



National Pg 2 Dar-Kibaha roadworks near completion



National Pg 4 Parliament to host national prayer breakfast



National Pg 5 Parental involvement in education



Mwinyi hails 'big' strides since 1964

By Guardian Reporter, Pemba

ZANZIBAR President, Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi (pictured) has declared that Zanzibar has made great development strides in the 58 years since the 1964 Revolution led by founder president Abeid Amani Karume.

He made the remarks yesterday at the launching of the CCM Youth wing (UVCCM) walk in the sequence of celebrations for the 58th anniversary of the revolution.

He said the revolution's initiator and his fellow compatriots had placed their lives in danger to liberate Zanzibar "hence it is the responsibility of every one of us to continue where they had left for the benefit of the present and future generations."

He expressed appreciation for procedures to coordinate youth activities from various areas of the country to assemble together, mobilising on various issues concerning the nation's destiny, including safeguarding the 1964 Revolution that brought true independence to Zanzibar.

It is the responsibility of each one to



This way they will see how they can benefit from self-employment opportunities with support provided by the government

develop the fruits of the revolution in strengthening the economy and improve the lives of the people by enhanced incomes, he said, emphasizing that the development of an envisaged modern economy takes up from efforts made by past administrations and work towards an economic revolution.

"I am pleased that despite Covid-19, we have started making slow strides towards where we intend to go. Hence it is the responsibility of everyone to support government efforts to reach the intended targets," he declared.

"The government supports the youth as an important social group facing many challenges, whose solutions depend on the government. Ongoing government efforts include strengthening the quality of education provided at various levels as well as strengthening technical education and various other fields for the youth," he told the gathering

Other steps include the need to mobilise the youth to join youth councils established in Unguja and Pemba islands, whose activities are monitored by the Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports.

The government aims at bringing the youth together as platforms to enable them to start economic projects, provide them with capital, equipment and expertise for productive activities, he stated.

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Speaker 'disowns' debt claims, applauds Samia

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma



National Assembly Speaker Job Ndagai addresses journalists in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

NATIONAL Assembly Speaker Job Ndagai yesterday apologised to President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the entire public over his remarks on the burgeoning public debt, saying he was 'misconstrued' by people with ill intentions aimed at causing division among leaders.

Mid last week Ndagai was quoted affirming that enactment of a law to introduce tangible mobile money transaction fees was better than going for loans, comparing the charges with the 1.3trn/- loan funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Which is better? Tanzanians for 60 years of independence keep borrowing and ballooning debts? We better cover for our own development instead of excessive borrowing," he said.

"When are we going to execute developments on our own, and in what manner? Is begging respectful? Once we have secured loans, we clap our hands...how can we afford daily borrowing?"

He said the mobile money transactions act was introduced despite the objections of some stakeholders, in order to build the country's capacity to develop on its own.

But addressing a press conference in his office here yesterday, Ndagai argued that his statement was not meant to demean the efforts of the president, who has since taking office initiated vast people-centered development.

"I sincerely apologise to the president and the public for at large for remarks that have been used to bring differences amongst us," he

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Amnesty to defaulting employers: NSSF gets 17bn/- in three months

By Reporter

THE National Social Security Fund (NSSF) has said the blanket amnesty it floated recently to private sector employers with outstanding contributions and supposed to pay penalty has paid off.

According to the fund's Director

General, Masha Mshomba, the 'offer' was meant to encourage all private sector employers to remit their contributions on time - "and the response has been hugely positive".

He said in a Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) programme yesterday that a sizeable number of employers had used the chance to pay arrears of

their contributions, "and the benefits now include 50 per cent penalty exemption for employers paying up across this month.

The offer, which took effect in October 2021, is open to all private sector employers who had defaulted on the payment of their contributions up to June 30 last year.

Employers who paid up between October

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14 pedestrians dead, 22 hurt as truck rams into partying group

By Guardian Reporter, Newala

FOURTEEN people have died and 22 others injured - some seriously, after a water tank truck T622AFS rammed into a group of people who were celebrating traditional initiation rites at Lindumbe village, Newala District in Mtwara Region.

Regional Police Commander Marc Njera said the accident happened at around 8:30 pm as the water truck being driven at high speed hit a group of pedestrians.

RPC Njera said after the accident the truck driver fled, leaving the vehicle at a nearby fuel station, noting that the police are on a manhunt for him.

"The driver failed to control truck traveling from Newala to Mahuta, hitting a group of people who were on the traditional celebration," he said.

Regional Commissioner Brig Gen, Marco Gaguti, said at the scene of the accident that it was a big blow to the town, losing community members and a treatment task for others.

He emphasized that drivers abide by road traffic regulations, and pedestrians as well, noting that whenever such accidents occur there are lessons on the proper use of roads.

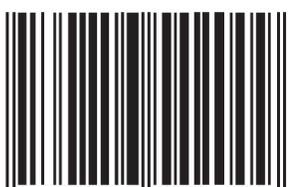
"We extend our condolences to those who lost their dear ones and for quick recovery of the injured, and hope that such mishaps do not occur again," he declared.

Saidi Mwendu, who witnessed the accident, said they were walking on the roadside at the material time when they saw a truck at high

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CRDB Bank Plc group CEO and managing director Abdulmajid Nsekela speaks in Dar es Salaam yesterday at the launch of the bank's campaign whose thrust is on sensitising Tanzanians on the importance of using the bank's "creative products" to reach their various targets this year. The initiative is dubbed "Unachostahili ni CRDB Bank" (literally, What you deserve is CRDB Bank). Photo: Guardian Correspondent



Speaker 'disowns' debt claims, applauds Samia

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said, asserting that technology can be used to destroy someone in a short period of time.

The Speaker explained that he made the remarks - but they have since been blown out of proportion - during a meeting with members of his constituency where they were discussing national issues and the development agenda.

The meeting among other issues discussed the need to set up a museum to showcase the Gogo culture and traditions for future generations.

Expounding on his remarks as to retain the current set of leaders or go for youths, some of whom do not believe in borrowing, he said the decision to vote who is that of the electorate, some of whom at times just decide to bring in new figures, punishing incumbents for unclear reasons.

Many times both CCM and opposition MPs have been turned down by electorates and later return to Parliament, so the statement was not pointing at any individuals, he said, remarking that with him as MP, Kongwa has benefited greatly from the 1.3trn/-, as through funds allocated to the constituency, they have managed to build 112 new classrooms.

"The classrooms are first class, with coloured iron sheets, aluminum windows and the tiled floors....in fact, the classrooms are as good as this room," he said, alluding to his office floor, noting further that Kongwa has been allocated 16bn/- to build girls secondary schools and a fortnight ago about 940m/- has been added for two more schools.

With all these achievements within a short period of time, he would be the last person to discourage the president from doing more, the Speaker intoned, maintaining that all those aggrieved after the remarks went viral forgive him. Scores of opinion makers reacted to the Speaker's statement last week.

Witnessing the signing of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) phase three building contract at the State House in Dar es Salaam, President Samia said the government would keep on borrowing to complete key strategic projects.

CCM regional officials and leaders of its wings have defended the party chairperson against the Speaker's declarations on the burgeoning public debt.

Singida regional chairman Juma Kilimba supported borrowing the 1.3trn/- as coming at the right time to execute various development projects, asserting that the region received 28bn/- for construction of 700 secondary school classrooms as well as improving water and health projects

His Dar es Salaam counterpart Kate Kamba said the region is benefiting from the IMF funds, citing the construction of Jangwani Bridge expected to use up around 190bn/-.

Closing a meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC), Simiyu RC David Kafulila said President Samia was on the right track in the supervision of the national debt and acquisition of foreign loans.

He said Moody's report released on August 30, 2021, assessed the country's debt situation, assigning it the B2 stable grade, higher than most African countries including Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique.

CCM youth wing (UVCCM) chairman Kenan Kihongosi said the amount secured from the IMF for development projects was quite small compared to past loans. "The country couldn't have the classrooms we have today if the Head of State would have opted to lock herself at the State House," he declared.

CCM has procedures providing its members with opportunities to submit arguments and claims instead of arbitrarily speaking, even as people have the right of speech and opinion, he added.



Mtwara regional commissioner Brig Gen Marco Gaguti (L) pictured at Newala Hospital yesterday consoling one of 22 survivors of a weekend road crash admitted there. Photo: Correspondent Abdallah Khamis

Truck rams into pedestrians, leaving 14 dead and 22 hurt

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coming in their direction.

"The driver of the truck did not honk his horn, nor did the vehicle put on headlights, making many people fail to hear it coming," he said, elaborating that by the time they saw it, it was too late.

Another witness, Mariam Jumbe said they did not hear the sound of the coming vehicle as they were playing to the beat of their traditional ngomas tied to initiation rites taking place in the area.

Fadhila Yusuf was injured on the leg said while they were dancing they entered the road and saw a vehicle at a distance with very dim front lights, which were soon extinguished and the vehicle increased speed and rammed into those who were in the middle of the road.

"Many people died and many received body and head injuries. I was fortunate as I was thrown to the side of the road, but some of my friends died," the witness stated.

Swamadu Hassan is another survivor

who was found himself under the belly of the truck but could not remember whether it had lights or the driver honked.

Mohamed Khalifa, the acting medical officer in charge at Newala District Hospital, said the hospital received 13 bodies and 23 injured persons, and one died while receiving treatment bringing the dead to 14.

Eight of the injured were transferred to Nanda Hospital for further treatment, and 14 continue with treatment at Newala, he added.

Mwinyi hails 'big' strides since 1964

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underscoring the need for youths mobilising themselves into youth councils.

This way they will see how they can benefit from self-employment opportunities with support provided by the government, he added.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi (3rd-R) unveils a plaque to inaugurate Watercom factory at Kinyikani Mchangamdogo on Pemba yesterday as part of the countdown to the commemoration of the 58th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Fifth left is Zanzibar's Industries and Trade minister, Omar Said Shaban, and second right is Zanzibar First Lady Mariam Mwinyi. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Kasekenya orders Tanroads to ensure Kimara-Kibaha eight-lane highway complete by June

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Minister for Works and Transport Eng Godfrey Kasekenya has directed the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS)-Dar es Salaam Region, to ensure that the ongoing on Kimara-Kibaha eight-lane road is completed before June, this year.

Speaking soon after inspecting the construction progress yesterday, Kasekenya wanted the leaders to closely supervise the completion

of the improvements as well as maintain the cleanliness of the road.

He also wanted leaders and experts who supervise the project to continue educating drivers on the proper use of the modern road so as to avoid unnecessary accidents.

"I want TANROADS and traffic police to work together and ensure that drivers and other road users know well how to use the road which includes various traffic signs and flyovers," he said.

The deputy minister warned road

users and the public in general to avoid dumping wastes in the road and directed supervisors to take stern actions over the actions as they damage the road.

TANROADS manager-Dar es Salaam Eng. Harun Senkuku assured the deputy that the first phase of the 19.2km Kimara-Kibaha eight-lane road has been completed and remained with only a few improvements including the road for rapid buses (BRT).

He said the road also involved the

construction of Kibamba, Kiluuya and Mpji bridges.

"Other on-going activities include construction of two upper bridges at Mbezi mwisho and Kwa Yusuf areas so as to reduce congestion at the Magufuli Bus Terminal. We are also constructing bus stand at Kibamba area-Mlonganzila road as well as installing traffic lights in the road so as to simplify crossing of people and cars," he added.

The project is set to spend 218bn/- upon completion in June this year.

Amnesty to defaulting employers: NSSF gets 17bn/- in three months

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1 and November 30 benefited from a 100 per cent penalty exemption, with 75 per cent applying to those who followed suit across last month.

"We are continuing with the campaign, with employers paying their outstanding contributions qualifying for the 50 per cent penalty exemption," explained Mshomba.

He said the penalty was due to the employers' own failure to remit contributions promptly, elaborating: "The law clearly states that all employers in the private sector are required to pay 20 per cent of the contributions - with half the amount deducted from an employee's monthly salary and the other half paid by the employer.

"However, the employer can pay a bigger percentage, depending on the system the particular company has put in place."

The DG further noted that they came up with the blanket amnesty plan in an effort to help employers with an overwhelming burden, while the penalty exemption also meant to improve the business environment "as the employers can then spend the money they would have paid penalty on other development activities".

He meanwhile explained that NSSF has "prioritised" the need to further sensitise and educate private sector employers and the larger public on the ongoing amnesty extended to employers.

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Six killed in dawn Al-Shabaab attack

LAMU, Kenya

At least six villagers were killed at dawn yesterday in an attack by Al Shabaab fighters at a village in Kenya's coastal town of Lamu, local officials said.

Lamu county commissioner Irungu Macharia said that the attackers are likely to have crossed from neighboring Somalia. They torched several houses and beheaded people in the dawn attack.

"The security forces are pursuing the attackers," he said over the phone, noting that one of the victims was shot dead, another was beheaded and four others burned in their house, an incident confirmed by the Coast regional police commander, Manase Musyoka.

"My team has informed me of the attack and we are planning to go there to assess the situation. I am told six people died in the incident," he said.

Security agencies said the militants were sighted in the vast Boni forest near the Somali border before the attack. Residents said tensions remained high in the area amid fears of more attacks as security operations are mounted.

The latest attack came two days after a motorcycle taxi rider was killed as his motorcycle ran over a bomb on a road in Lamu County on New Year.

Al-Shabaab militants, who have carried out numerous attacks in Kenya over the past decade, claimed responsibility for the latest attack.

"My team has informed me of the attack and we are planning to go there to assess the situation. I am told six people died in the incident," he said.



NSSF director general Masha Mshomba (C) speaks in an interview for TBCI's Jambo Tanzania television programme in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo courtesy of Special Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has hailed a great job done by districts and regional commissioners across the country in supervising various development projects, especially the construction of classrooms.

In his meeting with government and ruling party leaders in Songea, Ruvuma Region during the weekend, Majaliwa said the majority of development projects have been implemented well and at required quality standards.

"You have done a good job, I am satisfied that you have supervised the construction of classrooms. What is needed here to make sure that the classrooms are cleaned for the students to start using them once the schools are opened," he said.

The Prime Minister said he has conducted tours in the regions of Mbeya, Lindi, Dodoma, Dar es Salaam and now in Ruvuma and saw

Majaliwa hails construction of classrooms countrywide

a great job done by the leaders.

"The enthusiasm of management shown in these projects, if done on all other projects, this country must go far. We know that in big projects like this there are also challenges, but all in all, things have gone well," Majaliwa said.

He urged the leaders to maintain the spirit of hard work and oversee the remaining projects of health, water and roads.

He further elaborated that the development projects including the construction of classrooms are part of the implementation of the CCM election manifesto.

"We have also witnessed the availability of soft loans which are the efforts of President Samia Suluhu Hassan so as to facilitate completion of various projects of

health, education, water and rural roads," he added.

Meanwhile, the Premier wanted the district and regional leaders to educate and encourage citizens in their areas to keep food reserves and reduce selling them.

In order to restore natural vegetation within the next three to four years, the Premier urged the leaders to encourage people to plant more trees.

"If we restore our small forests, the humidity will soon return. We should also condemn and fight deforestation," he said adding:

"We have begun to witness the severe drought in these Southern regions. The Southern Hemisphere and the Southern Highlands have traditionally been used to provide food security for other regions,

but the situation is changing, so we have to tackle climate change by encouraging people to plant trees everywhere."

Earlier, Ruvuma Regional Commissioner Brig. General Wilbert Ibuge told the Premier that the region had received 10.24bn/- for the construction of 500 classrooms and three dormitories for special schools.

"All the 500 classrooms have been completed by 100 percent but the construction of the three dormitories are in the final stages and we hope that we will complete them before the opening of schools," he said.

The RC said in the health sector, they received 22.75bn/- for the construction of health centres in 11 divisions that never had the facilities.

Illegal agriculture contributes to deforestation in Morogoro

By Beatrice Philemon

ILLEGAL agricultural activities at Ntundwi, Mdimba Ng'ombe 'B' and Chimpembe forest reserves are said to contribute to deforestation which has resulted in a reduction of the reserves by 60 percent.

The situation has affected nearly 2,483 villagers in Ndole village, Mvomero District in Morogoro Region whose water sources have also been destroyed.

Ndole Village Natural Resources Committee Secretary, Cosmas Rubwaza said: "Deforestation rate is high at Ntundwi village forest reserve due to illegal agricultural activities. We arrested eight farmers in 2021 who were illegally burning charcoal and cultivating maize in the area."

He added that some villagers illegally conduct livestock grazing and timber production within the forest reserves. He said those arrested were ordered to pay fines whereas, so far, five farmers have already paid 470,000/- to the village government.

He said the funds collected from fines and penalties are used to implement development projects.

According to Rubwaza, some farmers have refused to pay the penalties amounting to 620,000/-, calling for government intervention to make sure the money is paid accordingly.

The Ndole village forest reserve that comprise of Ntundwi, Chimpembe, Mdimba Ng'ombe B, Lubanta, Mantenga, Digwamazi, Dimago, Masanje and Chalonga villages has a total of 1238.81 hectares of land.

He said, to control the situation, they are working closely with Morogoro Regional Commissioner, Mvomero District Forest Officer (DFO), Mvomero District Commissioner and Mvomero District Executive Officer (DED).

So far invaders have already taken 38 acres of land for their illegal agricultural activities within the

forest reserve, he said.

Ndole Village Chairman, Adrian Paulo said the villagers have been trained on forest conservation and management by the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) and Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network (MJUMITA) with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

The training was part of the Conserving Forests Through Sustainable Forest-based Enterprises Support in Tanzania (CoForEST) project which has been implemented in the village since 2015.

Under the project, villagers were trained on financial management, forest conservation, and good governance, the role and responsibilities of the village natural resources committee, forest management, record keeping and the 1998 National Forest Policy.

Through the knowledge and skills gained from TFCG and MJUMITA villagers are now well-informed about the effect of deforestation within their village land forest reserves.

He said that following the training, villagers can now report fire incidents occurring in the mountains and inside the village land forest reserve.

"Also a total of 46 Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCROs) were issued to residents thus increasing the land value and enabling villagers to use the CCROs to access loans from the financial institutions, something that was not the case in the past," he said.

"Deforestation rate is high at Ntundwi village forest reserve due to illegal agricultural activities. We arrested eight farmers in 2021 who were illegally burning charcoal and cultivating maize in the area."



JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA
WIZARA YA AFYA, MAENDELEO YA JAMII,
JINSIA, WAZEE NA WATOTO
MAMLAKA YA DAWA NA VIFAA TIBA



TAARIFA KWA UMMA

TAHADHARI YA UWEPO WA MATAPELI KWA WATEJA WA TMDA

- Mamlaka ya Dawa na Vifaa Tiba (TMDA) inapenda kuutadharisha umma kuwa wamejitokeza matapeli ambao hujifanya kuwa ni watumishi wa TMDA. Watu hao hupiga simu au kutuma ujumbe mbali mbali kwa mfano *"Habari - TMDA tunapenda kukujulisha huduma ipo tayari wasiliana nasi kwa namba hii ahsante"*;
- Matapeli hao hudai kuwa wanaweza kuwasaidia wateja kupata huduma zinazotolewa na TMDA kwa muda mfupi kuliko muda ulioainishwa katika *Mkatiba wa Huduma kwa Mteja*. Baada ya kutoa taarifa hiyo, hutuma ujumbe mwingine au kupiga simu na kuomba kiasi fulani cha fedha ikiambatana na namba ya simu ambayo pesa hizo zinapaswa kutumwa;
- TMDA inachukua fursa hii kuutadharisha umma juu ya utapeli huo na kushauri kupuuza ujumbe wowote wa aina hiyo. Aidha, tunawakumbusha wateja kuwa huduma zetu hutolewa katika ofisi ya Makao Makuu Dodoma, ofisi ndogo ya Makao makuu Dar es Salaam, ofisi za kanda zilizo Dar Es Salaam, Arusha, Dodoma, Geita, Mbeya, Mwanza, Mtwara na Tabora pamoja na vituo vya forodha na siyo kwa kificho kama ambavyo matapeli wanataka ieleweke;
- Vile vile, huduma hizo hutolewa na mtumishi anayevaa kitambulisho na beji yenye jina la mtumishi husika ili iwe rahisi kwa mteja kumtambua pale inapohitajika;
- Kwa tangazo hili, umma unakumbushwa kuendelea kupata huduma katika ofisi zetu zilizoko nchini kote na kuhakikisha kuwa malipo yote ya ada na tozo yanafanyika kupitia benki au mawakala waliohitabitishwa na benki husika baada ya kupatiwa ankara kifani (Profoma invoice) na Namba ya Malipo ya Serikali (Control Number);
- Aidha, tunawashauri wateja kuendelea kuchukua tahadhari dhidi ya matapeli hao na pale wanaposhawishiwa kupatiwa huduma nje ya ofisi za TMDA na kwa utaratibu tofauti, wasisite kutoa taarifa mara moja katika ofisi za TMDA nchini kote, kupiga simu bila malipo kupitia Na. 0800110084 au kutoa taarifa kituo chochote cha Polisi kilicho karibu; na
- TMDA inashirikiana na vyombo vya Ulinzi na Usalama kuwatafuta matapeli hao ili waweze kukamatwa na kuchukuliwa hatua za kisheria.

Imetolewa na:

Mkurugenzi Mkuu,
Mamlaka ya Dawa na Vifaa Tiba (TMDA),
S.L.P 1253, Dodoma Au
S.L.P 77150, Dar es Salaam
Simu: +255 22 2452108/2450512/2450751
Simu bila Malipo: 0800110084
Barua pepe: info@tmda.go.tz
Tovuti: www.tmda.go.tz



ZANZIBAR FISHERIES COMPANY (ZAFICO)

Tender No:SMZ/L01/G/NCB/L01-LOT2- LOT3-2021-2022/31

SUPPLY OF MOTOR VEHICLE

Invitation for Bid

Date: 3rd January .2022

- This Invitation for Bid follow the General Procurement Notice for this Project which appeared in Zanzibar Leo Issue 2nd October 2021.
- The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has set aside funds for the operation of the Zanzibar Fisheries Company during the financial year 2021/2022. It is intended that part of the proceeds of the fund will be used to cover eligible payment under the contract for:

| LOT | Description | Quantity |
|-------|---|----------|
| Lot 1 | Supply and Delivery Four Wheel Drive (4FWD) Station Wagon | 1 |
| Lot 2 | Supply and Delivery of Ten10 tones Lorry | 1 |
| Lot 3 | Supply and Delivery Double Cabin | 1 |

Bidders may quote for a single lot or both but evaluation will be done lot by lot

- The Zanzibar Fisheries Company now invited you to submit sealed bid for Supply and Delivery of Ten 10 Lorry, Four Wheel Drive (4FWD) Station Wagon and Double Cabin
- Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) Procurement procedures specified in the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act No. 11 of 2016 and is open to eligible Bidder as defined in the Regulations unless otherwise stated in the Bid Data Sheet.
- Interested Bidder may obtain further information from and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of the Secretary of Tender Board Zanzibar Fisheries Company ZAFICO from 7:30 to 15:30 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive except on public holidays.
- A complete set of Bidding Document(s) in English and additional sets may be purchased by you on the submission of a written application to the address given under paragraph 5 above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of 250,000.00 Payment should be settled through the following Account details: Zanzibar Fisheries company Account Number 0745613001 Branch Forodhani the People Bank of Zanzibar.
- Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Security in original form and for Tanzania Shilling TZS. 3,000,000.00 in the form of unconditional bank guarantee or bank cheque (in the format provided in Section IV.) issued by Bank located in Zanzibar, if the Bank located outside Zanzibar, the issuer shall have a correspondent financial institution located in Zanzibar.
- Bid in one original plus three copies, properly filled in, and enclosed in plain envelopes must be delivered to the address Zanzibar Fisheries Company, P.O.BOX 1680First floor PDMU, Date 25th January 2022at 02:30 pm hours at local time Bid will be opened promptly thereafter in public and in the presence of Bidders' representative who choose to attend in the opening at the Zanzibar Fisheries Company and must be to written the name of Tender.
- Late bids, portion of bids, electronic bids, and bids not received, bids not opened and not read out in public at the bids opening ceremony shall not be accepted for evaluation irrespective of the circumstance.

DR. AMEIR HAIDAR MSHENGA
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
ZANZIBAR FISHERIES COMPANY (ZAFICO)
ZANZIBAR.

Exim Bank announces winners of the second draw of 'Weka Mkwana Tukutoe!' campaign

By Guardian Reporter

EXIM Bank has announced the winners of the second draw of its 'Weka Mkwana Tukutoe' campaign which aims to encourage Tanzanians to have a saving culture while having the opportunity to grab various prizes including cash as well as a Toyota Vanguard car.

Announcing the winners during a draw held over the weekend in Dar es Salaam, the Bank's Head of Branch Network Ms Agnes Kaganda said a total of 6 winners emerged through the draw and won a total of six million shillings in cash.

"The six winners are Manish Govindji, Abdulkarim Lema, Emashu Investment, Paul Kadonya, Emile Singano, Ibrahim Nyange and Pritipal Chadha who will be presented with their cash prizes at their respective branches." She announced while noting that every month there will be six winners, along with a drawer that will allow them to win the grand prize of a Toyota Vanguard.

"So our current and new customers will be in a position to win these whenever they do a deposit starting 500,000/- and onwards. The bigger the deposit, the more they place themselves in a position to win big prizes" added Ms Kaganda during the draw which was also attended by a representative from the Gaming Board.

Further, speaking of the campaign she said it aims to bring about a change in the attitude of saving among Tanzanians from home savings and instead they keep their money through the bank for safety reasons along with many other benefits including interest.

"The goal is not just to encourage

Tanzanians to create a culture of saving, what we need is to see that more Tanzanians keep their savings in a safe place to sustain economic growth, which is why we plan to encourage them to use our various accounts such as salary account which is being used for daily uses."

"Others include Mzalendo account that runs without monthly deductions, Haba na Haba account and Faida account that allows them to save and earn interest. We also have Nyota account which is a special account for children without forgetting special account for SMEs," she mentioned.

For her part, an Officer from the Gaming Board Ms. Neema Tatomk congratulated the winners of the promotion while encouraging the banks customers to participate in large numbers and that they have a great chance to win many prizes in the next draw while assuring them that the Board is committed to ensuring the draws are transparently and fairly conducted in accordance with the set rules.



So our current and new customers will be in a position to win these whenever they do a deposit starting 500,000/- and onwards



Agnes Kaganda (C), Exim Bank's head of Branch Network, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday when announcing the winners of the second draw of the bank's 'Weka Mkwana Tukutoe!' campaign. The initiative is meant to encourage members of the public to cultivate a saving culture while having the opportunity to grab various prizes, including cash and a car. Others are Officer from the Gaming Board of Tanzania official Neema Tatomk (R) and the bank's retail product officer, Callist Butunga. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

OVER 3,000 girls of 13 to 21 years of age who had their secondary education discontinued are expected to continue on January 17 at various centres countrywide.

Those targeted are expected to benefit from the education through Tanzania secondary education quality improvement project (SEQUIP - AEP).

Opening a training seminar for stakeholders entrusted with the project, the Director of Tanzania Institute of Adult Education (TIAE) Dr Michael Ng'umbi said in Morogoro at the weekend that the girls are part of 12,000 to benefit from the five-year project (2021-26) in strengthening secondary education under TIAE.

3,000 girls to gain from SEQUIP - AEP

He thanked the government for facilitating the institute with funds for the project that will entail the refurbishment of coordination centres in the regions including repairs to classrooms to be used.

He said in implementing the project, the Institute has already integrated its curricula and written new ones for chemistry, physics subjects.

Dr Ng'umbi said the project is a unique opportunity for the Institute

to improve education to become competitive with the formal sector whereby the girls who will perform well in their examinations will be integrated into the formal education sector in Form V.

For his part, SEQUIP-AEP Coordinator from TIAE, Baraka Kiomwaki said the five-year project will cost USD 500 million, from a World bank loan.

He said in the project's first phase to run for one year USD 76 out of the

USD 500 million has been provided.

For her part, TIAE Deputy Director for Expertise, research and Consultancy, Mary Watungulu said by December 27 last year 1,500 out of 3,000 girls qualified have emerged for registration at the Institute's various centres.

She said the regions that are leading for registration of the girls being targeted in the project include Shinyanga and Mwanza, followed by Lindi.

Speaker of the National Assembly is set to host the first-ever national prayer breakfast event

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

NATIONAL Assembly Speaker Job Ndogai is to host the first-ever National Prayer Breakfast, an event geared towards praying for the nation and unity among Tanzanians, the speaker revealed yesterday.

Briefing journalists here, the speaker said the event to be held on 29th January 2022 will bring together MPs, religious leaders, government leaders, among others, saying President Suluhu Hassan has given go-ahead.

Ndogai said the purpose of the event that has been happening in other countries and never in Tanzania, is to help bring unity among leaders and Tanzanians in general, noting that the country has achieved a lot in the recent past, worth recognition.

Unlike in other countries where such events have specific themes, the speaker did not state any specific theme, simply saying the event aimed at building unity in the country. "The country is contact but there are people who are working against our unity and we should come together, calling for God's guidance to steer the nation further," he said.

Ndogai who earlier clarified his statement on the increasingly growing national debt said almost all Tanzanians were happy with what the sixth phase government has done for the short time it has been in power.

He said for the first time in history that the national budget has been implemented smoothly without delayed disbursement of funds, noting that people are amazed at this new development. "Any patriotic Tanzanians can see what the government under President

Samia Suluhu Hassan has done, directs funds to the needy, especially rural-based population," he said.

He called on Tanzanians to support the head of the nation in building the economy for the betterment of Tanzanians. Ndogai argued that the country is in safe hands, there is peace across the nation except a few individuals are using technology to create non-existing differences.

Meanwhile, the speaker has called on all members of parliament to come to Dodoma in readiness for the parliamentary committee sessions soon. He said the first committee is sitting from 9th January 2022 while others will resume on 16th January before the parliament session commences on 1st February 2022.

The 'National Prayer Breakfast hosted by national parliaments started in the United States in 1953, it was viewed as a 'Presidential breakfast' and was later observed as a 'National breakfast'.



The country is contact but there are people who are working against our unity and we should come together, calling for God's guidance to steer the nation further



Kyela district medical officer Dr Mariam Ngwere (C) takes around local residents at the site of the construction of a village hospital maternity ward at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Grace Mwakalinga

By Guardian Correspondent, Manyara

MANYARA Region has reported that it had collected 738m/- land rent between July and November last year, saying public response on land rent payments was good.

This was revealed here at the weekend in the report issued by Assistant Manyara Regional Lands Commissioner, Leonard Msafiri when speaking to this paper.

He said the region, in FY 2021/22 has been targeted to collect 3.1bn/- land rent.

Msafiri said apart from collecting the amount, they are faced with various challenges including

Manyara region collects 738m/- land rent arrears

little understanding among the people inland rent and that land formalisation has not been fully completed in the region.

He mentioned some of their strategies as including preparation of notices reminding landowners to pay, telephoning them and using vehicles with loudspeakers to remind them.

"Hardcore defaulters who will disregard our reminders will be referred to courts," he added.

He said sometimes they have to auction property of defaulters to compensate for land rent payment and called on defaulters to pay the rent even by installments.

"It is important for the people to be responsible in rent payment as

the land rate is small, they should pay in time to avoid accumulation," he added.

For his part, Gendi Ward resident, Gaston Damian said the reason for the people failing to pay land rent is sheer negligence and others because they have many land areas they own some of which were inherited from their ancestors.

NGO to spend 2bn/- on youth projects in Tanga

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

A SWISS-based Botnar Foundation is planning to spend 2bn/- starting this February to implement various projects which are meant to address a number of challenges facing youth in Tanga Region.

Representative of the Botnar Foundation, Dr Hassan Mshinda said the foundation has since 2018 been collaborating with stakeholders to implement various projects that address youth challenges as well as helping the city to build better systems to improve the health and wellbeing of young people in a growing urban environment.

"We are all witnesses of the speedy urbanization; the situation which puts children and youth in a challenging environment towards

their development. When cities grow, youth find it difficult to access some important social services such as clean water, good shelter and health," he said.

Dr Mshinda said the projects' implementation is scheduled for between February and March this year.

The projects according to him include improvement of the Forodhani Park, manufacturing of desks from primary and secondary schools, construction of toilets as well as youth training on entrepreneurship, and behaviour change.

He said youth will also be trained on digital technology and how to use the various social networks to access markets for their poultry businesses.

"We are planning to purchase 12

fishing boats as part of our efforts to empower youth economically. With the fishing boats they will be able to engage in commercial fishing and generate a good income," said Dr Mshinda.

Commenting on the projects, Tanga City Mayor, Abdurahman Shiloo said the projects would bring about desired development to youth whose demand for employment grows rapidly. He said youth empowerment programs are in line with the government's initiatives which target to see them economically independent.

Shiloo commended Botnar Foundation saying since the foundation was introduced in Tanga city they have implemented a good number of projects including the provision of capacity building training to various city executives.

The "TangaYetu Initiative" focuses on building a more youth-friendly city by enabling youth to engage in various economic activities such as fishing and poultry businesses.



Members of the Coca-Cola Tanzania management and staff celebrate in Dar es Salaam in ushering the New Year of 2022 at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Correspondent Adela Madyane, Kigoma

Kigoma residents decry lack of clean, safe water

KASIMBU Ward residents in Kigoma Municipality have no access to clean and safe water, a situation that forces them to rely on unreliable water sources, risking them waterborne diseases.

One of the residents in Busomelo Street, Athuman Tito said people in the area use water from wells located a few meters from the toilets, threatening them to the outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

"We are using water that is not safe at all; wells that we use are locally placed without any mitigation risks to our health. It's risky to get clean and safe drinking water, women in this area are forced to buy water or walk about 30 kilometers to fetch water in Buzebazeba, which is very far from here," Tito said, adding:

"We buy 20 litres of jerrycans for 1,000/- if you have a huge family you can spend 7,000/- per week only for drinking water, it is better to pay water bills to Kigoma Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (KUWASA) than costs like this."

Another resident, Mariam Hamisi said: "We urgently need clean and safe water to get rid of typhoid and diarrhea."

"Human factors such as washing clothes close to the wells endanger our lives," said Runigangwa Yahya said, calling the government to chip in and address the challenge.

Ramadhan Jama, a water vendor from Kasimbu ward said: "In a trip, we carry five gallons on a bicycle, we always charge a gallon for between 200/- and 500/- depending on where we got it."

Busomelo Street chairperson Hassan Hassanaly said, the street has a population of more than 1,000, they all depend on wells, whose water aren't reliable and the situation become worse during the dry season.

In studies conducted by the Lake Tanganyika Basin Authorities reveal that the construction of development projects and settlement houses without their involvement as the authorities can lead to the environmental impact on the areas.

Head of Environmental and Protection Department at Lake Tanganyika Basin, Odemba Kornel

said it is advised before starting and developing projects or settlements to seek advice from the authority to avoid environmental hazards that can cause further harm to human beings.

"There are projects built without our concern, they are now damaged, they were flooded and no longer existing, we regret that they did not use water statistics in designing their projects which led to damages, water data helps projects to be built effectively, for example, Kasanga and Mgambo ports sunk because they did not use water data and Kalema port is doing well because they used the water data in their construction," explained Kornel.

He insisted that, as an authority, they know the areas with water and should not be placed on projects or settlements, they know when and where there was a high water level and where, and when the water reduced, and where the ultimate water level is, this will help avoid losses of property and other infrastructure.

By Guardian Reporter

'Parental involvement a crucial factor for successful education'

TO comply with the system of integrated support for their students, schools need to build partnerships with parents and develop mutual responsibility

for children's success in the educational system. In this way, parental involvement is increased, parents' efforts to support schools are encouraged,

and they are directly making a positive impact on a successful educational system.

Njombe Regional Commissioner (RC) Eng Marwa Rubirya has said that the government will take stern measures on parents and guardians who will bar form one student to report to school once the schools are opened. He made the statement during the handover of 47 classrooms in Ludewa District which were constructed under the Covid-19 funds.

According to him, previously, parents were complaining of

tuition fees and contributions but now the government has taken the responsibility and so what is needed is to ensure that children go to school.

"There is no excuse now, we want parents to put all their efforts, preparing their children to go to school on January 17, we have completed the construction of classrooms and are waiting for the children to use them," he said.

He said that President Samia Suluhu Hassan's zeal is to ensure that Tanzanian children receive quality education and that's why she took an effort to look for funds so as to finance construction of enough classrooms across the country.

He directed district commissioners, executive directors, councillors and all leaders to supervise and ensure that children report to school and no one should

be left behind.

"We want our children, our girls to go to school so as to achieve their dreams of life, we will take stern measures to those who will go against the directives," he added.

Earlier, when reading a construction report, district executive director Sanday Deogratius said the construction of the 47 classrooms has been completed by 100 percent and will greatly help to reduce the congestion of students in classes.

He said due to the shortage of classrooms, 60 students were studying in one classroom but with the new classrooms, the number will drop to 40 students per room.

"This will enable the students to study in a comfortable environment and thus perform well in classes and national examinations," he explained.



BE PART OF THE EXCITING "SOS FAMILY"

Do you want to inspire people and at the same time contribute to a more productive, inclusive and sustainable society? We have a place for you to be part of the big SOS family, as a voluntary National Association Member. We are currently in the process of selecting the National Association Members. Do join us on our mission to help the people in need. Come and take place in an exciting journey to transform lives for the better.

SOS Children's Villages is a child focused, non-governmental organization providing care and support to children who have lost parental care or at risk of losing parental care of their biological family. SOS Children's Villages Tanzania, is a member of SOS Children's Villages International, one of the largest non-governmental and non-denominational organization working with communities, partners and states to ensure that the rights of all children are fulfilled in every society. In Tanzania, there are four SOS Children Villages under the SOS Family Care programme i.e. in Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Zanzibar (Unguja). Other programs include; Family Strengthening, Advocacy, Education and Youth Empowerment. SOS Children's Villages Tanzania implements its programs in six location i.e. Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Mwanza, Pemba and Unguja.

