



INVESTMENT



Mines and Minerals Act 2017 **PG3**

AGRICULTURE



CALL FOR POTENTIAL CASSAVA PRODUCTION **PG4**

INVANSION



WETLANDS IN KASULU DISTRICT, KIGOMA REGION UNDER THREAT **PG 5**

Magufuli hits out at Home Affairs on payments of police pensions



President John Magufuli inspects newly built classrooms at the Police Academy at Kurasini in Dar es Salaam yesterday shortly after gracing the ceremony at which he declared them officially ready for use. Photo: State House

By Henry Mwangonde

PRESIDENT John Magufuli yesterday took a swipe at Ministry of Home Affairs official for failure to process payments of pension to retired police officers. Presiding over the launch of classrooms at the Police Training Academy on his final day of a two-day tour of Dar es Salaam region, the president said it was sad to note that a simple matter of administration like that was being sung every day with officials at the ministry idling in their offices. The matter emerged when Inspector General of Police Simon Sirro requested the president to intervene and fast-track payments to retired police officers who have not been paid for a long time. "There is no way a simple matter like this one is being talked about all the time.

The problem with my ministers is that they do not communicate; these people have served the police professionally and they deserve to be paid without so much trouble," he said. President Magufuli gave a one week ultimatum to Home Affairs minister, George Simbachawene and the permanent secretary to consult counter-

“There is no way a simple matter like this one is being talked about all the time. The problem with my ministers is that they do not communicate....”

parts at the Treasury on the matter. IGP Sirro said earlier that a number of police officers have not been paid their pensions and requested the president's intervention but in his response, Dr Magufuli blamed the delays on negligence by the ministry. The hostels were built via 700m/- in support offered by the president last

year when he commissioned officers, with the police chief giving a summary of the state of security in the country, underlining that there was a 13.5 decrease in crime from 2019. The IGP said armed robbery had declined but the main challenge remaining was behavior change so that

TURN TO PAGE 2



Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa named Chief Secretary

By Guardian Reporter

President John Magufuli yesterday appointed CCM Secretary General Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa (49) Chief Secretary. The position was formerly held by Ambassador John Kijazi, who died in a Dodoma hospital mid-last week and was buried at his Korogwe home village in Tanga Region. A State House press statement issued yesterday said the president also conferred upon the incoming Chief Secretary the rank of Ambassador, in like manner as most of those who came before him. Dr Kakurwa, whose appointment took effect yesterday, is expected to be sworn in tomorrow at the State House in Dar es Salaam today.

Govt to skip contractors in poor, late water works

By Guardian Correspondent, Sengerema

IT IS now official: the government will no longer award tenders to contractors who delayed water projects or delivered shoddy works. This follows a series of reports of works performed below standard and others undertaken for longer than agreed in the contracts. Most if not all of the culprits are indigent firms. Speaking after an inspection tour on implementation of water projects here yesterday, Deputy Water Minister Maryprisca Mahundi

TURN TO PAGE 2

Court jails hosts to 83 illegal migrants

By Guardian Correspondent, Bagamoyo

A COURT here has sentenced two Tanzanians to 23 years in prison after finding them guilty of hosting and facilitating movement of 83 undocumented foreigners. Reading the sentence here yesterday, Resident Magistrate Mwanakombo Mmanga sent Julius Shija, a resident of Bagamoyo to 20 years in prison after the prosecution proved that he was found hosting 16 of the migrants at his house last month. His alleged accomplice, Eliah Lekule, a resident of Arusha, was sentenced to three years in jail after he was found guilty of facilitating the movement of some migrants at Bagamoyo. The court heard that Lekule was arrested while assisting two of the foreigners to move from Bagamoyo bus stand towards the city of Dar es Salaam. But Shija can regain his freedom by paying 20m/- in fines, the court ruled. The magistrate also handed each of the 83 foreigners to spend two years in jail or pay 500,000/- in fines. The convicted foreigners are

from Ethiopia (81), Somalia (1) and Malawi (1). Earlier, a prosecutor from the Immigration Department in Coast region told the court that the undocumented foreigners were arrested on diverse dates in the past two months in Bagamoyo district with the two hosts in their company. The Regional Immigration Officer, Paul Eranga warned bus owners facilitating the movement of foreigners without tipping off authorities, after the sentences



TURN TO PAGE 2





Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has a word with his fellow Muslims shortly after Friday prayers at Raudha Mosque in the Daraja Bovu section of Zanzibar's West 'A' Unguja District yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Magufuli hits out at Home Affairs on payments of police pensions

FROM PAGE 1
ex-inmates do not return to crime after being released upon finishing jail terms or on parole.

"With the fifth phase government, business people have forgotten about guns and banks being robbed. Now the main problem is rape and

child abuse which is more of a societal problem," he asserted. On traffic offences, Sirro said the traffic police had collected 50bn/- last year

and 2bn/- in the beginning of this year.

On reducing custodial congestion, he said police has decided to put aside civil cases

and land conflicts as they are supposed to be handled by courts directly, noting also that last year up to 780 police officers were fired for various

offences to restore discipline. Earlier, the president launched a police uniforms factory, built at a cost of 680m/-.

MPs refuse to ratify trade pact between Kenya and UK

NAIROBI

Members of Parliament have refused to ratify Kenya's trade pact with the UK, accusing unknown officials of sneaking in documents that had not been tabled in Parliament.

The lawmakers said until they are fully aware of the details of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the two countries, they will not ratify the agreement.

The lawmakers yesterday deferred debate on the report of the Trade, Industry and Cooperatives Committee after some sections containing details of the pact were sneaked in without the authorisation of the Speaker.

The earlier report tabled before the House last week did not have annexures containing the details of the type of goods that the UK will ship into the country duty free for 25 years.

Some of the annexures missing from the report include custom details of the goods coming from the UK, a joint statement of the parties that signed the agreement and the concept definition of terms of the products originating from the UK.

Last week on Thursday, the committee tabled its report on its consideration of the EPA, setting the stage for debate by the House, which was scheduled for yesterday.

The committee's chairman, Mr Aden Haji, yesterday came up with annexures that were not contained in the earlier report, raising concerns among the lawmakers that something is not adding up.

National Assembly Speaker Justin Muturi said it is a serious offence and against the Standing Orders for additional documents to be introduced in the floor of the House without his ratification.

"If the documents as confirmed by the deputy clerk were not received by this House, then it is a serious issue. Do not sneak in documents over lunch hour because that is not how business is conducted here," Mr Muturi said.

"This is Parliament of the Republic of Kenya and must have a say on the ratification of the agreement. Those telling us they are in a hurry should have started yesterday," Mr Muturi added.

Luanda MP Chris Omulele said without the details of the goods to be shipped into the country, then Parliament cannot ratify the agreement.

AGENCIES



Government Chief Medical Officer Prof Abel Makubi holds a giant pouched rat named Justine that spent five minutes identifying six samples of TB bacteria from the sputum of 60 patients yesterday. He was on a tour of the world-acclaimed APOPO TB-detection research project at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro Region yesterday. For over 20 years APOPO's scent detection animals have been detecting landmines and the debilitating disease. Photo: Correspondent Yasmine Protace

Opposition scraps controversial rally after PM Roble intervenes

MOGADISHU

which a hotel the leaders were lodging in was attacked on the eve of their march last week.

The deal arose from an emergency meeting at Mogadishu's Decale Airport Hotel, a facility inside the Aden Abdulle International Airport, as part of Premier Roble's efforts to cool down the tempers that have flared over delayed elections in the country.

Ahead of the meeting, the council had warned it would proceed with the peaceful march to express disapproval of President Mohamed Farmaajo's government, his alleged overstay in power, and delaying elections for both the legislature and the presidency.

Roble, a former technocrat

at the Food and Agriculture Organisation and who was appointed in September, declined to have senior security chiefs fired for the violence; but did offer an official government regret for it. He also said the matter would be investigated and culprits punished through an independent team. In addition, the Federal Government guaranteed that citizens' rights will be protected including the right to assemble and protest.

"I am pleased to address today the issues on February 19 incidents, security and elections. Thanks to the Union of Candidates for their flexibility and to President Mohamed Farmaajo, the Presidents of Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Benadir Gov-

ernor for their contribution to the solution," Roble tweeted on Thursday night, referring to the leaders of the two federal states who helped broker a meeting.

"I call upon all to support it."

The deal averted a potential clash between security forces and the opposition groups, in a week that had seen government officials accuse the council of "insurrection." Appearing before the UN Security Council for a virtual meeting on Monday, Somalia's Foreign Minister Mohamed Abdirazak said his government would allow protests, but there had been no guarantee they would be peaceful.

"Rest assured, the prospective presidential candidates have and will continue to be

provided the freedom and political space to express their views and government bodies, as well as security forces, will fulfil their statutory duty to protect the public against the dark forces of extremism and the silent enemy of the pandemic while they express their views openly," he said during a session of the UNSC on Monday night.

"However, the security and wellbeing of the Somali people will remain paramount and no armed insurrection under the guise of a political demonstration will be accepted."

His colleagues in the Ministry of Security later banned public gatherings and warned they would arrest participants at the

rally. The resolution on Thursday was welcomed by the UN as a "positive step" but Somalia must still reach an agreement on the election.

The leaders have bickered on the composition of electoral management teams as well as venues especially in Jubbaland's Gedo region. Although a technical committee composed of Federal Government and federal states had worked on a proposal, Jubbaland and Puntland refused to attend the endorsement meeting, accusing Farmaajo of dictatorship.

The Council of Presidential Candidates has been demanding to be enjoined in the meetings.

Court jails hosts to 83 illegal migrants

FROM PAGE 1

were handed out.

Facilitating movement of illegal migrants is not only aiding but abating crime which by itself is a criminal offence, he declared.

Recent statistics show that the Horn of Africa nation of Ethiopia leads the pack with its residents caught regularly in Tanzania while trying to cross to southern African countries. Many of them have used the route to reach South Africa despite the considerable likelihood of being arrested and face years in jail.

Last month, President John Magufuli pardoned and ordered the release of 1,789 Ethiopian illegal migrants who are in Tanzanian jails.

Their release was prompted by discussions and accord between the president and his visitor, Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde who was on a short visit at the president's Chato residence.

Govt to skip contractors in poor, late water works

FROM PAGE 1

said 'enough is enough' with firms that impair the government's efforts to relieve Tanzanians, mainly women and children, the burden of having to carry buckets of water for long distances on a daily basis.

She had inspected a water project for Buyagu, Kalangalala, Bitoto, Mwalanga, Nyamagana, Magulukende, Bukokwana and Nyampande villages in Serengerema district, Mwanza region and was particularly angered by the state of works at the Buyagu-Kangalala-Bitoto water project conducted by D4N Construction Ltd.

The contractor was paid 1.7bn/- and according to the contract, the work commenced in December 2013 and would be completed in June 2014, she stated.

"The contractor has stayed with the work for seven years and if you look at what has been done, it's a disappointment. This company is one of those that should forget about ever winning a government contract again," she stated.

After being paid the money to kick off the project, company officials used the funds for personal matters at the expense of villagers, the deputy minister asserted. The government's intention to blacklist firms delaying water projects was earlier announced by President John Magufuli last month following delays in several projects whose funds had been released years back.

Launching a water project for Kagongwa-Isaka in Kahama municipality in Shinyanga Region, Dr Magufuli directed the Water ministry to be careful in selecting tender bid winners in water projects.

"This is taxpayers' money. There is no way the government should be spending a lot of money to finance these projects and yet someone tries to interfere with them. We will take serious actions against anyone who will be found doing this," he said. He cited an example of a contractor for the Nyumba ya Mungu Dam water delivery project from Mwangi to Himo in Kilimanjaro Region which was suspended for failure to complete the project since 2017.

Last October, the president warned the contractor to watch his steps or face the law, issuing a 30 days ultimatum for the contractor to speed up the project, and directing the minister to follow up on the matter.



Road Safety Ambassadors Tanzania CEO Augustus Fungo (L) pictured yesterday presenting a special T-shirt to Kilimanjaro Regional Police Commander Ronald Makona during a road safety awareness seminar for students from various schools in the region held in Moshi municipality, as Regional Traffic Officer Zauda Mohammed looks on. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

‘Hundreds of school children abducted in Nigeria again’

LAGOS

HUNDREDS of school girls were yesterday morning kidnapped in the north-western state of Zamfara.

A teacher told the media that at least 300 students were unaccounted for after the attack by gunmen.

A spokesman for the state’s governor confirmed the attack but did not give details.

This is the latest mass abduction targeting schools in recent weeks. Armed gangs often seize schoolchildren for ransom. At least 42 people, including 27 students, who were kidnapped last week in Kagara, in the neighbouring Niger state, are yet to be released.

In December, more than 300 boys were kidnapped by gunmen in Kankara in Katsina state and later released after negotiations.

But the 2014 kidnap of 276 schoolgirls in the north-eastern town of Chibok by Islamist militants Boko Haram brought global attention to the mounting security challenges Nigeria was facing.

Yesterday’s attack happened at 01:00 local time (midnight GMT) when a group of gunmen arrived at the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe

town with pick-up vehicles and motorcycles, a teacher told news site Punch.

Some of the gunmen were dressed as government security forces, the report said, adding that they forced the schoolgirls in the vehicles.

But other witnesses have told the BBC that the armed men arrived on foot at the school.

Worried parents gathered outside the school and some have gone out into the bush to look for their daughters, witnesses say. A teacher told the BBC that of 421 students in the school at the time, only 55 had been unaccounted for, meaning more than 300 were believed to have been kidnapped.

Every time children are taken from their schools by armed gunmen in northern Nigeria, the kidnapping of the Chibok girls is mentioned.

Similar raids took place before that well-publicised abduction but they received little publicity and they never involved girls.

But the publicity that incident generated showed armed groups that the mass abduction of children was a sure way of applying pressure on authorities, including asking for ransom, although the authorities always deny paying.

East African private sector calls for fast-tracking of DRC admission

By Guardian Reporter

THE East African private sector has urged the EAC heads of state to fast track the admission of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) into the EAC bloc.

They also called for the heads of state to embrace a coordinated approach in responding to COVID-19, adopt the EAC open skies policy and come up with solutions to persistent Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) in their upcoming 21st ordinary summit.

Finalisation of the comprehensive review of the EAC Common External Tariff (CET),

harmonisation of EAC domestic taxes and tapping into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are also some of the key issues the private sector is keen on.

Through the East Africa Business Council (EABC) the private sector has tabled the concerns to the eac council of ministers among the matrix of issues to be considered in the Summit slated for today.

The actions are expected to improve business environment in the region and rebound an economy embattled by the pandemic. A study conducted by EABC in

collaboration with GIZ which looked at opportunities for trade in the DRC, the value of goods imported in the DRC in 2019, stood at USD 6.6 billion. However, EAC exports to the DRC in 2018, stood at USD 855.4 million, representing 11.5 percent of total DRC imports while China dominated as the top exporter with a 31.2 percent share. “DRC offers a large market for EAC SMEs to tap into. DRC will in turn benefit from the larger EAC Common Market and Common External Tariff Framework,” said EABC CEO Dr. Peter Mutuku Mathuki.

Dr Mathuki added: “We

urge the EAC Heads of State to direct relevant Government bodies to fast track bilateral and diplomatic engagements to solve these persistent trade disputes and NTBs and finalize the operationalization of the EAC Trade Remedies Committee. This will improve intra-EAC trade and economic resilience amid COVID-19.”

Uncoordinated approach on the COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth new trade barriers leading to congestions at EAC border points, increased cargo transit time and escalated the cost of doing business. For instance, cargo transit

time more than doubled in the Northern corridor between January and September 2020.

Intra-EAC trade contracted due to COVID-19 and is exacerbated further by the persistent NTBs related to Rules of Origin and import bans that continue to deny market access of products made in East Africa.

Total EAC exports decreased by 4.7 percent to USD 14.0 billion in 2018 from USD 14.7 billion in 2017 of which, intra-EAC exports accounted for 22.4 percent. The trade deficit for the EAC region increased by 39.4 percent to USD 24.3 billion in 2018 from USD 17.4 billion reg-

istered in 2017, according to the EAC Trade and Investment Report, 2018.

The reviewed EAC CET is expected to encourage more value addition and protect priority value chain sectors in the region. Strengthening of regional value chain is paramount as COVID-19 disrupted the global supply chains hence necessitated manufactures to rely more on the region to source raw materials and inputs.

Implementation of the open skies for cargo in the EAC will increase connectivity, improve consolidation and boost export of fresh products (horticulture

& fish) to international markets amid the pandemic. EABC is also calling for the implementation of the EAC Regulations on Liberalization of air transport services to reduce air ticket and freight costs. With the AfCFTA now in force, the private sector is calling for the finalization of EAC remaining tariff offers and ratification by all partner states to take advantage of the 1.3 billion people market.

EABC is also calling for the adoption of the One Network Area (ONA) model by all EAC Partner States to reduce the high cost of telecommunications in the region.

Minerals investors urged to abide by Mines and Minerals Act, 2017

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

MINERALS minister Doto Biteko has called upon investors in the sector to adhere to available regulations as well as the Mines and Minerals Act 2017.

He made the remarks on Wednesday in Mwanza during a meeting with stakeholders in the minerals sector and the president and CEO of Barrick Gold Corporation, Dr Mark Bristow. The meeting was meant to discuss the investors’ strategic plan for the coming ten years.

Biteko said it was crucial meeting and discussing various issues with the stakeholders including Barrick Gold Corporation which operates the North Mara, Bulyanhulu and Buzwagi mines.

He assured investors that Tanzania is one of the best investment destinations in the continent insisting the fifth phase government under President John Magufuli has created good investment and business environment to facilitate smooth operations.

“May I remind you to consider the “local content” element in your contracts; you must ensure that some of your commodities are purchased locally,” he said.

Dr Mark Bristow commended the government’s efforts in developing the country’s minerals sector. He said in the coming ten years, the mining company will work in accordance with

the laws. He insisted that the company has always been working to improve its relationship with the government.

“We promise to adhere to the country laws, pay relevant taxes on time and ensure transparency in our operations,” he said. The mining sector has continued to grow whereas last year it grew by 17.7 percent while revenue collections increased to 528bn/- in 2019/2020 compared to 270bn/- recorded in the

2015/2016 financial year.

In her remarks at the opening of the international minerals and mining investment conference 2021 in Dar es Salaam early this week, Vice President, Samia Suluhu Hassan said the amendments of laws and endorsements of new regulations in the mining sector are not for scaring away investors, but to create a win-win situation between them and the government.

WOMEN’S LEGAL AID CENTRE (WLAC)

Publication of Bi- annually Income and Expenditure July – December 2020

In accordance with Non-Government Organization amendment Regulation 2018 WLAC is pleased to publish its Bi-annual Income and Expenditure report for a period between July to December 2020.

Women’s Legal Aid Centre Bi-Annual Income and Expenditure Report for the period from July - December 2020		
	July - Dec 2020 TZS	July - Dec 2019 TZS
Income		
Receipts from Donors	829,043,026	833,052,652
Total Income	829,043,026	833,052,652
Expenditure:		
Access to justice for women, children and refugees	728,352,106	558,888,427
Public awareness and engagements in women’s civic and socio-economic rights	42,888,266	-
Policy and legal frameworks, including the country’s constitution, on the rights of women, children and refugees	9,224,000	189,915,076
Institutional capacity and sustainability of WLAC	50,511,280	97,61,2953
Total Expenditure	830,975,652	846,416,456
Surplus (deficit) of Income over expenditure	(1,932,626)	(13,363,804)

WLAC House, Kinondoni, Hanasif Area, Ufipa Street, Block No. 40, House No. 184, P. O. Box 79212 Dar es Salaam

E-mail : wlac@wlac.or.tz
Website: www.wlac.or.tz
Telephone : +255222664051
Facebook : Women’s Legal Aid Centre (WLAC)



JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA
WIZARA YA MAWASILIANO NA TEKNOLOJIA YA HABARI
MAMLAKA YA MAWASILIANO TANZANIA
ISO 9001: 2015 CERTIFIED



Mamlaka ya Mawasiliano Tanzania (TCRA) inapenda kuwatangazia watumiaji wote wa huduma na bidhaa za mawasiliano,

Unapokutana na changamoto yoyote ya huduma ya mawasiliano, tafadhali piga namba **100** ambayo ni ya **BURE** kuwasilisha malalamiko kwa mtoa huduma wako au tembelea duka la mtoa huduma lililopo karibu na wewe.

Endapo malalamiko yako hayatashughulikiwa au kusuluhishwa, wasilisha malalamiko hayo kwa Mamlaka ya Mawasiliano Tanzania (TCRA) kupitia namba **0800008272** ambayo ni ya **BURE**.

Au kupitiabaruapepe: malalamiko@tcra.go.tz

‘TUTUMIE MAWASILIANO KUJILETEA MAENDELEO’

www.tcra.go.tz



[tcra_tanzania](https://www.facebook.com/tcra_tanzania)



Mamlaka ya Mawasiliano Tanzania



Chamwino legislator Deogratius Ndejemi (R, foreground) has a first-hand account of progress on the construction of classrooms at Itiso Secondary School in Chamwino District on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Teachers resolve to call off strike as negotiations for COVID-19 risk allowances continue, govt reports

LILONGWE

PARENTS and learners can now breathe a sigh of relief following the decision by Teachers' Union of Malawi (TUM) to call off the stay away pending resolutions of the discussions between the government and the union.

TUM addressed journalists in Lilongwe on Thursday morning saying that the suspension of the strike follows commitments President Lazarus Chakwera during the meeting he held with the leadership of the union at the Kamuzu Palace earlier in the week.

Haridi said Chakwera had made a number of commitments, including his government's commitment to improving the living standards of the teachers in Malawi.

"The President assured us that he understands that the teaching industry is one of the largest in the civil service; that as President of this country, he is committed to serving Malawians in everything and in response to the

Covid-19 risk allowance, the President directed the Presidential Taskforce on Covid-19 Response to deliberate and discuss the issue," she said.

The union's first vice president Bresters Nyirenda said TUM is committed to the promotion of quality education by ensuring child right to education and teachers welfare as it is a catalyst and developmental partner in socio-economic development of the nation.

Nyirenda said it is in cognizance of the above that TUM has resolved to suspend the industrial action with immediate effect and that teachers should return to work while the union continues engaging authorities at the Capital Hill on their request for Covid-19 risk allowance.

Meanwhile, TUM has also requested President Chakwera to consider appointing a TUM representative as an ex-official member of the Presidential Taskforce on Covid-19 Response who should be a focal person between the teachers and the taskforce.

TMDA calls for utilisation of laboratory drug testing

By Correspondent Devota Mwachang'a

TANZANIA Medicine and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) has invited medical researchers, pharmaceutical manufacturers and dealers from within and outside the country to utilise its lake zone state-of-the-art laboratory for testing drug impurities before supplying them to the markets.

Bugusu Nyamweru, TMDA's acting head of the lab in Lake zone said the lab has several modern equipment to support excellence drug testing and research activities.

According to him, the lab has a Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectroscopy (LCMS) for analytical chemistry samples in medical research whereby researchers can identify the shape of a chemical for medication purposes; the modern machine can identify the level of protein and remained chemical in human's body.

He was addressing a group of journalists who visited the TMDA's Lake zone Lab in Mwanza recently.

Nyamweru said among the advantages of the LCMS machine is that when doing

research, it is able to detect very small substances and amounts of chemicals in the human body.

He said through the LCMS machine, researchers will be able to identify the drug impurities and if the medicine has active ingredients; but the machine is useful for testing the level of chemicals in herbal medicines as well.

"It is better to do analysis for other chemicals which are given to animals as food substances, this will protect the health of eaters of animal products to find out if they have been contaminat-

ed," Nyamweru said.

Drug analyst from TMDA's Lake zone Lab Lameck Kapilya said: "The lab is equipped with an apparatus called 'Dissolution Tester Machine' in which the drug is placed within the medium in the vessels and reaching sufficient temperature, the dissolution apparatus is operated. Kapilya said the sample solutions collected from dissolution testing are commonly analyzed by High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) or Ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy (Uv-Vis).

According to him, the ma-

chine works like the human stomach that can detect the presence of active pharmaceutical ingredients in drugs and the ability of medicine in curing the human body.

"If there is any other non-living substance or organic substance that has been damaged in the human body or in medicine and in the case of research it can identify the chemical composition of the drug that needs to be processed for any treatment or activity," he said.

Kapilya added: "We look at how the medicine works in the body after the medicine

arrives and what the residue appears to be and what chemical it is made of; also we want to know how much is the level of medicine entered into tissues of the human body, saliva, urine and liver."

Waridi Msumari is a Laboratory Analyst from TMDA's Lake zone Lab details that there are steps that need to be taken to determine the ability of medicine to kill bacteria.

"We do a Microbiology test in medicine to identify the ability of the drug in killing targeted parasites and, for sterile products the sterility

test and bacterial endotoxin tests are conducted to see if there is any contamination during their preparation," he said.

Msumari said microbiological tests are done to ensure that the community is safe by using quality, safety and products.

