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## Govt working on sugar, cooking oil sufficiency

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government is strategizing to address the shortage of sugar and edible oil, the two commodities which often cause frustration among traders and consumers.

Gerald Kusaya (pictured), the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture said here yesterday that the country, even with potential land and climate to produce the needed raw materials, it has been struggling to close the gap for the sweetener and food supplement.

Official figures from the ministry affirm that Tanzania has a deficit of 60,000 tons of the sweetener annually and a troubling 365,000 tonnes deficit cooking oil.

"One of the key strategies is to increase land for irrigation farming," he said, urging

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# TCRA readying to check correct airtime bundles

By Guardian Reporter



Zanzibar President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi exchanges greetings with the Minister for Lands and Human Settlements Development, Riziki Pembe Juma shortly after arriving for a meeting with Old Town stakeholders to discuss how to improve the area. Photo: State House

COMMUNICATIONS and Information Technology minister Dr Faustine Ndagulile has given three months to the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) to address public concerns over shortened airtime and internet bundles by mobile phone service providers.

Dr Ndagulile issued the directive yesterday during a familiarization tour at TCRA, where he talked with members of the board, management and employees with a view to finding out what should be done to ensure improved services to the public, along with facilitating the digital economy and Tanzania's entry into the fourth industrial revolution.

"Most mobile phone users are not happy with the shortened interment and airtime bundles. There should be a common system to verify the actual cost of communications in regard to monies paid by users," he said, directing TCRA to establish a toll-free number where people can air their concerns, to enhance their confidence and trust in the government.

Dr Ndagulile said it is worth it for the government to come up with bold decisions instead of not taking action at all. He said Tanzanians



**Most mobile phone users are not happy with the shortened interment and airtime bundles**

are not ignorant and would want to know how their monies are spent in communication services.

He directed the Consumer Consultative Council (TCRA-CCC) to address complaints by the public, urging it to ensure that people have access to five free-to-air (FTA) channels through their decoders even when their bundles expire.

He affirmed that some digital television service providers restrict viewers from accessing some FTA channels when their bundles expire, whereas FTA channels including Channel Ten, ITV, Star TV, EATV, TBC and Clouds TV are supposed to be free to air.

Tanzania scored a first in sub-Saharan Africa in switching off analogue terrestrial television signals eight years ago.

Deputy Minister Kundo Mathew applauded TCRA for its up to date Information and Communications Technology (ICT), noting that it is likely to take Tanzania to desired technological development levels.

The Permanent Secretary, Dr Zainab Chaula called upon TCRA employees to persevere in pursuing the targeted goals.

TCRA Director General James Kilaba said he was aware of the airtime and internet bundle challenges. "We will immediately start working on the matter," he assured the minister, noting further that technological and ICT developments have resulted

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# JPM revokes Igunga DED's appointment

Directs RC to appoint 'trusted civil servant' as acting director

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli has revoked the appointment of Igunga District Council executive director Revocatus Kuuli amid accusations of graft and incompetence.

Dr Magufuli suspended the official following reports of illegally acquiring land that belonged to local residents, misuse of council funds and other incompetence.

The decision was given when the president stopped to greet residents at Igunga town where they explained to him



**Dr Magufuli directed Tabora Regional Commissioner Dr Philemon Sengati to appoint a trusted civil servant to act in the position until a new director is appointed**

the challenges they face.

Dr Magufuli directed Tabora Regional Commissioner Dr Philemon Sengati to appoint a trusted civil servant to act in the position until a new director is appointed, who resonates with the work rhythm of the fifth phase government.

Apart from complaints by local residents, the president said he already had a lot of information involving the official, saying he has on several occasions warned him but to no avail.

Dr Magufuli expressed appreciation

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# Non-returning tourists: Ministry seeks answers

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

OVER 80 percent of all foreign tourists coming to Tanzania don't feel the need to return for repeated experience, which means tourism agencies are compelled to rely on scouting for new visitors each year.

Dr Aloyce Nzuki (pictured), the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, made this observation here yesterday before countrywide media practitioners,



underlining that there is need to find out why only 20 percent of tourists visiting the country return for another take.

"We seriously need to find out why most tourists do not want to come back, after sampling our tourist attractions," he said.

It was learned that before the global COVID-19 pandemic, Tanzania was getting up to 1.5m tourists in the last two years or so. Still, surveys show

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in improved services in the communications value chain.

The main telecom operators are Vodacom, Tigo, Airtel, Halotel, Zantel and TTCL, with Smile

coming up, with TCRA data showing that mobile internet subscribers were 27.9m at the end of September from 26.8m at the end of March, an increase of over one million users within nine months, he added.

## Mwinyi vows to cooperate with Zanzibar Association of Imams

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Ali Hussein Mwinyi has pledged to closely work with the Zanzibar Association of Imams (JUMAZA) in building and strengthening the foundation of Islamic religion in the country.

During his talks with JUMAZA members at the State House in Unguja yesterday, Dr Mwinyi insisted that for building the foundations of Islamic religion, Imams must insist on unity, peace and solidarity.

The JUMAZA delegation was led by Deputy Secretary, Sheikh Ali Abdallah Amour. Also present at the meeting were Mohamed Hafidh Khalfan, Sheikh Masoud Hemed Nassor, Sheikh Yussuf Khamis, Sheikh Abdalla Issa Makame, Sheikh Muhiddin Zubeir Muhiddin and Halima Qasim Mohamed.

He said the formation of the government of national unity (GNU) in the Isles has strengthened unity among the residents as well as government leaders.

He said the current political situation in Zanzibar provides for the government to smoothly implement development projects.

Dr Mwinyi informed religious leaders on the various strategies taken by the government to end gender-based violence (GBV) insisting on collaborative efforts from stakeholders and religious leaders to ensure successful

elimination of the problem.

According to him, religious leaders play an important role in educating people on the adverse impacts of GBV to society.

He underscored the need for establishment of the Hajj fund to facilitate Muslims going for annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He said various countries have been benefited with the Hajj funds

In another development, the President announced intentions to review teachers and doctors incentives following the good job and services they provide to the community.

Meanwhile, JUWAZA members congratulated Dr Mwinyi for being elected the eighth Zanzibar President and chairman of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council.

They commend him for a good job as well as ensuring peace and unity amongst Zanzibaris. The religious leaders insisted that without peace it would be difficult for the government to bring about the desired development to the people.



**They commend him for a good job as well as ensuring peace and unity amongst Zanzibaris.**



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa inspects one of the desks which had been donated by Tanzania Postal Bank worth 164m/- at Nandagala primary school in Ruangwa District yesterday. Right is TPB director general Sabasaba Moshingi. Photo: PMO

## Sunflower oil processing plants cease production over lack of raw materials

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

A NUMBER of sunflower oil processing plants in Mbeya City have closed business due to lack of raw materials while the price of sunflower oil has been rising especially during the end of the year holidays.

The rising of the sunflower oil price is claimed to have affected the city's other economic activities including food and hotel business.

Speaking to this paper at the weekend owners of some sunflower oil processing plants at SIDO Market here said

this year has been different compared to others due scarcity of the raw material that came up much early.

One of the owners, Charles Mwakitalima said the shortage of the raw materials has been attributed to prolonged rains in the Southern Highlands regions that destroyed sunflower crop in the fields.

He said farmers made great effort to cultivate the crop but prolonged rains devastated their hopes for huge harvests.

"In the past during this period we used to have adequate sunflower, and the sunflower oil

did not rise as it has done this year...you cannot blame anyone other than climate change," he said.

Samson Sangwe, a worker from one of the sunflower processing plants said as for now the business of sunflower seeds and oil thereof is at a standstill and many plants and workers remain idle.

He said owners of the plants have been forced to close them because of big operation costs as compared to income, hence he appealed to the government to find solution to the problem.

Some of the city's prominent food vendors said the scarcity of

edible oil and its high price have affected their businesses.

One of them, Deborah Mwanjanje said in the past they used to buy a three-litre container of sunflower for 15,000/- but now the price is 25,000/-, the greatest price hike since she started business.

Recently, the Director of the Uyole Centre Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI-Uyole) Dr Tulole Bucheyeki said the institute has begun taking steps to tackle the scarcity of edible oil by researching on better quality seeds for oil-yielding crops including sunflower.



Communication and Information Technology deputy minister Kundo Mathew (3rd L) being briefed by engineer Jumanne Ikuja (L) of Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority on how frequency monitoring equipment works during their familiarisation tour with him is minister Dr Faustine Ndogulile (2ndL) yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Govt working on sugar, cooking oil sufficiency

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directors in the ministry to team up with potential stakeholders in ensuring the government plan succeeds.

Initially, out of 44m hectares of available land for farming, some 29m hectares have irrigation potential but yet less than 700,000 hectares have been put to irrigation.

"The fifth phase government plan is to attain 1.2m hectares of irrigated agriculture to further improve food security, increase individual income and supply of raw materials for agro-processing

factories," he said.

Agriculture minister Prof Adolf Mkenda said last week that the ministry banks on enhancing good agricultural practices to boost the contribution of the sector in the economy.

He challenged the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) and the Agricultural Seeds Agency (ASA) to intensify studies and ensure farmers are exposed to improved seeds and agro-inputs offering higher yields on smaller sizes of land.

"We have the market for some of the crops but we need more

markets to ensure all the produce is taken up by the market," he said, pointing out that the government is working to enable access to credit among farmers to ensure greater capacity for enhanced productivity for strategic crops.

In recent months, the shortage of sugar was attributed to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic cutting supplies from outside markets, enabling traders to reserve stock and hike prices.

The Sugar Board of Tanzania (SBT) announced that the demand for sugar in 2019/20 stood at 670,000 tons in which domestic

supply reached 515,000 tons.

Experts were urging the ministry to undertake initiatives to reduce importation of foods such as edible oils and sugar which can be produced locally. In 2019, total edible oil production was valued at 676.2bn/- (\$294m), with 1.6m tonnes of edible oil produced in 2018.

Central bank data showed it represented a 75% decrease in production compared to earlier figures, and current projections are that the demand for cooking oil will increase by 700,000 tons towards 2030.

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for the people of Igunga for voting for him for the second term, promising that he will serve them with all his ability.

He applauded the fact that the people of Tabora, Nzega and Igunga were now obtaining water from Lake Victoria, asking them to properly use the limited supplies.

President Magufuli has recently emphasized hard work among his appointees, in remarks after

swearing in Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa last month. He pointed at his key priorities, underlining that they key parameter for the presidency was national security, and following it, it is economic development.

He welcomed foreign investment in a host of sectors including the mining sector, gas and oil extractive industries as well as agri-business projects, tourism infrastructures, etc

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that about 70 percent of foreign tourists coming here learn about the country mostly by testimony of other tourists.

The second source of information about Tanzania for potential tourists is travel agents, he said, expressing concern that most visitors touring various attractions in Tanzania were not interested to return for repeated experiences.

Some stakeholders at the event argued that there is need to overhaul the hospitality industry, especially service providers at airports, ground handlers, restaurants, hotels, lodges and other areas of accommodation coming into direct contact with tourists.

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area is so far the leading tourist destination in Tanzania, getting an average of 500,000 visitors annually and generating billions

of shillings in revenues.

The NCAA Commissioner for Conservation, Dr Freddy Manongi pointed out that the area faces major challenges of a growing population, increasing number of livestock and related human-wildlife conflicts that call for drastic intervention.

"Only recently a hyena attacked and killed 30 sheep from local households. It is a rare incident that we believe came from a rabid animal, but such cases cannot be ignored with the changing scenario of the park," he stated.

NCAA Principal Conservation Officer Elibariki Bajuta said the area, measuring 8292 square kilometers, has over 20,000 households and thus poses problems for rangers to effectively patrol, to ensure the non-intrusion of wild animals.

And despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCAA has managed to generate 122bn/- in revenues during fiscal 2019/2020, he added.





Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority director for planning, research and marketing development, Zakaria Muyengi hands over certificate to NMB Insurance senior manager Martin Massawe in recognition of NMB's contribution to the insurance sector during the insurance stakeholders meeting over the weekend. Others include Sanlam's chief executive officer Khamis Suleiman (C). Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Wildlife stakeholders in Arusha to support jumbo attack victim

By Guardian Correspondent, Monduli

WILDLIFE stakeholders in Arusha Region have resolved to assist a resident of Mswakini Ward in Monduli District, Mjomba Songei who was badly injured by a rampaging elephant whilst in Randlen Wildlife Sanctuary on November 29 this year.

Monduli District Commissioner Edward Balele yesterday handed over 4.6m/- to the victim's father Nengilang'eti Mibuko, the money that which was raised by Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) community, Honey Guide Tourist Firm, the Nation Conserve and other ordinary people.

After handing over the money DC Balele said: "Even for us, the government did not remain quiet after the tragic incident. We had the task to raise funds for treating the victim.

"I advise the WMA Board to look into how to establish a special disaster fund to assist victims of such incidents in villages bordering wildlife areas."

Earlier, before handing over the money, WMA Chairman Kilamiani Lendoya said they will implement

the advice given by the DC to manage destruction from attacks by wildlife.

Mswakini Ward Councillor Nanga Lenasira thanked the Office of the District Commissioner and other stakeholders for the kind-heartedness and being ready to assist the Songei family, the situation that was quite non-existent in the past.

Speaking after receiving the money, Songei said: "When the tragic incident happened I was walking inside WMA area and suddenly I was chased by an elephant which caused harm to my left ribs, legs and on the chest.

"I am thankful that Good Samaritans came to my rescue and rushed me to KCMC Referral Hospital."



**I am thankful that Good Samaritans came to my rescue and rushed me to KCMC Referral Hospital**

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

## Identify more potential areas of investment TPSF advises authorities in Dodoma Region

THE Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) has advised authorities in Dodoma Region to identify potential areas of investment so as to attract both local and foreign investors to come and invest in the country's capital.

A representative of TPSF in Dodoma Ringo Ilingo made the call here when briefing journalists over various investment opportunities available in the region.

Ilingo said Dodoma Region has several areas which are potential in investment but majority of them are yet to be identified so as to enable investors to recognize them easily when they need them.

"We have also found that

majority of the investment areas that have been already identified by the government lacks essential services such as power, water, road infrastructures and others, all these should be resolved so as to make the areas more marketable," he added.

The official however urged local and foreign investors to invest in Dodoma to go and grab the opportunities as the government has expressed its zeal to continue improving the investment environment in the region and the

country at large.

He highlighted potential areas to invest in hospitals, pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry, the automotive industry, edible oils production industry, livestock and leather sector, agro-food processing industries, real estate, tourism and the leisure industry.

"Investors can also grab potential opportunities in the grape farming as the region has huge and fertile land to favour its production, Dodoma is a good place to invest because if someone invest there,

his/her products can reach easily in the markets of East Africa Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and the Southern Africa (COMESA)," he explained.

Recently, a delegation of thirteen investment companies from Austria landed in the country's capital eyeing potential opportunities in transportation, agribusiness, education, health and construction.

Speaking soon after his meeting

with the investors, Dodoma Regional Commissioner Dr Binilith Mahenge said that the investors came to the region to survey various investment opportunities.

According to Mahenge, the investors expressed their readiness to put their efforts to invest in several potential areas which in turn brings positive impacts to the Dodoma city.

"The investors have shown their commitment to invest in infrastructure networks, social services and technology," he said.

## Majaliwa receives classrooms, teachers' offices, special girls' room in Ruangwa

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has received 11 classrooms, two teachers' offices, furniture and a special girls' room built by the TPB Bank PLC at the Ndadagala primary school in Ruangwa District, Lindi Region.

Worth 164.9m/-, the project involved construction of a new building as well as renovation of older ones so as to improve the learning and teaching environment at the school.

Speaking during the handover event held yesterday at the school, Majaliwa commended the bank's leadership for extending their support saying that the new buildings and furniture will facilitate smoothing learning and thus improve performance of the pupils in class and examinations.

The Prime Minister urged authorities, parents, teachers and students to ensure that the implemented project is well kept and supervised for it to last long and benefit future generations.

On performance, the premier

said that the school has performed well in this year's Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) whereby 57 pupils out of 63 passed the exam.

He directed authorities to supervise and ensure that all children who passed the national examination continue with secondary education next year and those who have failed be sent to the Ruangwa's Vocational Educational Training Authority (VETA).

Earlier, TBP Bank chief executive officer Sabasaba Moshingi said that one of the bank's priorities is to support various development initiatives by the government which includes enabling provision of quality education in the country.

He noted that education plays a vital role in tackling a whole range of development issues, including building the right skills for productive employment, eradication of poverty, improving health and sanitation and supporting a country's overall economic and social

advancement.

According to him, the project involved construction of four new classrooms, two teachers offices, store, special room for girls, renovation of seven classrooms, 28 toilet holes as well as purchase of teachers furniture including tables and chairs.

Various reports point out that a favourable learning and teaching environment was vital in improving children's performance in schools.


Chairman of the construction committee, Hamza Mkuyanda said the project's completion will ensure a better learning environment to the pupils. He said the good learning environment would also improve pupil's academic performance in national examinations.

Meanwhile, the prime minister received three classrooms and one teacher's house at Mkata primary school at Namhema village in Ruangwa District, Lindi Region.

The project was implemented by education stakeholders.




A woman carries bananas looking for potential customers at Makumbusho in the outskirts of Dar es Salaam. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma



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**Tanzania Cheshire Foundation**

### International consultants and suppliers

We are regularly looking for consultancy roles in our regional offices.

### Expression of interest

We are seeking to procure services of an independent consultant to conduct a lighter touch End of programme Evaluation with a greater focus on learning.

Our project, in partnership with Tanzania Cheshire Foundation, aims to increase the enrolment and retention of children with disabilities in primary schools, to increase their learning and improve their life chances.

Children with disabilities face multiple barriers to education including stigma around disability, isolation and abuse from family and community members, inaccessible environments and lack of rehabilitative support.

This project addresses the barriers to education to ensure that more children with disabilities access education and improve their learning, ultimately receiving a full, quality and inclusive education.

### Overview

The purpose of the consultancy is to provide an independent end-of-programme evaluation of the inclusive education project being implemented in Chamwino District and Dodoma City Councils to assess whether the project outcomes as identified in the project's theory of change and the log-frame are being realized, and to document the lessons learnt, especially enabling factors and remaining barriers of inclusive education in the district.

### Key aims and objectives

This end of project evaluation will be guided by the following broad objectives:

- To assess progress made towards the achievement of the project objectives and expected results as outlined in the project log frame, the extent to which they were achieved and the contributing factors affecting the achievement of the intended results. To ensure the final endline targets in the logframe have been completed.
- To determine the overall impact of the project from baseline to endline on improving the life of children with disabilities at the individual, household/ community level and local government level Dodoma (especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic)
- Provide key learning and recommendations for shaping LC/TCF's inclusive Education model.
- Provide three case studies to illustrate the impact of the project on the lives of girls and boys with disabilities.

### Application process


Interested consultants are invited to submit a proposal by 5pm (Tanzania time) on **6th Jan 2021** to [Rachel.Gondwe@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:Rachel.Gondwe@leonardcheshire.org) with a copy to [menance.mhombwe@outlook.com](mailto:menance.mhombwe@outlook.com).

**NOTE:** to view the terms of reference for the consultancy please visit <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/our-impact/our-international-work/international-consultants-and-suppliers>

JUBILEE LIFE INSURANCE

Jubilee Life Insurance Corporation of Tanzania Limited  
HEAD OFFICE: P.O. Box 20524  
DAR ES SALAAM  
LOSS OF LIFE POLICY NO.  
T1201600022735  
RAHEL MANGE

Application has been made to this company for the issue of duplicate of the above numbered policy, the original having been reported as lost or misplaced. Notice is hereby given that unless objection is lodged to the contrary at the office of the company within thirty days from the date of this notice, duplicate policies will be issued, which will be sole evidence of the contract.





## Pharmacy council happy with good number of pharmacists

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE Pharmacy Council (PC) registrar is happy with the increasing number of pharmacists registering with the council which recorded 11.5 per cent increase.

PC's role is to protect the public that use pharmacy services by registering competent professionals to regulate the system of managing and delivering wholesale and retail pharmacy services.

It is involved with pharmacists, pharmaceutical technicians and assistants and other cadres who are involved in dispensing medicines from the day they start their education and training through obtaining their approvals, registration and licences to practice.

Pharmacy Council Registrar, Elizabeth Shekalaghe noted that the number of pharmacists registered rose from 1,892 in 2018/19 to 2,111 pharmacists in 2019/20.

She made the statement through a media communique issued by the Ministry of Health Community Development Gender, Elderly and Children's Government Communication Unit the number of registered certified pharmacists also reached 3,040 during the year under the review.

The registrar called on training institutions to increase intakes to ensure sufficient pharmacists across public and private health facilities. The council was concerned that some training institutions have low intakes and have been targeting to maximize profits, saying the country is in dire need of pharmacists to help prescribe medicines among patients.

Technically, Tanzania has 52 registered training institution under the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE). But with such a large number of the institutions, the council says the number of graduates is

insufficient.

During 2018/19 a total of 174 pharmacists graduated and received the council's registration. In 2019/20 the number slightly rose to 219 pharmacists. "We need the technical professionals and the council is working to ensure the training institutions provide the needed skilled professionals," she said.

The certified pharmacists who were registered this year were 694, she said. This cadre is still needed to be able to oversee the supply of medicines to the health centres.

The council said it has also been monitoring private pharmacies although in most part the city, municipal and town councils have been entitled to supervise pharmacies in local areas as per their by-laws. She said the council has been conducting regular training to ensure professionalism is sustained.

The council announced, however, that it will be holding training for inspectors and pharmacists next year focusing to improve their capacities to match up with the changing world.

It urged the general public to refrain from purchasing drugs arbitrarily emphasising the decision poses greater health risks.



