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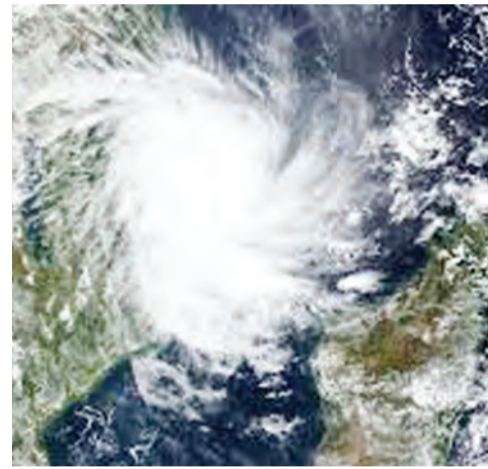


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15 climate disasters of 2019 which cost over US\$1 billion

By Guardian Reporter

EXTREME weather, driven by climate change, hit every populated continent in 2019, killing, injuring and displacing millions and causing billions of dollars of economic damage, according to a new report by Christian Aid.

This year is set to be the second hottest year in history and each of the disasters in the report has a link with climate change, the global relief agency noted.

"Extreme weather, fuelled by climate change, struck every corner of the globe in 2019. From Southern Africa to North America and from Australia and Asia to Europe, floods, storms and fires brought chaos and destruction," it said.

Assembling its report from official figures, estimates by NGOs and aid bodies, scientific studies and media reports, the British charity said the disasters displaced millions and caused widespread deaths.

In contrast, the financial cost was greatest in richer countries: Japan and the United States suffered three of the four most costly events

Seven of them caused damage of more than \$10 billion (9 billion euros).

These included the floods that ravaged north India, typhoon Lekima in China, Hurricane Dorian in the United States, floods in China, floods in the Midwest and southern United States, typhoon Hagibis

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JPM directs adding 20 days in biometric simcard drive

THE move is also meant to get rid of dishonest SIM card users and registration agents who harbored malicious intentions, including committing crimes

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli yesterday announced an extension of biometric registration of telephone lines to January 20th to allow SIM card owners who do not have a national identification number (NIN) to secure them and register.

Earlier, the Tanzania Communications and Regulatory Authority (TCRA) reaffirmed that December 31st was deadline for the biometric registration exercise which started on May 1st. Biometric registration is supported by NIN and SIM card holder's fingerprints.

Speaking shortly after he registered his telephone line, Dr Magufuli said the deadline extension will also provide a chance to Tanzanians who couldn't register due to various rea



President John Magufuli registers his phone with biometric data by visiting Airtel Money branch in Chato, Geita Region yesterday. The Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) had earlier announced that simcards not re-registered biometrically will be switched off by 31st December. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

The National Identification Authority (NIDA) is responsible for issuance of the national identification numbers

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Japan grants 4.2bn/- for TAFICO revival

Getrude Mbagu

JAPAN has provided Tanzania a grant amounting to 200 million Japanese yen (equivalent to 4.2bn/-) to support the revival of the Tanzania Fisheries Corporation (TAFICO) which collapsed in 1998.

The agreement was signed yesterday in Dar es Salaam by Treasury Permanent Secretary Doto James and Katsutoshi Takeda, Acting Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of Japan in Tanzania.

Speaking shortly after signing the agreement, the perma-

The TAFICO revival project ranks high in government development agenda, seeking to improve the social-economic well-being of the people

nent secretary expressed the government's appreciation for the government of Japan as the grant will complement govern-

ment efforts towards attaining Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the African Development Agenda 2063.

The TAFICO revival project ranks high in government development agenda, seeking to improve the social-economic well-being of the people.

Under the revival project, a lot of things will be done including purchasing a new multipurpose fishing vessel

TURN TO PAGE 2

Peace is only way to success, says Mkapa

By Guardian Correspondent,

Mtwara

FORMER President Benjamin Mkapa has called upon Tanzanians to uphold peace and love amongst each other saying it is the only way to success.

Mkapa made the remarks during an event to lay the foundation stone for a multipurpose hall for the Tunduru-Masasi Diocese of the Catholic Church, to be



constructed at Nanjota village at an estimated cost of 418m/-. He said one of the qualities

that differentiate Tanzania from other states was peace and co-existence among its people.

The prevalence of peace and support between state leaders and various communities enables development activities as seen currently, the former president noted.

"Without the prevalence of peace and love, the platform for implementation of various

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JPM directs adding 20 days in biometric simcard drive

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sons including sickness to complete the exercise. He registered his SIM card at Chato town in Geita region.

The National Identification Authority (NIDA) is responsible for issuance of the national identification numbers (NIN).

The president directed TCRA to make sure all unregistered telephone numbers are switched off after January 20th, 2020.

He said that biometric registration of SIM cards is crucial to enhance national security and control crimes. "Despite security organs arresting a number of criminals, yet such incidences happen in our community causing inconveniences, loss of money and properties," he stated.

The move is also meant to get rid of dishonest SIM card users and registration agents who harbored malicious intentions, including committing crimes.

In a statement issued yesterday, NIDA said it will embark on an exercise to massively issue national identification numbers to Dar es Salaam and upcountry residents at Mnazi Mmoja grounds in the commercial capital.

Addressing the general public, it said that its officials have camped at the Mnazi Mmoja grounds from November 23rd to December 31st specifically to offer NIN to applicants. The service is offered from 8am to 5pm every day.

During the exercise, Dar es Salaam residents will get all the services including photography and biometric registration while those from upcountry regions will only be provided with NIN and required to complete registration at NIDA offices in their specific localities.

Efforts to get NIDA Director General Dr Arnold Kihalele to confirm that the Mnazi Mmoja camp will continue offering its services for the 20 days added by the president failed to materialize, as his phone continually went unanswered.

On December 19th, TCRA announced that out of the 47 plus million telephone lines in the country owned by 21.1 million people, 19,681 million lines owned by 7.6 million people have been biometrically registered.

TCRA also said about three million people with National Identification Numbers (NIN) have not registered their telephone phones.

Back in April, President Magufuli ordered TCRA to extend the deadline for electronic SIM card registration since too few Tanzanians possess national identification numbers.

There are 55 million Tanzanians but only about 13m to 14m people had acquired NINs by that time, he pointed out.



Dodoma residents gather at the National Identity Cards Authority to collect their cards to meet the deadline for registration of SIM cards through biometric system yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Peace is only way to success, says Mkapa

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development activities would be minimal," he said.

He said that when he was president, he was asked by various foreign leaders how

Tanzania managed to build such an environment where people can co-exist peacefully.

He said Tanzania was being envied by many nations who keep asking questions as to how handing power

to another leader works efficiently when many other countries have failed to conduct regular transfer of power.

He said it is time the parishes make efforts to help their bishops implement

various projects instead of waiting for foreign missionaries.

He however said it was encouraging to see that most parishes are running things properly without depending on aid.

In his remarks, Bishop Filbert Mhasi said peace was a tool for development and it is the role of every citizen to ensure that peace is upheld at all costs.

The hall which has been built at Nanjota village has

been named after William Matwani, late father of the former president.

The former president and his wife Anna are in Masasi for the Christmas and New Year festival season.

Japan grants 4.2bn/- for TAFICO revival

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with trawl gillnets having ability of freezing at least five days of fishing trips.

Others include procurement of an ice making machine (ice plant); cold room storage, fishing gear, tools for workshop marine (lather machine, presser), a refrigerated vehicle and pickup vehicle for supplying fish.

Successful implementation of the project will contribute significantly towards achieving the objectives of the second Five-Year Development Plan, which among others, aims to improve the performance of the fisheries sector, attracting more local people to engage in the sector as a major income generating activity.

"This project will increase fish export and stabilizing national food security. In addition, it will improve fish processing, value addition and marketing and reduce fish post-harvest losses," he specified.

He further noted that the fisheries sub-sector has continued to regulate and control fishery resources through patrols and special operations.

It also focuses on quality control and safety of fishery products, enhancing participation of fishing communities in managing fishery resources through participatory fishery management groups and improving the fisheries infrastructure, including fish landing sites.

"The growth rate of fishing activities was 9.2 percent in 2018, which was higher than 8.4 percent recorded in 2017. This increase was attributed to proper management of fish hatcheries including privately owned ponds and increased demand for fish and fish products in the domestic and foreign markets.

"The share of fishing in GDP was 1.7 percent in 2018, which confirms that fishing is important to our economy," he emphasized.

sized.

James said that since 2012 Japan has provided Tanzania grants and soft loans amounting to 1.3trn/- to finance various projects in the sectors of agriculture, roads/infrastructure, water, energy, good governance and accountability.

"We also wish to extend our appreciation for the pipeline projects with total commitments of Japanese yen 37.9 billion equivalent to 784.57bn/-, in agreements which are now awaiting signature," he stated.

The agreements shall enable the government to embark on the implementation of various projects including rehabilitation of Kigoma Port, Arusha-Holili road improvement and improvement of the Zanzibar Urban Water Distribution facilities, he elaborated.

"Let me affirm that we will take all necessary measures to ensure successful implementation of this project in order to achieve the intended objectives.

For his part, Takeda said the support among others will take the country's fishery sector to another level while improving the social-economic well-being of the people.

He expressed Japan's commitment to continue cooperating with the government to strengthen the long and valuable bilateral relationship.

"On behalf of the government of Japan I would like to reaffirm our commitment in supporting the people and the government of Tanzania in their efforts to realize the aspiration to become a middle-income country in the near future," the envoy intoned.

Dr. Rashid Tamahtamah, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries said that TAFICO is expected to commence operation in February 2020.

"The corporation was established in 1974 to manage fishing activities but collapsed in 1998 as part of the privatization policy. It however failed to flourish as it lacked a serious investor to run it," he added.



Germany tourists Carmezina Gianreco (35) and her husband Thomas Maurer (33) get briefing from a tour guide of Erege Adventures company during their honeymoon held at Manyara National Park in Arusha yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Sabuni.

15 climate disasters of 2019 that cost over US\$1 billion

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in Japan and the California wildfires, the costliest tragedy at \$25 billion.

"These figures are likely to be underestimates as they often show only insured losses and do not always take into account other financial costs, such as lost productivity and uninsured losses," it said.

Christian Aid said the overwhelming majority of deaths were caused by just two events, in India and southern Africa, which called it "a reflection of how the world's poorest people pay the heaviest price for the consequences of climate change.

"In contrast, the financial cost was

greatest in richer countries: Japan and the United States suffered three of the four most costly events."

Greenhouse gas emissions are once again set to rise in 2019 after hitting a record in 2018, as extreme weather events—made more likely as the planet warms—struck seemingly everywhere this year.

These include Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, typhoon Hagibis in Japan, a deadly, record-breaking heatwave across much of Europe, wildfires in California and eastern Australia and floods in Venice.

The threat posed by climate change became so stark in 2019 that Indone-

sia, one of the fastest-growing economies on Earth, decided to move its capital to somewhere that wasn't sinking.

"Unless urgent action is taken to reduce emissions, global temperatures will rise by at least another 0.5°C over the next 20 years, and another two to three degrees centigrade by the end of the century," it asserted.

"The world's weather will continue to become ever-more extreme and people around the world will continue to pay the price. The challenge ahead is to minimise the impacts through deep and rapid emissions cuts," the church-affiliated agency added.

Sudans' PM promises to bring murder, genocide culprits to justice

KHARTOUM

Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on Wednesday vowed to bring those involved in murder and genocide to justice.

"Justice will be achieved. The law will take its course on all killers," said Hamdok while addressing a rally marking the first anniversary of Sudan's December protests.

"War crimes and genocide do not drop due to statute of limitations. We will work to ensure that all criminals are tried and that dignity is restored to the families of the victims," he added.

Meanwhile, Hamdok reiterated the importance of achieving peace, saying, "Without fair and sustainable peace, the slogans of the protests will not be achieved."

The Sudanese are celebrating the first anniversary of the protests which erupted on December 19, 2018.

Upon the street's pressure, the Sudanese army on April 11 ousted the former President Omar al-Bashir and formed a military council to run the country's affairs.

Late last August, the the military and the opposition Freedom and Change Alliance, which led the protests, established a sovereign council and a transitional government to rule the country for 39 months.

Activists want ILO's Convention on Violence and Harassment ratified

By Correspondent Gerald Kitabu

HUMAN rights and Gender stakeholders have called on the government to take concrete action to ratify and implement the International Labour Organization's Convention on Violence and Harassment.

Speaking at the just ended 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) held in Dar es Salaam recently, the stakeholders said that the ratification and implementation of the ILO convention no 190 will ensure all people especially women are legally protected against violence and abuse of any form at home and at workplaces.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign was organized by Actionaid in collaboration with ILO. At global and country level, the campaign dedicated to raising awareness about the impact of violence, particularly on women.

Commenting on the ILO convention no 190, a representative from ILO Maridadi Phaniel said that the Convention aims at protecting women and that's why it has strong focus on gender-based violence at work places.

He said that violence and harassment had no place at work places. That's why there is a call for all nations to take concrete action against GBV and particularly specific groups that are excessively affected.

Actionaid head of programmess Jovina Nawenzake called for improvement of working conditions and other infrastructures to enable and attract more women work comfortably at home and work places.

She also called for the government and other stakeholders to ensure social accountability and close monitoring within the health sector to help more women access the services adequately, fairly and on time.

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign is a time that brings together individual and national actions to end gender based violence in the country and at global level.

In Tanzania this year, hundreds of CSOs, government and private institutions, policy and decision makers, international organisations participated in the campaign.



Former President Benjamin Mkapa greets Lulindi MP Jerome Bwanausi during an event to lay a foundation stone for a multipurpose William Matwani hall by Tunduru- Masasi Diocese of the Catholic Church which will be constructed at Nanjota village and is expected to cost at least 418m/-. The hall has been named after the former president's father. The event took place yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Hamis Nasri

Minister receives credentials from Germany and Algeria ambassadors

By Guardian Reporter

FOREIGN Affairs and East Africa, Regional and International Cooperation Minister Prof Palamagamba Kabudi yesterday received credentials from Algeria ambassador to Tanzania, Ahmed Djellal and Germany's ambassador Regine Hess.

The officials who met with the minister in Dar es Salaam also held talks on how to strengthen the existing bilateral relationships between their countries and Tanzania.

Prof Kabudi told Algeria's ambassador, Ahmed Djellal that the two countries had enjoyed historical relations since 1960s when African nations struggled to liberate from colonialists.

"This relationship was founded by our late Julius Kambarage Nyerere and the

late Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria", said Minister Kabudi noting Algeria is among the first African countries to open its embassy in Dar es Salaam since 1964.

He said in 1981, Tanzania and Algeria established a permanent joint partnership committee (JPC) which has contributed to improve the bilateral relationship in various economic and social sectors such as security, education, minerals, energy and sports. Algeria ambassador to Tanzania said his government will continue to cooperate with Tanzania in diplomacy issues as well as enhancing businesses, investments and tourism.

"I will work to bolster businesses and investments between our two countries for mutual benefits of our citizens", he noted.

Speaking after handling her credentials to Minister

Kabudi, German ambassador to Tanzania, Regine Hess said Tanzania and Germany enjoy a cordial diplomatic relationship, insisting her responsibility will be to cement it.

She noted that apart from diplomatic relations, the two countries cooperate in a number of issues including businesses, investments, tourism and education. She said the partnership has contributed to the country's development as well as job creation.

Ambassador Hess promised to lure more German investors into Tanzania since the country is internationally recognised for having good investment climate.

"My responsibility as ambassador is to cement the existing bilateral relationship and facilitate Germany's investments in Tanzania", said the ambassador.

Strategies to control damage of products at slaughter houses

By Guardian Reporter, Moshi

BUYERS of raw hides and skins in Kilimanjaro region have called upon the government to come up with strategies to control damage of the products at slaughter houses.

According to the traders, between 40 and 60 per cent of the animal skins are damaged at slaughter houses, hence the need to put up strategies to ensure quality raw hides as well as leather goods.

One of the traders, Silvester Silayo said the damage is caused by poor storage of the animal skins. She stressed to train

people working at slaughter houses especially on proper slaughtering and caring of the raw skins.

"Sometimes the animal skins are damaged by being badly pierced", she said.

Zainudin Hamza from Hai district said the situation is worsening underscoring the need for the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to come up with strategies to control the situation since it also affects production of quality leather goods.

She said since the government has from August this year started to take a number of interventions to improve the

quality of leather products, it should also register skins slaughters to ensure the country produces quality raw hides in the East African region.

Assistant director in the department of livestock, food security and nutrition in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Dr Gariel Bura said the government will from 2020 not allow unlicensed workers to work at slaughter houses. He said they will also not be allowed to slaughter or attend to animals before slaughtering.

Dr Bura said the raw skins business in the country is yet to be formalised, not

ing the government gets revenues from 15 million pieces of hides out of the produced 10 million animal skins.

He said the country produces 4 million pieces of raw skins from cows per year, 5.6 million pieces from goat and 1 million raw hides pieces from sheep.

Tanzania is rich in livestock resources with a total of 32.2 million cattle and 2.8 billion kilograms of fish scattered at different Lakes, Rivers and the Indian Ocean, according to Livestock and Fisheries Minister, Luhaga Mpina.

From the 32.2 million cattle, the country is endowed with 20 million goats, 5.5

sheep, 2 million pigs and 636,997 donkeys.

Tanzania's export earnings from raw leather have fallen in the past four years due to imposition of heavy levies on the exports.

Currently the country hardly exports 10 tonnes of raw skins and wet blue products compared to up to 20 tonnes in the past.

Uganda is said to have five modern tanneries and Kenya three. Data from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries shows that Tanzania has seven tanneries.

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Joyland Girls secondary school students in Same district, Kilimanjaro region listen to a reporter with The Guardian newspaper Aisia Rweyemamu on the operations of the newsroom yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Africa urged to work towards a human-centred future of work

ABIDJAN

INTERNATIONAL Labour Organisation Director-General, Guy Ryder, has called on African countries to seize the opportunities that exist on the continent to advance towards a human-centred future of work.

He was speaking recently at the ILO's 14th African Regional Meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, which brought together the ILO's tripartite constituents representing governments, workers and employers from 54 African countries.

They reviewed the progress made in implementing the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and charted a course towards a future with decent work in the region.

Ryder referred to projections for economic growth in Africa that are higher than the global average; a 'demographic dividend' that will see labour force

numbers rising to 60 per cent; the continent's unique potential for creating renewal energy; and opportunities for development that could be opened up by advances in technology.

"Africa has every reason to regard the future with confidence. Young, rich in resources, dynamic and creative, it offers possibilities which in many ways, do not exist in other regions. However, as always, there are challenges," he said.

Among these is the need to create 26 million jobs every year in Africa to meet the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Other challenges, he said, include a social protection financing gap amounting to US\$68 billion dollars a year; economic, social and migratory pressures; and the impact of climate change and globalisation.

"What we seek is a future of work with social justice as the

surest guarantee we can have of peace and prosperity in African and in the world. This is the unfinished business of our 100 year old organization which we must take forward together."

Ryder focused on the 'human-centred' approach outlined in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work that was adopted at the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2019.

This 'human-centred' approach is based on investing in people's capabilities, the institutions of work that ensure that labour is not a commodity, and in decent and sustainable work, particularly in the green, rural and health care economies.

Ryder also outlined particular priorities for Africa—the formalisation of the informal economy, which accounts for 80 per cent of the workforce, the structural transformation of production, economic diversification, creat-

ing an enabling environment for the creation of decent jobs. Others are tackling inequality and actions to promote full and equal participation of women in the labour force.

He also called for accelerated action to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Compact on Safe and Orderly Migration, as well as promises made by governments to tackle climate change.

"We should not avert our eyes from the reality that in most aspects, the international community is well off-track in delivering the 2030 Agenda and that the planet is fighting back hard in the war that we humans have abusively launched against it. And because decent work is so deeply involved in all of these challenges, we are, very clearly, called upon to do better," he said.

Delegates discussed the Director-General's report to the Con-

ference on Advancing social justice: shaping the future of work in Africa, with a view to formulating policy recommendations for inclusive growth and social progress.

The meeting took place as the ILO celebrates its centenary and its 60th year since it established its first permanent presence on the African continent.

At the opening session Pascal Abinan, Côte d'Ivoire's Minister of Labour and Social Protection, was elected president of the four-day meeting. Paul Mavhima (Zimbabwe) was elected government vice-chair; El Mahfoudh Megateli, (Algeria) was elected employer vice-chair and Francis Atwoli, (Kenya) was elected worker vice-chair.

The meeting included a series of thematic panels on various issues related to the future of work in Africa.

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The leader of Taarifa na Maarifa centre of Kipunguni in the outskirts of Dar es Salaam Selemani Bishagazi (2nd L) airs his views at the workshop organised by TGNP aimed capacity building in women in renewable energy. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

FAO teams up with Chinese experts to strengthen global aquaculture

By Guardian Reporter

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences (CAFS) have agreed to strengthen cooperation and build the capacity and sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in developing countries.

According to FAO statement, the partnership will advance the transfer of technology and capacity development through the South-South Cooperation and promote joint efforts to advance sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

"In fisheries and aquaculture China is the biggest in almost everything," said Árni Mathiesen,

FAO's assistant director-general for fisheries and aquaculture, at the signing of the agreement with Wang Xiaohu, president of CAFS, at FAO's headquarters in Rome.

"Therefore, it really goes without saying that cooperation with CAFS is a great asset for FAO," Mathiesen said.

FAO see their agreement with the Chinese academy, which is affiliated with China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, as a valuable way to help to contribute significantly to improving the lives and livelihoods of communities in developing countries and help them achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals amid the growing threat of climate change.

Under the accord, FAO and CAFS will facilitate joint seminars and workshops, information exchange and technology transfers. The partners will support initiatives to promote climate impact mitigation and adaptation and help build the resilience of fishers and others working in the sector, while strengthening efforts to increase the regulation and safety of fish products for regional and global trade. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme (SSC), which has benefited more than 70,000 people directly in 12 developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Since FAO and China established the SSC Programme in 2009, experts from China have shared

their knowledge and technologies with farmers in Africa and Asia to raise agricultural productivity and sustainability in areas including cereal production, animal husbandry, fisheries and aquaculture. South-South - together with the Triangular Cooperation, which involves third countries and other partners - breaks the traditional dichotomy between donors and recipients and has been effective in creating jobs, building infrastructure and promoting trade.

Through this cooperation, FAO has facilitated exchanges of technical experience and know-how by fielding more than 2,000 experts and technicians to over 80 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North Africa and elsewhere over the past 20 years.

Govt set to improve oil palm production in Kigoma region

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has embarked on a plan to improve the oil palm production in Kigoma region where it is expected that 20 million nursery trees will be planted in a period of four years and saving about 400bn/- to 600bn/- that is currently used to import cooking oil annually.

Director of crops development in the Ministry of Agriculture, Nyasebwa Chimagu said in an interview that the strategy is aimed at saving the said amount of money every year.

He said the strategy started in 2018/19 financial year and that during the year various studies will be conducted to ensure quality seeds for the crop are found.

The strategy according to Nyasebwa also aims at ensuring that five million palm oil trees are planted every year so that farmers easy access quality seeds.

He said the strategy involve other key players such as the Tanzania Prisons and the National Service (JKT) through its various camps in Kigoma.

"The government is committed towards achieving this that it the reason we came with such a strategy," he said.

He however called upon farmers in the area to prepare nursery beds ready to receive the nursery seeds for implementation of the strategy.

Currently, oil palm production in Tanzania is carried out primarily by smallholder farmers in Kigoma Region, Kigoma Rural District in particular, as well as in Mbeya Region (mostly Kyela district) and some parts of Tanga region.

Tanzania has all it takes to grow and produce enough palm oil to meet local demands, but inadequate investment is bogging the sector down.

Despite such a huge potential, the country relies on imported raw materials for producing edible oils and soaps. Tanzania has more-or-less similar weather conditions with Malaysia from where it imports most of its palm oil. Malaysia is the world's second largest producer of palm oil while Tanzania is not even on the list of palm oil producing countries.

Tanzania imports 55.5 per cent of its total edible oil requirements despite having a vast and promising production potential in palm oil and sunflower sub-sectors.

Sunflower oil contributed about 40 per cent of edible oil requirement of 330,000 tonnes in 2017, according to the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) research paper 'Potentiality of Sunflower Sub-sector in Tanzania of March 2017'.

The 60 per cent deficit is plugged by imports, which cost the country over 600bn/-, annually.

Mtwara referral hospital project to be completed in time - NHC

By Guardian Correspondent, Mtwara

THE National Housing Corporation (NHC) who are the main contactors tasked to build Southern Zone Referral Hospital at Mtwara say they will ensure to work day and night to complete the project in time as per the agreement.

Speaking to reporters during her inspection visit at the project site, Mtwara NHC manager Angelina Magazi said they recognize has given over 15bn/- for the project in order improve medical services in the southern regions.

She said they, as contractors of the big project will not let down the government as they will work hard to complete it in time, and added that 20 per cent of the work has been completed.

Magazi said according to the contract agreement the construction of the referral hospital was supposed to be completed July 1 2020 and start offering services to the wananchi.

She also assured that as the main supervisors they will ensure the construction to be of quality standard that commensurate with the government expenditure.

The Mtwara District Commissioner Evodi Mmanda said as the regional government they are satisfied with the work progress.

He said every time they have been visiting the project site they become more assured the project will finish in time.

"We will be making close follow up on the project to see how the work is going on but up to now everything has been going on quite well," Mmanda said.



Finance and Planning Permanent Secretary Doto James (R) and Japan embassy in Tanzania Charge de Affairs Katsutoshi Takeda sign grant agreement of 4.2bn/- for reviving Tanzania Fishing Corporation at a ceremony held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Haule

ECA and AfDB launch the 2019 report on status of gender equality in Africa

ADDIS ABABA

THE joint African Development Bank and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Gender Index provides useful tools not only for engaging with stakeholders but also as a tool for holding themselves accountable for delivering on their commitments.

The African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa today unveiled the first edition of the Africa Gender Index, aimed at informing policies to transform economies and to propel governments to adopt an ambitious agenda for making gender equality a reality throughout the continent.

The Index is published at a time when women's empowerment is on the top of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030 and the Africa Union Agenda 2063. But also, and more importantly, the index is marked by the outcome of the just concluding Africa Regional Beijing+25 which emphasised strides registered in Africa but also persistent challenges, and indeed emerging issues.