In a related move, assistant technician from TMD's Lake Zone Lab Godfrey Marwa urged Tanzanians and nearby countries to use the microbiology lab for sterilization of hospital reagents, for the process of reducing microbial contamination to an acceptable "safe" level.

Experts sensitise farmers on benefits of commercial production of cassava

By Guardian Correspondent, Lindi

FARMERS in the country have been urged to embark on the production of cassava commercially including using inputs and seeds proposed by experts so as to increase harvests and reap bigger yields from the sector.

Mercy Sila, secretary of the Tanzania Cassava Producers and Processors Association (TACA-PPA) said commercial cassava cultivation can transform lives of farmers, if viable steps are taken.

Speaking during the association's meeting held here, Sila said that cassava in Tanzania is making a great leap economically but more measures are still needed.

"Tanzanian farmers can leap big from cassava crop if they could decide to invest heavily in farming because it has wide market opportunities across the globe," she said.

According to her, cassava is one of an essential crop but its potential is yet to be fully utilized, so deliberate measures are now needed to boost production of the crop.

"It is high time now researchers and experts invest in producing quality seeds especially those that are resistant to drought and diseases. More education should also be given to farmers across the country," she said.

Sila said that, majority of farmers and Tanzanians as whole are still considering cassava as a crop to fight hunger and not a commercial, a perception which should be eradicated.

Khadija Bakari, assistant regional administrative secretary -agriculture urged the meeting participants to go and educate other farmers to join the association so as to benefit from various things including training and markets.



Dr Khalid Salum Mohamed, Minister of State in the Zanzibar Vice President's Office, responds to questions in the Zanzibar House of Representatives yesterday. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Ikungulipu villagers all smiles after construction of 110.5m/- dispensary

By Guardian Correspondent, Simiyu

IKUNGULIPU village residents in Itilima District, Simiyu Region have all reasons to smile following construction of a dispensary in the area worth 110.5 million/-.

The move, among others, will enable thousands of villagers who have been travelling 15-km seeking for health services, to start accessing them at the village and thus being sure of their health.

The dispensary has been constructed by World Vision Tanzania through its Luguru project.

Speaking during the event here, World Vision act-

ing zonal manager Nzenga Balyagati said previously, villagers had to walk long distances to seek health services at Luguru health centre which is located 15 kilometers away.

Balyagati said that the project will increase the overall well-being of the residents by helping pregnant women to have safer births, providing preventative interventions and health education.

According to him, the dispensary is not only going to be helpful to them but also neighbouring villages including Giriku. "Villagers contributed to the construction by bringing sand and stones as well as supporting constructors with various activities to enable its com-

pletion," he said. He added: "We created a teamwork spirit, worked hard while engaging the local residents for positive results...We commenced the construction in 2015 and now the project is on has been completed, it has not been an easy job but we have achieved it."

Balyagati said apart from the construction of the dispensary, the organization has also donated medical equipment worth 5.1m/- so as to support smooth provision of services to the community.

Luguru ward councilor Robert Jongera said the dispensary is an outcome of the World Vision and villagers' efforts who participated in clearing the land and collected stones for construction.

District Commissioner Bnson Kilangi commended World Vision for supporting the government's efforts by constructing the dispensary which will benefit thousands of residents.

According to him, the government's major aim is to improve the overall health in the district and all over the country thus reduce disease burden, eradicate maternal death and complications among others.

"Inadequate health services are a major obstacle to socio-economic development and have a negative health impact in the population, so this project is going to boost social-economic activities," he acknowledged.



Longido legislator Dr Steven Kiruswa (R) briefs a delegation led by Arusha regional commissioner Idd Kimanta (2nd-L) making a follow-up earlier this week of the spraying of locusts reported to have invaded parts of Longido District. Photo: Correspondent Asraji Mvungi

S.Africa budgeting to provide free vaccines for coronavirus

By Prinesha Naidoo

SOUTH Africa's national treasury said it's set aside sufficient funds to provide free coronavirus vaccines to all those who need them, as the nation races to bring the pandemic under control.

An allocation of 10.3 billion rand (\$708 million) has been made to buy and dispense the shots through March 2024, the Treasury said Wednesday in the 2021 Budget Review. A further 9 billion rand could be drawn from contingency reserves and emergency allocations if needed as the final costs remain uncertain, it said.

"Since the state is procuring vaccines on behalf of both the public and private sectors, some revenue will be returned to the fiscus when private providers buy vaccines from the state," the Treasury said.

The pandemic has ravaged Africa's most-industrialized economy, with gross domestic product expected to have contracted the most in almost nine decades

last year as restrictions to limit the disease's spread curbed output. More than 1.5 million infections have been confirmed in the country so far, and almost 50,000 of those diagnosed with the disease have died.

While the economy is forecast to expand 3.3% this year, the combined effect of the deep shock caused by the virus and lingering structural constraints to growth mean real GDP won't return to pre-pandemic levels until the end of 2023, the Treasury said. It warned that the growth rate could be as low as 1.6% this year if the vaccine roll-out doesn't slow the pandemic's spread and there are more waves of infections that necessitate stricter lockdown measures.

South Africa started its inoculation program on Feb. 17, with healthcare workers receiving the first single-shot doses developed by Johnson & Johnson. The government aims to inoculate two-thirds of the population by year-end and says it has secured sufficient vaccines to meet that goal.

Establish tourists' centres around Lake Victoria, Mwanza businesspersons told

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda, Mwanza

THE deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Mary Masanja, has called upon business community in Mwanza city to take advantage of the Lake Victoria to establish tourists' centres.

She said there are a number of tourism potentials around Lake Victoria which have not been properly tapped.

Masanja made the remarks here recently when briefing journalists on various initiatives the government is taking to improve the sector.

"With the centres, business persons can gain profit as well as create employment opportunities for the locals. We must use the available natural resources to fight poverty and contribute to the country's economic growth," said the deputy minister.

She noted that centres can help tourists visiting Serengeti National Park to easily cross to Burigi-Chato National Park and Rubondo National Park via Lake Victoria.

Masanja noted that most of the foreign tourists coming in the country would prefer to visit the Serengeti National Park, but with tourists' attractions in Lake Victoria, they should also be visiting Mwanza.

She called upon Tanzanians to promote the available tourist attractions for the government to achieve its targets of increasing the number of foreign and local tourists visiting its national parks.

Early this month when presenting the national development plan 2021/2022 and the third five-year development plan (2021/2022-2025/2026) in the National Assembly, Constitutional Affairs, and Justice

minister Mwigulu Nchemba said revenues from the tourism sector have increased from \$1.9 billion equivalent to 4,436.7bn/- collected in 2015 to \$ 2.6bn/- (6,071.3bn/-) in 2019.

However, the government spent 269.7bn/- within five years to improve and develop the tourism sector. The improvement included protection of natural resources.

He said following the improvements in the tourism sec-

tor, the average number of days spent by tourists staying in the country increased to 13 in 2019 compared to 10 days in 2015.

The minister informed that the number of tourists who visited the Burigi National Park until December last year reached 1,171 whereas among them, 996 are Tanzanians and 175 foreigners. Revenues collected from Burigi National Park reached 492.741, 622m/- in December 2020. The minister also added

that various initiatives undertaken to improve the tourism sector resulted in an increased number of tourists visiting the country from 1,137,182 in 2015 to 1,527,230 in 2019.

In 2019 Tanzania generated more than \$ 2.6 billion that comprised more than 25 per cent of the total export earnings. The sector also supports nearly 1.6 million direct and indirect jobs.

Farmers, pastoralists invades Moyowosi-Malagarasi wetlands in Kasulu District

By Guardian Correspondent, Kigoma

MOYOWOSI-Malagarasi wetland in Kasulu District, Kigoma Region is under threat following the invasion of groups of farmers and pastoralists for rice, maize farming and grazing.

Speaking to journalists who visited the area, conservation and tourism stakeholders suggested the need for concerted efforts to address the anthropogenic factors threatening the wetlands which is a lifeline to millions of people.

Kasulu District Commissioner Col. Simon Anange said the operation to remove the invaders is expected to take place next month.

"This is a short term solution, but the permanent solution is to upgrade the area so that it can be protected by the Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) all the time. Currently, the area is managed by the district council, which has no resources," said the District Commissioner.

"There are people who have invaded farming and started grazing in this important area for the national economy, we have asked them to leave voluntarily, but some have refused to do so," he said, adding that procedures are being taken to remove them and citizens will be relocated to Kagerankanda area provided by the government.

Manager of Makare Forest hunting block, Dago Ally said that most of the invaders are from neighbouring countries. "The area is overwhelmed with thousands of cattle and large rice and maize farms, something which is a threat to the wetlands," he said.

Moyowosi game reserve manager, Bigiramungu Kagoma described the area as one of the largest and most important wetlands in East Africa and it is a home to large mammals, migratory and resident waterbirds, fish and plants as well as providing significant livelihood support to local communities.

"That's why this area needs to be protected for the flora and fauna as well as the entire ecology that goes as far as Lake Tanganyika," he said.

One of the pastoralists who stormed into the wetlands, Juma Malilo said: "I moved into this area in search for pastures and I wasn't aware that this is a protected area as we're welcomed by village leaders."

Moyowosi-Malagarasi is one of the largest and most important wetlands in East Africa, the basin has five main rivers, the Malagarasi, Moyowosi, Kigosi, Gombe and Ugalla which drain an area of 9.2 million ha.

The core area of the Ramsar site comprises lakes and open water in the dry season covering about 250,000ha together with a permanent papyrus swamp of about 200,000 ha with large peripheral flood plains that fluctuate widely on a yearly basis depending on the amount of rainfall but cover up to 1.5 million ha.

There are two relatively large lakes associated with the flood plain namely, Sagara and Nyamagoma lakes. The wetland habitats are surrounded by very extensive miombo woodlands and wooded grasslands which are part of a larger region of forests and wetlands covering about 15 million ha in Western Tanzania.



Jenista Mhagama (C), Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament, Employment, Youth and Persons with Disabilities), pictured on Thursday touring a dam being constructed in the Nguru Hills Ranch in Mvomero District as part of a slaughterhouse project. The dam is meant as a reservoir for treating effluent from the slaughterhouse for subsequent use in irrigation farming. Photo: PMO

KAMPALA

SCHOOL owners and administrators have warned that the Covid-19 preventive measures set by the government have proved difficult to implement.

This comes as schools prepare to receive semi-candidate classes on Monday after a year of closure.

A survey at some school in Kampala and across the country reveals that a number of schools are unable to implement the Ministry of Health recommended Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), especially the two-metre social distancing in classrooms and dormitories.

Sources, who declined to be named, said during their meetings, the head teachers agreed to continue operating normally once they are reopened because government's demands required recruiting more teachers and constructing more buildings which require a lot of money.

Schools reopen Monday amid suspense on SOPs

One head-teacher of a school in Kampala, which Daily Monitor visited, said they never would have reopened had they maintained the social distancing rule.

"Is the two-metre distancing observed in the buses or taxis? Why should government think schools will find the two metres now? These children mix everyday with parents, who use buses, go to markets and arcades. They have not fallen sick," the source said.

Another head teacher said her Primary Seven class of 119 pupils was occupying two classrooms before Covid-19 but with the two-metre distance recommendation, they were forced to add seven more classrooms which meant that she needed more staff.

"I was forced to recall the Primary Six teachers to join

the four who were teaching Primary Seven. We never increased fees but I had to pay transport and housing allowances for the teachers. I was stretched until I reduced the distance to 1.5 metres," the head teacher said.

In Ntungamo District, Ntungamo High School head-teacher Wilson Byamukama said he is concerned that teaching in shifts, as suggested, will be costly for both schools and parents.

"Nobody would not want these SOPs to stay but given the circumstances under which schools in Uganda operate, both government and private, a few SOPs are likely to fail," Silver Nuwagaba, an officer at Promoting Equality in African Schools, said.

While Patrick Okwir, the head-teacher of Kangai Sec-

ondary School in Dokolo District, said they are failing to procure additional hand-washing facilities and sanitisers due to financial constraints.

"Those elements under SOPs are expensive and it requires a lot of money, which is not there because even whatever government sends is quite meagre," he said.

However, in Tororo District, the education officer, Albert Odoi, has warned that those who fail to comply with the standards will not be allowed to operate.

At Parental Care Nursery and Primary School in Bushenyi District, Perez Basiime, the head teacher, said they asked parents to pack raw ginger, lemon, and garlic for the children.

"The school will pound these herbs and make a mixture,

Rukwa residents express dismay over authorities' failure to tame corruption

By Guardian Correspondent, Sumbawanga

SOME residents in Rukwa Region have expressed dismay over what they see as failure by the authorities to take action against local government executives alleged to embezzle public funds.

They claimed that such acts demoralize villagers from paying relevant government taxes and levies.

In separate interviews, the residents claimed that despite decisions by Rukwa Regional Commissioner, Joachim Wangabo to give the embezzlers 14 days to return the swindled money, further actions are needed to ensure proper management of the funds.

In his directive, the Regional Commissioner ordered the executives to reimburse the 932m/- within 14 days or they will be arraigned.

Furaha Kabinda, a resident of Nkasi District said: "We do not know as to why the regional government has not taken any legal actions against the officials; it is almost a year since the officers were alleged to steal the monies."

According to Kabinda, the residents pay taxes for their development, but it is unfortunate that some few people have been using the funds for their personal benefits.

Another resident from Sumbawanga District, Flaviana Kilosa blamed the regional authority failure to take bold decisions against the fund embezzlers for almost one year. She said although the suspects have been reported to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) it was important that they are arraigned and punished in accordance with the laws.

Recently, RC Wangabo gave a 14-day ultimatum to the three local executives in charge of revenue collections to return the monies threatening to take them to court. He claimed that the officials have been spending public funds for their own benefits, hence delays in implementation of development projects.

According to the Regional Commissioner, the region had targeted to collect 9,487,289,000/- in the 2020/2021 financial year, but until December 2020, it has only managed to collect 3,682,531,918/- equivalent to 38.8 percent of the target.



Another resident from Sumbawanga District, Flaviana Kilosa blamed the regional authority failure to take bold decisions against the fund embezzlers for almost one year. She said although the suspects have been reported to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau



Pangani District Council planning officer Waziri Mwakibolwa tables the council's budget estimates for financial year 2021/2022 at a councillors' meeting on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

UNHCR seeks \$164 million for displaced CAR residents

By Guardian Reporter

THE UN Refugee Agency—UNHCR has launched a \$164 million appeal to provide life-saving assistance and protection to nearly 1.5 million uprooted Central Africans, including 210,000 who fled a new bout of violence related to the December 2020 presidential elections.

With no end in sight to the violence fueling the displacement crisis, nearly one third of the Central African Re-

public (CAR)'s population of 4.7 million have been forced to flee. Since the new crisis erupted, some 100,000 people have been displaced inside CAR, while neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo have received 111,000 new arrivals. Refugees continue to cross every day.

Many new arrivals are reporting grave human rights abuses inside CAR. Our colleagues in Gore, Chad, are

caring for a 26-year-old refugee mother who was beaten and raped by a rebel with her six-month-old baby at her side after fleeing her home in Maroukounde. She is now pregnant as a result of the assault and is receiving medical and psychosocial support from our teams.

To enable UNHCR's targeted and timely protection and assistance to the displaced Central Africans and their hosts, and to ensure our support to governments and

other partners, we require urgent financial contributions. Unless funding is swiftly made available, we will be forced to reduce or halt vital assistance, even as the needs are rising.

The appeal include, \$35.2 million to address the ongoing protection crisis and to help us support the most vulnerable children and families, to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and for monitoring, registration, and documentation.

Another \$13.7 million is required to supply shelter and essential relief to the displaced living in dire conditions inside CAR and in neighbouring countries, and who now depend on the generosity of local host communities.

The agency also needs \$27.8 million for health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, needed to prevent the spread of disease. These needs are compounded by the looming threat of COV-

ID-19. Despite our limited resources, UNHCR has scaled up border and protection monitoring to proactively identify and address the most pressing needs of displaced Central Africans.

UNHCR is also working to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infections by building and equipping quarantine centres and areas for treatment and isolation, as well as by testing, distributing masks, raising awareness on COVID-19 prevention and social

distancing, and by improving water, sanitation and health resources.

Funds for UNHCR's humanitarian response to support displaced Central Africans are already critically low and under severe pressure due to the rising needs of both refugees and the host communities. The agency appeals to the international community to mobilize resources to protect and assist the displaced Central Africans and their hosts.



Work on infrastructure for Dar es Salaam's rapid bus project in progress at Kurasini along the Gerezani-Mbagala stretch of Kilwa Road yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Rains leave 300 Nyamkazi households without shelter

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

OVER 300 households in Nyamkazi area in Bukoba municipality, Kagera Region have been badly affected by floods due to the ongoing heavy rains, leaving hundreds of families homeless.

Residents at the area are calling on the government and stakeholders to extend their support so as to rescue the families.

Murshid Huessein, one of the residents said heavy downpour that smashed most areas in the Miembeni ward has brought havoc as hundreds of households are now full of rain water.

According to him, the challenge has been chronic and persisted there for over a year thus destroying some of the houses.

"It is not only houses which have been destroyed but other infrastructures as well, these include roads, water networks, so we appeal for the government to construct strong infrastructures to carry the water channels to carry water to the Lake," he said. Another resident, Josephat Duadi said he was forced to take his family to an uncompleted house after their previous house was destroyed by the rain water.

Miembeni ward councillor, Richard Gasper said the floods have left about hundreds of people homeless who are currently starving as the available aids are insufficient.

He advised the government to immediately work on restoring the various social infrastructure services which had been destroyed by floods.

"Heavy downpour that smashed most areas of the Miembeni caused a number of destructions, hundreds

of people are homeless, they have no food, these floods have brought huge pain to our people, so as government and stakeholders, we have to think on the measures to rescue these people," he said.

He said that the village leaders have already sent the claims to the upper authorities and they are now waiting for the government to act.

Bukoba District Commissioner Deodatus Kinawiro said that the government was aware of the challenge and it was working to ensure that the problem is fully controlled.

"We have already taken some measures to address the flood challenge at the area, we have expanded a road heading to the fish factory so as to give space for the water to pass easily but the situation seems to be unsuccessful," he said.

Kinawiro urged residents to vacate the area and find other safe places for their own benefit.

Recently, the Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA) issued a seasonal rainfall outlook for March to May, this year with normal rains expected over most parts of bimodal areas.

It, however, warned that there will be short periods of heavy rains which may be associated with flooding leading to destruction of infrastructures, disruption of socio-economic activities, loss of lives and properties.

TMA Acting Director General Dr Hamza Kabelwa told journalists in Dar es Salaam last week that Masika rains are likely to be normal to above normal over most parts of the Lake Victoria basin and northern part of Kigoma noting that the rains are expected to start during the first week of March, 2021 and cease during the fourth week of May, 2021.



Hughes Motors Tanzania Ltd representative Laurence Kisoka (R) briefs Kilimanjaro regional commissioner Dr Anna Mghwira (2nd-L) in Moshi municipality yesterday on a New Holland-make tractor. This was at a two-day 'Kilimo Gulo' agriculture exhibition organised by the National Network of Farmers' Groups in Tanzania. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

Women in Rwanda's energy sector receive financial, training support

KIGALI

MOST women in Rwanda still depend on environmentally harmful and health-damaging firewood as a source of energy hence measures to improve access to clean and affordable energy.

The measures are crucial and must be taken at the highest level, said Rwanda's Minister for Gender and Family Promotion, Prof Jeanette Bayisenge, at the online launch of the Rwanda segment of the African Development Bank's new Gender and Energy Country Briefs.

Women should be supported to join the energy sector in Rwanda by improving access to micro-finance and training to allow them to engage in small-scale electricity production, participants heard at a 22 February event on energy policy to correspond with the launch this week.

"Gender equality and the energy sector are two major priority areas of focus in Vision 2050 [Rwanda's growth plan]," said Bayisenge, whose country has been hailed as a global leader in efforts to achieve gender equality. She said the aim was to ensure high-quality living standards in Rwanda.

The Bank's Gender Empowerment Manager, Amel Hamza, emphasised the importance of data collection, through the involvement of women engaged in the energy sector and

building knowledge on investment opportunities available in the sector.

Hamza said policymakers could learn from successful energy investment initiatives such as South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment programme, which helped to increase the capacity of women to become independent energy producers that sell power to the national grid.

The Bank is working with energy companies, including South Africa's Eskom, in a project to provide credit guarantees to enable women seeking to invest in energy enterprises to borrow with support from the Bank's Africa Guarantee Fund. The project provides risk-sharing capacity to boost loans to women-owned enterprises.

By recognising that men and women have differentiated priorities in energy services, and by involving women in decision-making and creating opportunities for them in energy, the sector can contribute towards increasing gender equality, participants heard.

The Bank supports the implementation of measures to support access to clean cooking fuels, finance, and business opportunities for women, and improving the impact measurement and employment of women in the energy sector, said Fauzia Haji, the Bank's Acting Country Manager in Rwanda.

Malawi MPs debate bill to liberalise abortion laws as churches oppose

BLANTYRE

A bill to liberalise Malawi's abortion laws was debated by MPs on Thursday in the face of opposition from faith groups.

If passed, the termination of pregnancy bill would allow abortions when a woman's mental or physical health is in danger, in cases of rape and incest, and when there are serious foetal abnormalities.

Currently, abortion is only permitted to save a woman's life and campaigners have been lobbying for change for many years.

The bill has been proposed by MP Matthews Ngwale, who said change was needed after "observing that there are an ever increasing number of justifiable situations for the termination of unwanted pregnancies, which have not been covered by exist-

ing law". "Many people think that we want to make abortion [in its entirety] legal or allow abortion on demand. But abortion is already allowed in our laws and what we're doing is to increase the situations where this can be allowed, that's all," he added.

Pro-choice campaigners believe almost half of the 193 MPs in the national assembly back the bill, but there is strong opposition.

The Episcopal Conference of Malawi, the Evangelical Association of Malawi, Malawi Council of Churches and the Muslim Association of Malawi have long resisted any attempt to change the law. Attempts to introduce the bill in 2016 were rejected after protests.

Henry Saindi, secretary general of the Episcopal Conference, said: "It is only God who can give or take life irrespective of whatever circum-

stance that has happened. Human life remains sacred and it must be preserved, promoted and defended.

"The bill does not reflect our values, our culture and our aspirations as the nation."

Research by the Guttmacher Institute, which advocates for sexual and reproductive health, and the University Of Malawi College Of Medicine, published in 2017 - the latest date for which figures

are available - estimated that 141,000 women in Malawi had an abortion in 2015, and that 60% of these resulted in complications that required treatment. Between 6% and 18% of maternal deaths in Malawi are estimated to be the result of complications from unsafe abortion.

"Most people in the rural areas - and the people are very poor, too - resort to using sticks like cassava, bicycle

spokes, and take dangerous drugs and concoctions to terminate pregnancy," said Dr Amos Nyaka of the Coalition for Prevention of Unsafe Abortion. "This leads to pain and suffering."

Brian Ligomeka, director of the Centre for Solutions Journalism, a human rights media organisation that has been lobbying for the bill, said the legal changes would save lives.

Total, Eacop oil deal in high gear

By Special Correspondent

TOTAL, Eacop oil deal is in high gear after calling for bids, final investment decision in Uganda and Tanzania.

Ugandan players keen on a slice of oil and gas deals through local content provisions, with an estimated \$8 billion to \$10 billion worth of investment expected to flow into the country once final signature is done.

French oil major Total and its affiliate East African Crude Oil Pipeline (Eacop) have invited bids for various services, a sign that the long-awaited final investment decision (FID) oil deal that is expected to unlock \$10 billion of investments, is around the corner.

The tenders target Uganda and Tanzania-based firms to compete across 10 categories of offers.

The Eacop route lies 80 percent in Tanzania, where Total is seeking bidders to provide commercial and office space for the pipeline company, on which the anticipated FID is premised.

Some tenders have closed but those invited last week, are open till March 19, and sources told The EastAfrican that "there is a lot of interest" from companies making "many inquiries about a number of issues." Association of Uganda Oil and Gas Service Providers (AUGOS) Chief Executive Emmanuel Mugarura, said the group's members have been waiting for more than a decade for these oil and gas related opportunities.

"These are good signs that this project is taking off. Another piece in works and optimism for our members," he said, adding that some have applied for the closed

tenders while others are starting to ready bids for the tenders that have just opened.

Ugandan players are keen to get a piece of the oil and gas deals through local content provisions, with an estimated \$8 billion to \$10 billion worth of investment expected to flow into the country. During the early stages of exploration, oil companies spent an estimated \$3 billion, 28.3 percent of which remained in the country, according to Mugarura.

With bigger money and opportunities to tap into as the country readies for oil production, AUGOS targets between 30 and 40 percent of the expected investment flows to remain in Uganda.

Elly Karuhanga, chairman of Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum says the time for local companies to make money from oil and gas projects is the period between announcement of the final investment decision and when production starts. "Between now and oil production, is when you will have all sorts of opportunities open up," he says.