**The certified pharmacists who were registered this year were 694, she said. This cadre is still needed to be able to oversee the supply of medicines to the health centres**



Shia Ithnasheriya Tanzania Maulana Chief Sheikh Hemed Jalala offers Christmas and New Year greetings to Tanzanians at Masjid Ghadir Kigogo in Dar es Salaam yesterday. With him is Imam of Masjid Ghadir Sheikh Said Athumani. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## ZFDA destroys 15 tonnes of rice unfit for human consumption

By Guardian Correspondent, Pemba

ZANZIBAR Food and Drug Agency (ZFDA) has destroyed 15 tonnes of "Red Rose" brand of rice which it deemed unfit for human consumption to protect people's health.

The rice was recently seized by the Agency as it was being repacked in bags of 'Rayyan' and 'Asmin' brand of rice for sale at a Kizimbani Warehouse, Wete in Pemba North Region.

Speaking soon after the destruction of the rice as well as other condemned foodstuffs,

ZFDA director for Pemba Nassir Salum Bukheti said the aim for destroying the rice was to protect the people against unfit foodstuffs.

He said after inspection in various shops, they seized the rice and destroyed it.

He said they were still going on with the crackdown on other shops and warehouses that could be storing the condemned rice.

He called on traders and the people in general to ensure they store well their foodstuffs in the shops and homes to be fit for human consumption.

"This has proved that poor

storage of the rice is the reason for the rice going bad, as its expiry date was still far away," he added.

For his part, the head of ZFDA Food Quality Control Department in Pemba Saade Omar Hamad said after laboratory tests the rice consignment recently seized was found to be unfit for human consumption, hence it was decided to destroy it.

He advised traders that when they buy huge consignments of goods, they should also look for their expiry dates.

Pujini Kumvini Ward secretary for the area praised ZFDA for

conducting the crackdown on foodstuffs unfit for human consumption because many traders do not care about the lives of the people.

For their part, residents said if the Agency should continue with the crackdown in shops and confiscate unfit foodstuffs for the lives of the people will be greatly protected.

During the destruction of the condemned rice other foodstuffs including powdered milk, spaghetti and other items were also destroyed.



Arusha Urban MP Mrisho Gambo talks with Murieti Ward residents after listening to their challenges facing them yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

## Villagers in Izumbwe blame Tarura for building a new bridge over 'God's Bridge'

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

RESIDENTS of Izumbwe Ward in Mbeya District have complained to the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (Tarura) for rerouting the Swaya-Igale tarmac road over the natural bridge dubbed 'God's Bridge' over Mbalizi river claiming the bridge was a tourist attraction.

They have claimed that they were also worried that the bridge could collapse due to its being used by heavy duty vehicles thereby destroying the area's history.

The residents aired their complaints at the weekend during the visit by Mbeya Rural Member of Parliament Oran Njeza to inspect the government funded bridge project.

One of them Oscar Asheri said they believed during the road's feasibility study Tarura experts should have built the bridge in another area to live the natural bridge intact as a tourist attraction.

They said they were surprised to see when they started building they constructed the new bridge over the natural bridge, saying as a tourist attraction the bridge would have been a source of revenue for the villages.

"We also do not know how certain Tarura experts can be sure that the new bridge could withstand heavy duty vehicles, we are worried that it can collapse any moment," Asheri said.

Nonetheless he thanked the government for its decision to construct the road at tarmac level, saying it would ease transport for both passengers and goods from the farms to the markets in Mbeya City.

Responding to the claims, Mbeya District Tarura manager

Seleman Mziray said the road was nine kms long and so far its construction was 40 per cent complete.

During its feasibility study they decided to use concrete in some of the sections including the area for the said "God's Bridge."

"But also on this bridge, the vehicles that would be allowed to pass would be those not exceeding 10 tonnes, the weight that cannot cause damage to the bridge, hence there is no reason for you to worry about," he said.

He said the road including the bridge over Mbalizi river will cost 7bn/- upon completion expected in March, next year.

He added that the project was supposed to be completed this month (December) but they gave the contractor more time due to conducting new feasibility study as the earlier one was outdated.

For his part, MP Njeza called on ward residents to take care of the infrastructure being built by the government in their areas, saying it was for their own benefit.

He said he would be making the road's follow-up as well as on other projects to ensure they are completed in time for the benefit of the people.



**We also do not know how certain Tarura experts can be sure that the new bridge could withstand heavy duty vehicles, we are worried that it can collapse any moment**

## Minister calls on motorists to be cautious during year end festivals

By Guardian Reporter

THE Minister for Home Affairs George Simbachewene has called on motor vehicle drivers to take great care whilst driving especially during the end of the year festival.

The minister gave the remarks at the Virgin Mary Catholic Parish at Pwaga, Kibakwe Diocese in Mpwapwa District at the weekend.

"There has been a huge drop of road accidents in the past five years, in 2017 there the total

reached 9,250 accidents, but from January to December this year 1,602 road accidents have been recorded because people have been adhering to road traffic rules, but also due to good work by the traffic police," he said.

Meanwhile, the minister called on Tanzanians to maintain the existing peace and value the good ethical foundations inherited by the nation's founding fathers.

He said peace and love begin at family level, hence in the period

of the end of the year's holidays, families should maintain peace and love, which should also extend to the national level.

Simbachewene further said 2020 went through many big incidents, but the nation was safe.

He said the incidents included Covid-19 pandemic and the General Election that ended peacefully, hence, he said Tanzania have every reason to thank God.

Meanwhile, the minister

contributed 5m/- for Simbachawene family in the village and called on the faithful to work hard in order to get money to contribute towards the construction of the church.

For his part, Acting Parish Father, Stephen Umondi congratulated the minister for the contribution towards the church's construction which is expected to begin next year and will be the biggest church in Mpwapwa District.



# TFS in Tanga Region collects about 659m/- in fines - official

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

THE Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) in Tanga Region has this year collected more than 659m/- in fines from tax and levy evaders of forest products.

TFS forest officer Michael Charles said the collections were the penalties from those who evaded tax and levies on the products such as timber, charcoal, firewood, honey and other forest products.

He said that the fines were collected in the inspection centres including roads, ports, railway and illegal routes.

"Tanga doesn't have harvesting forests, even the Pongwe forest is not for harvesting purposes, so we have been setting traps to catch all forest products transporters who pass here without having required certificates or permits," he said.

Michael said that apart from the fines, TFS has also continued to educate stakeholders on the rules and regulations of the government the forest sector while emphasising of the Forest Act, No. 14 of 2002.

"In this year, we provided the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) over 1500 tree seedlings. We have also received a request to supply 100 tree seedlings for the High Court in Tanga," he added.

"There is a huge challenge of some traders evading paying tax and levies when transporting forest products, majority of them have been using illegal routes including through the Indian

Ocean.

Some of the forest products traders claimed that the challenge is big to small-scale traders who have been smuggling the products and selling them at low prices thus affecting those who conduct the business legally.

"We, who conduct this business legally have been ending up getting nothing due to some dishonest traders who have been transporting and selling the forest products at low prices because they doesn't pay levies, taxes or permits, this is hurting us a lot, we are calling for the government to strengthen efforts and fight against the vice," said Omar Njama, a trader at Duga area in Tanga.



**In this year, we provided the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) over 1500 tree seedlings. We have also received a request to supply 100 tree seedlings for the High Court in Tanga**



Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila (wearing t-shirt) listens to fertiliser warehouse supervisor (not named) at Iyunga during his official visit yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

TANGA Regional Commissioner Martin Shigela has directed all managers overseeing the implementation of various projects in the region to buy materials from local manufacturers instead of importing them.

Shigela made the remarks yesterday when he opened tax stakeholders meeting organised by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) where he called upon businessmen and women to get prepared to expand their businesses.

"I call upon you managers, we do

## Managers directed to buy projects materials from local manufacturers

not expect to hear that you have been surprised with this directive and we don't expect an engineer to go beyond this region in search of construction materials, it does not make sense to see lorries from other regions carrying bricks while we have people in this region who can do that," he said.

He urged business people in the region to go beyond thinking of their usual customers and expand by bringing their products near

their clients.

Shigela called upon TRA officers to ensure taxes were collected on a friendly environment.

The RC said taxes were the backbone of the country's economy, adding that there was need for TRA to train workers not to harass businesses by overtaxing them or threatening to close their businesses.

"We should make sure that we conduct our businesses in

accordance with the law at the same time TRA should make sure that they conduct their businesses in accordance with the law and by doing this we can reach out tax collection targets," he said.

The RC called upon traders to love their country by encouraging their customers to demand receipts and ensure that the Electronic Fiscal Devices (EFD) they have been given are well used.



Natural Resources and Tourism Minister Dr. Damas Ndumbaro (L) shows a film of Kituro national reserve through his minister's mobile phone to world tourism documentary producer Drew Binsky from USA and his fiancée Deanna Vesperas after arrival at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam during their conversation yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## 'Experts move to other regions in need to best provide medical services'

By Guardian Reporter

THE Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children Dr Dorothy Gwajima has called on all regions in the country to put in place procedure of calling specialists from all other regions to provide specialist services to the people in the regions.

Dr Gwajima said the procedure would make it easy for the people to get services in their own areas and reduce the number of patients referred to other hospitals.

She also said having in place this kind of procedure in each region will assist to minimise costs as well as reducing inconveniences.

"The specialists themselves will know how to mobilise and make procedures to where they will start going in response to the required services, except that every local council or region should tell the specialists beforehand what they want them to do," she added.

Dr Gwajima said it would be better for the funds provided by various stakeholders to conduct seminars on their specialists services.

"We have very many stakeholders giving us money

for seminars etc, we should ask them to give us the money to take medical services closer to the people," she added.

She said it was not necessary for each patient, after undergoing examination to be referred to the other hospitals, adding "some treatment can be given where he/she is."



**We have very many stakeholders giving us money for seminars etc, we should ask them to give us the money to take medical services closer to the people**

# Mbeya building special secondary schools for Form IV failures

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA Region has started building special secondary schools in every local council that would be enrolling students who did not pass their Form IV examinations.

Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila said the schools would be receiving Form IV

failures to enable them repeat the exams, and that the schools will have Form III and Form IV classes only.

The RC said the schools will be government owned and will be used as alternate to private centres used for those repeating Form IV examinations, and added that the students will be required to pay school fees as

normal.

Speaking to reporters at the weekend, the RC said the implementation of the idea has begun in regard to Mbeya City where the school was being constructed at New Iziwa grounds.

"Schools for the other councils have also been incorporated in their budgets, these schools are

important because the number of students in this group is now big," Chalamila said.

He said leaving these students alone was dangerous because they could turn into muggers and other criminals creating havoc in the streets.

The RC further said teachers who will be teaching in these schools will be employed by

the government in the formal employment way, adding that the aim is to make the region an example for the nation in schools' creativity.

He said the overall aim was to involve the government that if possible such schools should be established countrywide to cater for this kind of students.

Meanwhile Chalamila said as for

now they are mobilizing for the establishment of English Medium primary schools, the exercise that has begun in Mbeya City.

He added that so far Mbeya city Council has three such schools - Benjamini Mkapa, Azimio and John Magufuli English Medium Primary Schools, and more would be opened in 2021 in the city's Uyole and Iwambi areas.



## 22 officials drilled on Kaizen industrial cluster approach

By Guardian Reporter

TWENTY-two Tanzanians have benefited from an online virtual training programme aimed at scaling up the Kaizen cluster approach for participants to acquire and deepen knowledge to promote industrial clusters.

Organised by the Japan International Cooperate Agency (JICA) and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT), the training brought onboard participants from the ministry and Regional Administrative Secretary's offices in Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, and Coast regions, Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO), and College of Business Education (CBE).

According to a statement issued yesterday in Dar es Salaam, MIT and JICA have been implementing a technical cooperation project called the "Project on Strengthening Manufacturing Enterprises through Quality and Productivity Improvement (Kaizen)" since 2013, in order to progress the Tanzanian Kaizen movement toward a nationwide expansion and improve competitiveness for private enterprises in Tanzania through Kaizen.

Held between December 8, and 18, in Dar es Salaam the training was a component of the project and one of the current main activities of the project is to promote and implement the "Industrial Cluster Development" through Kaizen (called the "Kaizen x Cluster approach") from early 2020.

"Thus, this online training focused on such the Kaizen x Cluster approach for participants from related organizations to acquire and deepen knowledge to promote industrial cluster," the statement reads in part.

"Almost all of the contents in the training were provided

from Japan online. Participants learned from lecturers of several Japanese experts, discussions with Japanese enterprises/governmental organisations, and group study through online, videos, and exercises. In addition, the training included virtual visits to Japanese enterprises that implement Kaizen, local governments, and associations/cooperatives that promote industrial cluster development in Japan."

"The training was composed of two parts, whereby the first part was organized for Kaizen trainers and practitioners who involve in the deployment of a model for Kaizen promotion through industrial cluster development from 8th to 16th December.

"The second part from December 16th to 18th was designed for high-ranking government officials, including Dodoma RAS Paul Maduka, who are responsible for planning and facilitating policies for nationwide Kaizen promotion. As a part of the training program, participants of the first part were able to improve a draft model for the Kaizen x Cluster approach combining the lessons from this program and their experiences with the target clusters. On December 16th, all participants from both groups gathered, and the first groups presented the drafted model to the second group's high-ranking government officials."

Early 2021, MIT and JICA are planning several events (i.e. Tanzania Kaizen Award 2021, Tanzania Kaizen Day, Training for Kaizen trainers, etc.) to promote nationwide Kaizen activities further. JICA will continue supporting Kaizen in Tanzania through its technical cooperation and the provision of necessary funding, in order to achieve our goals for Tanzanian industrialisation agenda.



Tanzania National Road Agency Manyara Region manager Bashiri Rwesingisa speaks during the regional consultative meeting held in Babati over the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

## Dodoma city authority urges residents to plant trees for commercial purposes

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

DODOMA city authority has urged area residents to focus on planting trees for commercial purposes and support efforts of the government and non-state actors working to make Dodoma a green city.

Early this year the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa emphasised on the need to make the country's capital, Dodoma green and clean, as he directed that traffic lights in the city should be installed.

He was speaking when officiating the official launching of a robust Master Plan for Dodoma City, as he insisted that there was no way Dodoma can be as dirty as Dar es Salaam City.

"I want to ensure that Dodoma City Council is clean, therefore, I am directing the city council to ensure that it does all it can to ensure that Dodoma remains clean," he stressed.

Speaking recently during Regional Consultative Council (RCC) meeting, the Dodoma Regional Commissioner, Dr Binlith Mahenge urged residents to invest in planting trees for commercial purposes, directing the councils to turn their focus into setting up small scale industries in their localities.

Dr Mahenge explained that commercial trees have double profits being income generation and conserving the environment. "There several tree species such as cashew nuts, mangoes, sisal

and grapes with a lot of economic potentials" he said, adding that an acre land can hold at least 33 trees of cashew nut and during harvest, a farmer can harvest more than 400 kilogrammes.

For his part, Bahi MP, Kenneth Nollo said there has been a growing challenge in the market for grapes in the region and farmers are struggling without a backup plan.

"Farmers are faced with a lot of challenges despite the government's decision to freeze nuisance duties and charges," he said, calling on more stakeholders to join efforts and see how to support farmers.

Peter Mavunde, representing the elders' desk in the region said there was still need for a

comprehensive strategy to market tourism attraction in the region that could help boost the region in the global map. "If we have a proper market strategy I believe we can also get investors who can spearhead the grape subsector," he said.

Assistant Regional Administrative Secretary in-charge of economy Aziza Mumba explaining the status of agriculture in the region said there 4.131million hectares on which 2.24 million hectares is arable land.

She said 1.2million hectares are estimated to be cultivated representing 52 per cent of the arable land. She added that 50,457 hectares of land are sufficient for irrigation infrastructure.



Deputy Home Affairs minister Khamis Hamza Chilo (R), Zanzibar Police Commissioner Mohammed Hassan Haji, and North Pemba Police Commander, Juma Sadi Hamis and Zanzibar Immigration Commissioner Johari Sururu inspect one of the police houses built at Finya area in Wete District yesterday. Photo: Home Affairs

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

## Only 9,000 students reported at UDOM out of 11,000 enrolled - Vice-Chancellor

THE University of Dodoma (UDOM) has enrolled 11,000 students of various undergraduate degree courses but only 9,000 students reported so far.

In addition, among them the country's largest varsity has enrolled 600 students pursuing masters' degrees and 101 pursuing PhDs in different fields.

UDOM Vice-Chancellor Prof Faustine Bee, said yesterday while speaking to reporters at the varsity campus located few kilometers from the capital city.

Prof. Bee said that the competition was fierce and the varsity decided to enroll students with high pass marks.

He said that in the competition there are students who got second division failed to sail through some competitive courses such as medicine and law, advising students with second-division in Form Six exams to apply for other courses in order to get a chance to join the varsity.

Prof Bee said that UDOM has a good reputation before the public, the situation that increased competition as more students applied for different courses offered by the university.

He further said that more than 40 per cent of students applied to join UDOM in the new academic season, which is a high rate compared to the fact that there are many universities in the country and some are older.

He said the university continues to improve training as well as integrate practical training programs to build graduates with a broader understanding of what they are learning.

"Give me a few examples, our students of dance art, painting, costume design, the electronic design have been getting various jobs while still in university, jobs that they can do and earn income," he explained.

## Africa waits for Biden to unlock, reallocate \$200b of IMF reserves

By Special Correspondent

AFRICAN countries are waiting with bated breath for the Joe Biden administration and other rich economies under the G-20 to consider a proposal to allocate at least \$200 billion held in unused reserves at the International Monetary Fund to deal with the adverse impact of the coronavirus on their economies.

Africa is currently staring at a pandemic response funding gap of approximately \$100 billion annually over the next three years, according to initial estimates by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

If approved, IMF funds made available under a major issuance of the IMF's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) - reserves from central banks of all IMF members - will provide additional resources to cash-strapped governments on the continent.

However, given that SDRs are allocated in proportion to each country's shareholding (quota) in the IMF, what is required is for the largest shareholders of the bank to reallocate their unused reserves and increase capacity of the IMF to lend to low-income countries.

The proposal which is expected to be discussed during the spring meetings of the IMF/ World Bank in 2021 requires votes - at least 85 per cent - by IMF member states. Africa's current shareholding of the IMF is about seven percent.

Of particular importance is a decision by the United States, the largest shareholder of the IMF with 16.51 percent of the votes. Under the Trump administration, the US made reservations delaying the decision.

Now, with the exit of President Donald Trump, there is optimism

that the Biden administration may give a new lease on life to countries currently choking on debt that is complicating efforts to deal with the pandemic.

Analysts say while advanced economies have pulled out massive stimulus packages to deal with the effect of the pandemic, countries in the global south have limited options. For example, just last week, the US Congress approved a \$900 billion stimulus package.

"It is a political decision; it has not been possible to get the super-majority under the current administration; the expectation is that hopefully under the new administration it could happen; but there is no guarantee it will happen," Dr Donald Kaberuka, a member of the eminent African Union (AU) panel tasked with mobilising international support for Africa's efforts to address the economic challenges African countries face as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic said.

If approved, Dr Kaberuka argued, the funding would be a hugely cost effective way to provide massive stimulus in the global south.

On December 21, Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who is a special AU envoy confirmed that the continental body will be engaging advanced economies on an economic relief package that is urgently needed to give room to countries to invest in revamping their economies to mitigate the adverse shocks of the ongoing pandemic.

Africa needs an economic relief package that includes loan restructuring, debt relief and a reallocation of SDRs from rich countries to navigate the twin challenge of a health and economic crisis.



# Cardiovascular centre of excellence construction on course - professor

By Guardian Correspondent

THE country's ability to treat patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases is set for more advancement as the construction of Centre of Excellence for Cardiovascular Sciences (CoECS) is set to be complete next year.

The centre which is at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) Mloganzila Campus, is expected to contribute more to the government's efforts in reducing the number of patients seeking treatment abroad, thus saving public funds.

According to project coordinator, Prof Gideon Kwesigabo, the construction of the centre is so far complete by 75 per cent.

The CoECS is part of the East African Centres of Excellence in Skills Development and Tertiary Education in Biomedical Sciences Project that aims at contributing to the development of relevant and highly skilled workforce in biomedical sciences to meet the East African Community's immediate labour market needs.

Prof Kwesigabo said the main purpose of establishing the centre is to support prevention of cardiovascular diseases, offer treatment and save costs spent on sending patients abroad for heart disease treatment.

"The construction work began in 2018 and it was supposed to be complete in 2019, but there were some challenges that held up the completion, including late issuance of building permit,

extreme and unforeseen weather conditions and processing tax exemption, which made the contractor to delay in obtaining work equipment that he had to import from abroad," he said.

He added: "But now the construction is progressing well and it is 75 per cent complete, and we have already spent 50 per cent of the total costs of the project, so we expect that by July 2021, the work will be completed," Prof Kwesigabo further said that their main request to the government is to provide them with support in construction of a cardiology hospital that will be used for teaching but also to provide services to the people.

Speaking during the official visit of the Deputy Minister for Education, Science and

Technology, Mr Omari Kipanga, he said Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) alone was not enough to serve the whole country since it was built to provide treatment only and not to prevent heart diseases.

The centre is funded by the government of Tanzania and a soft loan from the African Development Bank (AfDB). Phase one of the project will cost 10.2 million US Dollars.

Expounding further, he said when the centre is completed, they will be providing training that had already started, and so far 38 professionals are already on training, where some of them are in the PhD level.

Other responsibilities of the centre include development of curricula, where so far seven

curricula are ready and four of them have been approved by Tanzania Commission for University (TCU) where they have successfully recruited 14 students for the first time in 2020/2021 academic year that will use the curriculum.

Other areas that the centre will prioritise are regional integration, creating a database of cardiovascular diseases to determine the extent of the problem and see the contribution that the facility will make to reduce these problems.

For his part, Kipanga said the project is important for the East African Community (EAC) because it will increase regional cooperation. Phase one of the project will support the creation of a network of CoEs in biomedical

sciences and engineering - Nephrology and Urology in Kenya, Oncology in Uganda, Cardiovascular in Tanzania and Biomedical Engineering and eHealth in Rwanda.

The project's main objective is to enhance EAC's competitiveness through a highly skilled workforce in biomedical sciences.