What is more, the Index's release is during a year when the African Development Bank is creating the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) program

as part of its long recognition of the critical need for a gender-balanced approach to development and to achieve the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, with a \$300 million risk-sharing facility for women owned and led SMEs to unlock access to commercial financing for women and a gender equality trust fund providing grant resources to support the guarantee facility activities (technical assistance/capacity building) as well as the Bank's overall gender activities in regional member countries.

"No bird can fly with one wing. When Africa achieves full economic empowerment of women, it will fly with two wings and achieve its best growth rates ever," said AfDB President D. Akinwumi Adesina.

The 2019 Africa Gender Index is the most comprehensive measurement of the state of gender equality across 51 out of 54 African countries: it examines the position of women as economic agent, in human development, and as active citizens and leaders, to provide African governments with a benchmark to evaluate the effectiveness of policies to advance gender equality. The Index provides maps for each area and highlights sectors where leadership is most needed at national, regional and international levels and presents

suggestions for policy measures and investments that can change the status quo and generate gains for all Africans.

The report takes stock of Africa's progress towards equality of opportunity for women and men, access to services and participation in civil and political life. It also draws on a review of African initiatives and policies that promote gender equality, and a collection of case studies emerging from UNECA's and AfDB's support to African countries. The report focuses on five areas: women and education and health, young women and jobs, agricultural development, climate change and energy, and leadership.

"Closing gender gaps is not a zero-sum game, but a road towards a future where everybody gains. Gender equality is a matter of economic efficiency and competitiveness, leading to the achievement of other key development outcomes," said Mrs. Thokoziwe Ruzvidzo and Mrs. Vanessa Mounzar respectively UNECA's Director, Social Development Policy Division, and AfDB's Director of Gender, Women and Civil Society Department. "Our aim is to spark dialogue and inform debate on gender equality at national and regional levels, and wherever Africa's development is on the global agenda."

Kalambo faces shortage of 2,693 civil servants

By Guardian Correspondent, Kalambo

KALAMBO district in Rukwa region is facing a shortage of 2,693 civil servants as a result affecting provision of services.

Speaking recently when presenting the municipal's proposed 36.4bn/- budget for the 2020/2021 during a full council meeting, the district planning officer, Eric Kayombo said the shortage of workers had delayed services at various state owned institutions.

"We are facing serious shortage of servants, the number become small after some servants were removed from service during the operation to eliminate ghost workers as well as those with fake academic certificates",

said Kayombo noting most of the workers were disqualified during the exercise.

He however noted that in implementing the 2020/2021 budget, the district will spend 27bn/- to pay salaries, 5.6bn/- for development projects and remaining 1.8bn/- for recurrent expenditures.

According to him, Kalambo district is expecting to collect revenues amounting to 1.8bn/- from its internal revenues sources.

The full council endorsed the proposed 36.4bn/- budget for the 2020/2021 led by Daudi Sichone who called upon wananchi to prioritize paying government taxes insisting the monies are used to implement development projects.

Early this week, the government said it

plans to employ more than 40,000 people in various cadres in February 2020.

Permanent Secretary, President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance Dr Laurean Ndumbaro said the move follows the shortage of workers in the health sector.

He said in order to deal with workers shortage in various sectors the government has allocated 40,000 jobs.

Dr Ndumbaro said the employment exercise will begin in February 2020, and there will be opportunities in the health sector that will alleviate shortage of staff at various health centres and other hospitals that have been built during the fifth phase administration.

Zimbabwe to spend \$133 million on maize grants after drought

HARARE

ZIMBABWE will next year spend 2.16 billion Zimbabwe dollars (\$133 million) on subsidies for the staple maize meal as it seeks to keep prices of the most consumed food affordable amid food shortages and spiralling inflation.

Mthuli Ncube told state-owned television ZBC News on Friday that the government would fork out 180 million Zimbabwe dollars a month on the subsidy programme and was considering subsidising other goods as well.

The southern African nation's population is enduring the worst economic crisis in a decade and a severe drought that has left millions facing hunger.

U.N. rights expert Hilal Elver warned last month that poor rains and erratic weather combined with hyperinflation had left 5.5 million people food insecure.

Low dam water levels have meanwhile led to 18-

hour power cuts that have hit output from industry and mines.

The government this year reintroduced the Zimbabwe dollar currency, ending a decade of dollarisation, and also removed subsidies on electricity and fuel. Both of these actions unleashed rampant inflation, while wages lag behind.

"Our target is basically to inject 180 million Zimbabwe dollars to target the (maize) meal subsidy. We also intend to include other commodities going forward," Ncube said.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa on November 28 announced the government would scrap its plan to remove grain subsidies next year, saying this would protect impoverished citizens from rising food prices.

Scarce foreign exchange has meant that even after Zimbabweans started paying more for the power and fuel, shortages have remained widespread.

Six arrested in Arusha for allegedly illegal connections of power supply

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

POLICE in Arusha region yesterday arrested six people for allegedly illegal power connections and causing a loss to the Tanzania Electric Supply Company (Tanesco) worth 20.54m/-.

The Arusha Regional Police Commander (RPC) Jonathan Shana said the suspects were arrested yesterday at 10am at Mbeshere Street in Olorieni Ward during a special house-to-house crackdown.

RPC Shana explained that the illegal power supply was connected to 13 houses with 40 rooms at 5,000/- per room for a month.

"We have arrested four people

but we decline to mention their names because there are other suspects on the run", the RPC said.

Tanesco regional manager, Eng. Herin Mhina said they discovered the illegal connections after being tipped off by Good Samaritans.

He said after arriving at the scenes they found many houses were illegally connected with electricity using underground path from one house to another.

"We arrived at the house of Juma Marunda on the street who was accused for stealing electricity, after arriving at his house we discovered that he distributed illegal power to all houses on the street by using underground path.", the manager said.

The manager added that apart from stealing the power, he was also collecting bills for 5,000 per month for more than six years and caused significant losses to the organisation.

According to Engineer Mhina, they also decided to check Marunda's meter which was connected to the electricity pole and found that it had been destroyed.

Eng. Mhina said, the team has also found three more houses connected to electricity directly from the pole without going through the meter and one of them selling it to others from his house.

He said, there have been a habit of some people who violate

Tanesco's infrastructure by stealing electricity, transformers oil, and other organisational materials.

The Eng. urges residents in the region to follow the required procedures when they want to connect power to their houses in order for them to get the electricity legally.

One of the robbers admitted and confessing that they have a contract to pay 5000/- per month to Marunda who connected it to their houses from his home.

"I have been renting at this house for more than six years and throughout the time we were illegally using the electricity," he said.



Publication of Bi- annually Income and Expenditure

Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) is a non-profit Non-Governmental Organization which was founded in 1989 and registered under the NGOs Act No. 24 of 2002 as amended by Written Laws Miscellaneous Amendment Act No. 3 of 2019.

Vision: WLAC envisages a society that respects and promotes women's and children's rights.

Mission: WLAC is a non-governmental organization, which works toward promoting women and children's rights through civil and socio-economic empowerment; access to justice; and advocacy for pro-gender legal and policy frameworks in Tanzania.

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 January to June 2019.

Women's Legal Aid Centre Bi-Annual Income and Expenditure Report for the period from January - June 2019	
	Jan - June 2019 TZS
Income	
Receipts from Donors	541,523,387
Other Incomes	504,165
Total Income	542,027,552
Expenditure	
Access to justice for women, children and refugees is broadened and improved.	384,038,985
Public awareness and engagements in women's civic and socio-economic rights are enhanced and sustained.	70,596,246
Policy and legal frameworks, including the country's constitution, on the rights of women, children and refugees are reformed and enforceable.	368,000
Institutional capacity and sustainability of WLAC are strengthened.	47,380,070
Human resources	44,283,592
Total Expenditure	546,666,894
Surplus (deficit) of Income over expenditure	(4,639,342)

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

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

Tanzania, China embarks on joint military training

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA and China will carry out joint military training in Dar es Salaam this December to mid-January 2020, the Chinese embassy in Dar es Salaam said yesterday.

Through its website the statement quoted spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence of China announcing the joint training from Beijing.

The spokesman was speaking during the Defence Ministry's Regular Press Conference on Dec 26.

According to the embassy, the joint training is code named - 'Sincere Partners 2019' and has been agreed to by the two countries' armies to promote mutual cooperation.

"This joint training aims to further improve the practical cooperation between Chinese and Tanzanian militaries so as



"This joint training aims to further improve the practical cooperation between Chinese and Tanzanian militaries so as to build a new type of security partnership featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation," said the embassy in the post.

to build a new type of security partnership featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation," said the embassy in the post.

The deep and long-standing Tanzanian-Chinese

relationship continues to be characterised by significant trade, diplomatic exchanges and Chinese assistance and investment in Tanzania.

Tanzania remains one of China's principal African trading partners and assistance recipients. Tanzania and China have enjoyed a very special relationship that dates back from the days of the generation of leadership of the founding fathers of these nations, namely the late Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, Abeid Aman Karume and Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and later Supreme Leader Deng Xiaoping.

The two countries established bilateral relations in 1964. Each year the Tanzania Peoples Defense Forces' (TPDF) officers and non-commissioned officers attend training courses in China at various military training centers.



One of 21 go downs belonging to Tunduru district agricultural marketing co-operative societies had been demolished while cashew nut stored in danger of rotting away. Photo: Correspondent Steven Chindiye.

Dodoma city officials urged to maintain conducive investment, business climate

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

DODOMA Regional Commissioner Dr Binilith Mahenge has urged city leaders to maintain conducive business and investment climate and allocate special areas for construction of industries.

Speaking during a Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) held here recently the RC directed the regional leaders to submit report on measures taken to

find solution to the complaints raised by some potential investors claiming to face difficulties in acquiring investment premises.

The meeting was also attended by regional leaders including Speaker of the National Assembly, Job Ndugai and Dodoma Regional Administrative Secretary, Kessy Maguka who both complained on the complexity investors' face in acquiring land.

"There are still some challenges with city officials especially on

allocating land for investors. You should come up with a full report in the coming meeting, indicating how you allocate land for investment," said the Regional Commissioner.

Dr Mahenge said there are some potential investors willing to establish businesses in the country's capital but they are failed with complexity in acquiring land and some bureaucratic executives.

He gave example of the Ministry of Education and Vocational

Training being ordered to pay for a piece of land to construct a vocational school. He urged the officials to consider facilitating investment rather than gaining revenues.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Job Ndugai complained of the complexity in acquiring land, insisting the high land costs in Dodoma affects investment.

Dodoma Regional Administrative Secretary, Kessy Maguka said: "There is bureaucracy at the city

land department; some of the workers have been complicating issuance of permits to investors. Some of the officials cannot even be reached; we must find solutions to these challenges to promote more investment in the region".

Dodoma City Mayor, Prof Davis Mwamfupe said his office has not received any complaints from investors. He promised to work on the said challenges to ensure better investment and business environment.

Kanyasu tasks TFS to invest in forests for sustainable income

By Guardian Correspondent, Tabora

DEPUTY Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Constantine Kanyasu has tasked the Tanzania Forest Service Agency (TFS) to invest in forests for sustainable income and environmental conservation.

Kanyasu wasn't comfortable with the way TFS is doing, saying the agency has been relying on fines rather than getting income from their forests.

"This tendency of relying on penalties to get your revenues cannot present you with a sustainable income," Kanyasu said yesterday here when addressing the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism staffs.

"Time has come for TFS to invest in tree planting and beekeeping to be able to have more sources of income instead of waiting for people to make mistakes," the minister told TFS officials.

He further said: "As time goes on people will be civilized and will no longer involve in illegal forest harvesting. This will put you in a tight angle as you won't get income, that's why it is important for you to come up with other sources of income."

In another development, the deputy minister has called on the leadership of the Tabora Region to speed up the process of handing over the wildlife reserve in Tabora municipality to the Ministry of Natural Resource and Tourism for it to help the government in revenue collection.

He said the reserve is very important for Tabora region in increasing the number of tourists and the income as well.

Kanyasu said instead of tourists going straight to other tourist's attractions they may start by visiting the attractions in Tabora and by so doing generate income to the people in the region.

He also said that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism has been paying soldiers who guard the park when the park is not properly used to raise revenue for the government.

For her part, the Tabora Regional Administration Secretary Msalika Makungu said the issue of handing over the reserve to the responsible ministry is at the final stage, he promised to complete it within just few days.



Excavator at work along river Ngo'mbe at Tandale area in the outskirts of Dar es Salaam as captured yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

CAPE TOWN

Call to stop overfishing of tuna

SOUTH Africa is playing a leading role in reversing the overfishing of tropical tunas in the Atlantic Ocean.

The bigeye tuna fish has been overfished in that ocean for years and is still subject to this practice, but a conservation measure - introduced and promoted by South Africa at a recent meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Iccat) - has laid the groundwork for the improved management of bigeye and other species of tropical tunas.

Bigeye tuna is an important catch for South Africa's tuna fishing industry which has massive potential to grow and

provide jobs and economic opportunities. However, the management of bigeye and other tuna stocks is largely out of South Africa's hands; tunas are migratory species that are fished by a number of nations as they move through different regions of the world's oceans.

In the Atlantic, tunas are managed by Iccat, but until last month the management regime put in place by Iccat was considered to be ineffective and bigeye tunas were known to be heavily overfished - recent catch limits set by Iccat for bigeye tuna were exceeded by more than 20%.

The adoption by Iccat of

an interim conservation and management measure for tropical tunas represents a remarkable improvement to reduce the catch of juvenile bigeye and other tropical tunas, with the goal of establishing sustainable tuna fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean. South Africa's role in leading negotiations and lobbying for a new management regime aligned with the advice of Iccat's scientific body, was robustly applauded during the closing session of the Iccat meeting late last month.

Head of the South African Delegation, Saasa Pheeha, director of offshore and high seas fisheries management

within the department of environment, forestry and fisheries (Deff) said: "South Africa is a founding member of ICCAT and we are proud to have played an integral role in moving a much-needed agreement forward, while standing strong on ensuring equitable and responsible management of our common resources."

Among the new management measures adopted by Iccat is a reduction in catch limit for bigeye tuna from 78000 tons per year to 62500 tons in 2020, and a further cut to 61500 in 2021. Importantly, the number of fish aggregating devices (FADs)

that may be deployed by fishing nations using purse seine nets to catch tropical tunas, has been reduced from 500 per vessel to 350 per vessel in 2020, and 300 per vessel in 2021.

The use of FADs is known to result in the capture of high numbers of juvenile tunas and the entanglement of other marine species, most notably turtles and sharks. Restricting the deployment of FADs will reduce the catch of juvenile tunas - a practice that has obvious and serious implications for the productivity of tuna stocks.

The complete closure of the Atlantic Ocean to FAD-

associated tuna fishing by purse seine vessels for two months in 2020 and three months in 2021 is a significant measure included in the newly adopted Conservation and Management Measure for Tropical Tunas.

"By closing the FAD fishery, you're giving the stock a greater chance of maturing and reproducing," explains Qayiso Mketsu, deputy director of pelagic and high seas fisheries management within the Deff and a key member of the South African delegation to ICCAT.

A significant increase in the number of scientific

observers deployed on long-line and purse seine fishing vessels in the Atlantic Ocean is also included in the newly adopted Iccat conservation and management measure for tropical tunas.

The observers gather data and note infringements of management measures and so increased observer coverage translates into improved compliance with fishing rules and regulations.

The newly-adopted measures will regulate catches of tropical tunas in the Atlantic Ocean for a period of two years. It is expected that this will be reviewed and refined over the same period, with the ultimate goal of substantially reducing the overfishing of tunas in the Atlantic Ocean.

Dr Sven Kerwath,

chairperson of the large pelagic fishery's scientific working group of DEFF completed the delegation of South African government officials.

South African Tuna Association President, Clyde Bodenham and chairperson Pheobius Mullins, together with the South African Tuna Longline Association chairperson, Trevor Wilson, said that it was inspiring to be part of the Deff sector management team and at the forefront of driving change at an international level. "This is a huge international achievement," said Bodenham. "The tuna fishing industry is immensely proud to have been part of the South African delegation to ICCAT".

Zambia energy regulator allows state power utility to hike prices

LUSAKA

ZAMBIA'S state power firm Zesco will hike the price of electricity for residential and commercial customers starting next month as the African nation seeks to attract investment into

power generation, the energy regulator said.

Zambia's Energy Regulation Board said it had allowed Zesco to increase electricity tariffs for the least consuming residential customers by more than 200%.

Zambia's electricity supply shortage increased to 810 megawatts (MW) in November from around 750 MW in September, state power firm Zesco said on Dec. 12, adding it would quickly commission new power plants to plug the gap.

The new measure will not affect global mining firms including First Quantum Minerals, Glencore, Barrick Gold Corp and Vedanta Resources which currently pay a flat tariff of 9.30 U.S. cents/kilowatt hour (kWh).

The price of electricity for

many categories of commercial customers would nearly double, the energy regulator said, adding that Zesco needed revenue to cover its operating costs.

"Zesco is facing serious financial problems with regard to its profitability,

liquidity, solvency and efficiency," it said.

Africa's no.2 copper producer has seen electricity supply dwindle due to low water levels at hydropower dams as a severe drought sweeps through southern Africa due to climate

change.

In September Zambia said it would import 300 MW of power from South Africa's Eskom, which itself is struggling with generation problems and has been implementing power cuts, putting imports under pressure.

It will take 12 years for SSA countries to attain gender parity in education, WEF report states

By Guardian Reporter

THE 2020 Global Gender Gap Index that was published recently has forecasted that it would take just 12 years to attain gender parity in education and 95 years for Sub-Saharan Africa to reach gender parity, the report forecasts. In the education sector, 40 out of 153 ranked countries fully achieved gender parity.

In terms of parliamentary representation, globally, women have secured just 25 per cent of available positions, a figure that slips to 21 per cent at a ministerial level. While economic participation, the report found out, the gender gap will take 257 years to close, in comparison to 202 years in the 2019 report.



The report pointed out the reasons why women's participation in the economy is still decreasing; not enough women are entering professions where wage growth is the most pronounced (most obviously technology), and women face the perennial problem of insufficient care infrastructure and access to capital.

Manyara regional hospital procures 258 million/- worth X-Ray machine

By Guardian Correspondent,

Manyara

MANYARA Regional Referral Hospital has purchased an X-Ray machine worth 258m/-, that will be a big relief to people living in the northern part of Tanzania.

Acting medical doctor in charge of the hospital, Dr Michael Haule revealed this early this week in an interview with this paper.

He said that the money used to buy the machine has been secured from the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) as a loan.

According to him, since its establishment in 2013, the hospital has been oper-

ating without an x-ray machine thus forcing patients to seek for the service in Dareda and Mrara hospitals.

"So, currently, patients are accessing the x-ray services here 24 hours."

Neno Mbogo, head of radiation services at the hospital said that patients will no longer travel miles away and incur extra expenses to seek for the services.

He commended NHIF for providing the loan which in-turn will rescue a number of needy people.

"As an expert I had no place to practice my expertise because the hospital didn't have this special equipment...Currently I serve at least 20 patients," he said.

Mbogo further said that despite getting the X-ray machine, the hospital also needs more CT-Scan and ultrasound machines to improve service provision at the hospital.

"We are also in dire need of experts as currently I am alone here, so we are calling for the government to hire six more staff to strengthen the department," Mbogo added.

For his part, NHIF regional manager Hance Mwakenja said the institutions saw it better to provide the hospital with a loan to enable it improve service provision.

"We have capacitated the hospital with a loan amounting to 250m/- and we are happy people are happy with the service."



Going, going almost gone. A section of Shekilango road in Sinza suburb on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam after it was washed away by floods recently. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

'Everybody talks about it': Women's rights to take centre stage in 2020

By Liz Ford

WORLD leaders, civil society and the private sector are preparing to make 2020 the biggest year yet for the advancement of women's rights.

Over the course of the year, thousands of people are expected to attend high-level UN events and forums in Mexico City and Paris to mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing platform for action, a landmark agreement to end gender inequality.

More than 160 countries have already submitted reports outlining the progress made and the obstacles faced in achieving the Beijing agreement. In January, the UN secretary general is expected to publish an assessment of global efforts, and member states are already negotiating ways to accelerate action.

Global gatherings for gender equality, convened by UN Women - which has launched its own Generation Equality campaign - and co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France, will be held in May and July. Governments, women's rights activists and businesses are expected to form coalitions to agree fully-funded action plans on abortion rights, ending violence

"2020 is going to be massive, and the potential [for change] is enormous," said Katja Iversen, president and CEO of Women Deliver, a global advocacy group for women's rights. "Everybody is talking about it. A lot of people are talking about how to get in on the act."

Iversen cautioned, however, that the year "has to end

in strong action". "We can't have empty commitments again. We need big, bold, accountable commitments and action. If that doesn't happen after this year, we will all lose tremendously."

The Beijing platform for action was adopted unanimously by 189 governments at the UN's fourth world conference on women, held in China in 1995. It is considered the most progressive international blueprint for advancing women's rights.

It covered 12 key areas. These included eliminating violence against women, ensuring all women have access to family planning and the reproductive healthcare they need, removing barriers to women's participation in decision-making, and providing decent jobs and equal pay for equal work. The declaration urged governments to assess the impact of environmental degradation on women, and called for indigenous women to be given an equal say in sustainable development. It also recognised the disproportionate burden of unpaid care that falls on women and called for a better portrayal and representation of women in the media.

A quarter of a century on, however, no country has achieved gender equality, and the Beijing agenda is being undermined by growing conservative populist movements that seek to roll back women's rights. The Trump administration has taken a leading role in the pushback.

There has been some progress but, globally, one in three women are still expected to experience sexual or physical violence in their

lifetime, women are paid less than men for doing the same work, and they continue to bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. Hundreds of thousands of women still die each year from complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and less than a quarter of MPs are women.

Françoise Girard, president of the International Women's Health Coalition, said 2020 is a "key moment to gather and push [the Beijing agenda] forward".

"We are very engaged in the Beijing+25 anniversary work. It's a moment where governments are going to negotiate a new agenda," she said. As well as fighting for "issues that remain difficult", such as abortion rights, body autonomy and sexual orientation, Girard said the anniversary offered a chance to push for action on issues "that have really developed since Beijing". These include the impact of the climate crisis on women, targeted support for female refugees, and the impact of sexual violence at work on women's economic participation. "We're now understanding the impact that has had in keeping women back in the workplace", said Girard.

She added that activists will be calling on governments to afford greater protection to female human rights defenders, and to take more seriously online harassment and mental health issues.

"There's lots [of areas] that we have come to understand in the past 25 years that were mentioned in Beijing but not all were developed. We're ea-

ger to bring these to the fore."

As well as the Beijing anniversary, next year will mark two decades since UN security council resolution 1325 first acknowledged women's unique experience of conflict and their lack of involvement in peace negotiations. Nine subsequent resolutions have been passed. Anniversary events are being planned for October and activists will be steeling themselves for the introduction of any new resolution. In April, heavy lobbying by the US resulted in the removal of key language around sexual and reproductive health and rights from a resolution introduced by Germany.

Next year also kicks off the 10-year countdown to achieve the UN sustainable development goals, which includes a commitment to end gender inequality by 2030.

"These are all extremely important to advance women's rights," said Dinah Musindarwezo, director of policy and communications at Womankind Worldwide, a global organisation supporting women's rights groups in Africa and Asia.

She said she hoped 2020 would mark the coming together of feminist groups to create a strong, global movement for change.

"It's a crucial year because we see it as a year where we can come together and accelerate the promotion of women's rights and gender equality," said Musindarwezo.

"Twenty-five years is a long time to wait to achieve the commitments our governments have made," she added. "We can't wait another 25 years."



Pedestrians avoid stepping on uncollected garbage at Mabibo market on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala.

Rail project to link Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti Park is extremely important

The Tanzania National Parks Authority commonly known as TANAPA is responsible for the management of Tanzania's 17 national parks. Its main source of revenue is sourced from tourist arrivals. TANAPA in collaboration with the Tanzania Tourist Board markets the national parks locally and internationally to attract visitors. It also currently manages 26 airstrips throughout its network of national parks. The proposal for an ambitious infrastructural project targeting to link Tanzania's second highest peak, Mount Meru, with Serengeti National Park, via Ngorongoro Crater rim is crucial.

The project is expected in the near future also to connect the two famous tourist attractions with Lake Victoria at Speke bay, according to reports being unveiled ahead of the 60th Anniversary of Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area peaking on the 23rd December 2019 at Fort Ikoma.

The two parks were endorsed in 1959 two years before Tanganyika independence, whose anniversary was held last week. Ngorongoro is the only conservation area in East Africa which was then annexed from Serengeti reserve.

Joining the two tourist destinations was also an idea behind the railway project which should have linked them with Mount Meru and Lake Victoria.

It was hatched during the first several attempts by 'white men' from overseas that had set out on inland voyages into Tanganyika, journeys that led the teams of explorers to as far as Ngorongoro and the Serengeti plains.

German explorer Oscar Baumann, working for the then colonial government, thought of the idea to link the slopes of Mount Meru in the area now known as Arusha, to Ngorongoro Crater walls using a railway line.

Later the same rail tracks were to be extended from Ngorongoro to the shores of Lake Victoria via Serengeti National Park. The proposal behind the anticipated project was tabled and the German government is said to have approved it, but everything fell into pieces when allied forces defeated Hitler in World War II.

The Railway was meant to ease transport for foreign explorers who yearned to

discover the inland precincts of the country as previous explorers had faced major problems in making it into highlands.

The first such excursion was through the 1889 Royal Geographical Society scholars' Expedition which was led by one Joseph Thomson.

Entering from what is now known as Tanga Port, the expedition targeting to enter the then called 'Maasai Land,' trekked inland and only managed to reach the eastern border of northern Maasailand, near Mount Kilimanjaro, some 275 kilometres south-east of the Ngorongoro.

The expedition was forced to turn back after being threatened by Maasai warriors that had earlier on attacked a caravan led by another explorer, Dr Fischer.

Nine years later, another German (Austrian?), Oscar Baumann, attempted a similar venture, and thanks to protection by some German Soldiers he proceeded further West braving ferocious wildlife and less than conducive environment into the heart of Maasailand.

Going beyond the rift valley Baumann targeted Lake Victoria, and that was how he came across the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti plains.

Dr Baumann is recorded to be the first 'white man' to reach Serengeti plains in 1882. He reportedly used 23 days to cross the Serengeti and while at it, he documented 'first' sightings of Lakes Eyasi, Manyara, and Ndutu.