Our Vision:

Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.

Our Mission:

We build families for children in need, we help them shape their own futures and we share in the development of their communities.

Our Values

- Courage - We take action.
- Commitment - We keep our promises.
- Trust - We believe in each other.
- Accountability - We are reliable partners.

Mission of the role:

The National Association members will be responsible for election and voting in the leadership of the organization, support the organization in fulfilling its strategic goals, receive information of the organization's progress by any means of communication, actively attend the general meeting and participate in all organization activities, as they may be required.

Key roles of the association members:

- Receive and endorse the Chairperson's reports.
- Approve the audited financial statements.
- Nominate and elect the national board members.
- Appoint and approve auditors for the next year.
- Elect and appoint an independent nomination committee that undertakes new recruitment of members.
- Partake on national association activities upon invitation.
- Approve changes in the statutes and authorize major transactions such as mergers and dissolution of the organization.

Personal qualities, values and attitudes:

- A collaborator valuing the contributions of others, able to create a supportive and safe environment for others in the organization.
- Capacity in crisis management, with proved resilience and stamina in times of internal or external crises.
- "Outside the box" thinker.
- Bold enough to take decisions that will help the organization move forward and thrive.
- An Individual with no criminal records.

Attitudes:

- Passionate with solution based approaches for positive outcomes.
- Ready to contribute expertise, experience and know how to support the organization.
- Empathic attribute that promotes inclusivity and empowerment.
- A strong belief on meritocracy over paternalistic traits.
- Enthusiastic about innovative approach and change management for strong performance.

Minimum Requirements for association members:

- He/she should have knowledge of SOS Children's Villages and given his/her support before, or is willing to be a friend of SOS.
- He/she is committed to the SOS Children's Villages' vision, mission, and values.
- He/she should be persons of topmost integrity with the ability to effectively probe and offer advice and solutions to complex organizational challenges.
- He/she should be an individual who is free from any conflict of interests that can violate the organization's constitution, national laws and, regulations.
- He/she has competencies in one or several of the following areas: children's rights and child-care practices, social and children's issues in the country, and general management / management of non-profit organizations.
- He/she should be an individual who will devote adequate time to the affairs of the organization to support the general strategic direction.
- An individual with the unquestioned capacity to represent the core interests of the organization both within and without.
- A very good knowledge of child protection and safeguarding including but not limited to policies and statutes of both national and international standards.
- He/she must have a general knowledge of the UN convention on the right of the children.
- He/she should be able to pay annual membership fee.

Minimum Skills and qualifications required:

- A form four leaver to University / Tertiary / College levels graduate.
- Proven work experience in working and engaging with programmes to support vulnerable groups.
- Experience in engaging with children related programmes / projects.
- A track record in working with inclusive programmes.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to communicate with people from different backgrounds.
- Fluency in Kiswahili and ability to communicate in English.
- Ability to comply with our child safeguarding policy.
- Ability to pay annual membership fee equivalent to **USD 100.00**
- Age from 35 – 50 years

SOS Children's Villages Tanzania holds strict child safeguarding principles and a zero-tolerance policy for conducts of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in the workplace. Parallel to technical competence, recruitment, selection and hiring decisions will give due emphasize to assessing applicants value congruence and thorough background checks, police clearance reference check processes.

How to Apply:

If you have passion to be part of the global movement to give a loving home to children please submit a 1-page Curriculum Vitae which indicates age, academic qualifications and experience and a brief motivational letter with at least three (3) traceable referees, applications should be sent electronically to Member.Association@sos-tanzania.org.

All applications should be submitted not later than Monday 17th January 2022 on or before 4:00 p.m. and only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.



Simiyu RC says he will not tolerate any contractors behind shoddily executed works

By Guardian Correspondent, Bariadi

SIMIYU regional commissioner David Kafullila has threatened to terminate contracts for contractors who will carry out the implementation of the projects below the required standards.

He made the remarks yesterday when speaking at a contract signing event for the construction of gravel roads within Simiyu Region. The contracts have been signed between 16 contractors and the Tanzania Rural and Urban Road Agency (TARURA).

Kafullila warned the contractors to avoid the 'business as usual' syndrome and make sure all the roads are constructed at required standards. He also directed district commissioners to properly supervise the projects and ensure they are completed within schedule.

"We will not hesitate to take stringent actions which include termination of contracts against any of the contractors who will implement the projects below standards," said Kafullila, adding that there has been a tendency by some contractors to poorly execute the projects.

He gave an example of the Matongo gravel road project which was constructed below standards.

"TARURA boss should submit to my office a report on why the contractor working on the Matongo road has not been punished," he said.

He said for the first time in history, Simiyu residents will witness over 18 road projects being implemented at once. He said all the projects are

implemented using funds sourced internally through various levies.

TARURA Acting Manager in Simiyu Region, Mathias Mugorozi said they are planning to spend 18.2bn/- for repairing and construction of new roads in the 2021/2022 financial year. He said the construction of the roads is meant to facilitate transport services and enable residents to transport their harvests to marketplaces.

Mugorozi added that all the roads should be completed before the end of the 2021/2022 financial year.

Speaking on behalf of the contractors, Eng Lameck Okech promised to implement the projects at required standards, and that they will work day and night to ensure the projects are completed within schedule.



We will not hesitate to take stringent actions which include termination of contracts against any of the contractors who will implement the projects below standards



Kiteto constituency legislator Edward ole Lekaita has an audience with Dongo ward residents at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

NATURAL Resources Minister, Dr Damas Ndumbaro, who is also the Songea Constituency Member of Parliament, has called on his constituents and those from other areas to utilise the Ruhila Zoo for meetings and festivals, in order to advertise the zoo.

Dr Ndumbaro made the call here at the weekend when speaking to hundreds of Songea residents who attended the New Eve celebrations at the Zoo area that is managed by the Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) located in Songea Municipality in

Minister calls upon Songea residents to advertise Zoo

Ruvuma Region.

Speaking to those in attendance, some of who received game meat, Dr Ndumbaro said his constituents had every reason to be proud of the Zoo for its being located in the municipality.

He said his Ministry is set to improve the zoo by constructing a fence, and 500m/- has been set aside for the purpose, provided by

President Samia Suluhu towards the development of the country's tourism sector.

He said strategies to improve the Zoo include increasing the number of fierce animals including lions, Leopards, crocodiles, and giraffes to make sure any incoming tourists should not miss viewing these animals.

He added that an investor has

been located to construct a hotel in the area for visitors coming from various areas of the country.

For his part, Songea District CCM Chairman Hamis Abdalah Ally praised TAWA officials for their good job in the zoo especially in protecting the natural forest against invaders who do not know what conservation means.



Parents and guardians in Muheza town buy school uniforms and other items in readiness for next week's countrywide reopening of schools next week. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

'Catholic Church will continue saying without fear or favour'

TANZANIA Episcopal Conference (TEC) President Bishop Gervas Nyaisonga has said the Catholic Church will continue performing its duties including cautioning, criticising and educating whenever it sees things not going in the right direction, all for the national interests.

Nyaisonga, who is also the Archbishop for the Mbeya Diocese of the Catholic Church, made the remarks at the weekend when speaking to this paper on the Church's position in his New Year message.

He said in doing so the Church should not be regarded as

mobilising any incitement, but only to revert to the Church's basic teachings.

"An apostle teaches his people what is true before God, and if anything committed is regarded negatively, and we are certain of its being right, we shall speak on the issue without fear, sometimes people get restless whenever the Church says something, but these are ignorant that the apostle works for the Church, and it should not

be regarded that we want to grab others' responsibilities.

Nyaisonga stressed on the Church adherents to continue living within God's Truth while ensuring they commit good deeds and preach peace to enable the country to develop politically and economically.

He said the community should identify God's servants in conveying God's message in various ways including via entertainment

including sports.

Some of the Catholic Church's adherents said they will continue to part of those preaching for peace to the community while admonishing vice whenever these

Meanwhile, Bishop Nyaisonga conveyed his New year's message to Tanzanians and called on them to thank God for all that they had passed through and stressed upon them not to despair but to continue working hard.

Illegal activities reduce water supply to Tanga

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

POPULATION growth and the increase of human activity along water sources of the Zigi River has been cited among the major causes of weeds at the Mabayani dam in Tanga District.

The situation is claimed to cause 30 percent of the dam to be affected by weeds, something which endangers its well-being.

Muheza Zonal officer of the Tanga Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Tanga-UWASA) Ramadan Nyambuka made the statement yesterday when the District's Commissioner Hashim Mgandilwa visited to inspect water sources supervised by the authority.

"The increase of human activities along Zigi River, the residents are contributing much to the damage to both river and the dam, weeds and mud have greatly increased causing the depth of the dam to decrease," he said.

In addition, Nyambuka said they had previously formed environmental committees at the village level that showed great performance where people stopped degrading rivers and dams as well as burning forests.

"But the situation has changed, residents have stopped adhering to the rules and regulations, they are farming and grazing animals along the river and dam, we need to take coordinated measures to rescue these water sources," he said.

On his side, DC Mgandilwa warned residents conducting the activities along rivers and dams and all other water sources that the government will not tolerate them.

He said that the safety and security committee will closely monitor the water sources and strengthen efforts to ensure that rivers and dams are

safe from harmful human activities.

"We will have zero tolerance to anyone who will be found damaging our water sources, we should all work together to protect rivers which are the major source of water," he insisted.

He wanted village and street leaders, especially those who supervise environment protection to continue educating and encouraging citizens to avoid deforestation and charcoal burning businesses.

Mgandilwa asked the leaders to encourage wananchi to use other sources of energy that are friendly to the environment including gas so as to protect the surroundings.



But the situation has changed, residents have stopped adhering to the rules and regulations, they are farming and grazing animals along the river and dam, we need to take coordinated measures to rescue these water sources

New link between sickle cell and severe malaria is found

By Special Correspondent

MALARIA parasites may have adapted so that they can cause severe malaria in people with sickle cell disease, a study suggests.

Sickle cell, a group of conditions that can cause red blood cells to become sickle-shaped, it's become common in Africa because the genes responsible for the disease can help prevent malaria during early childhood, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

However, a study published in the December edition of Nature, found that specific changes in three regions of the malaria parasites' genome could be responsible for malaria infections in people with sickle cell disease.

"The [malaria] parasites that cause disease in people who carry sickle haemoglobin are almost always the specific types of parasites," explains Gavin

Band, lead author of the study and statistician at the Wellcome Center for Human Genetics, University of Oxford.

"They have these specific alleles [two or more forms of genes] in these three regions of the parasite genome. That is an exciting finding not known before."

The researchers looked for genetic variants in over 3,000 children from Gambia and Kenya children who had developed severe malaria.

Their findings suggest that the deadly malaria parasites seem to have evolved to be able to attack people with normal haemoglobin and sickle haemoglobin, with the potential of causing severe disease in those normally thought of as unlikely to bear the brunt of malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa.

"Parasites have big genomes," says Band. "They evolve on much quicker timescales than humans and we know actually that they can

evolve very quickly in response to selection pressures we have seen with response to antimalarials in the past."

The findings are a step towards developing treatments for the problem, but there is still a lot of work to do.

"It would be great if, in future, this might lead to something for people with sickle cell, but that is not where we are now," Band says. "The next step would be that we need functional studies to find out what these variants do."

Wellington Oyibo, a professor of medical parasitology at the University of Lagos in Nigeria, commends the researchers for identifying an association between severe malaria in people with sickle cell disease and different regions of malaria parasites genome.

"The belief that patients with sickle cell disease ... are protected from malaria is not completely true," he says.



Zanzibar Lands and Housing minister Riziki Pembe Juma (R) has a word with Zanzibar's Education and Vocational Training ministry permanent secretary, Ali Khamis, shortly after yesterday's launch of content broadcasting on the ministry's education channel. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Africa must get up to speed on cyber diplomacy

By Karen Allen

ON January 17, African diplomats will meet their global counterparts in New York to thrash out the details of a proposed new United Nations (UN) treaty to tackle cybercrime. It will be an opportunity for the African delegates to highlight growing digital threats and determine how to define, investigate and prosecute what is in effect a borderless crime.

Existing treaties such as the Budapest Convention or the African Union (AU) Convention on Cybercrime and Personal Data Protection (the Malabo Convention) are considered by some states to be useful if somewhat limited regional instruments. Russia has been among the countries arguing for an UN-wide convention, with cyberspace increasingly becoming a theatre of geopolitical competition.

The New York meeting is an example of the growing influence of cyber diplomacy. It is among a raft of multilateral forums, many of them led by the UN and driven by competing resolutions, where cyber governance, resilience, capacity and response are discussed. The core of such engagements is how states balance freedom of information, privacy and security in the rapidly evolving digital world.

An upcoming Institute for Security Studies (ISS) report explains why Africa cannot afford to take a back seat in such diplomatic discussions. The continent currently lags behind many other parts of the world when it comes to digital 'capacity' - the people, processes and technology that define the digital age.

Discussions on cybercrime, cyber security and how future digital technology is developed, diffused and deployed cannot be the sole preserve of richer nations with more

advanced digital capabilities. Those same technologies are increasingly being used in Africa to shape the way business, government and security are conducted.

Africa's more digitally advanced states, including Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, Egypt and Rwanda, must articulate the continent's digital priorities coherently and convert this into organisational strength. This would almost certainly bolster Africa's influence in cyber diplomacy negotiations.

One regional cyber security expert interviewed for the ISS report observed that in many multilateral forums, 'cyber superpowers view Africans as junior partners needed to make up the numbers in possible coalitions.' To counteract this, Africa needs continental champions who can negotiate common digital positions for presentation by continent-wide bodies such as the AU.

Examples of the most pressing issues include how African states can rapidly develop their digital capacity in line with the AU's Digital Transformation Strategy. Beyond this are issues of cyber security. For instance, how should African states respond to attacks on critical infrastructure or the weaponisation of cyberspace to conduct disinformation campaigns and undermine democracy?

It also includes the threat posed by cyber-enabled crimes. Their perpetrators use the internet to engage in traditional crimes like fraud and forgery, human trafficking or the illicit trade in drugs, wildlife products, weapons, precious stones, etc.

The AU's Digital Transformation Strategy emphasises the economic and developmental potential of rapid digital advances to the

continent. A key part of this is ensuring equitable access to digital technologies and building the human capacity to benefit from them.

However, discussions are needed on the unintended consequences of evolving technologies on human security. Without strategic thinking on shaping and taming the algorithms and deploying future digital technologies, African states risk being swept along by the more digitally mature superpowers and their agendas. The continent needs to upskill African cyber diplomats and embed digital knowledge across government.

Competition over the ownership of emerging technologies and related power relationships is another reason Africa should engage more actively in cyber diplomacy. African states need the infrastructure underpinning digital technologies such as the networks, hardware and other tools that define the cyber ecosystem. This makes them dependent on other state actors and their proxies but also leaves them vulnerable to influence and imported norms about privacy, mass surveillance and security.

The rapid rollout of CCTV camera systems along with facial recognition tools supplied by Chinese firms in countries including Ethiopia, South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe have ignited a debate about sovereignty, technological interdependence and digital feudalism.

Given the modest level of digital development among many of the AU's 54 states, Africa seems particularly vulnerable to tech-infused geopolitics. The economic challenges facing many countries on the continent may incline them to opt for the cheapest tech rather than the most secure.



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Carrier frame

- Box section frame fabricated from high-strength, low alloy steel.
- Front/rear towing and tie down lugs.

Outriggers

- Four hydraulic telescoping single-stage double box beam outriggers with inverted jacks and integral holding valves.
- Three position setting, 0%, 50% and fully extended.
- Outrigger boxes removable for ease of transportation.
- All steel fabricated, quick release type outrigger floats, 609.6 mm diameter.
- Maximum outrigger pad load: 57 290 kg.
- Controls and crane level indicator located in cab.

Engine

- Engine (Tier III): Cummins QSB 6.7L diesel, six cylinders, 205 kW at 2500 rpm.
- Maximum torque: 978 Nm at 1500 rpm.
- Ma of 5000ppm.Sulphur diesel fuel.
- Fuel tank capacity: 312L.

Transmission

- 6 forward and 6 reverse speeds.
- Front axle disconnect for 4 x 2 travel.

Drive/Steer

- 4 x 4.
- Fully independent power steering:
- Front: Full hydraulic steering wheel controlled.
- Rear: Full hydraulic switch controlled.
- Provides infinite variations of 4 main steering modes: front only, rear only, crab and Coordinated.
- Rear steer indicator.

Axles

- Front: Drive/steer with differential and planetary reduction hubs rigid mounted to frame.
- Rear: Drive/steer with differential and planetary reduction hubs pivot mounted to frame.
- Tyres; Std. 29.5 X 25 - 34 bias ply, Titan.

Brakes

- Full hydraulic split circuit operating on all wheels.
- Spring-applied, hydraulically released parking brake mounted on front axle.

Lights

- Full lighting including turn indicators, head, tail, brake and hazard warning lights.

Maximum speed

- 24km /h

Grade ability (theoretical)

- 73% Based on 79 460 kg GVW,
- 33.25 x 29 tires,
- pumps engaged, 48,8 m boom, plus 18 m swing away,
- 18 144 kg counterweight, hook block and headache ball.

Electrical system

- Two 12 V - maintenance free batteries.

Key documents

- Clear and detailed Quotation
- Company registration documents i.e. Certificate of incorporation, business licence, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.
- A written statement indicating Tanzanian ownership percentage, Tanzanian management and below management employment percentage to determine classification as an Indigenous Tanzanian Company as per the Local Content Regulation, 2018;
- Applicable certification, accreditation, affiliated registrations, and letter of dealership as required;
- Approved Local Content Plan or acknowledgement of submission from the Mining Commissioner

Submission of Quotes
 Please submit your quotes via email to bulytender@barrick.com. The reference "Mobile Crane - BUL-RFQ-21-11-01" must be quoted in the subject line of the email.

NB: The Company reserves the right to invite any other supplier(s) who did not submit a quote through this advertisement.

Key Dates

- Last date to submit quotes **January 07, 2022**

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Limited

2022: Consolidating sixth-phase policies

MINISTERS were spending their office time last month reviewing what has been done in 60 years of independence in various sectors, a quarterly preoccupation this year, having spent the end of the third quarter reviewing development achievements during the first six months of the sixth phase government. The preceding quarter they were looking at the first 100 days of the sixth phase, fresh from a first quarter milestone of bidding farewell to fifth phase leader Dr John Magufuli. It was that stressful, a hectic year.

This year those milestones will be something of the past, a legacy whose gradual eclipse we took the whole of the past year to reflect upon, both in relation to the departure of Dr Magufuli and the 60 years of independence. This year the country is settling into consolidating the now sharpening orientations of the sixth phase presidency, altering institutional structures to suit the new orientation, and politically, work to overcome distraction in that regard. Uneasy feelings came up in the third quarter 2021 and were dispelled.