The project will enable EAC to increase its capacity and competitiveness through expanding higher education and specialised service delivery that is demanded by the rapid economic development in East Africa.

On the other hand, the project has the potential to create jobs for professionals and support services through medical tourism within the EAC as well as from other African regions.

# UNESCO addresses inequalities, economic impacts of COVID-19 in nine African cities - report

By Special Correspondent

WHILE the world has focused on the public health consequences of the COVID-19, the socioeconomic impacts have been a key policy lever in establishing government responses.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the pandemic triggered severe economic and social contractions, magnifying the long-standing legacies of prejudice, injustice, and increasing inequalities of our societies. Local populations have suffered devastating consequences for food security, employment opportunities, and public trust, provoked by the global health crisis.

UNESCO, in partnership with Metropolis Canada and the Canadian COVID-19 Social Impacts Network, produced a report on the Impact of COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa to put forward key policy recommendations to counter the consequences of the pandemic that has left the most vulnerable further behind. Based on over 3,000 collected responses, the report's results explore the most salient societal issues, such as public trust in institutions, access to services, and social status, the most widely reported form of discrimination. The report was launched during a webinar announcing the findings of the study on 11 December 2020.

Among its key findings, the report revealed the economic transformations brought about by the pandemic, with a staggering 81% of respondents suffering negative financial impacts, almost half experiencing difficulties accessing employment services, and just under 40% having trouble getting financial assistance. Health was another focus of the report, with one in five respondents reporting bad or very bad mental health and young Sub-Saharan Africans, in particular, disclosing difficulty in accessing health care.

To counter high fear levels - 46% of respondents indicated being fearful of contracting the virus - the report recommended establishing additional safety measures. One in four respondents indicated a lack of access to testing and testing facilities despite a willingness to do so. Responders also experienced discrimination based on social status, political affiliation, and gender, with 18 to 24-year-olds having the highest rates. Improvement of trust in various government and law enforcement institutions was another key recommendation in light of a disturbing erosion of confidence in these bodies.

The survey was conducted in nine cities across Sub-Saharan Africa (Maputo, Mozambique; Johannesburg, South Africa; Harare, Zimbabwe; Nairobi, Kenya; Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; Dakar, Senegal; Libreville, Gabon; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Kampala, Uganda - members of UNESCO's International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities - ICCAR), and collected a total of 3001 responses from 18 to 65+ year-olds in English, French and Portuguese, via a web-based

survey with both quantitative and qualitative questions, between 11 August and 4 September 2020.

Chaired by the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Former Governor General of Canada & Former Secretary-General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, and coordinated by an Expert Advisory Committee including Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences; Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, Director of the UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Office in Nairobi for East Africa; Firmin Edouard Matoko, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations; as well as researchers and elected officials, the study uncovered several key themes requiring the attention of policymakers.

Moderated by Simona Bignami, Professor of Demography at the Université de Montréal, the webinar welcomed more than 100 participants from around the world.

The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean emphasized the study's significant goal to provide governments of the cities involved with necessary data to address the need for effective and inclusive policy responses that are evidence-based. She also addressed the imperative need to consider the socioeconomic dimension of the crisis while highlighting how it has exacerbated inequalities within countries - leaving the most vulnerable groups behind. She later expressed how this is only the beginning of the work that needs to be done as the pandemic is an opportunity to examine what is needed, especially in terms of policies and access; it is also an indicator of the gaps and inequalities and blindspots of society.

Gabriela Ramos highlighted the need for more granular information and a solid evidence base to understand the impact of the COVID crisis, which has stagnated economies and hit the lower-income groups - emphasizing how the mapping out of its differentiated impacts is exceptionally significant. Recognizing that this partnership has produced innovative knowledge to better understand the perceptions of people in Sub-Saharan Africa on how COVID is affecting their health, their life and their economic activities, Ms Ramos expressed that this international survey will inform better policies, not only related to the containment of the virus spread or to keep the economy but in anticipating the reaction of certain groups regarding the newly developed vaccines. Based on this research, she made a strong call for countries to prioritize policies that will deliver better for the most vulnerable and for those segments that were highly hit. The partnership that UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences forged with the Canadian institute has delivered greatly, as the study dealt with one of the regions with a higher level of vulnerabilities, and a lack of granular data.



A local shoes petty traders hunt for potential customers at Makumbusho area in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Maasai youth these days have engaged in petty businesses as captured yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

# AfDB takes steps to accelerate the circular economy in Africa

By Special Correspondent

WITH an initiative funded by the Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation (KOAPEC) focused on waste management, the African Development Bank aims to accelerate the circular economy in Africa, a model which aims to minimize waste and maximize value from resources through the recovery and regeneration of products at the end of their typical service life.

The rationale for the initiative, entitled "Development of a Green Growth Investment Program in Africa focused on waste management and the circular economy," is that waste management constitutes one of the major developmental challenges for Africa. It has serious

potential consequences in terms of environmental quality, public health, fisheries, agriculture, and sustainable development.

The expected outcome of the KOAPEC intervention is a stronger enabling environment for sustainable waste management and circular economy activities. This will be delivered through an enhanced policy and regulatory framework, capacity building and resource mobilization activities.

The initiative specifically unlocks opportunities for public, private and public-private investment projects in Algeria, Ethiopia and Rwanda, three countries which have already taken steps to advance sustainable waste management and the circular economy. The initiative will identify key

opportunities for private and public sector investment in the waste management and circular economy sectors.

In Ethiopia, the focus is on energy recovery from waste incineration. Algeria is promoting enhancing the value of waste through recycling, composting and remanufacturing. Rwanda has phased out plastic bag use to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.

"For African countries, the circular economy model offers concrete means to deliver on their Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitments and the broader Africa Agenda 2063 through the scaling of green innovations with positive impact on job creation and resource optimization," said

Prof. Anthony Nyong, Director for Climate Change and Green Growth at the AfDB.

"In this regard, the circular economy model strongly aligns with the Bank's High 5 agenda and brings forth innovations with the potential for new project pipelines for the Bank's operations."

The KOAPEC initiative will deliver 'gap analysis' reports for each country with a detailed list of priority areas and identification of viable investment opportunities for public, private and PPP interventions. Other outputs will include the preparation of three concept notes for investment projects or technical assistance interventions in each country, as well as the dissemination of success stories in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.



Monduli District Commissioner ACP Edward Balele (2nd L) hands over 4.6m/- to Nengilang'eti Mibuko being medical treatment for her son Mjomba Songei who was hurt by an elephant last month in Randlen conservation area, Arusha Region. Photo: Correspondent Cynthia Mwilolezi



TUESDAY 29 DECEMBER 2020

Taking A New Look  
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## Stone Town renewal is tough task but feasible

ZANZIBAR authorities have a huge task in their hands trying to map out what to do about Stone Town tourist section of the city of Zanzibar, especially in the wake of the collapse of a historic building, the House of Wonders (Beit el Ajaib) late last week. The surprising event was reported in the regional media up to Oman in the Gulf zone, as the country has historic relations with Zanzibar, and some spheres of cooperation were already being mapped out. They included facial uplift of some historical structures, etc.

So far not much has been said about immediate causes of the collapse of the building, but it shall be recalled that there was a strong earthquake in the city of Dar es Salaam whose epicenter was located in the sea, within the 12-mile territorial waters zone not far from a touristic island. This may have been a coup de grace for aged structures whose foundations and upper structures may have experienced other tests earlier, and failed to survive a 5.9 Richter scale earthquake, but temporarily. It means that there is plenty to do to shore up the touristic zone now under siege from the weight of its aged structures, firstly.

The first area of concern of the Isles authorities has predictably been the safety of the population, as many structures in the Stone Town area are similar in age, mode of construction and definitely some of the underlying weaknesses.

First Vice President Seif Sharif Hamad was thus issuing directives over the weekend to senior officials of the Urban West Region to start working together with the Stone Town Authority. They need to closely examine all buildings in

the tourist zone to stem the danger of collapsing.

The Isles VP was visiting those injured following the collapse of the House of Wonders mid last week, killing two people and injuring four others, noting in his remarks that many structures in the Stone Town area are old and dilapidated, not being refurbished for a long time. He directed his remarks at the Urban West Regional Commissioner, saying it would be better for him to sit with officials of the authority to form an evaluation committee to examine the buildings and map out actions to be taken. A first step is to figure out if the buildings are safe for people to live in and if not, then the dwellers be advised to shift.

He similarly praised the government of Oman for cooperation with the Zanzibar Government in refurbishing historical buildings. It hence implies that plenty of work needs to be done, as not even the collapsed building can be left 'to the dogs' as they say but needs to be rectified to solve the glaring weaknesses. Lela Mohammed Mussa, the minister for Tourism and National Heritage, said that the government was forming a team to probe circumstances of the building's collapse. For the details, surely.

The House of Wonders was built in 1883 and was in recent years extensively dilapidated, with large sections of the verandah and roof collapsing in 2012 and 2015 respectively, threatening the structural integrity of the rest of the building, the minister stated. Given the prominence of the structure in the Stone Town zone, its revamping is a priority for Zanzibar authorities. There are willing partners for the task.

## Africa is immensely rich in biodiversity, but Continent demands a strategic plan

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

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

Rapid environmental changes typically cause mass extinctions. More than 99.9 per cent of all species that ever lived on Earth, amounting to over five billion species, are estimated to be extinct.

Estimates on the number of Earth's current species range from 10 million to 14 million, of which about 1.2 million have been documented and over 86 per cent have not yet been described. More recently, in May 2016, scientists reported that 1 trillion species are estimated to be on Earth currently with only one-thousandth of one percent described.

Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to see some of the most severe biodiversity impacts tied to land

use, according to researchers who warn that agricultural production will affect some 20,000 species without changes to the global agricultural system.

The new findings were published recently in the journal Nature Sustainability.

"Ultimately, we need to change what we eat and how it is produced if we're going to save wildlife on a global scale. We need to alter both our diets and food production methods," said Dr. David Williams of the University of Leeds in the UK. Williams led the research team from Leeds and the University of Oxford.

Their findings are based on a more precise model of how land use will affect biodiversity, and finer detail on which parts of the world are more likely to see expansion of agricultural land. In addition to sub-Saharan Africa, the most severe impacts are expected to affect Central and South America.

The authors hope that improved visibility into the agricultural impacts will drive conservation efforts in a more targeted way.

"Discussions on slowing and reversing biodiversity often focus on conventional conservation actions, such as establishing new protected areas or species-specific legislation for threatened species. These are absolutely needed, and have been effective at conserving biodiversity," said Dr. Michael Clark of Oxford. "However, our research emphasizes the importance of also reducing the ultimate stresses to biodiversity—such as agricultural expansion. The good news is that if we make ambitious changes to the food system, then we can prevent almost all these habitat losses."

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## Science has delivered, will the WTO deliver? TRIPS waiver proposal from India, South Africa and other members

By Brajendra Navnit

A proposal by India, South Africa and eight other countries calls on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to exempt member countries from enforcing some patents, and other Intellectual Property (IP) rights under the organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, known as TRIPS, for a limited period of time. It is to ensure that IPRs do not restrict the rapid scaling-up of manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. While a few members have raised concerns about the proposal, a large proportion of the WTO membership supports the proposal. It has also received the backing of various international organizations, multilateral agencies and global civil society.

Unprecedented times call for unorthodox measures. We saw this in the efficacy of strict lockdowns for a limited period, as a policy intervention, in curtailing the spread of the pandemic. International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its October 2020 edition of World Economic Outlook states "...However, the risk of worse growth outcomes than projected remains sizable. If the virus resurges, progress on treatments and vaccines is slower than anticipated, or countries' access to them remains unequal, economic activity could be lower than expected, with renewed social distancing and tighter lockdowns".

The situation appears to be grimmer than predicted, we have already lost 7% of economic output from the baseline scenario projected in 2019. It translates to a loss of more than USD 6 trillion of global GDP. Even a 1% improvement in global GDP from the baseline scenario will add more than USD 800 billion in global output, offsetting the loss certainly of a much lower order to a sector of economy on account of the Waiver.

Merely a signal to ensure timely and affordable access to vaccines and treatments will work as a big confidence booster for demand revival in the economy. With the emergence of successful vaccines, there appears to be some hope on the horizon.

But how will these be made accessible and affordable to global population? The fundamental question is whether there will be enough of Covid-19 vaccines



to go around. As things stand, even the most optimistic scenarios today cannot assure access to Covid-19 vaccines and therapeutics for the majority of the population, in rich as well as poor countries, by the end of 2021. All the members of the WTO have agreed on one account that there is an urgent need to scale-up the manufacturing capacity for vaccines and therapeutics to meet the massive global needs. The TRIPS Waiver Proposal seeks to fulfil this need by ensuring that IP barriers do not come in the way of such scaling up of manufacturing capacity.

### Why existing flexibilities under the TRIPS Agreement are not enough

The existing flexibilities under the TRIPS Agreement are not adequate as these were not designed keeping pandemics in mind. Compulsory licenses are issued on a country by country, case by case and product by product basis, where every jurisdiction with an IP regime would have to issue separate compulsory licenses, practically making collaboration among countries extremely onerous. While we encourage the use of TRIPS flexibilities, the same are time-consuming and cumbersome to implement. Hence, only their use cannot ensure the timely access of affordable vaccines and treatments. Similarly, we have not seen a very encouraging progress on WHO's Covid-19-Technology Access Pool or the C-TAP initiative, which encourages voluntary contribution of IP, technology and data to support the global sharing and scale-up of the manufacturing of COVID-19 medical products. Voluntary Licenses, even where

they exist, are shrouded in secrecy. Their terms and conditions are not transparent. Their scope is limited to specific amounts or for a limited subset of countries, thereby encouraging nationalism rather than true international collaboration.

### Why is there a need to go beyond existing global cooperation initiatives?

Global cooperation initiatives such as the COVAX Mechanism and the ACT-Accelerator are inadequate to meet the massive global needs of 7.8 billion people. The ACT-A initiative aims to procure 2 billion doses of vaccines by the end of next year and distribute them fairly around the world. With a two-dose regime, however, this will only cover 1 billion people. That means that even if ACT-A is fully financed and successful, which is not the case presently, there would not be enough vaccines for the majority of the global population.

### Past experience

During the initial few months of the current pandemic, we have seen that shelves were emptied by those who had access to masks, PPEs, sanitizers, gloves and other essential Covid-19 items even without their immediate need. The same should not happen to vaccines. Eventually, the world was able to ramp up manufacturing of Covid-19 essentials as there were no IP barriers hindering that. At present, we need the same pooling of IP rights and know-how for scaling up the manufacturing of vaccines and treatments, which unfortunately has not been forthcoming, necessitating the need for the Waiver.

It is the pandemic - an

extraordinary, once in a lifetime event - that has mobilized the collaboration of multiple stakeholders. It is knowledge and skills held by scientists, researchers, public health experts and universities that have enabled the cross-country collaborations and enormous public funding that has facilitated the development of vaccines in record time - and not alone IP!

### Way forward

The TRIPS waiver proposal is a targeted and proportionate response to the exceptional public health emergency that the world faces today. Such a Waiver is well within the provisions of Article IX of the Marrakesh Agreement which established the WTO. It can help in ensuring that human lives are not lost for want of a timely and affordable access to vaccines. The adoption of the Waiver will also re-establish WTO's credibility and show that multilateral trading system continues to be relevant and can deliver in times of a crisis. Now is the time for WTO members to act and adopt the Waiver to save lives and help in getting the economy back on the revival path quickly.

While making the vaccines available was a test of science, making them accessible and affordable is going to be a test of humanity. History should remember us for the "AAA rating" i.e. for Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Covid-19 vaccines and treatments and not for a single "A rating" for Availability only. Our future generations deserve nothing less.

**Brajendra Navnit is ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to WTO**



By Correspondent Valentine Oforo

# Rural women farmers decry poor agricultural initiatives, calls for transformation

**I**N Tanzania women play a significant role in agricultural labour force and agricultural activities, as well as in rural economies.

The 2019 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)'s Labour Force Survey shows that women contribute for more than 50 per cent of the agricultural labour force whereby at least 58 per cent of the country's citizens eking their livelihoods in the sector.

Basing on the fact that the agriculture sector contribute to 26 per cent of the Domestic Gross Product (DGP), it remains clear that women offers useful workforce in economic growth and poverty reduction within the country, and from household levels.

Despite playing such laudable role in fostering economic growth, women engaging in agriculture activities in Tanzania have for years been grappling with numerous setbacks that upset their working morale.

Generally, they were- and most are still- distanced from access to vital agricultural production resources, such as land and credit. Their access to land is often through their husbands and fathers and usually loses their property rights as a consequence of widowhood, divorce and or desertion.

However, existence of masculinity systems within many societies stands tall among other factors that crowding - out women in rural areas ample inopportunities to effectively participating in the economic sector.

On September 19,2017, the women who practicing agriculture in Tanzania decided to organise themselves in a special platform, dubbed 'Rural Women Farmers Forum (RWFF), in order to have a 'Common Say and Voice' in lobbying for their rights, but also seeking and tapping potential opportunities the agriculture sector offers.

Established with an eye to ensure for general improvement of the agriculture sector through formation and implementation of gender- based free policies and systems, the positive forum has so far managed to achieve countless milestones.

Recently, a total of 90 smallholder rural farmers from different Mainland and Isle Regions convened in capital city of Dodoma to have an audience with officials from the ministry of Agriculture, thanks to the Forum' s chief supporter, Action Aid Tanzania.



Members of Tanzania Rural Women Farmers Forum and extension officers paying attention during a meeting with officers from Agriculture Ministry. Photo: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

Among others, the two-day gathering was tailored to provide the farmers with a vital platform to air their grievances, but also outlining their suggestion inputs to the government ahead of compilation of the Agriculture Sector Development Programme (ASDP II 2021/2025), expecting to come into effect from July next year.

Apart from that, the gathering was bravely used by the female farmers to retreat over their achievements, challenges and strategizing for their future expectations.

During the forum, President for the 'Rural Women Farmers Forum (RWFF) Amina Senge expressed that apart from the forum to fetch numerous achievements in help spur performance and livelihoods of Tanzania's rural women cultivators, they are still haunted by many setbacks.

### Poor access and improper uses of pesticides

During the gathering, most of female farmers raised concern of being crowded - out from reliable access to obtain pesticides, as well as awareness on how proper to apply the pesticides in their plantations.

"There's a need for the government to come with a more friendly mechanism through which farmers in rural areas can be supplied with certified pesticides,"

"In most villages we are often purchasing counterfeit pesticides due to poor awareness and lack of reliable supply of the key agriculture inputs," said Mary Martin, a farmer from Mo-

rogoro.

The farmers also appealed to the ministry of agriculture to appear more smart against some scrupulous agro dealers who sell fake pesticides to rural farmers.

Irregularities and unfriendly conditions in obtaining capital loans

Agriculture is science hence practicing it professionally to attain productivity a farmer must possess enough capital.

Rural women farmers, during their audience with the agriculture ministry, said they have been encountering some red-tapes when seeking for capital loans from most of macro and micro financial institutions.

"Most of financial institutions are profit oriented and thus, they are imposing huge interest rates that are not friendly to smallholder farmers. And on top of that, most of them are often shunning away to roll out loans to smallholder farmers in fear of experiencing loss," said Lilian Gekul, a female farmer from Singida.

### Effects of climate change

Climate change, which continues to negate agriculture activities in many countries within the African continent is another serious challenge damaging many rural women farmers in Tanzania.

At a forum, the farmers challenged the government to spearhead the war against the dangerous environmental disaster in Tanzania, meanwhile finding for reliable means to capacitate the farmers to professionally 'out-

smart' the global challenge.

According to them crop failures, which often leads to famine and poverty has been part and parcel among many rural farmer's households.

"We are aware of how the government has been striving to assist the agriculture sector in Tanzania not withstand effects of climate change, but we're asking for more support and interventions,"

"For instance, there is a need to impart the farmers, especially those in rural areas, with technical information on climate change, together with providing us with relevant facilities to help battle out the effects," challenged Elizabeth Msuya, a female farmer from Chamwino District, in Dodoma Region.

### Effects of industrial fertilisers

The female agriculture practitioners also spoke over challenge of unprofessional applications of industrial fertilisers, some of which lead to soil infertility.

Apart from appealing to the parent ministry to bring the rural farmers to the helpful knowledge on how to apply the industrial fertilisers, they also suggested that it was also of prudent for the government to invest more on the uses of organic agriculture.

### Land feuds between farmers and pastoralist

Development needs peace and harmony to prevail. Most of the smallholder women farmers, apart from suffering from sovereignty of mascu-

linity nature when it comes to land ownership, are again victims of land feuds.

"In rural areas most men spends their daytime and money drinking local brew, leaving behind their deprived wives struggling to cultivate in order to feed the families,"

"Sad enough, in most cases, their crops are being destroyed by some rude pastoralist due to land disputes, its very disconcerting and the situation need to be permanently addressed," most of the women farmers sounded during the meeting.

### Language barrier

To succeed in agriculture, a farmer needs to see and access key information on agronomic practices, among others.

The rural women farmers said most of such key information are in English language and due to small number of extension officers it becomes complicated for them (farmers) to read between the lines when meeting with such information.

"Its high time all vital information on Agriculture, those dealing directly to farmers, be available in Kiswahili," suggested Mariam Sangati, a smallholder farmer from Lindi.

### Other suggestions to the government

- (i) To increase budget allocation to agriculture sector, at least to the tune of 10 percent.
- (ii) Government to extend provisions of crops insurances to more farmers and at affordable prices
- (iii) To increase the number of extension officers and equip them with more agronomic trainings and facilities
- (vi) Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank (TADB) to roll out more loans to women rural farmers
- (v) Government to intensify strategies and supports towards organic agriculture
- (vi) Government to improve pesticides services to farmers
- (ix) Government to improve policies on land ownership towards women.

### Achievement of the forum

The forum, since its inception on September 19,2017 has managed to open its branches in a total of 28 districts of Tanzania.

Furthermore, the move managed to assist more women to realise their statutory rights, especially in land ownership and decisions making.

