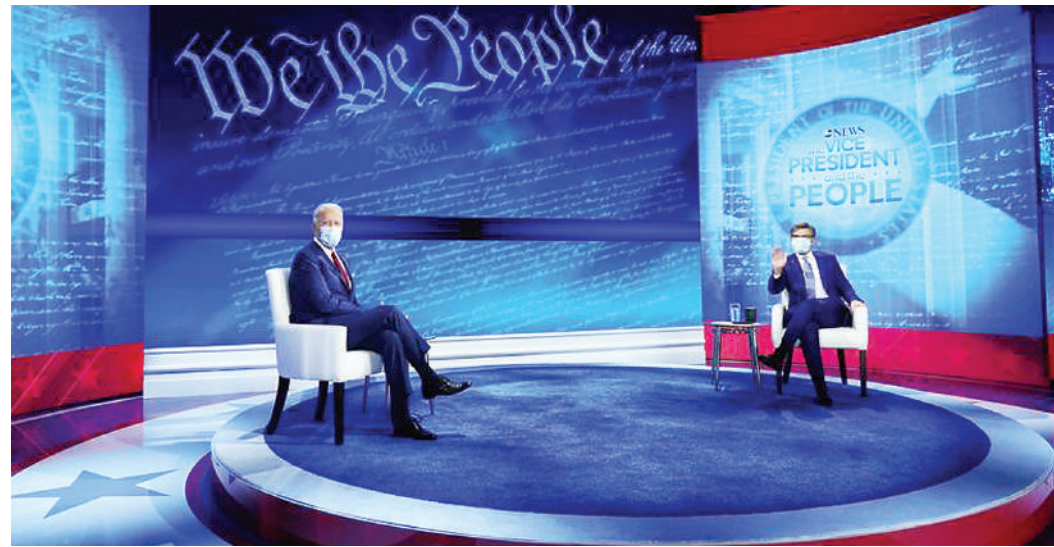
Trump nominated Barrett, a 48-year-old conservative federal appellate judge, last month to replace late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a leading liberal voice on the Supreme Court. The Senate confirmation would give the conservative wing a solid 6-3 advantage at the nation's highest court. Trump and Biden were originally scheduled to face off on Thursday in Miami at the now-canceled second presidential debate.

The Commission on Presidential Debates decided to stage the event virtually after Trump tested positive for coronavirus on Oct. 1, but Trump rejected the arrangement.

Trump is almost certain to score a higher Nielsen rating, an estimate of the total number of viewers for a particular television program, than Biden, since the president's town hall event will also air on NBC's sibling cable channels, MSNBC and CNBC, local media reported.

An analysis by the U.S. Elections Project found that at least 18.9 million people across the country have already voted in the 2020 general election as of Thursday night. A final debate is still scheduled for Oct. 22 in Nashville in the southern U.S. state of Tennessee.

Xinhua



US Democratic presidential candidate former Vice-President Joe Biden looks to media as he arrives to participate in a town hall with moderator ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, on Thursday. (AP)

Botswana citizen appointed as World Bank director

GABORONE

BOTSWANA'S Ministry of Finance and Economic Development said in a press release on Thursday that its former Secretary for Economic and Financial Policy Taufila Nyamadzabo has been appointed the new executive director of the World Bank Office for the African Group I Constituency.



The statement said the appointment is effective Nov. 1, 2020 to Oct. 31, 2022 and Nyamadzabo (pictured) will serve as the head of Secretariat for 22 English speaking African member countries of the World Bank Group based in Washington DC, USA.

In the two years preceding the appointment, Nyamadzabo served as alternate executive director. At the virtual meeting of the constituency held in the margins of the 2020 International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group annual meetings on Oct. 12, Botswana's Minister of Finance and Economic Development Thapelo Matsheka commended Nyamadzabo's wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated at both the international and national levels.

Matsheka expressed confidence that Nyamadzabo will act in the best interest of the constituency and adequately represent the aspirations and concerns of member countries at the World Bank Group boards.

Matsheka also expressed appreciation to other governors for entrusting a Botswana citizen with the responsibility of managing the affairs of more than 20 countries.

Xinhua

China's growth 'positive impulse' for world economy - IMF chief

WASHINGTON

CHINA'S growth amid the COVID-19 pandemic is a positive impulse for the world economy and could especially benefit commodity exporters and countries that are connected to the Chinese economy through global value chains, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Thursday.

The IMF's latest forecast for China's economy is based on the country's "decisive" measures to contain the pandemic and its "potent stimulus" for its economy, Georgieva said at a virtual press conference during the annual meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF.

In its latest World Economic Outlook report released on Tuesday, the IMF projected the global economy to contract sharply by 4.4 percent this year. Meanwhile, it projected China's economy to grow by 1.9 percent this year, 0.9 percentage point above its June forecast.

"When we look at the more disaggregated data, the manufacturing sector is doing better, whereas the services, especially contact services, are still more constrained," said the IMF chief.

Despite that, China's growth is "a positive impulse for the world economy," Georgieva said, noting that it is particularly important for countries that export metals and other commodities, as demand from China has been "a much needed relief," with commodity prices now going up.

China's growth is also important for countries that are connected to the Chinese economy through global value chains, as demand from China is an engine for growth there, she noted.

Additionally, China has joined the international efforts to develop vaccines, which is building global confidence to overcome the pandemic. "I cannot stress enough how important it is that boost the confidence that we together can get out of this crisis," said the IMF chief.

In an interview with Xinhua earlier this week, IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath said "the importance of multilateralism has never been greater."

"With this pandemic, unless we're able to control it everywhere in the world, nowhere in the world will be safe, and so countries have to work together," Gopinath said. Xinhua



IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva

Somalia, UN ink 5-year cooperation framework on peace, stability

MOGADISHU

SOMALIA and the UN on Thursday signed a new cooperation agreement which sets out how the country and the world body will work together over the next five years to achieve peace, stability and prosperity for all Somalis.

The new deal, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), outlines ways in which the UN intends to support government-owned and government-led priorities. "Since the signing of the UN Strategic

Framework in December 2017, Somalia has made remarkable progress in its journey towards consolidating peace and sustainable and inclusive development, with steadfast UN support," James Swan, UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia said in a joint statement.

Swan said the UNSDCF will replace a similar, previous agreement - the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) - which expires at the end of 2020.

The new framework's main pil-

lars of activity directly mirror those of Somalia's ninth National Development Plan (NDP-9), namely, inclusive politics and reconciliation, security and the rule of law, economic development, and social development.

Adam Abdelmoula, UN resident and humanitarian coordinator for Somalia said UNSDCF is an impressive achievement of collaboration across levels of the UN, government and other stakeholders. "It is through this Framework that the UN, with our partners, will further

strive to address the structural causes of chronic fragility and instability that have constrained inclusive and sustainable development in Somalia for decades," Abdelmoula said.

The UNSDCF represents the collective commitment of the government and the UN to work together in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect

the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone everywhere, and were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda, which sets out a 15-year plan to achieve the SDGs.

Mahdi Mohamed Guled, deputy prime minister said he will strengthen the government's partnership with the UN in order to address Somalia's complex challenges across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus.

Xinhua

European industry groups fear impact of Brexit 'brutal split'

LONDON

LEADERS of three major European business organizations issued a joint plea to European Union leaders to do all they can to agree a trade deal with the United Kingdom to come into force following the end of the Brexit transition period, or face up to what they called a "brutal split".