He managed to venture further because his team was guarded by German soldiers after he reported to be 'doing it for Europe!' Maybe the toils of traversing the terrains in the Northern Tanganyika, without proper roads is what drove him to come up with the proposal, of linking the slopes of Mount Meru to the rim of Ngorongoro Crater with a railway line.

Baumann's proposal did not stop there, but suggested further that the rail network should also connect the crater with shores of Lake Victoria in Mwanza, or Nyanza, as known then.

Apparently the idea was then deemed right and even got tabled several times but now, a century later, the project is yet to take off. Even the proposal writings towards the projects have reportedly 'disappeared.'

Renovating wagons by TRC partnership a taste of things to come

PRIVATE transporters are readying to partner with the Tanzania Railways Corporation which needs synergies to procure locomotives and renovate 690 wagons. This follows a directive by the Minister for Works, Transport and Communications Isack Kamwewe to TRC board members and top management. The minister said the idea of welcoming partnerships is to fast-track cargo movement to inland regions and transit trade, as official procurement procedures delay.

As the government needs 41.4bn/- to renovate 690 wagons and up to \$25 million to procure ten new locomotives, it is possible such cash can be mustered by some major transporters who need rail space more or less urgently. With a workable commercial arrangement they can purchase those locomotives and wagons, and make use of them as part of offsetting costs, plus a concessional charge. In future the wagons and locomotives are dissolved into ordinary TRC stock.

The minister sees this partnership as an opportunity, as apparently a huge flow of cargo needs to be transported from the port of Dar es Salaam, amidst a shortage of cargo wagons. Partnerships are vital to fast track obtaining engines and wagons, even if formal procurement would take one year. If the locomotives are purchased by a different method, TRC or the government would now have legroom to spend the money differently, into other areas needing urgent financing.

TRC had renovated 86 old wagons for 4bn/- and would now look for partnership to help renovate other currently redundant wagons. It is part of moderni-

zation as it isn't just the government that has large amounts of money that can be sought. Private firms dispose cash too and not just in railways but other areas such synergies can be tapped.

So far TRC has had partnership with the food and beverages group headed by Said Salim Bakhressa and also the World Food Programme (WFP) who had renovated 40 cargo wagons. If we look closely around there are other beneficiaries of an expanded rail network who could chip in to fast track availability of services, for instance in mining areas, plantation agriculture, etc. Those building industries in some inland areas also need a workable railroad, apart from people living in remote areas facing high charges from bus, lorry transport.

The method that the minister outlined is workable, as transporters use the wagons for a concessional fee for some years to return costs, and then they revert to TRC. Such occasional partnership is helpful while it doesn't change holding arrangements as to ownership of the service provider firm, only conducting business with it. At some point when there is more partnership needed, the vision could be reset to include continuous capital-based partnership, as in raising bonds.

Everything depends on how agro-processing needs increase in the country's economy, as cargo volume had reached 17m tonnes while TRC capacity stands at 425,000 tonnes per annum, a mere 3 percent of transportation needs. Lorries haul most of the cargo and this method of transportation is not the most efficient, since it is costly. At the same time trains are environment friendly as there is just one engine instead of countless bus and lorry engines as we usually have.

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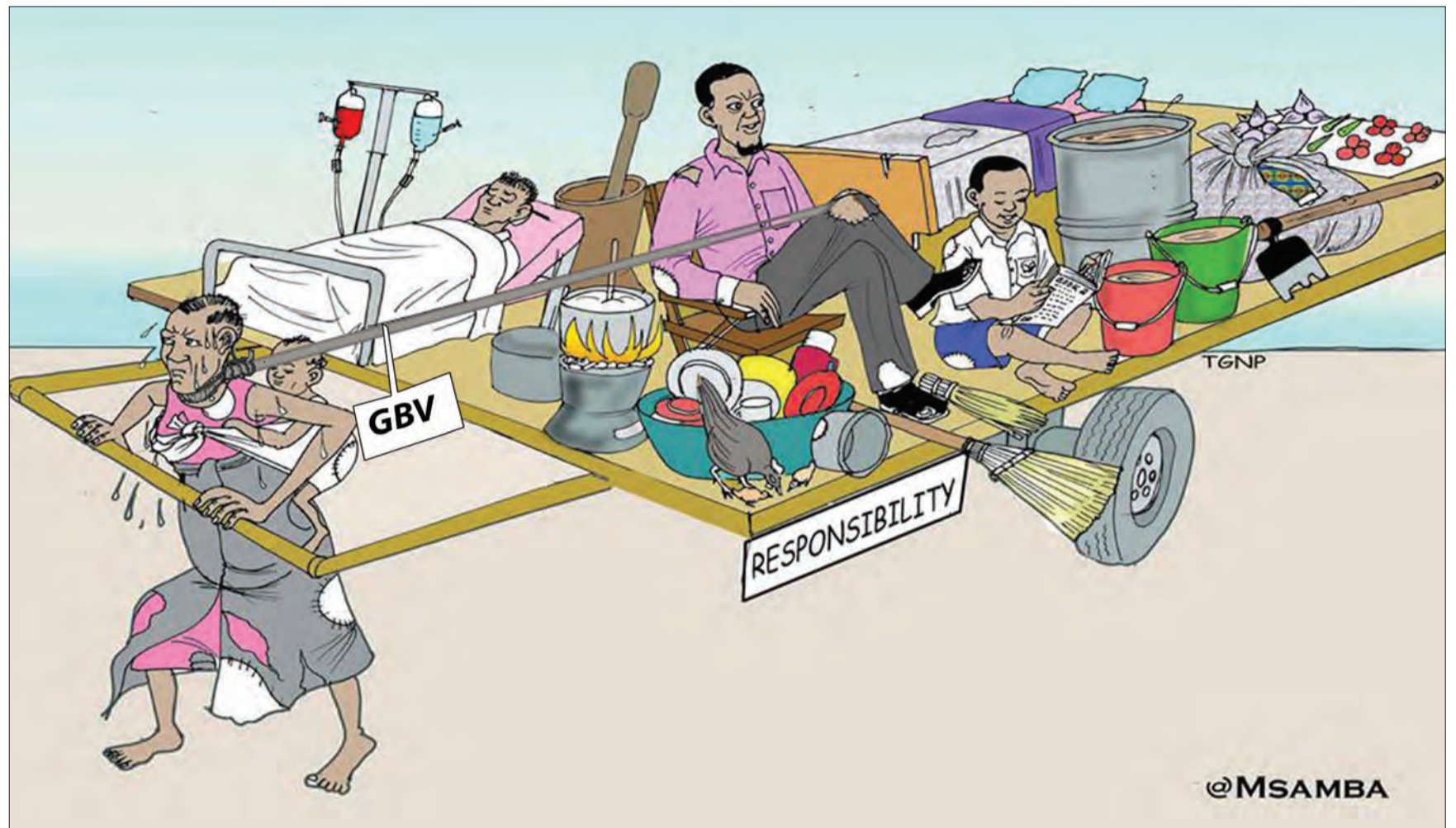
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO
Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO, 0716 500500

Newsdesk

General Line: 0745 700710
News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757154767
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Sales and Marketing:
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Trophy hunting: No place for forced removals in wildlife conservation

By Ivo Vegter

Ross Harvey, writing for the Conservation Action Trust, demonstrates why SADC countries are right to believe animal rights groups care more about animals than about African people. He advocates forced population removals by militarised eco-warriors, but worries about the morality of hunting.

In November 2019, I wrote a column explaining why animal rights groups should be kicked out of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), if the treaty is to be saved.

The countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have been crystal clear on the matter: by their opposition to the principle of sustainable use in conservation (read: hunting), animal rights groups from the rich world are dismissing the views of range state countries that actually have charismatic animals to protect.

Two weeks ago, the Conservation Action Trust, a South African animal rights group, published an opinion piece by Ross Harvey in these pages. In it, he declares that trophy hunting, as advocated for by SADC range states, "may entrench a Western narrative of supremacy underpinned by chauvinistic, colonialist and crudely utilitarian anthropocentric attitudes".

So African countries are colonising themselves, now?

The SADC declaration at the close of the most recent CITES conference included this paragraph: "This anti-sustainable use and anti-trade ideology now dominates decisions made by many states who are party to CITES. States are increasingly influenced by the dominance both at meetings of the decision-making structures of CITES and in their run-up by protectionist NGOs whose ideological position has no basis in science or experience and is not shared in any way by the Member States of SADC and their people." But the Conservation Action Trust will have none of it. Harvey acknowledges the science that trophy hunting bans imperil biodiversity, but he agrees with a response that policy should be based not only on science, but also on emotion. And his emotions, it seems, trump the views of millions of Africans. He'd have us believe that unlike hunting, telling Africans what to think and how to manage their affairs do not "entrench a Western narrative of supremacy underpinned by chauvinistic, colonialist attitudes". Perhaps the uppity SADC representatives should have asked his permission before threatening to withdraw from

CITES because they were sick of Westerners telling them what to do. In his headline and opening paragraph, he invokes the sixth extinction, disappearing birds, and disappearing biodiversity, as if they are somehow caused or made worse by trophy hunting. They aren't. The narrative of a "sixth mass extinction" is not only wildly exaggerated, as was the recent paper about disappearing birds, but extinctions are largely caused by habitat loss, not trophy hunting. "Morally, the idea of hunting any species faced with plausible extinction is intuitively disturbing," he writes. But it isn't, and intuition isn't science.

In 1965, game in South Africa was practically extinct outside its national parks. While domesticated livestock numbers increased by a factor of 4.5 during the 20th century, the number of game halved.

Since the advent of the private game ranching industry in the 1970s and the law that established private game ownership in 1991, numerous species have been brought back from the brink of extinction, and game numbers – contrary to what happened in East and West Africa – began to rise again. Today, National Parks and protected areas account for six million hectares, or about 5% of South Africa's land area, supporting six million head of game. Private game ranches cover more than 21 million hectares, supporting a similar number of game. When I was a kid, in the 1970s and 1980s, we used to visit Kruger often as a family. I recall vividly how rare sightings of big antelope such as roan and sable were. Even today, South Africa's National Parks support fewer than 500 sable antelope, fewer than 200 roan antelope and only about 1,000 bontebok. All are more rare than black rhino, which number 1,382 on state land. The private game ranching industry has bred these species right out of trouble, however. Today, private ranches, reserves or farms host 4,500 sable, 2,300 roan and more than 7,000 bontebok. In some cases, private game ranches account for 90% of the total population of wildlife species.

Elsewhere, African species that are critically endangered or extinct in the wild, like the scimitar-horned oryx, the addax and the dama gazelle, roam the Texas plains in their hundreds, entirely supported by hunting revenue.

Harvey claims that trophy hunters consist "largely" of "Western individuals". In South Africa, at least, that is far from true. Foreign hunters account for only 18% of the game ranching industry's total revenue. Local hunters account for 54%. By contrast, eco-tourism,

which is often proposed as an alternative by animal rights groups, accounts for only 5% of total revenue.

The reason for this is simple. The vast majority of game ranches are not in scenic locations on the beaten tourist track. The few that are well-positioned to profit from eco-tourism likely already do so. Some operate as dual-purpose facilities, supporting eco-tourism, but making the majority of their revenue from hunting parties, and ensuring that the twain never meet. Many others couldn't hope to attract the hundreds of photographic tourists it would take to make up for the fees paid by a single big game hunter. Harvey mentions the experience of declining elephant numbers in the Selous Game Reserve, but both he and the source he cites conflate hunting with poaching, and never offer data to support which is the actual threat to game populations. They mention "rampant corruption", without explaining why they then lay the blame at the door of trophy hunters. Nor do they address the fact that hunting alone is not necessarily the complete answer. South Africa's game numbers only took off once private property rights in game were established. Unlike in Tanzania, most hunting in South Africa is not subject to quotas set by the government. It is controlled by private ranch owners, who each know best how to manage their own game. They also ignore contradictory evidence, such as the Buby Valley Conservancy in Zimbabwe, which was converted from a barren cattle ranch to a thriving reserve supporting all of the Big Five, funded exclusively by trophy and meat hunting.

Many more private game ranches and reserves depend for a large part of their income on trophy hunting. With only a small share of revenue coming from ecotourism, the idea of prohibiting hunting would be so counterproductive as to be ridiculous.

Harvey says trophy hunting is typically defended under a "consequentialist moral framework". That is, because the outcomes are expected to be good for society and wildlife, it is deemed morally acceptable. Then he says "the failure of consequentialism lies in its inability to omnisciently predict the collective outcome with any degree of computing accuracy". It seems weird to admit positive outcomes, yet complain that you can't perfectly predict them. Besides, the consequences of prohibiting hunting are very well documented. Kenya lost more than 80% of its wildlife since banning hunting in 1977. Paolo Strampelli is a postgraduate conservation biologist with an aversion to

hunting, works in southern Tanzania, specialising in large carnivore conservation. He explains that banning hunting, as advocated by animal rights idealists, will have dire consequences for Africa's wildlife. "As a conservation biologist, while I of course care about the welfare of individuals, the main priority for me will always have to be the long-term survival of the population," he writes in an article republished by Africa Geographic. "Both myself and other fellow conservation biologists that have spent time on the ground learning about the issue, and who share these views, care deeply about wildlife. Our main interest is try and ensure that policy decisions help provide these threatened populations with the best long-term chance of survival. We have seen what happens when wildlife has no value: millions of acres of wild land can be lost in the space of a few years; within months, farms and cattle take the place of wildlife which has been there since the dawn of man. More lions can be poisoned or killed in retaliation for livestock losses in one location in a month than are killed through trophy hunting across the whole country in one year." No wonder Harvey doesn't like consequentialist morality. The consequences of his emotional and anti-scientific views, were they to be imposed on African wildlife range states, would indeed be terrible. Unless... well, unless we hear about the alternatives to trophy hunting that Harvey says do exist, and for which he says "global funding for their replication and scaling is now necessary". He doesn't tell us what those alternatives are, beyond linking to an article, presumably in the hope that we'd simply accept it's true without checking. What he concealed is that the cited article actually advocates "green militarisation and human population displacement". You read that right. He wants to impose forced removals upon poor, rural African populations by militarised eco-warriors, because it works. And he's worried that hunting is "morally reprehensible"? He's worried that hunting is an expression of colonialism? This is simply astounding. Harvey and the Conservation Action Trust demonstrate that SADC countries are right to believe that animal rights lobby groups care more about animals than they do about African people. For them to lecture Africans about morality is despicable. Remind me again, why do they have a voice at CITES? Why should anyone listen to their ideology of neo-colonial oppression and misanthropic totalitarianism?

Dairy cattle farming changes lives of livestock keepers in Bagamoyo District

By Beatrice Philemon

Mwanaheri Jumanne, a resident of Ng'ombe village, Magomeni Ward in Bagamoyo District of Coast region says Tanzanian livestock keepers will benefit from business opportunities available in Tanzania and the East Africa region if livestock officers will visit in areas where they are and train them on modern dairy cattle farming, advice on livestock management, types of vaccines and how to apply the right vaccine to control foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). It is the major threat to livestock keepers across the country.

There is need to visit them because they are still using traditional techniques for dairy cattle farming and are not knowledgeable on how to mix and apply foot and mouth disease (FMD) vaccines to control the virus causing outbreaks in cattle and other animals.

Also it will be easier for livestock officers to understand the main challenges they have, what they need and assist livestock keepers operate their activities more effectively.

Mwanaheri is among numerous pastoralists in the district benefiting from the dairy cattle farming project, which provided room for villagers to engage in the cattle farming project.

Elaborating on dairy cattle farming, Mwanaheri who is a mother of five says she began to embark on dairy cattle farming in 1994 starting with three dairy cows and later on obtained 20 cows from her brother Dr Shukuru Kawambwa, lawmaker for Bagamoyo.

Through the knowledge and skills gained from her father in the 1980s and other livestock experts, so far she has 180 dairy cattle, employed 13 workers, produces 190 litres of milk per day where 120 litres are put to the market. About 76 litres are used to

feed calves.

She availed this to the Agricultural Sector Policy and Institutional Reforms Strengthening (ASPIRES) staff and journalists who visited her dairy farm to learn on challenges she faces and how she operates her dairy cattle farming.

Right now she is able to feed her family, pay school fees for children, pay salaries to 13 workers, train other villagers on dairy cattle farming, dairy cattle feeding and nutrition and other domestic uses such as purchasing petrol worth 360,000/- per month for milk transportation and animal feed, which wasn't the case in the past, the 54-year-old widow says.

"I'm thankful for my brother Dr. Shukuru Kawambwa who took initiative to support me after my husband died to start business to improve my livelihood, take care of my children. Without my brother, I couldn't have managed to pay school fees for my children," she says.

Mwanaheri has also managed to provide five dairy cattle to her other relatives to embark on dairy cattle farming to raise their income and improve livelihoods, and trains them on how to keep their dairy cattle happy and healthy, to produce more high quality milk for commercial and domestic use.

Also she trains them on how to provide proper shelter to avoid viruses that can cause cattle diseases, have enough water as cattle often struggle to get enough water. They also need to keep an eye out for changes in vital signs.

Apart from that, she often receives students from Kaole Wazazi College of Agriculture for field attachment.

In a bid to have enough grass, so far she has allocated 70 acres of land to solve cattle feed shortage.

"We have decided to allocate farm after discover-



Bagamoyo-based widow, Mwanaheri Jumanne leads her cattle from their barn to go for pasture

ing that right now there is a shortage of grass to feed our cattle in Bagamoyo district as more farmers have taken land for farming activities and as climate change continues to affect many areas and cause drought, we will suffer to get grasses to feed cattle," she stated.

"Before I engaged in this project, I used to sell ice cream, baobab and sesame products. The income I got from selling those products was very small, so I couldn't manage even to pay school fees for my children and other domestic expenses," she says.

Right now my life has changed, she says lauding his brother for support that in turn has helped her children to meet their dream and get what they need.

Furthermore she called on women to work harder, take care of their children and make an effort to meet their dreams.

Highlighting on medical care, she says as livestock keeper she works very closely with private veterinarians who perform regular herd checks to make sure the cattle are healthy.

"When dairy cattle get sick, the vets normally come to see my cattle and advice me on what medical treatment should be used to protect them against virus or diseases to make sure the cattle are

healthy while the treated cattle are separated from the rest of the milking herd," she explained.

Also she expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries for plans to ensure that livestock keepers can access FMD vaccines suitable for their cattle.

She said the foot and mouth disease (FMD) is an endemic livestock disease that affects cattle and other animals and causes production losses and hardships for livestock keepers and ranchers.

"In 2018 when my dairy cattle were infected by foot and mouth disease, milk production declined from 276 litres to 190 litres per day," she lamented while urging the state to intervene and get a solution.

She said cattle infected with the disease causes milk production losses dramatically and the virus leaves cattle weakened and unable to produce milk the way they do every day or per day.

For his part the Director of Veterinary Services in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Prof. Hezron Nonga says the government will embark on a nation-wide campaign to collect samples of viruses that cause foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in livestock so that veterinary researchers can come up

with appropriate vaccines to treat the disease.

So far the government has started to collect samples in different areas across the country for cattle and other animals that have been infected with the virus to obtain isolates of the virus.

He said the outbreak of FMD has denied the country opportunity to sell livestock products in the international market.

"All samples that will be collected from livestock and animals that have been infected with the virus will be sent to vaccine manufacturers/industries in Botswana, Kenya and South Africa so that can produce special FMD vaccines for Tanzania," he said.

So far, the country has five known FMD virus sero-types or strains that includes SAT1, SAT2, SAT3, O and A virus and are endemic in different regions across the country, the Veterinary Services Director affirmed, noting that preliminary investigations show that cattle may have gotten the new strain of FMD from wild animals.

He dismissed livestock keepers' complaints that counterfeit vaccines are to blame for the outbreak, saying authorities are ahead of illegal importers of copycats hence it is not possible to have such rampant proliferation.

"The FMD vaccines that are imported into Tanzania undergo verification by the Tanzania Medicine and Medical Devices Authority before going into the market," Prof Nonga argued, advising farmers to calm down as the state moves to find a solution.

Currently Tanzania imports FMD Vaccines from Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Belgium to control the spread of FMD.

The disease affects cattle, sheep, pigs, goat and other wildlife animals with cloven hooves that include buffalo, wildebeest and warthogs.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease is the major obstacle for livestock keepers and the livestock industry value chain across the country because it affects livestock trade in international market, and causes milk production losses.

Recently livestock keepers in Bagamoyo complained against widespread FMD attacks which has badly affected their animals blaming fake vaccines as the main cause.

FMD is transmitted to other animals through direct contact with infected animals or through grass fed or drinking water or tsetse flies come from animals or cattle that are infected with the virus or through a contaminated feed.

Cattle or animals with FMD typically have a fever and sores on the tongue, mouth, feet, reluctance to move or stand, not be able to eat - which leads to decrease in milk production.

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is an endemic livestock disease in different regions across the country while young calves and elderly livestock die quickly from FMD.

The ministerial executive called on livestock keepers to continue to use biosecurity measures and vaccines available in the country as the government continues to seek for special vaccines that will help them prevent or control FMD.

Prophet Isaiah, angel Gabriel and historical itinerary of the names of Jesus

By Anil Kija

NOWHERE in history have names meant as much as they have as in the case of the birth of Christ, and with a monumental ambiguity that has scarcely been resolved down the centuries. The prophet Isaiah was given the most profound images and thus his depiction of Jesus is rivaled only by the Gospel account, and indeed the Book of Isaiah is a mirror and a check on how the later divinely inspired writers represented the life and work of Jesus, in a prophetic book around 800 years before Jesus was born. It shows how the birth and work of Christ was a monumental project in heaven, and the significance thereof has been stock of disputation since ancient times.

Of the two distinctive names of Jesus, one has an explanation and another has an elucidation, as Isaiah talks of the child being given the name Emmanuel and explaining that it means 'God (is) with us.' The other name was given by angel Gabriel in the annunciation to the Virgin Mary, that 'he will be called Jesus (or preferably we may use the Kiswahili version, Yesu) for it is he who will save mankind from their sins.' In that context Emmanuel or Immanuel ought to decipher a precise meaning which adds up to 'God (is) with us,' while Jesus or Yesu ought to show that the name is deserved. It means the name is a title, belongs to divinity but Jesus is qualified to have it.

As if this upload of names, meanings and connotations wasn't enough, Isaiah comes up with two instances of verse that explain Immanuel in his presence, and apparently the references aren't just to how Jesus lived in the world but also his posterity. The prophet first says 'unto us a child is given, a male child, and princely power will be upon his shoulders,' which is easy to reconcile with Immanuel as when the Lord is present with people, tremendous and astonishing acts will take place, as Jesus demonstrated by miracles all over the place. The miracles suffice for the name Immanuel, not 'princely power' is pointing to another set of events, huge manifestations.

Comprehending this 'princely power' is better attempted with the longer phrase of the prophet, when he says (or rather is so instructed), that 'a virgin will conceive and give birth,' which looked strange to everyone, and it is also tied up with another typical Isaiah phrase on Jesus, that 'the stone that the builders rejected, has become the foundation stone,' as Jesus is rejected by the priests, and the Lord proceeds to build a new horizon of faith, consigning the Torah priesthood to darkness and destruction. But Isaiah also says 'this matter comes from the Lord, and it has become strange in thine eyes?' He wonders if those hearing it don't know the Lord, his deeds...

This quizzing on being amazed or finding it strange leads back to Egyptian legends, with an implicit assertion that this is a method of the Lord, to build bridges of faith or knowledge of divinity around the world. It was thus easy for Roman worshippers of Mithras and whose learned people knew of Osiris, Isis and Horus to venerate the Virgin Mary, even more so as they could not (by 300 AD) look themselves in eye to say they are Jesus followers. It was a gate to divinity.

Immanuel though wasn't just a name but was pieced together by via post-Canaanite languages, as 'immanent' is something one can't escape from, like a shadow or the sun, while 'nous' is French for 'we,' and hence 'us' and then 'Eli' is Hebrew or Aramaic for God, hence 'Imma-nous-Eli' is to say Eli is immanently (with) us. But the big trap is why the one who shall save mankind from sin is to be called Jesus, or Yesu in a rendering that isn't just a pronunciation shift but has a definite leverage on the meaning. It is as if Jesus is the shift in meaning and Yesu is the intended origin, as it fits the purpose even more, when it comes to tying up with the 'for...'

In English the name Jesus is merely a translation of the Jewish, and some Jewish writers like Dr Eliyahu Litzorkin-Eyzenberg of the Israel Bible Centre have made an effort to stick to the Jewish version of Yeshua. In French however the name Jesus needs at least one more letter to attain an additional meaning, 'Je suis,' I am (the one), but in Kiswahili the meaning is apt and declaratory when tied to its Arabic moorings. Yesu becomes 'Ye Su-bhanna,' that is, becomes an equivalent of divinity, which clearly ties up with Immanuel. It means the Lord revealing himself differently.

Still it is in the second set of verses of Isaiah in relation to Jesus that the historical enigma really unfolds, saying he shall be (known as) 'amazing counselor, prince of peace, mighty God and eternal lord,' (which some recent translations write 'and eternal father' which is disputable). It is not often that these terms are elucidated, each on its own, on how the historical itinerary of the life and work of Jesus brings out this formulation. Jesus was an amazing counselor in the Gospel, and only after Europe ditched traditional Christianity for the Gospel, eliminating prejudgment by priests or rulers, did it embark on proper modernity, so the whole world is traveling on that road.

Jesus was a prince of peace such that his disciples, yearning beyond measure that he fulfill the Isaiah prediction that he 'repairs the broken house of David' wished he gives a sign, removes the corrupt rule of Herod II (the Hasmonean dynasty), and evicts the Romans by a proto-jihad, as he would be followed by all the Jews and well beyond. Jesus knew the design of the Lord was not this one, so he restored the ear of the Roman soldier, cut by the sword of Peter. He was crucified like a lamb, raising not a sound, thus earning a glorious place in heaven - the father and the lamb.

Jesus was or is mighty God in the miracles, the power of creation between his fingers which is given to those whose hearts yearn after him, comprehending the depth of his actions, teaching and suffering to become his witnesses around the world. He became 'king of kings' in Europe as the Lord proceeded to create a new dynasty from the family of the mother of Jesus and the Magdalene - where some legends even say St Paul had married into that family, a daughter called Tamari. This created a new veneration in Europe where kings and notables were seeking to marry from that clan until Emperor Constantine was baptized, whereupon royal families started to intermarry, as the older clan had by now dissipated. Only in this manner did Europe fuse into a single empire obedient to the bishop of Rome for 1000 years, 538 until Luther led a revolt in 1517 for Europe to dissipate into rival faith kingdoms. The power of faith was taking over after the church led the continent for 1000 years, based on worshipping the holy family.