In ensuring the government increase the agriculture budget allocation, the forum also managed to have an audience with members of East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) to lobby for an increased budgetary allocation towards agriculture sector as stipulated under the Malabo Agreement.

The forum also played notable role in sensitizing more women farmers to engage into agricultural activities.

# Oil markets were among the great disruptors of 2020

By Ed Stoddard

**T**he BIG disruptor, of course, was a certain virus that wreaked havoc with the global economy. But the response by some markets and sectors of the economy to the 'Great Lockdown' was more disruptive than others.

Global oil markets stand out in this regard. In April, futures contracts for West Texas crude plunged into negative territory for the first time, fetching close to minus \$40 a barrel. This was a buyer's wet dream - sellers were paying them to take the barrels off their hands. Think of the classic O Henry short story The Ransom of Red Chief.

Buyers were only briefly paid to acquire oil, and the price in December broke through \$50 a barrel - as in that was the price that buyers had to pay sellers - but that underscores the wild ride that oil markets have taken this year. And it is a ride that has sloshed through the pipes of the global economy, potentially reshaping it for decades to come.

In November, global consultancy PwC forecast in a far-reaching report that global oil demand would "never again exceed 2019 levels".

"Spurred on by the Covid-19 global pandemic, the world is finally galvanising its commitment to move towards a green and sustainable future by this mid-century, and the global energy transition is the cornerstone of this new world," PwC said.

The impact will be far-reaching and



is generally seen as a plus for the environment, with lowered emissions of the greenhouse gases linked to climate change. That is a cause for celebration, though the economic impact could herald unforeseen ecological consequences if poverty levels, for example, rise in developing economies that rely heavily on oil. (Rising poverty levels are often not good for the environment for a range of reasons.)

"Forecast oil demand globally shows a curbed recovery over

the next few years following the Covid-induced demand slump, with prices predicted to reach a ceiling of about \$54/bbl (compared with a pre-Covid view of long-term pricing ranging between \$60 and \$70/bbl). It is estimated that this lower price forecast will cost Africa a potential \$1-trillion in export revenues from oil over the next 20 years," the PwC report noted.

That would be a significant loss in revenue streams to the world's poorest continent,

though its potential to tap renewables is huge. The sun does shine brightly on the only continent that is bisected in the middle by the equator.

And the pace of events triggered by the pandemic will have a disruptive effect across global value chains.

"The rapid post-Covid greening policy response is forcing this shift far quicker than what industry and vehicle manufacturers are ready for and thus these industries and all associated suppliers in

the value chain will experience some form of disruption," James Mackay, PwC director of energy strategy and infrastructure, told Business Maverick.

Estimates vary, but the consequences of "peak oil demand" also include potentially trillions of dollars in "stranded assets" for the oil sector. That is, assets on the books that are suddenly liabilities because they won't generate expected or possibly any revenue. The kinds of assets that buyers might get paid to pick up.

"It is natural that higher-priced production is going to exit the market first i.e. highest producers on the cost curve get displaced first. This is generally regarded as unconventional and offshore production - Covid has already seen a permanent reduction in oil sand and shale oil production as an example," Mackay said.

Saudi Arabia still produces oil more cheaply than pretty much anyone else, so the kingdom may keep pumping the stuff long after obituaries have been written for America's fracking revolution. That should help to lay to rest concerns about the Karoo getting fracked.

For South Africa, the implications are profound and go beyond shale pipe dreams in the Karoo. Sasol posted a staggering loss of more than R90-billion in the year to the end of June, in large part due to the collapse of oil prices and demand.

But "lower oil prices for longer", to use a term now in use, are helping to contain already muted inflation pressures in the domestic economy, and boosting South Africa's "terms of trade". Prices for the oil South Africa imports are down, while prices for other commodities produced here, such as gold, rhodium and palladium, are near record highs. But what does "peak oil demand" mean for commodities such as palladium, which is used as an emissions-capping catalyst in petrol engines?

AGENCIES



# Reflecting back and imagining forward

SYDNEY

What a challenging year 2020 has been! A year of living dangerously - "Tahun vivere pericoloso" - perhaps these words of late President Soekarno of Indonesia are the best description.

Fortunately, I managed to remain sane, reading and writing op-eds (mostly about the pandemic, here, here).

I began the year 2020 with an interview with New Age (Dhaka, 12 Feb.), headlined, "We need to Democratise Politics" where I highlighted the perils of growing inequality and how it could be a greater threat than the evolving pandemic for the human race, interacting with the climate crisis and advancements in biotechnology and artificial intelligence. The pandemic seems to have accelerated the process.

The Economist described the year of "Great Lockdown", when the entire world was shut down, as "the year when everything changed" - the lead title of The New York Times columnist, Gail Collins' book *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present* (2009).

When the facemask not only became an emblem of the year, but also of a frightening new age, many pointed to fatal flaws in the neoliberal paradigm that came to dominance since the early 1980s with the Thatcher-Reagan onslaught on the post-World War II social contract that respected workers' right and promised full employment and universal provisioning of essential public goods, and unleashing of greed (recall the 1987 movie "Wall Street", where Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko captured the essence of neoliberalism, "Greed, for lack of a better word, is good").

It was refreshing to hear the torch-bearer of corporate capitalism, Klaus Schwab, say to *TIMES*, "the neoliberalist ... approach centers on the notion that the market knows best, that the 'business of business is business,' and that government should refrain from setting clear rules for the functioning of markets. Those dogmatic beliefs have proved wrong".

Hence, Schwab argued, "We must move on from neoliberalism in the post-COVID era", and acknowledged, "Free-market fundamentalism has eroded worker rights and economic security, triggered a deregulatory race to the bottom and ruinous tax competition, and enabled the emergence of massive new global monopolies. Trade, taxation, and competition rules that reflect decades of neoliberal influence will now have to be revised".

Agreed Francis Fukuyama, who celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of socialist experiments with his *The End of History and the Last Man*. "a certain set of ideas about the benefits of unregulated markets ... had a disastrous effect... it's led to a weakening of labour unions, of the bargaining power of ordinary workers, the rise of an oligarchic class ... that ... exerts undue political power". Thus, he thought, "socialism ought to come back", meaning "redistributive programmes that try to redress this big imbalance in both incomes and wealth. He further said, "if there's anything we learned from the financial crisis it's that you've got to regulate the sector like hell because they'll make everyone else pay".

Thus, it was encouraging to see the advocates of neoliberalism, such as *The Financial Times* pen an editorial reminding the readers of the core of the post-WWII social contract, "to demand collective sacrifice you must offer a social contract that benefits everyone".

It was also heartening to see the IMF's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva move swiftly to arrange debt relief for low-income countries in an innovative way which is superior to the G20's mean offer of debt suspension to be re-paid fully with accumulated interest obligations (no surprise not many takers). It was a music to hear debt hawks, such as Carmen Reinhart, the Chief Economist of the World Bank, advise, "First you worry about fighting the war, then you figure out how to pay for it". The Bank also "paused" its controversial *Doing Business* Report that encouraged a "beauty contest" of deregulation in the "race to the bottom" after it could no longer defend its data manipulation in fa-



Women selling non-timber forest produce (wild fruit) in Mumbai Maharashtra.

our of right-wing regimes.

So, "when everything changed", there was a great hope of change in the way we organise economies and societies, and respond to common threats to humanity; that low-paid workers would be recognised for their essential services; that the rent-seeking activities of the rentier class would be restrained; that the widening disparities in income, wealth and opportunities would be reversed; that there would be inclusive multilateralism recognising differentiated responsibility in collective global response; that no one or country would be left behind; and the list grows.

However, not everyone was so sanguine. Simon Mair of the University of Surrey, for example, contemplated four possible post-COVID world: a descent into barbarism, a robust state capitalism, a radical state socialism, and a transformation into a big society built on mutual aid. He believed, "versions of all of these futures are perfectly possible, if not equally desirable". It all depends on the choice we make and the decisions that our political leaders take.

Amartya Sen believes that "a better society can emerge from the lockdowns" as it happened after WWII; but he is concerned that "in the policies against the present pandemic, equity has not been a particularly noticeable priority... Instead, the focus has been on drastic control and sudden lockdowns ... with little attention paid to labourers who lose their jobs or the many migrant workers, the poorest of the poor, who are kept hundreds of miles from their homes".

Meanwhile Luke Cooper and Guy Aitchison of LSE list four dangers ahead: 'deglobalisation' takes a nationalist form; less democratic participation, more centralisation; surveillance state and erosion of human rights; inequality goes unchallenged.

I am not a fan of Tony Blair; but I tend to share his eerie feeling, when he says, "for the first time ever I'm

troubled about the future". He fears, "COVID-19 will usher in a world where insecurity and unpredictability constitute the new normal. Everything that was relevant and present before COVID will be there afterwards, except intensified and accelerated... to produce a lot of hardship with the burden falling often on the most vulnerable".

I have reasons to be spooky. I list a few:

Vaccine nationalism rules forgetting that we defeated small-pox that has been one of the major causes of death and blindness for centuries in less than a decade through unprecedented global cooperation at the height of the Cold war.

Governments remain beholden to Big Pharmas in opposing the waiver of patent rights, falsely arguing that patent rights are needed for innovation, and ignoring the fact that we won against polio with a vaccine without patent.

Corporate bosses shamelessly paid themselves fat bonuses and used taxpayers' pandemic relief money to pay dividends, and buy-back shares, while millions lost jobs and livelihoods.

Yet governments are offering more corporate tax cuts and further removing job and wage protections, instead of standing up to corporate interest, ignoring the fact that these are the very policies that contributed to widening disparities, sluggish growth, stagnating productivity and chronic fiscal crises.

Meanwhile billionaires have become richer and millions are pushed back to poverty and precarious living.

Governments have missed the opportunity to reboot and accelerate the achievement of sustainable development goals. The pandemic has shown that we can live on less and do not have to over-crowd cities.

But governments have failed to facilitate the millions of people who moved to villages and rural towns to stay by taking jobs and services there, and designing adjustment measures;

governments did not grab the opportunity to fix urban bias and initiate regenerative economies.

Governments and policymakers are refusing to recognise that both existential threats - the climate crisis and the pandemic - although appear to be "environmental" or "natural" problems, they are socially driven.

Climate crisis is caused by society's decision to over-consume and over-produce, the very factors that are destroying natural habitats of wild-lives and bringing humans in close contact with virus-carrying animals.

Tackling both pandemic and climate crisis would be much easier if we cut or cease our hedonic lifestyle and nonessential economic activities

Meanwhile, Nobel Laureate economist Michael Spence is advocating the return of structural adjustment era conditionalities for countries seeking help from the Bank and the Fund, ignoring the findings of the Bank's Growth Commission, he chaired, that fair-seeming, "good-intentioned" conditionalities produced "lost decades" of development.

Another Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz is advocating Brady-style bond buybacks using the IMF and donor money, while these monies are urgently needed for fighting pandemic, ignoring that the debt landscape has changed significantly since Brady with more varied players and that such debt buybacks in the past benefited the creditors.

Sadly, they are not offering a roadmap for a new more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future.

In my adopted country, Australia, the government is foot-dragging and refusing to take bold and ambitious green-house gas emission targets despite witnessing worst bushfires and extreme

weather events in history. It has done nothing to protect gig workers despite four Uber-eat delivery riders killed in road accidents taking food to people in lockdown. It is contemplating reforms of the industrial relations laws that are bound to make the life of essential workers like fire-fighters, nurses, cleaners and food-delivery persons more precarious.

My country of dreaming, Bangladesh, is now listed as new 'autocracy' where the government has become intolerant, arresting and harassing journalists and anyone exposing its misdeeds, and corruptions even when it involved fake COVID testings, and relief money and goods. Extra-judicial killings and forced disappearance have become instruments of control, while all the state institutions, including the judiciary, the police and bureaucracy are politicised.

Nevertheless, there are some rays of hope as we welcome 2021 in the spontaneous mass mobilisation in Thailand and Belarus against despots, in Chile's referendum to meet people's democratic aspirations, in impulsive resistance in India against the farm laws promoting corporate interest, in Indonesia's mass protest against the controversial, omnibus bill that assaults workers' rights; in defeating imperialist plots in Bolivia; in imposing taxes on Argentina's wealthy and rich; in Zambia's decision to default that defied debt-hawk's scare-mongering.

Hope is an incurable disease that keeps us alive and moving. Be safe and well. Let us ponder over the lessons of the crises; the relationship with our governments; social contract and trust; measures of societal progress; and how our economies be more distributive and regenerative or sustainable.



# Researcher punches a lion in the face as it tries to eat him in Botswana

By Jamie Pyatt, Cape Town

A wildlife researcher who was attacked by a starving lion in Africa punched the animal in the face as his friends threw elephant dung at it and hit it with a truck in order to save his life.

Gotz Neef, 32, was sleeping in his tent in the Okavango Delta in Botswana on December 7 when the emaciated predator pounced and tried to kill him.

Dr Rainer Von Brandis, a fellow researcher sleeping nearby, threw elephant dung and branches at the lion before hitting it with a piece of tree in a desperate attempt to save his friend's life - while naked from the waist down.

Head ranger Tomalets Setlabosha then threw a flash-bang - intended to frighten away elephants - at the big cat before running it over with his jeep, which finally scared the animal back into the bush.

Neef was rushed to hospital suffering 16 puncture wounds from the lion's fangs, broken bones in his arm and elbow, and deep scratches from its claws, but is now recovering from his wounds.

Meanwhile animal workers decided to put down the elderly lion, who had been kicked out of his pride by younger rivals and left to starve - prompting him to launch the attack on Neef in a desperate final bid for survival.

Recalling the terrifying five-minute attack, Dr Von Brandis, 46, said: 'I guess I was not a pretty sight in just a T-shirt naked from the waist down and wearing a head torch screaming at this lion who was attacking my friend!'

The married father-of-two from Cape Town is the Research Director of the Wild Bird Trust was on an expedition with his pal Neef and six other researchers in the wilds of Botswana.

He said: 'I heard Gotz screaming there was something big outside his tent and I ran out in the pitch black with my head torch on and saw this big male lion had collapsed his tent.'

'It had one paw on Gotz and fortunately was chewing on the tent poles rather than him and I just saw some big piles of dried elephant dung and pelted the lion with it really hard.'

'That didn't work so I threw thorn branches at it but that didn't work either and by now the lion had Gotz by the elbow and was seriously chewing him and my friend was screaming.'

'I was nearly naked and was screaming as well and ran up to the lion and beat it with a big piece of a tree but it did nothing and then our head ranger Tomalets Setlabosha came out.'

'I was smashing the lion with the branch but it would not stop chewing on Gotz and hardly even blinked when Tomalets threw a thunder flash banger used to scare hippos close to it.'

'The lion jumped a bit but was it was so hungry and so desperate and this was its last chance at a kill to feed or it would die so it restarted its attack and began trying to eat Gotz again.'

'Then Tomalets jumped into the Land Cruiser and ran the lion over but it would not leave Gotz alone and he had to run it over three times before it let go and ran off into the bush.'

'The lion was euthanised which was the kindest thing to do for it as it was skin and bone and would have died an agonising death at the jaws of other lions or starving to death if left alone.'

'We patched Gotz up and drove him to a hospital in Maun, which was a very bumpy 50 mile trip which took three hours which was very painful for him, where a doctor sorted him out.'

'He was then airlifted back to Windhoek in Namibia where he lives and taken to



Animal workers said the elderly and emaciated male had been kicked out of his pride by younger rivals and left to starve, before attacking Neef in a desperate bid for survival

hospital there and is recovering from so many bites - I cannot even guess how many fang holes he has.

'It is important to say that there is nothing reckless in camping in tents out in the wild as that is the only way you can do your research in the wild as there is no other way of doing this.'

'What happened was extremely rare where an old lion is driven out of its pride and was starving to death and to get a meal this was its last roll of the dice and he was so desperate.'

'Gotz will heal in time and will be back on the team soon and the lion was put out of its misery. This was not normal lion behaviour but it had no other option to try and stay alive' he said.

The pair were part of an eight-strong team from the Wild Bird Trust that works throughout Southern Africa and were on an expedition in Botswana funded by the US's National Geographic Society.

They are both Namibian born but have German ancestry and either have or are entitled to German passports and nationality through their parents. They spend much of their time in the wilds of Africa.

Lucky-to-be-alive Neef had sixteen deep and extremely painful fang bites stitched up in his arms, shoulders and head which left him covered in blood and he was also clawed by the lion.

Single Neef who lives in Windhoek, Namibia, said: 'I heard something moving around my tent and looked at the time and it 01.26am then saw a head pressed against my tent and a nose.'

'I did not know what was outside my tent and started calling for help and hit the nose with my fist as hard as possible and then it attacked me and began trying to bite and maul me.'

'I heard Rainer shouting 'it's a lion' and I tried to back into a corner of my tent and tried to push the lion away with my sleeping bag but it was determined to attack me.'

'The lion started to bite me and got my head but I managed to pull it out and pushed my left elbow in his face and he started biting my arm and I screamed in pain' said the Wild Bird Trust's Research Manager.

While Dr Von Brandis was battering the lion the Wild Bird Trust's senior guide Tomalets came to the rescue of the pair of conservationists and then helped pull Neef from his blood soaked tent after chasing off the lion.

Dr Von Brandis said: 'Gotz was bleeding heavily when we got to him and we put him on the back seat of the Land Cruiser and drove him to a nearby tourist camp to assess his injuries.'

'We patched him up the best we could and it was only then when one of our group politely mentioned I had no shorts or underpants on and that I was still naked from the waist down!'

'I obviously rectified that situation and we carried on treating Gotz!'

'We contacted the Okavango Air Rescue in Maun but were told they were not allowed to fly at night so we decided to drive Gotz to Maun by car as he was bleeding so much and we couldn't wait.'

'The roads were so bad it took us three hours to cover about 50 miles on a very bumpy and slippery track and finally we got him to a private clinic at 5am where doctors were waiting.'

'He was stabilised and his wounds cleaned and then he was airlifted to a private hospital in Windhoek where he is being treated and monitored to ensure there is no infection.'

'Gotz is in a stable condition

and his parents Georg and Martina are with him and the initial assessments are very encouraging and we hope he will be back to work in the New Year.'

'It is not many people that survive a lion attack and he will have quite a few scars to show his children and grandchildren one day when he tells them of the night he fought a lion.'

'Tragically the poor lion was very old and near the end of its life having been driven out by younger more powerful males and no longer had the ability to take down game itself.'

'Unfortunately for Gotz he was on the menu that night as the old male could no longer hunt and it was just nature and he was starving and desperate and came into the camp for a meal.'

'The expedition will go on and Gotz will rejoin us when he is fit again in a month or two' he said.

The Botswana Wild Bird Trust said that the Department of Wildlife and National Parks were contacted and assessed the lion's condition and agreed that it was kindest to put it down.

Neef was treated by the Okavango Air Rescue's Head of Medical Operations Dr Misha Kruck who said: 'He was not our first patient bitten by a big cat but he was probably our most serious.'

'He had been bitten many, many times by the lion and as well as patching him up we had to inject a broad spectrum of antibiotics and then thoroughly clean the wounds to prevent infection.'

'That is pretty painful so we had to sedate Gotz as he was in so much pain' she said.

Neef was then flown from Botswana by an air ambulance to the Lady Pohamba Private Hospital in Windhoek, Namibia, where he is being treated for

his bite wounds as well as broken bones in his elbow and arm.

The young researcher revealed that earlier in the evening while they were having dinner around a fire that a pride of 13 lions including two big males, a young male, eight females and two sub adults walked through their camp.

He said: 'It was around 8pm on the evening I was attacked and none of us were worried and the lions just walked though. Just where the old and emaciated lion later came from we don't know.'

Neef has slept out in the wilds of Africa in his two-man tent more than 500 times and has been the subject of lion attention before.

He said: 'In 2018 we had three young males come into camp and I had one of them lying against my tent and against my feet but after about 45 minutes he got up and just moved away'.

Neef was in the wilds with a team of researchers from the Botswana Wild Bird Trust on an expedition for the National Geographic Society on an ongoing biodiversity monitoring programme in the Okavango Delta.

They were piloting a biological control programme of the invasive plant *Salvinia molesta* known as 'Kariba Weed' which infests the area to see if the application of a species of weevil can kill it off.

It is thought lions kill up to 200 people a year in Africa in the wild mainly by old males who can no longer hunt. The victims are rarely tourists or guides or researchers and tend to be local people in remote villages or poachers.

A healthy male lion can run at up to 50mph and weigh 190kg and stand 1.2m tall at the shoulder and are feared throughout Africa except by the Maasai tribe where boys used to have to kill a male lion as a rite of passage.

Last year a hapless tourist almost had his arm bitten off by a hungry lioness after sticking his limb through the bars of her enclosure and trying to stroke it at a game lodge in South Africa.

Mechanic Pieter Nortje, 55, was being given a guided tour of the lions at the Tikwe River Lodge in Virginia, Free State Province, to celebrate his 10th wedding anniversary when disaster struck.

His wife Ilze captured the shocking incident on video and Nortje was only saved from losing his arm and potential death when a stranger suddenly punched the lioness on the nose.

He was rushed to hospital and had to have 60 stitches to repair the damage from the 5 second lion attack and was later readmitted to be treated for sepsis from wound infection.

On the video Nortje can be heard quipping to his wife as he strokes the lioness: 'Come here my lovely, let daddy stroke you'. He then jokes: 'If you bite me I will bite you back'.

Unfortunately for Nortje from Bloemfontein the lioness did and put him in hospital.

In May 2018 Mike Hodge, 72, who owns the Marakele Predator Centre in Thabazimbi just north of Johannesburg was attacked by a male lion when he entered its fenced enclosure.

British-born Mr Hodge was badly mauled and was only saved when the lion, called Shamba, was shot dead by a keeper after it had dragged Mr Hodge into the undergrowth to kill him.

The married family man was rushed by air ambulance to hospital for life saving surgery on wounds to his neck, chest and back but recovered and is now back running the game lodge.