Total Chief Executive Patrick Pouyane says Uganda project will have first oil in 2024, with FID confirmed this year, giving a three-year period of field development activity, which is the window of opportunity for local service providers, according to Karuhanga.

"Thousands of experts, contractors, and others, will fly into Uganda to provide all kinds of services. They will need accommodation, food, transport... That's the time for the local companies to make money. Once production starts, most of the activity is technical where Ugandans cannot compete," he says.



Owners of private pharmacies in Ushetu District, Shinyanga Region, take oath of office yesterday in line with guidelines laid out by the government. Photo: Correspondent Shabani Njia

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has urged farmers in the country to take insurance cover for their crops so as to avoid losses during climate change-induced disasters such as drought and floods.

Permanent Secretary in ministry of Agriculture Gerald Kusaya made the appeal in Dar es Salaam during the irrigation conference which brought together stakeholders from Tanzania and Japan.

Kusaya said that as the country has been experiencing several weather challenges including drought and floods, farmers should take measures to protect their crops by seeking agriculture insurance.

"By having crop insurance in hand, farmers will have more confidence in what they are doing, their produce

Govt directs farmers to insure their crops

will have high protection even if they are hit by either drought or floods," he said.

He said that if farmers happen to lose their crops due to climate-change related disasters, they will be compensated their losses by the insurance company.

"We encourage farmers to use agriculture insurance especially as we have many disasters these days, this should be taken very seriously by all farmers across the country," he added.

Enock Nyanda, acting director, sectoral coordination department in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government said that the

office has been working closely with local government authorities so as to improve irrigation farming in the country.

"We have been working with our fellow in the agriculture ministry and local government authorities to enable them to set aside enough budgets from their internal collections so as to support construction of irrigation projects in various areas," he said.

Nyanda said the development of the irrigation sector has an unprecedented opportunity to facilitate the Tanzania agriculture sector to be transformed from subsistence to a modern and highly commercial sec-

tor.

The government is currently giving high priority to irrigation development which is emphasized within the National policy frameworks. The government is also giving high priority to the management of the nation's water resources. This offers strong synergies between the water and irrigation sectors in irrigation development.

Tanzania has an irrigation potential area of 29.4 million hectares whereby 2.3 million hectares is of high potential, 4.8 million hectares is of medium potential and 22.3 million hectares is of low potential.

Out of this potential area 461,326 hectares equivalent to 1.6 percent of the area under irrigation has been developed and contributes 24 percent of the national food requirement as of June 2017.

Innovative business models promise Africa a lot of good

THERE is an ongoing trend to spur the economic growth that is already on a positive trend in Africa and Tanzania is no exception to greater heights, and more so to impact on people's lives in meaningful ways.

This was apparent at the Innovating Economies Summit, one of the many initiatives around the world under the aegis of The Economist. The summit, held in Nairobi years ago, noted how Africa is innovating for itself and facilitating home-grown innovations.

It sought to explore how the continent can more effectively navigate towards relevant solutions, given the many infrastructural challenges.

While it had many strands of discussion - from increasing productivity and efficiency, including in health care, to financing and linkages to the global knowledge economy - one of the most illustrative was a segment dwelling on strengthening the continent's innovation ecosystems, and of which there are ample examples of how they are impacting people's lives around the region.

So far, the numbers on the M-bisul website indicate that it has installed over 70,000 solar home systems for households and businesses in East Africa.

But the example discussed at the Summit, demonstrating how mobile money technology combined with the latest solar systems have fuelled the rapid expansion "leap-frogging" East Africa's poor infrastructure.

The mobile money platforms enabled M-Kopa (kopa means bor-

row in Swahili) to "crack it," thereby saving people in the lowest income bracket money they would have used to buy kerosene to light their homes, batteries to power their torches and radios and a long trek to someone with power to charge their mobile phones.

With more than 400,000 households connected to solar power across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, it remains the leader globally and was the first to demonstrate the business model and convenience for the underserved in a situation of inadequate power infrastructure.

As it is, most Africans still do not have access to proper loans, savings facilities or insurance, a situation mobile technology is already proving core anchor to exploit.

The entrance of Commercial Bank of Africa in Rwanda is a case in point, aiming to offer savings and loans facilities to the underserved through mobile technology. The bank has already been quite successful with m-shwari, a savings facility with Kenya's Safaricom, and mKash with Uganda's MTN. It has done the same in Tanzania.

Insurance is another area already being tapped through mobile technology in Tanzania and Uganda, as well as in Ghana and Senegal, by the multinational microfinance firm, Milvik, partnering with insurance businesses and telecoms providers.

The Innovating Economies Summit was something of a mirror to ourselves on what is possible on the continent through home-grown solutions. But it was on the insistence that the challenges besetting the continent could be overcome.

Yes, ensuring harmony between humankind and nature is a must

CONNECTING People to Nature', the theme for World Environment Day marked in 2017, implored us to get outdoors and into nature, to appreciate its beauty and its importance, and to take forward the call to protect the Earth that we share.

World Environment Day is the biggest annual event for positive environmental action and takes place every 5 June. This year's host country Canada got to choose the theme and will be at the centre of celebrations around the planet.

World Environment Day is a day for everyone, everywhere. Since it began in 1972, global citizens have organized many thousands of events, from neighbourhood clean-ups, to action against wildlife crime, to replanting forests.

This year's theme invites us to think about how we are part of nature and how intimately we depend on it. It challenges us to find fun and exciting ways to experience and cherish this vital relationship.

In recent decades, scientific advances as well as growing environmental problems such as global warming are helping us to understand the countless ways in which natural systems support our own prosperity and well-being.

For example, the world's oceans, forests and soils act as vast stores for greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane; farmers and fisher-folk harness nature on land and under water to provide us with food; scientists develop medicines using genetic material drawn from the millions of species that make up Earth's astounding biological diversity.

Billions of rural people around the world spend every working day 'connected to nature' and appreciate full well their dependence on natural water supplies and how nature provides their livelihoods in the form of fertile soil. They are among the first to suffer when ecosystems are threatened, whether by pollution, climate change or over-exploitation.

Nature's gifts are often hard to value in monetary terms. Like clean air, they are often taken for granted, at least until they become scarce.

This year's World Environment Day is an ideal occasion to go out and enjoy your country's national parks and other wilderness areas.

You could join the growing number of citizen scientists. More and more smartphone apps help you log your sightings and connect with others who can identify the species. The records feed into conservation strategies and map the effects of climate change on biodiversity.

You can also connect with nature in the city, where major parks can be a green lung and a hub of biodiversity. Why not do your bit to green the urban environment, by greening your street or a derelict site, or planting a window box? You could put a spade in the soil or lift a paving slab and see what creatures live beneath.

In the age of asphalt and smartphones and among the distractions of modern life, connections with nature can be fleeting. World Environment Day can make clearer than ever that we need harmony between humanity and nature so that both are able to thrive.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

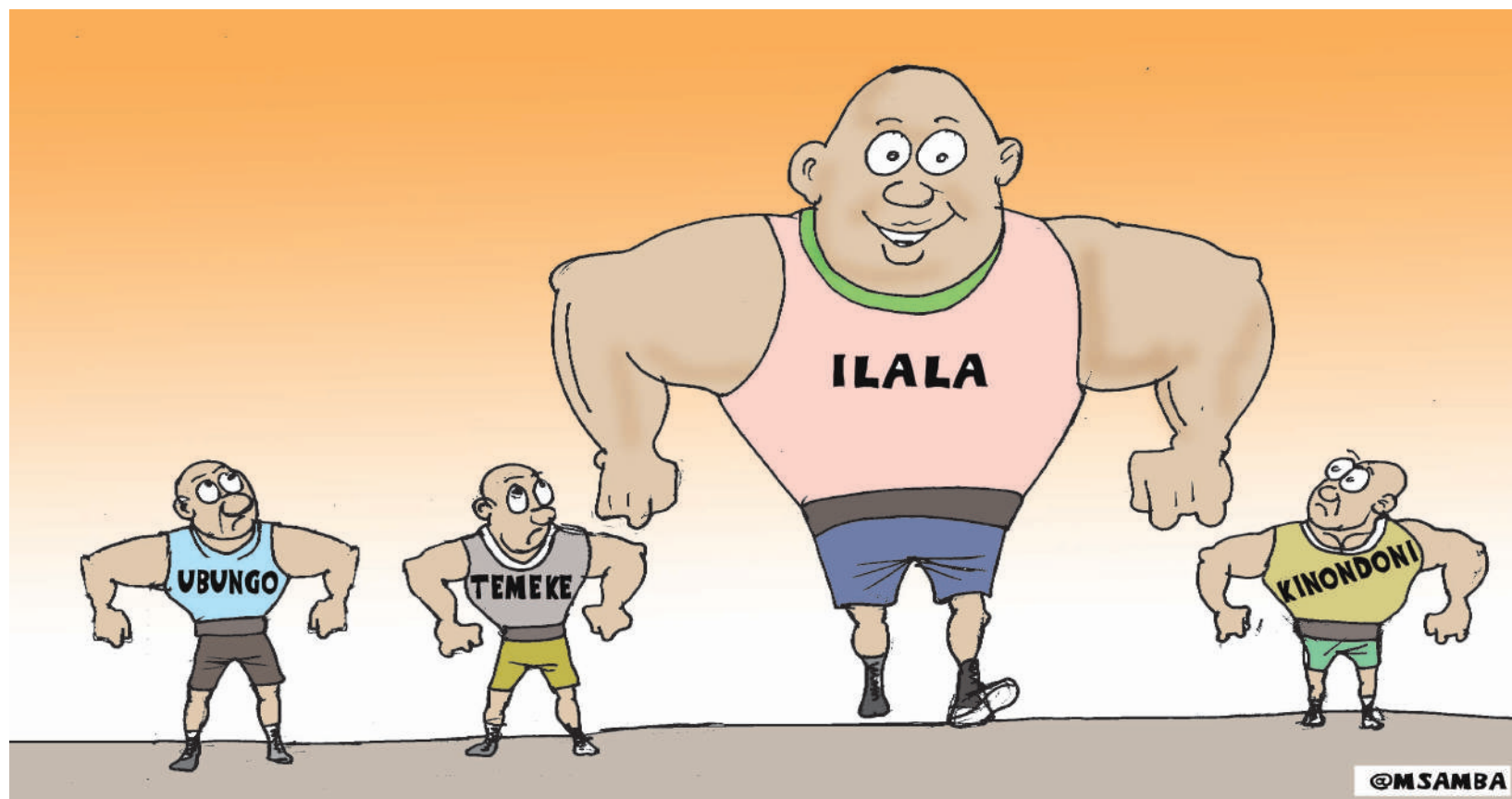
MANAGING EDITOR: WALLACE MAUGGO
CIRCULATION MANAGER : EMMANUEL LYMO

Newsdesk

General Line: 0745 700710
News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757 154767
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Cel: + 0782 253676 E-mails: Advertise@guardian.co.tz
Website: lppmedia.com, epaper.ippmedia.com



Successful crop innovation is mitigating climate change impact on African continent

By Martin Kropff and Nteranya Sanginga

AFRICAN smallholder farmers have no choice but to adapt to climate change: 2020 was the second hottest year on record, while prolonged droughts and explosive floods are directly threatening the livelihoods of millions. By the 2030s, lack of rainfall and rising temperatures could render 40 percent of Africa's maize-growing area unsuitable for climate-vulnerable varieties grown by farmers, while maize remains the preferred and affordable staple food for millions of Africans who survive on less than a few dollars of income a day.

Farmers across the continent understand that the climate crisis is affecting their harvests and their "daily bread". In sub-Saharan Africa, growing numbers of people are chronically undernourished, with over 21 percent of the population suffering from severe food insecurity.

The global battle against climate change and all its interconnected impacts requires a multisectoral approach to formulate comprehensive responses. For farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, especially smallholders, this involves producing improved crop varieties that are not only high-yielding but also tolerant to drought and heat, resistant to diseases and insect pests, and can contribute to minimizing the risk of farming under rainfed conditions.

CGIAR, a global partnership involving numerous organizations engaged in food systems transformation, has been at the forefront of technological innovation and deployment for many decades. The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) are the two CGIAR research centers undertaking innovative maize research and development work in the stress-prone environments of Africa. Successful development of improved climate-adaptive maize varieties for sub-Saharan Africa has been spearheaded by these two CGIAR centers that implemented joint projects such as the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) and



Stress Tolerant Maize for Africa (STMA) in partnership with an array of national and private sector partners in the major maize-producing countries in Eastern, Southern, and West Africa. Under the 10-year DTMA initiative, about 160 affordable and scalable maize varieties were released.

High-yielding, multiple stress-tolerant, maize varieties using CIMMYT/IITA maize germplasm released after 2007 (the year the DTMA project was started) are estimated to be grown on 5 million hectares in 2020 in sub-Saharan Africa. The adoption of drought-tolerant (DT) maize varieties helped lift millions of people above the poverty line across the continent. For example, in drought-prone southern Zimbabwe, farmers using DT varieties in dry years were able to harvest up to 600 kilograms more maize per hectare-enough for nine months for an average family of six-than farmers who sowed conventional varieties.

The STMA project that followed DTMA also operated in sub-Saharan Africa, where 176 million people depend on maize for nutrition and economic well-being. The project, which ended in 2020, and followed by a new project called Accelerating Genetic Gains for Maize and Wheat Improvement (AGG), developed new maize varieties that can be successfully grown under drought, sub-optimal soil fertility, heat stress, and diseases and pests. In 2020, CGIAR-related stress-tolerant maize varieties were estimated to be grown on over 5 million hectares, benefiting over 8.6 million smallholder farmers in 13 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.

In Kenya, farmers with the new maize varieties are harvesting 20 to 30 percent more grain than farmers without drought-tolerant seeds. Prasanna Bodupalli, Director of CIMMYT's Global Maize Program and the CGIAR Research Program on maize, says this has a cascading effect on livelihoods-improving the nutritional intake of the community,

helping children return to school, and reducing poverty.

In an interview with Gates Notes, Kenyan farmer Veronica Nduku, who has been growing CIMMYT's drought-tolerant maize for 10 years, had said that she always harvests even when there is no rainfall.

In Zambia, a study by CIMMYT and the Center for Development Research has shown that adopting drought-tolerant maize can increase yields by 38 percent and reduce the risks of crop failure by 36 percent, even though three-quarters of the farmers in the study had experienced drought during the survey.

Besides climate-adaptive improved maize varieties, both CIMMYT and IITA have developed maize varieties biofortified with provitamin A; vitamin A deficiency is highly prevalent in populations across sub-Saharan Africa. These biofortified maize varieties, developed in partnership with HarvestPlus, are being deployed in targeted countries in sub-Saharan Africa in partnership with national programs and seed company partners.

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of its founding this year, CGIAR unveiled its roadmap for a new 10-year strategy at the online 2021 Climate Adaptation Summit, hosted by the Netherlands in January.

The new sustainable research strategy puts climate change at the heart of its mission, with an emphasis on the realignment of food systems worldwide, targeting five impact areas: nutrition, poverty, inclusivity, climate adaptation and mitigation, and environmental health.

Through food system transformation, resilient agri-food systems, and genetic innovations CGIAR's ambition is to meet and go beyond the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for a concerted global effort to radically realign food systems to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030.

CGIAR warns that without more science-based interventions to align agriculture with climate targets, the number of undernourished people around the world could exceed 840 million by 2030.

To shift its focus and investment into agricultural research that responds to the climate crisis, CGIAR is undergoing an institutional reform. Now named 'One CGIAR' the dynamic reformulation of CGIAR's partnerships, knowledge, assets, and global presence, aims for greater integration and impact in the face of the interdependent challenges facing today's world.

Scientific innovations in food, land, and water systems will be deployed faster, at a larger scale, and at reduced cost, having greater impact where they are needed the most.

Ground-breaking progress to date would not have been possible without the generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Yet Bill Gates, who recognizes the essential role of CGIAR in "feeding our future", also acknowledges that current levels of investment do not even amount to half of what is needed.

Investments in maize breeding and seed system innovations must expand to keep up with the capacity to withstand climate variability in sub-Saharan Africa, the world's most chronically undernourished region, and provide food and nutritional security to millions of maize-dependent and resource-constrained smallholders and consumers.

At CIMMYT and IITA, we have invested on long-term breeding to increase genetic gains using many new tools and technologies. These efforts need to be further intensified.

Western Sahara, Africa's last colony, to resume liberation struggle on hold since 1991

NEW YORK

THE question of Western Sahara, known as Africa's last colony, has recently gained great visibility in international media interestingly due to two drastic developments.

The first occurred on 13 November 2020 when Moroccan forces breached the 1991 ceasefire by attacking Sahrawi civilians who were demonstrating peacefully in Guerguerat in southern Western Sahara.

The second took place on 10 December 2020 when the outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump made a proclamation declaring U.S. recognition of "Moroccan sovereignty" over Western Sahara, which Morocco has been occupying since October 1975.

As expected, Morocco's breach of the ceasefire forced the people of Western Sahara under the leadership of their legitimate representative, the Frente POLISARIO, to resume their legitimate liberation struggle put on hold since 1991.

At that time both parties, the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco, under the UN-OAU auspices, mutually agreed on a ceasefire that came into effect on 6 September 1991.

This arrangement was the first step in a process leading to the holding of a referendum on self-referendum in which the people of Western Sahara would choose, without military or administrative constraints, between independence and integration with Morocco.

To this end, on 29 April 1991, the Security Council established under its authority the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Notwithstanding the ups and downs, in January 2000 MINURSO was able to establish the list of potential voters for the referendum thus paving the way for the vote to take place. It was precisely at that moment that Morocco declared that it was no longer willing to proceed with the self-determination referendum, obviously for fear of losing at the ballot box. It was as simple as that.

The failure of the UN Security Council to hold Morocco accountable for reneging on its solemn commitment to the mutually agreed referendum on self-determination brought the UN peace process in Western Sahara to a standstill, which continues to date.

Despite Morocco's complete volte-face, for almost three decades the Frente POLISARIO maintained its commitment to the ceasefire and made many—often painful—concessions for the UN peace process to succeed.

The almost thirty years' ceasefire in Western Sahara was however violently broken when Moroccan forces attacked Sahrawi civilians on 13 November 2020 forcing the Frente POLISARIO to respond in self-defence.

Morocco's new aggression has not only put an end to the UN peace process but has also unleashed a second war that has the potential to endanger peace and stability in the region. Once again, the UN Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has remained silent in the face of Morocco's new aggression.



A UN patrol team, deployed for monitoring ceasefire, drives through the Smara area of Western Sahara.

sion.

The proclamation made by the outgoing U.S. President on 10 December 2020 has dealt another heavy blow to the UN peace process in Western Sahara. It is no secret that Trump's ill-advised decision was a quid pro quo for the deal that Morocco concluded with Israel to normalise their relations—another example of his transactional diplomacy.

Trump's decision however violates UN resolutions, including Security Council resolutions that the United States drafted and approved over the past decades, and upends the traditional U.S. policy regarding Western Sahara.

It flies in the face of fundamental rules underpinning the international order that prohibit the acquisition of territory by force and establish peoples' right to self-determination and as an inalienable right and a peremptory norm.

It also hampers the ongoing efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to achieve a peaceful solution to the question of Western Sahara, thereby fuelling tension and threatening peace and stability in the region.

The legal status of Western Sahara is unequivocally clear. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), which is the United Nations principal judicial organ, issued an advisory

opinion on Western Sahara on 16 October 1975. The ICJ ruled that there was no tie of territorial sovereignty between the Territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco.

By rebutting Morocco's claims of sovereignty over Western Sahara, the ICJ established clearly that the sovereignty over the Territory was vested in the Sahrawi people who have the right to decide, through the free and genuine expression of their will, the status of the Territory in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 1960 on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union) as well as the European Union have never recognised Morocco's forcible and illegal annexation of parts of Western Sahara that remains on the UN list of Non-Self-Governing Territories to be decolonised.

Trump's proclamation also affirmed the U.S. support for Morocco's autonomy proposal. Nonetheless, the so-called Moroccan "autonomy proposal", besides its proven illegality, emanates from an autocratic regime that seeks only to legitimise its forcible acquisition and occupation of parts of Western Sahara.

The United States should therefore advise Morocco to address the legitimate grievances of its own people instead of trying to pursue its expansionism that has had disastrous consequences for the entire region.

As a matter of historical fact, Morocco did not only claim Western Sahara but also Mauritania in 1960s. It was Morocco that included "the problem of Mauritania" in the agenda of the 50th session of the UN General Assembly in 1960 on the grounds that Morocco had legitimate rights over Mauritania. It then took Morocco nine years to recognise Mauritania as an independent country.

Morocco moreover used force against Algeria in October 1963 and Spain (Perejil Island) in July 2002, always in pursuit of its territorial claims, which demonstrates the real nature of the ruling regime in Morocco.

This also shows the extent to which the regime owes its survival to territorial conquest as a tool to divert attention from its deep-rooted domestic legitimacy crisis that had led to two coups against the monarchy in July 1971 and August 1972.

Morocco's expansionism is therefore the root cause of the enduring tension in North Africa and the main obstacle to the achievement

of a united, prosperous, and inclusive Maghreb that brings together all its nations and peoples.

As expected, strong voices from the US Congress, civil society, and the political arena, including former US Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, have expressed their shock and disappointment regarding the attempt to trade away the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

They have also called on the incoming President to reverse Trump's decision, which is at odds with the new Administration's declared pledge to recommit the US to multilateralism. Now the question is whether President Joe Biden is willing to reverse Trump's decision and bring back the United States to its traditional position on Western Sahara.

It is certain that Trump's proclamation—if maintained—will not change anything substantially in terms of the realities on the ground and the legal status of Western Sahara that is determined by the UN resolutions. It will however put the United States in a rather difficult situation given its membership of the Group of Friends on Western Sahara and the penholder for MINURSO.

In other words, it will not only cast doubt on U.S.'s neutrality vis-à-vis the question of Western Sahara but will also raise the question of whether the United States could continue to play a constructive role in the UN peace process.

For these reasons, the Sahrawi people remain hopeful that President Biden would rescind Trump's proclamation so that the United States could return to its traditional position on Western Sahara.

The legal and political nature of the issue of Western Sahara as a decolonisation case is unquestionably clear. Therefore, the question before the international community, in particular all peace- and justice-loving countries, comes down to this: do they allow the rule of "might makes right" to prevail in the case of Western Sahara, and thus allow the Moroccan military occupation of parts of the Territory to continue with impunity, or do they defend the fundamental principles underpinning the existing international order and thus implement UN resolutions on the issue?

The solution of the question of Western Sahara is clearly defined in successive UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, which call for a peaceful, just, and lasting solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

This means that no solution will prove either just or lasting if it does not have the consent and full support of the Sahrawi people.

This support can only be expressed through a credible, democratic, and genuine self-determination process that gives our people the opportunity to make their choice among a full range of options including independence.

United Nations resolutions, rules of international law and basic democratic principles all support this understanding of self-determination and its implementation. It is time the international community support it, too, not only in words but also in deeds.

Hyundai bought chips when rivals didn't, its assembly lines are still rolling

SEOUL

HYUNDAI Motor has so far avoided a chip shortage that has plagued global automakers, largely maintaining its stockpile of chips last year and even accelerating purchases towards the end, three people with knowledge of the matter said.

The shortage has forced production cuts worldwide, including at Volkswagen and General Motors, prompting Germany and the United States to ramp up efforts to resolve the shortage.

Other than Japan's Toyota Motor, which said this month it had enough chip inventory to last it about four months, Hyundai and its sister firm Kia Corp are the only global automakers to have maintained a stockpile of low-tech chips that helped them keep up production.

If it doesn't ease soon, though, the shortage could hit Hyundai too, as tight capacity on factory floors starts pressuring production of even high-tech auto chips, said two of the people, who are familiar with the company's purchases.

The South Korean automaker kept buying chips even as rivals cut orders to reflect diminished demand because of the pandemic.

Analysts said past events that roiled Hyundai's supply chain and forced it to halt production have shaped this more conservative take on inventory, a departure from automakers' typical just-in-time approach.

"Like other automakers, Hyundai also planned to cut production at the beginning of the year because of COVID-19," said one of the people with direct knowledge of Hyundai's purchases.

"But procurement read the trend of the semiconductor industry cutting auto chips production and said, 'if we don't buy them as well, we'll be in trouble later on,'" said the person, referring to a rush of buying by gadget makers that sucked up most chipmaking capacity.

Chipmakers who supply auto companies outsource most of their production to contract manufacturers like Taiwan's TSMC, which analysts say often prioritise orders from electronics clients who account for nearly all their revenue.

Hyundai still bought fewer chips in 2020 than it did in 2019, said one of the sources with direct knowledge of auto chip production. But it sharply increased buying in the quarter that ended in December, the person said.

The people declined to be identified because they are not authorised to speak to media.

The fact that Hyundai's domestic market was relatively



solid through the pandemic most likely influenced the company's plans, analysts said, as did its experiences with China and Japan.