How unrest in Congo thwarted the battle against Ebola

By Peter Beaumont

The men who came to the village of Ntombi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in mid-December aimed to spare no one. Militants with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), one of dozens of armed groups operating in DRC's North Kivu, they hacked to death women and children, killing 22 people in a single incident in one of a series of attacks over the course of a weekend that left 43 dead in total.

The consequence of the attack, one of several in a spike of violence in DRC, are profound: occurring at a moment when health officials believed they were close to finally bringing the country's 16-month long Ebola virus outbreak under control.

"We were down to the last two transmission chains," explained Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) health emergencies programme. "We were so close to finishing," he said, exasperated.

"I was going through the figures last night. If you look at the number of health zones in the area that were affected, they

had dropped dramatically."

Now the health teams, both local and international, that have been battling an epidemic that has claimed more than 2,200 lives over the past year and a half, are faced with a grimly familiar picture: a security crisis that limits their ability to work in one of the three epicentres of the outbreak, and an inevitable resurgence of the disease.

And underlining the continuing Ebola threat, the recent security issues coincide with a particularly intense "super chain" of transmission, involving an individual who had suffered a recurrence of the disease six months after apparently recovering.

The massacre at Ntombi followed hard on the heels of a pair of lethal attacks on health workers at the end of November, variously blamed on the ADF and the Mai Mai armed militia, in Mangina and in the sensitive Biakato Mines region. The attacks forced the evacuation of many staff involved in the Ebola effort.

The chain of circumstances at least partly responsible for the spike in unrest is

also familiar. Faced with a new operation by DRC government forces, targeting the ADF around Beni, the group replied with attacks targeting civilians.

The motives behind other attacks, however, including the attack on the health team at the Biakato Mines, remain murky. All of which led the head of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus, to call for greater security protection for Ebola responders in the Guardian earlier this month.

Ebola responders face deadly attacks. We must step up security in DRC

"There are two dynamics that are impacting on the security situation as it affects the Ebola response," said Ryan, differentiating between attacks by the Mai Mai, a group seen as embedded within the local community and with links to local politicians, and the ADF, a militant Islamist rebel group founded by a Catholic convert.

"There is the situation around Beni, which is an area where the ADF are operating. And that is something completely outside of the Ebola virus response. "Because the ADF is being

pressured by government forces it kills people, and then the local population responds with hostility to [the local UN peacekeeping mission] Monusco, and that in turn creates huge gaps in security for an Ebola response effort that's locked in its hotel with active rioting going on."

The setbacks emerged at a moment when health officials believed they were making significant progress, not only with their policy of improved engagement with a highly suspicious local community, whose resistance to the response was blamed for difficulties in managing the outbreak, but in building up the capacity of the local health system, which was practically non-existent in some areas at the beginning of the outbreak.

"You can see from the figures there are health zones where we've gone 100 days, 181 days without a case, where the disease has been cleared," said Ryan. "But every time we get close [to completely controlling the outbreak], security issues come and knock us down again."

AGENCIES

South Africa: 2019 was Annus Horribilis - and yet, we shall overcome

By Mavuso Msimang

At the end of a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interview in Ottawa in 1985, Oliver Tambo was asked by a journalist if he was optimistic about his people in South Africa achieving freedom in his lifetime. A pregnant silence ensued, and then came Tambo's terse response: "Yes, I am confident, definitely they will!"

By any measure, it was an audacious statement.

In a mocking reaction to Tambo's professed optimism, a man standing nearby asked me if I was familiar with the meaning of the word, 'optimist'. Before I could rustle up an answer, he volunteered a definition: "An optimist, my friend, is a person who is not familiar with reality." Ouch! But then Tambo did have the last laugh. He triumphantly returned to South Africa in 1990, ending 30 years of an exacting exile existence as the leader of the African National Congress (ANC).

The formalisation of the processes that led to the definitive transfer of political power to 'his people' on 27 April 1994 was left to Nelson Mandela, his ANC comrades, and negotiators from other political parties. Tambo departed our shores on 24 April 1993, two weeks after the assassination of his protégé and most respected revolutionary, Chris Hani.

By any account, 2019 has been a very difficult year for South Africa, a veritable annus horribilis. With 2020 barely a week away, the key economic, social, political indicators depict a nation tottering at the brink of a catastrophe. Stats SA reported that the economy grew 0.1% year-on-year during the third quarter of this year. Nationwide blackouts during the fourth quarter hit utilities, manufacturing, mining, agriculture and construction. It is projected that South Africa will need to borrow R335.3 billion in 2019/2020 and the economy itself is expected to grow by a paltry 0.7%.

The unemployment rate stood at 29.1% in the 3rd quarter of 2019. Youth unemployment at 58.2%, was exactly double this already astronomical national rate. The most vulnerable youth are said to be in the 15-24 age range. Substance abuse, according to 2011 Central Drug Authority research, is "twice the global average" and South Africa is rated "amongst the top ten nations in alcohol consumption."



Angry protesters loot alleged foreign-owned shops in a new wave of violence targeting foreign nationals in South Africa. - FILE PHOTO

A World Bank (WB) Report rates South Africa as the most unequal country in the world. It says 1% of the population owns 71% of South Africa's wealth; that the bottom 60% owns a measly 7% of the country's assets. Black South Africans are worst hit by poverty, as are the unemployed, the less educated, female-headed households and children.

Poverty, the WB report continues, remains concentrated in historically disadvantaged areas, such as the former Bantustans. Unfortunately, the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Bill supported by ANC and United Democratic Movement MPs and signed into law by the President last month, will not do anything to alleviate the plight of the rural poor. To paraphrase Gloria Patri, for the poor it will be as it was in Bantustan days, is now and ever shall be. No blasphemy intended! Social cohesion is an important ingredient in the building of a sustainable democracy and requires the development of synergies for a common destiny. Determined and sustained action by the leaders of society - political, business and civic - is necessary to bring this about. Currently, all signs point to the country experiencing an acute social-cohesion deficit. Nelson Mandela, who gave a lot of thought to building bridges to promote understanding among South Africans of different races and ethnic backgrounds, is sometimes derided and even dismissed

as having "sold out". Tutu's aspirational rainbow nation is similarly scoffed at.

There is a huge chasm in wealth disparities, as indicated in the WB Report; generally, white people enjoy a better standard of living relative to black people and this is regarded as a benefit from the apartheid past; the unemployment situation is deteriorating; there is race-indexing of certain jobs, as in affirmative action; levels of poverty mainly within the black community are worsening, signalling what some interpret as the absence of a democracy dividend. These are some of the factors that work against social cohesion. Incidents of random racist behaviour are not uncommon, while the employment of kith and kin is practiced across the board. Clearly, among other reasons, this happens when an economy does not generate enough jobs.

The political arena is, most unfortunately, not faring any better in the promotion of social cohesion. Democratic Alliance (DA) party leader, Mmusi Maimane's recent departure and Herman Mashaba's resignation as Joburg City mayor have been attributed to transformational difficulties within the DA. Top Economic Freedom Front (EFF) leaders seem to take a particular delight in launching racist attacks on political opponents and 'banning' journalists whose coverage they detest. Significantly, it is individuals associated with exposing

corruption in which EFF leaders have been implicated that have been the object of their most vitriolic attacks.

The ANC, a preeminent signatory of the Freedom Charter, the document which says something about South Africa belonging to all who live in it, black and white, has also succumbed to the racism bug. Addressing a meeting in Soweto recently, ANC deputy secretary-general Jessie Duarte was moved to label her organisation "tribalistic and racist". She accused it of "marginalising its members who are not black Africans." Indeed, senior ANC members are sometimes heard in conversation referring to their mixed-race comrades and those of Indian heritage as 'minorities'. This is despite the fact that members from these communities played second fiddle to no one during the ANC-led struggle for freedom and some paid the supreme sacrifice fighting under the banner of the organisation.

That people who are presently referred to as Africans - aren't we all Africans, by the way? - were the object of the most pernicious apartheid repression is incontestable - if the Khoi and the San also agree! As such, it is understandable that they are the prime beneficiaries of government programmes aimed at redressing past injustices. However, this policy requires constant review, lest it becomes prejudicial to the interests and welfare of other deserving citizens. A

community in need of water, sanitation, a school, etc. should be assisted purely on the basis of the acuteness of need, irrespective of its ethnic or racial background.

By all rational assessments, it is rampant corruption, now endemic in the ANC, that has more than anything else pushed the country to the very edge of the abyss. Once regarded by the ordinary people as the leader of society and torchbearer of democratic values, the ANC that emerged from ten years of leadership by a president who was up to his gills in corruption allegations had lost much of the respect it had previously enjoyed. Many of Zuma's colleagues on the National Executive Committee (NEC) were not rated any better. With the exception of a brave few, many simply sat like tranquilised rhinoceros, unable to raise a limb in defence of the soul of what was once called "the glorious movement". Politics of hunger, as Kgalema Motlanthe likes to say, or is it the allures of the feeding trough? When Zuma finally bowed out of office at the ANC's 54th conference in December 2017, all of 2360 delegates voted into the position of Secretary-General a man engulfed in a litany of corruption allegations dating back to the time when he was the Premier of the Free State, a man whose leadership of the party in the province was rife with factionalism; a man who had lost two court decisions following complaints citing election irregularities.

The Capture of the ANC It is important to distinguish between ordinary corruption, even that of the gigantic 'Bosasa' scale, and state capture. The modus operandi for state capture involves influencing the

strategic placement of decision-makers in key areas to shape the rules of the game to the capturer's advantage. The collaborating villains are, of course, handsomely rewarded for the betrayal of their oaths of office. When the Guptas secured the cooperation of Zuma in their state-capture, their enterprise hit the jackpot. It gained access to the highest levels in the hierarchy, starting with the minister and on to a compliant chain-of-command structure put in place to ensure the plan was carrying out to the letter. That is why Eskom, Transnet, Denel, SABC, SAA, etc. were captured with such facility.

The Guptas also appreciated the importance of capturing the ANC NEC, the organisation's highest decision-making body between its five-yearly conferences. They went for the leagues as well. The Women's League was well disposed towards the Guptas and supported the ANC delegation that demanded the reopening of their closed bank accounts. They looked after the financial interests of Youth League's then President, Collen Maine. He was later to tell mourners at Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's memorial service that he had been introduced to the Guptas by Supra Mahumapelo, the chairperson of the ANC in the Northwest and Premier of the province.

The Guptas did not find it necessary to approach the Veterans League, which was to all intents and purposes stillborn, having been starved of operational funds by the mother body. Instead, they focused their attention on the MK Military Veterans, which is not part of the ANC organisational structure but retains offices at Luthuli House. However, it had Zuma's support who appointed its President, Kebby Maphatsoe, Deputy Minister of Defence in charge of Military Veterans. Confirmed reports say the former Deputy Minister lost his arm to a Ugandan sniper while fleeing the armed struggle. The Guptas regarded him as an ally.

The election of Cyril Ramaphosa as ANC President and Snuki Zikalala as Veterans League President has somewhat normalised

the situation. The public must be eternally grateful for the release of the #GuptaLeaks as it got a peep of the goings-on in the Gupta compound in the Saxonwold suburb of Sandton where government ministers attended meetings at the behest of their hosts. It was sad listening to former finance minister Trevor Manuel tell the Zondo Commission how an emotional Fikile Mbalula reported at a 2011 NEC meeting how he had been congratulated by Ajay Gupta who told him that he would be made minister of sport and recreation. Mbalula himself had not been made aware by Zuma that he was offering him this appointment. It is the absence of any reaction by the NEC to Mbalula's plea that shocked the viewers. This is not surprising considering how some of the members were beholden to the Guptas who treated them to holidays at the luxurious Oberoi hotel in Dubai.

Just so that it doesn't happen again, it is important for the ANC leadership, veterans included, to reflect on what actually went wrong with the organisation during the past decade. Objectively, we will see a bunch of people who through sheer cowardice, sat back and allowed the Guptas to thoroughly corrupt an ANC President in the person of Jacob Zuma. He should not have been elected to office in the first place, especially after Shabir Shaikh's 15-year conviction on corruption and fraud charges; also, not after his rape case (in which he was acquitted) during which he admitted to having engaged in unprotected sex with one Fezekile "Khwezi" Kuzwayo, a troubled young woman who was HIV positive. Sad to say, she had to go into hiding to flee the wrath of marauding ANC Women's League and Youth League members who accused her of being a harlot. For a while, she even had to live in Holland as a refugee. Julius Malema, then-incoming President of the ANC, declared himself satisfied that Khwezi had not been raped as she had asked Zuma for bus fare home in the morning after their congress. Those were the days when he was also willing to kill for Zuma. Malema, who later became Zuma's nemesis, obviously subscribes to the philosophy.

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Repairing the House of David, past and present

By Anil Kija

For some reason, Biblical architecture is structured in the pairing of Jesus and David, the second king of the Jews whose son Solomon was at once the wisest person who ever lived according to Scriptures and one who more or less led Israel into perdition. He led the Jews to fraternizing with the gods of people whom the Lord had expelled before them, and after his rule the Lord split the kingdom into two, raised other kingdoms and put Israel into peril (both parts, after war was forbidden between the two parts of Israel). The main part fell to Assyria in 720 BC in terrible suffering, and the southern kingdom (the Judah zone) fell to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon in 596 BC and was restored after 70 years with Persian rule as other tribes disappeared. Scripture unites the work of Jesus

intensely with David, such that Jesus is known as the 'lion of Judah,' which indeed it must be David as he put to death a lion going after his sheep after he was anointed by the prophet Samuel. There is a degree to which Jesus himself gave credence to these interpretations of the work of the messiah, but inwardly he knew - and raised the topic sparingly with his disciples - that this was not the case. It was this dispute which colored the public view of Jesus the deeper they contemplated what he was saying, that he wasn't simply a son of David. Jesus tells the public (Jews and others in the vicinity) that 'I wasn't sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' by which he means the house of David, as Judah (mixed with Benjamin) had by the birth of Jesus coalesced into one and the ten tribes were people of a different background after

the wars and dispersals of 700 years. Thus the woman at the well, knowing Jesus by some identification to be a Jew, expresses surprise that he should ask for water from her - as the tribes of Jacob (who owned that well, that is what she says) as Samaritans, didn't mix with Judeans, while technically they were both Jews. At some point Jesus says food for children isn't given to 'dogs,' pushing those around to seek his presence and climb over those differences nonetheless.

The first stage of repairing the house of David was with Ezra, when the Lord raised this priest and scholar of the Torah from the dead to rewrite it, as no copies were found upon returning from the Babylonian captivity. This period formally ends with the fall in AD 70, after the priests put to death James, a disciple and brother of Jesus near the temple, repeating

what has earlier happened with the prophet Zachariah, who had prophesized the terrible agony awaiting Jews at the hands of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in chapter 43 of his book. It was fulfilled, and worse. The second dispersion of the Jews (or Judah specifically) started at that point and the Lord now had an inverse purpose to that in the ancient fall, and Babylonian captivity. As with Yusuf in Egypt, the Lord raised Daniel and a few other devout Jews to demonstrate divine presence before the Baal worshippers in that land, and finally more God-fearing Zoroastrian Persia overran the kingdom, as Belshazzar drank by cups of the temple. The Esther episode set the stage for return.

The restored house of David however had changed only in some aspects, for instance the rise of baptism from Elijah legacy and other influences, of cleansing

with water rather than sacrifices, but the latter rituals continued until AD70 at the time of the fall. Then the Lord rebuild the house of Solomon in Europe through the work of Josephus Flavius, who sought surrender to a Roman general in the Jerusalem sacking and devastation amidst a prolonged civil war - a plague from heaven as the Jews refused to worship a bust of Roman emperor Caligula, but having rejected Jesus. Josephus adopted the clan name Flavius and initiated a club in the military and then in the Roman administration for the veneration of the Persian sun god Mithras, a major strategic shift.

In time this proto-Masonic club would engulf most of high class Rome, reducing the worship of numerous Greek and Roman gods to the working class and peasant populations, and the way many see witchcraft and

tribal sacrifices in modern Africa. As the peripheral lands of the Roman empire were gathering in energy, a fall awaited Rome the way ancient Israel fell when Sham (Lebanon), Assyria (Syria) and Babylon (Iraq) rose to contest its authority, and eventually Persia (Iran) took over, and Greece replaced it for lasting mixed Greco-Persian dynasties, until the rise of Rome in the half century to the birth of Jesus. The learning of the Greeks inspired St Paul's letters or teaching as he built bridges with the Torah (Jewish law) and laid boundaries of faith.

This input of the falling house of Solomon built the foundations of the faith divide in Europe to the present, as Masonic doubts led to the pursuit of truth and reason without reference to Biblical teachings, such that science and emancipation appeared to be a hallmark of the masons, not faith.

The persecution of the Jews for not following Jesus (as the followers dissolved into Christianity) ensured that there is a check-mate to feudal rule as the (Jewish) bourgeoisie accumulated while living a strict life of the Torah. By pursuing learning and industry, supported by liberal royals, the bourgeoisie prepared Europe for free thinking and market economy, finally colonization that uplifted Africa from the 'depths of darkness,' but only as sacrifices to Baal fell into a minor cult. Thus restructured faith and remolded Europe rebuilt the House of David, not for Jews but for the whole world, and for this work the Lord awarded the Jews the land of America, with Israel nearly as an outpost of the United States. Within this, in the past decade the Lord took the kingship to the house of Zedekiah, in the presidency of Barack Obama, who

'What AfDB is doing to support Africa's growth, development'

By Bassey Udo

THE African Development Bank (AfDB) President, Akinwumi Adesina, has said the bank through its High 5s programme, supported the growth and impacted the development of the African continent.

Speaking at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Summit in Abuja recently Adesina said through the programme, the AfDB has been able to light up and power Africa, feed Africa, industrialize Africa, integrate Africa and improve the quality of life for the people of Africa.

In the past four years, he said, the bank has helped to support 18 million people connected to electricity; 141 million people with access to agricultural technologies for food security; 13 million people with access to finance; 101 million people with access to improved transport, and 60 million people with access to improved water and sanitation.

He said the bank has made substantial investments in the ECOWAS region, with portfolio investments of about \$20 billion focusing on energy and transport infrastructure, private sector, regional financial market integration, water and sanitation.

"The bank has been very responsive during critical times that matter most. We are there always at the right time, with the right product, for the right needs of countries," Mr Adesina said.

He cited the support to Nigeria, where the bank helped to provide \$600 million of budget support that helped it get out of the recent economic recession, and another \$500 million to

establish the Development Bank of Nigeria.

Another \$230 million, he said, was provided by the bank for support towards stabilizing livelihoods in the North-east region of Nigeria.

Apart from Nigeria, the AfDB President said last week the bank also provided about \$225 million for both budget support and investment programme to support social investments in Côte d'Ivoire.

Underlining the importance of regional connectivity as critical to boost trade and investments, he said the bank has done a lot to promote regional integration as the core work of the Bank.

As part of the support, he said the bank supported the construction of the Blaise Diagne international airport in Senegal with about €525 million, as well as the provision of another \$120 million for the construction of the new Terminal 3 for Kotoka international airport in Ghana.

Also, he said, the bank supported the construction of the Mandela Praia airport in Cape Verde with \$55 million, and provided a \$130 million to Air Côte d'Ivoire for the acquisition of a new aircraft fleet that has helped boost their capacity.

READ ALSO: AfDB has \$20bn investments' portfolio in ECOWAS - Adesina

He said the bank invested as well in the development of ports, including €60 million for the Lomé Container Terminal port; fully financed with \$96 million the new landmark SeneGambia Bridge that links The Gambia and Senegal and financed the Regional Express Train of Senegal with €183 million.

During its second Africa Investment Forum last



African Development Bank (AfDB) President, Akinwumi Adesina

month, he said the bank and its partners mobilized investments of about \$2.6 billion for the development of the Accra Sky Train and another \$251 million towards the Lagos Cable Car Transit System projects.

Other investment supports include the \$1.5 billion finance for the development of major transport corridors to improve inter connectivity in the ECOWAS region, including the construction and rehabilitation of 4,000 kilometers of main corridor roads.

"The Lagos-Abidjan Highway will become a reality. It has to! We (AfDB) will deliver on this project.

That's why the African Development Bank has provided \$11.1 million to the ECOWAS Commission to develop the Master Plan for the Lagos-Abidjan highway corridor.

"We'll be providing an additional \$13.5 million for the feasibility studies to be completed next year. We expect that construction will

start in 2022," Mr Adesina said.

To help boost industrial development, manufacturing and competitive value chains for countries in the region, he said the bank invested about \$100 million to support Guinea (the largest producer of bauxite globally) move toward its transformation into aluminum, including a railway network to link its bauxite mining area to the port of Boke.

The bank has also helped to syndicate a \$600 million financing facility for Ghana's COCOBOD, in partnership with Credit Suisse, while doing the same for Côte d'Ivoire, to help the two largest producers of cocoa transform their cocoa into value added products and be competitive in the global cocoa value chains.

The bank is also investing \$25 billion for financing agriculture, food and agribusiness in Africa, with the goal of turning Africa into a global powerhouse in

food and agriculture. "The bank will be supporting the development of several Special Agro-industrial Processing Zones, across several countries.

"Special Agro-industrial processing zones for competitive agricultural value chains for regional and global markets will be established from cotton, textile and garments, high value horticulture, dairy, livestock, cashew etc.

"The bank is financing special agro-industrial processing zones in Northern Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal and will be expanding rapidly across countries in the region, including Nigeria," he said.

To support industrialization, he said the Bank is facilitating access to power by providing universal access to electricity through the investment of \$546 million in power interconnection for The Gambia River Basin area and supporting the power interconnection to link

Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Apart from support to the interconnection to link Nigeria, Niger, Benin, and Burkina Faso, the bank is also supporting the power interconnection to link Guinea and Mali; strengthening the West Africa Power Pool, a critical part of ECOWAS master plan for development of the regional power generation and transmission infrastructure.

With these investments, Mr Adesina said, the AfDB expects the electricity grids of 14 ECOWAS countries to be connected by 2020.

This year, he said, the bank launched the \$20 billion Desert to Power initiative to develop the world's largest solar zone with 10,000 MW of power from solar, for the Sahelian countries, to provide electricity for 250 million people, with 90 million from off grid solar systems.

With the share capital of the bank now increased from \$93 billion to \$208 billion, he said the bank is determined to accelerate Africa's development and integration, unlock the full potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"We will integrate the ECOWAS region. I see much hope ahead: transport corridors and highways. Railways connection across the region.

"An integrated monetary zone and financial markets. A zone free for trade, with free movement of people, capital, goods and services. An ECOWAS region whose new currency would be ECO. And the echoes of that will reverberate across the world," he said.

Nurses on front lines of medical plastics recycling initiatives - study

By Norbert Sparrow

When it comes to recycling medical plastics, hospital nurses are on the front lines: Their engagement is critical to a successful "green transition" in the healthcare sector. That was one of the key takeaways from a recent workshop at the Danish Technological Institute exploring recycling programs in medical facilities.

Medical device manufacturers, nurses and representatives from hospitals, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, the Danish Medicines Agency and the PVCMed Alliance attended the workshop on Nov. 25, 2019, in Copenhagen, which focused on PVC, the most widely used plastic in hospitals. Stressing that the commitment of medical professionals is "crucial to the green transition of healthcare," Mette Skriver Revsbech, a nurse at Copenhagen University Hospital, explained to attendees how much plastic waste is generated after just five surgical procedures. That realization motivated her co-workers to take part in a project to collect and repurpose 2,000 used oxygen masks, said Revsbech.

Tobias Johnsen of the PVCMed Alliance reinforced that message by discussing examples of recycling projects initiated in healthcare settings in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Guatemala and the United Kingdom, where it was "striking" that nurses were at the forefront.

One program in Australia is illustrative of what can be achieved. As reported in *PlasticsToday* in February 2019, the PVC Recycling in Hospitals program, developed by the Vinyl Council of Australia and sponsored by medical device OEM Baxter Healthcare, began in 2009 with a single healthcare provider and has since grown to more than 140 hospitals across Australia and New Zealand. It provides recycling bins and training material for staff. Nurses separate three PVC products—IV fluid bags, oxygen tubing and oxygen masks, none of which have been contaminated with bodily fluids or drugs, an important distinction as potentially contaminated materials must not enter the recycling stream. This possibility has stymied recycling efforts in medical facilities in the past; however, it should be noted that a vast amount of medical plastic waste, notably packaging, does not come in contact with patients.

Making worthwhile products from the recyclate is also a key tool for engaging medical personnel, who already have intense professional lives, in recycling initiatives. At the workshop, attendees were shown one example—school shoes donated to South African children living in deep poverty that were made from recycled medical plastics. It takes only 20 IV bags to make a pair of those shoes, according to workshop participants.

Efficient sorting of plastic waste also was a key discussion point. Attendees learned that in the capital region of Denmark, the plastic is collected at the hospital without further sorting, which is done outside the facility because of space considerations.

The PVCMed Alliance proposed a more low-cost solution, whereby sorting takes place in the respective hospital departments. Every hospital could use its own granulator that simply crushes the plastic. Sufficiently large quantities of recyclate can then be sold to a recycler. Such a practice poses no particular risk of infection, said the organization, which represents the PVC medical industry chain. Hospital waste is handled exclusively by professional nurses who know which patients could pose a risk. The experiences from Copenhagen University Hospital and around the world show that mis-sorting is extremely rare, according to PVCMed Alliance.

To simplify sorting and recycling efforts, it's important to begin at the beginning and design products with recycling in mind, noted Annette Bitz from Danish medical device OEM Ambu. She presented a new design manual at the workshop, which makes the case that, as much as possible, a single type of polymer should be specified for the fabrication of a medical device. Plastics expert Peter Sommer-Larsen from the Danish Technological Institute cited the example of oxygen masks, which consist of soft and hard parts. They can be made either in PVC of varying softnesses, or two different types of polymers. Choosing the latter option makes recycling impossible, partly because of the plastics' different melting points, stressed Sommer-Larsen. Considering the product's entire lifecycle at the design stage can lead to a more sustainable outcome when the device has fulfilled its primary purpose.

African women challenged to take up more leadership roles

KINSHASA

ENTREPRENEURS, traders, business leaders coming from Rwanda, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Gabon, all shared their different experiences with leadership.