In February 2017 a 22-year-old woman was attacked and mauled to death by a lion at the Dinokeng Game Reserve in Hammanskraal after getting out of her car to photo wildlife.

By Greg Stanley

## As fertiliser spread worldwide, researchers find herbivores can't keep up with excess grasses

CERTAIN grasses have been growing taller, thicker and faster because of the nutrients and fertilizers humans have introduced both directly and indirectly into otherwise wild places. Some biologists had theorized that hungry wild herbivores would adjust and chow them down.

But, as it turns out, there simply aren't enough grazers left in most places to forage or mow down the extra plant life, according to a study

led by the University of Minnesota at more than 50 grasslands worldwide.

'We're seeing, yes, wild herbivores can counteract this to an extent, but the widespread issue is that numbers of wild herbivores around the world have been massively reduced,' said Elizabeth Borer, lead researcher. 'So it isn't just that there's more nitrogen in these ecosystems,

there's also less herbivores to counteract it.'

Extra plant life is a problem because each fall as the plants die, all that added weight and biomass becomes fuel for wildfires. In places less prone to fire, such as Minnesota, exotic nutrient-loving grasses are strangling out native plants and small flowers needed by bees and other pollinators.

The complex diversity of plant and animal life is being lost as one species takes over.

The grasslands study was replicated at 58 sites across more than a dozen countries. Not every location experienced the same results.

In some places, such as Tanzania, wild animals have been able to keep up with the rapid plant growth. Tanzania still

has large herds of zebra and other grazers, and the herbivores are eating almost everything the grasslands are providing them, Borer said.

But in most places, including Minnesota, that's not the case.

'Our big obvious herbivores - bison - are gone,' she said. 'We still have deer and rabbits and domestic grazers, but they are not keeping up.'

In drier climates, wild animals were able to eat more of the excess grasses and plants. But as regions became wetter and more fertile, herbivores had a harder time keeping up.

Nutrient pollution has become so prevalent that humans are essentially fertilizing every grassland on Earth, Borer said. It's coming from the land, and what farmers and homeowners are

spreading on fields and lawns, and from runoff into rivers and streams.

Studies are also finding that nutrients are being carried by the air, in dust particles, and building up in high enough quantities to change the makeup of life in lakes high in the Rocky Mountains. They may also be causing toxic algae blooms in some of the wildest and most remote lakes in northern

Minnesota and Isle Royale National Park.

The study's findings in places like Tanzania show there is hope to manage grasslands with herbivores, Borer said.

'The solution in northern Europe is going to be very different from Minnesota or California,' she said. 'But this suggests that restoration of wild herbivores and even some form of domestic grazing, with cattle or possibly goats, seem promising to avoid things like fire risk or the loss of species and biodiversity.'









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## Japan aims to eliminate petrol vehicles in next 15 years

TOKYO

Japan aims to eliminate petrol-powered vehicles in the next 15 years, the government said on Friday in a plan to reach net zero carbon emissions and generate nearly \$2 trillion a year in green growth by 2050.

The "green growth strategy," targeting the hydrogen and auto industries, is meant as an action plan to achieve Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's October pledge to eliminate carbon emissions on a net basis by mid-century.

Mr Suga has made green investment a top priority to help revive the economy hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and to bring Japan into line with the European Union, China and other economies setting ambitious emissions targets.

"The government has set up ambitious targets to achieve a carbon neutral society in 2050," said Yukari Takamura, professor at the University of Tokyo. "Making clear goals and policy direction in the green growth strategy will give incentives for companies to invest in future technology."

The government will offer tax incentives and other financial support to companies, targeting 90tn yen (\$870 billion) a year in additional economic growth through green investment and sales by 2030 and 190tn yen (\$1.8tn) by 2050.

A 2tn yen green fund will support corporate investment in green technology. The plan seeks to replace the sale of new petrol-powered vehicles with electric vehicles, including hybrid and fuel-cell vehicles, by the mid-2030s.

To accelerate the spread of electric vehicles, the government targets slashing the cost of vehicle batteries by more than half to 10,000 yen or less per kilowatt hour by 2030. It aims to boost hydrogen consumption to 3 million tonnes by 2030 and to about 20 million tonnes by 2050 from 200 tonnes in 2017, in areas such as power generation and transportation.

The strategy identifies 14 industries, such as offshore wind and fuel ammonia, and targets the installation of up to 45 gigawatts of offshore wind power by 2040. Japan also aims to use renewable energy "as much as possible" by 2050, mainly through off-shore wind farms, with a reference goal of renewable energy sources accounting for 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the nation's power by 2050, up from less than 20 per cent now, while reducing reliance on nuclear power.

## Simanjiro smallholder farmers get 1.142bn/- TADB equipment loan

By Francis Kajubi

**S**MALLHOLDER farmers in Simanjiro district of Manyara region have received farm equipment loan worth 1.142bn/- from Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank in the past two years.

Speaking to Smart Money over the phone this week, Chairman of Narakauo Village Farmers Union, Elia Reuben said the loan has enabled them improve their farming method hence increase production of yellow beans and maize.

"The union is made up of 19 members and has each received their loan since last month. We had earlier talked to LonAgro Tanzania about our demand to get tractors but the company turned down our request because we didn't have links with any financial institution," Reuben said.

He pointed out that the rebuff by LonAgro pushed them to seek TADB affiliation which has enabled them to get John Deere tractors on loan. The NVFU Chairman further said that for him the tractor is an important tool to cultivate his 600 acres farm which was largely underutilized. He asserted that because of mechanization, his will yield more beans, maize and paddy rice if seasonal rains are normal.



A section of John Deere tractors handed to Narakauo farmers last week in Simanjiro district. Photo courtesy of TADB.

"To be part of our union one must own a farm that covers not less than 150 acres. Our union was formed in May this year and this is the first deal that we have sealed with TADB," Reuben noted adding that this year, he harvested 500 tons of yellow beans and maize in total. "I got a loan worth 150m/- part of which pays for the 82 horsepower tractor and the balance goes to purchase other farm inputs," he added.

TADB's Managing Director, Japhet Justine said that the bank is targeting to improve activities of smallholder farmers in the country by financing them to produce more commodities and eventually graduate into commercial farmers.

Justin said the beneficiaries are expected to repay their loan individually in a period of between three to five years at an interest rate of 12 percent

annually through a reducing balance payment model.

"About 800m/- of the loan is for farm mechanization while the rest goes to procuring farm inputs such as seeds and fertilizers. This loan scheme is being offered in partnership with LonAgro and John Deere hence makes it less expensive as it attracts the lowest interest rate in the market," he argued.

"The low interest rates leverage

emerging opportunities in farming especially for women and youth who with this product, they will get the tractors at nine percent interest rate. TADB believes with more youth and women engaging in agriculture as a country, we can increase food security and attain gender equality," Justine said adding that the bank also targets to build capacity among the two groups so that they are skilled to participate in modern farming technologies.

Manyara region's Simanjiro district is perceived as an arid area good for Maasai pastoralists, a perception which TADB wants to change as the land is arable with huge farming potential.

"This project comes to change the narrative that the Maasai communities are not only herders but also transitioning into commercial farming now," Justin added while envisioning mechanization of the area as key to such diversification.

According to him, the renowned 'farmers bank' continues to design its products through an integrated financial model that sees the wholesome of the value chain financed and capacitated for increase in quality of produce and improvement of the different stages of the value chain.

## Brexit deal is 'enormously unifying' says UK finance minister

LONDON

The UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said the trade deal reached with the European Union should reassure people worried about the economic damage of Brexit and can be an "enormously unifying moment for our country."

London will continue discussions with Brussels over access and equivalence for financial services, the chancellor said on Sunday after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the agreement did not go as far as he wants for the sector.

The deal, which will be voted on by politicians in Parliament on Wednesday, "gives us a strong platform to look forward optimistically and put the divisions of the past behind us," Mr Sunak said in a pooled TV interview. "For those who were anxious about the economic implications of leaving, they should be enormously reassured by the comprehensive nature of this free trade agreement."

Mr Johnson conceded in an interview with the Sunday Telegraph that



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak described the free trade agreement reached with the EU last week as 'comprehensive'.

the agreement "perhaps does not go as far as we would like" on financial services, though said it offers "access for solicitors, barristers" and a "good deal for digital."

There is little clarity for financial firms and no decision on so-called equivalence, which would allow firms to sell their services into the single market from the City of London. The agreement only features standard provisions on financial services, meaning it doesn't include

commitments on market access. Mr Sunak said it gives a "stable regulatory co-operative framework" and "we will remain in close dialogue with our European partners when it comes to things like equivalence decisions".

Anneliese Dodds, economy spokeswoman for the opposition Labour Party, said ministers should do everything possible to provide certainty for businesses. "There are big areas, like financial services, where we need to see the Conservative government acting in a much more concerted way to get an agreement so we can ensure we keep jobs in our country," she told Sky News. "They really need to focus on this far more."

There was also a warning for Mr Johnson's government from across the Irish Sea, where deputy prime minister Leo Varadkar said any reduction of standards in the UK could lead to reduced access to the EU market.

"They have agreed to a non-regression clause in all but name, so we said you can only have access to the market if you don't reduce your standards

when it comes to workers' rights, the environment, health and safety, product standards, all of those things," Mr Varadkar told Newstalk radio.

"If they do reduce their standards, or if they don't keep up with our standards, then that access to our market could be threatened," he said. "So they do still have to largely follow European rules where they're relevant." Some senior politicians from Mr Johnson's Conservative Party complained there will not be enough time to properly scrutinise the deal when Parliament debates and votes on it on Wednesday.

While the legislation is expected to pass easily as Labour has indicated it will back the deal rather than risk the economic damage of a no-deal divorce from the EU, dissent among Johnson's rank-and-file lawmakers may spell trouble for the future. "Whatever you think of this treaty, it is going to affect the rest of our lives," former Brexit Secretary David Davis told The Observer. "It does require more than just a rubber stamp."

## Zambia lending startup PremierCredit receives \$650 000 investment

LUSAKA

US Venture Capital fund, Enygma Ventures, was delighted to announce its final \$650 000 investment of 2020 into Zambian-based online micro-lending tech startup, PremierCredit, an online micro-lending platform operating in Zambia and Zimbabwe, which has extensive plans to grow and serve the SADC region.

Sarah Dusek, Managing Partner and co-founder of Enygma Ventures comments on the performance of PremierCredit which led to the \$650 000 investment. "PremierCredit has a proven track record of supporting the informal sector and making informal trading possible for many by

providing timely and appropriate loans to help businesses thrive. After an extraordinary year, it has been incredible to see women-owned businesses still thriving and creating expansion plans despite the pandemic."

Operating since 2019, PremierCredit online platform offers its services in Zambia and Zimbabwe. The fintech startup offers micro-loans to local entrepreneurs and small scale businesses, allowing entrepreneurs to grow their business and positively contribute to the economy.

Partnering with a bank in Zimbabwe, PremierCredit is able to provide affordable bicycles, smartphones, and solar equipment on a 'pay-as-

you-go' basis to the underserved communities across Zimbabwe.

Chilufya Mutale, co-founder and CEO of PremierCredit comments on receiving the investment and what it means to the startup. "We are extremely elated about our partnership with Enygma Ventures. The financial and strategic support will allow us to execute on our vision to service multiple countries across the region."

Enygma Ventures has committed to supporting women-led ventures and startups and this investment adds to its existing portfolio. In 2020, the venture capital fund has reportedly carried out 10 investments. Currently, Enygma Ventures has applications open for talented entre-

preneurs in the SADC region to apply for available funding.

Applications can be submitted online and close on 31 December 2020. Lelemba Phiri, Principal and Operating Partner of Enygma Ventures concludes that the investment will have a domino effect on the local community, providing much-needed access to a range of services.

"We are excited about this investment and are confident in PremierCredit's ability to execute and expand regionally as they are a formidable team. The ripple effect of such investment goes beyond the immediate business because it in turn enables access to capital for underserved traders and communities."



Eugene Mwila (L) and Chilufya Mutale.



## District director applauds Airtel for taking 4G network to Bagamoyo



Bagamoyo district executive director, Fatma Latu listening to Airtel Tanzania Coast Zone manager, Brighton Majwala during the launch of Airtel Money Branch in the historic town last week. Photo courtesy of Airtel.

By Smart Money Reporter

**D**ECISION by Airtel Tanzania Plc to upgrade its communication network to fourth generation (4G) status will help speed up economic growth and personal incomes in Bagamoyo District.

Speaking during the launch a new Airtel Money Branch in the district last week, Bagamoyo District Executive Director, Fatma Latu commended Airtel for the development saying the shop and introduction of 4G services will change the area for the better.

"I take this opportunity to congratulate the management of Airtel Tanzania for launching this shop in our town because we all understand that communication plays a big role in the development of our country," Latu said.

She noted that Bagamoyo is a historic town with excellent beaches which attracts thousands of tourists both local

and foreign hence need reliable communications. "This one stop shop centre is an opportunity to both local residents and visitors who will be coming to our district for either leisure or an economic activities," the DED noted while adding the as a result of improved economic activities, government revenue will also increase.

She called on residents of her district to exploit fully opportunities being presented by Airtel Tanzania's 4G network and the Airtel Money Branch shop which will ease transactions among subscribers.

Briefing the DED on the telco's investments in Bagamoyo, Airtel Tanzania Coastal Zone Manager, Brighton Majwala said that by launching the new shop in the historic cum tourist town, the company is showing commitment to support financial inclusion.

"Our plan is to continue building a strong, reliable agent network with an

array of services that can be accessed through our Airtel Money Branches in addition to traditional cash in and cash out services," Majwala said.

He said the shop will provide all services and products by the telco such as SimSwap, Biometric Sim card registration, credit and savings financial sensitization and Airtel Money transactions. "We all understand the importance of Bagamoyo town and especially at this festive season when Tanzanians from all over the country come over to spend their holidays," he added.

Airtel Tanzania which is jointly owned by Bharti Airtel Limited of India and Treasury is one of the largest telecommunications company in the market with over eight million customers enjoying its services which include data, voice and digital transactions. The telco introduced its 4G network in the local market for the first time last year.



Inger Andersen, executive director of UNEP.

## A green pandemic recovery could slash CO2 emissions by a quarter by 2030, UN says

WASHINGTON

A sustainable global pandemic recovery could slash predicted greenhouse gas emissions by up to a quarter by 2030 and accelerate the momentum towards meeting the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming by 2 degrees Celsius, a United Nations study has found. The coronavirus led to flights being grounded and a fall in road traffic as movement restrictions were imposed to stop its spread, causing a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

However, despite this year's dip, the world is on course for a rise in temperature "in excess of 3 degrees Celsius this century," the UN Environment Programme warned in a new report. "As the world deals with the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis has not gone away. Greenhouse gas emissions hit a new high in 2019," Inger Andersen, executive director of UNEP, said.

"The year 2020 is on course to be the

warmest on record. Wildfires, storms and droughts continue to wreak havoc while glaciers melt at unprecedented rates," she added. Global policymakers have pushed for a more sustainable post-pandemic recovery, using the flatlining of emissions this year as a base case scenario for future planning.

European Central Bank president and former International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde sounded a warning note to investors last month to deal with the risks stemming from climate change. Ms Lagarde said companies that fail to prioritise climate goals could face possible exclusion from the bank's bond-buying programme.

Former Bank of England governor Mark Carney, who is now a UN special envoy for climate change, said reducing emissions represented "the greatest commercial opportunity of our time" and asked investors to step in to help companies meet their net zero emissions targets.

Several fossil fuel companies such as

Shell and BP have written off billions worth of hydrocarbon assets in 2020, as they pivot towards a net zero future. Japan and South Korea became two of the latest major economies this year to aim for net zero emission targets by 2050.

The UNEP report recommended prioritising "green fiscal recovery" including direct support for zero-emissions technologies and infrastructure, reducing fossil fuel subsidies, no new coal plants and promoting nature-based solutions - including large-scale landscape restoration and reforestation.

"The pandemic is a warning that we must urgently shift from our destructive development path, which is driving the three planetary crises of climate change, nature loss and pollution," said Ms Andersen.

"But it is clearly also a major opportunity. I urge governments, businesses and individuals - particularly those with the greatest climate footprint - to take this opportunity to protect our climate and nature for decades to come," she added.



An electronic board displaying stocks at NSE.

## Nairobi bourse best, worst 2020 stocks revealed

NAIROBI

The Nairobi Business Ventures (NBV) share is the biggest gainer this year at the Nairobi Securities Exchange, boosted by a big rally earlier this month following the Sh83 million takeover of the firm by Dubai-based Delta International FZE.

Media, manufacturing and banking stocks on the other hand have been the worst hit by the bear run that hit the market this year - exacerbated by the Covid pandemic - which has seen the NSE All share Index shed 10 percent and investor wealth fall by Sh238.5 billion. NBV opened the year with a share price of Sh0.70, and barely traded before it was suspended in mid-October after the announcement of the Delta takeover.

Following the lifting of the suspension on completion of the deal last month, the price has now shot up six fold (537 percent) to Sh4.44 a share. This means that anyone who bought Sh1 million worth of NBV shares at the beginning of the year would now be worth Sh6.34 million.

This analysis is based on investors who buy shares at the start of the year and measure their returns at the end of the trading season - in a review that does not capture speculators who enter and exit stocks in short periods. The other top gainers in the market this year are Kenya Airways and Carbacid, with gains of 86.8 percent and 50.6 percent respectively to Sh3.83 and Sh12.05.

Mr Gerald Muriuki, an analyst at city based investment bank Genghis Capital, said the fact that the three top gainers have been subject to significant corporate actions this year has attracted

speculators to their stocks, driving up prices.

"It is mostly due to corporate actions, where in the case of NBV it's the takeover by the Dubai firm, Carbacid making a bid to acquire fellow gas producer BOC Kenya and for Kenya Airways, the proposed nationalisation by the government," said Mr Muriuki.

"Overall, it is not unusual for small cap stocks to dominate the top and bottom of the market, given that they are more driven by the speculative activity." The Kenya Airways stock is however suspended from trading pending the resolution of its nationalisation plan.

On the other end, WPP ScanGroup leads the market in share price erosion, going down by 65 percent to Sh6 a share, while another small cap stock Express Kenya (-56 percent) and cement firm Bamburi (-53 percent) were also leading losers.

The price erosions are emblematic of the tough times the services and manufacturing industries have suffered due to the Covid-19 outbreak, which has cost thousands of Kenyans their jobs and reduced the purchasing power of the economy.

Companies have not been spared the difficulties in the economy, with this reflected in deteriorating financial performance that has filtered through to their share price performance. Only 10 companies have recorded a share price gain in 2020.

A total of 14 firms have issued profit warnings this year, up from nine in 2019. These have included banks, whose bottom line was hit by rising non-performing loans and the waiver of fees related to mobile transfers.

## Telkom sues Icasa over 'flawed' spectrum auction

PRETORIA

Telkom has filed papers in the high court in Pretoria seeking an interdict to stop communications regulator Icasa from proceeding, for now, with the spectrum licensing process.

Speaking to TechCentral on Tuesday, Telkom group executive for regulatory affairs and government relations Siyabonga Mahlangu said the company is approaching the court because it believes Icasa's invitations to apply (ITAs) for spectrum and the planned wholesale open-access network (Woan) have fundamental flaws that could entrench the "dominance" of Vodacom and MTN.

Telkom wants temporary relief against Icasa, preventing the regulator from processing, assessing, or adjudicating applications under the ITAs, which are due for submission by no later than 28 December. It then wants the high court to review and set aside Icasa's decision to issue the two ITAs.

One of Telkom's main arguments is that Icasa issued the ITAs knowing that the 700MHz and 800MHz bands - the so-called digital dividend bands used by analogue television broadcasters - are not yet available for use by telecommunications operators. Despite this, Icasa is pushing ahead with the licensing of these bands and will expect payment for them despite the inability by successful applicants to use them, Mahlangu said.

"So, we will buy the spectrum, but we will not be able to get a return from it," he said. "We can't commercially exploit that spectrum (until broadcasting digital migration has been completed)."

This is unfair, especially to smaller operators whose balance sheets are not as strong as the two big incumbent players, Mahlangu said. He added that

the most valuable lot of spectrum in the sub-1GHz bands will cost more than R1-billion. "It's unfair, for a company of our size, to commit that kind of capital, which we could use to compete more effectively... At this stage, no one knows when that spectrum will be available (for use)."

Telkom is the only major operator in South Africa that doesn't have access to sub-1GHz spectrum, which is useful for providing better in-building coverage and deploying infrastructure at lower cost. "Other operators will gain a competitive edge without us being able to plan our lives around sub-1GHz."

He added that Icasa "cannot license something that is not available." Telkom will also challenge the ITAs on other grounds, including that Icasa "pre-empted the outcome of the mobile broadband services inquiry," Mahlangu said.

"By licensing this spectrum without completing this inquiry, Icasa has removed spectrum as one of the levers it can use to promote competition in the sector. It is substituting that with a process that is not public. In our view, an internal process, called the competition assessment, cannot be a replacement of a public statutory process."

He said Icasa's design of the auction, as a result, will not promote optimal competition in the sector. "On the contrary, the way the auction is designed will result in competition being stifled and the entrenchment of the duopoly structure of the market."

Furthermore, Mahlangu said it is Telkom's view that Icasa "paid lip service, or at least attached insufficient weight, to a policy direction" on spectrum licensing and the Woan from communications minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams.



# Tanzanian CEOs take their place at the helm in line with JPM's philosophy

By Smart Money Reporter

**I**N the past five years, a lot has changed in the country thanks to the new thinking brought aboard by President John Pombe Magufuli.

President Magufuli's two main catch phrases, 'Yes we can and Tanzania is not poor,' are having a major impact in the country with many Tanzanians daring to do things which were hitherto preserved for foreigners, albeit illegally.

Dr Magufuli has emphasised on the need for Tanzanians to be patriotic and work hard to ensure rapid development of the country saying, "Our country has been taken for granted for many years."

One area which has seen significant progress along Magufuli's philosophy of Tanzania first, is that of appointment of local CEOs to head some big corporations including those which are largely foreign owned.