EU leaders met in Brussels on Thursday for their first major group discussions of the year on the current state of negotiations. With time running out for an agreement to be reached, and Britain having again moved a self-imposed deadline for one to be found, tensions are rising.

The presidents of Germany's BDI, Italy's Confindustria, and France's Medef said EU leaders should "explore all possible options to reach

a solution which ensures smooth trade conditions, while maintaining the conditions for fair competition between the Union and its British partner", while warning that failure to do so would bring about "cascading consequences" causing major trade problems.

One of the main areas of disagreement continues to be the access for fishing boats from EU nations to British territorial waters.

In August, ITV news reported the fishing industry made up just 0.1 percent of the UK economy, and in 2018 it employed around 12,000, just 0.04 percent of the UK workforce.

But Britain's negotiators have pushed it to the top of the agenda, with Europe showing little sign of wanting to modify its stance.

However, the Financial Times



quoted a senior German government official as saying "nothing is insoluble" and that there is room for maneuver on the side of Brussels. "Everyone realizes that if there's no deal, the Europeans' fishing quota in British waters will be zero," the official said.

"All the coastal countries in the EU realize that in future (their quota) will be less. (Prime Minister) Boris Johnson has said there will have to be a 'significant difference'. And

that allows us enough room for maneuver in our negotiations."

'Technically solvable'

The official added that the issue was "very sensitive politically, but technically it is solvable".

Critics of the Brexit process have been quick to remind its supporters of their previous confident claims. In April 2016, before the referendum took place, Michael Gove, who is now a senior Cabinet official,

said: "The day after we vote to leave, we hold all the cards and we can choose the path we want."

In January this year, shortly before Britain's formal departure, Johnson said he would celebrate it "in a way that I hope is respectful of the scale of the event, that does justice to the astonishing feat that Britain has accomplished".

On Wednesday Johnson had discussions with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, after which she tweeted: "Took stock of negotiations UK in a call with Boris Johnson, together with (European Council President) Charles Michel. The EU is working on a deal, but not at any price. Conditions must be right, on fisheries, level-playing field and governance. Still a lot of work ahead of us."

Agencies

Conspiracies pose threat to vaccination drives, experts say

LONDON

EXPERTS are warning that widespread belief in COVID-19 conspiracy theories could make vaccination campaigns less effective when treatments become available.

An international study led by Cambridge University psychologists and social scientists revealed that conspiracy theories linked to the pandemic are widespread, and that people who believe in such misinformation

might be less likely to get vaccinated against the novel coronavirus.

"Certain misinformation claims are consistently seen as reliable by substantial sections of the public," said Sander van der Linden, director of the Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab and co-author on the paper. "We find a clear link between believing coronavirus conspiracies and hesitancy around any future vaccine."

The study, which was pub-

lished this week in the journal Royal Society Open Science, surveyed 5,000 respondents in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, the United States, and Mexico to gauge public perceptions over the reliability of COVID-19 origin stories, some of which were not evidence-based.

In Mexico, 22 percent of respondents believed that the pandemic is "part of a plot to enforce global vaccination" along with 18 percent in Ireland, Spain and the US, and 13 percent in the UK.

The conspiracy theory that electromagnetic fields from 5G telecommunications towers make COVID-19 symptoms worse was also held by a sizable minority in each nation 16 percent in Mexico and Spain, 12 percent in Ireland, and 8 percent in both the UK and the US.

"As well as flagging false claims, governments and technology companies should explore ways to increase digital media literacy in the population," said van der Linden. "Otherwise, developing

a working vaccine might not be enough."

Reliability rate

The researchers asked participants to rate the reliability of COVID-19 conspiracy theories on a scale of one to seven. Respondents were also asked about their attitudes to a future COVID-19 vaccine.

The study found that, on average, an increase by one-seventh in perceived reliability of misinformation is associated with a

drop of 23 percent in the likelihood they will agree to get vaccinated.

Achieving and maintaining widespread immunity is vital to the eradication or control of disease. Depending on how infectious a disease is, herd immunity can only be achieved if between 50 and 90 percent of a population is immune through natural infection or vaccination, according to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The Cambridge researchers

called on governments to increase their efforts to confront the spread of misinformation surrounding the coronavirus.

Cambridge University has partnered with the UK government on the development of an online game to educate people about the pandemic.

Released this week on the web, Go Viral! drops users into the world of misinformation, and players must then expose the tactics used by malicious actors to spread false claims.

Macron's curfew evokes mixed reactions in France

PARIS

A CURFEW announced by French President Emmanuel Macron Wednesday evening evoked mixed reactions in France on Thursday, with some hailing it as a necessary measure to stem COVID-19 spread, others casting doubt on the efficiency and being worried about the economic fallout.

The curfew from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the great Paris region and eight big cities in France to be effective as of Friday midnight will last for at least four weeks, according to the president.

The situation is worrying and the curfew is a "pertinent" measure while having the whole country locked down again would be "disproportionate", Macron explained in a televised interview Wednesday evening.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Jean Castex said the government would seek parliament approval to prolong nightly curfew by two weeks until Dec. 1.

Some 12,000 police and gendarmes will be mobilized in the coming weeks to do the check every night in the concerned zones. Anyone who violates the curfew will be fined 135 euros (158 U.S. dollars) and repeat offender, after three times, risks six months in prison plus a 3,750-euro fine, according to the Ministry of Interior.

EXPERTS SPLIT ON CURFEW EFFECTIVENESS

While many applauded Macron's

move to introduce curfews in COVID-19 hotspots, some cast doubt on its efficiency, and others, especially hospitality and culture workers, were worried about economic losses. Jean-Francois Mattei, president of the National Academy of Medicine, believes a period of curfew is "necessary" to reduce the circulation of the virus before moving on to a normal life.

"The challenge we face is to confront this virus collectively. It was time to take such steps," he said. "When we take the example of French Guiana or Guadeloupe (overseas departments), which have experienced it before us, we can think that the consequences will also be positive."

In French Guiana, which borders Brazil, a curfew was imposed after it emerged from a lockdown on May 11. And data showed that both COVID-19 incidence and the number of patients in resuscitation units went down after the curfew.

But, Benjamin Davido, an expert in infectious disease, saw the other face of the coin. "I think the curfew is not the answer."

It would have been useful in summer when people went out a lot. But, today I can't see how by blocking the country (from 9 p.m.), we will reduce the circulation of the virus and the flow of patients in resuscitation," Davido said. "Contamination will continue throughout the day," he added, calling for reinforced test-trace strategy and better application of measures already



French President Emmanuel Macron

put in place.

ECONOMIC WORRIES

Speaking to LCI television, Professor Christian Brechot, a virologist, agreed that the new rule would "reduce the number of contacts" but warned that "it will be at a very heavy economic price."

The curfew means a fresh blow to culture and hospitality business as people will be only allowed to leave home after 9 p.m. for work, health emergencies, pre-booked journeys or walking pets, provided they can show relevant documents. "It is a measure

to close our establishments... It's what will happen. We're at the end of the line, we can't take it anymore," said Didier Chenet, president of the National Group of Independents, Hotel and Restaurant Industry (GNI).

Chenet noted that the area where the curfew is due to be in place represents 80 percent of turnover of hotels, cafes, bars, breweries and restaurants of the whole country.