Even at the end of the year such sentiments were still being expressed, for instance the debate on the pros and cons of borrowing, where no one raised an issue of whether all these strategic projects are needed, but some seemed to say we can squeeze more out of revenues. Much of this was expressed in relatively dim surroundings, not as pivotal contributions for instance in the legislature as it was off session,

but they are part of usual legislative input. Yet leadership is executing the president's vision, not consensus with MPs.

Naturally the president will not ignore the sentiments of civil society and elected office holders and in that sense the legislature, as well as those she has appointed to help her administer various sectors. At a certain point the Minister for Agriculture told an audience somewhere that the country doesn't need Ugandan sugar as it strives to be self-sufficient, to which the president responded in kind, that this view wasn't valid policy, qualifying it as 'nonsense.' This underlined her principled view of a market economy where the key issue is competition, forcing producers to cut costs and lower their prices, for consumers' benefit.

Eradicating non-tariff barriers with Kenya and Uganda consolidates the much-delayed East African Common Market. Without sixth phase vision it would not have been there. It is not a secret that despite signing on paper that we accept a common market, Tanzania never made a principled decision to move in that direction, and not surprisingly in 2014 MPs were moving to take Tanzania out of the EAC after Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda formed a 'coalition of the willing' to proceed with trade liberalisation.

Now we are part of it all. But it took seven years of hectic political change, first a constitutional conference that helped to bring about new capable leaders like President Samia, and secondly a revolutionary fifth phase government clearing up graft. Only on this premise was reform possible.

World Braille Day happier with recent digital version

ACTIVISTS around the world on January 4 each year mark World Braille Day, which United Nations write ups show that it is marked as an aspect of caring for people with disabilities generally. Last year this theme was entangled with extensive interrogation as to the fate of people with disabilities, estimated at

one billion worldwide, accessing health care and education in the wake of the pandemic. Covid-19 made far too many people dependent on public assistance or social protection channels, which means crowding out people with disabilities unless special arrangements are made at individual, community or state level.

Braille form of reading was invented by Louis Braille, a French genius who lived from 4th January 1809 to 6th January 1852, who became blind after an accident at his father's workshop at the age of three, playing with an awl and it struck on one eye, caused an infection that made both eyes visionless. He still proceeded to have a good education and become an educator himself. It is unlikely that without this lifelong handicap he would have put his mind to improving writing systems (or codes) to help the blind, virtually to its perfection. Chroniclers say his invention was ignored in his life and well beyond, and taken up last century.

It is equally being observed that Braille has remained what it was for most of this period, but in the past year, a major development was being taken up around the world, a digital of dot writing. A write up dated April 2020 says that digital

braille or electronic braille is a way in which the visually impaired can access information using electronic braille displays where the digital content on screen is converted into braille, thus made available for use. As the system is an application, it means one converts content in real time, unlike printing braille documents/

With Covid-19, chroniclers were at pains to point out that the pandemic has revealed how critically important it is to produce essential information in accessible formats, including in Braille and audible formats. With the severity of the pandemic largely eclipsed despite periodic new variants, digital braille, made accessible enough, reduced the learning and teaching pain for the disabled and their instructors. This must be included in current IMF loan based education and health sector infrastructure uplift drive.

In addition, there is the huge problem of unemployment for graduates and other school leavers, college and vocational trained youth. Current efforts at reducing trade barriers and making the country's investment environment more hospitable for local and foreign investors, along with agro-sector lending that was picking up in the past year, should open more doors for the visually impaired as well. For many the good education they obtained would be impossible to pursue without the system created by the French educator and inventor, and it is for that reason that World Braille Day is in many respects a moment of salutation for science, facilitating the realisation of basic human rights.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

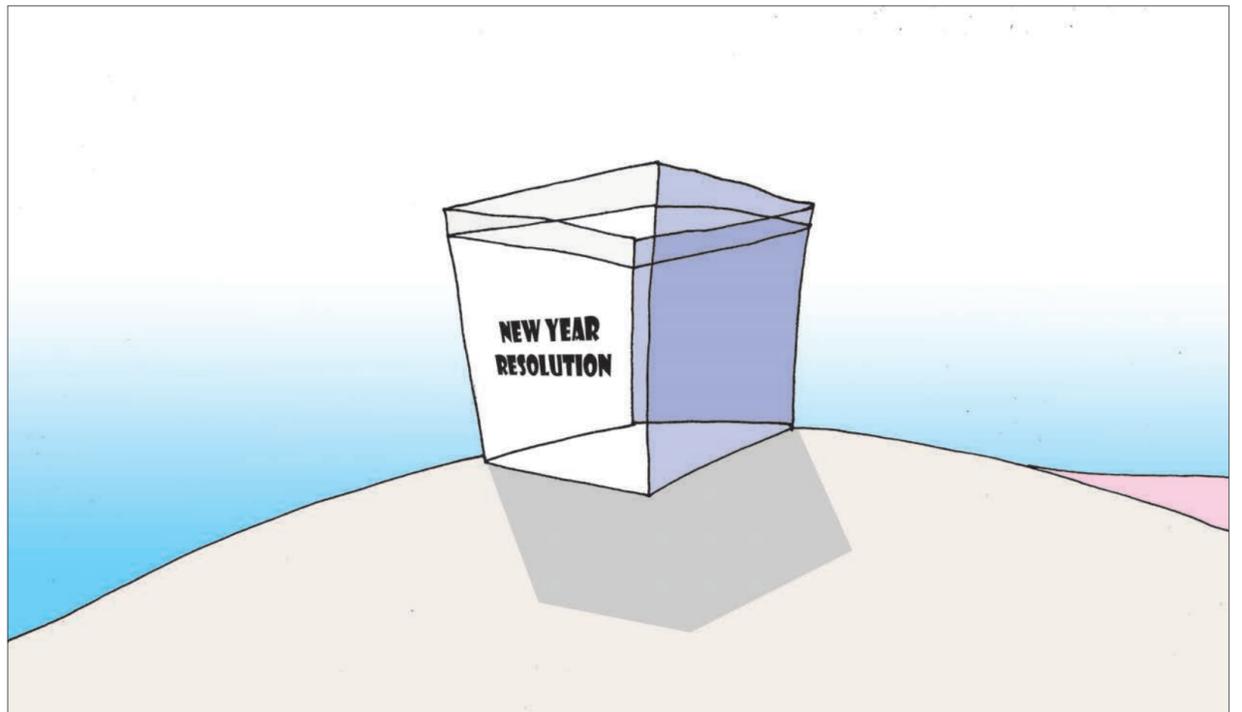
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO
Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO

Newsdesk

News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757154767
General line: 0745700710
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Mobile: 0782253676
E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz
Website: www.ippmedia.com
epaper.ippmedia.com



Renewing hope after another bad year

By New Frame

AS our social crisis escalates year after year, we are perilously close to an entirely unviable situation. There is a way out, but it can only be built in the realm of the popular.

It has been a long and exhausting stretch since South Africa has not had a bad year. The time when the pace of progressive change was lamented as being too slow and too narrowly conceived is long gone. These days we all know that things are getting worse.

With a youth unemployment rate of 77.4%, and an overall unemployment rate of 46.6%, South Africa is, as Duma Gqubule recently observed in these pages, "an unviable society". We are a violent, often chauvinistic society, with a weak public sphere, broken institutions, collapsing towns and decaying cities, and a political class that is often ruthlessly predatory and entirely lacking in any kind of emancipatory vision. Millions have been left in squalor, their lives shattered by the weight of the contempt of the elites who call each other comrade.

There are plenty of critiques of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution, but at this moment in our history both documents appear to be wildly utopian. The same is true of Steve Biko's aspiration that "in time we shall be in a position to bestow on South Africa the greatest possible gift - a more human face".

If prospects for political hope were graphed from, say, the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955 to the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement on campuses in the late 1960s, the rebirth of the Black trade union movement after the Durban strikes of 1973, the urban insurrection that began in 1976, the mass mobilisation of the 1980s - often cohering around the United Democratic Front - and then the attainment of liberal democracy, there would have been lots of ups and downs but a strong and general upward movement.

Many intellectuals were buzzing with excitement about the idea that the African Renaissance, first mentioned by Thabo Mbeki in 1997, would enable a "third moment" in postcolonial Africa after decolonisation and the democratisation that followed the end of the Cold War. Today these ideas inhabit a grainy half-forgotten world well lost.

From false hope to swift decline
The beginnings of the end of the



sequence of rising popular hope, which by the 1980s was largely associated with the ANC, can be traced back to the authoritarian currents in the movement in exile. It can also be traced to the demobilisation of popular struggle in the early 1990s, the turn towards conservative economics that followed, the general complicity in the ANC with Mbeki's catastrophically quixotic response to the Aids pandemic, the party's violently repressive response to the emergence of new forms of struggle at the turn of the century, and many other moments and developments in our recent history. But it was Jacob Zuma's trial for rape in 2006 that brought the ugliness that had festered at the margins of our politics into the centre of our public life.

The massacre of striking miners at Marikana in 2012 and then the Gupta leaks in 2017 bent the graph of popular hopes into swift decline. That decline was briefly reversed by the election of Cyril Ramaphosa on an anti-corruption ticket in 2018, but the failure of his presidency turned the curve of that decline into a drop every bit as precipitous as the rise of graphs showing Covid-19 infections with the Omicron variant.

As New Frame has argued before, it is vital that we take full measure of the scale and seriousness of our descent into crisis. Without that kind of pessimism of the intellect, it will not be possible to act decisively or effectively. But this is no time to abandon our social hopes.

There is a long list of countries that have rapidly recovered from crises

of various kinds, including economic collapse and the devastation of war. We can do the same. We can quickly turn the movement of the graph of our social hopes.

With sufficient political will, our institutions can be salvaged; the economy reoriented in the interests of the people as a whole, and the worst off in particular; the Trump-like attacks on the integrity of the public sphere effectively opposed; popular democratic organisation welcomed as a democratising force rather than treated as illicit dissent; and much more.

Two vital tasks

But this requires the building of a political force, or a set of political forces with the strength and resolute commitment to do two things. One is to oppose and decisively defeat the predatory forces in the state, the institutions and in society. There is a great popular appetite for this. One only has to look at the astonishing resilience with which grassroots activists have taken on the thuggery of the ANC in Durban, where its descent into gangsterism is most evident, year after year. There is also, among many examples, the riots in North West that drove Supra Mahumapelo from the premiership in 2018. An effective national political force could defeat the predatory political forces if it aligned itself to popular revulsion for the kleptocrats and their anti-democratic and sometimes violent politics.

The second task of a political project to restore hope would, of course, be to reorient the

power of the state and other institutions in the interests of the people. There is nothing utopian about this. There are plenty of examples - all with their limits and contradictions, to be sure - of rapid social progress under progressive governments. But this always requires popular organisation and mobilisation to build a political instrument for change, to renew and discipline it from below, and to defend it from domestic elites and imperialism, most particularly the revanchism of American foreign policy, covert and overt, under Joe Biden.

None of the political parties currently in Parliament has any capacity to offer any sort of way out of the current crisis. The way out lies in building democratic and progressive forms of popular power from below. South Africa has a remarkable history in this regard. Salvaging our hopes requires the renewal of that tradition. It is a challenge that we can meet, but only if we put aside the relentless elitism of the assumptions and ideas that dominate the elite public sphere.

What happens in the courts, in non-governmental organisation-based "civil society", in the elite public sphere and in Parliament as it is currently constituted is far from being irrelevant. But it is among the masses of our people that our future will be determined. As any undergraduate student of politics should know, democracy, a term that comes to us from Ancient Greece, means the power (kratos) of the common people (demos).



South Africa

What happens when ecosystem collapses and State capture collides?

‘The problem we have here is that the animals don’t just need to be protected, they need to be protected from the people that are protecting them,’ said forensic investigator Paul O’Sullivan, around 25 minutes into the first day of the virtual trial of case number 34502/2010 in the Pretoria High Court.

The time was 12.30pm on 17 August 2021, and since 19 July 2021, when the trial was meant to have kicked off, Daily Maverick had been seeking access to the documents and transcripts that we knew were out there somewhere. Given the matter’s history and cast of characters, we had every reason to suspect that the defendants in the case – either government entities or former and current employees of the state – had been leaning on the Stalingrad strategy to ensure that the evidence would never be heard by a South African court.

As outlined in our three-part Dead Matter series published in March 2021, the R1-billion civil claim, initially filed in July 2010, had been cast as a David and Goliath battle between conservationist Fred Daniel and Deputy President David Mabuza. As far back as 2003, when he was still buying up farm plots in fulfilment of his vision to regenerate one of the most threatened biomes on Earth – a vision, we noted, that for a time had become a reality under the name of “Nkomazi Wilderness” – Daniel had been blowing the whistle on the alleged land claims scam run by the Mpumalanga provincial government.

And Mabuza, when he took over as the Mpumalanga MEC for agriculture and land affairs in 2008, had reportedly taken the scam to a whole new level – so much so that in 2017 O’Sullivan would open a case of fraud against the future deputy president, arguing on his website that “pretty much all the land restitution claims in Mpumalanga” during Mabuza’s tenure as MEC were false.

Now, after a wait of 11 years, Daniel’s day in court had finally come. But before giving evidence on the allegedly fraudulent land claims, O’Sullivan would continue to provide testimony on the so-called “Problem Animal Fund” run by the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) in the mid to late 2000s.

In the second quarter of 2009, O’Sullivan told the court, he had been approached by Charles Ndabeni, the then CEO of the MTPA, to conduct an investigation into “irregular activities” regarding animals that had escaped from the province’s game parks.

“During that investigation, I became aware that a bank account was being operated,” O’Sullivan testified, “a bank account that was outside the control of the MTPA. It was managed by a couple of individuals, and those were individuals that were running the Wildlife Protection Services, Jan Muller and a chap by the name of De Beer.”

In the report that he presented to Ndabeni in 2010, O’Sullivan added, he noted that the Problem Animal Fund had morphed from its original intention into “nothing more nor less than a slush fund.”

The slush fund was being used, he said, to bypass the Public Finance Management Act, whether for buying or for selling.

“Whenever they did any buying, they just went out and bought. Whenever they did any selling, and the only selling they were doing was the selling of hunting rights, they sold to whoever they felt like selling those rights to. I think I analysed a period of six weeks where six animals were shot, and a large amount of money came into the account, and there were no proper quotations for how that money was spent,” O’Sullivan said.

“Nobody could give me an explanation as to why the animals had to be shot. The most common animals being shot were hippos and buffaloes, which were quite high up on the list of hunters’ wishes. And in one case I saw a discrepancy: a hippo was shot one day for R15,000 and another day was shot for R20,000. So none of those figures added up, nobody could give a proper explanation.”

Then came the kicker in O’Sullivan’s testimony: “When I asked, ‘Why couldn’t you put the animal back [in the place] from where it had allegedly escaped?’ – and in most cases, these animals had escaped from the Kruger National Park – I was told it was much easier and cheaper just to shoot them.”

So there it was, the evidence that Daily Maverick had been waiting for weeks to hear. Thanks to the efforts of our attorneys, we had been granted access not only to the virtual trial but to all the legal documentation. And we also knew, from the second part of the investigative series that we had published in March, that there was a document in the trial bundle linking Muller of the MTPA to Mabuza himself.

Dated 24 November 2008, the document was a memo on an MTPA letterhead, addressed from Muller to Ndabeni. The memo’s subject line referred to “recent developments at Nkomazi” – and while it was unsigned, it would read in hindsight as an attempt by Muller to throw Ndabeni off the scent.

The first item in the memo dealt with the confiscation of 72 animals from Nkomazi Wilderness – including eight leopards, four cheetahs, seven wild dogs and 24 indigenous ducks – during two respective raids in November 2007 and June 2008.

Covered at length in journalist Rehana Rossouw’s Predator Politics: Mabuza, Fred Daniel and the Great Land Scam, the story essentially involved a slapstick back-and-forth between the parks agency, the state attorney in the Mpumalanga premier’s office, Daniel’s former attorney Richard Spoor, a Jet Ranger helicopter, and the Carolina Magistrates’ Court.

As Rossouw would make plain in her astonishing book, the confiscations were all part of a much broader vendetta against Daniel. Back then, however, Muller had affected the stance and tone of an unimplicated

third party.

The second item in the memo concerned Daniel’s application for an animal rehabilitation centre at Nkomazi. Here, Muller felt secure enough to furnish his boss with a list of (somewhat circular) reasons why the application had been denied.

But it was in the memo’s third item, which dealt with Daniel’s application in 2000 to have Nkomazi officially proclaimed a private nature reserve – with one of his registered companies, Grand Valley Estates, as the “management authority” – that Muller may have been subtly attempting to scare Ndabeni out of his wits. Because, while Muller may have acknowledged that the Government Gazette had ratified the proclamation in August 2001, he would still frame the issue of management authority within the country’s most explosive context.

“This division [Wildlife Protection Services] came to the conclusion that the land claims might be the reason for the proclamation not being effected,” he stated.

At the time, again, Mabuza was the MEC for agriculture and land affairs in the Mpumalanga provincial government.

The outfitters were putting money into our trust account and we were using that money to uplift the community. We built a crèche and drilled a lot of boreholes. We were also donating to the drop-in centres. That was up until 2015, when the benefits were stopped by LEDET and given to the Mabunda Traditional Authority.

In mid-January 2022, when the hearing of case number 34502/2010 resumes in the North Gauteng High Court, it is highly likely that Muller and Ndabeni will be called into the witness box. If so, the memo will almost certainly play a key role in their respective testimonies. Given the evidence that the court has already heard regarding Mabuza’s role in the land claims scam – as testified by O’Sullivan and Kobus Vermeulen, a former detective inspector with the Badplaas police – a picture will begin to emerge of the link between ecosystem collapse and State Capture. The rot in the MTPA, we will continue to learn, was simply a small part of the much wider rot in the provincial government.

To this end, it’s hardly a stretch to argue that the decision of Judge Cassim

Sardiwalla, expected in the late summer of 2022, will have major implications for the future of South Africa’s game parks.

Because sadly, case number 34502/2010 does not just refer to an isolated incident from more than a decade in the past – the elements that led to the downfall of Nkomazi Wilderness, including the apparent culpability of the provincial authorities, are mirrored in a number of alleged scams that are taking place today.

In early December 2021, Daily Maverick published a 4,300-word investigation under the title “Communities, corruption and carcasses: when the Kruger National Park, the bushmeat trade and the Mthimkhulu’s complex history collide”.

Once again, the story took in the illegal hunting of the Kruger’s animals. But this time, instead of the MTPA, the relevant authority was the Limpopo provincial government’s department of economic development, environment and tourism, or LEDET.

It was a difficult story to report, with many moving parts, but essentially it centred on an eviction order brought in 2019 by the national minister of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform (DARDLR), the MEC of LEDET and the Mabunda Traditional Authority. The potential evictees, who are still fighting the case in the Polokwane High Court, were the Mthimkhulu traditional community, comprising about 26,000 residents of the twin settlements of Mbaula and Phalaubeni on the banks of the Letaba River.