The confirmation of Ruth Zaipuna as NMB Bank Plc's CEO was earlier this year was a major development along such lines following years of foreign CEOs at the country's largest bank by profit, net asset value and physical branch network.

Zaipuna became the first Tanzanian CEO to lead NMB since its privatization to Netherlands based Rabobank almost a decade ago. Her appointment was on merit because of the impressive performance of the bank under her watch as acting chief executive for more than two years. The bank had been under Dutch CEOs since its privatization.

Similar major appointments were made at US based banking conglomerate, Citi Bank where Geoffrey Mchangila was also named as Managing Director after years of foreign CEO leading the local chapter of the bank.

Another major appointment during the period was that of Songas Limited where Aneal Samuel took over the helm also following decades of foreign CEOs thanks to CDC Globeleque's



NMB Bank Plc's CEO, Ruth Zaipuna.

majority ownership.

Samuel who has been at the Songas for many years and his appointment, just like his peers, was deserved in addition to making history as the first Tanzanian CEO to lead Songas.

At National Bank of Commerce, Theobald Sabi also took over from another Tanzanian, Lawrence Mafuru who was the first Tanzanian CEO to head the bank which was privatised to Absa Group of South Africa in 1999.

In general, the banking industry has seen many local CEOs take over from their foreign peers for the first time ever since such companies were established or privatised mostly in early years of 2000.

Today, the banking industry has perhaps one of the most vibrant and youthful set of CEOs who have maintained superb performance in the market such as CRDB Bank Plc's Abdulmajid Nsekela, Standard Chartered Bank Tanzania's Sunjay Rughani, Azania Bank Limited's Joseph Itembe and TPB Bank Plc's Sabasaba Moshingi, to name but a few.

In general, the new breed of

Tanzanian CEOs taking over reigns at the helm of large corporations some of them foreign owned confirms President Magufuli's thinking that as Tanzanians we can deliver.

Performance of these chief executives has not let the country down either because companies such as Songas have continued to perform well in the market.

In the banking industry, sustained impressive performance by CRDB and NMB has remained a text book example of the success of privatization as echoed by former President the late Benjamin Mkapa when NMB hosted his book's launch event mid this year. "The success which NMB has had for many years means that our decision to privatise NBC was not a mistake," Mkapa said then.

As more and more Tanzanians are expected to take over the helm of existing corporations, most of which have had foreign CEOs since their privatisation of establishment two decades ago, a pack of eggheads is already there for others to learn from.

# China set to overtake US as the world's biggest economy by 2028

BEIJING

China will overtake the US to become the world's biggest economy in 2028, five years earlier than previously anticipated, as it recovers faster from the coronavirus pandemic, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

"For some time, an overarching theme of global economics has been the economic and soft power struggle between the United States and China," the London-based think tank CEBR said in an annual report published on Saturday. "The Covid-19 pandemic and corresponding economic fallout have certainly tipped this rivalry in China's favour."

China was the first country to report the coronavirus in December last year. However, strict movement restrictions introduced by Beijing helped contain the outbreak in the country and the subsequent easing of lockdown measures accelerated its economic recovery. As of Saturday, the number of infections in China reached 86,933 with 4,634 deaths, according to Worldometer. Total recoveries stand at 81,971.

"Thanks to a strict early response, China has managed to avoid re-introducing the harshest pandemic-fighting measures after the first wave and, unlike most other advanced economies, has avoided a recession in 2020," the report said.

China is expected to grow an average of 5.7 per cent a year from 2021 to 2025 before slowing to 4.5 per cent a year from 2026 to 2030, according to the report. The International Monetary Fund sees China's economy expanding 8.2 per cent in 2021 after slowing to about 1.9 per cent this year.

The US economy will grow 1.9 per cent a year between 2022 and 2024 and then to 1.6 per cent after that, according to CEBR. It will have a strong post-pandemic rebound in 2021. The IMF forecasts the US economy will expand 3.1 per cent in 2021 following a 4.3 contraction this year. The US has the highest number of infections globally at more than 19.2 million, while deaths total more than 338,000 and recoveries stand at 11.2 million.

Japan will remain the world's third-largest economy throughout the 2020s,

before being overtaken by India at the start of the 2030s, according to CEBR. The country's economy will grow at 3 per cent in 2021 and 1.6 per cent in 2022. Growth is expected to settle at 0.5 per cent a year from 2025 onwards.

The UK, currently the fifth-biggest economy by the CEBR's measure, will slip to sixth place in 2024. The country's economy is expected to grow 4 per cent a year from 2021 to 2025 and 1.8 per cent from 2026 to 2030.

The Brexit deal between the UK and the European Union "should be not be seen as an end in itself but as a beginning of a drive to test new policies that could work to the benefit of both sides in promoting prosperity while ensuring that the gains from prosperity are fairly shared out," the CEBR said.

Growth in Germany, Europe's largest and the world's fourth-biggest economy, is expected to contract 6 per cent in 2020, before rising 4.2 per cent in 2021. France's economy, the euro area's second-largest, will grow 6 per cent in 2021 and 1.7 per cent annually from 2025 onwards.

Italy's economy is expected to contract by 10.6 per cent in 2020 with growth picking up to 5.2 per cent in 2021. Italy was the first Western country to be hit by the coronavirus outbreak in March and introduced stimulus measures worth over €100 billion (\$121.6bn) to support the economy. Spain, which has the ninth highest number of coronavirus infections is not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels of output until 2024, according to the report.

Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's largest economy, is expected to grow at an average rate of 2.9 per cent from 2021 to 2025 and 2.3 per cent from 2026 to 2035, while the UAE's economy will grow 2.3 per cent a year over the next 15 years.

"Over the past four years, the United Arab Emirates has become more competitive in terms of its regulatory environment", CEBR said. Over the next 15 years, CEBR forecasts the UAE will see a modest improvement in its ranking in the World Economic League Table, rising to 32nd place in 2035 from 35th place in 2020.

Egypt, the Arab world's third-largest economy will grow 4.8 per cent a year

VIEW FROM THE TOP



Centre for Economics and Business Research hard cover report.

# Sudan's wheat struggle sums up revolution's opportunities and drawbacks

KHARTOUM

Two years on from the protest movement that screamed "bread and dignity," the Sudanese are still queuing around the block for the most basic of necessities, even as a transitional government battles systemic corruption.

Sharp rises in bread prices sparked street protests in central Atbara and other cities on December 19 2018, a movement which later opened up to include a plethora of grievances against the government, eventually toppling long-time dictator Omar Al Bashir.

During the reign of Al Bashir, Sudan was suffering from economic sanctions that alienated it in a globalised market. As such, Sudan's cheapest and only source of wheat imports hailed from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, also known as Black Sea wheat.

Now Sudan looks to a new future with the lifting of economic sanctions as a result of its removal from the US terror list, thereby opening up doors to potential investors and businesses. Sudan has been receiving, a substantial amount of aid in the form of wheat imports in recent days from Israel, the UAE and US aid

in efforts to alleviate its immediate shortages.

But the challenge of providing affordable bread for the public remains. Much like many households around the world, bread is a staple and necessity that is always found on the kitchen counter. Bread is a common staple alongside the Sudanese protein and legume heavy breakfast, comprised of eggs and fava beans or fowl. "You cant consume fowl in any form without bread being there to scoop it up on an ear-shaped piece of bread," said Dalia Abdel Moneim, owner of Duniyat Dalia's baking business and activist.

On the surface, bread shortages still seem to pose a problem in Sudan's many local and government-run bakeries. But Amro Zaakria, chief executive of Madarik Finance and adviser to Sudan's Ministry of Trade and Finance, claims it is a manufactured shortage.

"When Sudan receives these wheat shipments, local bakeries bake their daily bread using 30 per cent of the wheat for example, and the remaining 70 per cent gets sold at market price." Mr Zakaria



Workers at their first day of work at the recently inaugurated the Nile Valley Complex for bread production in Khartoum.

explained.

In April 2020, subsidized wheat flour in Sudan cost 550 Sudanese pounds, while it was sold in the market for 2300 pounds (\$41.4), more than three times its original value.

This is how local bakeries operated under Al Bashir's rule, where the regime owned most of the bakeries. But these illegal sales of subsidised wheat continue to undermine efforts to reverse the corrupt way of life. Nevertheless, the transitional government says it is working hard

to pave new paths for honest economic growth in Sudan.

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok's government devised three alternate plans to undermine black market wheat flour sales. One such step is the creation of 'mega bakeries'. Assisted with financial aid from Egypt, the first bakery in the Nile Valley was opened this week.

It is equipped with ten automated production lines, with a production capacity of up to 1.5 million loaves of bread per day and plans to eventually run off hydropower,

according to Hassan Abu Naouf, director of strategic goods at the General Administration of Internal Trade. These bakeries will be entirely run by the government, in an effort to push out corrupt bread makers. "That way people can buy directly from the ministry's subsidised bread to minimise selling subsidised flour illegally," Mr Zakaria said. In recent days, many Sudanese consumers have commented on the brown colour of their daily bread purchase, a new change to the normally white bread. "Bread is not as white as before, its more brown in colour and has a bran-like texture to it," said Ms Moneim.

The colour change is due to a government modification to the process of extracting flour from subsidised wheat, resulting in the flour retaining the more organic colour and elements of wheat, in another attempt to curb the illegal selling of subsidised wheat to local gourmet bakeries that would normally use white flour to bake sweets and desserts for sale.

Sudan's younger generation is also joining the fight against corruption. Mr Abu Naouf said young resistance committee members have assigned

each household a card with a QR code and are coordinating deliveries via WhatsApp.

As the second anniversary of the uprising looms, Sudanese neighbourhoods are drumming up plans for the festivities, as the neighbourhood councils (Iijan) get together and set plans for the celebrations. A local rounding up of people and resources outside of official government preparations to celebrate a national milestone is also a message to the transitional government.

With the recent devastating floods and alarmingly rapid currency depreciation, the Sudanese people are getting impatient with Mr Hamdok's transitional government. But activists such as Ms Abdelmonim say Sudan needs to play the long game, to carefully weed out all remnants of the old regime, lurking within many establishments and institutions, much like a local bakery in a small Sudanese village. The transitional government will remain in power until elections are held in 2022, as agreed by Sudan's civil society and the military a power-sharing set up in August 2019.



## WORLD

# It's not over: Major issues Brexit deal leaves unresolved

By Bloomberg

THE trade agreement between the UK and the European Union brought welcome relief to businesses, averting the prospect of punitive tariffs and a chaotic no-deal split from Britain's largest trading partner this week.

However, the deal leaves major issues either unresolved or at risk of flaring up again. Here's where the Brexit accord may cause problems in future:

## Level Playing Field

A deal over the so-called level playing field, creating the conditions for fair competition between businesses, was one of the thorniest parts of negotiations. The agreed compromise means the UK doesn't have to align with EU laws, but the bloc can impose proportionate tariffs, subject to arbitration, if it can show Britain's actions have distorted fair competition.

This means the question of levies on UK-EU trade is still far from settled and is a live issue. One of the central arguments of the campaign to leave the bloc was that Britain would "take back control" of its own laws, and euroskeptic members of Boris Johnson's Conservative Party have called on the prime minister to seize the opportunity to slash regulations.

The deal also contains a "review" clause which allows either side to periodically re-

negotiate this part of the treaty if they are unhappy with how it is being used. The trade deal could therefore still collapse in future if the UK or EU decide it isn't working out.

## Finance

The deal offers little clarity for financial firms. There is no decision on so-called equivalence, which would allow firms to sell their services into the EU's single market from the City of London. The agreement only features standard provisions on financial services, meaning it doesn't include commitments on market access.

Johnson told the Sunday Telegraph the deal "perhaps does not go as far as we would like" on financial services, in a rare admission his strategy in the talks had fallen short.

The Treasury is due to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with the EU as an urgent priority in 2021 and London will continue discussions with Brussels over access and equivalence for financial services, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said on Sunday.

## Data

The UK and EU have only agreed a temporary solution to keep data flowing between their territories. For an interim period of a maximum of six months, data can continue to be transferred until a separate legal



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson

agreement is reached.

EU officials have said a so-called data adequacy decision, which would certify that UK data protection standards are comparable with the bloc's, could be made in early 2021.

## Fish

The Brexit trade deal contains a five-and-a-half year transition period for fisheries, during which British fleets will see an uplift equal to 25 percent of the catch previously caught by EU boats in UK waters. After that, access will be subject to annual negotiations.

The agreement gives both the UK and EU the right to levy duties on each other's fish if they can show that any future reduction in access to waters causes economic or social harm.

There was an angry response from fishermen to the compromise, with the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations describing it as a "betrayal." Fishing was a totemic issue in the Brexit campaign and they will pressure the UK government to drive a hard line when the next talks come around.

## Gibraltar

The UK and EU are still yet to come to an agreement over Gibraltar, the British territory connected to mainland Spain. Without a deal, crossing the frontier could be more difficult, which could cause long queues for commuters and significant economic disruption. About 15,000 workers cross the border every day.

Any attempt by Spain to erode or even end British control of the territory has long raised the hackles of Conservative lawmakers, including former leader Iain Duncan Smith, and they will fight hard to stop the UK giving any concessions.

## Agencies

## How the world will change in 2021

### BEIJING

AS the world prepares to bid farewell to the year 2020, one question becomes glaringly evident: How will the world look like in 2021?

### MANY UNCERTAINTIES

The number of COVID-19 cases worldwide has surpassed the 80 million mark. Fortunately, more advances in vaccine development and drug therapies are expected to bring hope to ending the deadly pandemic in the new year.

Recently, as the virus continues to ravage the globe, mass vaccination drives have started in a growing number of countries. Meanwhile, results from clinical trials in Brazil and Turkey have confirmed the efficacy of Chinese vaccines.

Yet, concerns emerged over new COVID-19 strains detected in Britain, South Africa and Nigeria.

Though many are looking forward to a vaccine as the "ultimate weapon" against the novel coronavirus, it remains unclear whether the pandemic can be effectively controlled by 2021, given uncertainties such as vaccination rates, duration of antibody protection, and new coronavirus variants.

"Progress on vaccines gives us all a lift, and we can now start to see the light at the end

of the tunnel. However, (the) WHO (World Health Organization) is concerned that there is a growing perception that the COVID-19 pandemic is over," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a Geneva media briefing earlier this month.

The pandemic still has a long way to run, he warned.

### TURBULENCE AHEAD

In the United States, after this year's complicated presidential election, President-elect Joe Biden will take office on Jan. 20, with the fight against the virus and economic recovery as his administration's top priorities.

Yet, what lies ahead of the new administration is a deeply troubled and divided society. Driven by the ravaging pandemic, economic downturn, high debts, and two-party rivalry, the political battle in the country will likely drag on into the next year.

With ties between Russia and the West slumping to a new low following the Ukraine crisis, Russia's relations with the United States and other Western nations could remain frosty in the new year considering Biden's description of Russia as "the biggest threat" to U.S. security.

In the crisis-torn Middle East, senior Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani and top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh were assassinated; Turkey was

involved in conflicts in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh, with its relations with Greece and Egypt at odds due to tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean – all revealing a trend of turmoil that could continue into the new year.

Britain and the European Union (EU) on Thursday finally secured a free trade deal following nine months of tortuous negotiations.

The trade deal will certainly help avoid a Brexit cliff edge on Jan. 1, 2021, but it is not a Christmas gift for all. Challenges remain as Britain and the EU part as "old friends" in the new year.

### STRUGGLING ECONOMY

On the economic front, the pandemic has pushed the global economy into a recession. With such efforts as vaccination, the global economy is expected to gradually emerge from the shadow of the coronavirus next year, despite risks including vaccines' uncertain effects, the resurgence of infections and a surge in debt.

In its October 2020 World Economic Outlook report, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised up the 2020 forecast for the global economy to a contraction of 4.4 percent, a less severe contraction than the forecast in its June update.

The revision, the multilateral lender said, is "driven by second quarter GDP outturns

in large advanced economies, which were not as negative as we had projected; China's return to growth, which was stronger than expected; and signs of a more rapid recovery in the third quarter."

However, "renewed virus outbreaks in many economies, and the containment measures being introduced, have checked the pace of the global rebound from the output collapse in the first half of 2020, and are likely to result in further near-term output declines, particularly in many European economies," the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said in its economic outlook released earlier this month.

Analysts have said that over the short term, the re-introduction of coronavirus-containment measures in some countries will restrain the momentum of economic recovery. Over the longer term, the pandemic has severely hit the global economy, leading to rising debts, and disrupting global growth potential.

Thus, "the ascent out of this calamity is likely to be long, uneven, and highly uncertain," IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath wrote in an October blog.

### 5G HEAT

The year 2020 is the year of large-scale 5G construction. With the gradual completion of 5G infrastructure construc-

tion in some countries, 5G applications will continue to grow in prominence in 2021, which seems to foretell the advent of a new era of "Internet of Everything."

In the past year, 5G has accelerated its commercial launch, creating new application scenarios in various fields and gradually developing into a key cornerstone for the development of the digital economy.

For instance, China had set up 718,000 5G base stations as of November this year. In the country, the top-level design of 5G applications continues to be optimized, and related manufacturers have formed advantages in technology, equipment and innovative solutions, which has also helped bolster the global 5G market.

In the new year, with the expansion of 5G applications, its ultra-high speed, ultra-low latency, and ultra-large connection characteristics will empower the digital transformation of industries.

Also, 5G, industry insiders say, will efficiently connect such new infrastructures as big data centers, artificial intelligence, and industrial Internet, and advance the realization of industrial technological transformation and optimization with digitalization, networking and intelligence as the main directions.

Xinhua

## Trump signs gov't spending, COVID-19 relief package into law as pandemic worsens

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday night signed the government spending and COVID-19 relief package into law, averting a government shutdown and delivering aid to individuals and businesses as the pandemic worsens.

Trump signed off the 2.3-trillion-U.S.-dollar spending package days after he asked Congress to remove wasteful items in the bill and boost the amount of stimulus checks to 2,000 dollars for individuals, up from 600 dollars.

The president had threatened not to sign the bill if changes were not made. With the signing, the federal government avoids a shutdown due on Tuesday.

"I will sign the Omnibus and Covid package with a strong message that makes clear to Congress that wasteful items need to be removed," Trump said in a statement released Sunday night by the White House.

"I will send back to Congress a redlined version, item by item, accompanied by the formal rescission request to Congress insisting that those funds be removed from the bill," he said.

Trump also said he expects the Congress to vote on separate legislation to increase stimulus checks to 2,000 dollars. "On Monday the House will vote to increase payments to individuals from 600 to 2,000 dollars. Therefore, a family of four would receive 5,200 dollars," he said.

The Senate will also "start the process" to vote on legislation to increase stimulus checks, repeal Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and investigate alleged voter fraud, Trump said.

"Congress has promised that Section 230, which so unfairly benefits Big Tech (U.S. tech giants including Facebook, Apple, Amazon and Google) at the expense of the American people, will be reviewed and either be terminated or substantially reformed," said the president.

Trump signed the legislation under pressure from lawmakers of both parties after federal unemployment benefits expired for millions of Americans on Saturday.

Now the relief package has been signed, it would extend federal unemployment benefits by 300 dollars each week for existing recipients through mid-March.

"Mr. President, we are asking you to please sign the emergency relief bill. This act will show your support for the American people who are in need of emergency lifelines like food, shelter, unemployment benefits and small business relief during these challenging times," a bipartisan group of lawmakers said earlier Sunday in a statement.

"However, if your objection to the COVID-19 relief bill will prevent you from signing, please veto it immediately. You've made your position clear and rejecting it quickly will allow those in favor to act before it is too late," the group said.

The House of Representatives and Senate both approved the 900-billion-dollar relief package last week with overwhelming bipartisan support, along with 1.4 trillion dollars in government funding for the rest of the fiscal year, which ends on Sept. 30, 2021. Xinhua

## Rwanda reports highest single-day jump in confirmed COVID-19 cases

KIGALI

RWANDA on Sunday reported 153 new COVID-19 cases, the highest daily increase since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country on March 14.

The new infections included 103 cases in a prison in Southern Province, according to the health ministry.

Rwandan Minister of Health Daniel Ngamije earlier this month warned that the COVID-19 pandemic had reached a "critical stage" in the country, with an ongoing spike in new cases and deaths. The previous record was 131 cases on Dec. 13.

The small central African country now has a total of 7,970 of COVID-19 cases, out of which 6,289 people have recovered and 74 succumbed to the disease, the ministry said in its latest update on the pandemic, urging people to continue following preventive measures.

"Citizens have a big role to play in containing the spread of COVID-19," Sabin Nsanzimana, director general of Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), told Xinhua in a telephone interview yesterday. He warned that laxity and complacency on the COVID-19 preventive measures among the people is dangerous as it would lead to uncontrollable spread of the virus. Xinhua

## Chinese quantum computer prototype leads world in computational capabilities

A RESEARCH team led by professors Pan Jianwei and Lu Chaoyang of the University of Science and Technology of China has recently established a quantum computer prototype named "Jiuzhang", via which up to 76 photons were detected.

The achievement was made through joint efforts of the research team and the Shanghai Institute of Microsystem and Information Technology and the National Parallel Computer Engineering Technology Research Center.

Jiuzhang can process 50 million samples within 200 seconds by Gaussian boson sampling (GBS), a classical simulation algorithm, compared with 600 million years for the current most powerful supercomputer in the world.

The breakthrough marks the first time that China has realized a quantum computational advantage, or "quantum supremacy", which makes the country the second in the world to achieve the feat.

Jiuzhang's research team published their achievement on Science magazine, one of the world's top academic journals, on Dec. 4.

"Quantum supremacy" appears when a new quantum computer prototype outperforms the most powerful classical computers in terms of computing power in handling a particular task.

The result also proves that the new quantum computer prototype will possibly outperform traditional computers and more breakthroughs in many other areas in the future.

One of the most important issues in the cut-

ting edge of quantum science is to use quantum devices to solve complex problems and exhibit quantum advantages, noted Peter Zoller, member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, who is also winner of Wolf Prize in Physics as well as the Dirac Medal.