Hyundai took lessons from a diplomatic spat with Japan in 2019 that affected supplies here of chemicals at South Korean chipmakers, and in early 2020, when the coronavirus was spreading in China, production was halted in Hyundai and Kia's plants because of shortages of a part from China.

A spokeswoman told Reuters Hyundai was collaborating with its suppliers to maintain stable production.

RISING CONCERN

Since Hyundai kept buying from chipmakers and global auto parts suppliers such as Bosch and Continental before the shortage worsened, they also managed to keep costs down.

"This has allowed Hyundai to first, secure auto chips, and second, buy them when they were cheaper," said Kim Jin-woo, analyst at Korea Investment & Securities.

Hyundai also has more local suppliers than rivals. These suppliers - including Telechips, which contracts fabrication out to Samsung Electronics - are likely

to prioritise Hyundai, from whom they get much of their revenue, analysts said.

One person with direct knowledge of Hyundai's purchasing decisions said the company has diversified suppliers for at least one chip since late last year.

In a statement on Thursday, Hyundai said it plans to halt operations at one South Korean factory for five days in March to adjust inventories of some models.

A union official told Reuters the company was trying to save chips by adjusting production of its weaker-selling Sonata model. Sonata in South Korea sold 67,440 units last year versus 145,463 units of Hyundai's most popular sedan Grandeur.

According to an internal document seen by Reuters, Hyundai expects the shortage to ease in the third quarter, and Kia said last month that since October it had been reviewing its supply chain to prevent production disruption.

"We would not say we are prepared for the next three to six months, but we could tell you that we are not seeing any immediate production disruption," Kia said on an earnings call last month.

Still, there is rising concern at Hyundai, two of the three people said. The company is checking inventory more frequently and trying to lock down supply contracts earlier, one of them said. The union official said Hyundai had told the union this week that Hyundai "had secured a lot of chips" but that the situation was becoming "a bit difficult".

"Clients are trying to pull all they can, while suppliers are being strategic about which order they meet," said the source with direct knowledge of auto chip production. "It's going to get worse before it gets better."

Agencies

BEIJING

Xi leads fight against poverty

POVERTY plagued China for thousands of years. Through generations of struggle after the founding of New China in 1949, the country had lifted 700 million out of penury by the end of 2012.

By then, China still had nearly 100 million people living under the poverty line, one ninth of the world's total. About 100,000 villages were yet to be connected by paved roads; some 4,000 villages had no access to electricity; and 8.3 percent of the country's rural households eked out a living in ramshackle, grass-thatched mud huts.

In November 2012, Xi Jinping became China's top leader, and he inherited a mission China had striven to achieve for generations, which is eradicating absolute poverty. The Communist Party of China (CPC) aimed to reach the goal by the end of 2020.

"To achieve this goal, China has to lift 10 million people out of poverty every year," said Eduardo Regalado, senior researcher at Cuba's International Policy Research Center. "That is, 20 people every minute."

TARGETED POVERTY ALLEVIATION

At the end of 2012, Xi braved the ghastly winter temperatures to visit the villages of Luotuowan and Gujiatai, impoverished places set deep in the Taihang Mountains of Hebei Province. It was the first of a myriad of inspection tours dipping into the country's underdeveloped regions for Xi as the top Chinese leader.

Chatting with villagers, Xi was particularly concerned with difficulties they faced in their daily lives, such as problems concerning their income, food, education and medical care.

The austere living conditions were astounding. With similar hardship still haunting tens of millions of impoverished people in rural areas, Xi knew there was no time to spare.

While the entire nation held its breath waiting for his answer, Xi's commitment to this seemingly insurmountable task was never in question. He knew what it was like to be hungry.

"Meat would not grace our tables for months at a time," Xi once said, referring to the days when he was sent to Liangjiahe Village in northwest China's Shaanxi Province as a farmer some five decades ago. "How I wished to treat my fellow villagers to meat at least once." From a junior local official to China's top leader, Xi always held dear the wish he had made. Ensuring the rural poor improve their lot has been his motivation all along.

Reviewing the whole situation, Xi determined that China had entered the most difficult stage of relieving poverty, and the root cause of every household's destitution needed to be identified before any targeted approaches could be formulated.

It was during a visit to Shibadong Village in Hunan Province that he proposed a targeted approach to address poverty.

"We should seek facts from truth; guidance and development must reflect the local conditions," Xi said.



Chinese President Xi Jinping

"This is what I mean by targeted poverty alleviation."

In an effort to meticulously tackle impoverishment in various locations, the authorities need to have a full grasp of the conditions on the ground. Therefore, China launched an unprecedented project to compile a database of every single underprivileged citizen.

In 18 months, the country had a complete nationwide register of its poor population. It was the first time in history that an all-encompassing poverty database had been compiled.

"Precision poverty targeting is supporting the government in targeting the remaining poor in the last mile," said Jim Yong Kim, former president of the World Bank.

'A SOLDIER'S PLEDGE'

In November 2015, Xi led a conference on poverty alleviation and development, the largest of its kind ever held.

The heads of 22 provincial-level regions in the central and western parts of China signed liability pledges to eradicate poverty in their purview on time, said Liu Yongfu, former director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development.

"Xi Jinping took a liability pledge at the meeting, and said it is just like a 'soldier's

pledge' and we must keep our word," Liu recalled in an interview. "Should tasks not be finished on time, the signatory would be held accountable," Xi was quoted as saying.

Xi, too, had nothing to fall back on.

The entire system was mobilized to help the rural indigent population, with more than 250,000 teams dispatched to offer on-the-ground support and over 3 million people sent to countryside as special commissioners for poverty relief. While they have brought about transcendental changes for those in dire need of help, 1,800 of them lost their lives in the line of duty.

To uncover the root causes of underdevelopment and advise on solutions, Xi pushed on unabated with inspection tours, visiting some of the poorest places in China.

Ahead of the Chinese Lunar New Year in 2018, Xi traveled 2,200 km from Beijing to Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province to review plans for the relocation of communities. Eleven out of the 17 counties in the prefecture were flagged as key locations in the state's poverty alleviation work.

"Not a single ethnic group, family or person should be left behind," Xi said.

Locked in rough, unforgiving mountain terrain, Atulie'er Village in Liangshan, known as the "cliff village," was emblematic

of how difficult it would be for the country to fulfill its poverty-free pledge. Due to the village's isolated location, precariously perched with near-vertical cliffs both above and below, villagers had to use a series of handmade ladders to scale the 800-meter-high cliff. "I saw that children had to climb the unsteady vine ladders on the cliff with no safety measures whatsoever. It made me feel heavyhearted and concerned," Xi said.

Two years later, all 344 of the cliff village's former residents left the village in the clouds and moved down to safer ground.

Bidding farewell to their former houses, the villagers moved to brand-new apartments. Children resumed their study in bright classrooms, without the need to scale daunting cliffs on the way to class.

The village has since seen over 100,000 visitors every year, generating substantial income for the locals. As tourism becomes a pillar industry of the local economy, penury is resigned to history. At the end of 2019, China's rural underprivileged population had fallen to 5.51 million. An end to poverty was within reach.

"It is difficult to recall or identify any parallel achievement," said Guy Ryder, director-general of the International Labour Organization.

SPRINTING THE LAST MILE

In early 2020, the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic dealt a heavy blow to the economy of China and the world.

"For the first time in thirty years, poverty is rising," said Antonio Guterres, UN secretary-general.

While most people assumed China's goal to lift all its people out of poverty by 2020 would take a back seat, Xi took a tougher path.

In March 2020, Xi presided over an unusual symposium attended by officials ranging from country leaders to local officials.

Xi stressed that lifting all rural residents living below the current poverty line out of poverty by 2020 was a solemn promise made

by the CPC Central Committee, and it must be fulfilled on time.

"There were only 300 days left, and Xi said this meeting had to be held as soon as possible for another round of deployment and mobilization," said Chen Songbai, deputy Party chief of Zhaojue County, Sichuan Province. "He had a very grave look on his face when he said it."

Although fiscal revenue was at a low ebb in 2020, Xi pointed out that funding was key to achieving poverty alleviation.

Instead of reducing investment, the central government's special fund for poverty reduction reached 146.1 billion yuan (about 22.4 billion U.S. dollars). There was also a one-off supplementary injection of 30 billion yuan.

Xi's decision recharged the campaign and the whole society played its part. Once again, the have-nots knew that they would not be left behind under any circumstance.

Over the past eight years, the rural landscape has been completely reshaped. More than 9.6 million people suffering from intractable destitution have been relocated from uninhabitable areas. All villages in the country are connected to the network of paved roads. Every rural household is connected to the power grid. More than 100,000 countryside schools have been renovated or rebuilt, providing tens of thousands of rural children with a chance to carve an alternative future.

Along the path to zero poverty, Xi made plans and decisions that have changed the fate of millions of Chinese families for the better. The path has been littered with bumps and holes, yet he held on to his original motivation.

"Through eight years, under the current standard, China has eradicated extreme poverty for the nearly 100 million rural people affected," Xi said in the New Year speech that rang in 2021.

China has ended the poverty that plagued the country for thousands of years, but it merely marks another beginning -- the beginning of more miracles yet to be worked, and a path toward an even brighter future.

Xinhua

We have to change our suicidal ways and reconcile with nature to tackle climate crises and pandemics

By Roland Ngam

THE United Nations Environment Programme released a report, Making Peace with Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies, on 18 February 2021, which once again implored our collective conscience to reflect on humankind's relentless destruction of the environment, and to change course.

The report details the consequences of three interlinked environmental emergencies - climate crisis, biodiversity loss and pollution - and makes the case for collective global action to at least repair some of the damage we have done to the environment.

At the launch of the report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that "governments and people need to understand in their very DNA that all environmental, social and economic challenges are interlinked... and they must be tackled together". He added that "we must put the health of the planet at the centre of all our plans and policies. The economics are clear."

Humans have visited a right royal bashing on pretty much every square kilometre of global real estate. We have dug deep into the bowels of Earth and turned them inside out, dumped millions of litres of toxic liquid into rivers and aquifers and polluted the oceans with plastic. We didn't stop there, no! Our destructive tendencies have also ventured into space where our junk orbits Earth.

The prevailing social Darwinist accumulation model has become some sort of high altar at which we all worship in our frenetic race to what we perceive as the top.

We know how it all began. Starting from the Industrial Revolution, humans invented Fordist production lines and incredibly destructive fossil-energy and food regimes which transformed nature into what was believed by prophets of eternal growth to be an inexhaustible reservoir from which we could take without giving back.

We set up mines in faraway places. We invented slavery and proletarianised indigenous communities that did not have any real connection with global financial systems. Thus began the metabolic rift.

Deregulation (Margaret Thatcher and others insisted "there is no alternative") and Washington Consensus policies, driven largely by G20 countries, located production lines in poor countries where the most vulnerable people live, to exploit cheap labour, with the profits invariably flowing back to the global north.

The plunder has been unrelenting. The world-systems theory dictates that poor nations adopt exploitative laws and accept large-scale ecocide to become rich countries in their own right. Too often, a sliver of the population gets rich while the majority inherit the externalities of this hara-kiri: unproductive lands, polluted waters, cancer, settlements in flood-prone areas, persistent poverty,



wars...

Every day, entrepreneurs in Brazil cut down more of the Amazon to produce cheap soybeans for animals in Europe and America. Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia tear up their forests to produce cheap coffee and palm oil for the world.

In Africa, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and Algeria dump more than one trillion metric tons of carbon into the atmosphere every year. The oilfields of the Niger Delta have become wastelands as poor and marginalised young people set up illegal bush refineries to get in on the oil action which has generally benefited only the military top brass and the political class. The eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has become a killing field as armed groups set up shop to seize control of the cobalt trade.

What are the consequences of mass destruction of ecosystems by man? Consider these statistics from the Making Peace with Nature document. Since 1970:

The economy has grown fivefold and trade tenfold, the human population has doubled to 7.8 billion, but still 1.3 billion are poor and 700 million go to bed hungry every day;

Greenhouse gas emissions have doubled; Chemical production, waste and pollution have increased;

Resource use has tripled; and Humans affect three-quarters of ice-free land and two-thirds of oceans.

Unbridled human plunder of the environment further causes loss of carbon sinks, increased droughts, biome shifts, species range loss, habitat loss, biodiversity loss and ocean acidification.

The past five years have been the hottest on record. Many parts of the world have witnessed unprecedented natural events including floods, cyclones and droughts.

As the natural habitat of many species shrinks due to our insatiable appetite for raw materials and cheap food, we are coming into contact with more diseases and without urgent action, Covid-19-style shutdowns will become common.

The loss of pollinators (insects, birds, animals) is threatening more than \$1-trillion worth of crop output. The malaria belt has expanded further south into South Africa and farmers are dealing with more crop failures than

usual.

Last week, the state of Texas, which had long ignored the call to weatherise its power networks in the face of climate change, was completely shut down for days and more than four million people went without power for a full week. Even Cancun Cruz now agrees that climate change is real.

Still, it is not too late. We have long ignored the consequences of our actions because climate change played out in slow motion, but after unprecedented heat spells, unprecedented fires in California and Australia, unprecedented increase in diseases and pandemics (Ebola, Zika, MERS-COV, SARS-CoV-2, Covid-19), we can no longer pretend Earth can heal itself. We must change our suicidal ways - and we must act together.

The Making Peace with Nature report encourages nations to "adopt plans and goals consistent with the Paris Agreement for transitioning to net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, cutting emissions by 45% by 2030 compared with 2010".

And we must "put a price on carbon, phase out fossil fuel finance and end fossil fuel subsidies, stop building new coal power plants and advance adaptation and resilience to climate change".

We need to recognise that a healthy environment is a basic human right. This is really the foundation of climate justice: people have a right to clean air, clean water, a clean environment, clean food and so on.

We must understand that all plants and animals are important and must be protected.

The world is a miracle and we generally do not spend a lot of time thinking about the billions of worms that turn the earth every day, the insects that pollinate our crops, the predators that keep certain populations under control, the birds that help spread seeds, etc.

We must review our development models. Current neoliberal trickle-down policies funnel all the profits to a few people and maintain the majority of the planet in poverty, often in unhealthy environments. New development models must ensure a just and equitable distribution of wealth. We can, for example, break away from the GDP obsession and explore degrowth as a way of distributing a greater share of opportunities and the national cake to more people.

We have to consume less, buy more from local value chains and spend more time in nature. Smallholder producers must receive more support, because theirs is a more sustainable type of agriculture - and they provide food for 70% of the world's population. The onslaught against family or community-owned seed banks must stop.

DM

FAO sees threat of invasion by locusts get worse with rain

By Guardian Reporter

THE Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has said the moderate rains that fell in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia could allow the swarms present in both countries to mature and eventually lay eggs.

According to the organisation, the situation would give rise to another generation of breeding.

However, the scale of spring breeding is expected to be limited because of ongoing control operations that continue to reduce the number of swarms and the likelihood of poor spring rains starting next month.

In Ethiopia, immature swarms persist in Oromia (East Harerghe, Arsi, Borena) and SNNP (South Omo, Konso) regions, including southern areas of the Rift Valley where more swarms were reported.

In Kenya, small immature swarms are declining in northern and central counties. Many of the highly mobile swarms continue to be reported many times repeatedly, leading to multiple reports of the same swarm.

There were no new reports of swarms arriving from Somalia. A few small swarms moved from southern Kenya to northeast Tanzania where they were reported near Mt. Kilimanjaro in Longido district of Arusha region and further south in Manyara region. One aircraft was deployed from Kenya and control operations are underway.

In Somalia, hopper bands and new immature swarms continue to form in the northeast (Puntland). Additional surveys are required in the north-west (Somaliland) where a similar situation is likely to be underway.

The swarms that form in northern Somalia are likely to disperse along the northern plateau, drifting west towards Aysha district (Somali region) in eastern Ethiopia. A few swarms may move south towards Kenya.

The present situation in the Horn of Africa differs significantly from



one year ago. The current swarms are smaller in size and less numerous. So far, the swarms have not mated or laid eggs. Very little rain has fallen since the end of the short rains last year. Intensive aerial control operations, supported by ground teams, are well-established and making good progress in reducing locust infestations.

A few adult groups and small swarms are forming on the Red Sea coastal plains in Sudan and Eritrea. In Yemen, low numbers of solitary adults persist along the Red Sea coastal plains.

In Saudi Arabia, hopper bands are present and groups of immature adults are forming on the northern Red Sea coast.

An increasing number of mature adult groups and a few swarms are laying eggs in the interior between Riyadh and Hail where hatching is

expected to start in early March. Although intensive control operations are in progress, a few groups have nearly reached the Persian Gulf and could reach Kuwait and the coastal plains in southwest Iran during periods of south-westerly winds.

Although intensive control operations are in progress, a few groups have nearly reached the Persian Gulf and could reach Kuwait and the coastal plains in southwest Iran during periods of south-westerly winds.

UNICEF signs COVID-19 vaccine supply agreement with AstraZeneca

By Guardian Reporter

UNICEF and AstraZeneca this week signed a long-term agreement for the supply of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca on behalf of the COVAX Facility.

Through the supply agreement, UNICEF, along with procurement partners including the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), will have access to up to 170 million doses of vaccines for around 85 countries.

This is the third such agreement for COVID-19 vaccines, following previously announced agreements with Pfizer and the Serum Institute of India.

The AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine received WHO Emergency Use Listing (EUL) on 15 February.

Deliveries of the vaccine are planned to begin in the first quarter of 2021, in line with the COVAX Allocation Framework that take into consideration several factors includ-

ing country readiness, national regulatory authorizations and completed contractual provisions, as well as operating and supply considerations.

The goal of the COVAX Facility is to ensure that safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines are rapidly available and affordable to all countries around the world, regardless of income level.

The supply agreement will enable access to 170 million doses secured under the COV-

AX Facility's Advance Purchase Agreement (APA) with AstraZeneca, which will be available throughout 2021.

On 11 February, UNICEF announced the signing of an agreement with Pfizer for the supply of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine through 2021, following on from an agreement with the Serum Institute of India to access two vaccines through technology transfer from AstraZeneca which has been granted WHO EUL and Novavax,

which is subject to the approval of the vaccine by WHO.

The COVAX Facility, co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and WHO, together with UNICEF, aims to provide at least 2 billion doses of approved COVID-19 vaccines by the end of 2021, enabling the protection of frontline health care and social workers, as well as other high-risk and vulnerable groups.

What motivates natural resource policymakers in Africa to take action on changes in climate?

By Guardian Correspondent

CLIMATE services are vital tools for decision makers addressing climate change in developing countries, according to a new study published by the journal Risk Analysis.

The research finds that science-based seasonal forecasts and accompanying materials can support climate risk management in agriculture, health, water management, energy, and disaster risk reduction.

But in East Africa, natural resource managers have been slow to use climate information services, partly because they are difficult to understand and may not feel relevant for their local planning purposes.

The study suggests that one way to encourage policymakers in East Africa to use climate services more often is to appeal to the motivational factors that influence their professional actions on climate change.

Researchers at the University of Cape Town found that experience with extreme weather events and social norms – external expectations of how one is supposed to feel, behave, or think in particular situations – may play important roles in motivating professional action on climate change.

"Based on our results, aligning climate services with social norms could offer low-hanging fruit for designing more effective climate services interventions," says climate scientist Anna Steynor, head of climate services at the Climate System Analysis Group, University of Cape Town.

For example, messages such as "80 percent of urban planning professionals are using climate information in their planning" could highlight the use of climate information among policy planners and, therefore, encourage the use of climate services by those who aren't currently utilizing them.

Between September 2018 and January 2019, the team conducted structured surveys of 474 "policy decision influencers" in five East African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. The majority of respondents (71 percent) were employed by national and local government ministries. Others worked for trade unions, international development agencies, non-governmental organizations, research organizations, and the pri-



vate sector.

All of the respondents were involved in some way with natural resource management. "These individuals are an important community because they are an accessible group for introducing adaptation-oriented interventions and are in a position of leadership to drive social adaptations around climate change," the authors write.

The participants were asked if they had taken general action, as part of their job activities, to prepare for the impacts of climate change. Three items on the survey assessed overall worry about climate change, as risk perceptions have been shown to underlie action on climate change.

Other questions were designed to gauge obser-

vance of social norms, personal values, psychological closeness to climate change, and experience of extreme weather events. Questions related to psychological closeness pertained to whether participants felt that climate change would have a big impact on them now, personally and on their community.

The results were statistically analyzed using structural equation modeling in order to construct a conceptual explanatory model for professional action. The resulting causal model illustrates the important role that social norms, psychological closeness to climate change, and experience of extreme events play in motivating action. It also elucidates the cascading effects of

variables such as age, gender, education and personal values on action.

"Our model provides a framework for prioritizing the different factors that motivate adaptation action," says Steynor. "We hope it will prompt further research on individual climate change action and encourage behavioral change among policy decision influencers in Africa."

The Society for Risk Analysis is a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, scholarly, international society that provides an open forum for all those interested in risk analysis. SRA was established in 1980 and has published Risk Analysis: An International Journal, the leading scholarly journal in the field, continuously since 1981.



86 dolphins found dead off Mozambique - gov't

MAPUTO

ANOTHER 86 dolphins were found dead on February 24 on an island off the coast of the southern African nation of Mozambique, the cause still unknown, the country's environment ministry said.

Dolphins had already been discovered dead on February 21 at the same location, and a total of 111 marine mammals have been found by the authorities.

"The team from Bazaruto Archipelago National Park in Inhambane province

found 86 lifeless dolphins on the west coast of Bazaruto Island," a ministry statement said.

The archipelago is located in the Mozambique Channel, between the Mozambique coast and Madagascar.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause of their deaths, with researchers not finding any injuries or suspicious substances in their digestive systems, the authorities said.

The protected waters of the national park are home to dolphins, whales and

dugongs in addition to 180 species of birds, among other animals.



The team from Bazaruto Archipelago National Park in Inhambane province found 86 lifeless dolphins on the west coast of Bazaruto Island

Burmese journalist Swe Win on journalism in Myanmar, the coup, and what could be next... - 2

By E. Tammy Kim

WHAT does this mean for your staff in Yangon? You have about thirty people who work in your newsroom. Are they okay?

Two days before the coup, we wrote a story that, within seventy-two hours, there would be a huge political storm. It was written on the morning of January 28. I had already evacuated the newsroom. Still, nobody thought the coup was completely likely because the power-sharing government has been a military-orchestrated political framework. They retained so much power economically; they don't need to obey anyone. They committed massacres of the Rohingya in the Rakhine State and detained all these journalists, and then they released all the soldiers and officers accused of committing executions.

The military is so powerful, so why stage a coup? Some of my friends even cited political theorist Larry Diamond: in a transitional democracy, if there is a coup, that coup is never initiated by the leaders of the army; that coup is initiated by mid-level officers.

I said: "We cannot resort to theories when we have dictators who don't think in a logical way like we do. They can do anything."

So when you told your newsroom to close down, since you were not in the country anymore, where did your reporters go? Did you give them instructions?

Even though I foresaw the coup, I did not foresee the brutal way it would be launched. So before the coup, they all stayed in their houses, and then, within five hours of the coup, I ordered all my colleagues to leave their houses and stay somewhere with their families or their friends.

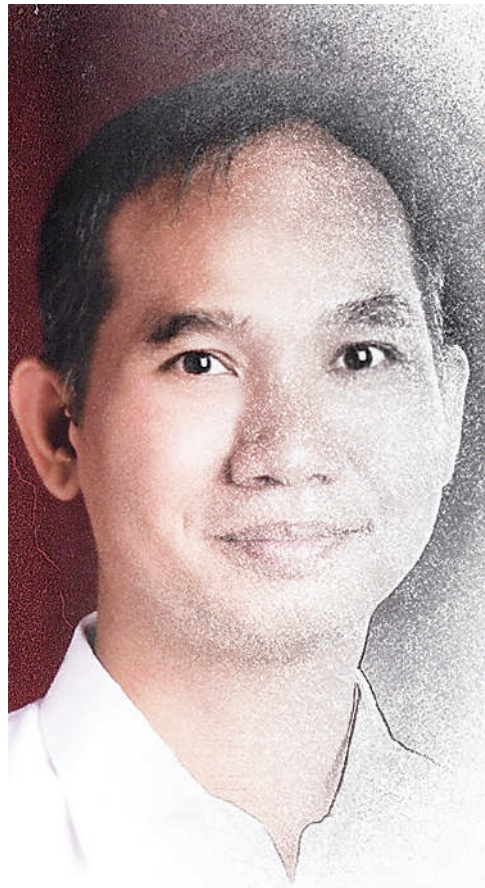
Half of the team did not want to accept my idea because they were as equally outraged as members of the public. "Why should we leave? We've got to do what we've got to do." If I worked in Yangon, I would not have shut down the newsroom. I would not have asked them to flee. I would have kept operating the newsroom, no matter what the consequences. But since I was out of the danger zone, I had the moral obligation to take precautionary measures.