As Daily Maverick discovered, this community had a long and complicated relationship with its namesake 9,000ha nature conservancy, known as the Mthimkhulu Private Game Reserve. According to the applicants for the eviction order, the land did not belong to them but to the South African government, which had incorporated it in 1985 into the Letaba Ranch Nature Reserve. The community’s interpretation, which appeared to fit with post-apartheid land rights legislation – specifically, section 25(7) of the South African Constitution and the Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act (IPILRA) – contended that the government was only “holding the land in trust” on their behalf.

During our reporting, all of our

smaller questions appeared to converge in one big question: why, after all this time – and particularly given the fact that numerous post-apartheid officials, including the former director-general of DARDLR, had recognised their rights – did the current government want the community off the land?

The answer, we found, could be located in the legal and sanctioned “offtake” hunting revenues that for many years had been flowing into the community’s coffers. The Kruger National Park, after all, had dropped its boundary fence with the Mthimkhulu Private Game Reserve back in 2002, ensuring a steady flow of buffalo and elephant.

“We started hunting a long time ago,” Kotlani Elvis Mavunda, the Mthimkhulu’s de facto chief, told Daily Maverick during our visit to the region. “The outfitters were putting money into our trust account and we were using that money to uplift the community. We built a crèche and drilled a lot of boreholes. We were also donating to the drop-in centres. That was up until 2015, when the benefits were stopped by LEDET and given to the Mabunda Traditional Authority.”

Although Mavunda held the surname that aligned most closely with the traditional authority, he added, the signature on the 2015 agreement with LEDET had been that of Pheni Cyprian Ngove, the apartheid-era overlord of the Mthimkhulu community, who lived more than 50 kilometres away.

“An official from the government wrote a letter to us saying that anything we do we have to consult Ngove, because in writing it says that he is the chief of Mthimkhulu. It just happened like that one day, although all along the hunting rights had been given to us. We don’t know what changed.”

In exposing what it was exactly that “changed”, Daily Maverick was led into the murky world of hunting quotas and permits. We established, for the month of September 2021, that a hunt to the value of R2,87-million – for 13 buffalo and two elephant – was entirely illegal, simply because the Mthimkhulu had not granted a community resolution for the event, as required by section 2(4) of IPILRA. We also established that neither LEDET, DARDLR, the Mabunda Traditional Authority (i.e. Ngove) or SAN-Parks were interested in telling us where the money had gone.

It hadn’t, of course, gone to the 26,000 members of the Mthimkhulu community. Clearly, the eviction order was all about bypassing section 2(4) of IPILRA. And the consequences of the apparent scam were that the community had been forced into the bushmeat trade – during our trip, we were confronted with images of severed baby hippo heads; elephant limbs in the back of a donkey cart; various small animals in states of decomposition in wire snares.

This, then, was the place where State Capture and ecosystem collapse met. In 2022, it appears, the South African public will learn a lot more. DM168

This story first appeared in our weekly Daily Maverick 168 newspaper which is available for R25 at Pick n Pay, Exclusive Books and airport bookstores. For your nearest stockist, please click here.



S.Africa a step closer to a super Presidency after Ramaphosa's master class in consolidating power

South Africa

It has taken this long since the 1994 democratic transition for new intelligence legislation and structures to be sorted out and established. Nhlanelo served as deputy for intelligence services under the then justice minister, Dullah Omar, until 1999 when intelligence was established as a full ministry in the Thabo Mbeki presidency. The minister of safety and security, as police was known then, was Sydney Mufamadi.

Now, for the first time in 22 years, intelligence is no longer a stand-alone ministry - and Ramaphosa is the first president to "assume political responsibility for the control and direction" of intelligence, as Section 209 of the Constitution allows, unless a Cabinet minister is appointed. And Mufamadi is now the presidential security adviser.

This comes in the wake of two scathing intelligence reviews, a decade apart, that identify common and unresolved problems.

The December 2018 High-Level Review Panel of the SSA highlighted not only excessive secrecy, which undermined accountability, but also "serious politicisation and factionalisation of the intelligence community over the past decade or more, based on factions in the ruling party, resulting in an almost complete disregard for the Constitution, policy, legislation and other prescripts". A redacted version of this review report was released publicly in March 2019 - only after the Right2Know Campaign went to court.

The September 2008 Matthews inquiry report, released after a two-year, wide-ranging review of structure, oversight, ministerial responsibilities also found:

"The intelligence services would benefit from greater provision of information. Excessive secrecy gives rise to suspicion and fear and this reduces public support for the services. In a democracy, unlike a police state, the services must rely on public cooperation rather than coercion to be successful."

Why is any of this important?

Because simply moving state security into the Presidency does not mean the issues would be resolved - they have not been resolved for more than a decade - but instead poses the risk of the Presidency directly being affected by ongoing unprofessional shenanigans, corruption and worse. The SSA currently has neither a serving full-time domestic or foreign branch head.

With the SSA moving into the Presidency, also moved is Deputy State Security Minister Zizi Kodwa, a known close associate



of Ramaphosa who was called up to government from the Luthuli House president's office. That, together with fellow known ally Mondli Gungubele as minister in the Presidency, means Ramaphosa has shored up a safety cushion.

But this move means the Presidency now straddles pretty much all aspects of government administration:

From intelligence to security in the form of the National Security Council, which while re-established on 27 February 2020 for the first time since the Thabo Mbeki presidency, only recently surfaced publicly as the mechanism for security ministers alongside the ministers of finance, justice, home affairs and cooperative governance and their directors-general, to coordinate and mandate "the work of the security services, law enforcement agencies and relevant organs of state to ensure national security", according to its Government Gazette mandate;

On the economic front, including various committees, from climate change to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and the Infrastructure and Investment Office driving the government's R1-trillion build programme, and the Project Management Office; and

Governance through structures the president chairs, including the State-Owned

Enterprise Council, and the Presidential Coordinating Council that brings together premiers and mayors.

A special mention must go to Operation Vulindlela, the joint initiative with the National Treasury to speed up economic transformation and regulatory reform. It's understood to have played a key role in the upping of the licensing threshold of embedded power projects to 100MW, well above the ministerially contemplated 10MW and double what business had requested.

That's all well and good, but the ministerial regulations that were promised within 60 days would miss that deadline, it emerged last week after the post-Cabinet briefing fumbled around verbiage that ministerial regulations were ministerial prerogatives.

Another example would be the Presidency's Project Management Office, which has to work through ministries and departments, missing the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan target of 800,000 job opportunities by March 2021, trailing at 694,152 temporary work placements.

Both examples - others exist, like the still to be auctioned spectrum - underscore that while the Presidency may drive a big-picture policy programme with special-occasion announcements, the imple-

mentation by ministers and departments remains haphazard at best.

Crucially, what happens in the Presidency is beyond parliamentary scrutiny and accountability.

No committee on the Presidency exists, despite years of opposition calls for this. A previous attempt to have the minister in the Presidency account to the parliamentary public service and administration committee failed to get off the ground. The presidential Q&As held every three months may be somewhat uncomfortable, given opposition barbs, but the accountability bar remains very low.

Ramaphosa is unlikely to face internal criticism from the governing ANC for centralising power in the Presidency for two reasons:

One, the ANC seems comfortable with executive-minded hierarchical governance and toeing the party line - as became clear in the State Capture Commission hearings on Parliament's constitutional duty of oversight over the executive. (Read more here, here and here.)

Two, the ANC's December 2017 Nasrec national conference resolution puts the Presidency as the "strategic centre of governance... [which] must be the central driver of the developmental state" with the

core administrative functions of "state macro-policy and planning; budget and resource allocation and prioritisation; cooperative governance; public services; and performance management".

While Ramaphosa, since his first State of the Nation Address on 16 February 2018, talked of reconfiguring the state, that process has unfolded not so much to reduce ministries, or even ditch ministers, but with expanding the scope and role of the Presidency.

By June 2021 it emerged that alongside moving a series of functions like investment and infrastructure and Operation Vulindlela to the Presidency, also well under way was the process to make the Presidency director-general head of the whole public administration. A super DG, so to speak.

That emerged in a briefing after the 2 June Presidency Budget Vote debate, when Ramaphosa said the Presidency had been realigned to "more effectively drive the transformation of our society and economy" and "strengthened to better equip" it to direct and coordinate government programmes.

"The Constitution confers on the Presidency the responsibility of leading a capable developmental state," Ramaphosa said then. "It is our firm conviction and intention that the Presidency must become the

heartbeat of a capable and developmental state."

Of course, the Constitution states no such thing. Neither does it impute the president with "responsibility to safeguard the security and integrity of the nation" as was claimed during Thursday's Cabinet reshuffle statement that also announced a panel to review security lapses related to the July violence and public disorder to "strengthen our security services and to prevent a recurrence of such events".

Section 83 of the Constitution says the president "must uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic", and also "promote the unity of the nation and that which will advance the Republic". Section 85 states "executive authority... is vested in the president", and exercised with other members of Cabinet, or ministers.

But it's understood that the Cabinet was rocked to its core by that security lapse in July. Many commentators and ANC stalwarts like Mavuso Msimang acknowledge it was at least in part instigated from within the governing ANC.

July's so-called security lapse happened despite the rise of the securocrats to the centre of governance in the unrelenting Covid-19 lockdown - it's Lockdown Day 502 on Tuesday - through the Natjoints, or National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, which brings together police, soldiers and spooks in a structure that is not established in law or regulation - and that does not account publicly.

And it happened despite the National Security Council that brings together the ministers of police, defence, state security, finance, cooperative governance, home affairs, international relations and justice. The directors-general of those departments serve in the secretariat headed by the Presidency DG, which importantly also includes the military chief and the intelligence coordinator of the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee that's established in terms of the 1994 National Strategic Intelligence Act.

The question must arise: if all these coordinating structures existed for as long as they have, why did they not work?

The answer may lie not in the positioning of the intelligence and security architecture - or that of economic recovery and reconstruction - but in the organisations and structures themselves. The 2008 Matthew commission report and the 2018 High-Level Review Panel indicate that.

If this is the case, moving state security into the Union Buildings would not resolve any of the real issues - except to further build a super Presidency.

DM

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

| MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME | TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME | WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME | THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME | FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME | SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME | SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) | 05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) | 05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) | 05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) | 05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) | 07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA UMJUAYVO 16:00-18:00HRS ALIYEVUMA 18:00-21:00HRS BUZUKI TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) | 07:00-09:00HRS HABARI NA MATUKIYA YA WIKI 09:00-11:00HRS THE SUNDAY 11:00-13:00HRS TOP 20 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CAPITAL MICHEZONI 16:00-18:00HRS UKURASA WA MBELE 18:00-21:00HRS JIACHIE 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-01:00HRS LADHA LAINI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO) |

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

African schools and hospitals fighting water issues, Covid-19

By Special Correspondent, Nairobi

SAFE water supply is key to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic but access to this vital commodity remains elusive for millions of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa, reports say.

Water access gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa remain, both at institutions such as healthcare facilities and schools, and at the household level, endangering millions of lives by the lack of simple hygiene practices such as hand washing.

According to Water.org, a non-profit organisation that aims to increase access to water and sanitation globally states that 41 percent of Kenyans do not have basic sanitation solutions while 15 percent use unimproved water sources including ponds, shallow wells and rivers.

"Now more than ever, access to safe water is critical to the health of families so they can prepare and protect themselves from COVID-19 pandemic and other diseases," says Patronilla Musonye, a project officer at the Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO), a non-profit organisation that promotes the right to access to safe water and health.

Healthcare facilities face water challenges

Less than half of all healthcare facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa have basic water services, add the 2020 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) progress report, published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP).

"But the true extent of the problem remains hidden, due to persisting data gaps in many countries in the region," says the report, which was published to coincide with the International Universal Health Coverage Day last year.

Samuel Godfrey, an advisor on WASH at the UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa regional office, says that net that the pandemic, which forced poor populations into self-isolation, led to



increased demand for urban water and sanitation systems, thereby compounding the WASH situation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

School students wash their hands before and after attending their classes using the washing basins provided by UNICEF to combat Covid-19. Photo Credit: UNICEF/Ethiopia/2020/Nahom Tesfaye

The latest report on WASH indicates how investing in WASH services in healthcare facilities is critical to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

But Godfrey says, "We still do not know the full extent of the COVID-19 impact on WASH in the region because this is an evolving situation."

Only 46 percent of healthcare facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa have basic water services, against the global average of 76 percent, according to the report. For example, the coverage of basic water services in healthcare facilities varied widely between countries in the region in

2019, with some surprising inter-country data.

Zimbabwe and Somalia, which have lower Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fared better on basic water services coverage in healthcare facilities recording 81 and 76 percent respectively, against bigger economies such as Ethiopia and Nigeria, whose proportion of health care facilities with basic water services were 30 and 46 percent respectively.

Godfrey explains that the disparities are informed by tax regimes, investment priorities and tariffs, adding that conflicts and climate change impact also contribute to the disparities experienced in the region. "Lowest coverage levels in the Horn of Africa and highest coverage in southern Africa were due to conflict and climate impact," Godfrey explains.

The 2020 global report on WASH in healthcare facilities follows earlier ones published on households in 2017, schools in 2018 and healthcare

facilities in 2019, and an updated one on schools in 2020.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there were disparities in WASH coverage in healthcare facilities between urban and rural areas, with urban coverage being nine percentage points higher for basic water, 19 points higher for basic sanitation and 38 points higher for hygiene compared with rural coverage.

Schools lack basic water services

The latest WASH report on schools, which compares data on 2015 and 2019, also describes the implications for ensuring the safety of students and school staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2019, two-thirds of countries with less than 50 percent coverage of drinking water in schools were in Sub-Saharan Africa, the report adds. For example, only 36 percent of schools in Nigeria had basic water services, which is lower than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa: 44 percent.

According to the report, at least 30 percent of schools in Benin, Cameroon and Senegal had limited drinking water service. "Consequences for lack of basic water services go beyond just washing hands and quenching thirst," Musonye says.

Adolescent girls missing school due to their periods is a growing phenomenon in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report cites the results of a survey of girls aged 15-24 years in West Africa showing that one in four girls in Nigeria, one in five in Côte d'Ivoire and one in seven in Burkina Faso missed school due to menstruation in the last 12 months.

When in school, teachers and students may struggle to manage menstruation if toilets lack water to enable them to wash and change when needed. In Nigeria, for instance, 41 percent of rural schools and just 14 percent of urban schools had water and soap available for girls' toilet compartments, the report notes.

Even fewer schools had covered

bins in toilets and mechanisms for disposing of menstrual materials, but urban schools were twice more likely to have these facilities than rural schools.

According to the report, more than half of the 462 million children globally (244 million children) who lacked hygiene service at their schools in 2019 were in Sub-Saharan Africa but inadequate data to estimate the exact number of affected schools is a concern in countries of this region.

The report adds that most schools in high income countries have piped water supplies but the situation is different for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where most schools use other types of improved sources including boreholes, rainwater or protected wells and spring.

Communities across the region have had to devise new ways to cope, as resources dwindled amidst the pandemic.

"Poor populations were unable to generate an income and could not pay for water tariffs," Godfrey says. "Many countries introduced subsidies for water utilities and cash transfers to target vulnerable households."

According to KWAHO, in rural Kenya, the average total coping cost for an unreliable or distant water supply is about US\$38 per month.

In comparison, the average water bill of a typical household in the capital Nairobi that is connected to a piped system is only US\$4.46 per month.

"This comparison highlights the economic burdens that often fall more heavily on unconnected rural consumers than households with piped connections," Musonye explains.

But there is hope, she says, as some of the healthcare facilities and schools that had no basic water services prior to the COVID-19 pandemic are now having access to such a basic resource.

"Clean water in health and learning institutions should be highly prioritised to aid disease reduction and improve the health status of community members," Musonye says.

By Mustapha Iderawumi

THE Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) urges to "take action to combat climate change and its impacts". Climate change is affecting virtually every country on every continent. Notably, many countries in Africa are vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events because of their limited ability to cope and adapt to those events. As a result, it is disrupting national economies and claiming lives.

To effectively monitor the progress in SDG 13, the UN developed five targets in total, all of which cover a wide range of issues surrounding climate action. The first three targets are "output targets", while the remaining two are the means of achieving these targets.

The three outcome targets strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries; integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Leveraging space technologies to achieve SDG 13-climate action



The two means of achieving these targets include implementing the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilising jointly USD 100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalise the Green Cli-

mate Fund through its capitalisation as soon as possible; Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries and Small Island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalised communities.

Benefits of space technologies to the realisation of SDG 13 include climate change monitoring

and early warning systems, weather forecasting, disaster management, search and rescue operations and utilising space technologies for SDG 13 in Africa

For Africa to reduce the risk and loss due to extreme weather events, the continent must continue to embrace and invest in technologies that support climate adaptation, which involves accurate and timely weather forecasts to any individual, business, or government.

Also, reducing the physical and financial risks is critical as weather extremes are predicted to occur with both increasing frequency and severity in the coming years.

Space technologies are employed against climate change, disasters and disease outbreaks in Africa. For example, the OpenStreetMap initiative and many other navigation applications have been used for search and rescue missions and to put previously unmapped areas on the map. Furthermore, satellite data are becoming more open-source, and this availability makes weather forecasts and policy decision-making easier and proactive. Also, the data aids preparation and makes targeted relief programmes or policies more successful.

Furthermore, data requirements in crop insurance are highly complex and multidisciplinary. Therefore, creating a robust digital infrastructure can significantly enhance existing methods. To this effect, Agritask and Hollard Mozambique are providing digital solutions to local stakeholders by offering crop insurance for farmers in their respective locales.

To enable the use of high-resolution data at a national

scale, the platform creates a village-based geographical clusterisation for the entire country. In addition, it integrates additional data layers to enhance risk assessment. Also, insured farms will be registered and mapped onto the platform, offering them real-time tracking of relevant parameters at each farm plot. The partnership will include thousands of smallholders initially, expecting to increase ten-fold.

Similarly, drought remains the most destructive cause of losses in agriculture and water resources in Africa as it causes widespread human and animal mortalities. In addition, sub-Saharan Africa is considered the most vulnerable region to climate change due to low rainfall, prolonged dry seasons, and high poverty levels.

However, a better knowledge of such weather conditions, such as flooding and drought and how they will impact agricultural productivity is crucial to countering such adverse effects and is a prerequisite to proffering solutions to cushion the effects.

Therefore, it is essential to provide and empower small scale farmers, who generate more than half of Africa's agricultural produce, with the data needed to combat the ad-

verse effects of drought. To this effect, ITIKI (Information Technology and Indigenous Knowledge) Drought Predictor, a mobile platform that combines meteorological data with traditional farming knowledge and utilises an app and SMS messages to send farmers forecasts on drought. ITIKI, launched in 2016, has over 15,000 subscribers [small-scale farmers] in Kenya, Mozambique, and South Africa. The solution delivers real-time data solutions to smallholder farmers at low costs and in their indigenous language enabling them to take proactive steps towards decision-making and cultivation.

Also, the Southern African Development Community-Climate Services Centre (SADC-CSC) addresses riverine flood monitoring and assessment; agriculture seasonal monitoring; early warning and assessment; rangeland seasonal monitoring; and early warning and assessment. SADC-CSC also attends to seasonal wildfire monitoring, as well as early warning and assessment. Similarly, the Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management (SASSCAL) is set up to mitigate constrained wetland assessment and monitoring.