"We are suffering from losses due to the successive closures and sanitary protocol that we apply. It is not with loans that we are going to repay and compensate them, it is economic nonsense," he said, noting that more than 10,000 companies are affected by a potential bankruptcy and more than 200,000 jobs are at stake.

In response to dismay of hospitality, catering, event industries, Minister of the Economy, Finance and the Recovery Bruno Le Maire pledged "to reinforce, simplify and expand once again" the solidarity fund set up by the government since the outbreak of the epidemic.

All companies with less than 50 employees in curfew zones and which have lost 50 percent of their business compared to 2019 will be benefit from aid of up to 500 euros (584.91 U.S. dollars).

In addition, all businesses to be closed during the curfew would be exempt from their social charge. Banks would postpone interest payments on state-guaranteed loans to struggling

activities to June 2021. "The new measures will cost about 1 billion euros over the duration of the curfew," Le Maire said.

PATIENCE NEEDED

Before the curfew, some extra restrictions have already been in place for nearly two weeks, which have forced closure of bars, pools and gyms. However, infections continue to climb rapidly. On Wednesday, France reported 22,591 new infections. It was the third time since last Friday that the daily case count exceeded 20,000. The cumulative number of infections rose to 779,063, Europe's second biggest tally after Spain, while deaths increased by 104 to 33,037.

Data released by health authorities showed additional 245 patients were admitted to hospitals, bringing the total to 9,194, of whom 1,673 needed to be put on ventilator.

As to the new extra restrictions, Health Minister Olivier Veran believes they are "necessary, temporary and effective." "It takes several weeks for a measure to be effective. Confinement has shown its effectiveness in several weeks, it needs patience," he added. During the national lockdown between March 17 and May 11, France saw its average of daily infections above 4,500 in the first half of April before going down to below 1,000 in May, figures show. (1 euro = 1.169 U.S. dollar)

Xinhua



Putin proposes to extend New START without preconditions for one year minimum

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin proposed to extend the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) for at least one year without any preconditions. He voiced this proposal during the Russian Security Council meeting yesterday.

"I have a proposal to extend the existing treaty without preconditions for one year, at least," the Russian leader said. "So that we could hold substantial talks on all parameters of the issues, regulated by treaties of this kind, so that we do not leave both our countries and all states of the world without such fundamental agreement as the New START," Putin underscored.

Putin has asked the Foreign Ministry to attempt to obtain from the US in the near future "some kind of a clear answer" on the prospects of renewing the New START treaty.

"Please, define our position to the American partners and in the near future attempt to receive from them some kind of a clear answer," Putin said.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty always performed its fundamental role of curbing the arms race, and its demise would be a tragic event, according to Putin.

"It would be extremely tragic, if the treaty ceases to exist, without being replaced with another fundamental document of this kind," the president said.

"For all these years, the New START worked, worked perfectly, performed its fundamental role of a limiter, curbing the arms race," the Russian leader noted.

Agencies

Russia approves second coronavirus vaccine

MOSCOW

RUSSIA has approved and registered the country's second coronavirus vaccine, President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday.

The peptide-based vaccine, named EpiVacCorona, was developed by the Vector Institute in Siberia, a former biological weapons research laboratory during the Soviet era, and completed early-stage human trials last month.

In addition to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Vector Institute is one of the two sites in the world that house smallpox stockpiles. The

institutes also hold samples of the Ebola virus.

"I would like to begin with pleasant news that the Novosibirsk-based Vector center has registered a second Russian coronavirus vaccine, EpiVacCorona," Putin said in a televised video conference with Cabinet members.

Putin said that Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova and the head of Russia's sanitary watchdog Rospotrebnadzor, Anna Popova, have both received the EpiVacCorona vaccine as part of clinical trials.

"As far as I know, we have a third candidate vaccine from the Chumakov center of the Russian Academy

of Sciences," Putin said.

Early trials on 100 volunteers were said to have been successful, Putin noted. "We need to increase production of our first and now our second vaccine," Putin said.

"First of all, we should supply the domestic market." Russia will also work with foreign partners to boost output, he said.

According to the Vector Institute, EpiVacCorona was registered before completing Phase III trials, two months after Putin announced the approval of Sputnik V, Russia's first coronavirus vaccine.

Sputnik V, based on an adenovirus vector, was also registered be-

fore Phase III trials.

Post-registration trials

Golikova told Putin that post-registration trials of EpiVacCorona will involve 40,000 volunteers across Russia. A large human trial of EpiVacCorona is likely to begin in November or December, the Tass news agency cited Rospotrebnadzor, which oversees the institute, as saying this month.

The trial is expected to involve 30,000 volunteers, of whom the first 5,000 will be residents of Siberia, according to the Interfax news agency. Nevertheless, Golikova said EpiVacCorona is safe and the first

60,000 doses will be produced "in the nearest future". She claimed to have no side effects after her injection.

The development comes as Putin seeks to play a leading role in battling the global pandemic that has hit Russia particularly hard. On Thursday, the Russian anti-coronavirus crisis center reported 13,754 new cases, and the capital Moscow added 3,942 cases from the previous day.

Since the start of the pandemic, Russia has recorded more than 1.35 million infections, the fourth most in the world behind the United States, India and Brazil. **Agencies**

To build a prosperous, clean and beautiful world

TO protect the Earth is a common responsibility of mankind. The global spread of COVID-19, which has severely impacted the world economy, is another reminder for us to contemplate our relations with Nature, calling on the world to promote green, inclusive and sustainable development.

"Humankind should launch a green revolution and move faster to create a green way of development and life, preserve the environment and make Mother Earth a better place for all." Chinese President Xi Jinping's remarks at the General Debate of the 75th Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has set a new benchmark for global ecological civilization.

Humankind can no longer afford to ignore the repeated warnings of Nature and go down the beaten path of extracting resources without investing in conservation, pursuing development at the expense of protection, and exploiting resources without restoration.

According to a global biodiversity report recently issued by the UN, the world has not yet achieved its goals of nature conservation set a decade ago, and the deteriorating environment is increasing the risk



Wild swans fly over the Kaidu River in Hejing county, Bayingolin Mongol autonomous prefecture, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Sept. 15. File photo

of disease transmission from animals to mankind.

Petteri Taalas, Secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization pointed out that greenhouse gas concentrations - which are already at their highest levels in 3 million years - have continued rising, and now 2016-2020 is set to be the warmest five-year period on record. Whilst many aspects of people's lives have been disrupted in 2020 by COVID-19, climate change has continued unabated, he added. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed to turn the recovery from the pandemic into a real opportunity to build a better future.

A civilization may thrive if its natural surroundings thrive. China,

with a sense of responsibility for human civilization, advocates for respecting, accommodating to and protecting nature, so as to find harmony between human beings and Nature, coordinate economic development and ecological conservation, and build a prosperous, clean and beautiful world. It is believed by the international society to be a remedy that addresses both the symptoms and root causes for global challenges such as global warming and deteriorating ecology.

China also holds that the world needs to increase the drive for building a beautiful world, build synergy for global governance on the environment, increase the potential for high-quality economic

recovery after COVID-19, and strengthen the power of action to tackle challenges to the environment. The world believes that China's proposals shall be taken as the goals, paths and principles for the construction of global ecological civilization.