It has now been almost a week since the coup began, and a lot of Burmese people have been out to protests, the medical university has threatened to strike, the teachers are involved, public sector workers, miners are involved. What do you think about the protests and the uprising from the people of Myanmar?

There is so much anger about what has transpired during the past week. We have developed so much anger and animosity towards the military. But the level and nature of the anger this time around is different because people have tasted democracy and liberty. No matter how it is flawed, no matter how it is limited in its nature and philosophy, people have tasted it. It was so delicious to all these people who languished in military rule.

Even people who are twenty-five or in their thirties have experienced two entirely different political systems: military dictatorship and democracy. Also, it's very clear that the NLD won the election. The NLD has remained the most popular political party not because of Aung San Suu Kyi's charisma, not because of their performance in government, but because there is no rival.

If I were in my country, I wouldn't have wanted to cast a ballot for the NLD. The NLD has let us down time and time again. I've felt that they've never done enough to improve human rights and democratic values, using all the resources at their disposal during the past ten years. Particularly the Rohingya issue. It's not just the Rohingya. We as members of humanity



have to fight for their rights.

Do you think the protests will make a difference against the coup?

I don't think so at all. The military knew how to deal with these protests, how to deal with public opposition. They have already started big-time information and psychological warfare against the public. They have cut off all the internet. Yesterday, the vigilante groups hired by the military went around a neighbourhood in trucks saying Aung San Suu Kyi was already released. People flooded the streets to celebrate the rumour of the release; they lit firecrackers. So I'm not hopeful about these ongoing protests, even though I congratulate the people, even though I feel emotional about the bravery of the youth.

What about the fact that we're still in the middle of Covid-19? How is the military using that? I saw that their excuse for arresting the president was that he had campaigned in violation of Covid-19 guidelines. Is the military taking advantage of Covid-19 to stage the coup right now?

I'm not sure about that. I believe that, with or without Covid-19, they would have done it anyway. This was premeditated.

What about the influence of China and Russia? Early in January, there were military and high-level foreign-ministry visits from China and Russia to Myanmar. And China and Russia have blocked the condemnation of Myanmar's killing of Rohingya people in Rakhine. Do you feel that these countries have been encouraging authoritarianism in Myanmar?

My gut feeling is that China is the most responsible entity for the coup in Myanmar. We had coups in 1962 and 1988, but China's influence on Myanmar was not very strong. Actually, the Myanmar military was fighting against the communists, who were supported

by Beijing. But after 1988, the military generals in Myanmar have had no choice but to turn to China for all the support they need - economic support, political support - and then the ethnic armed groups around the border have grown.

There's a lot of influence from China on the military in many ways. What the military has done is, they started colluding with China - a lot of businesses and also at a personal and government level.

The Burmese generals became shareholders in Chinese companies. China struck successful business deals with the military before the political transition. We have the controversial biggest copper mine in Myanmar: that deal was done before the transition. They signed a contract to build a huge hydropower dam in the northern part of the country, which has been delayed until now.

The Chinese government proposed construction of an oil-and-gas pipeline. And the Chinese proposed the construction of railways and bus lines allowing for this oil-and-gas pipeline.

During the Obama administration, the US was much more involved in Myanmar. During the Trump administration, the State Department was not really active. Do you think that the Trump administration's neglect of Southeast Asia led Myanmar and the military to get much closer to China?

I don't think so. Democratic forces have felt very discouraged by Trump's pathetic diplomacy towards Asia in general but, with or without Trump, the military would have done it anyway.

I'm curious about the relationship between protesters in Myanmar and those in Thailand. There's a lot of overlap, as seen most visibly in photographs of people raising the three-finger salute. It seems like there has been a lot of exchange.

One sure thing is that the Thai military learned something from Myanmar's political transition, a militarily guided transition. They were inspired by the military generals in Nay Pyi Taw. They launched a coup - they concocted a constitution of their own, which gave them a lot of leverage. And I think the Burmese generals got inspired again by their Thai counterparts.

There's a complementary process going on. There was a small protest in front of the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok a few days after the coup, and then Prayut (Chao-cha), the prime minister, came out saying that the media should not inflame the anger or something like that. He was basically protecting his counterpart in Nay Pyi Taw.

Do you have thoughts on January 6 in the US? Here, we called that an attempted coup. People were frightened.

I already had a clear analysis of what was going to happen in Nay Pyi Taw, in Myanmar, so I felt very emotional about what was happening at the US Capitol on January 6. I felt that we were going to see the resilience and the strength of the US's democratic institutions in resisting this lunatic president who wanted to be a dictator. If this were not the US, if you did not have all these institutions made over the centuries, the man who wanted to be dictator - he would not incite a mob; he would

Sales of China's catering sector exceed 800 bln yuan during Spring Festival holiday

By Chang Biluo, He Yong

CHINA'S catering sector saw about 821 billion yuan (about \$126.6 billion) in the combined sales of key retail and catering enterprises during the weeklong Spring Festival holiday that lasted from Feb. 11 to 17, marking a year-on-year growth of 28.7 percent from the same period last year, according to data released by the country's Ministry of Commerce (MOC) on Wednesday.

While strictly implementing epidemic prevention and control measures, catering enterprises have proactively enriched and upgraded their menus and innovated online and offline business models during this year's Spring Festival, also known as the Chinese Lunar New Year.

At the same time, food delivery service providers have made active efforts to respond to the needs of catering enterprises and constantly improve the quality of their services.

Through joint efforts and efficient coordination, catering companies and food delivery service providers in China managed to provide consumers with customized, diversified, and high-quality catering services during the Spring Festival holiday, a traditional peak season for catering consumption in China.

A restaurant named "Lao Chongqing" in southwest China's Chongqing municipality enjoyed brisk business during the recently-concluded Spring Festival holiday. Festively decorated by red lanterns and an eye-catching large poster, the restaurant witnessed its busiest period of the year in the past week, with customers keeping coming in even after lunchtime on the first day of the Chinese Lunar New Year.

"We launched New Year's Eve dinner delivery service this year. There is a lot of work to do," Chen Cong, owner of the restaurant, said with a smile, adding that they managed to guarantee high-quality services and strict anti-epidemic measures amid the busy work.

Every staff member of the restaurant must go through a morning check before entering the lobby of the restaurant, Chen pointed out, explaining that staff members have their body temperatures measured, report their travel records, and get disinfected during the check. According to Chen, he and his employees would clean and disinfect the restaurant for several times a day.

"I just ordered New Year's Eve dinner, and I'm going to wait for it at home," said a man named Liu delightedly. Liu was thrilled to find out that he could order New Year's Eve dinner, or the family reunion dinner, for two after visiting the restaurant, as he was worried that restaurants only provide meals for large groups.

Liu and his wife are not natives of Chongqing, yet they chose to stay rather than returning to their hometown during the holiday, in response to the call of the country for people to stay put during the Spring Festival holiday to prevent COVID-19 spread.

Besides delivering New Year's Eve dinner to people's homes, some restaurants even launched the service that allows people to have cooks prepare dishes they ordered at their own kitchens.

The fact that many people chose to stay put during the Spring Festival holiday has added to the popularity of catering businesses, especially food delivery platforms, in the country.

Data from China's popular online food delivery platform Meituan Dianping indicated that the platform saw 200 percent more searches for New Year's Eve dinner-related information since Jan. 15 than that found in the same period last year, and that restaurants have made great efforts to prepare New Year's Eve dinner sets

that can be delivered to consumers.

"Unlike previous years, many restaurants have been open during this year's Spring Festival. According to our statistics, nearly 70 percent of the restaurants across the country have been open in the period," an executive of Meituan Dianping told the People's Daily.

"I didn't expect to deliver more than 40 orders on the Chinese Lunar New Year's Eve, which was almost the same as that I usually handle within one day," said Li Mingming, a 30-year-old food delivery man of Meituan Dianping. The man chose to stick to his post at a branch of Meituan Dianping in Wangjing neighborhood in Chaoyang district of Beijing during this year's Spring Festival holiday.

Although people who chose to stay put during the holiday couldn't reunite with their family and have meals together, many of them prepared New Year's Eve dinner for themselves with the help of food delivery platforms.

On the Chinese Lunar New Year's Eve, the number of online orders for food delivery services surged by 70 percent year on year, while popular catering brands witnessed an 82-percent sharp rise in sales of takeout food, as shown by data from Meituan Dianping.

Semi-finished and small servings of New Year's Eve dinner sets have become hot topics during the Spring Festival holiday, when some catering enterprises launched New Year's Eve dinner sets for one.

Unlike traditional offline New Year's Eve dinner, which features lively atmosphere, New Year's Eve dinner sets offered via online platforms won favor with consumers for their smaller servings and daintiness.

People's Daily

send soldiers. And then I saw the soldiers in my own home country.

It sounds like you're very pessimistic about the next few months. What do you think is going to happen in terms of journalism? What is the responsibility of journalists in Myanmar, and outside Myanmar, to keep track of what's happening? To inform the public of what the military is doing, especially with the cutoff of internet and phones?

We will have to follow not just the political events, but our entire focus must be on the brutal injustices waiting to happen. Also, the international community, we have to scramble to find out what leverage we can use to support - emotionally, psychologically, or physically - people who are oppressed, and also to punish those individuals torturing their own citizens.

At the same time the military uses a lot of psychological warfare tactics to divide the public, we can't be like: "Oh, let's do neutral reporting" or "All sides are to blame." Sometimes we forget about the need to do critical reporting in the proper context.

What are you going to do at Myanmar Now? Your newsroom is in hiding. A lot of people are on the run. How do you operate a newsroom in these conditions?

Half of the team is now back at work. They are going out from their hideouts to cover the protests. It would be a shame if we missed the entire public opposition. It would be psychologically devastating to all of us - we'd feel very irresponsible - so I have put half the team back at work. But, still, we're in disarray. They're still grappling with the trauma of the coup.

I'm talking with our donors about whether there's a possibility of setting up the newsroom in a neighbouring country. Many journalistic colleagues won't want to work for a newsroom in Myanmar. They will have to accommodate the junta; they will have to adjust their coverage to the reality of military rule. There will be a lot of injustices, tonnes of stories to cover.

A CJR dispatch. E. Tammy Kim is a freelance reporter and essayist whose writing has appeared in The New Yorker, the New York Review of Books, the New York Times, and many other publications.

RADIO ONE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE



SATURDAY PROGRAMME

TIME	PROGRAMME
05.00 AM	HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I
06.00 AM	AMKA NA BBC
06.30 AM	NIPASHE
06.50 AM	COMMERCIALS
07.00 AM	NEWS BULLETIN
07.15 AM	NEWSPAPERS REVIEW
07.30 AM	KUMEPAMBAZUKA KISWAHILI
09.00 AM	WATOTO SHOW
10.00 AM	NEWS BRIEF
10.03 AM	DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS
10.15 AM	MIWANI YA MAISHA
11.00 AM	MTAA WA MAGOMA
13.00 HRS	NEWS BULLETIN
13.10 HRS	DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS
13.30 HRS	CHAGUO LAKO
15.00 HRS	MUZIKI NA MICHEZO
16.00 HRS	NEWS BRIEF
16.03 HRS	DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS
16.15 HRS	MIDUNDO MOTOMOTO
18.00 HRS	BONGO TEN
19.30 HRS	SPOTI LEO
20.00 HRS	NEWS BULLETIN
20.15 HRS	CHEMSHA BONGO
21.00 HRS	NEWS BRIEF
21.03 HRS	WEEK END SHOW I
22.00 HRS	NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS)
22.15 HRS	WEEK END SHOW II
23.00 HRS	NEWS BRIEF
23.03 HRS	WEEK END SHOW III
01:00-05:00HRS	MUZIKI MCHANGANYIKO

FAHARI YA MSIKILIZAJI // THE LISTENERS PRIDE



SATURDAY	
07:30-10:00HRS	DK 90 DUNIANI
10:00-11:00HRS	KADOGOO
11:00-13:00HRS	BONGO HITS
13:00-14:00HRS	DW RADIO
14:00-16:00HRS	ZAIDI YA UMJUAUVO
16:00-18:00HRS	ALIYEVUMA
18:00-21:00HRS	BUZUKI TIME
21:00-22:00HRS	SPOTI
22:00-00:00HRS	ALIYEVUMA(marudio)
00:00-01:00HRS	HALI HALISI(marudio)
01:00-05:00HRS	DAKIKI 90(marudio)
05:00-07:00HRS	ZAIDI YA UMJUAUVO(marudio)

BUSINESS

MPs to raise Sh9trn debt cap for extra borrowing

NAIROBI

PARLIAMENT will enlarge the debt ceiling currently set at Sh9 trillion to accommodate Treasury's borrowing for development spending, Majority Leader Amos Kimunya has said.

Mr Kimunya said the National Assembly will look at the reasons behind the Treasury's proposal to increase the statutory debt ceiling and act accordingly once the request is tabled in the House.

"We don't want debt to rise but Kenyans want development. We will look at the Treasury proposals and

if it is for raising money for development, we have no problem even if they want the ceiling set at Sh20 trillion," Mr Kimunya said.

"We will look at the merit and demerits on what the budget needs to adhere and not the limit or ceiling. I have been there (Treasury) and I know," Mr Kimunya said.

The Treasury is seeking Parliament's nod to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate gaps in its expenditure needs amid underperforming tax collections.

The Treasury disclosed in the

Kenya's Parliament buildings in Nairobi. File Photo.

Medium Term Debt Management Strategy 2021 that it will be tabling changes to the Public Finance Management law for approval by legislators in the near future to raise the cap on debt, without disclosing the fresh limit it is looking at.

The ceiling was last raised from Sh6 trillion in 2019, reflecting growing borrowing due to gaping budget deficits and investments in infrastructure projects like roads.

"The formulation of this strategy

has been on a background of public debt stock fast approaching the statutory ceiling of Sh9 trillion set out in the Public Finance Management Act, 2012," Treasury officials wrote in the debt strategy paper for the next three years.

"As a result, the implementation of this strategy may require the revision of the debt ceiling through the amendment of the PFM Act based on future borrowing requirements." Public debt crossed Sh7.28 billion

last December, an equivalent of 65.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), from Sh6.01 trillion or 58.0 per cent of GDP a year earlier, Treasury data shows.

Treasury earlier projected total public debt will hit Sh7.66 trillion by end of the current financial year in June from Sh6.69 trillion a year earlier, but rise to Sh8.59 trillion in June 2022 and Sh9.37 trillion by mid 2023. Addressing a news conference at his Parliament office

over the next phase of the Building Bridges Initiative's (BBI) Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2020, Mr Kimunya said Kenya will have to rely on borrowing since domestic taxes are not enough to implement development projects.

Japan has taken a huge debt to develop and so long as the loan is directed to development, there is nothing wrong to borrow up to 60 per cent of our GDP," Mr Kimunya said.

Tech firm to set up regional data hub in Nairobi

NAIROBI

KENYA's data centre market has a new suitor after Europe-based IXAfrica launched plans to build its 'Africa Campus' in Nairobi.

IXAfrica chairman Guy Willner said they had chosen Nairobi as their regional expansion Launchpad targeting partnerships with tech entrepreneurs that are helping to onboard local and regional firms into the paperless and automated regime.

"We are launching a major internet infrastructure project in Nairobi that will provide access to data centre and networks providing on-campus offices and facilities thereby enabling new tech businesses to thrive."

Without disclosing the cost of the investment, Mr Willner who earlier co-owned IXEurope that was later sold off for Sh60.8 billion (555 million USD) after which he resolved to concentrate on launching datacenters in emerging markets, especially Africa.

IXAfrica data centres, he said, which are designed to accommodate modern high-load serv-

ers and infrastructure for ultra-dense computing will ride on the most energy-efficient and engineering solutions largely based on green technology initiatives.

"Alongside sustainability, data sovereignty is also a major issue across the planet and IXAfrica's new hyperscale-ready campus will allow companies to fully comply with privacy and localisation laws while providing the fastest, lowest latency access possible to the region's over 300 million population," he said.

IXAfrica is to be located within Nairobi's central business district 1.2km from Kenya's main telecoms access node.

"We believe our ambitious project will allow both enterprises and government to further harness technology to help create a greener future. Our team members each have twenty years of experience in the data centre industry and this, combined with strong investor support of our many international clients and partners give us grounds to be confident," he said.

Data centre business continues to gain coinage across Kenya



Nairobi City skyline. File Photo.

with banks, telcos, learning institutions as well as governments signing business partnerships to entrench use of cloud services

for their business processes. This allows firms to concentrate on their core business while allowing data centre oper-

ators to man their servers onsite or remotely while ensuring their platforms are not only available round the clock but also secure.

AU: East Africa leads globally in mobile money services

ADDIS ABABA

EAST Africa is the global leader in mobile money services, according to a new report released by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

According to the report, Africa's Development Dynamics 2021 the region has the highest mobile money penetration rate in the world currently standing at 1,106 registered mobile money accounts for every 1,000 adults. This is compared to 600 for the whole of Africa, 533 for Asia and 245 for Latin America and Caribbean. Additionally, in East Africa most adult subscribers own more than one mobile account.

Research shows that in 2018, Africa had over 300 million mobile money accounts - more than any other continent - and that today there are more than 500 companies providing technology-enabled innovations in financial services in the region.

The report lists several East Africa member states, including Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania, that it says lead globally in mobile money transactions main-

ly because policymakers and regulators took on the risk to invest early in innovation and this has made the financial sector more inclusive.

Mobile money innovation is identified as a key enabler and driver of digital innovation and adoption, leading to increased productivity and job creation in key sectors such as healthcare, education and agriculture. It references the rise of start-up companies and their impact on these sectors. An excerpt from the report reads: "They are turning digital technologies and Africa's specific needs to their advantage to deploy fast-growing business models. For example, Kobo360, a Nigerian startup founded in 2017, is looking to revolutionise the country's domestic transport and logistics sector as well as to link Nigerian farmers with buyers all over the world."

AUC chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat said: "The AUC and OECD are committed to supporting their members' to make the digital transformation a vector of sustainable human, economic and social progress on the continent."

IFC subscribes to 16pc of Liquid Telecom's US\$620 million bond issue

JOHANNESBURG

THE World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) has snapped up 16 percent of the US\$620-million bond issuance by Liquid Telecom, which according to ratings agency, Fitch, is facing risks emanating from regional uncertainties - but is on course for steady revenue performance.

The 16 percent represents about US\$100-million of the bond issue by Liquid - which has broadband and fibre networks in about 13 African countries, with operations in Kenya, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, among others.

The Liquid Telecom long-term paper was listed on Ireland's main exchange, Euronext Dublin on Thursday.

Liquid will use funds from the bond issue to re-finance existing debt instruments and to unlock more funds to expand its broadband internet, digital and cloud services across Africa

Liquid Telecom Group CEO Nick Rudnick emphasised that there are "great opportunities" for the company "to address under developed telecommunications and internet access" across many parts of Africa that are lagging behind.

"Our refinance enables us to continue to invest in the African digital eco-system including driving penetration of digital and Cloud-based services to businesses who may not previously have had the resources to benefit from them," he said.

Much has been said about the upside potential to boost internet access in Africa, with the cost of gadgets and infrastructure deployment cited as the main challenges, especially in rural areas. The IFC is looking to bridge these hindrances through investing in private sector led initiatives to boost internet connectivity.

The corporation's COO Stephanie von Friedeburg said the best approach to ensuring much-needed internet access for everyone in Africa "is to invest in digital infrastructure" development.

"Our investment in the Liquid Telecom bond will help the company free up capital to further expand broadband access across Africa," she said.

However, weak operating and volatile regulatory environments in key African markets such as South Africa and Zimbabwe presents uncertainty for Liquid Telecom, said Fitch ratings agency earlier this week.

It cited currency volatility in South Africa, the holding up of about US\$30-million in cash in Zimbabwe, a country facing foreign currency challenges and a "mismatch between cash flow and debt (that) could lead to some volatility" as the major risk factors for the company.

Fitch Ratings agency nonetheless puts Liquid in position for healthy recovery of revenue as African markets lean on data adoption and enhancement as a way of adapting to the post-COVID-19 pandemic.

"South Africa remains a key contributor to the group's revenue while the rest is generated in countries such as Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which have weak operating environments. Regulatory uncertainty in these jurisdictions can have a negative impact on Liquid Telecom," said Fitch in a 22 February ratings write-up on the company.



Stock markets roiled by whiplash in global bonds

LONDON

GLOBAL stocks fell yesterday, with Asian shares down by the most in nine months, as a rout in global bond markets sent yields flying and spooked investors amid fears the heavy losses suffered could trigger distressed selling in other assets.

MSCI's Emerging Markets equity index suffered its biggest daily drop in nearly 10 months and was 2.7 percent lower, while European shares opened in the red, with the STOXX 600 down 0.7 percent, recovering from heavier losses earlier in the session.

The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 50 countries, was 0.9 percent lower and heading for its worst week in a month.

Asia saw the heaviest selling, with MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan sliding more than 3 percent to a one-month low, its steepest one-day percentage loss since May 2020.

For the week the index is down more than 5 percent, its worst weekly showing since March last year when the coronavirus pandemic had sparked fears of a global recession.

"It is not the beginning of a correction in equities, more a logical consolidation as price to earnings ratios were excessive," said Francois Savary, chief investment officer at Swiss wealth manager Prime Partners.

"What is reassuring is that Q4 2020 earnings were good and earnings per share surprisingly good and that means down the road we should get back to growth."

The scale of the sell-off prompt-

ed Australia's central bank to launch a surprise bond buying operation to try and staunch the bleeding.

The European Central Bank is monitoring the recent surge in government bond borrowing costs but will not try to control the yield curve, ECB chief economist Philip Lane told a Spanish newspaper.

On Friday 10-year German government bond yields were down nearly 4 basis points at -0.267 percent and French and Austrian bonds were back in negative territory. Yields on the 10-year Treasury note eased back to 1.4530 percent from a one-year high of 1.614 percent on Thursday.

"Bond yields could still go higher in the short term though as bond selling begets more bond selling," said Shane Oliver, head of investment strategy at AMP.

"The longer this continues the greater the risk of a more severe correction in share markets if earnings upgrades struggle to keep up with the rise in bond yields."

Markets were hedging the risk of an earlier rate hike from the Federal Reserve, even though officials this week vowed any move was long in the future.

Fed fund futures are now almost fully priced for a rise to 0.25 percent by January 2023, while Eurodollars have it discounted for June 2022. Even the thought of an eventual end to super-cheap money sent shivers through global stock markets, which have been regularly hitting record highs and stretching valuations.

"The fixed income rout is shifting into a more lethal phase for risky assets," says Damien McCoolough, Westpac's head of rates



The German share price index DAX graph is pictured at the stock exchange in Frankfurt, Germany. File Photo.

strategy.

"The rise in yields has long been mostly seen as a story of improving growth expectations, if anything padding risky assets, but the overnight move notably included a steep lift in real rates and a bringing forward of Fed lift-off expectations."

Japan's Nikkei shed 4 percent, its biggest single-day fall since April, and Chinese blue chips joined the retreat with a drop of 2.4 percent.

Overnight, the Dow fell 1.75 percent, while the

S&P 500 lost 2.45 percent and the Nasdaq 3.52 percent, the biggest decline in almost four months for the tech-heavy index. Tech darlings all suffered, with Apple Inc, Tesla Inc, Amazon.com Inc, NVIDIA Corp and Microsoft Corp the biggest drags.

All of that elevated the importance of U.S. personal consumption data due later on Friday, which includes one of the Fed's favoured inflation measures. Core inflation is actually expected to dip to 1.4% in January, which

could help calm market angst, but any upside surprise would likely accelerate the bond rout.

The surge in Treasury yields caused ructions in emerging markets, which feared the better returns on offer in the United States might attract funds away. Currencies favoured for leveraged carry trades all suffered, including the Brazil real, Turkish lira and South African rand.

The flows helped nudge the U.S. dollar up more broadly, with the dollar index rising to 90.390. It also

gained on the low-yielding yen, briefly reaching the highest since September at 106.42. The euro eased a touch to \$1.2144.

The jump in yields has tarnished gold, which offers no fixed return, and dragged it down 0.1 percent to \$1,767.81 per ounce, having earlier fallen to its lowest since June 26. Oil prices dropped on a higher dollar and expectations of more supply. [O/R] U.S. crude fell 1.5 percent to \$62.57 per barrel and Brent also lost 1.3 percent to \$66.02.

Hedge funds worry about market fallout from Tesla

NEW YORK

SOME Hedge fund managers are getting concerned about the money that has flooded into high-flying stocks like Tesla and the popular ARK fund as bond yields spike and growth stocks take a hit.

The popularity of stocks like Tesla helped Cathie Wood's \$26.6 billion ARK Innovation ETF become the top-performing actively managed U.S. equity fund tracked by Morningstar last year.

But even as shares of Tesla plunged this week and Wood's fund fell, she increased the fund's bet on the automaker. The ARK Innovation ETF is down 15 percent this week and Tesla is down 13 percent, along with declines in other high-flying technology stocks.