Adriana Talensi, Sivi Malukisa, Daphnee Mayet told of their journeys full of challenges at the 3rd edition of the Biashara networking in Pointe-noire, Congo.

"By being myself, by being a woman who works, a woman who knows what she wants to do. I am in a company I created in which I am the only investor. But in other businesses, I am associated with men. It is true that sometimes there are challenges, trying to impose on you, to impose to your qualities. I am the youngest and only woman. Indeed, sometimes it can be painful. There are so many myths: that the woman is weak, we must protect her... The woman needs us to think for her and tell her what to do. All we have to do is...As the panel's theme said, impose yourself but gently. "To impose oneself through ideas," said Sivi Malukisa, CEO, Manitech Congo.

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West Sussex group ready to tackle Kilimanjaro climb

BY Ryan Burrows

A group of climbers will ring in the New Year tackling one of the world's most famous mountains in aid of an inspirational West Sussex cause.

The group are setting off for Mount Kilimanjaro and are expected to take four days to reach the summit in Tanzania - in time to ring in 2020.

Those taking part will have to brave sub-zero temperatures and

altitude sickness on their journey to the top of the almost 6,000 metre high mountain, the highest on the continent of Africa.

Money raised from the climb will go to St Wilfrid's Hospice, which helps those across West Sussex with a range of life-limiting conditions.

Spirit FM's managing director Sally Austin is among those taking part in the climb: "Some of the people I've spoken to that have done it before have literally said it's one step, one breath and it's

really hard to get your breath when you're that near the top, because it's just under 6,000 metres.

"To be doing something that I have no control is something that is well out of my comfort zone, it's something I'm losing sleep over because I just don't want to let anybody down."

The group's inspiration for the challenge came from the 'Do Something' movement, set up by Spirit FM Local Heroes Award winner Haydn Walden.

Haydn was inspired to set up the movement after suffering three tragic bereavements in the space of just a few years.

Meet the man honoured for bravery at Spirit FM's Local Hero Awards

"The Do Something movement originally came around after the tragic loss of my second daughter, Meisee. It became a necessity for my own mental well being when I lost my wife, Laura, only 9 months later.

"Left with nothing, I started using #DoSomething on social media to help keep myself accountable on a daily basis. Little did I know that my drive to get up and Do Something each day would affect others around me so positively. The idea that, no matter how depressed or low you feel in life, no matter how broken you are, you can Do Something positive. And that may change your life. "Will you join me? Will you get up and Do Something?" says Haydn Walden

BUSINESS

TCB calls for collective efforts to curb coffee farming hiccups

Zambia plans to compel copper mining firms to account for gold

LUSAKA

ZAMBIA plans to make copper mining companies account for the gold they produce as it seeks to boost revenue from its mineral resources, a senior ministry of mines official said on Thursday.

Ministry of Mines Permanent Secretary Barnaby Mulenga told a news conference that Zambia, Africa's second-largest copper producer, was missing out on a lot of revenue because only one large mine was declaring its gold output.

First Quantum Minerals' Kansanshi Mine, the only mine that has been declaring its gold production, produced 4,200 kg of gold last year.

Mining accounts for more than 70 percent of Zambia's foreign exchange earnings and other companies operating in the southern African nation include Barrick Gold Corp, Glencore and Vedanta Resources.

Mulenga said Zambia's target for gold production next year was 40,000 kg and that would come from primary and secondary sources, including artisanal and small-scale miners.

Mulenga said some mining companies had not been declaring any gold production, arguing that the

quantities mined were very insignificant and therefore sold as copper.

"Some mining companies have been claiming that it is more of an impurity but gold is precious and can't be an impurity," he said.

"What has been happening is that in some cases the gold has been hidden in the copper blisters or copper cathodes. A system will be put in place to ensure that we account for that gold," he said.

Zambia's mining investment company ZCCM-IH would invest in exploration, mining, processing and trading in gold, its chief executive officer Mabvuto Chipata said at the same briefing.

ZCCM-IH had undertaken initial exploration work in northwestern Zambia in collaboration with the mines ministry and was likely to start mining in the first quarter of next year, Chipata said.

ZCCM-IH had also started to set up centers for buying gold in strategic areas with deposits as a first step in a bid to formalize artisanal and small scale miners, he said.

Chipata said ZCCM-IH would provide technical expertise to artisanal miners on mine planning and safety and give them access to earth moving machinery and processing plants.

By Francis Kajubi

TANZANIA Coffee Board (TCB) has called for collective efforts to address challenges thwarting the development of coffee sub-sector in the country.

TCB's Acting Director General, Prof Jamal Adam told this paper recently that cost is by far the largest obstacle for farmers considering organic certification for production and markets.

He said that large, medium and small scale farmers are interested to venture into organic agriculture, "but there are myriads challenges such as costs in practicing organic farming, pests and climate change."

"All these challenges need to be addressed by both the public and the private sector," he said.

Prof Adam said: "Farmers are responsible for the cost of inspection, which includes the travel and lodging expenses of certifying auditors, as well as annual certification fees."

"This effectively puts organic certification out of reach for most small-scale farmers unless they are part of a cooperative, in which case certifying costs can be split between all members."

He said it is obvious among farmers that organic coffee costs more versus coffee of the same quality that isn't certified as organic. The cost of certification, the additional labor needed, and all the extra work that goes into maintaining traceability adds up.

"The price differential for organic coffee is fair because producing organic coffee is more expensive than conventional method; everything is looking to guarantee the traceability and quality of the product



in order to avoid any kind of contamination. Besides the burden of certification and the additional labor of organic farming, there are other challenges in organic production" he asserted.

According to him, a bio-diverse, organic farm could be healthier and more resilient in the long term than a technified, full sun coffee farm, but it's difficult to quantify that resiliency.

He said when comparing an organic to a non-organic farm, the non-organic one may look more successful because this assessment is based only on factors that are easy to

measure, such as yield and cost of production.

Pests and diseases are the other challenge. With organic production, the focus has to be on prevention. Maintaining proper shade, drainage, and soil health minimizes the conditions in which pests and plant diseases can thrive.

Prof Adam is positive that organic agriculture can serve the industrialization agenda but it will take some time due to mainstreaming process along the value chain together with the increase in internal coffee consumption.

Revealing the trends of organic coffee production, he

said that in 2019/20 Tanzania produced 583 tons of certified Mild Arabica organic coffee worth US\$2,812,326 while at the same time produced 22,545 tons of non-certified Mild Arabica worth US\$2,218,730. It produced 155 tons of certified Hard Arabica worth US\$299,303 against 517 tons of non-certified worth US\$75,329.

Tanzania produced 745 tons of certified Robusta coffee worth US\$1,341,347 against 18,683 tons of non-certified worth US\$24,349,925. The prices for certified mild Arabica was US\$4.82/kg while non-certified was US\$2.19/kg, certified hard Arabica was

US\$1.93/kg against US\$1.47/kg of non-certified. Certified Robusta was sold at US\$1.80/kg versus US\$1.30/kg of non-certified.

Total certified coffee is 3.43 per cent of the total coffee produced in Tanzania amounting to 1,483 tons worth US\$4.453million.

The global organic coffee market stood at US\$7.50billion in 2018 and is anticipated to reach US\$18.35billion by 2027, expanding at a CAGR of 10.62 per cent during the forecast period. For this season total certified coffees is 3.43 per cent of the total coffee produced so far amounts 1,482 tons



Cashewnuts at risk of losing quality as warehouses' walls collapse in Tunduru

By Guardian Correspondent, Tunduru

WALLS of 21 warehouses in Tunduru District have crumbled down, the situation that put cashew nuts at risk of losing its quality, hence attracting low prices of the crop, a senior official has said.

Reports have it that walls of warehouses, which belong to 13 of the 37 Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies (AMCOs) in the district.

AMCO's general manager, Imani Kalembo confirmed to this paper that the situation might lead to jeopardizing the quality of the farmers' cashews.

Kalembo said that the situation was due to the big storage of cashew sacks in the warehouses owing to delays by the

supplier to deliver the products to farmers.

He said due to the high production of the crop in the 2019/2020 season so far there are 5,275,597 kg of raw cashew collected from local farmers being stored into the galaxies of farmers' cooperatives in various areas of the district.

In addition, he said that there are 14 warehouses that are reported to having cracks and making the total number of poor warehouses 35.

According to the manager, the warehouses belong to Asema Amcos, Chichilimbe Amcos, Mlimi Amcos, Mruji Amcos, Mshikamano Amcos, Mtetesi Amcos, Munjapo Amcos, Mutetesi Amcos, Namitili Amcos, Namiungo Amcos, Nguvumali Amcos, Sama Amcos and Tinginya.

He said the situation has

led to farmers' primary trade unions to spend more on strengthening protection to ensure the safety of farmers' cashews.

He said in order to control the situation his office had issued directives to leaders of all co-operative societies and had planned to repair the cracks and rebuild some of them.

Commenting on the cashew pricing model of this season, Tunduru District Cooperative Officer, George Bisani said that prices currently seem to continue to decline each day of auction.

He said the first auction which took place on December 7/2019 cashew was sold for an average of 2,622.98/-, per kilogram and the seventh auction held on December 19 the price dropped to an average of 2,598.23/-

Record online sales give US holiday shopping season a boost: report

New York

U.S. shoppers spent more online during this year's holiday shopping season, a report by Mastercard Inc (MA.N) showed on Wednesday, with e-commerce sales hitting a record high.

The holiday shopping season is a crucial period for retailers and can account for up to 40% of annual sales. But this year, Thanksgiving, which traditionally starts the U.S. holiday shopping period, was on Nov. 28, nearly a week later than

last year's Nov. 22, leaving retailers with six fewer days to drive sales between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

E-commerce sales this year made up 14.6% of total retail and rose 18.8% from the 2018 period, according to Mastercard's data tracking retail sales from Nov. 1 through Christmas Eve.

Overall holiday retail sales, excluding autos, rose 3.4%.

"E-commerce sales hit a record high this year with more people doing their holiday shopping online," said Steve Sa-

dove, senior adviser for Mastercard.

"Due to a later than usual Thanksgiving holiday, we saw retailers offering omnichannel sales earlier in the season, meeting consumers' demand for the best deals across all channels and devices," Sadove said.

Retailers have invested heavily to provide same-day delivery, lockers for store pick-up and improve their online presence as they battle against retail giant Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) for market share.

U.S. President Donald Trump, whose support in the polls has been buoyed by strong economic data despite his impeachment by the House of Representatives, heralded the news in a tweet in all capital letters.

However, Mastercard spokesman William Tsang, citing 2018's 5.1% growth in total sales, said this year's holiday sales growth was not the biggest ever.

The White House had no immediate comment on the apparent discrepancy. Despite slowing global growth, U.S.

consumer spending is benefiting from wage growth and a strong labor market, retail consultants and analysts say.

The holiday season was challenging for retailers after Amazon expanded its free return policy to include products that were not previously eligible, giving consumers until January to return even small purchases bought on the website.

FILE PHOTO: Shoppers make their way through Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, decorated for the holidays, in Arlington, Virginia, U.S. December 23,

2019. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

The National Retail Federation had forecast U.S. holiday retail sales over the two months to increase between 3.8% and 4.2%. That compares with an average annual increase of 3.7% over the past five years.

The SpendingPulse report tracks spending by combining sales activity in Mastercard's payments network with estimates of cash and other payment forms but excludes automobile sales.

From medicine to recycling, six African start-ups doing business for good in 2019

DAKAR

As Africa tunes into the burgeoning movement of business for good, young people across the continent are finding innovative solutions to problems from illiteracy to pollution.

There are no figures for how many social enterprises have been started across the continent, but the sector is growing with the emergence of tech hubs and accelerators even in the world's least-developed countries, such as Chad.

Here are six African social enterprises that had people talking in 2019:

1. mPharma: Ghana-based social enterprise mPharma manages prescription inventory for pharmacies to make medicines more affordable for Africans. Started five years ago, the business expanded in 2019 with the purchase of Kenya's second-biggest pharmacy chain and the launch of new initiatives including a financing program for breast cancer treatment in Nigeria. mPharma won \$1.5

million this year from Ebay billionaire Jeff Skoll and plans to eventually supply affordable drugs to public hospitals as well as pharmacies, said founder Gregory Rockson. [nL8N2IR5PC]

2. Easy Solar: Easy Solar provides pay-as-you-go solar-powered lighting and charging systems to people with no electricity access in Sierra Leone. In 2019, the three-year-old company reached 15 of 16 districts in Sierra Leone and expanded to neighboring Liberia.

Founder Nthabiseng Mosia made the Forbes Africa 30 Under 30 list this year, in the category of "game-changers" in technology. She plans to rapidly grow the company's reach in 2020, she said, after passing 300,000 users this year.

3. Toolboksi: Started in Tanzania, Toolboksi is an online platform that aims to reduce unemployment in the informal sector by connecting people seeking carpentry, plumbing or construction work with local artisans and handymen

skilled in those areas.

The two-year-old company has facilitated over 3,000 transactions so far. In 2019 Toolboksi won Best Social Impact Start-up for its growth this year at the Southern Africa Start-up Awards.

4. SiyaBuddy: SiyaBuddy is a recycling and waste management company in South Africa that aims to create jobs while helping the environment. The start-up buys waste from local collectors, mostly women, and sells it to recycling

companies.

SiyaBuddy gained recognition and funding this year when it won the World Export Development Forum young entrepreneurs pitch contest in Ethiopia. Since 2017, it has created 21 jobs and supported over 1,000 waste-pickers.

5. Farmcrowdy: Farmcrowdy is a digital lending platform in Nigeria that connects farmers with small investors who can sponsor them during a season and collect a small return when they harvest. It

aims to reduce hunger and poverty by increasing food production.

With over 25,000 small-scale farmers involved, Farmcrowdy has been growing quickly since it launched three years ago. It gained momentum in 2019, winning a number of awards including Africa's Innovative Business of the Year by the British Awards for African Development.

6. Eco-Warriors: Launched in Mauritius in 2019, Eco-Warriors is a mobile game application that teaches

children about climate change and conservation. It includes monthly comic books distributed for free if young players participate in recycling household waste.

Eco-Warriors is a few months old and has won several prizes and the support of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It aims to teach sustainability throughout the Indian Ocean region, including in Reunion Island and Madagascar. (Reuters).

Calif law will compel small businesses to rethink staffing

A CALIFORNIA law that makes it harder for companies to treat workers as independent contractors takes effect next week, forcing small businesses in and outside the state to rethink their staffing.

The law puts tough restrictions on who can be independent contractors or freelancers rather than employees. Supporters say it addresses inequities created by the growth of the gig economy, including the employment practices of ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft that use contractors. Company owners with independent contractors must now decide whether to hire them as employees or look for help in other states. Another alternative: asking these workers to start their own businesses, a setup the law allows.

Although the law affects companies of all sizes and out-of-state businesses that use California contractors, it likely will have a greater impact on the many small businesses that have hired independent contractors because of limited staffing budgets.

Tamara Ellison has used independent contractors in both her consulting and construction businesses. She's expecting to hire five of her consulting contractors as employees to bring her company into compliance with the law. But she's also thinking she may have to limit the services she offers because not all her hires will have all the skills she needs

for all her clients. She may also have to raise her prices, a worrisome proposition.

"Little companies just trying to start out won't be able to afford our services," says Ellison, whose Ontario, California-based company bears her name.

Ellison won't need to hire her construction contractors; they're subcontractors, a classification that complies with the new law.

The law approved by the California Legislature in September codifies a 2018 ruling by the state's Supreme Court that said workers misclassified as independent contractors lose rights and protections including a minimum wage, workers' compensation and unemployment compensation. The ruling came in a lawsuit brought against the delivery company Dynamex; workers around the country have complained that services like Uber and Lyft have misclassified them as well.

The law is being challenged in state courts, and companies including Uber and Lyft are campaigning for a referendum on the 2020 election ballot on whether they should be exempt from the law. And employment law attorneys expect the Legislature to add to the list of professions the law already excludes.

Independent contractors and freelancers have long been a sore point for federal and state officials who contend that many of these workers are doing work

that employees do. When employers classify workers as independent contractors, they avoid taxes including the 6.2% of salary and wages companies must pay for Social Security and the 1.45% they must pay for Medicare. Employers must also pay for workers' compensation and unemployment and disability insurance.

For many small business owners, especially those who do a variety of projects requiring different types of expertise, contractors provide more flexibility. Webconsults, a digital marketing agency with offices in California and Tennessee, bases its hiring decision on the work it has and whether projects are long or short term.

"We may need a developer who specializes in a specific language to help us build one website," managing partner John McGhee says. "If we don't anticipate having to use that language again in the near future, we'll hire a contractor to build the website."

The layoffs companies were forced to make during and after the Great Recession encouraged many small business owners to choose independent contractors over employees. Contractors cost less – they don't get health insurance, 401(k) contributions and other benefits – and owners don't have to let people go when business slows.

The new law allows workers to be classified as independent contractors only if companies don't have



Uber and Lyft drivers carry signs during a demonstration outside of Uber headquarters in San Francisco. A California law that makes it harder for companies to treat workers as independent contractors takes effect next week, forcing small businesses in and outside the state to rethink their staffing. AP Photo.

the right to control their work and how it is done. A number of factors go into making that determination, including how closely the worker is supervised – for example, who sets their hours. The work being done must not be part of the company's regular business, and the worker's occupation must be distinct from the company's; in other words, a graphic designer cannot be an independent contractor for a graphic design firm.

There are exemptions for professionals like doctors, lawyers, architects and

insurance brokers, but they must have the freedom to set their own hours, negotiate their own fees and exercise their own judgment as they do their jobs. Workers like graphic artists, freelance writers and travel agents can also be exempt if they have similar autonomy. And people who work in barber shops, hair and nail salons and spas can have exemptions, but they have to set their own rates and hours, choose their own clients and be paid directly by the clients.

Marisa Vallbona has

transitioned a contractor who has worked for her in California into an employee, and is being more selective about the work she takes on in the state. Vallbona, who recently moved the headquarters of her public relations firm, CIM, to Houston from California, is now using only Texas-based contractors.

"I don't work with freelancers in California anymore because of the gig economy problems," she says.

Other companies inside and out of California are

likely to follow suit. The increase in remote working over the past two decades has made it easier for companies to find workers anywhere.

Companies that don't comply with the law face the possibility of penalties running into the tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars, says Nannina Angioni, an employment law attorney with Kaedian LLP in Los Angeles. She's warning clients that the law expands the ability of local officials, and not just state tax officials, to enforce the

law starting July 1. Moreover, Angioni says, the law can lead to lawsuits brought by workers.

Some owners may believe it's OK to use independent contractors or freelancers because some workers like being part of the gig economy, says Michael Boro, a consultant with PwC whose expertise is in workplace issues.

"These people don't want to be employees" is the position owners may take, Boro says. But, he warns, they need to follow the law, not workers' wishes. (AP).

Exclusive: Nissan orders drastic spending cuts to stem profit slide and 'conserve every yen' - sources

BEIJING

JAPAN'S Nissan Motor Co has told its managers to slash non-essential spending as the automaker grapples with slumping car sales and tumbling profits, three company sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

The penny-pinching drive is in place for the rest of financial year until end-March and will most likely continue into the coming business year, they said.

Managers have been told to put the kibosh on unnecessary travel, sales incentives and promotional events to "conserve every yen," as one source put it.

Meetings that three or four

people would once have traveled to attend in person, might now only have one Nissan representative, the sources said, while other gatherings and dinners have been canceled altogether or replaced by video-conferencing. The extensive spending cuts come in tandem with Nissan's decision this month to order a two-day furlough for U.S. employees Jan. 2-3. There is also an effective travel ban for staff in the United States, where sales have been particularly hard hit, one source said.

While the automaker is not facing any cash crunch, the actions underscore a deepening sense of crisis at Nissan which has been

rocked by the ouster of scandal-hit leader Carlos Ghosn, the departure of other top executives and strained relations with alliance partner Renault SA.

In April, it embarked on a wide-ranging turnaround plan to revive sales and boost profits but the business outlook has worsened more than anticipated, the sources said. In November, it reported 70% slide in second-quarter operating profit and cut its full-year forecast to an 11-year low.

The de facto freeze on non-essential spending is "increasingly a modus operandi at Nissan globally," a second source said, adding: "The house is not on fire, but there's something



The logo of Nissan Motor Co. is seen at its show room behind a traffic sign in Tokyo, Japan. (Reuters File Photo)

smoldering."

The three sources declined to be identified as Nissan has not publicly disclosed the extent of the cuts.

A Yokohama-based Nissan spokesman said: "Given the business and operational situation we face, we're carrying out moves to cut expenses."

The sources stressed that

the automaker had sufficient cash resources.

According to a fourth Nissan source, the automaker has good credit lines and plenty of cash, including money in China, which he said is years of accumulated profit from Nissan's China joint-venture operations.

This week Nissan's stock hit lows not seen since

September 2011 after Jun Seki, its vice chief operating officer and a former contender for CEO, said he was leaving the firm to become the president of Nidec Corp.

On Friday, the automaker named executive officer Hideyuki Sakamoto as a candidate for the board of directors following Seki's resignation. (Reuters)

Morocco suspends customs duty on soft wheat from January 2 to April 30

RABAT

MOROCCO'S government approved on Thursday a decree to suspend customs duty on soft wheat from Jan. 2 to April 30 to ensure a regular supply and avert price hikes on the domestic market.

The announcement on suspension of the duty, currently at 35%, confirmed a Tuesday report by Reuters.

The decision aims to maintain price stability at a time when soft wheat prices have soared on the international market since October 2019, government spokesman Hassan Abyaba told reporters.

Morocco's stockpiles of soft wheat would stand at

900,000 tonnes by the end of December covering 2.5 months of industrial millers' needs, according to the decree seen by Reuters.

Earlier this year, Morocco announced a cereals harvest of 5.2 million tonnes, including 2.68 million of soft wheat, down 49% from a year earlier due to lack of rainfall.

French wheat exporters estimated Morocco's import needs of soft wheat at 3.8 million tonnes in the 2019/2020 season.

The government plans to spend 14.6 billion dirhams (\$1.52 billion) on subsidies of wheat prices along with sugar and cooking gas in 2020.

(Reuters)

Astellas ramps up M&A, buys US biotech Xyphos for as much as \$665 million



Astellas Pharma's logo is pictured at its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan

TOKYO

ASTELLAS Pharma Inc (4503:T) has bought U.S.-based Xyphos Biosciences Inc to expand its immuno-oncology business, a deal worth up to \$665 million including development milestones and its second acquisition announced this month.

Japan's second biggest drugmaker by sales paid \$120 million upfront for Xyphos and the rest will be milestone payments, the companies said in a statement.

Astellas also said this month it had agreed to purchase Audentes Therapeutics Inc for about \$3 billion to expand its push into genetic medicines. The deal is due to close in January.

Immuno-oncology, which seeks to use the body's own defense systems to fight cancer, is a primary focus for Astellas and under the deal, the Japanese firm will gain Xyphos' cell therapy

technology platform and its research team.

"Combining this technology with our capabilities in cell therapy that we have been working on so far, we can create next-generation high-function cells and maximize the value of our technology," Astellas President Kenji Yasukawa said in the statement.

Xyphos' proprietary molecules can be delivered to natural immune cells or to engineered Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) cells to generate immunotherapies for oncology.

Xyphos' first CAR cell product candidate is in preclinical development and is scheduled to be tested in a first-in-human clinical study in 2021, the statement said.

Both Xyphos and Audentes are based in San Francisco, a hub for biotech companies that are fetching huge premiums for global pharmaceutical companies eager to bolster their drug pipelines. Japanese companies

have agreed to more than 30 overseas acquisitions worth about \$6 billion in the healthcare sector this year, according to Refinitiv data. That's still dwarfed by the \$59 billion takeover of Britain's Shire Plc by Japanese market leader Takeda Pharmaceutical Co Ltd (4502:T) announced in 2018.

Astellas' purchase of Audentes was its second biggest on record after its 2010 purchase of OSI Pharmaceuticals Inc for \$3.8 billion.

In the wake of the Audentes deal, Moody's put its AI ratings on Astellas under review for a downgrade, saying the company's willingness to use debt to fund the purchase, worth 8 times the target's book equity, signaled an "an urgency for Astellas to feed its long-term product pipeline."

Shares in Astellas gained 0.7%, outperforming a largely flat broader market .N225 ahead of the New Year holiday. (Reuters).

Asian shares hit 18-month top in festive cheer; oil, gold hold gains

SYDNEY

ASIAN shares scaled an 18-month high on Friday while oil prices stayed buoyant in a holiday-shortened week, as investor optimism improved on hopes a U.S.-China trade deal would soon be signed.

Traders returned from their Christmas and Boxing Day break to digest comments from Beijing that it was in close contact with Washington about an initial trade agreement, shortly after U.S. President Donald Trump talked up a signing ceremony for the recently struck Phase I trade deal.

In early European trade, the pan-region Euro Stoxx 50 futures STXEc1 added 0.4%, German DAX futures FDxc1 rose 0.6% while FTSE futures FFIc1 were up 0.5%.

In an indication of a positive start on Wall Street, the S&P 500 e-mini futures EScl gained 0.12%.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS jumped 0.7% to 555.42, a level not seen since mid-2018. It is up more than 16% so far this year.

Japan's Nikkei .N225 was off 0.4%, but on track for a near 9% rise this year, matching the annual increase of 2017.

Australia's benchmark index rose 0.4%.



Passersby are reflected on a stock quotation board outside a brokerage in Tokyo

Chinese shares gave up early gains with the blue-chip CSI300 .CSI300 down 0.1%.

The rally in global share indices is in sharp contrast to a plunge late last year when fears about the impact of the Sino-U.S. trade war had sapped investor confidence.

The worries scuttled capital expenditure plans over much of 2019, but strong employment and signs of an improving global economy suggest that will change next year.

The U.S. Federal Reserve's policy easing, economic data that has come in above low expectations, and corporate profits have helped lift stocks this year along with trade-related optimism.

Market participants are now waiting for fourth-quarter financial results to be announced in January for indication on whether sentiment among corporates has actually improved.

On Thursday, MSCI's all-country world index .MIWDO0000PUS and Wall Street's Dow Industrials, the benchmark S&P 500 and the technology-rich Nasdaq all closed at record highs.

MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe gained 0.38% to a record, on track for its best year since 2009. The index has gained 24% this year. (Reuters).