Zoller believes that Pan's team has brought to a new level the research on the size, scalability, and the prospect for practical application of quantum systems.

"In the era of big data, the volume of data created in the world is showing exponential growth and doubling every two years," said Pan, who added that such an enormous amount of data wouldn't mean anything unless it is extracted.

At present, the development computer is hindered by its traditional development model,

and supercomputers tend to consume large amounts of energy, Pan said, noting that Jiuzhang was designed to improve computing capabilities without consuming more energy.

The research and development of quantum computers have become one of the biggest challenges at the forefront of world science and technology, as well as a focus of global efforts.

In 2019, Google created a 53-qubit quantum computer known as Sycamore, which was much faster in processing a mathematical algorithm than the world's strongest supercomputer back then. The computer was the first to achieve "quantum supremacy" in the world.

The new quantum computer developed by the Chinese research team beats Sycamore in three aspects—computational speed, environ-

mental suitability and computing power on problems with larger samples, Lu noted.

Sycamore could only outspeed supercomputers in the case of a small amount of samples while Jiuzhang showed better performance than supercomputers in both small and large amounts of samples.

It's like Google's quantum computer could outrun supercomputers in a sprint, but not a marathon; Jiuzhang excels in both sprints and long-distance races, Lu said.

Jiuzhang-based GBS algorithm boasts potential for application in areas such as graph theory, machine learning and quantum chemistry, which are considered as concentrations of research in the future.

People's Daily



## Despite hi-tech advances, many Europeans wary of taking shot

WARSAW / SOFIA

EUROPE rolled out a huge COVID-19 vaccination drive on Sunday to try to rein in the coronavirus pandemic but many Europeans are sceptical about the speed at which the vaccines have been tested and approved and reluctant to have the shot.

The European Union has secured contracts with a range of drugmakers including Pfizer and BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca, for a total of more than two billion doses and has set a goal for all adults to be inoculated next year.

But surveys have pointed to high levels of hesitancy towards inoculation in countries from France to Poland, with many used to vaccines taking decades to develop, not just months.

"I don't think there's a vaccine in history that has been tested so quickly," Ireneusz Sikorski, 41, said as he stepped out of a church in central Warsaw with his two children.

"I am not saying vaccination shouldn't be taking place. But I am not going to test an unverified vaccine on my children, or on myself."

Surveys in Poland, where distrust in public institutions runs deep, have shown fewer than 40 percent of people planning to get vaccinated, for now. On Sunday, only half the medical staff in a Warsaw hospital where the country's first shot was administered had signed up. In Spain, one of Europe's hardest-hit countries, German, a 28-year-old singer and music composer originally from Tenerife, also plans to wait for now.

"No one close to me has had it (COVID-19). I'm obviously not saying it doesn't exist because lots of people have died of it, but for now I wouldn't have it (the vaccine)." A Christian Orthodox bishop in Bulgaria, where 45 percent of people have said they would not get a shot and 40 percent plan to wait to see if any negative side effects appear, compared COVID-19 to polio.



Member of staff draws the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine out of a vial at the Southmead Hospital, Bristol. (AFP)

"Myself, I am vaccinated against everything I can be," Bishop Tihon told reporters after getting his shot, standing alongside the health minister in Sofia. He spoke about anxiety over polio before vaccination became available in the 1950s and 1960s.

"We were all trembling in fear of catching polio. And then we were overjoyed," he said. "Now, we have to convince people. It's a pity."

### GREAT LEAP FORWARD

The widespread hesitancy does not appear to take into account the

scientific developments in recent decades.

The traditional method of creating vaccines - introducing a weakened or dead virus, or a piece of one, to stimulate the body's immune system - takes over a decade on average, according to a 2013 study. One pandemic flu vaccine took over eight years while a hepatitis B vaccine was nearly 18 years in the making.

Moderna's vaccine, based on the so-called messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) technology, went from gene sequencing to the first human injection in 63 days.

"We'll look back on the advances made in 2020 and say: 'That was a moment when science really did make a leap forward'," said Jeremy Farrar, director of the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit, which is backed by the Wellcome Trust.

Agencies

## Japan tightens ban on foreign visitors over new variant

TOKYO

THE Japanese government has tightened a ban on the entry of non-resident foreign nationals starting from yester as coronavirus cases reach record highs and the nation confirmed that infections involve a new and potentially more transmissible variant.

The restrictions will be implemented through late January, the government said in a statement on Saturday. Meanwhile, Japanese nationals and foreigners with residency will no longer be exempt from a 14-day quarantine after arriving, according to the statement.

The move came amid mounting concerns over the spread of the new variant of the coronavirus at a time when cases in Japan and its capital city Tokyo reached new highs.

The variant, which led to the lockdown of London and southern England, has been diagnosed in five people in Japan so far, Norihisa Tamura, Japan's health minister, said on Friday. All had either recently traveled to the United Kingdom, or been in contact with someone who had.

Under the move, the Japanese government will require all people coming from countries and territories where the new variant is confirmed to submit negative virus test results within 72 hours of departure and undergo tests upon arrival from Wednesday.

The UK, Germany, France, Switzerland, Ireland and Sweden are among the nations that have confirmed the presence of the new variant.

However, businesspeople and students from 10 countries and regions including China, Thailand, Vietnam and South Korea, with which Japan has a special scheme to ease travel restrictions, will not be affected by the suspension policy.

Agencies

## Putin ready to take Russian-made Covid-19 vaccine as regulators approve extension of Sputnik V rollout to all age groups - Kremlin

MOSCOW

THE Kremlin said on Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin is likely to soon receive the country's pioneering coronavirus vaccine. The comments came as eligibility for Sputnik V was broadened to those over the age of 60.

Speaking to the Rossiya 1 news channel, presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin was poised to announce his intention to get the jab.

"We can expect to hear from the president himself about the decision in the near future," he said, adding that "he has actually previously said he would definitely take it."

In a conversation with South Korean President Moon Jae-in earlier this

year, Putin had already suggested he was keen to roll up his shirt sleeve.

However, he has since insisted he would wait his turn for the vaccine, rather than skip the queue or enroll in an experimental trial.

Sputnik V, created by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute, made headlines in August, when it became the first vaccine against Covid-19 to be registered anywhere in the world.

There had been initial hesitancy about rolling it out to all age groups, and the very vulnerable, without extensive research, but with more than 700,000 Russians having received the jab already, and clinical trials completed, regulators now feel there is sufficient evidence to extend it to more and more people.

As a result, last week, the Russian



Ministry of Health announced that people over the age of 60 would be able to sign up for appointments to

receive the jab. Previously, only those working in certain sectors, such as education, healthcare, energy, and the

media had been eligible, although, in practice, clinics were known to be more liberal in their distribution.

While Russia was the first state to register a Covid-19 vaccine, a number of countries have since begun their immunization program using other formulas.

Over the past week, a row has been brewing in the US, after a number of right-wing Republican senators, many of whom had played down the pandemic, were among the first in line to get their shots.

Outgoing Vice President Mike Pence and President-elect Joe Biden are among those who have been vaccinated already, joining world leaders such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the front of the line.

Agencies

## Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games bring more splendid life to Chinese

CHINA is currently in a thick atmosphere of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games as the event approaches. Athletes are going through intense preparation for the games, while citizens are inspired to invest more time in fitness programs. Besides, venues for the games have also been successively completed.

All these have led to a more splendid life of the Chinese nationals.

Liu Boqiang, who has been worked over 20 years for Beijing Shougang Co., Ltd., a Chinese listed steel manufacturer, has embraced a career transition because of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

Liu, 43, who used to work on the production lines of steel manufacturing, was among the earliest to sign up for an ice making training program organized by his company in 2017.

In order to acquire the skill, Liu spends over a dozen hours a day in a stadium, carrying equipment that weighs more than 20 kilograms.

He had walked nearly 150 kilometers in two months on a road outside the stadium to learn ice making for curling. The Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games is like a new gate for him, through which he found a new life.



Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic mascots stand in front of the Yanqing station of Beijing-Zhangjiakou High-speed Railway, a key infrastructure project for the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games that starts operation on Dec. 1. (File Photo)

Xing Liang is an employee of the Beijing Capital Airport Aviation Security Company. Recently, he joined a skiing service team organized by the Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, a team that recruits highly skilled skiers from the society. The team offers ski training and serves national ski competitions.

As a ski enthusiast, Xing always competes with advanced skiers. Now the team has of-

fered a larger space for him to use his skiing skills.

Wang Pu and Cu Lixin are a young couple that work for the construction of the National Ski Jumping Center in the Zhangjiakou competition zone of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

The wife Cui is from the budget department, and her husband Cui is a surveyor. They have been working at the construction site for over 300 days, where sunburn is very com-

mon.

They believe that to struggle for a shared destination is what youth should be like.

Enthusiasm in ordinary life - that's a similar but unique feeling of the Chinese brought by the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games. Looking into 2022, they can sense the thick atmosphere of the games, and are working to contribute to the games and struggling for a better life.

People's Daily

## US must stop meddling in China's internal affairs

THE so-called sanctions imposed by the U.S. on senior Chinese legislators of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee entirely run against basic norms governing international relations, severely interfere in China's internal affairs, and seriously undermine China-U.S. relations.

The hysterical political bullying has triggered strong condemnation from the Chinese government and people.

The sanctions were announced by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a statement on Dec. 8, in which he also made groundless accusation against China's promulgation and implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in accordance with law.

Hong Kong is a part of China, and its affairs are purely China's internal affairs. The U.S. is in no position to interfere. The NPC Standing Committee's legislation on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong in accordance with the Constitution to improve governance on Hong Kong and crack down on criminals is totally within China's sovereignty.

The recent decision of the HKSAR government to disqualify four members of the Legislative Council (LegCo) is in line with China's Constitution and the Article 104 of the HKSAR Basic Law.

It also conforms to relevant interpretations of the NPC Standing Committee and the law on safeguarding national security in the HKSAR. The decision is totally legal, and shall never be questioned by any external forces, including the U.S.

China's promulgation and implementation of the law on safeguarding national

security in the HKSAR in accordance with law accord with international law and common practice. It's also an international convention for civil servants to swear allegiance to their country.

The U.S. itself has long enacted dozens of laws on safeguarding national security, and the members of the U.S. congress also have to swear allegiance to American Constitution as required. Over 20 members in the U.S. history have been disqualified due to violation of political loyalty.

The farces of the White House interfering in other countries' domestic affairs once again proved that the U.S. is on one hand building an airtight wall that safeguards its own national security, and is on the other hand trying hard to smash the walls of other countries.

The more farces of such double standards are staged by the U.S., the more hypocritical and ugly nature it exposes. What the White House is doing just proves that the U.S. was the largest backstage manipulator of the chaos in Hong Kong.

It seems like the U.S. cares about Hong Kong's democracy, human rights and autonomy, but as a matter of fact, to bring turbulence to special administrative region and undermine China's development stability is what it really aims at.

The Chinese government is firmly determined to oppose U.S. interference in Hong Kong affairs, to uphold China's sovereignty, security and development interests, and to implement "one country, two systems".

The retrogressive behavior of the U.S. will only trigger greater indignation among the 1.4 billion Chinese people, including Hong Kong compatriots, and beef up the Chinese government's resolution to implement the law on safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, crack down upon the "anti-China" forces that scheme to destabilize Hong Kong, and safeguard the long-term development and stability of Hong Kong.

People's Daily

## Ethiopia bids farewell to 2020 as COVID-19, conflicts pose challenges

ADDIS ABABA

IN a turbulent year as COVID-19 grabbed the headlines across the world, Ethiopia has also suffered the blow by the health crisis, which put a strain on its social economy and represented a threat to public wellbeing.

As the East African country scrambled to flatten the curve, it failed to dodge yet another hit. Its north saw a bloody conflict flare up in November after months of growing political tensions, dragging it into bitter chaos and putting millions in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Could there be a healthy and peaceful future around the corner? With the year 2020 coming to an end and a new year in sight, many were won-

dering.

### ANTI-VIRUS EFFORTS

Ethiopia confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on March 13. Now its total infections have surpassed 121,880, after reporting 481 cases on Friday.

Ethiopia, the second-most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of 110 million, saw the fifth-highest caseload of COVID-19 on the continent, following South Africa, Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia. Economic experts stressed that when Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, also an economic powerhouse, be-

came the pandemic's epicenter, it further leveled up the toll COVID-19 took on the country's economy.

A week after Ethiopia announced its first COVID-19 case, it introduced stringent anti-virus measures, including closing schools, limiting religious gatherings, postponing sporting events, and punishing unnecessary price hikes on consumer goods. Many of the preventative measures have been recently lifted. On Oct. 13, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education said it had finalized the distribution of 50 million face masks to 46,000 schools across the

country "in a bid to resume classes with the necessary precocious measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19." As the pandemic prevailed, it forced Ethiopia to postpone its election by one year from the initial schedule. On Friday, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia tentatively scheduled the national polls for June 5, 2021.

On Oct. 19, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the country registered 6.1 percent economic growth during the last budget year ending on July 8, by mitigating the impact of COVID-19. Citing the dis-

ease's multifaceted fallout in society and economy home and abroad, Ahmed said his country has taken "remarkable prevention measures to protect the economy." Ethiopia has undertaken a wide range of activities to secure economic stimulation support from global financial institutions and many countries to its economy as well as other African countries amid the pandemic, said the premier.

### DOUBLE HIT

Weeks of fights in northern Ethiopia's Tigray regional state between the Tigray People's Liberation Front

(TPLF) and the Ethiopian Defense Forces since early November have reportedly left hundreds of people dead and thousands displaced. More than 52,000 refugees have fled Tigray into eastern Sudan over the past six weeks, according to the latest figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on Tuesday. The deadly clash followed rising tensions between Ethiopia's ruling Prosperity Party and the TPLF, as each side accused the other of trying to destabilize the country.

The Ethiopian government has frequently blamed

the TPLF, one of the four coalition fronts of the country's former ruling party, for masterminding a host of treasonous acts. Mounting differences between the two sides exacerbated in September, when the Tigray government decided to go alone with its planned regional elections, which the Ethiopian parliament had previously postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid the devastating humanitarian consequence of the conflict, the UN refugee agency, together with 30 humanitarian partners, on Tuesday appealed for 156 million U.S. dollars to meet "the critical humanitarian needs" of Ethiopian refugees fleeing the Tigray conflict through the first half of 2021.

Xinhua



The Guardian

## SPORT



In this combo of 2020 file photos, Naomi Osaka, of Japan, wears face masks bearing the names of Black victims of police violence and racial profiling during the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York. Osaka has been selected by The Associated Press as the Female Athlete of the Year. (AP Photo)

## Activist, champion: Naomi Osaka is AP Female Athlete of Year 2020

By HOWARD FENDRICH

WITH tennis, like so much of the world, shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic, Naomi Osaka found herself with time to read and think.

And while she won the U.S. Open for her third Grand Slam title, she also stood out for speaking out about racial injustice and police brutality.

As noteworthy in 2020 for her activism away from the tennis court as her success on it, Osaka was selected by The Associated Press as the Female Athlete of the Year in results revealed Sunday after a vote by AP member sports editors and AP beat writers.

"It was difficult to be isolated from my family for large parts of the year, but that's nothing compared to others. It was sad to watch and read the news of people suffering from COVID-19, and the economic and social effect on so many – losing jobs, mental health. It was such a tough year for so many people," Osaka wrote in an email interview. "And then watching the police injustices like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Jacob Blake (to name just a few) in the summer broke my heart. I am proud of my U.S. Open victory, but more so that I got people talking about the real issues."

Osaka collected 18 of 35 first-place votes and a total of 71 points.

WNBA Finals MVP Breanna Stewart was next with nine first-place votes and 60 points, followed by Sarah Fuller, the Vanderbilt soccer player who kicked for the school's football team, with one first-place vote and 24 points.

LeBron James was announced Saturday as the AP Male Athlete of the Year.

Billie Jean King, a 12-time Grand Slam singles title winner and a pioneering advocate for decades, praised Osaka for positioning "herself as a leader not only in women's tennis but in all of sports and a force for change in our society."

"She successfully completed the difficult task of taking excellence in sports performance and using that platform to succeed outside of sports on a much bigger stage," King told the AP. "She ignited a conversation on social justice, the results of which were bigger than tennis, larger than sports, and in doing so raised the bar for all those who want to leverage the gifts and talents we have to make a difference in our world."

Osaka went 16-3 during the coronavirus-truncated tennis calendar – the professional tours took about a five-month hiatus; Wimbledon was canceled for the first time since 1945 –

and ended the year ranked No. 3.

The defining stretch of Osaka's season came in August and September, when she compiled an 11-match winning streak that included the U.S. Open.

It was during a tuneup tournament in New York that Osaka – whose father is Haitian and mother is Japanese – declared she would not play her semifinal, joining athletes from the NBA and elsewhere in protesting the police shooting of Blake.

"There are clearly so many worthy issues. This one especially resonated with me because of my own personal up-bringing; and also while the tennis tour was paused, I was able to watch and read news at length for the first time in my life. This summer in the U.S., tensions were high and reached boiling point," Osaka said. "It was the right time for me to speak up."

Taking her lead, that tournament shut down completely for a day.

"Her activism has shone a light on how we as individuals and sports leagues can collectively make an impact," WTA Chairman and CEO Steve Simon said. "Not only is she a phenomenal tennis player, but she also demonstrates how athletes have an opportunity to use their platform for something bigger than the game or themselves. Her actions are nothing short of inspiring and she is so very deserving of this recognition."

During the U.S. Open, Osaka brought attention to Black victims of violence by arriving for matches wearing face masks bearing the names of Floyd, Taylor, Tamir Rice, Elijah McClain, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery and Philando Castile.

"To be honest, I really didn't stop to think about what others would think of my actions. Other people's opinions weren't going to stop me from doing what I know in my heart was the right thing to do," Osaka said. "The strong voices of Colin (Kaepernick) and LeBron were certainly positive influences for me and gave me strength in my own convictions."

Turning to 2021, the 23-year-old Osaka listed these goals: "work hard, do better, speak up, be kind."

Japan, where she was born, is slated to host the postponed Olympics next year.

"I am looking forward most to being with the athletes that had waited and trained for over 10 years, for celebrating a very hard year (2020), and having that happen in Japan makes it that much more special," Osaka said. "It's a special and beautiful country filled with culture, history and beauty. I cannot be more excited."

AP

## Said lifts lid on refusal to accept E&CAPBF Super Welterweight title

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIAN professional Super Welterweight boxer, Mfaume Said, has broken his silence on his refusal to be presented with the East and Central Africa Professional Boxing Federation (E&CAPBF) honour, much as he had won it with victor over Malawi's Chikondi Makawa in a bout held in Dar es Salaam last weekend.

Said defended the title, beating his Malawian opponent by points in the 10-round fight, which took place at Next Door Arena, Masaki last Saturday.

The E&CAPBF Super Welterweight title holder disclosed he opted out of taking the title he was to receive after he had been declared as the winner because it, according to him, was not the one he was supposed to be presented with.

Said noted: "The title was worn out and it was different from the one I was shown during the weigh in last Friday."

Tanzania Professional Boxing Regulatory Commission (TPBRC)'s president, Agapeter Bazil, said Said had every reason to reject the title, with the former as well claiming it was worn out.

"The fight's promoter and E&CAPBF's repre-



Tanzanian boxer, Mfaume Said (R), lands a left punch on Chikondi Makawa of Malawi when the boxers met in the East and Central Africa Professional Boxing Federation (E&CAPBF) Super Welterweight title fight, held in Dar es Salaam last weekend. Said won the title by points. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

sentative, Joe Anea, will tell us why the title the boxers were shown is different from the one that was presented after the fight, otherwise the commission will take action against them," he said.

Anea, who also represents the Africa Boxing Union (ABU) in Tanzania, noted the Super Welterweight title is the one Said got once he won it on June 16, 2018.

He disclosed: "Yes, he has defended it, his bout, though, had, until the weigh in day, not been deemed as a title fight, he asked to fight for the title his fellow boxer, Selemani Kidunda, was set to fight for the same

day."

"Once Said had seen the title that Kidunda was set to fight for, he said he wanted a title with the same quality, he may have won it but the fight's promoter has to pay for it," he noted.

He stopped short of mentioning the amount of cash the bout's promoter, Suleiman Semuny, has to pay for the title.

Said emerged as the winner, getting maximum points from all of the bout's judges.

The judges scored 96-94, 100-90 and 96-94 in Said's favour.

"It was a tough fight, but I'm relieved to have won," Said disclosed shortly after the bout's

results were announced.

The results looked to have brought contrasting opinions from fans, who turned up to watch it, with a section of them believing Said had lost the bout, whereas others were adamant that he had won it.

Despite Makawa opting to be more defensive, Said seemed to have what it takes to come out victorious via either Knockout (KO) or Technical Knockout (TKO).

Said turned out to be dominant in the sixth round, punishing Makawa with heavy punches and winning noisy cheers from the boxing enthusiasts.

Makawa abandoned

his defensive approach in the last round and at some point landed a big left punch on Said's forehead, the latter managed to finish the fight and was later announced as the winner.

Several other bouts took place at the venue, with one of them, a 10-round Pugilist Syndicate of Tanzania (PST) national championship fight, ending with Juma Choki winning the bout, overcoming Issa Nampepeche by TKO in the third round.

Nampepeche disputed the results, TPBRC's Basil announced that the results will not be changed.

"Anyone with a complaint should bring it to the body's office," Basil stated.

In the day's other fight, Tanzania's Abdallah Pazi 'Dullah Mbabe' won by KO against Simeon Tcheta of Malawi.

within 120 seconds, claimed that in August when he was beaten by Kiduku he was in pain but now it was too late.

"I want to reconcile with Kiduku," said Mbabe as he cheered loudly by hundreds of fans at the Next Door Arena, Dar es Salaam.