African Safari Brothers on a mission to recruit more black South Africans to embrace the great outdoors

South Africa

A ripple of laughter filled the cool early-morning air when our guide Excellent Hlatshwayo removed his rifle from the dashboard of the game-viewing truck.

"Let me get my walking stick," he said as we prepared for a 4km walk through Big Five country near the Berg-en-Dal rest camp in the south of the Kruger National Park.

We were a group of about eight men, energised by the sweet morning air and the adventure that would unfold. The previous night we had slept through pouring rain in tents pitched at the campsite after an evening of excited chatter around the fire.

It was another outing by the African Safari Brothers, a social group started by wildlife photographer and tour operator Rodney Nombekana. The group's mission is to recruit more black brothers to embrace the great outdoors lifestyle - camping, hiking and visits to wildlife reserves from which they were previously excluded. Membership of the group, however, is not racially exclusive.

Writing in the Sowetan in 2011, Fanyana Shiburi, a jour-



Members of African Safari Brothers on a bushwalk near Berg-en-Dal in the Kruger National Park. (Photo: Lucas Ledwaba / Mukurukuru Media)

nalist who later joined the SA National Parks (SANParks) communications department, captured the history of black exclusion from parks thus: "For at least six decades, Kruger [National] Park was the symbol of white domination and black exclusion. This has been the experience of the people living on the borders of Kruger National Park and black South Africans in general. Black South Africans were never allowed to go into the park,

except as labour to the exclusively white management."

Although the laws of exclusion went with the demise of apartheid in 1994, Nombekana, who spends most of his life in the bush with clients, has noticed the number of black people visiting game parks still does not reflect the demographics of the country.

"Somehow I always feel lonely and left out when I'm in the bush and holidaying. And I feel that there's not

enough people who come from the same places that I come from who actually come and be in the bush together," Nombekana said when he explained why he started African Safari Brothers.

He began by mobilising a few friends through a WhatsApp group "to share ideas about spending time in the bush".

This was two years ago, and even though the movement was interrupted by the outbreak of Covid-19 in

2020, the group that started with only seven people now has 115 members who come from different parts of the country.

"Any brother who wants to come and join us is passionate about nature and the outdoors, this is the place. It's all about the love for nature. So there's no prerequisite for joining the African Safari Brothers. It doesn't matter if you are a lawyer, if you are somebody who sweeps the streets, who does what-

ever, everybody is welcome here," said Nombekana.

"Some people don't even know how to get to the Kruger National Park. It's like a land that is foreign to them. For me, there's something wrong with that. This is the heritage that should not only be enjoyed by everybody but protected by us," he said.

The Safari Brothers make regular visits to the Kruger, which also include an imbizo, at which new members are formally introduced, and members are encouraged to network and exchange ideas. Part of the imbizo includes orientation of new members regarding the rules and general conduct expected from visitors to the park. Nombekana hopes the members will extend their visits beyond the country's borders.

SANParks spokesperson Laura Mukwevho said that, during the 2020/21 financial year, black South Africans made up 30% of local visitors to the Kruger National Park; and 58% of visitors to the Kruger during the SA National Parks Week last year were black South Africans.

Parks Week was established in 2006 to encourage local day visitors to visit national parks. Mukwevho said 71% of day visitors who entered Kruger's gates in 2019 were South Africans.

She said the park, through its Social Economic Transformation Department, engages with structures such as community forums, people and parks and other relevant committees to build capacity and assist local communities to come up with ideas to develop and implement sustainable conservation projects in their communities.

As part of initiatives to bolster racial quotas at game parks, SANParks has established a special package for stokvels and travel clubs. These offer special payment terms and discounted rates for selected national parks on particular dates.

"Stokvel & Travel Club membership boasts many

different types of personalities and profiles, ranging from the ordinary grandmother to the high-earning CEOs of companies and large corporate and public sector institutions," said Hapiloe Sello, SANParks's managing executive for tourism development and marketing.

"There are over 800,000 registered stokvels and even more formal and informal travel clubs or groups in South Africa. Travel clubs that qualify include groups of people who have special interests, such as hiking or biking but also just groups of friends and large families who enjoy group travel."

Mukwevho said there are environmental education centres in the Kruger that serve as "an excellent outdoor classroom for gaining an ecological understanding of natural areas, especially for the learners. These are linked to programmes such as Kids in Kruger, Walk and Learn on the Wild Side and Kids in Parks."

Our 4km walk, which took a little more than two hours, was a breathtaking adventure into Big Five territory.

We stopped to learn valuable lessons from the excellent guidance of Hlatshwayo and his colleague Bridgeman Zulu. These included tips about animal behaviour, the use of different plant species, how to read animal spoor and, most importantly, how to behave to survive in the wild.

Hlatshwayo caused great excitement among the men when he showed us where an elephant had dug up a tree to consume its roots, which, apparently, gives it the power of a rocket during mating. A pair of hyenas about 50m away raised their heads to check us out as we walked by in single file and in silence. In the distance, a tower of giraffes looked down curiously at us like bored security guards. In the end, our two guides had no use for their rifles, perhaps justifying Hlatshwayo's earlier reference to his as a walking stick. -

Mukurukuru Media/ DMI68

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 196 00--

In this puzzle you have no clues, only a list of words that all fit into the grid. The Guardian have given you a head start

3 LETTERS: ART, APE, RID
4 LETTERS: MOOT, DIET, SURE, OVEN, NETA, WAGE, PAID
5 LETTERS: AROMA, TEASE, DAILY, ASANA, EVADE
6 LETTERS: ASMARA, ASCEND, KARATE, DENTAL, TYRIAN
7 LETTERS: FARANGA,
8 LETTERS: AGRARIAN
10 LETTERS: MADAGASCAR

1 2 3 4
5 6 7
8 9 10
11
12
13 14 15 16
17 18
19 20

CLUES: Across
1 Selling of black Africans
5 one of the two branches of Islam
7 consumed
8 a male honey-bee
10 a pen for pigs
11 Masai warrior
13 greater, further
15 total number of points made in a game
17 slaughterhouse
19 a way of acting
20 citrus fruit

Down:
1 neither very good nor very bad
2 sharp-tasting or sour
3 a thick cord made of twisted fibres
4 to give as a gift to charity
6 an expanse of land
7 molluscs having wormlike bodies and spiral protective shell
9 Chief city of Sri Lanka
12 soft, delicate
14 to go or come in
16 to adhere, to be attached
17 short for amplifier
18 fuss or difficulty

WORD-FIT
B O U N D A R I E S
A E A L
C A F E A G A I N
K A B O D E T
P L U N G E S E E
L R S
S O O N E L E C T
W D A A
L E G A L E S E G
I D E M S E
T T A B O O S R

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

RADIO One

RATIBA YA VIPINDI

JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

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Nsekela urges clients to make use of CRDB's innovative digital platforms, products

By Smart Money Reporter

THE public has been challenged to make use of innovative and alternative banking channels and products being offered by CRDB Bank Plc in order to make 2022 a successful digital banking year.

The banking group's Managing Director and CEO, Abdulmajid Nsekela said when he launched 'Unachostahili ni CRDB Bank' campaign in Dar es Salaam that the bank's clients should adopt use of innovative digital products.

"Last year we conducted a survey of the regularly changing needs of our customers which gave us their views on how best to serve them. I am proud to report that we did work on many of the suggestions to improve our products and services," Nsekela said.

He said the ongoing campaign will also sensitise the

public on the various services and innovative products that the market's Tier 1 capital bank has on offer with an objective to encourage customers make use of the same.

He said, among other things, the bank has invested heavily in alternative banking channels to ensure that clients have seamless access to banking services and products without visiting physical branches. "We understand that our clients are very busy people with almost most of their time being utilised to fulfil their economic objectives hence investment made to improve our digital channels is meant enable them transact wherever they are to meet their financial needs," Nsekela noted.

The CRDB chief named some of the digital products that the bank offers as Sim-Banking, TemboCard, CRDB Wakalas and Internet Bank-

ing which currently handle over 90 percent of the bank's transactions.

During the campaign, the bank's officials countrywide will also inform the public on available products in terms of loans to groups of people, individuals, entrepreneurs, students, farmers and private companies.

"I want to assure the public that CRDB Bank has everything for everyone because we are a big bank in the market with enough financial muscles to meet everyone's needs," Nsekela added while challenging Tanzanians to seize opportunities being created by President Samia Suluhu Hassan's government since taking over power in March last year.

"The massive size of our country means that we have to make use of innovative technologies to ensure that formal banking services are accessed

by every Tanzanians even those based in remote parts of the country," the CRDB chief stated saying through use of digital platforms and electronic gadgets such as mobile phones, anyone can open a bank account and start transacting without meeting any bank's official.

Nsekela's observations were backed by Director of Corporate Communications, Tully Mwambapa and Head of Marketing, Joseline Kamhanda who invited all Tanzanians to make use of the Dar es Salaam based lender's products and services.

"Our bank is strong and reliable with subsidiaries in neighbouring countries of Burundi and DR Congo where we are serving both the public and private sectors," Mwambapa said while stressing that CRDB is integrating economies of East African countries.



CRDB Bank Plc's director of corporate communications, Tully Mwambapa.

Court freezes top cars after owners charged with drug trafficking

NAIROBI

The High Court has frozen four vehicles among them two luxurious cars after its owners were charged last year with trafficking in narcotic drugs. Justice Dorah Chepkwony ordered the freezing of the vehicles following a petition by Assets Recovery Agency (ARA), arguing that the vehicles could be linked to proceeds of crime.

The vehicles are linked to Dida Jarso Ache and Yusuf Halkano Sokono, who were arrested in May last year and charged before a Jomo Kenyatta International Airport court with trafficking in cannabis sativa (bhang). The agency claims that Mr Ache allegedly confessed that he had been involved in drug trafficking for several years, when he was arrested last year.

The vehicles include a Mercedes Benz Actros, a Toyota Land cruiser, Toyota Ractis and Toyota Probox. The court directed the cars to be handed to the Directorate of Criminal

Investigations immediately, pending the determination of the case.

While the Mercedes Benz is registered in Mr Ache's name, the Land Cruiser belongs to Grace Mbinda, the Toyota Ractis is registered in the name of Florence Kimeu while the Toyota Probox belongs Samwel Maobe.

Mr Ache and Sokono were arrested on May 29, 2020 along Sagana-Nairobi Highway near Kakuzi Farm and were found in possession of 10 sacks of dry greenish plant material, which later turned to be bhang after being tested.

They were driving in the Toyota Land cruiser Pickup. The police also found them with Sh183,000, which has since been frozen. They were charged on June 6, before the chief magistrate's court at JKIA with trafficking in narcotic drugs and released on bail.

"That in his statement to the police the 1st Respondent (Ache) admitted to having been involved in the drug trafficking case for three years prior to his arrest and to owning a fleet of vehicles," the agency submitted. The



High Court's Justice Dorah Chepkwony.

agency said there are reasonable grounds to believe that motor vehicles were purchased using proceeds of crime.

"It is in the interest of justice that a preservation order do issue prohibiting the Respondents and the Interested Parties jointly or singly by themselves

or through their agents from dealing in any manner with the aforementioned assets," the agency said.

Justice Chekwony ordered the vehicles to be frozen for three months and the Director General of National Transport and Safety Authority to register

a caveat against the records of the motor vehicles. "An order be and is hereby issued to the Respondents and the Interested Parties to surrender the original logbooks of the motor vehicles specified above to the Applicant within 7 days," she said.

Syrah Resources to supply processed graphite to Tesla

MAPUTO

The Australian mining company Syrah Resources on Thursday announced that it has entered into a binding agreement with Tesla under which the electric car and battery manufacturer will buy "Active Anode Material" produced out of graphite from Syrah's mine in Balama district, in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado.

The material will be produced at Syrah's factory in Vidalia, Louisiana, in the United States and sold to Tesla at a fixed price over a four year period. Tesla also has an option to offtake additional Active Anode Material from Vidalia subject to Syrah expanding its capacity beyond 10,000 tonnes per annum.

According to a statement from Syrah, "the agreement provides a compelling foundation to proceed with the initial expansion of Vidalia's production capacity and Syrah plans to make a final investment decision for construction of this expanded facility in January 2022."

The Balama mine covers 106 square kilometres and is reported to hold the largest graphite reserves ever discovered. It is an open cast mine and the company estimates the lifespan of the resource at more than fifty years.

In addition to supplying graphite to its factory in Louisiana, Syrah exports graphite from Mozambique to China which has an overwhelming dominance in the production of Active Anode Material.

The production facility at Vidalia is currently in its pilot and qualification phase but Syrah is planning to have the capacity produce 10,000 tonnes per year of active anode material by 2023 or early 2024, with longer-term plans to produce up to 40,000 tonnes per year. Active Anode Material is used in lithium-ion batteries for electric cars.

Ecobank and GTBank lead in adoption of eNaira digital currency



A model of Nigeria's eNaira digital currency.

LAGOS

Ecobank and GTBank are presently leading in customers adoption of the eNaira according to a report by TheCable. eNaira is Africa's first Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) launched by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in October.

TheCable report revealed that with more than 2,000 merchant wallets active, about 20 percent are domiciled with Ecobank, while GTB has the majority of the consumer wallets activated by users amongst the top 10 financial institutions in the country.

The report further reveals that Ecobank is leading in merchant adoption, followed by Access Bank, Zenith Bank, Union Bank, First Bank, UBA, and Polaris Bank. Others banks in

the top 10 list include Keystone Bank, GTB, and Wema Bank - in that order.

On the other hand, GTBank is leading with the majority of the consumer wallets activated by users from the top 10 financial institutions in the country. The bank has more than 30 percent of the total activated consumer wallets held by all banks in Nigeria. Access Bank, Zenith Bank, First Bank, UBA, Polaris Bank, and Ecobank are the top seven banks with the highest number of activated consumer wallets.

In October, CBN unveiled the very first Central Bank Digital Currency in Africa with a lot of national and international interest on how well the electronic currency will perform and what problems it would solve in the banking and finance space on the continent.

As of November 29, 2021, about a month after eNaira went live, 589,000 downloads had been recorded for the digital currency across the iOS and Android app stores. That translates to an average of 20,000 eNaira downloads per day since launch.

Of the 589,000 downloads, 461,000 have been from the Android side of the market, while iOS downloads stand at only 124,008,000 downloads. Most of the downloads on both platforms happened in the first few days after the currency went live.

As of November 29, 2021, there were at least 114,900 activated wallets. These wallets are broken down into two types: consumer wallets and merchant wallets. Consumer wallets stood at about 112,870 activated wallets. Merchant wallets were just a little over 2,000 wallets.

Ministry of Finance preparing strategy on financing small businesses and petty traders

By Francis Kajubi

PETTY traders have pleaded with the government to consider better places to relocate them with their businesses as Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning finalises collection of their views that will be used to prepare their financing strategy.

In October last year, the government started roadside stationed petty traders and street hawkers in urban centres of the country to designated areas to ease congestion and improve on cleanliness.

But at the petty traders who include second hand clothing retailers, food vendors and merchandise hawkers are pleading with the state to rethink the exercise because some of the designated places are congested or located outside central business districts where a large number of clients are found.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning is finalising the process of writing a new Micro Small and Medium size Enterprises Strategy that will give lenders confidence to issue loans to the group which constitute a substantial number of self employed youth and women.

"How is the strategy going to work if the government itself has reached a conclusion of moving us to places where we can hardly find customers? Are those financial institutions willing to give loans to businesses that can be disturbed anytime anyhow?" questioned Damas Emmanuel, a petty trader dealing in used shoes at Mwenge market.

Emmanuel who has secured some tiny space along Coca-Cola road, argued that most of the petty traders in



Petty traders at Mwenge market before their eviction last year.

Dar es Salaam have been relocated to places where customers cannot easily reach them because they are located in the periphery. Emmanuel's argument was backed by Samira Ali, a second hand clothing petty trader at Mwenge market who argued that their businesses have completely been destabilised since the relocation was done without necessary preparations.

"It seems like some of the customers who are from the other side of the Bagamoyo highway where we used to be are not ready to walk down to this place hence our sales have dwindled," Samira argued saying financing institutions cannot give credit to such unstable businesses.

Giving an update on the new strategy, Assistant Commissioner at Minis-

try of Finance and Economic Planning, Dionisia Mjema told The Guardian that the process of canvassing views from the financial sector, development partners, MSMEs themselves, youth and women's group to establish reasons behind financial institutions reluctance to give credit to the group has reached advanced stage.

"Our survey targeted to collect views from stakeholders on why are petty traders not given credit and why most SMEs don't grow or prosper into companies or big businesses," Mjema said adding that the stakeholders will be invited to a meeting to fine tune their opinions before the strategy is prepared. She said the financing strategy will cover all sectors including technology and innovation where a good number of young people are involved.

Businesses to get tax relief for hiring fresh graduates

NAIROBI

Businesses that employ at least 10 fresh graduates from technical and vocational institutions will from Saturday enjoy a tax relief equivalent to half of the trainees' salaries.

The relief starts on January 1 and will be offered to businesses that hire the graduates for between six months to a year, and is meant to boost skills development and stem Kenya's high youth unemployment rate.

The Treasury made the changes in the Finance Act 2021 in a bid to open doors for the graduates from technical and vocational institutions to gain experience

and earn cash like their counterparts from the universities.

"Any employer who engages at least 10 university or technical and vocational education and training graduates as apprentices for a period of six to 12 months during any year of income shall be eligible for a tax rebate in the year subsequent to the year of such engagement," reads the changes.

Kenya has since 2016 extended the relief to firms that employ at least 10 university graduates. The changes come at a time of growing emphasis on technical and vocational institutions. Fresh graduates from institutions of higher learning struggle for limited job opportunities due

to a lack of specialised market skills and experience to perform tasks.

Employers in Kenya have for years complained of poor quality graduates who do not meet the needs of the job market, prompting companies to spend millions of shillings on training. The inclusion of graduates from technical and vocational institutions in the tax relief to employers comes amid increasing enrollment at the institutions.

Data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) shows that enrollment at the institutions grew 130.4 percent to 451,205 students last year from 195,857 in 2016, highlighting the growing popularity of the institutions.

Kenya has for years struggled to create formal jobs, a situation that worsened by the Coronavirus pandemic and further dimmed the employment chances for graduates from the institutions of higher learning.

The number of formal jobs contracted for the first time in two decades, highlighting the economy's struggles with coronavirus-induced shutdowns and restrictions. Data from the Economic Survey 2021 shows the economy shed 187,300 formal jobs in the year ended June 2020, marking the first time since 2001 when some 18,300 salaried workers were struck off payrolls.

CURRENT NEWS

IFAD to invest U\$67m in SACP to transform small-scale farming

HARARE

An investment initiative worth US\$67.43 million announced by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) would help 78,000 rural households in Zimbabwe who are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and economic hardship.

As part of the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project (SACP), the small-scale farming industry will be transformed and farmers will have more access to market-oriented and climate-sensitive value chains.