Growth names have been hit by higher bond yields while assets like bitcoin that have bubbled up have also pulled back. Tesla was also hurt by a report of a temporary factory closure. Wood's fund also owns a number of internet, social media and technology names, such as Twitter and Snap.

"ARK believes that this week, which has had significant volume, multiple standard deviations above average, has shown that the ETF structure and markets work, providing ample liquidity and tight spreads," Tom Staudt, ARK's chief operating officer told Reuters via email. Still, some investors have concerns.

"Cathie Wood runs a very high-risk, high-beta tech portfolio, and to load up on Tesla right off its highs seems a little premature," said Peter Bortel, general partner at Bortel Investment Management, who said he put a short position on Tesla on Wednesday.

"I've been meditating on the short for the last couple of weeks," Bortel added.

Investors yanked \$465 million from Ark Innovation on Monday, according to Refinitiv data. More such redemptions would prompt Wood's fund to sell liquid holdings to manage the squeeze in the near-term before looking to unwind its illiquid holdings.

"I do worry that funds like ARK could be forced to sell, devastating certain stocks where they are a big holder," said Rob Romero, portfolio manager at Connective Capital, based in California.

Spiking bond yields, which saw 10-year Treasury note yields touching the highest level in a year at 1.614 percent, are causing particular pain for high-growth names. The S&P 500 technology sector, among the sectors that powered the market's rally in 2020, is down 4.5 percent this week.

David Greenwald, associate portfolio manager at Toronto-based Waratah Capital Advisors, said his firm has been "broadly cautious" of high-momentum technology stocks given the rapid increase in Treasury yields year-to-date.

Growth stocks like technology with longer duration cash flows can be sensitive to rising yields as those flows are discounted at higher rates.

"Many of these momentum stocks trade at valuation levels well above historical norms, which have been justified by the low-rate environment," said Greenwald. "To the extent rates continue to rise, we would expect these stocks to continue to underperform the broader market."

Andy Pauly, managing partner at Warwick Investment Management, said "rapidly growing companies that are being priced on cash flows 10-20 years in the future are vulnerable to rising yields."

That has been seen in the sharp divergence between growth and value stocks this year with the S&P 500 growth index nearly unchanged in February, sharply underperforming the value index, up more than 7 percent on optimism of a post-pandemic reopening of the economy.

Troy Gayeski, co-chief investment officer at Sky-Bridge Capital, which invests with some of Wall Street's largest hedge funds, said hedge funds didn't have too many growth or momentum stocks in their portfolios because they knew that "sooner or later ... a lot of the global growth names are going to struggle."

"The larger, more well-established firms are well aware of this bias, well aware of this risk, have spent an inordinate amount of time making sure they're not overly exposed," said Gayeski.

Ant Group restructures its micro-lending scheme

HONG KONG

CHINA'S Ant Group is in talks with other shareholders in its new consumer finance unit to bolster the firm's capital as the fintech giant prepares to fold in its lucrative micro-lending businesses, people familiar with the matter said.

It would need additional capital of 30 billion yuan (\$4.6 billion) to meet regulatory requirements, said one of the people who has direct knowledge of the plans.

Ant plans to bring most of its micro-lending businesses into the unit - equivalent to roughly 1 trillion yuan (\$155 billion) in outstanding loans - a move which will allow it to maintain operations nationwide and expand more easily, said two sources.

The plans reflect intense regulatory pressure on Ant to rein in some of its operations and subject them to rules and capital requirements similar to those for banks. That pressure scuppered Ant's \$37 billion IPO last year and has seen it formulate plans to shift to a

financial holding company structure.

Ant has two lucrative micro-lending businesses: Huabei, which operates like a virtual credit card, and Jiebei, a short-term consumer loan provider. Both based in the southwestern city of Chongqing, they form the bulk of its credit business which accounted for close to 40 percent of Ant's revenue in the first half of 2020.

But under new draft rules published by China's central bank in November, Huabei and Jiebei would have to limit their operations to Chongqing unless they obtain new national licences - a potentially lengthy and uncertain process.

That would not be a problem if the micro-lending businesses were part of the consumer finance arm.

Another major benefit of shifting the businesses to the consumer finance unit is that consumer finance firms can lend up to 10 times their registered capital while online micro-loan firms are only allowed leverage ratios of 2-3 times.



A sign of Ant Group is seen during last year's World Internet Conference (WIC) held in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province, China.

The new consumer finance firm, called Chongqing Ant Consumer Finance Co Ltd, was set up in August 2020 but still has not gained its business licence, three sources said.

"Regulators won't easily greenlight the launch of the business before it fully complies with the capital adequacy rules," said one of the

people. The sources were not authorised to speak on the matter and declined to be identified.

Ant, an Alibaba Group Holding affiliate, declined to comment. The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Micro-lending - loans for small

purchases such as smartphones, cameras and white goods - is hugely popular in China. Ant and other tech platforms such as Tencent-backed WeBank and JD.com Inc have become powerful third-party intermediaries who draw in borrowers, take as much as a third of lending profit margins while the banks they partner with

passively supply the credit.

Ant owns 50 percent of the consumer finance unit, which it plans to develop into China's biggest consumer lending player.

Hong Kong-based Nanyang Commercial Bank holds a 15 percent stake while Taiwan's Cathay United Bank holds 10 percent. Other co-founders include battery maker CATL and Alibaba-backed intelligent transport services firm China TransInfo Technology.

If the other shareholders are reluctant to provide additional capital, Ant plans to bring new investors, two of the people said. Several shareholders want more clarity on the consumer finance unit's listing prospects, they added.

Shareholders are also hoping their stakes in the unit will be converted into shares in Ant's financial holding company, which is likely to go public, the people said. Most of the other shareholders did not respond to requests for comment. CATL referred queries to Ant.

Nissan makes breakthrough with engine in reducing CO2 emissions

TOKYO

NISSAN Motor Co said on Friday it has reached a breakthrough in achieving a 50 percent thermal efficiency with its in-development e-POWER hybrid technology, which could lead to a further reduction of car CO2 emissions.

This new thermal efficiency level would improve fuel consumption by 25 percent

over the 40 percent thermal efficiency level in the upcoming e-POWER engine, the company said.

"Nissan's latest approach to engine development has raised the bar to world-leading levels, accelerating past the current auto industry average range of 40 percent thermal efficiency, making it possible to even further reduce vehicle CO2 emissions," the company

said in a statement.

Nissan did not disclose when the e-POWER technology with 50 percent thermal efficiency would be launched.

Toshihiro Hirai, senior vice president of the powertrain and EV engineering division at Nissan, told reporters on Friday that the automaker is maximising the thermal efficiency of e-POWER in order to reduce



It took 50 years to increase thermal efficiency (of conventional engines) from 30 percent to 40 percent," Hirai said.

CO2 emissions while driving.

The e-POWER, first introduced in Japan in 2016, uses a gasoline engine to charge a battery that powers the vehicle.

"It took 50 years to increase thermal efficiency (of conventional engines) from 30 percent to 40 percent," Hirai said.

"But with e-POWER, we can increase it to 50 per-

cent in several years. That has been the target for the engineering community," he said, describing that level as the "ultimate, challenging goal".

To achieve this, Nissan said it strengthened in-cylinder gas flow and ignition, which burns a more diluted air-fuel mixture at a high compression ratio.

"Without building up these fundamental technol-

ogies, we are unable to attain carbon neutrality," said Hirai.

The automaker said last month that all of its new models in key markets would be electrified by the early 2030s to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Nissan has also said it expects sales of more than one million electrified vehicles per year by the end of fiscal 2023.

China reeling from US sanctions

HONG KONG

CHINA's Huawei plans to make electric vehicles under its own brand and could launch some models this year, four sources said, as the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, battered by U.S. sanctions, explores a strategic shift.

Huawei Technologies Co Ltd is in talks with state-owned Changan Automobile and other automakers to use their car plants to make its electric vehicles (EVs), according to two of the people familiar with the matter.

Huawei is also in discussions with Beijing-backed BAIC Group's BluePark New Energy Technology to manufacture its EVs, said one of the two and a separate person with direct knowledge of the matter.

The plan heralds a potentially major shift in direction for Huawei after nearly two years of U.S. sanctions that have cut its access to key supply chains, forcing it to sell a part of its smartphone business to keep the brand alive.

Huawei was placed on a trade blacklist by the Trump administration over national security concerns. Many industry executives see little chance that blocks on the sale of billions of dollars of U.S. technology and chips to the Chinese company, which has denied wrongdoing, will be reversed by his successor.

A Huawei spokesman denied the company plans to design EVs or produce Huawei branded vehicles.

"Huawei is not a car manufacturer. However through ICT (information and communications technology), we aim to be a digital car-oriented and new-added components provider, enabling car OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) to build better vehicles."

Huawei has started internally designing the EVs and approaching suppliers at home, with the aim of officially launching the project as early as this year, three of the sources said.

Richard Yu, head of Huawei's consumer business group who led the company to become one of the world's largest smartphone makers, will shift his focus to EVs, said one source. The EVs will target a mass-market segment, another source said.

All the sources declined to be named as the discussions are private.

Chongqing-based Changan, which is making cars with Ford Motor Co, declined to comment. BAIC BluePark did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Shares of Changan's main listed company Chongqing Changan Automobile rose 8% after Reuters reported the discussions. BluePark's shares jumped by their maximum 10% daily limit.

Chinese technology firms have been stepping up their focus on EVs in the world's biggest market for such vehicles, as Beijing heavily promotes greener vehicles as a means of reducing chronic air



pollution. Sales of new energy vehicles (NEVs), including pure battery electric vehicles as well as plug-in hybrid and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, are expected to make up 20 percent of China's overall annual auto sales by 2025.

Industry forecasts put China's NEV sales at 1.8 million units this year, up from about 1.3 million in 2020.

Huawei's ambitious plans to make its own cars will see it join a raft of Asian tech companies that have made simi-

lar announcements in recent months, including Baidu Inc and Foxconn.

"The novel and complicated U.S. restrictions on semiconductors to Huawei have slowly been strangling the company," said Dan Wang, a technology analyst with research firm Gavekal Dragonomics. "So it makes sense that the company is pivoting to less chip-intensive industries in order to maintain operations."

In the United States, Amazon.com Inc and Alphabet Inc

are also developing auto-related technology or investing in smart-car startups.

Huawei has been developing a swathe of technologies for EVs for years including in-car software systems, sensors for automobiles and 5G communications hardware.

The company has also formed partnerships with automakers such as Daimler AG, General Motors Co and SAIC Motor to jointly develop smart auto technologies. It has accelerated hiring of en-

gineers for auto-related technologies since 2018.

Huawei was awarded at least four patents related to EVs this week, including methods for charging between electric vehicles and for checking battery health, according to official Chinese patent records.

Huawei's push into the EV market is currently separate from a joint smart vehicle company it co-founded along with Changan and EV battery maker CATL in November, two of the sources said.

Australia lifts ban on Boeing 737 MAX

SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA said on Friday it would lift a near two-year ban on flights involving Boeing Co 737 MAX planes, becoming among the first in the Asia-Pacific region to do so.

"We ... are confident that the aircraft are safe," Graeme Crawford, acting chief of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, said in a statement. The regulator has accepted comprehensive return-to-service requirements set by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the 737 MAX, he added.

No Australian airlines operate the 737 MAX, but Virgin Australia has 25 of the planes on order. Singapore Airlines Ltd and Fiji Airways operated them on flights to Australia.

The Boeing 737 MAX was grounded in March 2019 after two deadly crashes. Crawford said it was unclear when those airlines would resume flights to Australia given the disruption by COVID-19 to international air travel.

Singapore Airlines and Fiji Airways will also need approval to resume flying the 737 MAX from their national aviation regulators and from other authorities where they need to use airspace.

Singapore's aviation regulator did not respond immediately to a request for comment. Singapore Airlines said it would continue to work with and be guided by regulators on 737 MAX operations.

A Fiji Airways spokesman said it was still working with other regulators in the region, including those in Fiji and New Zealand, before returning the 737 MAX to service.

New Zealand's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said it had worked closely with counterparts in Australia and Singapore on the return of the 737 MAX in New Zealand.

"The CAA will not issue a blanket approval for the Boeing 737 MAX to fly into New Zealand but will work with any future operators on a case-by-case basis to clear flight operations into New Zealand," the CAA said, noting Fiji Airways was still restricting international flights due to COVID-19.

Regulators in the United States, Europe, Britain, Canada, Brazil and the United Arab Emirates are among those that have already approved the 737 MAX's return to flight following technical modifications and additional pilot training.

Japan lifted its restrictions at the end of January following decisions by counterparts in the United States, Europe, Canada and Brazil, an official at Japan's Civil Aviation Bureau said on Friday. Japan has no local operators of the 737 MAX and the decision was not announced publicly at the time.

China was the first country to ban the 737 MAX from its airspace in 2019 and it has not indicated when it will lift the ban. Boeing said on Friday it was working with regulators and customers to return the 737 MAX to service safely worldwide.



A logo of Airbus at the entrance of its factory in Blagnac near Toulouse, France. File Photo.

Airbus 'exploring' hybrid-electric aircraft technology

"The company's work in electric flight has laid the groundwork for our future concept of zero-emission commercial aircraft," Airbus said, adding it is "now exploring a variety of hybrid-electric and hydrogen technology options".

PARIS

AIRBUS is working on hybrid-electric propulsion among the options for reducing jetliner emissions, the European planemaker said on Friday.

It disclosed the initiative in a document projecting more than a million tonnes of equivalent CO2 emissions over the life of each current-generation jet, as it became the first planemaker to report so-called "Scope 3" emissions.

Until now, Airbus has mainly publicised hydrogen as the preferred energy source for future airplanes, pledging to introduce the first hydrogen-powered

commercial plane in 2035. But on Friday it said it was also working on hybrid-electric alternatives.

"The company's work in electric flight has laid the groundwork for our future concept of zero-emission commercial aircraft," Airbus said, adding it is "now exploring a variety of hybrid-electric and hydrogen technology options".

Although experts say hydrogen could power relatively small planes to start with and galvanise green investments, it poses challenges because of its volume and the need for a new infrastructure. Rival Boeing has downplayed the idea.

Several industry sources say the leading option for a future replacement to the best-selling 150-seat A320, likely to enter service in the 2030s, involves hybrid-electric power, with hydrogen only likely to power such large airplanes later.

Engine makers are actively exploring open-rotor engines with visible blades using a mixture of traditional turbines and electric propulsion for future replacements to the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737, industry officials told Reuters.

Asked to comment on its hybrid-electric plans, an Airbus spokesman said:

"Only a combination of technologies, including hydrogen, will help us aim for zero emission."

Chief Executive Guillaume Faury has urged the industry to push itself harder on research and redefining operations. In 2019, Airbus inaugurated a facility for testing alternative propulsion systems and fuels in Europe.

It is also using a Daher-Socata TBM 900 turboprop to analyse distributed propulsion with the standard engine supplemented by wing-mounted, electricity-driven motors, the Airbus spokesman said.

"The CAA will not issue a blanket approval for the Boeing 737 MAX to fly into New Zealand but will work with any future operators on a case-by-case basis to clear flight operations into New Zealand," the CAA said, noting Fiji Airways was still restricting international flights due to COVID-19.

WORLD

I left Britain to escape toxic press, Prince Harry says

LONDON

BRITAIN'S Prince Harry has said he stepped back from his royal duties because the "toxic" British press had been destroying his mental health, adding he had not walked away from public service.

Last week, Buckingham Palace announced that Queen Elizabeth's grandson and his American wife Meghan had made a final split with the royal family, and would not be returning as working members and would lose their patronages.

Harry, 36, and Meghan, 39, sent shockwaves through the monarchy in January 2020 when they announced their intention to step back from royal duties and embark on a new life across the Atlantic.

"It was never walking away. It was stepping back rather than stepping down, there was a really difficult environment as I think a lot of people saw," Harry said in an interview with James Corden, host of the Late Late Show in the United States.

"We all know what the British press could

be like, and it was destroying my mental health, I was like this is toxic. So I did what any husband and what any father would do is like, I need to get my family out of here."

Before they moved to California, the couple had complained about the British tabloids' treatment of Meghan, whose father is white and mother is African-American, some of which they said amounted to bullying or racism.

Earlier this month, Meghan successfully sued one tabloid for breaching her privacy by printing extracts of a letter she wrote to her father while last month Harry won a libel case against the same paper over a story which said he had turned his back on the military.

Critics of the couple, who announced this month they were expecting their second child, have said they are keen for publicity but only on their own terms. An in-depth interview they have given to US chat show host Oprah Winfrey is due to be aired on March 7.

There was also disapproval of Harry and Meghan's response to last week's split when



Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan arrive at Edinburgh Castle in Edinburgh, Scotland, Feb 13, 2018. (File photo)

they said they were committed to a life of service. Some commentators contrasted their life with the duty shown by the 94-year-old queen during her 69-year reign.

DECISIONS 'ON THE OTHER SIDE'

"And as far as I'm concerned whatever decisions are made on that side, I will never walk away," said Harry, who commentators have said was unhappy with losing his treasured royal patronages, particularly those connected to the military in which he served for 10 years.

"But my life is public service so wherever I am in the world it's going to be the same thing."

During the interview, carried out on a tour of Los Angeles, Harry told Corden that Netflix's hit

series *The Crown*, a fictional account of the life of the queen and her family, was "loosely based on the truth".

"It gives you a rough idea about what that lifestyle, what the pressures of putting duty and service above family and everything else, what can come from that," he said.

"I'm way more comfortable with the Crown than I am seeing the stories written about my family or my wife, or myself, because ... that is obviously fiction, take it how you will, but this is being reported on as facts because you're supposedly news."

Harry also revealed his one-year-old son Archie's first word was "crocodile" and said the queen had sent him a waffle maker as a Christmas present.

Agencies

Don't be selfish - get a virus shot, says UK's Queen Elizabeth

LONDON

BRITAIN'S 94-year-old Queen Elizabeth, who last month had her first COVID-19 vaccination dose, has encouraged the public to follow suit, saying it did not hurt and those who were wary should think of others.



"Once you've had a vaccine you have a feeling of you know, you're protected which I think is very important and as far as I could make out it was quite harmless," the queen said in a video call with health officials overseeing inoculations across the four nations of the United Kingdom.

Britain's vaccines minister said this week that between 11 percent and 15 percent of the public were hesitant about getting the shot, particularly among ethnic minority groups, amid conspiracy theories around the inoculations.

"It is obviously difficult for people if they've never had a vaccine because they ought to think about other people other than themselves," said the queen, who described Britain's rollout of the vaccination, one of the fastest in the world, as "remarkable".

The UK's chief medical officers lowered their COVID-19 alert level on Thursday, citing a gradual reduction in pressure on the health service.

"Following advice from the Joint Biosecurity Centre and in the light of the most recent data, the four UK Chief Medical Officers and NHS England National Medical Director agree that the UK alert level should move from level 5 to level 4 in all four nations," Britain's health ministry said in a statement.

"The health services across the four nations remain under significant pressure with a high number of patients in hospital, however thanks to the efforts of public we are now seeing numbers consistently declining," the medical officers added.

The British government on Thursday reported 9,985 new cases and 323 additional deaths, bringing the cumulative tally to 4,154,562, including 122,070 fatalities, according to the latest official data. **Agencies**

More schoolchildren abducted in northwest Nigeria

ABUJA

Kidnappers have abducted schoolchildren in northwest Nigeria's Zamfara state, a local official said yesterday, but declined to say how many people were taken or provide further details.

Abubakar Dauran, Zamfara state commissioner of security and home affairs, who confirmed the information to reporters in the state capital of Gusau, said the gunmen abducted the female students of the Government Girls' Secondary School (GGSS) at Jangebe town in the Talata Mafara local government area of the state.

He said the abductors invaded the town and took away the students at about 2 am local time (0100 GMT) on Friday.

"At this moment, I cannot say how many students were taken away by the gunmen," he said.

A security source told Xinhua that over 300 students are yet to be accounted for.

This is the second such kidnapping in a little over a week in Nigeria's north, where a surge in armed militancy in the northwest has led to a widespread and worsening breakdown of security.

Last week, unidentified gunmen killed a student in an overnight attack on a boarding school in the north-central Nigerian state of Niger and kidnapped 42 people, including 27 students. The hostages are yet to be released. **Agencies**

Iran says probing shooting deaths at border with Pakistan

IRAN is investigating an incident in which at least two Iranians were shot dead this week at the border with Pakistan, and Islamabad has handed over the body of one of the victims, the Iranian foreign ministry said yesterday.

Monday's shooting of at least two people carrying fuel across the border led to protests that spread from the city of Saravan to other areas in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, including the capital, Zahedan.

A provincial security official has said calm has returned to the province with the help of religious leaders. Media quoted prominent Baluch Sunni Muslim religious leader Molavi Abdulhamid as urging calm and calling for an independent investigation.

"The body of at least one person was delivered by Pakistan's border guards. We are reviewing the incident," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh was quoted as saying by Iranian media.

Protesters stormed a governor's office in southeastern Iran on Tuesday and set fire to a police car, according to videos posted on social media. Security forces used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Reuters could not verify the authenticity of the footage. **Agencies**

Emerging technologies offer opportunity for inclusive COVID-19 recovery, says UN

GENEVA

THE COVID-19 recovery offers an opportunity for governments and the international community to use new and emerging technologies to tackle inequalities triggered by the pandemic, a United Nations report said on Thursday.

The Technology and Innovation Report 2021, published Thursday by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), appealed for more attention to the new technological wave of such frontier technologies as those that take advantage of digitalization and connectivity - including artificial intelligence, the internet of things, big data, blockchain, 5G, 3D printing, robotics, drones, gene editing, nanotechnology and photovoltaic technology.



Workers install solar panels for a hospital in Yemen. (File photo)

These rapidly developing technologies represent a 350 billion U.S. dollar market, which by 2025 could grow to over 3.2 trillion U.S. dollars, according to UNCTAD.

The Geneva-based UN trade and development body warned of serious implications for poor communities and countries either overwhelmed or simply left be-

hind by such a wave.

Therefore, "societies and productive sectors need to be well prepared and build the required skills," urged Isabelle Durant, deputy secretary-general of the UNCTAD. Durant cautioned that while frontier technologies have brought enormous benefits, rapid advances could have serious downside risks if they out-

pace the ability of societies to adapt. The report warned that the new technologies had at the same time led to inequality in new forms. "Today, major concerns are related to risks of automation taking jobs in large scale, the gig economy and the reduction of labour rights.

Others are the inequalities created by market and profit concentration, the increase of inequality driven by AI and widening technological gaps," it wrote.

The report found that the countries best prepared to equitably use, adopt and adapt these technologies are mainly in North America and Europe, while those least prepared are in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing regions. "Technologies are not deterministic. We can shape their pathways for good.

And we have an obligation to do it," said Shamika N. Siri-manne, director of UNCTAD's division on technology and logistics. The report also emphasized that governments play a critical role in paving the way for technologies, especially in creating an enabling environment and ensuring the benefits of these technologies are shared by all.

The report highlighted that China and India performed well in research and development.

"This reflects their abundant supplies of qualified and highly skilled human resources available. They also have large local markets, which attract investment by multinational enterprises. In the case of China the progress is partly a reward for spending 2 percent of GDP on R&D," it wrote.

Xinhua

India rescues 81 Rohingya on drifting boat, 8 dead, 1 missing

KOLKATA / DHAKA

INDIA'S coast guard found 81 survivors and eight dead on a boat crammed with Muslim Rohingya refugees adrift in the Andaman Sea, and were repairing the vessel so that it can return safely to Bangladesh, Indian officials said yesterday.

The Indian government was in discussions with Bangladesh to agree for the safe return of the vessel, which was found drifting in international waters, having left southern Bangladesh about two weeks ago with hopes of reaching Malaysia.

Many of the survivors, ac-

ording to Indian officials, were sick and suffering from extreme dehydration, having run out of food and water after the boat's engine failed four days after leaving Cox's Bazar, where refugee camps house hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who have fled neighbouring Myanmar.

"The engine of the boat broke down earlier this week and we received a SOS from some Rohingyas," said an Indian coast guard official overseeing the search and rescue effort from New Delhi.

"It's a humanitarian crisis and we are doing the best we can

to save their lives," he said, requesting anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

"The foreign ministry is working towards sending them back to Bangladesh and India will repair or replace the boat's engine to ensure they can travel back safely," he said.

The survivors were being provided with food supplies and medicine, and women and children have been given fresh clothes. It was unclear what arrangements were being made for the funeral rites of the people who perished, he added.

Giving news that the boat had

been found, India's External Affairs Ministry spokesman Anurag Srivastava said on Thursday two Indian coast guard ships were dispatched to search for the boat following urgent calls for help.

The United Nations refugee agency had raised the alarm earlier this week over the missing boat, which had left Cox's Bazar on Feb 11.

Of the 90 people that had set out on the voyage, eight were found dead, and one was missing, Srivastava said. Talks were underway with Bangladesh for the safe return of the 81 survivors, he added.