China calls on all countries to pursue innovative, coordinated, green and open development for all, seize the historic opportunities presented by the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, achieve a green recovery of the world economy in the post-COVID era and thus create a powerful force driving sustainable development. Such important guidance demonstrates China's sense of responsibility to foster green development and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Natural environment shall be protected in the same way people would protect their own eyes, and green ways of working and living shall be encouraged.

This is a resolute decision of China, which bears the country's sincere aspiration for a harmonious world.

People's Daily

Japan to release Fukushima water into sea - Reports

TOKYO

NEARLY a decade after the Fukushima nuclear disaster, Japan's government has decided to release contaminated water from the destroyed plant into the sea, media reports said on Friday, with a formal announcement expected to be made later this month.

The decision is expected to rankle neighboring countries like South Korea, which has already stepped up radiation tests of food from Japan, and further devastate the fishing industry in Fukushima that has battled against such a move for years.

The disposal of contaminated water at the Fukushima Daiichi plant has been a longstanding problem for Japan as it proceeds with a decades-long decommissioning project. More than one million tonnes of contaminated water are currently stored in huge tanks at the facility.

The plant, run by Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc, suffered multiple nuclear meltdowns after a 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Yesterday, Japan's industry minister Hiroshi Kajiyama said no



decision had been made on the disposal of the water yet, but the government aims to make one quickly. "To prevent any delays in the decommissioning process, we need to make a decision quickly," he told a news conference.

He did not give any further details, including a time-frame.

The Asahi newspaper reported that any such release is expected to take at around two years to prepare, as the site's irradiated water first needs to pass through a filtration process before it can be further diluted with seawater and finally released into the ocean.

In 2018, Tokyo Electric apolo-

gized after admitting its filtration systems had not removed all dangerous material from the water, collected from the cooling pipes used to keep fuel cores from melting when the plant was crippled.

It has said it plans to remove all radioactive particles from the water except tritium, an isotope of hydrogen that is hard to separate and is considered to be relatively harmless.

Last week, Japanese fish industry representatives urged the government to not allow the release of contaminated water from the Fukushima plant into the sea, saying it would undo years of work to restore their reputation. **Agencies**

To steer reform, improvement of global governance in right direction

REFORMING and improving global governance is an issue of the times that the international community must address, as the world is undergoing major changes unseen in a century, and the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating such changes.

Protectionism is threatening global economy; unilateralism is undermining the current international order; and bullying practices is challenging the norms governing international relations. All these are endangering peace and development of the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the global governance system to the test, and at the same time exposed the problems of maladaptation and mismatch in the glob-

al governance system.

Out of a strong sense of responsibility to the future of mankind, Chinese President Xi Jinping summed up the enlightenment brought by COVID-19 and elaborated on China's ideas about reforming and improving global governance at the high-level meetings to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations (UN).

"We should stay true to multilateralism and safeguard the international system with the UN at its core. Global governance should be based on the principle of extensive consultation, joint cooperation and shared benefits so as to ensure that all countries enjoy equal rights and opportunities and follow the same rules," Xi said. "The global governance system should

adapt itself to evolving global political and economic dynamics, meet global challenges and embrace the underlying trend of peace, development and win-win cooperation," Xi continued.

"It is natural for countries to have differences. What's important is to address them through dialogue and consultation. Countries may engage in competition, but such competition should be positive and healthy in nature. When in competition, countries should not breach the moral standard and should comply with international norms," he said.

"In particular, major countries should act like major countries. They should provide more global public goods, take up their due responsibilities and live up to

people's expectations," Xi noted.

In the world, there is only one system, namely the UN-centered international system, and only one set of rules - the basic norms of international relations based on the UN Charter, Xi stressed during a videoconference with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sept. 23.

The world has learnt from the past 75 years of experience in global governance that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter can not be changed, and the banner of multilateralism cannot be changed, which is also the keynote of the future reform of the global governance system.

China has called on the UN to stand firm for justice, uphold the rule of law,

promote cooperation, and focus on real action, so as to encourage all countries to rally behind the banner of the UN to pursue greater unity and progress.

These suggestions of China, while reflecting the international community's ardent aspirations for a greater role of the UN, have been praised as good approaches to coping with global challenges and reforming and improving global governance, and made China widely acclaimed for setting a good example of safeguarding the UN Charter.

The general trend towards a multi-polar world, economic globalization, and greater democracy in international relations remains unchanged.

At meetings marking the 75th anniversary

of the UN, many state leaders and heads of international organizations have made commitment to unwaveringly upholding multilateralism and rules-based international order, and expressed firm determination to stick to unity and cooperation to meet the needs in the 21st century.

All parties hold that they should tackle growing global challenges and threats by strengthening global coordination, fully accommodate the concerns of developing countries, and give consideration to the fact of the collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries when it comes to the reform and improvement of global governance. **People's Daily**



Dege & Skinner Managing Director William Skinner poses for a portrait in the Dege & Skinner tailors on Savile Row, amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in London. REUTERS

Unsuited to new era? Fate of formal fashion hangs by a thread

MILAN/SYDNEY/LONDON

ITALIAN luxury designer Brunello Cucinelli makes men's suits that sell for up to 7,000 euros (\$8,200). But even he - like most people across the globe - hasn't worn a suit for months, let alone bought one.

"We've all been locked away at home, so this is the first jacket I have put on since March," Cucinelli told Reuters in Milan as he presented his latest collection in September, wearing a light grey blazer.

Most people in "white-collar" jobs are working from home, with a newfound love of sweatpants, a trend that some experts expect to outlive the pandemic. And few, if any, weddings or parties are taking place.

This seismic shift in behaviour is having profound repercussions across the supply chain for suits and formal wear, upending a sartorial sector spanning every continent.

In Australia, the world's biggest producer of merino wool, prices have been in freefall, hitting decade lows. Many sheep farmers are in dire straits, storing wool in every available shed in the hope of a rebound.

In northern Italy, the wool mills that buy from the farmers and weave the fabric for high-end suits have seen their own orders from retailers nosedive.

In the United States and Europe, several retail chains specialising in business attire such as Men's Wearhouse, Brooks Brothers and TM Lewin have closed stores or filed for bankruptcy over the past few months, and more could follow.

Players at all levels told Reuters they were being forced to adapt to survive, from farmers turning to other forms of agriculture to mills making stretchier fabrics for a new breed of suits that don't crease easily and are more resistant to stains.

"People want to be more comfortable and are less inclined to wear a formal suit," said Silvio Botto Poala, managing director of Lanificio Botto Giuseppe, a wool mill in Italy's textile hub of Biella which counts Armani, Max Mara, Ralph Lauren and Hermes among its customers.

"With Zoom conferences and smart working, you'll see men wearing a shirt, perhaps even a tie, but not many suits."

MERINO FARMERS CLING ON

Fine wool prices in Australia have more than halved during a tumultuous 18-month period, as usually healthy purchases of merino wool from Italian mills have almost ground to a halt.

The benchmark price for merino wool fell to A\$8.58 (\$6.1) per kg in early September, auction results show, down from A\$20.16 in early 2019. It has since partly recovered to just over A\$10.

Andrew Blanch, managing director of New England Wool in New South Wales, which sources wool from farms for Italian textile makers, said many buyers now had excess supplies.

"They've all got wool to get rid of before they even come back to the market here," said Blanch, speaking on the phone from wool auctions in Sydney's western suburbs.