Rural micro-firms and value chain lead enterprises that may take advantage of enhanced access to assets and prospects for agricultural output will be supported by technical assistance, matching funds, and infrastructure expenditures. Over half of the recipients will be female, with at least one-third of the beneficiaries being under the age of thirty.

The \$35.69 million loan from IFAD is helping to fund the project. There is domestic co-financing of US\$8.8 million: US\$4.6 million from the Zimbabwe government and US\$4.2 million from the recipients themselves.

One-hundred and seventy-two thousand dollars more will come from OPEC's International Development Fund and the private sector. Rehabilitated roads and better irrigation access will make small-scale agriculture more commercially viable and attract the private sector, all of which will benefit participants in the project.

With the correct investments, small-scale farmers and other rural residents may have a significantly greater impact on economic growth, job creation, food security, nutrition, and climate change than they presently do.

"We have an opportunity to make a lasting difference in the lives of rural Zimbabweans by investing in the small-scale farmers who influence the sector and can play a critical role in job

creation and addressing the country's food and nutrition insecurity," said Jaana Keitaanranta, IFAD Country Director for Zimbabwe.

SACP will be incorporated in five provinces - Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Midlands, and Matabeleland North - and will focus on critical urban-rural agricultural production and food trading corridors, with the goal of increasing the role of small-scale farmers and the private sector.

Agriculture is critical to Zimbabwe's economic development, food security, and poverty alleviation measures. A decade ago, the sector accounted for around 20% of the Gross Domestic Product of the country (GDP).

This has consequently fallen to around 10% in recent years, with 70% of the population subsisting on agriculture. Small-scale farmers are important to the sector's success, as they own the vast bulk of agricultural land.

Unfortunately, recurrent droughts, insufficient and variable rainfall, sporadic flooding, and the current COVID-19 pandemic have all had an adverse effect on productivity. This has subjected millions of people to poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition, making the country a net food importer and one of the world's top ten most vulnerable countries.

Zimbabwe's government has executed a number of development initiatives aimed at revitalizing the economy, but more has to be done to enhance agriculture and offer sustainable livelihoods for rural impoverished people.

Since 1983, IFAD has supported seven rural development programs and projects in Zimbabwe totalling US\$328.03 million, including a US\$125.71 million investment by IFAD. These programs and initiatives impacted directly 1,246,240 rural households in Zimbabwe.



KCA University graduates toss in the air their caps after getting their degrees on November 26, 2021.



Smallholder maize farmers in Zimbabwe.

Lake Harvest Zambia, Cellulant introduce mobile payment option in market

LUSAKA

Cellulant, a top Pan-African payment platform has teamed up with Zambia's largest fish wholesaler, Lake Harvest to offer Tingg, a one-stop digital payment capabilities in each of their retail locations.

Lake Harvest has made it a priority to take all forms of mobile money in order to provide its consumers with a hassle-free payment experience. As a result of client demand, Lake Harvest has implemented a new payment method that does not require users to take cash from their

mobile money network in order to pay for goods.

Cellulant's payment platform, Tingg, will be installed in all of Lake Harvest's 13 stores in Zambia, allowing them to accept all types of mobile money. Using a short code that can be accessed from any phone, customers may pay quickly and easily. Cellulant launched its payment platform earlier this year. Because of this collaboration, Cellulant has expanded the use of Tingg to large retailers all around Zambia, putting it at the forefront of the country's digital payments

revolution.

"When a big distributor, like Lake Harvest, joins the Tingg ecosystem, it promotes the growing trend of digital payments over traditional payment methods", according to Cellulant Zambia's Country Manager, Gilbert Lungu.

According to him, "Platforms like Tingg solve for cash management difficulties while providing improved reconciliation and settlement solutions for enterprises." The ability to focus on offering better services and making things easier for customers is a major benefit."

As a result of the country's COVID-19 regulations, the government has encouraged the use of contactless payments, which has proven to be a more secure alternative to traditional cash transactions.

K76.6 billion (US\$4.22 billion) has been recorded as the value of mobile payments by the Bank of Zambia in June 2021, an increase from K43.1 billion (US\$2.37 billion) in June 2020. The cashless preference is not unique to regulatory authorities; as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, more customers are recognizing that they wish to use cash much less.

Zambia's government, through regulators, continues to emphasize this, as mobile banking wallets are a popular method of holding currency but are only accepted in a restricted number of shops and distribution sites.

"We've noticed that clients are expressing their joy at having this simplified means of payment," says Lake Harvest General Manager Steven Chidove. "It's apparent that minimizing the early lines at distribution locations during peak traffic hours improves their customer experience when they

visit our businesses."

In the long run, our cooperation will play an important role in facilitating corporate transactions that leverage technology to make conducting business throughout the country easier while also improving residents' lives.

The Finscope 2020 in Zambia study found that over a five-year period, mobile money users increased by 44.5 percent to 58.5 percent of adults, and that these users now require access points to spend mobile money directly where they purchase on a daily basis.

Iringa livestock stakeholders praise govt for closing donkey slaughterhouses

By Correspondent Friday Simbaya

LIVESTOCK stakeholders in Iringa region have commended the government for banning donkey meat trading and closure of abattoirs which were mainly run by Chinese investors.

Commenting on a recent move by Livestock and Fisheries Minister, Mashimba Ndaki to ban trading in donkey meat, the stakeholders said the decision was long overdue because locally bred donkey were facing the threat of extinction. Minister Ndaki said the Chinese investors have failed to adhere to agreed conditions including introducing hybrid donkeys to save existing locally bred ones from extinction.

Speaking in a random interview by The Guardian last week, the Iringa based livestock stakeholders said the existence of donkey slaughterhouses had led to an increase in donkey theft in the region but also endangered the safety of and existence of the animals.

They said that presence of the abattoirs and donkey skin processing factories in the country contribute to increased donkey demand hence fuelling thefts and illegal trading of the live animals.

A resident of Migoli village in Iringa district, Rhoda Mwangosi said the government's decision has restored law and order because theft of donkeys in her village has disappeared. Mwangosi added as one of the victims of the donkey thieves, she strongly backs Minister Ndaki's move. "Two of my four donkeys were stolen because of presence of these slaughterhouses and tanneries," she charged.

Mwangosi was optimistic that the closure of the factories will help restore donkey numbers in the country for use as beasts of burden especially in rural areas where motorised transport is scarce. "The donkeys are very important to us because they help us fetch water, firewood

and farm produce to markets," she noted.

Mwangosi's arguments were backed by Mtera Village resident, Redenta Mgungile who said that, finally, the government heard their cry and took action. "We are happy that these animals are now safe and we as owners are at peace," Mgungile said while noting that existence of the factories and slaughterhouses forced them to pay herd-men between 30,000/- and 40,000/- per month to protect them.

A Project Officer from Inades Formation Tanzania, Fortunata Tarimo said donkeys have made a significant contribution to the well-being of the families and smallholder farmers, as they are important beasts of burden. Tarimo said that when donkeys are not present in villages for household use, its mostly girls and women who suffer because their responsibilities are done by the group.

"In rural areas, many activities are done by donkeys such as taking maize or rice mills, help women fetch firewood, take women to clinics and children to school," she argued while saying that the presence of donkeys at community level is a big relief to girls and women.

She said increasing demand for donkeys had pushed prices to new levels peaking at 250,000/- each on average. "As we know a donkey takes a long time to reproduce due to being overworked which negatively affects pregnant donkeys," the Inades Formation Tanzania Project Officer noted.

Maiko Koturo, whose is Chairperson of Mbeveleli Village, advised the government to keep the ban permanent because livestock keepers had suffered enough due to thieves. "We have now returned to normal because the threat has gone away," Koturo said.

Mbeveleli Village Executive Officer, Christina Matayo also backed Minister Ndaki's decision saying civil society organizations such as Inades should sensitise the public on how

to take care of donkeys to increase their numbers.

"I would like to call upon organisations such as Inades to collaborate closely with the government in giving farmers expert advice on how to raise healthy donkeys," Matayo said saying the banning of donkey meat trade and tanneries will restore their numbers but also give owners peace.

Iringa District Council's Livestock Officer, Isidory Karia said donkeys are valuable assets in rural areas and decision by the government of President Samia Suluhu Hassan through Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to ban their trading was meant to protect interest of rural farmers.

Karia commended a project implemented by Inades Formation Tanzania since 2019 for improving donkeys' livelihood as the animals are better off currently. "Before the project, the donkeys were found to have sores, overloaded and owners not following the five donkeys' rights," he stated saying the situation is completely changed now.

"In short, we commend the Inades organization for helping to provide education on animal welfare to the public and for motivating the community to engage in better animal husbandry practices," he noted.

Inades Formation Tanzania's Director, Specioza Kifutu commended the government through Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries for effectively enforcing the Livestock Act of 2008, which has been applied to stop donkey trading business mainly in Shinyanga and Dodoma regions.

Kifutu said abolition of such slaughterhouses and tanneries will lead to an increase in the number of donkeys in the country where so far it is estimated that there are on average of 637,000 donkeys. She said the decision was based on the slower pace of breeding donkeys compared to the high market demand.

"Only a small percentage of farmers are able to get rid of the hand-hoe and move to mechanised agriculture technology with donkeys as beasts of burden," the Inades Formation Tanzania Director added.

She pointed out that use of animals such as donkeys in rural farms is an important step towards mechanising farming. Kifutu called on the government to continue cooperating with Inades in ensuring that animal welfare laws are implemented and leading to the complete abolition of the trade in the country.



Iringa Regional Veterinary Officer, Isidory Karia (in white coat) giving a de-worming drug to one of the donkeys found at Mbeveleli village during a mobile veterinary clinic organised in collaboration with Inades Formation Tanzania last week. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya.

After record year, Bitcoin faces the uncertain 2022 amid more potential regulatory pressure

NEW YORK

The price of Bitcoin hit record highs in 2021, thanks to support from traditional finance, but cryptocurrency specialists are struggling to predict next year's outcome for the volatile sector.

Having more than trebled in value to \$60,000 between December 2020 and April, Bitcoin has lost some shine to trade at under \$50,000 heading into the New Year. "The current choppy and directionless price action with a possibility of further pressure to the downside has introduced a lot of uncertainty to the digital asset market," noted Loukas Lagoudis, executive director at cryptocurrency investment fund ARK36.

He added, however, that "sustained adoption of digital assets by institutional investors and their further integration into the legacy financial systems will be the main drivers of growth of the crypto space" during 2022. Bitcoin's rise in 2021 coincided with Wall Street's growing appetite for cryptocurrency. The record high in April occurred with the stock market debut of cryptocurrency exchange Coinbase.

October's peak above \$66,000 followed the launch of a Bitcoin futures exchange-traded fund, or type of financial instrument, on the New York Stock Exchange. Tesla boss Elon Musk helped the market rise - and fall - with controversial tweets about cryptocurrencies. The move by El Salvador in September to make Bitcoin a legal tender also made an impression.

But pressure has come from China's crackdown on the trading and mining

of cryptocurrencies, while the risk of wider regulatory action, from the likes of Europe and the US, weighs on Bitcoin. "There is no certainty in crypto, never mind regulation," said Huong Hauduc, general counsel at digital assets exchange Bequant.

"However, one thing is certain, the voices calling for crypto regulation, whether it be for tighter consumer protection or just clarity of the rules for institutions, are getting much louder." Created following the 2008 global financial crisis, Bitcoin initially promoted a libertarian ideal and aspired to overthrow traditional monetary and financial institutions such as central banks.

In more recent times, climate change watchers have shone a spotlight on the huge amount of electricity used to power computers required to unearth new Bitcoin tokens. Bitcoin is at risk of increased competition as it enters 2022, especially from its closest rival Ethereum, according to some analysts.

In November, Twitter co-founder and chief executive Jack Dorsey announced his departure from the social media platform, leaving him to concentrate on his digital payments firm as it looks to expand into cryptocurrency. For now, Bitcoin remains the dominant player.

According to cryptocurrency data aggregator CoinGecko, the sector has a market value totalling \$2.36 trillion, with Bitcoin worth a combined \$900 billion. For analyst Frank Downing, "Bitcoin's reluctance to evolve its design" compared to the likes of Ethereum, is in fact "a feature that provides the stability and consistency required to serve as a true global money."

Big tech adds \$2.5trn in value on robust 2021 gains

NEW YORK

Big tech powered U.S. stocks to a third straight winning year in 2021, as giants like Apple Inc. and Microsoft Corp. continue to see strong demand almost regardless of the economic environment.

Five of the market's most notable Internet and technology names - Apple, Microsoft, Google parent Alphabet Inc., Amazon.com Inc. and Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc. - rose last year, even as they finished in the red on the final trading day of 2021.

While their 2021 performances varied from Alphabet's 65% surge to Amazon's 2.4% slog, the group collectively added more than \$2.45 trillion in market valuation. Microsoft, Apple and Alphabet were among the three biggest contributors to the S&P 500 Index's 2021 gains.

"Investors have recognised that these companies continue to do extremely well," said Mark Luschni, chief investment strategist at Janney Montgomery Scott, which has about \$125 billion in assets under management. The rapid growth of their profits, their competitive moats and the strong balance sheets protected them from some of last year's risks, he added. "While I believe in the merits of tilting toward cyclical names going into 2022, I would not abandon tech," Luschni said.

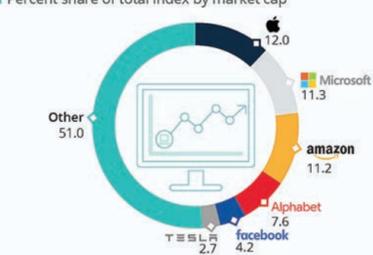
The group ended 2021 on a negative note. Apple fell 0.4% on Friday, while Microsoft lost 0.9%, Amazon dropped 1.1%, Alphabet shed 0.9% and Meta sank 2.3%. The Nasdaq 100 Index declined 0.7% for the session but still rallied nearly 27% for the year. Here's how the group performed in 2021, starting with its biggest gainer:

Alphabet Inc.

Google's parent company soared 65% in 2021, making it the top performer among Wall Street's biggest names. This was the strongest year

Tech Companies Dominate Nasdaq 100

Percent share of total index by market cap



Data as of July 22
Sources: CNBC, FactSet



statista

A chart showing dominance of Big Tech on The Nasdaq 100 Index.

for the stock since 2009, and it briefly joined Apple and Microsoft with a \$2 trillion market valuation.

Alphabet benefitted from growth in its cloud business as well as a rebound in digital ad spending, particularly in key categories like travel that were hurt by the pandemic in 2020. Earlier this week, CFRA upgraded the stock to a strong buy based on its "attractive valuation versus large-cap tech peers" as well as a "belief that it can sustain a mid-teen annual revenue growth pace over the next three years."

Microsoft Corp.

The software giant surged 51% in 2021, pushing it into the \$2 trillion market capitalization club. The stock has gained for 10 consecutive years, its longest such rally ever, and it's put up double-

digit returns for nine straight years. The shares have risen nearly 1200% since the end of 2011. Microsoft's strength came from steady demand for its cloud computing and enterprise software.

Apple Inc.

The iPhone maker rose 34% in 2021, beating the S&P 500 for a third straight year. While 2021 marked its weakest performances of the three - the stock rose more than 80% in both 2019 and 2020 - the rally brought the company within striking distance of a historic \$3 trillion market capitalization. Despite issues like a shortage of chips and the ongoing pandemic, which recently prompted Apple to shut its New York City retail stores, the stock remained a favourite with investors in 2021.

The company continues

to benefit from the global popularity of its products, the potential for new offerings to maintain steady sales growth and a strong cash balance. And the future looks bright with investors favouring equities that considered high quality with long records of growth amid the uncertainty related to Federal Reserve policy and the prospect of higher rates.

Meta Platforms Inc.

Shares rose 23% in 2021, roughly in line with the S&P 500, despite one of the most tumultuous years in the company's history. While Facebook's parent continued to benefit from high user engagement across its platforms and an ongoing shift of advertising budgets toward social media, it struggled with the impact of Apple's changed privacy policy and intense scrutiny of its products, especially after the release of documents from a whistleblower.

In October, the company announced a new focus on the metaverse, an immersive virtual reality technology, and a new name to reflect the shift. Meta's gains came mainly in the first half of 2021, as the stock hasn't traded at a record since September. However, Wall Street is optimistic about the company's prospects in 2022, given what's seen as an attractive valuation and a powerful engine for generating profits. Baird just named it one of its top large-cap internet picks for 2022.

VIEW FROM THE TOP



Bitcoin's rise in 2021 coincided with Wall Street's growing appetite for cryptocurrency.

WORLD

Sudan's PM Hamdok quits amid political deadlock

KHARTOUM

SUDANESE Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok said on Sunday he was resigning, six weeks after returning to his post in a deal with military leaders he argued could save a transition toward democracy.

Hamdok (pictured), who had failed to name a government as protests continued against the military takeover in October, said a roundtable discussion was needed to produce a new agreement for Sudan's political transition.

"I decided to give back the responsibility and announce my resignation as prime minister, and give a chance to another man or woman of this noble country to...help it pass through what's left of the transitional period to a civilian democratic country," Hamdok said in a televised address.

The announcement throws Sudan's political future even deeper into uncer-

tainty, three years after an uprising that led to the overthrow of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir.

An economist and former United Nations official widely respected by the international community, Hamdok became prime minister under a power-sharing agreement between the military and civilians following Bashir's overthrow.

Ousted and placed under house arrest during a military takeover on Oct 25, he was reinstated in November.

But the deal for his return was denounced by many in the civilian coalition that had previously supported him and by protesters who continued to hold mass demonstrations against military rule.

RISK OF 'DISASTER'

On Sunday Hamdok said he had tried in vain to forge a consensus between deeply divided factions that would



have allowed for the completion of a peace process signed with some rebel groups in 2020, and the preparation of elections in 2023.

"I have tried as far as I am able to spare our country the danger of slipping into disaster," Hamdok said. "Despite all that was done to bring about the desired and necessary agreement to fulfill our promise to the citizen of security, peace, justice and an end to bloodshed, this did not happen."

In the latest rallies on Sunday, hours before Hamdok's speech, security forces fired tear gas at demonstrators in Khartoum as protesters marched toward the presidential palace.

At least three people were killed, bringing to 57 the death toll in protests since the Oct 25 takeover, a doctors' committee aligned with the protest movement said. Six died and hundreds were injured in nationwide demonstrations on Thursday.

The military has said it will allow peaceful protests, and will hold to account those found responsible for violence.

Among the economic reforms Hamdok oversaw were the removal of costly fuel subsidies and a sharp devaluation of the currency.

Those enabled Sudan to qualify for relief on at least \$56 billion of foreign debt and a long-running economic crisis had shown signs of easing. The military takeover put the debt relief deal in doubt and froze extensive Western economic backing for Sudan.

On his return as prime minister in November, Hamdok said he wanted to preserve the economic steps taken by the transitional government and halt bloodshed after rising numbers of casualties from the crackdown on protests.

Xinhua

Russia ready to work with US on Ukraine issue in any format - senior diplomat

MOSCOW

MOSCOW is ready to work with Washington on the Ukraine issue in any format based on the understanding that there is no alternative to the Minsk Agreements, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko said in an interview with TASS.