ITV

SATURDAY 28 Dec

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt
10:45 Usafiri wako rpt
11:15 Shamba lulu rpt
11:45 Mapishi rpt
12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
14:40 Igizo rpt: Pigo la moyo
15:15 Igizo: Mkaguzi
16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe
16:20 Igizo: Mtego
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Igizo: Dhoruba
19:00 Sanaa na wasanii
19:30 Jungu Kuu
20:00 Habari
21:00 Shangweka
21:30 Makala Maalum: Watoto
22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja
22:15 Hawavumi lakini wamo
23:00 Isidingo rpt
01:30 CNN International

SUNDAY 29 Dec

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Isidingo
11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt
12:40 Bongo Movie rpt: The Virgin
14:00 Tamasha la Michezo
15:00 Mwangaza
16:00 The Great queen Seonduk
16:45 Igizo rpt: Mkaguzi
17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Matukio ya wiki
19:30 Igizo: Mtego
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko
21:10 Mizengwe
21:30 Mjue Zaidi
22:15 Bongo Movie: The Second Wife
00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost

MONDAY 30 Dec

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 Habari
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 HABARI
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 CNN International
9:30 Soap: Isidingo the need
10:00 Watoto wetu
11:00 Jagina
11:30 Igizo rpt: Dhoruba
11:45 Al Jazeera
12:00 Jungu kuu rpt
12:30 Mjue Zaidi
13:45 Sanaa na wasanii rpt
14:15 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
15:00 Meza huru rpt
16:30 Watoto Wetu

THURSDAY 2 Jan

17:00 The Base
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:10 Aibu yako rpt
18:15 Mapishi
18:45 Kesho leo
19:00 Afya ya Jamii
19:30 Isidingo
20:00 Habari
21:05 Dakika 45
22:00 Insta Moja
22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost
23:00 The Base
00:00 Al Jazeera
02:00 CNN International

TUESDAY 31 Dec

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 Habari
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 CNN International
9:30 Isidingo
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:30 Shamsam za pwani
11:30 Igizo: Mtego rpt
12:00 Al Jazeera
12:30 Aifa ya jamii rpt
13:00 Uchumi na biashara
13:30 Shamba lulu rpt
14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
15:00 Meza Huru rpt
16:30 Watoto wetu
17:00 The Base
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:10 Yu wapi
18:15 The Great queen Seonduk
18:55 Jarida la wanawake
19:30 Isidingo
20:00 Habari
21:05 Tanzania yetu
21:35 Chetu ni chetu
22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost
23:00 The Base
00:00 CNN International

WEDNESDAY 1 Jan

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 CNN International
9:30 Isidingo
10:00 Movie: Kisasi cha Ulata
10:30 Korean drama: The great Queen Seondok
12:45 Jarida la wanawake rpt
13:15 Dakika 45
14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
15:00 Movie:
16:30 Watoto Wetu
17:00 The Base
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt
18:30 Ijue Sheria
19:00 Kipindi Maalum: Kipanya Chooni
19:30 Isidingo
20:00 Habari
21:00 Aibu Yakol! Hata wewe?
21:10 Kipindi Maalum: Uongozi
21:40 Kipindi Maalum: Tanesco
22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost
23:00 The Base
00:00 Al Jazeera
2:00 CNN International

THURSDAY 4 Jan

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt
10:45 Usafiri wako rpt
11:15 Shamba lulu rpt
11:45 Mapishi rpt
12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
14:40 Igizo rpt: Pigo la moyo
15:15 Igizo: Mkaguzi
16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe
16:20 Igizo: Mtego
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Igizo: Dhoruba
19:00 Art and Style

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 CNN International
9:30 Isidingo
10:00 Movie:
12:00 Kipindi Maalum: Uongozi rpt
12:30 Ijue Sheria
13:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Kipanya Chooni
13:30 Tanzania yetu
14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
14:45 Movie:
16:30 Watoto Wetu
17:00 The Base
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Jagina rpt
19:00 Usafiri wako
19:30 Isidingo
20:00 Habari
21:00 Malumano ya hoja
23:00 The Base
00:00 CNN International

FRIDAY 3 Jan

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:30 HABARI
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 CNN International
9:30 Isidingo
10:00 Watoto wetu
10:30 Hawavumi lakini wamo
11:30 Usafiri wako
12:00 Al Jazeera
12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco
13:00 Jagina rpt
13:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt
14:15 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
15:00 Meza huru
16:30 Watoto Wetu
17:00 The Base
17:30 Ibada ya kiislamu
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mizengwe rpt
18:30 Shamba lulu
19:00 Uchumi na biashara
19:30 Isidingo
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipima Joto
23:00 The Base
00:00 CNN International

SATURDAY 4 Jan

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt
10:45 Usafiri wako rpt
11:15 Shamba lulu rpt
11:45 Mapishi rpt
12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
14:40 Igizo rpt: Pigo la moyo
15:15 Igizo: Mkaguzi
16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe
16:20 Igizo: Mtego
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Igizo: Dhoruba
19:00 Art and Style

SATURDAY 4 Jan

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu
10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt
10:45 Usafiri wako rpt
11:15 Shamba lulu rpt
11:45 Mapishi rpt
12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt
12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost
14:40 Igizo rpt: Pigo la moyo
15:15 Igizo: Mkaguzi
16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe
16:20 Igizo: Mtego
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Igizo: Dhoruba
19:00 Art and Style

19:25 Kipindi maalum: Vodacom Draw
20:00 Habari
21:00 Shangweka
21:30 Kesho leo rpt
22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja
22:15 Hawavumi lakini wamo
23:00 Isidingo rpt
01:30 CNN International

SUNDAY 5 Jan

5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00 HABARI
6:40 Kumekucha
7:00 Habari
8:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto Wetu
10:00 Isidingo
11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt
12:00 Bongo Movie rpt: Keki ya Birthday
14:00 Tamasha la Michezo
15:00 Mwangaza
16:00 The Great queen Seonduk
16:45 Igizo rpt: Mkaguzi
17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00 Jiji Letu
18:15 Mapishi
18:30 Matukio ya wiki
19:30 Igizo: Mtego
20:00 Habari
21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko
21:10 Mizengwe
21:30 Mjue Zaidi
22:15 Bongo Movie: Penzi la Giza
00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost

CAPITAL

Sat 28 Dec

08:00 CNN International
09:00 Drive It rpt
09:30 Turning the Spotlight rpt
10:00 Culinary delight rpt
10:30 Innovation rpt
11:00 Out n'about rpt
11:30 Sports Gazette rpt
12:00 Usafiri wako rpt
12:30 Eco@Africa rpt
13:00 Business edition rpt
13:30 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae
14:30 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa?
17:15 Tanzania Yetu rpt
17:45 Bundesliga kick off
18:15 Capchat rpt
19:15 Mizengwe
19:30 The Decor
20:00 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae
21:00 Out n' About
22:00 Movie: Murder So Sweet
23:00 Life is a teacher rpt
01:00 Al Jazeera

Sun 29 Dec

08:00 CNN International
09:00 In good shape
10:00 Capchat rpt
11:00 Sports Gazette rpt
11:30 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae
12:00 Jagina rpt
12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt
13:00 In good shape rpt
13:30 Series rpt: Godwin
15:15 Aibu yako
15:30 Drive it rpt
16:00 Dakika 45 rpt
16:45 Mizengwe rpt

17:00 The Decor rpt
17:30 Meza huru
19:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt
19:30 Cookery pgm: Culinary Delights
20:00 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae
21:00 Shift
21:15 Capchat live
22:15 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa?
00:00 Al Jazeera

Mon 30 Dec

06:00 Al Jazeera
08:00 CNN International
09:00 Movie: Knight Rider
10:30 Movie: Black Water
12:00 Turning the spotlight rpt
12:30 Bundesliga kick off
13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa?
14:00 In goodsahape rpt
15:00 Sports Gazette rpt
15:00 Cookery rpt: Culinary Delight
15:30 Jagina rpt
16:00 Series rpt: Life is a teacher
16:30 Tanzania Yetu rpt
17:00 Eco@Africa rpt
17:30 Meza Huru- Ulafi
19:00 The Decor rpt
19:30 Shamba lulu
20:00 Series: Life is a teacher
20:45 The Monday Agenda
21:30 Capital Prime News
22:00 Kijima Joto
00:00 Al Jazeera

Tues 31 Dec

06:00 Al Jazeera
08:00 CNN International
09:00 Movie: Breach
10:30 Movie: Death Proof
12:00 Innovation rpt
12:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt
13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa?
14:00 Usafiri Wako rpt
14:30 Monday Agenda rpt
15:00 Drive It rpt
15:30 Business Edition rpt
16:00 Series rpt: Life is a teacher
16:30 Capchat rpt
17:30 Meza huru-Ustaarabu wa Kula'
19:00 Innovation
19:30 Jagina rpt
20:00 Series: Life is a teacher
20:45 Telenovela: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa?
21:30 Capital Prime
22:00 Turning the spotlight rpt
22:30 Eco@Africa
23:00 Al Jazeera

Wed 01 Jan

06:00 Al Jazeera
08:00 CNN International
09:00 Movie: The Family Holiday
10:30 Movie: Night of Terror
12:00 Capchat rpt
13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa?
14:30 Mizengwe rpt
15:00 Drive It rpt
15:30 Out &About rpt
16:00 Series rpt: Life is a teacher
16:30 Culinary delight rpt
17:00 Innovation rpt
17:30 Movie: Edge Of Darkness

Tesla secures \$1.29 billion loan from Chinese banks for Shanghai factory

BENGALURU

TESLA Inc entered into agreements with lenders in China for a secured term loan facility of up to 9 billion yuan (\$1.29 billion), according to a regulatory filing on Thursday.

The electric car maker said it has also signed agreements for an unsecured revolving loan facility of up to 2.25 billion yuan, adding that both the loans will be used for its Shanghai car

plant. (bit.ly/2tU35d1)

China Construction Bank Corp, Agricultural Bank of China, Shanghai Pudong Development Bank and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China are the lenders, according to the filing.

Besides construction and production at the Shanghai factory, the loan may also be used to repay the 3.5 billion yuan debt due to be repaid on March 4 next year.

The factory, which is Tesla's first car manufactur-

ing site outside the United States, is the centerpiece of its ambitions to boost sales in the world's biggest auto market and avoid higher import tariffs imposed on U.S.-made cars.

Reuters reported earlier this week that Tesla and a group of China banks had agreed to a new 10 billion yuan, five-year loan facility for the automaker's Shanghai car plant, citing sources familiar with the matter. (Reuters).

WORLD

Plane crashes after
takeoff in Kazakhstan,
15 dead, dozens injured

ALMATY

A PASSENGER plane carrying nearly 100 people crashed near the city of Almaty in Kazakhstan yesterday after take off, slamming into a house in an accident that killed 15 people and injured dozens.

The Fokker 100 aircraft, operated by Bek Air, got into trouble shortly after departing from Almaty, the Central Asian country's commercial center, on a pre-dawn flight en route to the capital Nur-Sultan.

It lost altitude during takeoff and broke through a concrete fence before hitting the two-storey building, Kazakhstan's Civil Aviation Committee said. It was not immediately clear what caused the crash.

"Before crashing, the aircraft touched the runway with its tail twice, the gear was retracted," Deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar told reporters.

"A commission... will establish whether this was pilot error or technical is-

ues. The runway was in an idea condition."

A Reuters reporter saw the battered remains of the front of the plane and other separate parts of the fuselage scattered around the wreckage of what was left of the house.

A survivor told news website Tengrinews she heard a "terrifying sound" before the plane started losing altitude.

"The plane was flying at a tilt. Everything was like in a movie: screaming, shouting, people crying," she said.

Almaty healthcare authorities initially put the death toll from the crash at 15 or more but later revised the figure down to 12. They said 66 people were taken to hospital, some of them in a serious condition.

The plane had been carrying 93 passengers and five crew, and Kazakhstan's interior ministry said the captain was among those killed.

The ministry said it was investigating a possible breach of flight operation and safety rules, a standard legal procedure.



Emergency and security personnel are seen at the site of the plane crash near Almaty, Kazakhstan, yesterday. REUTERS

There was thick fog in the area at the time of the crash.

Kazakhstan's aviation committee said it was suspending all flights by carrier Bek Air and those of Fokker 100 aircraft pending the results of the investigation.

"FALLING... AT AN ANGLE"

Another survivor, businessman Aslan Nazaratyev, told the *Vremya* newspaper that the plane started shaking while gaining altitude about two minutes after takeoff.

"At some point we started falling, not vertically, but at an angle. It seemed like control over the plane had been lost," he said.

Authorities cordoned off the crash site in the village of Almarek, just beyond the end of the runway.

The airport remained operational with other planes seen taking off after the crash.

In the airport at Nur-Sultan, relatives of the passengers - some of whom were going to reunite with their families for the holidays - were being briefed on their fate and offered flights to Almaty.

"Those responsible will face tough punishment in accordance with the law," Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev tweeted, expressing condolences to the victims and their families.

Tokayev declared today a national day of mourning and appointed Prime Minister Askar Mamin to head a commission to investigate the crash.

The plane involved in the crash was built in 1996, the government said, and its most recent flight certificate was issued in May 2019.

Agencies

Netanyahu wins party vote in boost ahead of Israeli election

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu easily won a vote to keep the Likud party helm, the party said yesterday, in a boost ahead of what is likely to be a hard-fought general election in March.

A Likud tally gave Netanyahu 72.5% of votes in Thursday's party ballot, against 27.5% for challenger Gideon Saar, who conceded defeat, tweeting that he would now back the incumbent "for the sake of a Likud victory in the (general) election".

The results awaited official

confirmation by Israel's Elections Committee.

The challenge by Saar, a former education and interior minister, had added to pressures that have mounted this year on the four-term premier, who is under indictment and fighting for political survival.

In November, Netanyahu was charged with corruption in three criminal cases and he has twice failed to form a government in the wake of two inconclusive national ballots, held in April and September.

Netanyahu's centrist rival in those elections, Benny Gantz of



the Blue and White party, was also unable to form a coalition government, leading to political deadlock and an unprecedented third election on March 2.

Netanyahu has cast the legal case against him as a political witch-hunt orchestrated by the media and an Israeli left hoping to oust him.

Though the troubles of "King Bibi", as he is nicknamed by his fans, do not seem to have dented the loyal Netanyahu commands among his supporters, some Likud members have said it is time for fresh leadership.

Netanyahu had played down Saar's challenge, talking up his own security credentials and international prowess.

Thanking supporters for the "huge" Likud leadership victory, Netanyahu tweeted that he would "continue leading the State of Israel to unprecedented achievements".

Pentagon confirms no missile launched from DPRK

WASHINGTON

THE Pentagon has confirmed that no missile had been launched from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), after Japan's public broadcaster NHK falsely reported Pyongyang's missile launch earlier in the day.

"The Pentagon is not tracking a launch of any type," a Pentagon spokesman told Xinhua in an email reply.

Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported yesterday that the DPRK had fired a missile that fell about 2,000 kilometers off Hokkaido's coast in Japan, but then it retracted the story as a false report and issued an apology hours later explaining it was a media training alert.

The NHK bulletin, sent out 22



minutes after midnight on its website, read: "North Korean missile seen as having fallen into seas about 2,000 km east of Hokkaido's Cape Erimo", suggesting a flight path over Japanese territory.

The DPRK is also referred to as North Korea.

The same information was also delivered to users' phones through NHK's apps.

NHK corrected the information on those platforms, as well as on television and radio within half an hour, an NHK spokesman said.

"We apologise to our viewers and the public," NHK said in a statement on its website, explaining the alert was for training purposes. It also said it would review its procedures to prevent a recurrence.

Warning citizens about disasters and security threats is one of the mandates for the publicly funded broadcaster, whose newscasters regularly and frequently hold drills for earthquakes and other disaster coverage.

When the DPRK did launch missiles that flew over Cape Erimo in Japan's far north in 2017, warnings spread through sirens and government-issued "J-alerts" on millions of cell phones throughout Japan, jolting some out of sleep.

NHK had also sent an erroneous news alert about a DPRK missile in error in January of last year.

Pyongyang had set its deadline for the denuclearization negotiations at the end of this year. It carried out two "important tests" at its Sohae Satellite Launching Ground on Dec 7 and Dec 13.

DPRK's vice foreign minister Ri Thae-song warned in early December that Washington would soon need to decide what kind of "Christmas gift" it would like to receive from Pyongyang.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday downplayed the significance of a possible "Christmas surprise" from Pyongyang, saying he would deal with it successfully. "Everybody's got surprises for me ... I handle them as they come along," he said, adding that the DPRK might send him "a beautiful vase" instead of a missile test.

The denuclearization negotiation between Washington and Pyongyang has lost momentum since the impasse of the Hanoi Summit in late February and the unproductive working-level talks in Stockholm in October.

Brazil's Lula faces new
indiction for corruption

RIO DE JANEIRO



BRAZIL'S federal police indicted former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Thursday for another case of corruption.

The case involves donations made by construction company Odebrecht to the Lula Institute the former president founded after he left office.

According to the federal police, the donations to the institute, which were made between December 2013 and March 2014 and amounted to 4 million reais (US\$1 million), originated from an Odebrecht account habitually used to pay bribes.

Lula, the Lula Institute's head Paulo Okamoto, and former Finance Minister Antonio Palocci were charged with corruption and money laundering.

Lula's defense lawyers said that the accusations do not make any sense, as the supposed bribes were paid when Lula had not been in office for years.

Lula's last term ended in 2010.

Lula's attorneys said the donations were normal and regular, with an identified origin and not related to any commitment. They also stressed that the donations were made not to Lula, but the institute, which is an organization separate from the ex-president and aims at preserving objects which are part of Brazil's cultural heritage.

Lula was found guilty of corruption in other cases and started serving a sentence since April 2018. However, he was released earlier in November this year after Brazil's Supreme Federal Court (STF) ruled that defendants in Brazil will only be arrested after their last appeal is settled.

Lula currently still has appeals to the Superior Court of Justice and STF to be judged.

Philippines bans two US senators,
mulls new visa rules for Americans

MANILA

THE Philippines has banned two US lawmakers from visiting and will introduce tighter entry restrictions for US citizens should Washington enforce sanctions over the detention of a top government critic, the president's spokesman said yesterday.

President Rodrigo Duterte will impose a requirement on US nationals to get visas should any Philippine officials involved in the incarceration of Senator Leila de Lima be denied entry to the United States, as sought by US senators Richard Durbin and Patrick Leahy.

Duterte's move comes after the US Congress approved a 2020 budget that contains a provision introduced by the senators against anyone involved in holding de Lima, who was charged with drug offences in early 2017 after she led an investigation into mass killings during Duterte's notorious anti-drugs crackdown.

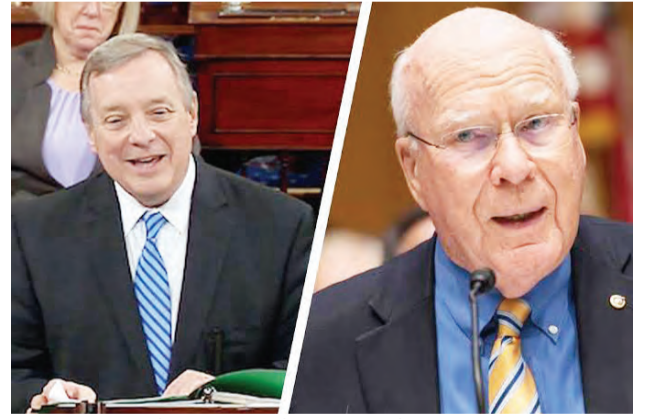
"We will not sit idly by if they continue to interfere with our processes as a sovereign state," Philippine presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo told a regular news conference.

The Philippines grants visa-free entry for up to 30 days to Americans, 792,000 of whom visited in the first nine months of 2019, nearly 13% of foreign arrivals, government data showed.

The US embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Panelo said travel restrictions over de Lima's detention were nonsense because she was not wrongfully imprisoned but detained pending trial for crimes.

"The case of Senator de Lima is not one of persecution but of prosecution," he said.



US senators Richard Durbin and Patrick Leahy

US immigration policies result in countless tragedies

AN unprecedented 69,550 unaccompanied immigrant children were held in U.S. government custody between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019, up 42 percent year on year, according to the latest data from the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It is the highest number in recent years.

Conditions in which children are being held in immigration detention are more appalling in the US than any other country, said a United Nations researcher.

According to the DHHS, about 4,200 of the nearly 70,000 unaccompanied immigrant children are still in detention, while the rest are being deported from the US or sent to foster homes across the country.

Most immigrant children who have

been held in custody are exposed to trauma, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, warning that absence of proper treatment will result in serious consequences.

However, the harsh reality is that the vast majority of these children simply do not have the conditions to receive the necessary treatment.

From May to June last year, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice presented a "zero tolerance policy" intended to combat illegal immigration along the US-Mexico border.

Under the policy, captured adult migrants would be prosecuted for illegal entry and children would be sent to foster centers across the US.

In less than two months, about 2,500

children were separated from their parents. Until now, many children have still not been reunited with their parents, due to lack of information or other reasons.

Kevin McAleenan, who served as the acting secretary for the DHS, openly criticized that the border policy "went too far" in an interview.

"When you see the impact in the six-week period on 2,500-or-so families and understand the emotional pain for those children, it's not worth it," he said. "It's the one part of this whole thing that I couldn't ever be part of again."

In June, a scandal involving migrant child detention centers in the US sparked criticism. Attorneys found that two immigration facilities in Texas were overwhelmed with immigrant children.

More than 250 children were held inside a windowless complex in Clint, struggling to care for each other with inadequate food, water and sanitation.

"Everyone is sick. Everyone. They're using their clothes to wipe mucus off the children, wipe vomit off the children. Most of the little children are not fully clothed," said attorney Toby Gialluca at another border patrol station in McAllen, adding that immigrant children said they were offered frozen ham sandwiches and rotten food at the facility.

At least six immigrant children and many more adults have died in US government custody since last September, according to the Newsweek, underscoring that separation is only the beginning of this administration's cruelty toward

immigrant children.

Immigrant children and families are warehoused in de facto internment camps, and some private detention center under the contract with the American government treat immigrant children like "prisoners", said the Newsweek.

According to the magazine, children are being locked up in cages without adequate food or water; many are going without bathing, clean changes of clothes or other basic sanitary needs, like toothbrushes. Additionally, in many of these camps, the administration does not provide beds for children, forcing them to sleep on cold concrete floors.

It is no surprise that outbreaks of the flu and other diseases at these detention centers have created a real public

health crisis.

Illegal migrants are the most vulnerable group in American society, who are doing the jobs that the Americans are sniffling about and living an insecure life, an immigration lawyer from McAllen, Texas told People's Daily.

The lawyer pointed out that in the past two years, the US government has cracked down on illegal migrants for political purposes and forcibly separated many migrant kids from their parents, which is an extremely inhuman way of law enforcement.

A CNN report pointed out that one of America's greatest sources of strength - soft power echoes one of Ronald Reagan's favorite images, the shining city upon a hill.

People's Daily

Direct train brings made-in-China Christmas gifts all the way to Europe

FRANKFURT/HANGZHOU

In the holiday season in December, people across Europe may have different ways to celebrate, but their celebrations have one thing in common: made-in-China products are increasingly making their most important festival merrier.

Thanks to direct freight train service between China and Europe, Chinese businesses, with an intimate knowledge of the European market, have stepped up their game in Europe's Christmas economy by means of innovation and new designs.

MARKET EXPERTISE

The latest data from Germany's Federal Statistical Office show that in 2018, the country imported 17,720 tons of Christmas items worth around 143 million euros (159 million U.S. dollars). Nearly three quarters of them were from China.

In fact, from decorative LED lights to automated Santa toys, more than 60 percent of the world's Christmas-related merchandise come from the eastern Chinese city of Yiwu, some 260 km south of Shanghai. The great variety of holiday products there have earned the place a nickname: China's Christmas Village.

"European customers prefer simple and elegant designs for Christmas trees, green pine trees with snow, and a couple of jingle bells would be enough," said Zhu Zhijuan, who went on about different regions' preference regarding the choice of a Christmas tree.

Based in Yiwu, her company Xintean Arts & Crafts have been making artificial Christmas trees for 15 years. Its annual revenue amounts to 100 million yuan (14.3 million dollars), and is expected to grow 10 percent this year,

Zhu said.

In Yiwu, the section of Christmas goods alone boasts 15,000 varieties. The manufacturers have their own organization -- Yiwu Christmas Products Industry Association -- and follow regularly-published market indicators.

Local commerce bureau has listed 333 exhibitions around the globe as recommendations for local businesses to attend. Shortly after the holiday season, in January or February each year, for example, Zhu will go to Frankfurt Consumer Goods Trade Fair in Germany to get prepared for the coming year.

"We go to exhibitions everywhere every year," Zhu said. "In the past, we entrusted foreign trade companies to do business for us. Now we take orders directly from customers and learn their different demands, improve our products, and expand the market."

Jin Zhixun is also a frequenter of trade fairs. His company Fuye Toys specializes in Santa Claus toys and exports products to European markets including Britain, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Norway.

His signature product this year is a Santa Claus toy that could make dance moves to the tune of any song the customer chooses, be it in Spanish or English. "Even the pattern of the clothes is patented," he said.

Jin said they have their samples made using 3D printing and then modify details. "Yiwu's local design companies and 3D printing companies have provided good support for innovation, and the entire innovation ecosystem has been established," he said.

"SMART" GIFT CHOICES

Apart from Christmas decorations, more and more Chinese products have made their way into the shopping lists of European households in the holiday season.



A store manager arranges Christmas products at a MINISO store in Warsaw, Poland, Dec. 24, 2019. (Xinhua)

In downtown Brussels, Kam Yuen Supermarket, the largest Asian supermarket in Belgium, local residents were bustling for Christmas shopping.

"Kam Yuen used to be a small shop for Chinese people, now 70 percent of the customers are non-Chinese," said Liu Jingrui, CEO of Kam Yuen Investment. "They not only buy Chinese products, but also start to embrace the Chinese culture," Liu said.

In Warsaw, Chinese retailer MINISO has become one of the most popular places for Christmas gift-shopping, and their best-seller this year is a stuffed snowman imported from China. Piotr Piorkowski, the shop's manager, said that the customers like the original design of the Christmas products sold there and the quality they get for the price they pay.

For Anna Godlewska, co-owner of Amko Toy Store in central Warsaw, which imported 90 percent of their products from China, people's love for

LOGISTIC SUPPORT

Chinese toys are obvious: Two days before Christmas, all the products in the store like dollhouse, stuffed animal and baby shoes were sold out.