"If the shops aren't open, everything just backs up. A lot of the orders we had bought wool against just got cancelled by their clients in the U.S. and around Europe."

He said that China, which alongside Italy purchases most of Australia's more than A\$3 billion in annual wool exports, was now "the only show in town" even though Chinese buyers were also acquiring less wool.

Many merino sheep farmers are storing their wool in sheds or storage facilities;

though some who are still emerging from a three-year drought are selling their bales into the weak market to stay financially afloat.

"Not everyone is big enough to hold on to their wool clip and wait for the price to change," said Dave Young, a farmer near the New South Wales town of Yass. "We are in the position where we have to meet the market within a relatively short time after shearing."

Young, who has about 4,500 sheep on his property, said he had re-focused some operations to provide lamb meat instead.

WOOL WEAVERS' GLOOM

A jump up the food chain to northern Italy, and Botto Poala expects his mill's sales to fall by 25% from 63 million euros last year and that they will take 2-3 years to recover.

However his business is insulated to a degree because it mostly makes womenswear fabric; others are more pessimistic.

"For some businesses, we are talking a 50%-80% plunge in sales," said Ettore Piacenza, general manager of the Fratelli Piacenza wool mill, a centuries-old family business with an annual turnover of 52 million euros. He also heads the wool mills department of the local business association.

Botto Poala said more than 50% of his mill's turnover now comes from wool that has been made stretchier by treating in a particular way or having lycra added to it.

This is because whatever demand is left for suits, it is more likely to be for fabrics that are more resistant to stains and don't crease easily, while such cloth can also be used for casual wear, wool mills say.

Italian luxury label Etro, for example, has just launched a "24-hour jacket" made of jersey and mixing wool and cotton.

'MY CLIENTS ARE IN PJ'S'

A gradual move towards casual wear has been going on for years. In 2019, even Goldman Sachs - a bastion of bespoke suits - relaxed the dress code for its staff. Not to mention the rise of the Silicon Valley hipster crowd.

But COVID has turbocharged that shift - boosting sales of comfort clothing and sportswear at the expense of business attire.

In the second quarter of this year, when much of the world was in lockdown, Nike was the hottest brand according to Lyst, a global fashion search platform that analyses the behaviour of more than nine million online shoppers a month.

It was the first time since the Lyst Index began that a luxury fashion brand did not take the top spot.

Gap's Athleta unit, which sells tights, jogging pants, sweats and workout tops, was its best-performing fashion line in the three months to Aug. 1. Sales rose 6%, compared with a 52% fall at Banana Republic, known for dressier attire.

Suits ranked among the highest-discounted and lowest-selling items in France, Italy and Germany in September, according to data compiled by StyleSage, which combs prices on websites.

Cheaper to mid-market labels including Asos, Topman, Guess and Hugo Boss had the steepest markdowns, at up to 50%.

The collapse in demand for office attire led storied U.S. retailers, also including Jos. A. Bank and J. Crew, to file for bankruptcy over the summer and many more retailers face an uncertain future.

REUTERS

Foreign professionals shine at Azam FC, Yanga

BY CORRESPONDENT ADAM FUNGAM-WANGO

THREE goals netted by Azam FC's foreign professionals, Zimbabwean Prince Dube and Zambian Obrey Chirwa, against Mwadui FC on Thursday have seen the former keep on depending on foreign players to post good results in this season's Vodacom Premier League (VPL).

Azam FC commanded a comprehensive 3-0 win over Mwadui FC in the top flight game, which took place at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam.

Chirwa netted a brace and Dube drilled in one goal for the game's eventual winners.

All of Azam FC goals in the first six rounds of the Premier league have been scored by foreign professionals.

Azam FC has scored 12 goals after the six rounds and the side is leading the rest of the pack in the top flight with 18 points, winning all six games whilst conceding two goals.

Dube that has become the most talked about forward in the top flight has netted half of Azam FC goals.

He is currently the VPL leading goal scorer with six goals, whilst Chirwa has notched four goals.

The two players have netted a total of 10 goals, whereas the club's other goals have also been scored by foreign professionals, Ivorian Richard Djodi and Rwandan Ally Niyonzima.

Yanga are the other outfit in the



Azam FC's forward, Zimbabwean Prince Dube (L), controls the ball in front of Kagera Sugar fullback, Mwaite Gerezera, in a 2020/21 Vodacom Premier League clash, which took place at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam last week. Azam FC won 4-2. PHOTO: AZAM FC

VPL that has foreign players netting all of the club's goals.

The squad has recorded seven goals, two of which have been netted by Ghanaian defender, Lamine Moro, the player's compatriot, striker Michael Sarpong has scored one goal.

Angolan midfielder Carlos Fernandes 'Carlinhos', Rwandan Haruna Niyonzima, Burkinabe striker, Yacouba Songne, and

Congolese midfielder, Mukoko Tonombe, have scored a goal each for Yanga.

The VPL defending champions, Simba SC, and Namungo FC have domestic players netting goals for them, much as most of the two clubs' goals have been scored by foreign professionals.

Simba SC has amassed 14 goals netted by foreign players, Rwandan Meddie Kagere, Zam-

bian Clatous Chama, Congolese Chris Mugalu, Mozambican Luis Miquissone and Tanzanian midfielder, Mzamiru Yassin, who has scored two goals.

Namungo FC has recorded four goals, three of which have been scored by Burundian striker, Bigirimana Blaise, and one scored by Tanzanian winger Hashim Manyanya.



Dar es Salaam's junior football players selected for Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) development program participate in training at Karume Stadium in the city yesterday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Indian cinemas reboot after months of blackout from virus

NEW DELHI

AFTER seven months of total blackout, cinemas reopened Thursday in several parts of India with few older titles on the marquee and shows limited to half the capacity.

The reopening of movie theaters comes at a time when India's confirmed coronavirus tally surpassed 7.3 million. The country is registering the highest number of daily cases globally, and is expected to become the pandemic's worst-hit country in the coming weeks, surpassing the U.S.

Nearly 10,000 theaters closed in mid-March following coronavirus restrictions. Now, they will become one of the last few public places to reopen outside high-risk areas as India further opens its economy. But they still pose some of the biggest infection risks: the virus can spread easily in closed spaces.

To minimize the danger, seats are separated. Show timings will be staggered and digital payment encouraged. Masks and temperature checks are mandatory.

"We have put everything into place, maybe more than what has been prescribed. The entire cinema touch points have been provided with anti-microbial films," said Gagan Kapur, regional head of the PVR Cinemas in New Delhi.

Some Indian states have been cautious.

Authorities in Mumbai, the home of Bollywood, put off re-



A worker wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) sanitizes seats inside the Inox Leisure movie theatre ahead of its reopening, amidst the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Mumbai, India, October 13, 2020. REUTERS

opening cinemas for the time being. The southern Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital, is the worst-hit state with nearly 37% of the country's COVID-19 fatalities.

Every year, Bollywood produces more than 2,000 films that feature complex dance routines, singing and a spectacularly large and lavish cast. It unites a diverse nation and is India's best-known brand globally. The industry's success over the years is also a boon for the economy, which, since the pandemic began, has nosedived to its slowest growth on record.

As theaters reopen to an audience that has embraced moviegoing as part of its contemporary culture, it's seen as a step toward

kickstarting an industry that boasts of being the world's largest producer of films.