Other domestic boxers, Selemani Kidunda, Tony Rashid and Ismail Galiatano, won their respective fights against boxers from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



This photo provided by Pyramide Films, shows a scene from the film "You Will Die at Twenty." For the first time, Sudan has a contender for the Oscars. The film "You Will Die at Twenty" based on a short story by Sudanese novelist Hammour Ziyada, is competing for the Best International Feature film at the Academy Awards. AP

## A Sudan in transition presents first-ever film for Oscars

CAIRO

NEARLY two years after the overthrow of autocrat Omar al-Bashir, Sudan is taking steps to rejoin the international community from which it was long shunned. That includes its film industry.

For the first time in its history, Sudan has a submission for the Academy Awards. Produced by a consortium of European and Egyptian companies but with a Sudanese director and cast, "You Will Die at Twenty" will compete in the Best International Feature Film category.

The story follows a young man whose death at the age of 20 is prophesied not long after his birth, casting a shadow over his formative years, and parallels the burdens placed on a generation of Sudan's young people.

Based on a short story by Sudanese novelist Hammour Ziyada, critics say it demonstrates that the country's cultural scene is reawakening after decades of oppression.

The film was produced amid mass demonstrations against al-Bashir, who was toppled by the military in April 2019 after ruling the country for nearly 30 years.

"It was an adventure," filmmaker Amjad Abu Alala told The Associated Press. "There were protests in the streets that had grown to a revolution by the beginning of filming."

Sudan's uprising erupted in late 2018, and as the number of people in the streets swelled, many of them young, the military stepped in and toppled the Islamist president. Since then, the country has embarked on a fragile transition to democracy, ending years of theocratic rule that limited artists' freedoms.

The film's submission was announced in November by the country's ministry of culture, a month before the second anniversary of the start of the uprising.

It follows a narrative written by Ziyada in the early 2000s that chronicles the life of a child in 1960s in a remote village, located between the Blue and White Nile rivers. The inhabitants are largely guided by ancient Sufi beliefs and traditions, a mystical strain of Islam.

The film starts when a mothman, Sakina, takes her newborn boy to a Sufi ceremony at a nearby shrine as a blessing. As a sheikh gives his blessing, a man in traditional clothing performs

a meditative dance, suddenly stopping after 20 turns, falling to the ground – a bad omen.

The frightened mother appeals to the Sheikh to give an explanation. But he says, "God's command is inevitable." At this point, the crowd understands this is a prophecy predicting the child will die at 20.

Stunned and frustrated, the father leaves his wife and son, named Muzamil, to face their fate alone.

Muzamil grows up under the watchful eye of his overprotective mother, who wears black in anticipation of his early demise. He is haunted by the prophecy – even other children name him "the son of death."

Despite that, Muzamil proves to be an inquisitive boy full of life. His mother allows him to go to study the Quran. He receives praise for his memorization and recitation of verses. Then comes a turning point.

A cinematographer, Suliman, returns to the village after years working abroad. Muzamil, who is by now working as an assistant to the village shopkeeper, gets to know him through delivering him alcohol, a social taboo.

Suliman, who lives with a

prostitute, opens Muzamil's eyes to the outside world. Through their discussions, he starts to doubt the prophecy that has governed his life so far and torn his family apart.

As he turns 19, Muzamil takes it upon himself to decide what it means to be alive, even as death beckons.

The film has received positive reviews from international critics. It premiered at the 2019 Venice International Film Festival's parallel section, Venice Days. It won the Lion of the Future for Best First Feature – the first Sudanese film to do so. Since then, it has won at least two dozen awards at film festivals worldwide. Abu Alala says his team tackled obstacles in making the film, thrown up by the same conservative milieu that it depicts. He blames the environment created by al-Bashir, who came to power in an Islamist-backed military coup in 1989. Under his rule, limited personal freedoms meant art was viewed with suspicion by many.

One major challenge, he said, was that local residents at the initial filming location objected to their presence. The crew was forced to move, but they persevered. AP



## Messi slams Barca lies, will decide future in June

BARCELONA

LIONEL Messi says former Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu lied to him repeatedly over the course of several years but he won't rule out staying at Camp Nou beyond this season despite wanting to leave four months ago.

Messi, 33, is out of contract in June and is free to negotiate a pre-contract agreement with other clubs from Jan. 1. However, the forward says he will not make any decision about his future until the summer.

In an extensive interview with La Sexta's Jordi Evole, Messi also lifted the lid on why he tried to quit Barca in August, spoke about a possible reunion with Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar and detailed how his relationship with Bartomeu, who resigned in October, deteriorated.

"I had been telling [Bartomeu] for six months that I wanted to leave and asking for his help and he just said 'no, no, no,'" Messi said. "So, I sent the burofax as a last resort to show I was serious, to make it official.

"I'm eternally grateful to the club for everything but it felt like a cycle had ended and I needed a change. I knew this would be a transition year and I want to fight for the Champions League and league titles.

"The president didn't want to let me go and then he started to leak things to make me look like the bad guy. Then everything that happened happened, but I am still calm that I did what was right at that moment."

Messi said he was appalled at how Bartomeu forced friend and teammate Luis Suarez out, letting him leave for title rivals Atletico Madrid for free, but wouldn't go into details about the lies the former president had told him.

"He [lied] about many things," Messi laughed. "Honestly, so many, but I prefer not to go into private things that happened -- but I can assure you it was many things over several years."

Bartomeu stepped down in October and a new president will be appointed on Jan. 24. Before then, Messi will be able to talk with other clubs, although he insists he is only focused on the current campaign.

"No [I won't talk with other clubs because] I don't have anything clear until the end of the year," the Argentina international added. "I am going to wait for the season to finish. The important thing is to think about the team and to try and win titles, not to get distracted with other issues.

"I don't know what will happen. I am focused on what we have in front of us over the next six months. It would not be right to tell you what I am going to do after that because even I don't know."

Ex-president Joan Laporta and Victor Font are the favourites to replace Bartomeu and will be tasked with trying to convince Messi to sign a new deal.

Messi wouldn't position himself with any of the candidates but will listen to the incoming president's plans before making any decision on his future.

Manchester City and PSG are the two best-placed clubs to sign him in Europe, but Messi wouldn't be drawn on either, although he did say "it's always been a dream to play in the United States" before he retires.

Creating a project to tempt Messi to stay will be tough for the new president given Barca's financial problems.

"The club is very bad [financially], very bad," he said. "It's going to be difficult to return to where we were. It won't be easy for the new president to turn things around. I hope whoever wins does things well to get this great club back to where it deserves to be."

Neymar recently said he would like to play with Messi next season. Messi said he still speaks to the Brazilian -- and did so earlier this month when Barca drew PSG in the Champions League -- but he doubts a Camp Nou reunion would be economically possible.

"It's going to be tough to sign quality players because there's no money," Messi said. "It's tough to bring Neymar here. [Even if he] accepts a smaller salary, how do you pay PSG? The new president will have to be very intelligent and get things in order."

Messi also said he has never seen a psychologist even though he knows he should, backed Barca coach Ronald Koeman, reiterated that there are no problems between him and Antoine Griezmann and said he sees himself as a sporting director, not a coach, when he retires.

Messi touched on a myriad of topics on Sunday night, but his comments on possibly playing in Major League Soccer one day has piqued fans of the sport in the United States.

When asked about whether he'd play in MLS, Messi said: "I always had the dream of being able to enjoy and have the experience of living in the United States, experience what the league there is like."

City Football Group own NYCFC while David Beckham's Inter Miami CF has been seemingly linked with every global star out there, so there surely will be intrigue if Messi does ever land stateside.

(Agencies)

## Spurs' winless run a massive test for Mourinho and his managerial style

By Mark Ogden, Senior Writer, ESPN FC

JOSE Mourinho doesn't like statistics being used to assess a football match. Just last week, the Tottenham manager complained that, too often, they are like "badly cooked meat or fish" when used out of context, but here is one stat that the Portuguese cannot argue against -- Spurs have now collected just two points from a possible 12 after throwing away victory late in a 1-1 draw at Wolverhampton Wanderers.

For a team and a manager who were beginning to harbour genuine ambitions of a title challenge this season, recent results have highlighted their shortcomings and brought some old failings back to the surface. Primarily, Tottenham's creativity problems and Mourinho's struggles with motivating a group of players who do not possess the winning mentality of those he worked with in the early, trophy-laden stage of his managerial career.

The first issue should be a simple one to address, but it requires the second problem to have diminished within Mourinho's makeup for it to be corrected quickly, and without long-term damage, in order to

Spurs to get back on track. Basically, has Mourinho learned how to be less demanding and unforgiving of underperforming players since those traits led to the breakdown of his relationship with the players at Chelsea and Manchester United in his past two jobs?

It is a question that will soon have an answer, because Mourinho won't accept the same old mistakes costing his team points for long. His postmatch comments, when he pointed the blame at his players, are not a good sign, however.

"It is very disappointing, it is like against Liverpool where you control dangerous players for 90 minutes and concede from a set piece," Mourinho said. "Defending deep, that's not the intention. They know what I asked them at half-time, if they couldn't do better it's because they couldn't do better. I know the way I prepare the team, I know all that and don't want to say much more than that. We didn't have that ambition or desire to go for more."

The current Spurs slump began with a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace two weeks ago, but since they travelled to Liverpool with the opportunity to go three points clear at the top of the Premier League on Dec. 16, Tottenham



Jose Mourinho has eventually wore out his welcome almost everywhere he's been, and in the midst of a four-game winless run, he needs to show he's grown from those past experiences. (Agencies)

have lost two out of three games and now find themselves in fifth. Rather than set the pace in the title race, Mourinho and his team have fallen back into the pack.

At Palace, an 81st-minute goal denied Spurs victory, and then at Anfield, Roberto Firmino's 90th-minute header turned a 1-1 draw into a 2-1 defeat. On Sunday at Molineux, it was an 86th-minute header by Romain Saiss which cancelled out Tanguy Ndombele's first-minute opener and secured a deserved point for the home side.

Conceding such punishing late goals will be a source of intense irritation for Mourinho, who places

great importance on concentration and organisation. Wherever he has managed, his basic principles have always been rooted in defensive solidity, and Spurs are beginning to let that side of the game slip.

Against Wolves, just as against Liverpool at Anfield, Spurs lined up well and were rigid in their defensive shape. From a tactical perspective, they were impressive. But shape only goes so far in determining the outcome of a game and at Molineux, as before at Anfield, Spurs were too willing to sacrifice possession and allow the opponent to dominate.

And although Spurs were undone by a

failure to defend a late corner in both games, the mental fatigue of having to concentrate on defensive organisation for such lengthy periods may have contributed to defenders switching off when their focus was needed most. The blame for that can be laid at Mourinho's door because his reluctance to play with greater flair ensures that Spurs will have to do more defending than a title challenger should.

Mourinho sanctioned the departure of attacking midfielder Christian Eriksen to Inter Milan last January -- a move Spurs had little option but to allow due to the Dane's dwindling contract -- but Eriksen has not been replaced.

Dele Alli could be used as Tottenham's creative force in the attacking third, but the former England midfielder has been overlooked repeatedly by Mourinho and appears to be heading for the exit door, just as Eriksen did almost a year ago. Perhaps the money being spent on Gareth Bale's wages during his season-long loan from Real Madrid could have been better used on a No. 10 to replace Eriksen, but that didn't happen and Mourinho has shaped his squad in a different way.

But right now, the players he uses, especially away from home, don't create enough for Harry Kane and Son Heung-min and also don't allow Spurs to keep the ball and command possession. The downside of that was seen at Wolves, just as it was seen at Anfield and Selhurst Park this month. Mourinho's approach invites pressure and his players are creaking under it.

So this is now a big test for Mourinho. He has to get Spurs winning again, but he also needs to do it without making enemies in the dressing room. It sounds simple enough, but history has shown us where it can go wrong with Mourinho in circumstances like these.

## Fan unrest in Brazil a warning to Europe's super league dreams

By Tim Vickery, ESPN South America correspondent

SOME players in the Brazilian league may be relieved that games are being played behind closed doors at the moment, as it limits the opportunities that angry fans have to protest.

Even so, furious supporters can still gather at airports and training grounds, and it is not only teams at the wrong end of the table who can feel the force of the fury. Sao Paulo and Flamengo are the leading candidates to win the league table but, in the last few months, even players from these clubs have had abuse hurled at them or seen insulting slogans daubed on the walls of their training ground.

In part these are manifestations of an angry society. The old tourist myth of Brazil as a happy-go-lucky land of the contented has crumbled in the light of the political events of recent times.

But there is also something else, a factor intrinsic to Brazilian football, but something which should serve as a severe warning to those in charge of the European club game.

Brazil is a country the size of a continent, a fact of geography with significant implications for the development of the game. For decades the transport infrastructure was insufficient for a genuinely national championship. Brazilian football, then, developed as a regional phe-

nomenon. The focus was on the local. There were prototypes, but a national league only came into being in 1971. Until around 25 years ago, huge importance was still placed on the state championships, one for each of the 27 states which make up this giant country.

It was under this approach that so many clubs accumulated the titles and the prestige to be thought of as giants. The heartlands of the south east and the south -- Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre -- contain the acknowledged 12 giant clubs, a total that does not even include clubs from further north with mass support.

The last few decades have seen an important switch. Brazilian club football has moved from a regional to a national approach. The state championships still exist, but they have lost their shine. Their time has been cut back, and even so, they are viewed as tournaments which are now little better than unnecessary clutter.

This has led to a problem. Clubs are now aiming to win the national league or the domestic cup, or the continental Copa Libertadores. In a sporting culture that is obsessed with winning now that the state championships are an afterthought, there are simply not enough titles left for all of the so-called giant clubs to retain their giant status.

In a league that contains 12 giant clubs,



Botafogo are in real danger of being relegated this season. (Agencies)

someone is doomed to finishing no higher than 12th. And a club that consistently can aspire to nothing more than mid-table mediocrity can hardly be called a giant.

Imagine the example of Botafogo. They supplied a succession of magnificent players to Brazil's World Cup winning sides of 1958, 1962 and 1970, but they are now facing relegation for the third time this century. This is not a huge surprise. Their support

base is comparatively small compared to that of their Rio neighbours Flamengo or even Vasco da Gama. In a national environment, when huge gaps have opened up in the amount teams are paid in TV rights, it is hard for Botafogo to be competitive. It is some time since they have gone into the league season with realistic hopes of winning the title -- and that is a tough reality for those brought up on tales of Garrincha, Didi,

Nilton Santos, Zagallo, Amarildo and Jairzinho.

The transition from regional to national is one guaranteed to breed supporter dissatisfaction.

Now let's apply this to the hopes of some of Europe's big clubs to set up a continental super league.

The parallels are very clear -- it is just a case of imagining Europe as a single country and of seeing the national leagues as akin to Brazil's state champion-

ships. And indeed, some of Europe's leagues are already becoming like the state championships: Losing prestige as they lose competitiveness, becoming more predictable as financial chasms open up. A continent-wide super league would start with, say, 20 clubs, all of which would go into the competition with giant status, based on the fact that they win most of their games.

But in a 20 team league, someone has to finish 20th, and 19th, and so on. And a club which is losing the majority of its games is soon fated to lose its giant status, and be an intense disappointment to generations of fans who have grown up on titles and glory. A European super league, then, would seem fated to please a few at the top, and prove a major source of dissatisfaction to everyone else.

The behaviour of fans in Brazil serves as a warning.

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

Spurs' winless run a massive test for Mourinho and his managerial style

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

## Namungo FC head coach in search of new strikers



Namungo FC's head coach, Hemed Suleiman.

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

**N**AMUNGO FC's head coach, Hemed Suleiman, has opened up on his desire to add foreign strikers to his team, seeking to get good results in the Vodacom Premier League, Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC) and CAF Confederation Cup.

The Lindi-based club on Sunday advanced to the fourth round of this season's Azam Sports Federation Cup, notching 2-0 victory over Second Division League (SDL) squad, Green Warriors, in a third round match played at the Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam.

Winger Idd Kipagwile netted Namungo FC's opener on the eighth minute from a superb

free kick he took outside Green Warriors' 18-yard box.

The Lindi side had won the free kick after Kipagwile was fouled. The team went 2-0 up on the 78th minute via striker Sixtus Sabilo who easily tapped in from close range.

After the game, Suleiman said: "I need to add strikers, considering that one of our players is still nursing an injury and he is yet return to his best quality."

"Adam Salamba is still not fit so it is time for us to find another striker in

the transfer market, who will help us in the league we are competing in as well as in the continental tournament," he said.

Salamba has not had a good season after suffering a thigh injury in the CAF Confederation Cup's clash pitting Namungo FC against Al Rabita of South Sudan.

He was substituted just a few minutes after coming on in the second half of the clash, which took place at Azam Complex and ended with Namungo FC notching victory over Al Rabita.

Salamba, the former Lipuli FC and Simba SC striker, has been having short stint for each outfit he has turned out for. He previously donned Stand United FC's kits in 2016 and later joined Iringa's Lipuli FC in 2017, where he showed his goal scoring prowess.

Simba SC recruited Salamba from Lipuli FC in 2018 and the former loaned him out to a Kuwait side, Al Jahra, last year.

He, this year, joined Namungo FC as a loanee from Simba SC.

Namungo FC, which has booked a place in the CAF Confederation Cup's first round, is tasked with securing victory over Sudan's Al Hilal Obeid in the second leg of the round's clash between the two sides.

The Tanzanian club posted 2-0 win over Al Hilal Obeid in the first leg, played at Azam Complex on December 23, and the two sides will lock horns in the second leg slated for January 5-6 next year in Sudan.



Hassan Dalali

## Dalali disqualified from vying for Simba SC's Chairman's post

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

FORMER Simba Sports Club's Chairman, Hassan Dalali, has been disqualified from vying for the post in the club's by-election scheduled for February 7, next year, due to his failure to meet criteria.

Simba SC is expected to hold the by-election to fill the void left by the club's former Chairman, Swedi Nkwabi, who resigned from the post in September last year due to personal reasons.

A member of the club's Directors' Board, Mwina Kaduguda, is filing the post in an acting capacity.

Eleven candidates took forms to vie for the post, with seven of them returning the forms whereas four failed to return the forms.

Initially, the candidates included Dalali, Juma Nkama, Victor Antony, Rashid Shangazi, Ayoub Semvua, Mohamed Soloka, Kassim Nyangalika, Alfred Elia, Hamis Omary, Mutaza Mangungu and Piton Mwakisu.

Simba SC's Election Committee's Chairman, Boniface Lihamwike, said that one of the criteria stipulates that a candidate must submit a degree certificate and if the candidate does not have one, he will be disqualified from the exercise.

He disclosed: "The members have already returned the forms to vie for the Chairmanship, out of the 11 members who took the forms, seven have returned them, they include Nkama, Dalali, Mutaza, Shangazi and Mwakisu, the ones, who did not return the forms, are Semvua, Antony and Nyangalika."

"We are interviewing candidates on December 27-28 based on the criteria we have set, which demands that the candidates must have degree certificate and age proof certificate."

"A candidate who is 65 years old will not be eligible for running for the position, the criteria as well do not allow a person with Ordinary Level, Advanced Level certificates and Diploma education's certificate to vie for the post, if a person does not have a Degree certificate he or she will be disqualified from the exercise," he said.

Dalali had led Simba Sports Club for three years and he enabled the team to win the 2009/10 Premier League trophy without losing a single game before leaving the post for Ismail Aden Rage.

He was disqualified from vying for the side's Chairman's post a few years back for lack of academic qualifications before returning to class and he is now said to have a diploma education.

## Ngorongoro Heroes' skipper thanks minister for backing soccer promotion

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA's national U-20 football team 'Ngorongoro Heroes' skipper, Kelvin John, has expressed his sincere regards to Deputy Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, Angeline Mabula, for the latter's efforts to back soccer promotion from grassroots in Mwanza.

John issued his gratitude to Angeline when he visited the latter in the city on Sunday.

The forward has been groomed by Mwanza-based center for soccer talent development and growth, known as Football House, which is located at Bwiru in Ilemela District.

Angeline is also Mwanza's Ilemela Constituency's Member of Parliament and she has been actively playing part in boosting football promotion in her constituency.

She is moreover the Football House center's matron.

John had sharpened his career at the Football House before joining Brooke House College's Football Academy located in Leicester City in the United Kingdom.

The youngster thanked Angeline for her contribution in promoting various sporting talents within her constituency and in other parts of the country.

John thanked Angeline for the way she commits herself to soccer promotion, noting the latter has been seeking to find solution to challenges facing young people in the sports sector via backing the center.

The forward stated the center nurtured him in both the sport and other aspects of life.

John further congratulated Angeline



Ngorongoro Heroes' skipper, Kelvin John (R), pictured with Deputy Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, Angeline Mabula, when the former visited the latter in Mwanza last weekend. John expressed his gratitude to Angeline for backing football promotion in the region. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

for hosting the Ilemela Constituency Cup tournament, an event the youngster took part in prior to joining the national U-17 football team 'Serengeti Boys'.

"I'm very grateful to my mother, Angeline, for her support to us, that is why I felt I should use the Christmas break to visit her," he disclosed.

John stated there is a huge difference between his current football academy and the Mwanza center, as far as facilities and developing talent are concerned.

He called on the government and sports stakeholders to invest in sports by ensuring that sports equip-

ment and other necessities are readily available to youths with a view to seeing to it the latter live up to expectations.

He stated that Tanzania and the rest of the continent have great potential in sports, compared to other nations in the world, only that the former do not have better facilities.

Angeline urged John to be patriotic and work hard, insisting the youngster should not give up on his plan to turn into a successful soccer player.

Angeline further advised town planning authorities to set aside areas for sports, adding the community should protect the areas.

The Football House's Manager, Francis Felician, said Angeline has been helping to solve various challenges facing the center.

Felician pointed out the Member of Parliament has greatly been helping in scouting for talent, developing it and seeing to it soccer and other sports are a source of employment.

He disclosed Football House has produced several other youngsters, namely Hussein Zubeir, Nassor Mfaume, Agustino Athanas, Machumu Malagira, Adam Ramadhan and Michael Aloyce, who all played with John at the center.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