"People love to buy products from China for Christmas because they have reasonable price and really good quality," said Godlewska.

In Budapest, a lot of Hungarians turn to Chinese tech products for Christmas gifts for their beloved. "I bought Xiaomi smart lamps," Tamas Sos, a 40-year-old entrepreneur told Xinhua, noting that the lights are extremely helpful as his pregnant wife has to get up at night in a house with narrow corridors and steep stairs.

According to Extreme Digital, a leading Hungarian online marketplace, their best-selling products during Christmas this year were the Chinese sandwich maker and a smart fitness watch produced by Huawei.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the launch of direct freight train service between Yiwu and Madrid, an important logistics center in Europe.

The China-Europe freight train not only delivers Chinese goods to Europe but also brings back overseas items to Yiwu, where they are then sold across the country, said Liu Mingming of the Yiwu Tianmeng Industrial Investment, a private operator of the service.

Cargo that travels 30-40 days by sea between China and Spain only takes half that time by train, allowing more flexibility to manage inventories for businesses along the route.

The freight trains made 168 round trips in 2017 and 320 in 2018, and are expected to make 500 this year, according to Liu.

Furthermore, the city of Yiwu has set up five logistic distribution centers and eight warehouses in cities along the Belt and Road, including Madrid, Duisburg and London, to facilitate trade.

Customs data show that Yiwu's exports and imports between January and November this year amounted to 265.76 billion yuan (37.99 billion dollars), topping the figure for the whole year of 2018.

Meanwhile, more than 50 Chinese cities have launched China-Europe direct freight train services. The ever closer bilateral trade ties have prompted Liu Jingrui, who owns the supermarket in Brussels, to come up with a new year wish.

"We look forward to the conclusion of the investment agreement between China and the European Union," said Liu. "We also hope that free trade negotiations could start as soon as possible so that the potential of the two markets covering nearly 2 billion consumers can be fully unlocked."

Xinhua

8 Kenyan fishermen rescued in Indian Ocean after 18 days

MOMBASA

POLICE have rescued eight fishermen who miraculously survived 18 days in the Indian Ocean along the Kenyan coast.

The eight were spotted and rescued by marine police on patrol on Christmas Day.

"Their boat were taken to the deep waters and capsized by strong winds and they have been in the ocean," said Malindi Sub County Police Commander Vitalis Otieno who confirmed the incident.

They had been reported missing at Ziwayu beach, on the north coast and were using an Alhafidh Fibre 15HP boat. Upon their rescue, the eight were rushed to Malindi Sub County Hospital for a medical check-up.

Otieno said the eight, whose names were not immediately available, have since been discharged.

"The actual date of their disappearance was not reported to us but friends and relatives say they went in their normal fishing expedition but failed to return on December 8," he told Xinhua on Wednesday.

A citizen-run rescue organization dubbed Coast Sea Survival team officially known as Captain Shallo confirmed that they received the missing alert on the said date.

"One of the survivors is a close relative to my wife. We have been following their disappearance until their rescue today," he said. Other reports indicate the eight survived on raw fish and other sea creatures.

It is not uncommon for fishermen to drown in the ocean waters in Kenya's coast where the economy relies predominantly on fishing and tourism.

Xinhua

Any attempt to interfere in Hong Kong affairs is doomed to fail

In spite of China's strong opposition, the US Congress has arbitrarily passed the so-called Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019.

Under the guise of human rights and democracy, the US has confused right from wrong by supporting anti-China rioters determined to push Hong Kong into the abyss of ongoing turmoil to achieve their political goal of containing the development of China.

China warned the US that any attempt to destabilize Hong Kong and undermine China's sound development is wishful thinking and any attempt to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs is doomed to fail.

In the past five months, Hong Kong has witnessed continuous violence and crimes, which have seriously violated the rule of law and social order, seriously undermined Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and seriously challenged the "one country, two systems" principle. Mobs have carried out heinous crimes resulting in the deaths of innocent civilians and serious injury to police.

They have smashed and burned shops, caused large-scale traffic paralysis, forced suspension of schools and seriously violated fundamental rights and freedoms of Hong

Kong citizens.

Facts show that the escalating violence in Hong Kong is jointly conspired by the anti-China forces in the US and local rioters. The US has not stopped interfering in Hong Kong affairs either by secretly instigating or openly supporting violence.

This Hong Kong related bill completely ignores the well-being of Hong Kong residents, basic norms of international law, glorifies the actions of rioters and boldly supports anti-China forces in Hong Kong.

Its essence is to disrupt Hong Kong, or even destroy the city. This is gross interference in China's internal affairs and seriously damages the common interests and fundamental interests of Hong Kong compatriots.

The US side will eventually hurt itself by its provocative acts. 22 years after the reunification of Hong Kong, the practice of "one country, two systems" in the region has been a widely recognized success.

Hong Kong residents live with freedom and democracy that they were never granted in the past. Hong Kong's unique position in international economic and trade relations is widely recognized and respected by the international community. However, its standing comes from ad-

hering to basic law and is not unilaterally granted by any other country.

Hong Kong has established mutually beneficial cooperation with many trading partners in the world, including the US. In the past decade, US companies have earned tons of gold through the bilateral trade with Hong Kong.

At present, about 1,344 US companies operate in the city and more than 85,000 US citizens live there.

A prosperous and stable Hong Kong is in line with the common interests of the international community, including the US.

The Hong Kong-related bill passed by US lawmakers not only insults 1.4 billion Chinese people, including Hong Kong compatriots, but also seriously damages the interests of enterprises, individuals from the US and other countries who have invested substantially in Hong Kong. This global hegemony will surely be opposed by the international community.

Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong. The Chinese government will never allow any external force to turn the city into a lawless jungle.

The US side must not underestimate the Chinese government's unswerving determination to protect national sovereignty, security and de-

velopment interests, implement the "one country, two systems" principle and safeguard prosperity and stability in Hong Kong; it must not underestimate the confidence and capability of the Hong Kong SAR government to stop and punish violence according to the law; and it must not underestimate mainstream public opinion that the Hong Kong community desires to stop the violence and restore order.

No one and no tricks will stop Hong Kong's integration into the overall development of China and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China's government will continue to firmly support the lawful administration of the Hong Kong SAR government, law enforcement by Hong Kong police and punishment of violent criminals by the Hong Kong judiciary in order to protect the lives and properties of Hong Kong residents and prosperity and stability in Hong Kong.

China urges the US side to stop taking risks with its unilateral decisions and avoid making any other irreparable mistakes.

Any attempt to contain China's development and mess up Hong Kong's stability is doomed to fail.

People's Daily

India tightens security for protests after Friday prayers

NEW DELHI

INDIAN authorities stepped up security in major cities yesterday and mobile data services were suspended in some places ahead of protests against a new citizenship law. At least 25 people have been killed in protests across the country since the law, seen as discriminatory toward Muslims, was adopted on Dec. 11.

The backlash against the law pushed through parliament by the Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the biggest challenge he has faced since he was first elected in 2014.

Violence peaked last Friday as police clashed with protesters in several cities, especially in Uttar Pradesh state, after weekly Muslim prayers and more protests are expected this week.

The administration of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, has banned mobile internet services in many parts of the state, including the provincial capital Lucknow, the state government said.

Some television channels reported that police had imposed an emergency law in some parts of the capital, New Delhi, that prohibits gatherings. Such prohibitions have been in place in Uttar Pradesh for more than a week.



Indian women shout slogans during a protest against a new citizenship law that opponents say threatens India's secular identity in Bangalore, India, on Thursday. (AP)

But despite that, thousands of protesters are expected to gather after Friday prayers in the capital, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and Chennai, protest organizers said.

The citizenship legislation makes it easier for people from non-Muslim minorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who settled in India prior to 2015 to get Indian citizenship.

Critics say the exclusion of

Muslims is discriminatory and that the award of citizenship based on religion is an attack on the secular constitution.

Muslims make up about 14% of India's population.

The protests come amid the slowest economic growth in more than six years, rising unemployment and growing discontent over several surprise government decisions.

Agencies

US double standard reveals pure hegemony

The so-called Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 recently passed by the US Senate distorted the truth and merely revealed the undue double standard and hypocritical hegemony of the US.

The US double standard is barely a recent thing and is completely unmasked on the Hong Kong affairs. Some American officials labeled the violent rioters as warriors for democracy, yet they chose to overlook the most important human rights that the majority want, which is to end the violence and chaos and restore order in Hong Kong.

While turning a blind eye to and even encouraging the

spread of violent remarks, the US closed the social media accounts that told the truth about Hong Kong and banned the righteous netizens from speaking up for the rule of law.

Such bald-faced double standard fully exposed its ulterior motives of undermining human rights and democracy and restraining China's development behind the seemingly noble gesture.

No wonder some said that the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, which severely harmed human rights and democracy, should be renamed the Hong Kong Violence Act.

It's globally recognized

that violence is poisonous for law-based society, and unrests are a nightmare for stable development. That's why the US politicians, who can't know this better, deal with violence in "domestic" and "international" ways.

When protests in Portland, Oregon escalated, local police set roadblocks to block the streets and bridges, and arrested the demonstrators. US leaders even considered the protests' organizers as terrorism organizations.

However, when rioters committed violent crimes in Hong Kong, Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi called the large demonstrations there "a beautiful sight to

behold".

They on one hand are tough on domestic crimes, and on the other hand call violence in other countries "a beautiful sight". Law enforcement in the US performs the rule of law, while law enforcement in other countries is taken as a violent crime committed by the police. Is there anything more absurd and barefaced than this double standard?

This US double standard deeply roots in the country's hegemonic philosophy. To achieve maximum benefits of the US, some US politicians could spare no effort to start disturbances and "color revolution" across the world, and wantonly whitewash

the US and smear the others.

They implemented the "PRISM" plan globally, but in turn blamed others for launching cyber attacks against the US. They arbitrarily interfered in other countries' domestic affairs, but in turn slandered others for trying to control the US election. They resorted to trade protectionism, but in turn accused others of hurting free trade.

No country is more arbitrary than the US. To make it simple, these US politicians only believe that might is right, as if the world was still in the old age of the "law of the jungle".

These US politicians don't care about the human rights or democracy in Hong Kong at all,

and the interests and well being of the Hong Kong citizens were neither on their mind. The only one goal they have is to make Hong Kong a mess and contain China's development at the sacrifice of the fall of Hong Kong.

The Chinese have always believed that good always triumphs over evil, so that the US hegemony will not work at all. To bring violence and chaos to an end and restore order is the most pressing task for Hong Kong at present, and also the broadest public opinion and biggest human right.

The Chinese government has unswerving determination to protect national sovereignty, security and development inter-

ests, implement "one country, two systems" policy and oppose any external force in interfering in Hong Kong's affairs.

In the 21st century, the ugly double standard and hegemonic thinking will never be supported, and the attempts to press China under the disguise of human rights and democracy are doomed to fail.

The fate and destiny of Hong Kong will and can only be controlled by all Chinese including Hong Kong compatriots. The double standard of the US politicians, no matter in what disguise, will only be spurned by the world.

People's Daily

The
Guardian

SPORT



Dallas Mavericks forward Luka Doncic (77) battles San Antonio Spurs guard Bryn Forbes (11) for space during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, Dec. 26, 2019, in Dallas. (AP Photo)

Luka Doncic scores 24 on return, Mavericks hold off Spurs 102-98

DALLAS

LUKA Doncic barely missed a step and added a little Magic on his return to the Dallas lineup on Thursday night.

He had missed the previous four games because of a sprained right ankle. Doncic scored a game-high 24 points as the Mavericks beat the San Antonio Spurs 102-98. He finished with 10 rebounds and eight assists and barely missed adding to his NBA-leading total of eight triple doubles. He last had played on Dec. 14 against Miami.

Against San Antonio, Doncic played 32:39, about half a minute more than his season average.

"I'm not going to lie," Doncic said. "I was pretty tired."

Tired or not, he impressed Spurs coach Gregg Popovich.

"I hate to say this, he's not Magic Johnson but it's Magic Johnson-like in the sense that he sees the floor in that same way. He's got a real intuitive sense and you can't teach that. He's just got it and he's great at it. I'm not trying to put the Magic Johnson pressure on him, he's not ready for that yet but he's doing a hell of a job."

Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said that Doncic could have been even better.

"He had a few challenges early with rhythm and getting his legs under him. He got into a great flow as the game went on."

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 17 points, Porzingis and Dorian Finney-Smith had 13 each, and Delon Wright added 12 off the bench for Dallas. Dwight Powell's 11 points all came in the first half.

DeMar DeRozan led San Antonio with 21 points, 16 in the second half. Rudy Gay scored 18, LaMarcus Aldridge had 17 and White finished with 10.

San Antonio rallied from a 102-85 deficit by scoring the game's final 13 points. After Doncic missed two free throws, the Spurs' Derrick White missed a 3-point attempt with six seconds left and Doncic got the rebound.

The Mavericks led 79-74 after three quarters, and all but put the game away by making 7 of 9 3-point shots to start the fourth quarter.

"They had their little barrage there when they made six in a row, and that was the game," Popovich said.

Doncic didn't make any of the seven in that barrage, but his presence was felt even then.

"He draws so much attention that he gets everybody else open," Porzingis said. "We get good looks. It's up to the rest of us to knock down the shots or make the next play."

"It was good to have him back."

Doncic said his ankle was good.

"I'm going to keep icing it. I'm young. I just want to play. I don't want to miss no games."

The Mavericks (20-10) pulled within half a game of idle first-place Houston in the Southwest Division.

Dallas scored the first eight points, with

3-point shots by Finney-Smith and Hardaway bracketing Doncic's first basket 1:23 into the game from short range.

Meanwhile, in Sacramento, California, as he watched Buddy Hield's last-second 3-point attempt clang off the back of the rim at the end of double overtime, Minnesota's Andrew Wiggins breathed a sigh of relief that was nearly a month in the making.

For the first time in December, the Timberwolves won a game.

"All you could do was look and watch," Wiggins said. "I was looking at the shot and it missed. Thank God."

Wiggins scored the first basket of the second overtime and then fed Robert Covington for another score, and Minnesota ended its 11-game losing streak by beating the Sacramento Kings 105-104 on Thursday night.

Minnesota hadn't won since Nov. 27 before limiting Sacramento to 11 points in the fourth quarter and then outlasting the Kings in two overtimes. The Wolves did it without Karl-Anthony Towns, who missed his fifth straight game with a left knee sprain.

"We did a lot of great things tonight," coach Ryan Saunders said. "Our offense was not pretty tonight but we found ways. That locker room deserves to feel good."

Wiggins got the Wolves going in the second OT with a short jumper that started a 6-0 run. After Jeff Teague made a floater, Wiggins passed to Covington for a layup.

Gorgui Dieng's dunk with 3:11 left put Minnesota up 105-99. Hield scored five straight points for Sacramento to close the gap, but the Wolves held on after Hield missed the potential game-winner.

"Winning in double overtime, winning in regulation, either way I would have took it," Minnesota's Treveon Graham said.

Wiggins finished with 18 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists. Dieng had 21 points and 15 rebounds, and Covington scored 19 for the Timberwolves.

Richaun Holmes had 20 points and a career-high 18 rebounds for the Kings, who have their own injury concerns.

De'Aaron Fox left two minutes into the first quarter with back spasms. Sacramento's point guard missed 17 games this season with an ankle injury sustained in practice. Marvin Bagley III limped off the court in the third quarter and was wearing a walking boot on his left foot after the game. Bagley had also recently returned after missing 22 games because of a broken right thumb sustained in the season opener.

"Give Minnesota credit. They knocked down some big shots when they had to and we didn't," Kings coach Luke Walton said. "We have to keep scrapping and fighting. We have to be better."

Both teams turned chances to win in the first overtime into turnovers. In the final 0.5 seconds alone, Teague threw away an inbound pass and Bogdan Bogdanovic missed the rim on a 3-point try.

Mapinduzi Cup deformation a result of TFF chaotic attitude

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL ENEZA

REPORTS that the Mapinduzi Cup tournament will have a changed format this year will displease virtually all its enthusiasts and throw the competition to the rear of the mind, as the basic excitement will have been put out of reach. Essentially tournaments are supposed to start with group stages where teams clash to find two winners per group (of four teams ordinarily), and then another format can be adopted at that stage. The reason is that the group stage already shows which team is better, and the rest is a rapid certification or proof of these impressions.

This stage is psychologically important as a tournament is not just meant to find a winner to take a cup or money - or both - but crucially, to evaluate the teams and obtain a credible or valid order in terms of ranking. That isn't just for the general public but even the closest stakeholders with a participating team need a sufficiently wide range of competition so as to take adequate stock of its performance, within limits of how a soccer tournament operates. In that case groups of four teams allow three matches on all sides; consequently people evaluate a team in three ties.

The contrary of that proper evaluation is a preliminary sort of tournament where eligible teams are put on an elimination format where proper competitors are then arranged in groups for their fans or stakeholders to begin a proper evaluation. Half of the contestants are denied such facility because someone was doing a cost reduction somewhere, thus diminishing the tenor and luster of a competition to meet some base goals somewhere. It is a measure of lawlessness which is at times noticed in some tournaments, and one is forced to say it is chiefly this part of the world.

Some pundits seeing that this kind of sentiment belittles soccer organization in Africa as they tend to use such truncated methods repeatedly, will say that this method is used in the Europa League organized UEFA, the European soccer administrators. Still that isn't accurate as the teams that basically qualify for the competition go into the group format while those who come from another door are given a play-out chance to enter the Europa League as an alternative format to search for honors during the season. In any case the league is itself a second tier event.

Yet in the CAF context teams that qualified directly for the club championship were put

to a play off to determine who actually participates in the tournament by obtaining a group berth, implying that some voices prevailed to cut costs. Most significantly these ought to be referee costs like hotel placement and allowances, and perhaps obtaining a better cut from funds delivered by this or that sponsor for holding the tournament. Chances that it is club welfare at issue are negligible.

The format adopted will have a telling effect on Mapinduzi Cup as a testing ground first for Isles leading teams in a regional context where more of them appear. Ordinarily each of the three or four participating sides would play either of the city rivals and even meet in subsequent rounds.

This chance is now sidelined, at least for this year's version of the tournament, and in its place one has a chance to meet either of the two sides - or any visiting side or Zanzibar club side and whoever wins that first match proceeds with the tournament. People don't stay on the screen long enough to evaluate their teams first, and then develop the feeling needed for any other side, for instance the team which subdued that fan's preferred club, and excitement for instance if the pair meet again at another level. Brushing all this aside for some pennies is to be somewhat reckless.

Ironically this is a tournament intended to mark the day of the Isles Revolution and the fun tied with it is now being overthrown, perhaps in similar spirit - not by workers and unemployed as in the first instance but a 'white revolution,' of those who stand to conserve some cash when the tournament is cut short somewhere. It is difficult to believe that it is the sponsors who pleaded poverty and compelled TFF and ZFA officials to revamp the tournament but TFF which has imposed an overloaded premier league match sequence. It completely ignored that the tourney exists and there are no higher authorities to direct TFF to cart aside a few re-deployable matches.

Whether or not this intrusion into Mapinduzi Cup shall lead to its more positive institutional anchor where TFF will not be able to impose a schedule which more or less nullifies the Isles tournament is one thing. But it all depends on conviviality at higher levels, that is, how far there is commitment to the Isles anniversary tourney or if officials take it for granted, and whether stakeholders actually speak aloud on the matter, or if poor attendance compel a rethinking. All in all it seems there is an environment of slighting the tourney, for rather unclear causes, decidedly.



Lipuli FC players, Emmanuel Kichiba (2nd L) and David Mwasa (R), block Simba's midfielder, Clatous Chama, when the squads clashed in a Mainland Premier League duel in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Grizzlies hang onto lead this time, beat Thunder 110-97

OKLAHOMA CITY

AFTER what happened eight days earlier in the same arena, the Memphis Grizzlies took extra satisfaction in beating Oklahoma City on Thursday night.

Jonas Valanciunas scored 21 points, Jaren Jackson Jr. added 20 and the Grizzlies held onto the lead this time in a 110-97 victory over the Thunder.

Tyus Jones added 15 points off the bench on 6-of-7 shooting for Memphis, which blew a 24-point third-quarter lead during its last visit to Oklahoma City on Dec. 18 and lost 126-122. That started a stretch in which the Grizzlies dropped three out of four games.

"Last time was disappointing,

because we had a big lead and we lost it," Jackson said. "We weren't able to respond. This time we made sure we responded the right way. We got a big lead again ... then made sure we took care of the ball and made the right plays."

"That one stung before, so we definitely owed them one. I'm glad we got it done."

Chris Paul had 23 points and 11 assists, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 21 and Dennis Schroder added 20 points for Oklahoma City, which had a four-game winning streak snapped. The Thunder had beaten Memphis nine straight times at Chesapeake Energy Arena, a streak that dated to Nov. 14, 2012.



Oklahoma City Thunder center Nerlens Noel (9), guard Chris Paul (3) and Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke (15) battle for the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game Thursday, Dec. 26, 2019, in Oklahoma City. (AP Photo)

"They were rebounding on us and they were just making timely shots," Paul said. "They made the floaters, the mid-range, the 3s. Honestly, we can look and see what we need to do better, but I think give them credit, too - they played an all-around great game."

The burly Valanciunas went 9 of 11 from the field and fueled an 8-0 run early in the fourth quarter that essentially put the game away. Memphis shot 55% from the field and outrebounded the Thunder 50-34.

Memphis didn't trail after the first quarter. The Grizzlies led by nine in the first and were up 49-47 at halftime. They extended their advantage to double digits for the first time at 79-67 on a 3-pointer by Jones with 2:53 left in the third and pushed their lead to 20 with 9:10 left after six straight points by Valanciunas.

Oklahoma City pulled to 106-97 with 2:15 to go, but Schroder missed an open 3 on the Thunder's next possession and Valanciunas dunked at the other end with 1:25 remaining.

"We've had some tough endings the last (few games), but we don't dwell," Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins said. "We move forward. Our guys are continuing to get better. The competitiveness is there every single night. But when you get that production, that competitive

fire from all 11 guys, the unselfishness that we're talking about, the critical learning opportunities that we've had, in the fourth quarter to close out a win is huge for us."

Brandon Clarke scored 13 points for Memphis, going 5 of 6 from the floor.

Steven Adams had 16 points for the Thunder.

Meanwhile, Salt City, Joe Ingles was hot early and Donovan Mitchell had it going in the second half. But it took three big plays in the final three minutes by Rudy Gobert for the Utah Jazz to turn back the Portland Trail Blazers. Mitchell scored 28 of his 35 points in the second half to power the Jazz to a 121-115 win over the Trail Blazers on Thursday night, but it wouldn't have been possible without a few Gobert gems that won't jump out of a box score.

"Those hustle plays by Rudy really sealed the game. You can say what you want about my scoring, or Joe, but at the end of the day it came down to Rudy making two big plays. That's why he is who he is and that's why we rely on him," Mitchell said.

Clinging to a two-point lead, Gobert used all of his 7-foot-9 wingspan to dive after a ball that was passing over the baseline and flick it to Bojan Bogdanovic for a 3-pointer from the corner with 1:45 to play. AP

Mourinho and Klopp agree: Prem scheduling a 'crime'

LONDON

LIVERPOOL boss Jurgen Klopp and Tottenham's Jose Mourinho have described the Premier League's hectic festive schedule as a "crime" against some teams that are forced to play two matches in the space of 48 hours.

League leaders Liverpool, who won the Club World Cup title by beating Brazil's Flamengo last Saturday, defeated second-placed Leicester City 4-0 on Thursday and host Wolverhampton Wanderers on Sunday, but other teams including Manchester City are not as fortunate.

City visit Nuno Espirito Santo's Wolves on Friday before welcoming Sheffield United on Sunday, prompting manager Pep Guardiola to write to the league to "thank" them for a demanding schedule.

"It is absolutely not OK," Klopp told the British media ahead of the win over Leicester. "There's no reason why more teams do not get more than 48 hours between Premier League games."

"None of the managers have a problem playing on Boxing Day, but playing on the 26th and 28th is

a crime. This year we play 26th and 29th and it's like a holiday."

Brighton, Everton, Watford and Manchester United all play twice within 48 hours this week.

"I understand all those saying it shouldn't happen. They're not moaning. They're telling," Klopp added.

"We can say what we want but no one is listening ... sports science gives you nothing to deal with this."

"The body needs a specific amount of time to go again. But we ignore that completely."

Liverpool increased their advantage to 13 points over Leicester, who after losing to Manchester City last week have now dropped their second straight game.

Mourinho, meanwhile, was speaking after Tottenham's 2-1 comeback win over Brighton at home. Spurs face Norwich away on Saturday and Mourinho said: "I cannot imagine that these boys can play in less than 48 hours. It is a crime that they are going to play football again in 48 hours. It's against every rule of physiology and biology."

(Agencies)

Guardiola hails 'irreplaceable' Aguero

MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM

PEP Guardiola believes Sergio Aguero is "irreplaceable" as the Manchester City forward enters the final 18 months of his glorious career in English football.

The record-breaking Argentinian is likely to be on the bench for the reigning Premier League champions visit to Wolves on Friday as he continues his recovery from a thigh problem.

That injury has sidelined the 31-year-old since the end of November and given Guardiola a taste of what life will be like when Aguero's contract ends next year.

The City manager does not expect to be able to talk Aguero into changing his plans to end his career in his homeland and that will leave Guardiola with the thankless task of replacing a man who has, to date, scored 244 times for his club.

"I'd say it will be one of the toughest (tasks). Sergio is irreplaceable," said Guardiola.

"We have an incredible other striker in Gabriel Jesus and maybe another one will come when Sergio leaves. But he is irreplaceable."

Aguero played a pivotal role when City were crowned champions of England for the first time in 44 years when his last-gasp winner against QPR took them to the 2011/12 Premier League title.

"The most important moment of this club, more important than if one day this club wins the Champions League, is the moment when Sergio scored that goal, against QPR to win the first Premier League (2012) after I don't know how many years," said Guardiola.

"That moment is much better than four titles in one season or whatever. And he was THE guy. More than anything, more than the goals he has done at this club."

"But sooner or later it is going to happen (Aguero's departure), he'll decide when."

Aguero's efforts in the three-and-a-half seasons that Guardiola has been in charge at the Etihad have been all the more impressive given many thought the Argentina

international would not fit into the Catalan manager's demanding style of play.