But Indian filmmakers, reeling from zero box-office returns in this pandemic year, have so far not lined up any new big-ticket releases and have pushed their films directly to online streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime.

On Thursday, many theaters across the country re-released earlier hits.

Films like "Tanhaji," a historical epic about a Hindu warrior who rises against the Mughals, "Thappad," a social drama on domestic violence, and "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan," a rom-com featuring a gay couple, were played

across multiple screens. "PM Narendra Modi," an unabashed hagiography of the Indian prime minister that was released last year, also ran on some screens.

The reopening of cinemas comes as trends suggest a decline in new infections.

India saw a surge in July and added more than 2 million in August and another 3 million in September. But it is seeing a slower pace of coronavirus spread since mid-September, when the daily infections touched a record of 97,894. It is averaging a little more than 70,000 cases daily so far this month.

But some experts say that India's tally may not be reliable because of poor reporting and inadequate health infrastructure. India is also relying heavily on antigen tests, which are faster but less accurate than traditional RT-PCR tests.

Health officials have warned about the potential for the virus to spread during the religious festival season beginning later this month.

"The next 2 1/2 months are going to be very crucial for us in our fight against corona because of the winter season and the festival season," Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said Wednesday. "It becomes responsibility of every citizen to not let our guard down and follow COVID-19 appropriate behavior to curb spread of the infection."

AP

Resurgent Everton face acid test in Liverpool showdown

LONDON

LIFTED by Carlo Ancelotti's astute leadership and the transformative signing of James Rodriguez, Everton have a golden opportunity to prove their rise to the top of the Premier League is no fluke when they face Liverpool on Saturday.

Everton have gone 22 matches without a win over Liverpool since their last Merseyside derby success in October 2010.

But a decade on, Everton finally face their near neighbours from a position of strength, while Liverpool arrive at Goodison Park looking unusually vulnerable.

Everton's perfect start to the season extended to a fourth successive league win when they brushed Brighton aside before the international break.

Just 24 hours later, Liverpool suffered a humiliating 7-2 loss at Aston Villa that highlighted the defensive flaws that have bedevilled the Premier League champions this season.

If Everton can take advantage of Liverpool's mini-crisis, it would provide further evidence that Ancelotti's side are capable of turning their early-season form into a sustained revival.

Without a major trophy since the 1995 FA Cup, Everton have languished in Liverpool's shadow since the 1980s, when Howard Kendall led them to a pair of top-flight titles.

Thanks to the intuitive guidance of Italian boss Ancelotti and the sublime displays of Colombia playmaker James, the Goodison Park club have hope again.

Ancelotti's relaxed persona masks a fiercely competitive streak that has taken him across Europe in search of more managerial glory at an age when many of his peers are ready to step away from such a stressful job.

The 61-year-old has won domestic titles with Chelsea, AC Milan, Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Munich, as well as lifting the Champions League with Milan, as player and manager, and Real Madrid.

His reputation lost a little lustre during a troubled spell with Napoli that ended with his dismissal

in December after 16 months in charge.

- 'Unbelievable quality'

Last season, after Ancelotti's first seven months at Goodison, Everton finished a disappointing 12th, prompting suggestions his appointment to replace the sacked Marco Silva had been a mistake.

But he has turned the tide, helped by a dressing room blast that defied his urbane image.

Tearing into his players after a spineless 3-0 loss at Wolves last season, Ancelotti demanded more ambition and the response has been emphatic.

"We are all aware our standards dropped last season," said Everton captain Seamus Coleman. "There are ways of losing games, but I thought the fight wasn't there in some games and wanted to make sure the lads understood what it means to play for this club."

"We have a top-class manager who won't accept anything else. Since we came back, the standard and work rate has been fantastic."

Ancelotti has brought the best out of striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin, who has netted nine goals in six games for Everton this season before scoring on his England debut last week.

His masterstroke has been the close-season capture of Real Madrid cast-off James.

Fellow new-boys Allan and Abdoulaye Doucoure have added grit to Everton's midfield, but James sets the tone.

The 2014 World Cup Golden Boot winner fell out of favour in Madrid, but Ancelotti still had faith in him after their time together at Real and Bayern Munich.

Having won La Liga and Champions League titles with Real and enjoyed domestic success in Munich, the 29-year-old has brought a quality and confidence that has helped address Everton's chronic lack of belief.

"James has improved us without a shadow of a doubt," said Coleman. "He has got unbelievable quality when we get him the ball. His range of passing and decision-making are fantastic. We are very fortunate to have him."

"Dominic is benefiting from James and the whole team is at the minute." AFP

Liverpool face Everton threat as Man Utd bid to stop the rot

LONDON

LIVERPOOL face Premier League pacesetters Everton this weekend determined to prove their 7-2 drubbing by Aston Villa was just a bizarre blip while misfiring Manchester United could slip into the relegation zone.

The Merseyside derby kicks off the Premier League action on Saturday after the international break, with Manchester City's match against Arsenal also catching the eye.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer will be desperate to turn around Manchester United's fortunes at Newcastle after their 6-1 humbling by Tottenham.

AFP Sport looks at some of the main talking points ahead of the action.

Can Everton end Liverpool hoodoo?

Everton have been rivals to Liverpool in name only for the past decade, without a win against their near-neighbours since 2010.

But the Goodison Park club are top of the table with four wins out of four and Jurgen Klopp will not be relishing the short trip across Stanley Park.

The champions are smarting from their pummelling at Villa, which followed impressive wins against Chelsea and Arsenal, and it will be the defence that is giving the German boss his biggest headache.

Liverpool have conceded 11 goals in the Premier League so far -- only West Brom have conceded more (13) -- and they are coming up against the Premier League's joint top-scorer in Dominic Calvert-Lewin, who has six goals.

The forward, who scored for



Jurgen Klopp

Carlo Ancelotti

England on his debut last week, is quick to praise fellow attackers James Rodriguez and Richarlison.

"I demand high standards from myself every day," he told Everton TV. "I continue to work hard, like I always have, to get into this position. I am just grateful the quality behind me is producing the opportunities for me to score the goals."

Man Utd must stop rot

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer described his side's 6-1 defeat at home to Tottenham as the "worst day" in his career as a Manchester United player or manager.

United are just three points above the relegation zone after shipping 11 goals in their three matches so far and their confidence looks to be in tatters.

The question until recently was who would partner Harry Maguire at the back but the world's most expensive defender is himself enduring a horror season on and off the pitch.

The central defender's latest low point was his red card during England's 1-0 defeat to Denmark in the Nations League on Wednesday.

Left-back Luke Shaw, whose place is under threat from the arrival of Alex Telles, urged United to tighten up.

"We need to be clinical and, especially at the back, we need to be more solid," Shaw said. "Not just as a backline but throughout the whole team, a bit more defensively solid and a bit more compact."

Spurs' feelgood factor

Jose Mourinho's

Tottenham started the season with a disappointing Premier League defeat against Everton but they are unbeaten since then despite a hectic schedule leading up to the international break.

Their seismic victory at Old Trafford brought an end to a sequence of eight matches in 22 days as Spurs reached the League Cup quarter-finals and qualified for the Europa League group stage.

Lucas Moura says Tottenham are keen to pick up where they left off.

"We need to start the new month in the same way, with the same fighting spirit," he said. "I'm very positive. I think we are building a very strong squad and we can dream of big things this season, that's our objective."