"Bangladesh is respectful of its international obligations under the UNCLOS (The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)," Bangladesh's foreign ministry said in a statement. On earlier occasions when other littoral countries of the region repeatedly denied access to Rohingya adrift at sea, it was the Bangladesh that came to the rescue, the ministry added.

More than 1 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar are living in crowded camps in Bangladesh, including tens of thousands who fled after violence in Myanmar in 2017. **Agencies**

Latest measurement of height of Mount Qomolangma good test of China's scientific and technological strength

ON Dec. 8, 2020, China and Nepal jointly announced that the new height of Mount Qomolangma, the world's highest peak, is 8,848.86 meters. The figure was imprinted on the mind of Li Guopeng, chief commander of the measurement task.

Measuring the height of Mount Qomolangma mirrors human beings' ambition to transcend themselves and represents a country's overall national strength as well as scientific and technological capabilities, said Li, who is also captain of the First Geodetic Surveying Brigade under China's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

Due to its complex environment and unpredictable weather, Mount Qomolangma is only suitable for climbing in May.

On May 27, 1975, a Chinese team placed a surveyor's beacon on the summit of Mount Qomolangma for the first time, and accurately measured its height, which was 8,848.13 meters.

Forty-five years later, a new generation of Chinese surveyors reached the summit of Mount Qomolangma on the same day in 2020, and erected a red surveyor's beacon on the world's highest peak again.

On the peak of the mountain, surveyors needed to set up beacons as quickly as possible and adjust their angles so that the laser ranging signals reflected from the prisms on the beacons can be received at six intersection points at the mountain's base, according to Li.

Meanwhile, the survey team also conducted Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS),

high-precision gravity, and meteorological surveys, and used radar to measure the depth of snow while at the summit of the mountain, Li said.

When Chinese surveyors measured the height of Mount Qomolangma in 2005, their equipment was imported from abroad, including GNSS and snow depth radar, according to Li. "Fifteen years later, we finally completed the measurement task successfully with domestic equipment," Li noted.

On the evening of May 28, 2020, members of the Chinese survey team returned safely to their base camp following the completion of relevant surveys on Mount Qomolangma.

After technicians confirmed that all the data had been well collected and stored, Li was fi-

nally relieved.

The 2020 measurement task marked multiple "firsts" in China's surveying history, including the first time that the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS), which is independently developed by China, was used to measure the geodetic height of Mount Qomolangma, the first time humankind measured the gravity value of the mountain's peak, and the first time a global vertical datum was established for Mount Qomolangma.

Gravity data is of great value for the study of changes to the earth's crust and glaciers.

"Back in 2005, we were only able to conduct gravity survey for the mountain with imported gravimeters at an altitude of no more than

7,790 meters, while domestic gravimeters can now perform normally even at the peak of the mountain," said Li.

The gravimeter needed to be kept vertical on flat ground, which was not an easy thing to do in the harsh environment of Mount Qomolangma, he noted.

To ensure the stability of the gravimeter, surveyors stayed up all night in the tent to guard the device at an altitude of 8,300 meters, Li disclosed.

According to Li, surveyors improved their equipment creatively to ensure the accuracy and reliability of data collected in the low-temperature, low-pressure, low-oxygen environment of Mount Qomolangma.

People's Daily

Seoul may see 1st female mayor as scandal stirs Moon's party

By Bloomberg

THE suicide of Seoul's mayor in the wake of sexual harassment allegations shamed South Korea's male-dominated society.

The April election to replace him is now turning into a battle over women's rights that could impact the legacy of self-described "feminist president" Moon Jae-in.

His Democratic Party is expected to put up veteran female politician Park Young-sun to try and retain the mayoral seat in Seoul, which is often seen as a springboard to the presidency. Her main challenger is looking to be Na Kyung-won, one of the most prominent female conservative leaders of the main opposition People Power Party (PPP), which has risen in national polls ahead of a presidential election scheduled for next year. The parties will make their official selections in early March.

What's worse for Moon, another member of his party had stepped down last year as mayor of the southern city of Busan after being accused of sexual assault - and was indicted last month. That by-election gives a chance for the conservative opposition to take back the post in a traditional stronghold and deal a blow to

Moon's progressives.

The elections in cities that account for about a quarter of South Korea's population will be a key barometer of support for Moon's progressives as his party seeks to keep the presidency after his single five-year term ends next year. They also serve as a reminder about Moon's struggles to make progress on women's issues and turn the page on a series of sexual assault and harassment scandals.

"If the opposition takes any of the two cities, it would ring alarm bells for the Democratic Party ahead of the presidential election," said Shin Yul, a political science professor at Myongji University in Seoul.

Moon's support rate was at 39 percent in a weekly tracking poll released by Gallup Korea Friday, hovering near record lows and providing a worrisome sign ahead of the votes in Seoul and Busan.

South Korea's gender problems run deep. Despite being the world's 10th-largest economy, the country has the largest wage gap between men and women of any developed country, according to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Only three of Moon's 18 cabinet members are women, and South Korea ranks in the bottom half



This combo photo shows South Korean politician Park Young-sun of the Democratic Party (left) and the opposition People Power Party's Na Kyung-won. The two politicians are possible candidates running for the mayoral seat in Seoul. (File photo)

of the world in terms of female representation in parliament with 17.1 percent.

Difficulties facing women are also have an economic impact. Apart from the wage gap, South Korea's fertility rate of 0.84 last year was the lowest in the developed world, according to Statistics Korea.

This is driving down the potential growth rate. Women have blamed the high cost of raising children, difficulties in returning to the workforce after giving birth and a lack of support for single-parent households.

The scandals have put Seoul on a course to elect its first female mayor, with women leading the tickets of the two biggest parties ahead of internal votes. There's also one prominent male contender, Ahn Cheol-soo, from a minor conservative party.

The winner will serve out the term of Park Won-soon, who killed himself in July after one of his former secretaries filed charges against him for what she said was inappropriate physical contact

and obscene images sent to her phone.

Na has slammed the ruling party for using gender as a "political tool" to score votes without making any practical progress on gender inequality.

The assaults by the former mayors revealed South Korea's "structural violence" against women, she said last week.

"Progressives had been more vocal about gender equality and women's rights," Na said in a written response provided by her office to questions on the election. "Ironically though, it was progressives that have demonstrated sexual misconduct when they were in office."

Na wants to replace opaque walls in the offices of high-ranking city officials with glass to prevent misconduct at the workplace, and also set up a housing evaluation system in Seoul to certify real estate as having measures to prevent sexual assault.

Park Young-sun and her office didn't immediately respond to requests for comments. Her office said that Park plans to announce her plans for gender equality "soon."

Kremlin says too early to discuss introduction of vaccination passports in Russia

MOSCOW

KREMLIN Spokesman Dmitry Peskov thinks it is too early to discuss the need to introduce vaccination passports in Russia.

"So far, it is too early to discuss that, but, of course, such an agreement and the general understanding in the EU is, of course, a very important aspect that we will analyze in the future," the spokesman told reporters yesterday, commenting on the statement of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in which she said that the EU plans to introduce electronic vaccination certificates by the summer.

According to Peskov, so far, this is about "domestic EU processes," while in Europe itself, the details of the initiative are unclear.

"If this project is finalized, if some documents are introduced and if movement is tied to these documents, then, of course, this will be a subject of our future contacts with Europe and a deep analysis," he stressed, adding that this matter is rather important.

"There are no international agreements and it is unlikely that they are possible," the spokesman said.

Nevertheless, he assured that Moscow would closely monitor the extent to which EU vaccination passports would concern Russia.

On Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said during a press conference on the outcomes of the first online EU summit that the heads of EU states and governments are united in the opinion that electronic vaccination certificates should be established within the union by the summer.

Merkel reminded that Germany had already decided to develop a national vaccination certificate.

Agencies

Argentina receives Chinese Sinopharm vaccines to combat COVID-19

BUENOS AIRES

ARGENTINA received the first batch of vaccines from Chinese pharmaceutical firm Sinopharm on Thursday night.

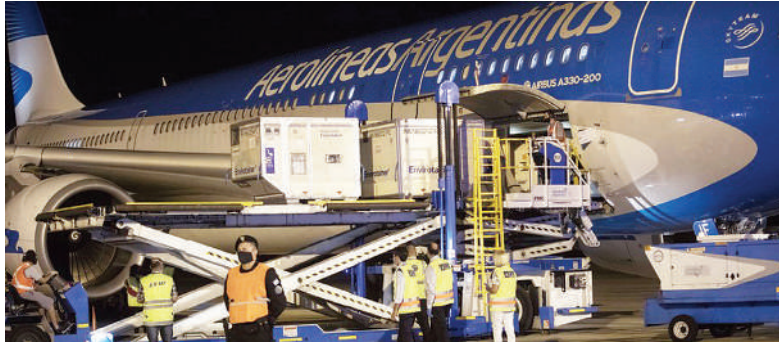
Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers Santiago Cafiero was on hand to receive the shipment at the Ezeiza International Airport on the southern outskirts of the capital Buenos Aires.

Accompanying Cafiero were Foreign Affairs Minister Felipe Sola

and Health Minister Carla Vizzotti, as well as Chinese Ambassador to Argentina Zou Xiaoli.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Argentine counterpart, Alberto Fernandez, have reached an important consensus on cooperation in the development and use of vaccines, said Zou.

"This consensus has become a reality" thanks to the joint efforts of Argentina's foreign affairs and health ministries, ANMAT (Argentina's National Administration of



Workers unload containers with COVID-19 vaccines developed by Chinese pharmaceutical firm Sinopharm at the Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Thursday. (Photo by Xinhua)

Drugs, Foods and Medical Devices) and the Sinopharm group, Zou told reporters at the airport.

The Chinese ambassador highlighted China-Argentina cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, including exchanges among medics of diagnosis and treatment experience, institutions' cooperation in vaccine clinical trials, as well as the acquisition and transportation of vaccines.

Xinhua

'Stay-put' Spring Festival sparks consumption boom

THE Spring Festival is an important period that gauges China's economic vitality.

During the past 7-day Chinese Lunar New Year holiday, huge high-quality and upgraded consumption demand was released in the country, leading to thriving businesses of online shopping, house call services and short trips, as more and more residents tended to avoid physical contacts and aggregations, and turned to reserved and staggered leisure activities.

"I didn't go out this Spring Festival, and instead I did some fitness practices at home. It felt good," said Li Bin, a teacher with a college in Beijing's Haidian District. In order to keep an hour of fitness practices each day, he specifically bought a treadmill, dumbbells and a yoga mat.

The sales of household goods witnessed robust growth during the Spring Festival, and the consumption of jewelries, cosmetics and flowers also surged during this period that coincided with the Valentine's Day.

During the 7-day holiday, the sales of jewelries, garments, communication devices and home appliances of enterprises monitored by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) grew 160.8 percent, 107.1 percent,



Visitors flock to Yandaixie Street, literally meaning "Skewed Tobacco Pouch Street" in Beijing, Feb. 15, 2021. (File Photo)

39.0 percent and 29.9 percent year on year, respectively. The sales of fitness equipment on some e-commerce platforms surged 49 percent.

According to relevant departments, the number of people visiting shopping centers more than doubled in 10 first- and second-tier Chinese cities, reaching 86 percent of that in the same period two years ago.

Cai Xiang, who works for a construction enterprise in Changsha, central China's Hunan Province used to bring home stuffs he bought every Spring Festival. However, it was never easy to carry big-size luggage on the road. This year, everything he bought for his

parents was ordered online and shipped to his hometown in western Hunan, which he said was much more convenient.

China's online shopping and express industries maintained operation during this year's Spring Festival, which enabled people staying put and their families back in their hometowns to send each other new year gifts. An online Chinese New Year shopping festival was organized by the MOFCOM and local authorities, and the sales exceeded 120 billion yuan (\$18.5 billion) in the first 6 days of the holiday.

As the application of 5G and 4K goes wider, more and more Chinese are spending the

Spring Festival "on the cloud." Yunnan, Guangdong, Hubei, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang and Tibet launched various online activities and issued online and offline coupons to benefit the residents. Besides, Beijing, Shenzhen and Suzhou gave out tens of millions yuan of digital red packets.

"It was safe and interesting to spend the holiday in a B&B," said Tang Wei, a citizen from Shijingshan District, Beijing, who booked a B&B in the capital's Shunyi District where he and his family had a taste of local Chinese New Year's Eve dinner and visited surrounding scenic spots.

The "stay-put" Spring Festival also led to a rise in short trips. The number of visits in parks, tourist attractions, museums, theaters, and ski resorts across the country significantly climbed. There was also a boom in the reservation of hotels and B&Bs in city outskirts. Statistics indicate that the accommodation consumption in the Beijing's suburban districts of Yanqing, Miyun and Huairou more than tripled during the Spring Festival, and that in Shanghai's Chongming, Qingpu and Jiading also surged more than 200 percent.

People's Daily

Eritrean refugees' situation in Ethiopia's Tigray still 'remains very precarious'

ADDIS ABABA,

THE situation of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia's conflict-affected northernmost Tigray regional state "still remains very precarious" amid improving situations, a senior United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) official has said.

Speaking to Xinhua, Ann Encontre, UN Refugee Agency Country Representative in Ethiopia, said the situation of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia's Tigray region "is improving and we are getting access." There were about 100,000 Eritrean refugees residing in the Tigray region before the law enforcement exercise that was undertaken by the Ethiopian government against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fighters, following the TPLF's alleged attack on the Ethiopian army's northern command based in the regional capital, Mekelle.

Eritrean refugees in Tigray reside across four camps that are Shimelba and Hitsats in the Northern part, and Mai-Ayni and Adi Harush in the Southern part; some other refugees also reside in non-



camp areas across the region and beyond.

"Now, we have access to the two camps in the South, not the two camps in the North; and we have accounted for more or less 30,000 of those refugees," the UNHCR Representative told Xinhua in a recent exclusive interview. Noting that the two camps in the south were not that much affected by the conflict, Encontre stressed that the refugees have "remained intact and are still there."

"However, what is of concern are the camps in the North, and we are getting access now to areas to give assistance, for instance in Mekelle, where some of the refugees ran away," she added.

Despite the military exercises having been officially declared finished by the Ethiopian government before, re-

ports indicate sporadic fighting across areas in the region. The Ethiopian government in December emphasized that the conflict "was not a direct threat to the Eritrean refugees" residing within and outside refugee camps in the region.

Noting that refugees are coming forward in very small numbers, she said that the UNHCR have moved some 5,600 refugees out of about 20,000. "We are still hoping that the others will come forward, either to be registered or to be given humanitarian assistance or to be relocated to safe places," she added.

"However, the situation still remains very precarious and we don't have full contact with all the refugees," Encontre said.

While stressing that the UNHCR is "getting more and more access through the government channels," she emphasized financial constraints, in relation to the UNHCR's recent appeal to urgent financial support to its operations in Eritrean refugees in Tigray as well as Ethiopians who fled into Eastern Sudan.

Xinhua

As Khashoggi report looms, Biden & S. Arabia king talk

BY BLOOMBERG

A US intelligence report expected to be declassified as soon as Friday implicates Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in approving the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, according to a person familiar with the findings.

The report builds on classified intelligence from the CIA and other intelligence agencies after Khashoggi's murder in October 2018 inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the report hasn't yet been released. It wasn't immediately clear how much detail the

declassified version of the report will provide about Prince Mohammed's role in the killing.

The decision to release the report, compiled by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, reflects the Biden administration's determination to recalibrate relations with Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, amid tensions over its human rights record.

In advance of the report's publication, President Joe Biden held a call Thursday with Saudi Arabia's King Salman. Biden discussed



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

regional security and the renewed US and United Nations effort to end the war in Yemen, and he "affirmed the importance the United States places on universal

human rights and the rule of law," the White House said in a statement.

Prince Mohammed has denied any involvement in the killing, while saying he

accepts symbolic responsibility for it as the country's de facto ruler. Saudi officials have said the murder was carried out by rogue agents who have since been prosecuted.

State Department spokesman Ned Price declined to comment when asked about the report Thursday but suggested that the US was looking at other ways to hold the perpetrators of the killing responsible for their actions. Among the options may be cutting back arms sales to Saudi Arabia and imposing sanctions.

"I expect that we will be in a position before long to speak to steps to promote accountability going forward for this horrific crime," Price told reporters in Washington.

"Transparency, as it often is, is an element of accountability. I wouldn't expect the accountability to stop there, however."

The decision to release the report, which was withheld by the Trump administration, reflects the difference in attitudes toward Saudi Arabia, and human rights issues, under Biden. Former President Donald

Trump dismissed concerns about whether the crown prince approved the killing -- "Maybe he did, maybe he didn't," he said -- citing the economic rewards of selling arms to the Saudis. His secretary of state, Michael Pompeo, said the US had "no direct evidence" linking the prince to the murder and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner maintained a close working relationship with him.

The US intelligence report isn't the only finding to implicate the Saudi monarchy. A UN investigator, Agnes Callamard has said Khashoggi was the victim of a "state killing" and has said there was little doubt it was ordered at the highest levels of the Saudi government.

Agencies

AT weighs in on Kenyan athletes' absence from 2021 Kili Marathon

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

A few hours after reports surfaced that Kenya has barred the country's athletes from traveling to Tanzania to participate in the 2021 Kilimanjaro Marathon, scheduled for tomorrow, the Athletics Tanzania (AT) has broken its silence on the decision.

The Kilimanjaro marathon is expected to take place in Moshi, starting from Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) venue and ending at the same venue.

Athletes from Kenya have been competing against locals in the 42km and 21 km races, and this season, according to AT's vice-president John Bayo (pictured), who is also the coordinator of the race, 15 Kenyan runners have registered to participate in the showdown.

"They are already in Tanzania, and they have followed all the procedures for participating in this race," Bayo said.

He disclosed: "I saw the reports on Kenya's stance on barring their athletes from participating in the Kili Marathon, but they were not official, however, we did not ignore them, I took the responsibility to call our Kenyan counterparts and explain to address the issue," he said.

Bayo explained that, as of Thursday, 15 athletes from Kenya had registered to take part in the race and were already in Tanzania.

"We are afraid of getting into a diplomatic crisis, although there is no official statement from Kenya to AT about banning their athletes, but I have called them and they have stated they are set to address the issue," he said.



He said the matter has already been reported to the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports and the National Sports Council (NSC), so it is being addressed by all parties in tandem with the Athletics Kenya (AK).

"It is a matter of common sense, but it is already in place and it is being addressed," he disclosed.



Simba SC's fullback, Shomari Kapombe (L), challenges Egypt's Al Ahly player in the 2021 CAF Champions League's group stage clash between the two clubs, which took place at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on February 23. Simba SC registered 1-0 victory over Al Ahly. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Tanzanian fans will take a short while to reawaken from outlandish CAF wins

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL ENEZA

SOBERING up has not as yet begun on the part of local soccer fans, apart from the more sober betting fraternity, as to where the country's leading sides stand in continental football.

The reason was a series of wins, some logical and some surprising, either on account of the clubs they defeated or the margin itself, chalking up three matches that all had surprising results.

Most notable in the clubs they defeated was Simba SC winning 1-0 against famed Egyptian side, Al Ahly, where the margin was right but not many people expected they could pull it through, given the formidable track record of the multiple CAF Champions League's kings.

What was more digestible in the series of wins was the local champions' outwitting of DR Congo's AS Vita in an away match by the same margin, where frankly no element of surprise was necessary on the part of local observers as Simba obtained the benefit of surprise.

As it has a modestly fair track record in the CAF top tournament, the Msimbazi Street side is just beginning to elicit respect from continental major sides, in which case AS Vita did not work

overnight for that clash.

They would for instance be remembering that the side lost by a wide margin last time they were in Kinshasa or thereabouts, or knocked out by Mozambique's UD Songo.

Yet the most outlandish win on record was the 6-2 result that Namungo FC obtained against famous Angolan side, Primeiro de Agosto (1st of August, a heroic commemoration), in the first of two bitter encounters in the wake of tit for tat sabotage appearances in relation to the COVID-19 environment.

The second result of 3-1 win by the visiting side was strictly speaking more in accord with the legacy of the two sides, for the Angolan side is a regular feature in the top or second tier as in this year, while Namungo are journeymen.

The loss in the return match may have had to do with the problems their coach would have faced in instructing players what to do - even just to obtain a draw.

While Namungo were reasonably certain of having qualified for the next stage of the tournament, in which case they were unavoidably overconfident, Simba fans were in a different world altogether, which is not strictly speaking good for the next series of fixtures, the 'return' games.

Having floored AS Vita on their own turf and then outclasses Al Ahly even in the game pattern and possession, the fans were in another planet.

It appeared as if they were just waiting to bag the cup, as they counted on repeating the same feat in Cairo given that they missed some clear scoring chances and hammer AS Vita at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

With the 3-1 result in the 'return' game right here, evidently Namungo players will be in a softer and thus more attentive mood to listen to the coach, Hemed Suleiman, on how to go about with other opponents in the next stage.

They will be aware that the 3-1 result at home actually makes them underdogs in the next stage against whichever side they meet, and memories of the 6-2 thriller tied to COVID-19 detentions will be something of the past.

Football glory can be like the morning dew, a hyperbole at first and only a faint glimmer within an hour or so, in which case Namungo glory lasted for less than a week and back to work.

Predictably it is Simba fans that will be more difficult to cure of their far-flung optimism, which is in a sense solid, as the game pattern that AS Vita showed in their home encounter said plenty of

the strengths of the two sides, but they may alter their pattern of play or game strength next time.

While each encounter is an experiment at team strength, background data about where Tanzania and DRC stand in African soccer are vital to keep in mind, like the way three Champions League 'last 16' sides have first team players with a Mendy surname - Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester City. We are not anywhere near there, definitely.

What is evident is that the Simba coach has plenty to do to ensure that players are ready for exhausting physical work outs and not start imagining that they are at the top, and only wait for hefty bonuses for perhaps lifting the African Club Championship trophy.

This sort of fantastic claim has been on the lips of the fans for a while now that the side arguably dominated the game, leave out vital statistics of the level of football the two sides' performances show, like the fabulous unbeaten run by the Egyptian side in their local and international tournaments, where only the 2-0 loss against Bayern de Munich was registered lately.

No predictions need to be made here, but the Al Ahly side that we saw at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium was deceptive.



Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF)'s president, Phares Magesa.

TBF: Tanzania ready for AfroBasket tournaments

BY CORRESPONDENTS ISMAIL TANO & NASSIR NCHIMBI

TANZANIA Basketball Federation (TBF)'s president, Phares Magesa, has confirmed the country's inclination to compete in major continental basketball tournaments.

The events include Women's AfroBasket Qualifiers, U-18 Boys & Girls and 3X3 AfroBasket Qualifiers.

Magesa said in Dar es Salaam this week that the country's national teams' preparations for all events are on a top gear.

The official stated they are waiting for official confirmation from international basketball body (FIBA) leaders who are yet to confirm on the competitions' venues and dates.

"All responsible commissions have been already directed by TBF to start their preparations as we wait for FIBA to give us official invitation," he said.

According to him, the TBF is tasked with informing FIBA of the teams' readiness for participation, preparing budget and other logistics.

Magesa stressed that they plan to prepare strong teams that can match other top level opponents in men and women's categories.

He said since the TBF leadership's coming to power, it has been working hard to revive national basketball teams ranging from the youth, senior players to wheelchair basketball.

He noted they have all started to gain momentum after being static for many years.

He said they currently see tremendous achievement and they will keep on working hard until they reach the desired goals.

Magesa explained: "Through our youth development program we have seen achievement, our young players playing in America and Canada are doing fine and we are monitoring their progress."

He stated: "But we will not seat back, we have put in place sustainable programme to ensure more young players win scholarships and academic benefits."

He moreover said that discussion has been going on with well-wishers from Canada and USA to allow many young hoops players from Tanzania to ply their trade in the two countries.

He said that it is important for the country to send many young talents to basketball powerhouses so as to sharpen the players' skills and see to it they get exposure.

Magesa also thanked the government for its willingness to put its weight behind the sport's promotion.

He thanked basketball stakeholders for their consistent intentions and efforts, which helped the hoops leadership prepare programs that have already been submitted to government.

Magesa stated: "The government has also acknowledged our efforts during this short period, it is among a few chosen sports that will be given priorities."

Yanga under pressure to excel in VPL- coach

BY CORRESPONDENT ISMAIL TANO

YANGA's head coach, Cedric Kaze, has revealed that they are currently under a lot of pressure to ensure they get good results in every game in the 2020/21 Vodacom Premier League (VPL) due to the fact that their opponents, including Simba, are equally in the race for silverware in the top flight.

Kaze made the statement as Yanga lead the rest of the outfits in the league with 49 points, followed by Simba with 42 points,

while Azam FC is positioned third with 36 points.

Yanga have played a total of 21 matches in the Vodacom Premier League, as it is the case for Azam FC led by tactician George Lwandamina, while Simba have played a total of 18 matches in the 2020/21 season.

The VPL leaders have yet to take on Namungo FC which was playing a CAF Confederation Cup's play off match against Angola's CD Primeiro de Agosto at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam.