Jesus was seen as an immediate successor to Aguero but the veteran had other ideas and, after leading City to that memorable maiden Premier League title in 2012, has been a central figure during the most successful years in the club's history.

"Humble star" -

"He's responded incredibly well," said Guardiola.

"I've never seen as big a star as him be so humble, such a funny guy, and it is a joy to work with him and how he accepts sometimes my decisions even when it has not worked for him."

"As big a star as him don't (usually) accept that. I've worked with other stars -- who believe they're bigger stars than Sergio and they were not -- and it was more difficult to handle them or be with them."

Aguero remains such a crucial figure in City's modern history, especially since the pre-season departure of former captain Vincent Kompany, and while Guardiola would be open to the possibility of Aguero remaining beyond 2021, he does not feel it likely.

"I don't know. He can stay but it depends on his physical condition and desire," he said. "But I didn't speak with him and I don't know his intentions."

David Silva is also due to leave City after the end of the season, with Guardiola openly conceding he has no hope of talking the Spain international into staying at the Etihad.

But, unlike Aguero, Guardiola does not expect to sign a replacement for Silva, a player many believe to be the best foreign import in Premier League history.

"In this position, we're not going to do anything," he said. "Maybe I'll change my mind but we have other priorities. I have enough there."

"Bernardo can play there, Phil (Foden) is there, we have (Ilkay) Gundogan and Kevin (De Bruyne)."

AFP

Liverpool thrash Leicester to stretch lead as Tottenham, Man Utd close on Chelsea

LONDON

LIVERPOOL stretched their Premier League lead to 13 points by outclassing second-placed Leicester in a 4-0 win on Boxing Day as Manchester United and Tottenham cut the gap on fourth-placed Chelsea.

Mikel Arteta got off to an underwhelming start as Arsenal manager with a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth, but Carlo Ancelotti had a more positive impact on his Everton bow as Dominic Calvert-Lewin's brilliant diving header earned a 1-0 win over Burnley.

Chelsea beat Tottenham in a big win for Frank Lampard over his former mentor Jose Mourinho on Sunday, but the gap between the two is back down to three points as the Blues lost 2-0 at home to lowly Southampton.

Spurs came from behind to beat Brighton 2-1 thanks to goals from Harry Kane and Dele Alli, while United moved just a point further back in seventh as they too overturned a poor start to thrash Newcastle 4-1 with Anthony Martial scoring twice.

- Liverpool lay down a marker -
Liverpool's trip to their closest challengers was the top billing of a busy Boxing Day card, but there was no contest as the newly crowned world champions showed their class.

"It's one of many successful nights so far this season," said Liverpool midfielder James Milner.

"We are not even halfway and so much can change and happen. The strength of this team is we take it one game at a time."

Roberto Firmino's header was scant reward for a dominant first half display as Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah wasted big chances.

However, three goals in seven



Southampton's Nathan Redmond, left, scores his side's second goal of the game during their English Premier League soccer match against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, London, Thursday, Dec. 26, 2019. (AP)

minutes in the final quarter ensured the scoreline fairly reflected their control.

Milner doubled the visitors' lead before Firmino's classy finish made it 3-0.

Trent Alexander-Arnold helped set up all of his side's first three goals and rounded off a stunning individual display by drilling home the fourth from outside the box.

"We played our last two games against two of arguably the best teams in the history of the Premier League," said Leicester boss Brendan Rodgers, whose side also lost 3-1 to Manchester City on Saturday.

- Tottenham, Man Utd close on Chelsea -

After the highs of Sunday, Chelsea again struggled when faced with breaking down stubborn defensive opponents in Southampton.

The Blues have now lost to West Ham, Bournemouth and the Saints in their last four home league games.

"We are being asked a different

question at home. At the moment we are not answering them," said a frustrated Lampard. "We do not manage to pick up that final pass."

Southampton boss Ralph Hasenhuttl's decision to rest in-form talisman Danny Ings paid off as his replacement Michael Obafemi scored just his second Premier League goal with a calm finish into the top corner.

The visitors then secured a second straight win to move up to 14th when Nathan Redmond prodded past the onrushing Kepa Arrizabalaga 17 minutes from time.

Spurs were still feeling the after-effects of that Chelsea defeat with Son Heung-min suspended and confidence low when Adam Webster headed Brighton ahead midway through the first half.

Kane swept home at the second attempt after his first shot was saved by Mat Ryan before Alli then delivered all three points with a delightful chipped finish from an acute angle.

United were also beaten 2-0 at

bottom-of-the-table Watford on Sunday and another frustrating evening seemingly beckoned when Matty Longstaff scored his second Premier League goal - both of which have come against the Red Devils.

However, unlike when the Magpies beat Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men 1-0 in October, the response from United was emphatic.

Martial fired in at the near post with the help of Newcastle 'keeper Martin Dubravka before a thundering finish from Mason Greenwood and Marcus Rashford's header made it 3-1 before the break.

Another defensive error then teed up Martial to dink over Dubravka for the fourth early in the second half.

- Arteta's slow start -

Arteta got an early lesson in the flaws that have blighted Arsenal's season as they were caught out trying to play from the back to concede the opening goal when Dan Gosling put Bournemouth into the front.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang again rode to the Gunners' rescue to equalise just after the hour mark, but a point leaves Arsenal still down in 11th.

"It was intense, I was so excited, I just wanted to pass that energy to the players and I really enjoyed it," said Arteta.

Sheffield United are sixth, behind Tottenham only on goal difference, as they missed the chance to close to within a point of Chelsea in a 1-1 draw with Watford.

Crystal Palace climbed up to eighth thanks to Jordan Ayew's brilliant individual run and finish a minute from time to beat West Ham 2-1.

Aston Villa won the battle of two of the bottom three as Conor Hourihane's fine strike was enough to beat Norwich 1-0.

AFP

It's a matter of when, not if, Liverpool win the league

BY MARK OGDEN, SENIOR WRITER, ESPN FC

LIVERPOOL are 13 points clear at the top of the Premier League, and their supporters still refuse to sing that their team are "gonna win the league" this season. There have been too many near misses at Anfield since the club were most recently crowned champions of England in 1990 for the fans to tempt fate by going too early with that particular chant, but Jurgen Klopp's players made it 17 wins out of 18 in the league this term with Thursday's 4-0 victory against closest challengers Leicester City.

It would seem that the only people who don't yet believe that the Premier League trophy is on its way to Liverpool are the very supporters who are so desperate to witness it.

Their Boxing Day win at second-placed Leicester showed it's no longer a case of if Liverpool win the Premier League this season, but when. It's also become slightly irrelevant as to when they will win it, too. The only real questions that remain unanswered are about how big Liverpool's winning margin will be and how many records they will smash along the way.

Remember the rush to declare Pep Guardiola's Manchester City as the best team of the Premier League era two years ago, when they became the first side to break the 100-point barrier in the top flight? On current form, Liverpool are on course to make 100 points look like little more than a stopping-off point toward a much greater final total. By doing so, they will put Guardiola's team firmly in the shade.

City might have gone one further last season by winning a domestic treble, even pipping Klopp's side to the title by one point in the process, but Liverpool ended that campaign as Champions League winners. The gap between the two was already wafer thin, but this season, Liverpool have planted their foot so firmly on the pedal that they have left City, and everyone else, in their slipstream.

It took seven minutes for the Reds to finish off Leicester in the second half, but they were dominant from start to finish at King Power Stadium. A flurry of early chances culminated in a pinpoint cross from Trent Alexander-Arnold to Roberto Firmino for



Liverpool were sensational against Leicester, leaving a question only of when, not if, they clinch the Premier League. (Agencies)

an easy headed finish, and while it remained 1-0 until midway through the second half, the result rarely felt threatened.

In the 71st minute, the rout began: Caglar Soyuncu inexplicably handled in the box to give James Milner, one of the most reliable penalty-takers, an easy finish. Further goals followed from Firmino, who calmly curled an Alexander-Arnold cross into the top corner, and from the Liverpool full-back himself, whose thumping first-time finish left Kasper Schmeichel helpless.

As if to cement their controlling performance against the league's second-place team, Klopp's side restricted the Premier League's leading scorer, Jamie Vardy, to one off-target shot in his worst performance of the season.

Liverpool's consistency has been off the scale. Only Manchester United have been able to land a blow on Liverpool in the league, by holding them to a draw at Old Trafford in October, but the rest have all been beaten at least once. As they approach their final league game of 2019,

against Wolves at Anfield on Sunday, Liverpool have not dropped three points since their very first game of the calendar year: a 2-1 defeat against City at the Etihad on Jan. 3.

It goes further. Liverpool have now gone 35 games unbeaten in the league -- Arsenal's 2004 Invincibles hold the Premier League record on 49 games unbeaten -- and 30 of those have been victories. Translate those past 35 games into points and Liverpool would be on 95 points, which is simply incredible, yet with 20 league games

still to play between now and the end of the season, there is still 60 points available to Liverpool.

They can drop 12 points -- or lose four games -- and still end up with 100 points, but they're moving like a steam train right now, and current form would suggest that Liverpool are going to go well beyond City's century milestone. Such is their lead at the top that Liverpool can now play without fear or anxiety for the rest of the season because they know they have such a sizeable margin for error that the odd mistake or defeat here or there is highly unlikely to make a difference toward the outcome of the title race.

When a team plays with such freedom, they tend to win because they are playing to their strengths, which means things could only get better for Liverpool. And that will lead to the question as to whether they can claim another piece of history by emulating Arsene Wenger's great Arsenal team, which emerged as champions in 2003-04 having gone unbeaten for an entire league campaign.

Ozil has shown new Arsenal boss Arteta an 'incredible' attitude

LONDON

MIKEL Arteta has praised Mesut Ozil for his "incredible" attitude after restoring the Arsenal midfielder to his starting XI for the 1-1 draw at Bournemouth.

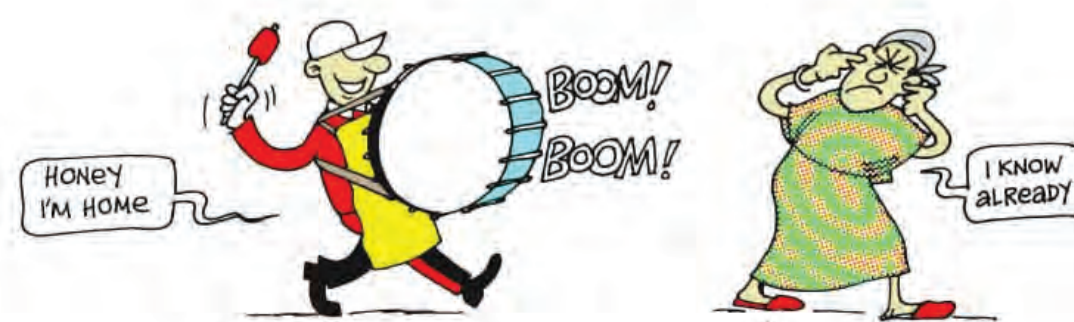
Ozil missed the final game of interim boss Freddie Ljungberg's spell in charge at Everton due to a foot injury, though the Swede said he would not have featured anyway after he reacted angrily to getting substituted in the loss at Manches-

ter City.

Midfielder Ozil had barely featured under Unai Emery earlier in the season either but Arteta, appointed last week, called the German "a massive player" at his first news conference.

He backed up that comment by naming Ozil in his first team and Arteta was impressed with what he saw from Ozil at Bournemouth, where Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang cancelled out Dan Gosling's opener. (Agencies)

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Yanga end Prisons' unbeaten run in VPL

SPORT

It's a matter of when, not if, Liverpool win the league

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

5 EATV **TONIGHT @ 21:00**

UJENZI

MONDAY
11:00 DADAZ (LIVE)
15:00 FUNGUKA
16:00 UTAKA
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 S5ELEKT
17:55 KURASA
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:30 MJADALA
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 5SPORTS LIVE
22:30 BONGO HITS

eastafrica RADIO
05:00 EA Breakfast
09:00 Supamix
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

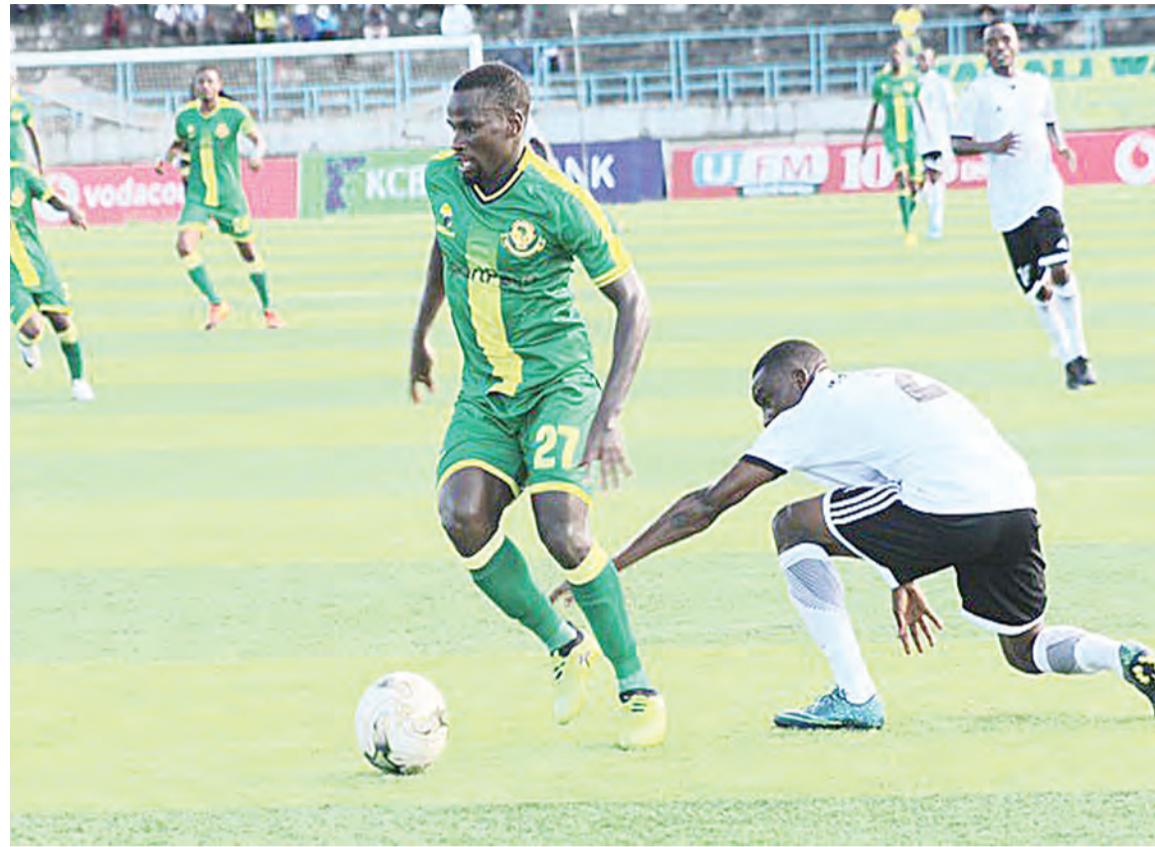
88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

By Guardian Reporter

YANGA have brought Prisons' unbeaten spell in the Vodacom Premier League to an end, edging the latter 1-0 at the Samora Stadium in Iringa yesterday.

Prisons had, before the yesterday clash, turned out to be the only club in the domestic top flight competition this season with unbeaten spell after taking part in 12 matches.

There were hardly meaningful opportunities for either team in the early stages of the duel, given both sides opted for a timid approach.



Yanga winger, Deus Kaseke (L), gets the better of JKT Tanzania center back, Damas Makwaya, in a recent Vodacom Premier League match which took place in Dar es Salaam.

Winger Patrick Sibomana put Yanga 1-0 up on the fourth minute, slamming in with his left foot from within Prisons' box, off defender Vedastus Mwaliambi's poor clearance.

Mwaliambi rose high to head away Yanga midfielder Abdul-Aziz Makame's long throw whilst under pressure from forward David Molinga, the defender ended up directing the ball to Sibomana, who quickly slotted it in with his left foot.

The early stages of the clash

were not quite exciting given neither of the two teams created meaningful opportunities.

Yanga wasted a chance to grab a second goal on the 28th minute, after Molinga had blasted over from close range when he pounced on a loose ball.

Prisons again struggled to foil a dangerous long throw by Makame, with one of the squad's defenders making a weak clearance that had the ball falling in front of Molinga, who nevertheless wasted the

opportunity.

Despite Prisons managing to push upfront on several occasions, they found it difficult to get past their opponents' defenders and keep keeper Metacha Mnata busy.

In one of the Mbeya team's opportunities, one of the team's forwards could only manage weak header, which did not trouble Mnata.

Yanga led by the lone goal after the completion of the opening period.

Lack of concentration by Prisons' defenders nearly proved costly six minutes into second stanza, when a free header by Yanga's substitute, Mrisho Ngassa, went inches over.

Prisons' central defender, Vedastus Mwaliambi, failed to properly mark Ngassa within the penalty area, the winger freely jumped to connect the cross, the effort went over.

Prisons' keeper, Jeremiah Kisubi, had to later on make a good save, tipping over Sibomana's fierce attempt from almost 25 meters.

Prisons pressed upfront in the latter stages of the match in an attempt to draw level, the approach made them prone to count attacks.

Yanga made a quick counter attack, which had Molinga setting up Sibomana, the winger unleashed a left foot shot, Kisubi composedly saved the effort.

Prisons made several more forays into Yanga's box, their efforts to find Yanga's back of the net nevertheless ended in vain.

Yanga had failed to post victory in their previous clash with Mbeya's other team, Mbeya City FC, as the teams were locked to 0-0 draw.

The yesterday match had been slated to take place at Sokoine Stadium in Mbeya, only to then be hosted in Iringa.

Mainland Premier League Board issued a directive the clash should be played at Samora Stadium because the Sokoine Stadium was in bad shape given it had two days earlier hosted a music concert.

Siddle magic fires Strikers home despite Maxwell blitz

CARRARA

PETER Siddle experienced ecstasy and agony within the space of three deliveries. He'd just dismissed the rampaging Glenn Maxwell for a 25-ball 43. This was Adelaide Strikers' game to lose now, but in the same over, he saw Nathan Coulter-Nile back away and put him into the stands to bring the game in the balance again, with Melbourne Stars needing 24 off 12 balls.

Siddle would once again be called in to defend 12 off the final over with Ben Dunk and Coulter-Nile still at the crease. He responded by nailing three yorkers - five full deliveries in all - as Strikers squeezed home by five runs to remain unbeaten after three games. Siddle's international career may or may not be over, his BBL career certainly isn't, for there's still enough fuel burning inside. Stars, meanwhile, registered their first loss in three matches.

Dale Steyn's BBL initiation

Dale Steyn's first four balls in his BBL career had people wondering briefly if they'd be able to see magic from him. Jake Weatherald thumped the first ball to mid-off, and then hit him for a sequence of 6,6,4,4. The method was simple: stand inside the crease, get under the length and go over the top. The third of those boundaries was off a slower ball. Weatherald 1-0 Steyn.

In his previous T20 outing, on December 1 at the Mzansi Super League, he'd conceded 10 runs in four overs combined. Now, Steyn was properly under pressure now. Having seen the full deliveries disappear, he shortened his length and cramped Weatherald for room, and had his man when the batsman toe-ended another lofted hit off a thickish inside edge to Glenn Maxwell at mid-on. Weatherald 1-1 Steyn.

Legspinning twins pull it back

Maxwell immediately took Steyn off and introduced Adam Zampa, who struck off his second delivery with some drift and fizz off the pitch. Having watched Weatherald thump boundaries, Phil Salt tried to leave his mark too, and he may have erred in playing for turn as this one gathered pace after pitching to beat his slog and castle him. It could've been a double-strike had Marcus Stoinis not put down Matthew Short first ball at extra cover when he stepped out to drill a half-volley.

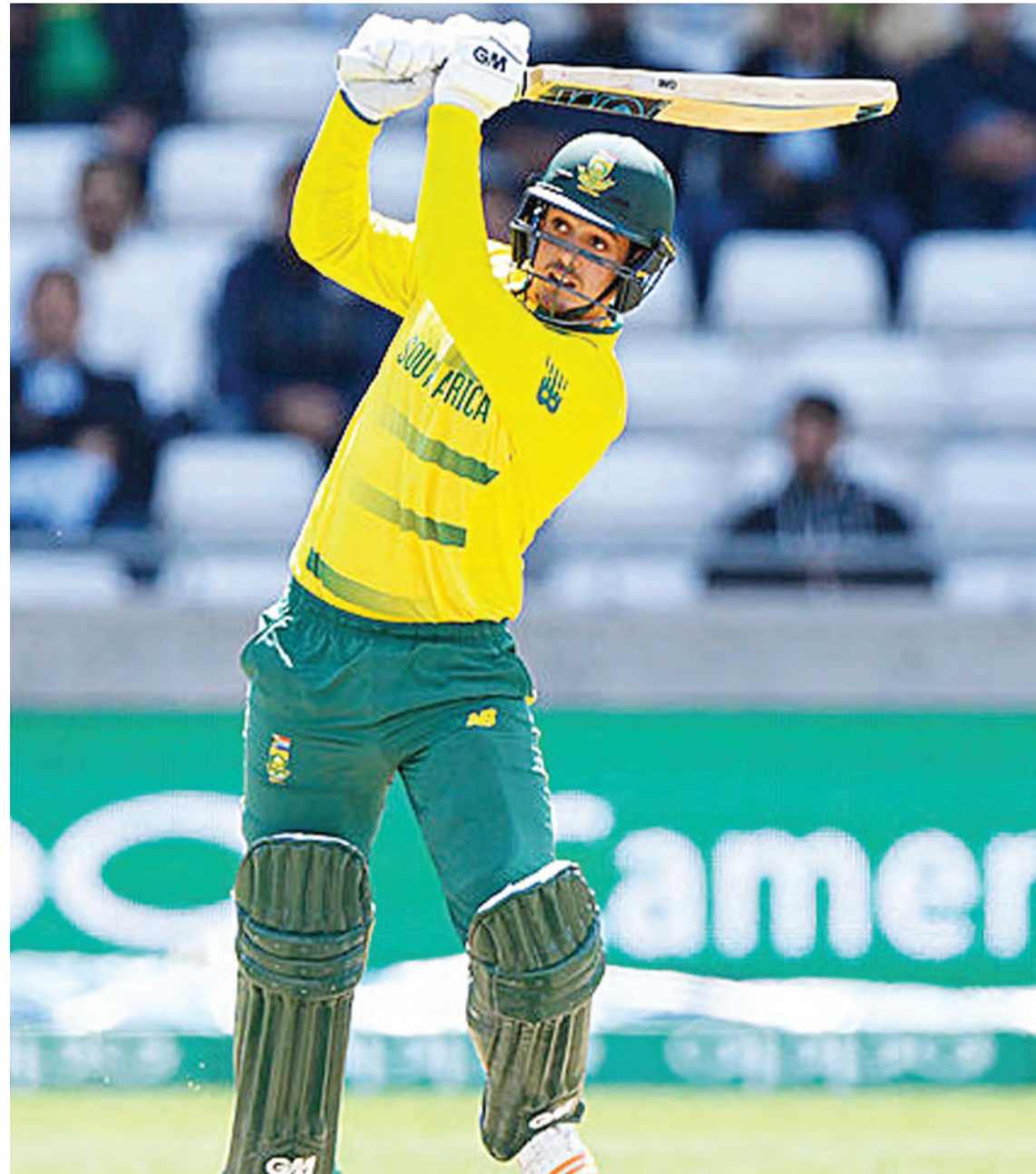
However, Short's stay was short-lived - no pun intended - as he was foxed two overs later by Nepal leg spinner Sandeep Lamichhane. Having seen Alex Carey caress the ball inside-out for six only two balls earlier, Short tried to do the same. Except, he didn't pick the googly and didn't have the length to get underneath it. Bowled. Strikers 53 for 3 after the Powerplay.

Carey lends control, Wells rides luck

Carey had driven sublimely through covers and mid-off so far in the season. His drives had produced 44 runs (four fours and three sixes) off just 19 balls. And he showed those imperious driving skills by hitting Zampa and Maxwell with the spin to clear long-off and the extra cover boundary. It was evident why three IPL teams were in a frenetic bidding war for Carey.

AGENCIES

De Kock leads South Africa fightback v England



Quinton de Kock

PRETORIA

QUINTON de Kock fell five runs short of his century after dragging South Africa out of early trouble to 277 for nine at the close on the opening day of the first test against England at Centurion Park on Thursday.

England took a wicket with the opening delivery of the four-test series and had their hosts teetering on 111-5 after lunch but De Kock's belligerent innings brought South Africa back into the match.

James Anderson marked his 150th cap and return to the England attack with the first-ball wicket of opener Dean Elgar, setting the tourists up for early domination of an inexperienced home side seeking to halt a run of five successive test defeats.

Sam Curran's skilful bowling earned him figures of 4-57 and Stuart Broad returned from illness to claim 3-52.

But De Kock wrestled the initiative away from England with an innings that combined early aggression, as he sought to impose himself on the bowlers, with later circumspection.

"We tried to make sure we kept up our intent, to keep ticking over and not get bottled up," De Kock told reporters.

"When England are on top, it's very tough to score runs against them."

He reached his 50 off 45 balls with some ferocious hitting before digging in to try to tire out

the England bowlers on a hot day.

De Kock fell agonisingly short of a sixth test century as he feathered an away swinger from Curran through to wicketkeeper Jos Buttler for 95 off 128 balls.

De Kock featured in an 87-run sixth-wicket stand with 30-year-old debutant Dwaine Pretorius, who made 33, and 47 runs for the seventh wicket with Vernon Philander who was 28 not out at the close.

Curran led the way for the England bowlers, who had to do without Ben Stokes, forced off the field by dehydration although he did return to field for the last hour.

The 37-year-old Anderson's first ball in test cricket for five months, having limped out of the Ashes series with a calf injury, was a warm-up delivery down the leg side that Elgar tried to flick at and edged to Buttler.

NEW REGIME

It was not the start South Africa, under a new coaching regime after an administrative crisis, were looking for against an England side who have battled with a flu bug in their camp since arriving almost two weeks ago.

But Zubayr Hamza, in his third test, boosted his chances of securing the regular No. 3 place with 39 before being caught in the slips by Stokes off Broad.

"We would have liked to have got them out but if we can keep them to under 300, we are confident we can go on and bat big," Curran said. **REUTERS**

Flexibles by David Chikoko