Villa meet Leicester in summit clash

When Aston Villa escaped relegation on the final day of the 2019/20 season, few would have expected them to be second in the table, with three wins out of three, in mid-October.

Defender Ezri Konsa is confident they can maintain that flying start against Leicester, who are just behind Villa on goal difference.

"It's been a great start for us," he said. "We've carried on our form from last season, and we need to keep going and keep the focus on ourselves."

"The chemistry in the squad has gone up another level and we keep building on that in training."

Fixtures

Today
Everton v Liverpool (1130 GMT), Chelsea v Southampton (1400), Manchester City v Arsenal (1630), Newcastle v Manchester United (1900)

Tomorrow
Sheffield United v Fulham (1100), Crystal Palace v Brighton (1300), Tottenham v West Ham (1530), Leicester v Aston Villa (1815)

Monday
West Brom v Burnley (1630), Leeds v Wolves (1900)

AFP

Dense fixture list tests Bayern Munich's strength in depth

BERLIN

EUROPEAN champions Bayern Munich face a test of their strength in depth with a flurry of fixtures, starting Saturday in the Bundesliga as the defending Bundesliga champions attempt to bounce back from an uncharacteristic dip in form before the international break.

The Bavarian giants have questions to answer on Saturday at newly-promoted Arminia Bielefeld in the second of a tough run of eight games in just over three weeks.

Six points from their opening three league games this season is below-par by Bayern's standards and they are fourth in the table.

"We have to find our rhythm," said Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic.

"The calendar is full of games, it won't be easy, but I believe the squad is well set up."

Bayern made four new signings before the transfer window shut, recruiting Marseille right-back Bouna Sarr, striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting, Espanyol midfielder Marc Roca and Brazil winger Douglas Costa.

The quartet all have a chance of featuring at Bielefeld with several Bayern stars just back from international duty, including Robert Lewandowski, who picked up a leg knock playing for Poland.

Having already won Bundesliga titles with Bayern in 2015/16 and 2016/17, Costa has returned from Juventus to rival Leroy Sane, Serge Gnabry and Kingsley Coman for a

place on the wing.

Bayern's depth will be tested by an intense three-week period. They visited amateurs Dueren in the German Cup on Thursday evening, but the competition quickly becomes more intense, including the start of their Champions League defence at home to Atletico Madrid next Wednesday.

Bayern then face Eintracht Frankfurt (October 24), Lokomotiv in Moscow (27), Cologne (31), Red Bull Salzburg (November 3) and Borussia Dortmund (November 7) in quick succession.

Bayern needed four Lewandowski goals - including an added-time penalty - to see off Hertha Berlin 4-3 in their last league game nearly a fortnight ago.

Hansi Flick's Bayern side threw away a two-goal lead against Hertha, a week after their record 23-match winning run was shattered by a shock 4-1 defeat at Hoffenheim.

After an 11-year hiatus, Bielefeld are back in the Bundesliga with four points from their first three games.

They made a bit of Bundesliga history when replacement Joan Simun Edmundsson scored their winner against Cologne at the end of September.

The midfielder became the first player from the Faroe Islands to play in Germany's top flight.

Bielefeld's last win over Bayern was back in September 2006 when Salihamidzic and Oliver Kahn, now a board member, were in the Munich team which lost 2-1.

AFP

Barca ponder Messi rest as Madrid continue to wait on Hazard

MADRID

BARCELONA must weigh up the decision whether to rest Lionel Messi for Saturday's trip to Getafe ahead of a congested run of fixtures, while Real Madrid are still waiting on the return of Eden Hazard from injury.

Messi played the full 90 minutes in Argentina's World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Bolivia during the international break, the second of which was played at altitude in La Paz.

The Barca captain has not missed a single minute for his club since football resumed in June following the coronavirus shutdown.

However, with seven games in the space of 21 days awaiting Barca, coach Ronald Koeman could elect to give Messi a breather before the start of the team's Champions League campaign.

Barca host Hungarian side Ferencvaros on Tuesday and then face sworn enemies Real Madrid four days later behind closed doors at the Camp Nou.

The Catalan club head to Italy for a Champions League clash with Juventus on October 28 before games against Alaves and Real Betis either side of the visit of Dynamo Kiev.

Leaders Madrid are unbeaten in La Liga since March, winning 13 of their past 15 games, and welcome Cadiz to the capital this weekend.

Zinedine Zidane could also opt to rotate some players but Thibaut Courtois, Karim Benzema and Vinicius Junior are in line to play after resting while others were away on international duty.

Courtois left the Belgium squad with a back injury and while he is fit to return, compatriot Hazard is not yet ready for action.

The 29-year-old has yet to feature this season having picked up a muscle injury as he worked his way back from an ankle problem.

He is also expected to miss next weekend's Clasico, but Courtois believes Hazard will come good after scoring just once in an injury-plagued first season in Spain.

"I have no doubt we are going to see the best of Hazard," Courtois told Cadena Ser radio.



Lionel Messi (C) played the full 90 minutes in World Cup qualifying wins over Ecuador and Bolivia. (Agencies)

"He is more desperate than anyone to show it. He's coming along well and hopefully soon he can prove it."

He added: "I am sure that in no time he will explode and will give many joys to the team."

Atletico Madrid visit Celta Vigo in their first

game since the sale of Ghana midfielder Thomas Partey to Arsenal on transfer deadline day.

Partey made 188 appearances for the Atletico and was part of the sides that reached the 2016 Champions League final and beat Arsenal on the way to winning the Europa

League in 2018.

One to watch: Oussama Idrissi

The Dutch-born Morocco international could make his Sevilla debut at Granada after joining the club on a five-year deal from AZ Alkmaar.

Idrissi, 24, scored 13 goals in 25 games in the

Eredivisie last season before it was declared over in March due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Julen Lopetegui's Europa League winners are one of four undefeated teams in La Liga this term, with seven points from their first three matches.

Key stats
12 - goals scored by Sergio Ramos since the start of the 2019/20 season, more than any other defender in Europe's top five leagues.

250 - goals scored by Karim Benzema for Real Madrid. The Frenchman is only the fifth player to reach the mark in club history

Fixtures

Today (all times GMT)
Granada v Sevilla (1100), Celta Vigo v Atletico Madrid (1400), Real Madrid v Cadiz (1630), Getafe v Barcelona (1900)

Tomorrow
Eibar v Osasuna (1000), Athletic Bilbao v Levante (1200), Villarreal v Valencia (1400), Alaves v Elche (1630), Huesca v Real Valladolid (1630), Real Betis v Real Sociedad (1900)

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Liverpool face Everton threat as Man Utd bid to stop the rot

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Waluguru Original Band's Director, Deogratius David.

Waluguru Original Band set to start shooting new album's videos next month

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

MOROGORO's dance music band, Waluguru Original, is set to start shooting videos for the troupe's new album, titled 'Kikao cha Wahenga', after the completion of the General Election slated for October 28 this year.

Deogratius David 'Killer Man', the Waluguru Original Band's Director, stated the troupe had earlier planned to shoot the videos last month but they were forced to shelve the plan because of issues that were beyond the artists' control.

"The production of the new album's videos will now start after the General Election, we will shoot the videos in various parts of Morogoro, which has attractive mountains," he disclosed.