Kaze said the current results have been increasing pressure

on them but they will continue to fight to ensure they achieve their goals.

He said: "We have not been in a good period at the moment especially in terms of results, the pressure has been great on our side because everyone wants to see good results and that is our goal."

"The main thing we are looking at is the team's goals to be achieved together and to remove the pressure we have now due to the results of previous matches and the great speed that our opponents (Simba), who have been winning their games in a row have

been," he disclosed.

In the second round Kaze led his squad to two consecutive matches, which have had them settling for two points from six points he was looking for.

Yanga managed 1-1 draw against Mbeya City FC and the VPL leaders were later held to 3-3 draw by Kagera Sugar. The VPL leaders, thereafter, emerged with 1-0 victory over Mtwara Sugar, in which midfielder Carlos Fernandes netted for the former.

The Angolan midfielder now has three goals for his club in the league.

Mourinho's Spurs future depends on evolving from his combative past

BY JAMES OLLEY, SENIOR WRITER, ESPN FC

WE'RE about to find out if Jose Mourinho really has changed. Tottenham progressed into the Europa League round of 16 with such a comfortable win against AC Wolfsburg on Wednesday -- 4-0 in the second leg, to advance 8-1 on aggregate -- that it's easy to feel the bigger battle took place a day earlier in Mourinho's prematch news conference.

These are challenging times for the Tottenham Hotspur manager, who has long been miscast as a Machiavellian manipulator. He is mischievous and often calculated, of that there is no doubt, but those who know him best describe a capricious individual prone to violent emotional mood swings.

Several years ago during a private conversation, one of his most famous former players once described to me the contrast between Guus Hiddink and Mourinho during their respective tenures at Chelsea by making two hand gestures. The first was with his hand out in front, palm facing flat to the floor, motioning from left to right to signify calm waters. For Mourinho, he drew waves as high and low as his arms would allow.

Following an 11-month hiatus from the game after being sacked by Manchester United, Mourinho insisted when he arrived at Spurs in November 2019 that he was a different man; a more mellow, measured character who no longer relished conflict no matter how contrived. Anyone versed in his career knows his time at a club follows a specific pattern which never completes a fourth season: improve, excel, push to breaking point, civil war, acrimonious exit.

You know we've reached a dangerous stage of the cycle when the blame game starts.

"I think for a long, long time, we have problems in the team that I cannot resolve by myself as a coach," he said after Sunday's 2-1 defeat at West Ham United, their fifth in six Premier League games, which left Tottenham's top-four hopes hanging by a thread. Three days later, with time to gather himself, he backtracked from that position, keen to reset the rhetoric toward the more conciliatory tone he has struck since joining the club.

"Sometimes, there are moments of frustration and I think postmatch interviews are the perfect place for a coach not to say the right things or to leave some doubts [for interpretation]," he explained. "Like today, a prematch press conference, I think everything we say you can follow word by word, because we are calm with no pressure and no adrenaline but after matches it is not easy for us."

Postmatch interviews have not been easy for Mourinho because Spurs keep losing. Although they endured a difficult spell before England's first coronavirus lockdown last March, Mourinho avoided the tough questions because he'd only been in the job for four months, with further mitigation offered by lengthy injuries to Harry Kane and Son Heung-Min, among others.

This time, it's different, and under a more searching examination, Tuesday's news conference was at times like watching Mourinho battle with his own shadow. In claiming he has greater composure than the Mourinho of 2004, the 58-year-old made a remarkable admission.

"As you know, I didn't have many bad runs of results," he said, struggling with the self-anointed 'humble' element of his new persona. "But day-by-day problems that happen many times in clubs with all of us, I reacted previously in a much more emotional way. And instead of helping myself and the ones around me, I even created the kind of conflict situations that I had previously."

He's right, of course, but it was no less eyebrow-raising to hear Mourinho admit his penchant for generating internal hostility. And this was why the "problems I cannot resolve as a coach" line set alarm bells ringing; it appeared to

signal an escalation in his habitually confrontational approach, with certain members of the dressing room that has inexorably led to his departure from every club he has managed.

Mourinho instead claimed he was referring to "nothing specific, nothing that probably you think I wanted to say and I didn't," taking a damp cloth to the small fire he started.

There were more contradictions. A declaration that the club should be everyone's focus preceded a lengthy ramble about his own feelings and reputation.

In insisting conflict creation was behind him as a more mature man, he had a dig at another unnamed manager -- the smart money is on Chelsea's Thomas Tuchel for his public admonishment of Callum Hudson-Odoi -- for going "a bit too far in his words, but that's another story because it's not Jose Mourinho, that's not a problem." He just cannot help himself, and remember: these are the occasions we can "follow word by word."

It is easy to place too much stock in news-conference quotes, but Mourinho knows all too well the perception he is fighting: yesterday's man, left behind by more progressive, expansive managers playing a brand of football to which he is the antithesis.

For a time this season, he appeared capable of catapulting Tottenham into the title race, particularly with Manchester City struggling before their winning streak and champions Liverpool looking truly vulnerable. Yet this downturn smacks of the terminal decline synonymous with Mourinho's third year at clubs, when defeats are drenched in acrimony, finger-pointing and rancor.

The second season, which Mourinho is now in at Spurs, is supposed to be the peak. At FC Porto, he won the Portuguese Primeira Liga and Champions League in year two. At Chelsea, he retained the Premier League. At Internazionale, it was a Serie A and Champions League double. At Real Madrid came his sole La Liga title. On his second tour with Chelsea, he delivered the Premier League. In 2017-18 at Manchester United, he didn't win a trophy but described his second-placed finish as "among my top achievements."

That double remains possible again this season, and he will have to win at least one to even begin claiming this campaign has been a success.

Those two trophies at United were supposed to be the springboard to greater prizes. The same trajectory is desired at Spurs, whom Mourinho himself declared had a better squad than he managed at Old Trafford. That squad was also supplemented expertly in the summer window with the additions of Sergio Reguilon, Gareth Bale (on loan), Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg and Matt Doherty, leading Mourinho to "congratulate" chairman Daniel Levy for the work he'd done.

With nobody to blame above him, Mourinho has occasionally taken out his frustration on the players, particularly the number of individual defensive mistakes that have contributed to their dismal run. Players have been ostracised, as is Mourinho's style, with Bale and Dele Alli now asked to take a more prominent role. Last night was a promising start with Alli and Bale on the scoresheet but their response will be vital to Tottenham in the run-in, as will be Mourinho's management of those individuals -- and the squad as a whole -- with his position under mounting pressure.

Being in London at the family's Belgravia home will help, rather than holed up alone in The Lowry, a five-star hotel in Manchester he preferred to buying a house in the area. But these next few games -- starting with Burnley's visit on Sunday -- are crucial moments in determining whether Mourinho truly has evolved as manager and can break his own cycle.

His future at Tottenham depends on it.

Why top clubs will never stop playing from the back

BY BILL CONNELLY, ESPN STAFF WRITER

ON Feb. 7, in the most important game of the Premier League season, Liverpool's Alisson, generally regarded as one of the best keepers in the world, handed a game, and potentially the league title, to Manchester City.

First, he sent a pass directly to City's Phil Foden, who assisted for Ilkay Gundogan for the go-ahead goal in the 73rd minute; just three minutes later, he did almost exactly the same thing, only with Bernardo Silva as the thief and Raheem Sterling as the scorer.

It got worse this past weekend. In Germany, Bayer Leverkusen's Niklas Lomb fielded a simple back pass... or tried to, anyway. He whiffed, and a charging Florian Niederlechner put Augsburg ahead; the match ended in a 1-1 draw, and Leverkusen fell five points back from a Champions League spot. The same thing had happened to Marseille just two days earlier: keeper Steve Mandanda whiffed, Nantes' Ludovic Blas scored and a favored Marseille dropped points.

These moments brought to mind a panel at the 2019 Sloan Sports Analytics Conference, in which Daryl Morey, current Philadelphia 76ers president and soccer-curious nerd, said to StatsBomb CEO Ted Knutson, "[passing the ball back to the goalkeeper] is absolute insanity."

He explained his position. "Let's say you assume you gain some small advantage of possession. You basically then need to connect like 50 passes to the front to get to an efficient spot. But then it gets even worse: the managers are choosing the goalies based on... their feet skills."

To Morey, the purpose of a goalkeeper was getting muddled. "I would want a guy that can stop a ball that some other goalie cannot stop... The risk of passing it back is so, so high relative to the reward that it doesn't make any sense." To him, the downside -- a turnover in an extremely vulnerable position -- was not worth the marginal upside.

Anecdotally, this seems obvious. The disasters are disastrous. But if teams led by the best, most successful managers in the sport keep playing the ball to their keeper's feet, is there really a problem?

Playing out from the back is why teams press

Let's begin exploring this by laying out some basic data:

- On average, teams in Europe's Big 5 leagues this season average 948 possessions per match and begin 7.5% of them, about 71 per game, in the attacking third. They score about once every 32 times on these, or about 0.03 goals per possession. If they start a possession here because of a ball recovery, defensive action, dispossession or take-on, the odds increase to 0.04 goals per possession, or one in 23.

- Teams start 38.8% of their possessions, 36.8 per game, in the middle third and score once every 61 times, or about 0.02 goals per possession.

- Teams start 53.7% of their possessions, 50.9 per game, in their defending third and score once every 89 times, or 0.01 goals per possession.

This data alone tells you why teams are getting more aggressive at chasing possession in advanced areas. You're almost three times more likely to score when you start the ball in the attacking third, and in a sport in which teams average about 1.4 goals per game, improving your odds of scoring however slightly can make a massive difference.

It's no coincidence that the 14 teams from the "Big Five" leagues averaging at least two goals per match all start at least 7.7% of their possessions in the attacking third, and five are over 9% (AC Milan, Bayern Munich, Inter Milan, Manchester City, PSG; three of these teams are top of their respective leagues, too). Of the 21 teams averaging under a goal per match, only two start more than 8% of their possessions in the attacking third (Nimes and poor Eibar, one of the best pressing and worst finishing teams in the known universe).

For most non-Eibar teams, part of pressing high is also creating a high defensive line so you can confine opponents to a smaller area of the pitch. Once they're locked into a tighter space, pressing after you've lost the ball is more likely to succeed. But building a high line generally requires quite a bit of passing in the back, and yes, the goalkeeper sometimes gets involved. As Gab Marcotti wrote after Alisson's dueling howlers, "they don't do it because they like to needlessly have a giggle or show off their tappers mid-game. They do it because their managers believe it gives them an edge in terms of breaking



Liverpool's play out from the back has memorably backfired in some high-profile games in 2021, though the tactic will never fade given how it helps possession-minded teams like the Reds. (Agencies)

the press or enabling them to play a higher line or whatever, and that edge translates in goals and chances created.

Now, Morey's rant was directed specifically at the act of a field player having the option of making a lower-percentage pass forward, but instead choosing to pass the ball to the goalkeeper. It does seem that the more you can build your line without getting the keeper involved, the better it is for you: teams whose keepers average more than 30 pass attempts per game start 7.2% of their possessions in the attacking third, while their opponents are at 7.9%. This makes some logistical sense: a pressing team's defensive line should end up near midfield and if your keeper is seeing that much action, the ball's probably not close to where it should be. Only a few of Europe's best teams -- basically, much of the Bundesliga's top tier (Bayern Munich, Eintracht Frankfurt, Wolfsburg, Borussia Monchengladbach and, yes, Bayer Leverkusen) and Serie A's Lazio -- get their keepers involved this much. Others like Atalanta (22.9 GK pass attempts per match), PSG (21.2) and Manchester United (19.2) don't want their keepers' feet touching the ball any more than it has to, but still generate solid pressure on the other end.

And now, a special word about West Ham

What would Morey do if he ran a club? "My football club would be the 'launch-and-squish' football club," he told the Sloan audience. "Launch [the ball] and press and squish, keep them in their end and look for turnovers. It seems like that style is coming when I watch." He and David Moyes might get along well, then, as Moyes' West Ham United squad is the closest thing to a successful "launch-and-squish" team in the Big 5 at the moment.

West Ham's stats stick out like a sore thumb:

- Of the 24 Big 5 teams currently averaging at least 1.8 points per match, they are the only one with a possession rate under 50% (and they're at an extremely low 41.8%). Only two of these teams have their keepers pass the ball (a) under 25 times per match and (b) forward at least 70% of the time: Diego Simeone's patented defense-and-counter-attacking Atletico Madrid and West Ham.

- While 20 of these 24 teams have their keeper send under 40% of his kicks to the opponent's half of the field, West Ham does so 59% of the time.

- In part because of this, opponents are starting only 6.1% of their possessions in the attacking third; only six of these 24 teams can top that. (Two of them, admittedly, are Bayern and Eintracht, two of the more keeper-heavy passing teams in Europe.) Their possession rate is low because of all the 50/50 balls downfield, but when they do establish possession, they advance the ball 24.0 meters per possession, sixth in the Premier League.

Moyes has never minded the idea of

maintaining possession, but first and foremost he wants the ball out of his team's half as quickly as possible. And this combination is working staggeringly well this season: the Hammers are fourth in the Premier League, ahead of four of England's big six clubs, and only four points out of second.

Of course, they are far more "launch" than "squish." They're starting only 6.2% of possessions in the attacking third, and only 34.7% in the middle third. They allow 177 passes per defensive action, fourth-lowest in the league. They are as high as they are in the table because of their extreme effectiveness in the midfield -- they average a goal every 43.5 possessions beginning in the middle third, and they're led in scoring by a central midfielder, the brilliant Tomas Soucek (who's also second on the team in ball recoveries).

To maintain a top-four spot over the season's final 13 league matches, West Ham might have to create a few more easy scoring opportunities for itself. But the verticality that the Hammers employ might be key to eventually breaking the possession game's stranglehold.

The real threat of playing out from the back is...

The thing most likely to convince the richest clubs to change their possession ways probably won't be a goalkeeper miscue, no matter how much of a howler it may be. Instead, it might be that counter-attacks -- "squish-and-launch," if you will -- are getting better and better.

The most vulnerable moments for a rich, high-quality, high-possession team comes in the seconds after they lose the ball and their counter-press fails. Last season, Pep Guardiola's Manchester City possessed the ball 66.3% of the time -- a decimal point behind Barcelona's 66.4% for highest among the Big 5 -- and the ball spent so much time at the other end that opponents could only average 0.07 shots per possession, lowest in the Big 5. But the shots opponents earned were likely to spring from quality counter-attacks and were of extremely high quality -- 0.14 xG per shot, fifth-highest in the Big 5.

This meant that while City spent most of the year looking like the same dominant team that had won the Premier League the two previous seasons, the Sky Blues stepped on enough random land mines that their point total fell to 81 points, far behind champions Liverpool.

This year, Liverpool and defending Champions League winner Bayern Munich are suffering from their own issues in that regard.

Liverpool are still mostly the "high-uptime" team we've seen in recent seasons -- their heavy pressing allows them to still start 10.2% of their possessions in the attacking third (second in the Big 5) and possess the ball 63.9% of the time (also second). But their patently absurd injury problems at center-back -- starters

Virgil Van Dijk and Joe Gomez suffered long-term injuries, and virtually every replacement has gone the way of Spinal Tap drummers as well -- have created two different issues. First, they've helped create random disasters in building from the back; then, when these disasters occur, this frail back line has struggled to prevent opponents from creating good chances. Opponents are starting only 5.0% of possessions in Liverpool's defending third (third-best in the Big 5), but are averaging a goal every 17.2 such possessions (fourth-worst).

Yes, Alisson's case of the yips against City contributed to those numbers, but it was an issue long before that.

Bayern's issues have come about in a slightly different way. Like Liverpool, the eight-time defending Bundesliga champions spend most of the time looking like Big, Bad Bayern -- they start 12.2% of their possessions in the attacking third (first in the Big 5), average 2.8 goals per match (first) and possess the ball 62.0% of the time (sixth). But their defensive timing has been randomly off.

Opponents begin a normal amount of their possessions in the middle third overall (32.4%, six percentage points lower than average), but Bayern allows a goal every 35.7 such possessions. In a 3-2 loss to Borussia Monchengladbach in January, all three goals they allowed came from counter-attacks following midfield turnovers. In a 3-3 draw against relegation-threatened Arminia Bielefeld in mid-February, two goals came from quick vertical-thrust situations against their high defensive line, one from a long throw-in and one on a quick move from midfield.

Manchester City's issues last year proved temporary: personnel changes and manager Pep Guardiola's endless tinkering have led to enough of a solution that City is up to seventh in the Premier League in xG allowed per shot, while still allowing the fewest shots per possession. We could soon find that Bayern's issues are equally short-term. After all, they've dealt with massive fixture congestion and constant shuffling of personnel; they also lost midfielder and occasional tactical fouler Thiago to Liverpool in the offseason. (Then again, they're about to lose defender David Alaba this coming offseason as well.)

Liverpool's issues could settle when they actually have their top two central defenders. Bayern could stabilize with fewer two-match weeks and steadier lineups. But these champions' struggles have at least hinted at the way forward for teams looking to make up the current gaps in both talent and possession numbers. If a team figures out how to combine the "launching" of a West Ham, the "squishing" of an Eibar and some proper finishing, we might see the recipe for a post-possession future, one with less goalkeeper-related comedy.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Why top clubs will never stop playing from the back

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Yanga top official summoned by TFF special committee

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AFTER Yanga's vice-chairman, Fredrick Mwakalebela, had accused Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) of being unfair to his club, his case has now been referred to the federation's special committee for hearing.

On February 19 this year, Mwakalebela spoke to reporters and in his statement he accused TFF of not treating Yanga fairly, especially in terms of decisions on selection of stadiums.

"In Yanga we have seen that we are not being treated fairly by the football governing bodies in the sense of TFF, the Premier League Board, the 72 Hour Committee, as well as the referees' committee," Mwakalebela was quoted as saying.

Following these allegations, the League Steering and Management Committee and the Mainland Tanzania Premier League Board (TPLB) at its meeting on February 24, 2021, reviewed the conduct and events of the Premier League and First Division League (FDL) and made decisions including Mwakalebela's issue.

A statement issued by the board, through the information and communication department on February 25,

stated: "After reviewing the allegations (regarding Mwakalebela), the committee saw the need for the plaintiff to be given the basic right to be heard and to prove his case before the relevant committee to hear the case."

Yanga's secretary general Haji Mfikirwa, who also announced that the club was being bullied by the football governing bodies in the country, stated they have no problem with their leader being summoned by TFF.

According to Mfikirwa the bodies' decisions led to Yanga ending up managing draw in their league fixtures against Kagera Sugar and Mbeya City FC.

Mfikirwa said Mwakalebela would heed to the call to express himself as the complaints they had made were sure and the evidence was there as football is a game that is being played openly.

"Football is played openly, it is not played in a room, the clips are there, he will respond to the call and we did not issue the comments without evidence, we were satisfied with the details and that's why he spoke it to the reporters," he disclosed.



Yanga's vice-chairman, Fredrick Mwakalebela

Defender Kelvin Yondani returns to Taifa Stars



Taifa Stars' defender, Kelvin Yondani.

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S senior national soccer team 'Taifa Stars' head coach Kim Poulsen has called veteran defender, Kelvin Yondani, back to the squad after the latter's long absence in the squad.

Promising forward, Yohana Mkomola, has moreover earned a first senior national team's call-up.

Poulsen yesterday announced a squad which will prepare to play in the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers against Equatorial Guinea and Libya, which will take place next month.

Yondani, who currently features for Premier League outfit, Polisi Tanzania, was absent from

Taifa Stars, which took part in the 2021 African Nations Championship (CHAN) hosted by Cameroon, much as he was one of the players who had helped the squad secure progression to the showpiece.

The players is said to have not been selected for the national team once he had left his previous outfit Yanga.

Yanga had released the no-nonsense defender after the outfit's contract with him had come to a close.

The player joined Polisi Tanzania during this season's mini transfer window and he is playing for the squad in domestic top flight matches.

Mkomola, who plays professional football in Ukraine for Inhulets

Petrove, will be donning Taifa Stars' kits for the first time.

The youthful attacker last turned out for national U-17 soccer team, Serengeti Boys.

Poulsen said he has selected some of players from the national U-20 squad to play for Taifa Stars with the aim of seeing to it they have consistency.

He stated: "We are preparing the youngsters for the next few years and that is why we are also giving them the opportunity to be part of the Taifa Stars."

The Taifa Stars' players selected by Poulsen:

Goalkeepers: Aishi Manula (Simba) Metacha Mnata (Yanga) Juma Kaseja (KMC FC)

Defenders: Shomari Kapombe

(Simba) Hassan Kessy (Mtibwa Sugar) Israel Mwenda (KMC) Erasto Nyoni (Simba) Bakari Nondo Mwamnyeto (Yanga) Dickson Job (Yanga) Kelvin Yondani (Tanzania Police) Carlos Protus (Namungo) Kennedy Juma (Simba), Laurent Alfred (Azam FC), Mohamed Hussein (Simba) David Bryson (KMC FC) Nickson Kibabage (Cabyfootofficiel, Morocco) Yassin Mustapha (Yanga), Edward Charles Manyama (Ruvu Shooting).

Midfielders: Simon Msuva (Wydad Casablanca, Morocco) Hassan Dilunga (Simba) Ayoub Lyanga (Azam FC) Novatus Dismas (Maccabi Tel Aviv, Israel), Mzamiru Yassin (Simba) Jonas Mkude (Simba) Said Ndemla (Simba) Feisal Salum (Yanga) Himid Mao (Entag El Harby, Egypt) Ally Msengi (Stellenbosch South Africa), Salum Aboubakar 'Sure Boy' (Azam FC) Baraka Majogoro (Mtibwa Sugar) Farid Mussa (Yanga) Iddi Seleman (Azam FC).

Forwards: Ditrani Nchimbi (Yanga), Mbwana Samatta (Fenerbahce, Turkey) Thomas Ulimwengu (TP Mazembe, DRC) John Bocco (Simba SC), Oscar Mkomola (Ukraine) Shaaban Iddi Chilunda (Matfoot officiel, Morocco) Deus kaseke (Yanga) Abdul Hamis Suleiman (Coastal Union), Kelvin John (Brook House College Academy, England), Nassor Saadun Hamoud (MFK Vyskov, Czech Republic) and Meshack Abraham (Gwambina FC).

Kili Marathon 2021 transforms Moshi

By Guardian Reporter

MOSHI town is now a beehive of activities as participants of the 2021 Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon, scheduled for tomorrow, have started streaming in and getting ready for the marathon.

According to the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon Race Director, John Bayo, all necessary preparations have been completed ahead of the big day where participants will run in the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager's 42km event, Tigo's 21km race and Grand Malt 5km Fun Run.

"Towards this race which is expected to take place tomorrow, starting and finishing at the Moshi Cooperative University (MoCU) Stadium, 95 percent of its preparations have been achieved", he said.

He said the organizing committee had already ensured of enough security during the race after being assured by the Kilimanjaro regional police leadership regarding the matter.

"We have also received assurances from the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) regarding the routes to be used, whereby they have issued special permits to close some of the roads that will be used during the race," he said.

He stated that the roads will be closed from 6am to 11am during the day of the event.

He mentioned the roads as Sugar road, which leads towards the TPC sugar factory, as well as the Kilimanjaro road, Lema road, Sokoine road, Khambaita road, VETA road and the Bustani Alley.

He said participants are still collecting their race numbers at Keys Hotel in Moshi and the exercise will today ahead of the big event tomorrow.

He confirmed that registration for the 42km and 5km events is still on but it will take place on cash basis, whereas entries for 21km race are completely sold out.

He further added that health precautions are still a priority for the organizers of the race which he said is ex-



Moshi residents, who will participate in this year's Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon, collect their race numbers in the town yesterday, ready for participating in the event slated for tomorrow in Moshi. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Flexibles by David Chikoko



pected to involve runners from within and outside the country and that they have followed all the guidelines provided by the government.

Kilimanjaro Premium Lager's Brand Manager, Irene Mutiganzi, said they have organized a series of events this weekend as a build up to the marathon and everything was going on smoothly.

"We have organized a number of events on Friday and Saturday, among them entertainments which will include a performance by South African artiste, Prince Kaybee, which will

be held at the Hugo's Hotel gardens on Friday, whereby the climax of all these will be on Sunday, during the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon which will be held at the MoCU Stadium," she said.

Meanwhile, most hotels and guest houses are already fully booked in Moshi as participants continue to stream in for the Sunday event as recreation places also record a huge number of attendees.

Sponsors are also busy doing promotional activities in all corners of the town to promote the event, causing a lot of excitement

among Moshi residents and the visitors.

Sponsors for this year's edition include, Kilimanjaro Premium Lager-42km, Tigo-Half Marathon, Grand Malt-5km, water table sponsors, Unilever Tanzania, Simba Cement, TPC Sugar, Kilimanjaro International Leather Company Limited, Kibo Palace Hotel and official suppliers, namely Garda World Security, Keys Hotel and CMC Automobile.

The event is organized by Kilimanjaro Marathon Company Limited and nationally coordinated by Executive Solutions Limited.