David pointed out the 'Kikao cha Wahenga' album has six tracks, 'Morogoro Yetu', 'Mwanzo wa Mapenzi', 'Cha Kupewa', 'Ngalile Mwanangu Ndole', 'Supu' and 'Nataka Nilewe'.

He said the troupe will though start shooting videos for four of the album's songs.

"Morogoro Yetu' is one of the songs that we will produce videos for, the track details Morogoro's qualities that include attractive mountains and good weather, the song also promotes the region's tourist attractions," he disclosed.

He noted the troupe has, since launching the album in August this year, embarked on presenting it to music fans at various shows whilst planning to shoot videos for some of the songs.

"The album's launch was one of our strategies for seeing to it Morogoro regains the enthusiasm the region had in dance music in the past," he disclosed.

The vocalist said Morogoro held sway in dance music in Tanzania, boasting of several gifted musicians including Mbaraka Mwishehe.

He said the region's passion for music, though, started waning in the closing stages of the 1970s.

He pointed out he is now set out to slowly see to it Morogoro regains passion for dance music promotion.

Kilimanjaro Marathon 2021 registration announced



The 2020 Kilimanjaro Marathon men's category winner, Kiplagat Kiplimo from Kenya, in jovial mood after finishing the race, which took place in Moshi in March. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

By Guardian Reporter

ORGANIZERS of the prestigious 2021 Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon have announced the start of registration for next year's event.

According to a statement issued by the race's organizers in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the registration officially started the same day.

Participants will be required to register through the race's website, www.kilimanjaronmarathon.com, local runners can as well register through Tigo Pesa.

In the statement, the

local Race Director, John Bayo, advised that athletes' number will be limited again across all three races, Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon, Tigo Kili Half Marathon and Grand Malt 5km Fun Run.

The move, according to him, targets to see to it the event sticks within the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)'s official regulations of a safe carrying capacity.

Runners wishing to take part in the race, the statement said, must not delay, as it will be a case

of first come, first serve and once entries run out, organizers will close registration.

This, according to Bayo, will ensure runners enjoy their time out on route without being overcrowded.

The approach will, moreover, see to it the athletes abide by the COVID-19 Social Distancing rules and so that the organizers can ensure they get all logistics in terms of the hydration and medical support needed on route and at the finish in line with the numbers expected.

"We want all participants to register early on as numbers are limited," she said.

Kilimanjaro Premium Lager brand has been the main sponsor of the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon since it started 19 years ago.

Woinde disclosed that

runners that do not have

participants to register early on as numbers are limited," she said.

Woinde Shisael, Communications Manager for telecomms company Tigo, which sponsors Kili Half Marathon, urged participants to use Tigo Pesa to register as this has made the registration process easy and fast.

Woinde disclosed that

Tigo lines can however request their friends to register for them.

"This will be Tigo's sixth year sponsoring and participating at this renowned international event," she noted.

"I urge all participants to register for the Tigo Kili Half Marathon by dialing *149*20# and follow on-screen instructions and complete registration by paying with Tigo Pesa since it is easy and secured," Shisael said.

Official sponsors for next year's event include Kilimanjaro Premium Lager (main sponsor-42km), Tigo (21km), Grand Malt (5km Fun Run), Kilimanjaro Water, TPC Limited, Simba Cement, Absa Bank Tanzania, Unilever.

The race's official suppliers are Keys Hotel, Garda World Security, and CMC Automobiles.

Next year's race will be held at the Moshi Cooperatives University ground on February 28 and will play host to IAAF route measured 42km race, a 21km race and a 5km Fun Run.

The event is locally coordinated by Executive Solutions limited.

Coach Cedric Kaze signs two-year contract with Yanga

By Nassir Nchimbi, TUDARCO

YANGA leadership yesterday officially introduced new head coach, Cedric Kaze, who has signed a two-year contract with the club.

Kaze landed in Dar es Salaam two days back from Canada and was welcomed by Yanga officials as well as the outfit's fans.

The Burundian tactician has replaced Serbian coach, Zlatko Krmpotic, who was sacked by the club on October 3 due to what was described as the outfit's failure to put impressive showing in domestic top flight.

By the time Krmpotic left he had headed Yanga's technical bench in five Vodacom Premier League matches, recording victory in four and posting draw in one.

Yanga were held to 1-1 draw by Tanzania Prisons at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam in what was also the former's opening match in this season's top flight.

Yanga later went on to notch wins in games against Mtibwa Sugar, Mbeya City FC, Coastal Union and Kagera Sugar.

Kaze said he is happy to coach Yanga as he has



New Yanga head coach, Cedric Kaze (R), and the club's Chairman, Mshindo Msolla, sign a contract the club has entered with the tactician in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The coach will serve Yanga for two years. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

knowledge of the club, noting he needs support from the rest in the club.

The contract will see him work for Yanga until 2022.

Kaze said that he is happy to come to Tanzania and coach Yanga, as he understands they are a great team with ambitions and boast of huge following.

"I am happy to join Yanga, which is a great team

and is known all over East and Central African region, so, my presence here will be beneficial to the club," he noted.

"I know the team's goals and what they need so I would like to tell them they should not worry about that," he said.

Kaze said: "I can say that I have found great comfort in serving as head coach at Yanga and many have

been congratulating me on this, I have received so many congratulatory messages."

"I have come to work and all I need is seeing others support my work."

"Yanga are a great team and have a lot of fans, so, all we need now is looking at how we will achieve success and goals that we have set for ourselves," he said.

Kurasini Heat Club clinches 2020 RBA League top honour

By Nassir Nchimbi, TUDARCO

KURASINI Heat Club has lifted the 2020 Dar es Salaam Regional Basketball Association (RBA) League's trophy, edging National Service (JKT) Club 64-61 in the fourth game of the finals which took place at Don Bosco court, Upana, in the city on Thursday.

Kurasini Heat have consequently registered a 3-1 victory over their opponents in the five-game series to clinch the league's top honour for the first time.

Shendu Mwangalla, Kurasini Heat's coach, said: "We had to win, for 11 consecutive years we never qualified for the finals, when we qualified for the finals this year, we had to set goals in order to win this title."

He stated that when they won 64-57 over JKT Club to tie the finals to 1-1 after the first two games of the series, they assessed their performance and identified mistakes they made in line with the quality of JKT Club and worked on the weaknesses.

"We kept their players in check, we succeeded in the second match and won, the same way we did in the third match (which ended

with Kurasini Heat posting 78-77 victory over JKT Club)," he said.

He disclosed: "We haven't reached the finals since 2009, when we qualified for the finals this year, it turned out to be a springboard for us, seeing to it we didn't lose the opportunity to clinch the silverware."

Recruitment of such good players like Amin Mkosa, a versatile defensive player, Eric Lugola and Mwalimu Herry, has been key to Kurasini Heat's success this season.

Finalists, JKT Club, for that matter, settled for the second spot, whereas Oilers Club wrapped the competition's top three.

Oilers Club registered 55-52 victory over Army Basketball Club (ABC) in the third place play off, which was a one-off clash.

This season's RBA League has ended in fascinating fashion for the men's category, whereas the women's category had to wait for the fifth game to get the category's winners.

The DB Lionesses emerged as the category's champions, edging JKT Stars in the last game of the series.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

NOW, WHAT SHOULD I CALL YOU, YOUNG MAN, OLD MAN?



JUST CALL ME 'BABY'!