When asked about the possibility of resuming Russian-US consultations similar to those that used to involve former Russian Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov and US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, Rudenko said that "this is, first and foremost, a question for our US partners." "On our part, we are ready to cooperate in any format based on the principle that there is no alternative to the Minsk Agreement, which was supported by Washington, and the understanding that it is impossible to resolve the conflict without providing special status to Donbass," he pointed out.

The senior diplomat added that Russia had earlier proposed a Normandy Four group's meeting to the US, which would also involve representatives of Donetsk and Lugansk. "Unfortunately, we did not get a positive response," he said.

Status of Donbass

The United States emphasized the need to provide special status to Donbass in contacts with Moscow, Rudenko said.

"Indeed, US President Joe Biden stated at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin that there was no alternative to the Minsk Agreements and the conflict in eastern Ukraine could not be resolved without providing special status to Donbass. US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland also confirmed it during her visit to Moscow in October," he said, commenting on the two countries' positions on the domestic Ukrainian conflict.

"Given Kiev's actual reluctance to implement the Minsk Agreements, it is a very important statement as it provides the basis for Russian-US cooperation in resolving the domestic conflict in Ukraine," the senior Russian diplomat stressed.

Donbass settlement process

Attempts to attach obligations to Russia under the Minsk Agreements are stymieing efforts to resolve the situation in Donbass, Rudenko said.

"The question remains open: how to move towards the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, which were supported by Washington, given Ukraine's categorical refusal to implement their cornerstone provision and build a direct dialogue with Donetsk and Lugansk," he noted.

"Clearly, attempts to circumvent this requirement, particularly by trying to depict Russia as a party to the conflict and attach some obligations to Moscow that aren't included in the Minsk Agreements, are further stymieing the process," Rudenko added.

According to him, it indefinitely delays the prospects for restoring peace and security in Donbass. "We expect that the United States will put decisive pressure on Kiev, making it comply with its obligations under the Minsk Agreements," Rudenko emphasized.

Agencies

Oath-taking ceremony held for HKSAR's 7th-term LegCo members

HONG KONG

THE oath-taking ceremony for 90 members of the seventh-term Legislative Council (LegCo) of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) began at 11:00 a.m. local time yesterday at the Chamber of the LegCo Complex.

The lawmakers, one by one, began to take an oath to uphold the Basic Law of the HKSAR and swear allegiance to the HKSAR after jointly singing the national anthem of China together with HKSAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam, the oath administrator.

It is the first time for the lawmakers to take an oath in front of the national emblem in the history of the HKSAR LegCo.

According to the National Flag and National Emblem (Amendment) Ordinance of the HKSAR that came into effect in October 2021, the na-



The oath-taking ceremony for members of the seventh-term Legislative Council (LegCo) of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is held at the LegCo Complex in Hong Kong, south China, on Saturday. Xinhua

tional flag and emblem must be displayed at the oath-taking ceremonies of the chief

executive, principal officials, the judiciary, the Executive Council, the LegCo, and the

District Council. The taking of the oath is legally binding. The oath-taker must sincerely

believe in and strictly abide by the relevant oath prescribed by law. An oath-taker who makes a false oath or who, after taking the oath, engages in conduct in breach of the oath, shall bear legal responsibility in accordance with the law.

A list of LegCo members, whose oaths are determined as valid, will be published after the oath-taking ceremony.

The seventh-term LegCo began its four-year term of office on Saturday. The new LegCo is expected to hold its first session on Jan. 12.

The LegCo election, the first since improvements to the HKSAR's electoral system, was successfully held on Dec. 19, 2021. In the election, a total of 153 candidates had contended for 90 seats, including 20 from geographical constituencies, 30 from functional constituencies, and 40 from the Election Committee constituency.

Xinhua

COVID-19: Fauci warns of danger of hospitalisation surge

WASHINGTON

TOP US infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci said there was still a danger of a surge in hospitalization due to a large number of coronavirus cases even as early data suggests the Omicron COVID-19 variant is less severe.

"The only difficulty is that if you have so many cases, even if the rate of hospitalization is lower with Omicron than it is with Delta, there is still the danger that you will have a surging of hospitalizations that might stress the healthcare system," Fauci said in an interview on Sunday with CNN.

The Omicron variant was

estimated to be 58.6 percent of the coronavirus variants circulating in the United States as of Dec 25, according to data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The sudden arrival of Omicron has brought record-setting case counts to countries around the world and dampened New Year festivities around the world.

"There will certainly be a lot more cases because this is a much more transmissible virus than Delta is," Fauci said on CNN.

However, "It looks, in fact, that it (Omicron) might be less severe, at least from data that we've gathered from South Africa, from the UK and even some from preliminary data from here in the United States," Fauci said.

Fauci added that the CDC will soon be



coming out with a clarification on whether people with COVID-19 should test negative to leave isolation, after confusion last week over guidance that would let people leave after five days without symptoms.

The CDC had reduced the recommend-

ed isolation period for people with asymptomatic COVID-19 to five days, down from 10. The policy does not require testing to confirm that a person is no longer infectious before they go back to work or socialize, causing some experts to raise questions.

"You're right. There has been some concern about why we don't ask people at that five-day period to get tested. That is something that is now under consideration", Fauci told ABC News in a separate interview on Sunday. "I think we're going to be hearing more about that in the next day or so from the CDC."

US authorities registered at least 346,869 new coronavirus on Saturday, according to a Reuters tally. The US death toll from COVID-19 rose by at least 377 to 828,562.

Agenciess

THIS year, northeast China's Heilongjiang province witnessed a total grain output of nearly 78.68 billion kilograms, an increase of about 3.27 billion kilograms from the previous year, accounting for 11.5 percent of the country's total grain output.

The province has recorded good grain harvest for 18 consecutive years, and its annual grain output has ranked first in China for 11 years in a row. Such an achievement couldn't have been possible without the province's efforts to develop smart agriculture.

As one of China's main grain producing areas, Heilongjiang has vigorously implemented the strategy of sustainable farmland use and innovative application of agricultural technology to increase farmland productivity.

Heilongjiang vigorously develops smart agriculture

The province's comprehensive agricultural mechanization rate, coverage rate of improved varieties of major crops, and contribution rate of scientific and technological progress to agriculture have reached 98 percent, 100 percent, and 68.3 percent, respectively. Multiple agricultural indicators of the province rank first in the country.

Thanks to the efforts of the province to carry out projects to promote the construction of high-standard farmland and protect black soil, gullies in farmland have been effectively smoothed out, the once small pieces of land have been turned into large contiguous farmland, and ditches,

bridges and culverts have been built to form smooth water passages, making it more convenient for the use of large machinery.

Han Xiaoyu, a villager in Keshan county, Heilongjiang province, has 10 hectares of flat and contiguous farmland, which was dotted with gullies three years ago.

In the past, only half of the land could be used for cultivation, and every year nearly five millimeter thick of the black soil was washed away, Han recalled. "Past gullies have been transformed into high-standard farmland, and our yield has also doubled this year," Han said happily.

According to local landforms and

climatic conditions, the province has classified the black soil cultivated land into four categories, and then tailored measures for comprehensive management and protection, according to Wang Zhaoxian, head of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Heilongjiang Province.

Agricultural technology plays a key role in the realization of good harvests in Heilongjiang. At the farm machinery storage facility of Hu Chunguang, a farmer at Daxing farm operated by Beidahuang Group, a large agricultural and agribusiness group in China, rows of modern agricultural mechanical devices are particularly eye-catching. With the help of the government,

Hu had automated terminals using BeiDou Navigation Satellite System installed on his agricultural machinery and sowed seeds of high-quality new crop varieties recommended by local agricultural technology department this year.

"I have not only saved 5,000 yuan (\$785) to 6,000 yuan of labor costs, but realized precision farming from sowing to harvesting through machinery," Hu said, adding that the yield per mu (one mu equals 0.067 hectares) of land has reached about 600 kilograms this year, nearly 50 kilograms more than that in 2020.

Since 2016, by integrating its scientific and technological resources, Hei-

longjiang has established technological collaborative innovation systems concerning 17 industries, including soybeans, rice, corn, and grains, Wang pointed out.

Focusing on the construction of a 1,000-kilometer high-standard technology demonstration belt, Heilongjiang has built four national modern agricultural technology demonstration bases, 58 high-standard modern agricultural technology parks, and 150 modern agricultural technology demonstration bases, cultivated more than 3,000 modern agricultural technology demonstration entities, and made sure that the availability rate of main agricultural technologies in the province stabilizes at more than 95 percent.

People's Daily

South African President Ramaphosa vows deep investigation into parliament fire

CAPE TOWN

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday said he “believes” somebody is being held and questioned for the fire at the parliament in the early morning in the legislative capital Cape Town and promised a deep investigation into it.

“We need to go a lot deeper, a lot deeper into how this type of event can take place and what measures we will need to take going forward,” Ramaphosa (pictured) addressed media outside the parliament.

The president said the fire first started at the hall of the old assembly building, then moved to the lower house National Assembly.

He also commended key officials for their great capability, speed and resource mobilization in response to the fire, and said Speaker of the National Assembly Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula is rushing to the scene from the neighboring province the Eastern Cape by car as she couldn't get a flight.

The fire, which the city initially said was reported to the Fire and Rescue Services on 5:03 a.m. but later corrected the time to 6:12 a.m., has affected both the Old Assembly Wing and the National Assembly Wing of the buildings of the parliament, which house the National Assembly and the upper chamber of National Council of Provinces, the parliament said in a statement.

The fire has been contained in the old wing and firefighters are currently trying to control the fire in the new wing, where the fire has affected the National Assembly chamber, it said, adding that no person has



been injured. The cause of the fire has not been established and investigations are underway by the relevant authorities, it said.

The National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure led by Minister Patricia De Lille, the Deputy Minister of State Security Zizi Kodwa, the South African Police Services and security personnel of Parliament are in the parliamentary precinct to assess the situation, according to the parliament.

Jean-Pierre (JP) Smith, Cape Town's Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security, had said the city's Fire and Rescue Services first received a call of a building alight in Parliament Street, which is within the precinct of the parliament, and arrived at the scene minutes later.

The fire gutted the 3rd floor of the old wing, including the office space and the gym, and its roof collapsed and has gone, Smith said in a fire update, adding that the old wing's chamber does not appear to be damaged although it maybe damaged by water.

The structural ceiling of the the National Assembly Wing collapsed, he said. According to him, about 70 fire staff members are on the scene. Initial reports indicated the fire started in an office space.

US knee-deep in pandemic chaos as New Year rung in

NEW YORK

THE latest surge of coronavirus, with the variants of Omicron and Delta combined, has kept the United States in complicated chaos of understaffed medical services as well as cancelled flights, while the federal government still pins hope on its vaccination policy to turn the table, sooner or later.

With more than 580,000 COVID-19 cases on Thursday, the United States shattered its own record for new daily coronavirus cases, beating a milestone it already broke just the day before.

Thursday's count topped the 488,000 new cases on Wednesday, which was nearly double the highest numbers from last winter.

“The back-to-back record-breaking days are a growing sign of the virus's fast spread and come as the world enters its third year of the pandemic,” reported The New York Times (NYT), noting that hospitalizations and deaths, however, have not followed the same dramatic increase, further indication that the Omicron variant seems to be milder than Delta and causes fewer cases of severe illness.

In the past two weeks, deaths are down by five percent, with a daily average of 1,221, while hospitalizations increased by just 15 percent to an average of 78,781 per day, it added.

CLOSURES, CANCELLATIONS

Urgent care centers across the United States are grappling with what to do as the fast-spreading Omicron variant hits employees and the demand for COVID-19 testing surges. “In some instances, they are closing certain locations for a few days,” reported The Wall Street Journal on Friday.



People receive COVID-19 test in Washington, D.C., the United States, on Dec. 30, 2021. File photo

More people are turning to the non-emergency clinics for COVID-19 testing, and at-home test kits are hard to come by. As at airlines, which have canceled thousands of flights this month, workers at urgent care centers are testing positive for coronavirus and are unable to work, said the report.

CityMD, a chain of urgent care clinics in the New York City area, closed 31 of its locations in recent weeks, including 12 on Wednesday.

A spokeswoman said more locations could close. Northwell Health-GoHealth Urgent Care temporarily closed about 10 of its 55 locations in New York in recent days.

Heading into the New Year's weekend, when return flights will produce another crest in air travel, airlines have been canceling more than 1,000 flights a day to, from or within the United States.

“Carriers and their employees say the latest chapter of the pandemic, the Omicron variant, has cut deeply into the ability to staff flights, even though a vast majority of crew members are vaccinated,” reported NYT on Thursday. JetBlue has

been one of the airlines hardest hit, canceling 17 percent of its flights on Thursday, according to the air travel data site FlightAware.

The carrier said on Wednesday that it would cut about 1,280 flights through mid-January, citing the rise in virus cases in the Northeast, where its operations and crews are concentrated.

As many as 10 million people may fly from Thursday through Monday, according to Transportation Security Administration estimates. For months, airlines have been preparing reserves of workers for the holiday crush, but “those measures were inadequate in a fast-changing situation, and many passengers were frustrated,” said the report.

BRIEF SURGE, ENDURING TUSSELE

The rapid surge of Omicron infections in the United States may be relatively brief, measured in weeks rather than months, according to infectious-disease experts who have

been astonished by the speed of the coronavirus variant's spread and who are hoping this wave ebbs just as quickly, reported.

The Washington Post on Thursday. Some forecasts suggest coronavirus infections could peak by mid-January.

“Omicron will likely be quick. It won't be easy, but it will be quick. Come the early spring, a lot of people will have experienced COVID-19,” William Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, was quoted as saying.

On Thursday, the Joe Biden administration told the Supreme Court that federal law gives it the authority to impose a nationwide vaccine-or-testing requirement for large employers, and the court should not stand in the way of a program that will save thousands of lives, the report said.

“The nation is facing an unprecedented pandemic that is sickening and killing thousands of workers around the country, and any further delay in the implementation of the (requirement) will result in unnecessary illness, hospitalizations, and deaths because of workplace exposure” to the coronavirus, said a federal filing.

Xinhua

U.S. assassination of Iran's top general raises “hatred” in global opinion - ministry

TEHRAN

IRAN'S Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that the U.S. assassination of the country's top general two years ago has raised “hatred” in global opinion.

“The world's reactions to the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani were that all nations have strongly despised the U.S. bullying and hegemonic policies,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry said on its Twitter account. “If the U.S. officials failed to see the images of hatred on the streets of the countries world-

wide, they are puppet of their own media empire,” the ministry added. A U.S. airstrike on Jan. 3, 2020 killed Soleimani, former commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, along with an Iraqi militia commander, near the Baghdad International Airport. Tehran Prosecutor General Ali Qasbi Mehr said earlier that Iran had filed a case with the Interpol to arrest a number of U.S. political and military officials “who were involved in the assassination of Soleimani.”

Xinhua

Russia to demand actions from UNICEF over children listed in notorious Ukrainian database

MOSCOW

RUSSIA will demand that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) undertake specific steps over children being included in the database of Ukraine's notorious nationalist Mirovtvorts (or Peacekeeper) website, Russian First Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy said in his Telegram channel on Sunday.

According to him, the website published personal data of a 13-year-old teenager whose parents moved to Donbass.

“Actually, according to the listing on the website, this is precisely what constitutes his crime. <...> We will demand specific steps for the correct positioning of the events from the point of view of Ukraine's international obligations.

International officials struggle with giving an honest assessment of that total lawlessness that is going on with human rights (and children's rights in particular) at our neighbors,” he wrote on his Telegram channel.

The diplomat also said that information about the teenager will be passed on to UNICEF whose representatives, according to him, are yet to hold a substantive meeting with a 13-year-old Faina Savenkova who was included in the database earlier.

In October, the notorious Mirovtvorts website included Savenkova in its list of people who pose a threat to the national security of Ukraine.

The website published her personal data, photos and screenshots of posts. The website's admins believe that the girl “takes part in anti-Ukrainian propaganda events.”

Later, Ukraine's Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Lyudmila Denisova addressed the National Police and the Security Service demanding to undertake measures to remove information about children from the website.

The ombudswoman stressed that according to Article 38 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocol, Ukraine has to undertake all the necessary measures to protect children affected by an armed conflict.

China presses forward button of business environment optimisation

By Lv Xiaoxun,

Sound business environment is like sunshine, water and air for enterprises. In recent years, many places in China have achieved obvious progress in improving their business environment, aiming to offer world-class climate for enterprises.

Beijing has enhanced its support for enterprises and improved its all-procedure approval efficiency. Shanghai tailored regulations that suit its own conditions and have built a service system that covers the whole life cycle of enterprises. Guangzhou in south China's Guangdong province takes how market entities feel as a primary evaluation index of business environment, and has established a multi-dimensional supervising mechanism that is oriented toward the satisfaction of enterprises.

In recent years, China has been taking huge efforts to optimize business environment. It has continuously improved relevant systems and mechanism, significantly expanded market access, advanced fair regulation and perfected government services.

According to the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report, China's business environment has raised to the 31st place in the global ranking, up by 47 places from two years ago, making the major economy that saw the most considerable improvement in business environment.

Since 2012, over 10 million market entities have been newly established in China on an annual basis, and around 70 percent of these entities are active. It used to take them averagely 22.9 days to set up a company, and now the figure has been cut to less than four workdays. The



A technician debugs an automatic production device in a workshop of the Nantong Yuetong CNC Equipment Co., Ltd., Hai'an, east China's Jiangsu province, May 24, 2021. File photo

constantly improving business environment is playing a very important role in such progress.

Better government services make stronger development impetus. Recently, the State Council issued a guideline making clear that pilot reform steps to improve business environment will be rolled out in six cities, including Beijing; Shanghai; Chongqing; Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang province; Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province.

This move aimed to further improve the energy and development quality of market entities, and will set an example for business environment building in other regions of the country. It is of important significance for

better collaboration between the market and the government, stabilizing market expectation and maintaining economic stability.

Whether a country has a sound business environment shall be judged by its market entities. In general, most of the market entities in China have benefited from and are satisfied with the efforts of local authorities to improve business environment.

To further improve business climate and stimulate the vitality of entities, the guideline issued by the State Council has set major goals in a number of aspects. It includes a list of 101 reform measures, as well as a list of relevant administrative regulations that are to be adjusted in the six pilot cities.

The quality, efficiency and dynamics of the Chinese economy are all going through a reform, while institutional supply has become an important core competitiveness. To pilot reform steps in the six cities will gain more replicable experiences and bring Chinese business environment onto higher levels.

Improvement of the business environment is an on-going process, and there is always room for things to become better. It is believed that by its continuous efforts to improve business environment and stimulate market vitality, China will surely achieve higher-quality development of its economy.

People's Daily

BANGKOK

THE world's largest free trade pact forged by 15 Asia-Pacific countries entered into force Saturday to provide a tailwind for the region's post-pandemic recovery and a catalyst for global economic progress, bringing a ray of hope.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement groups 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, as well as China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, covering nearly a third of the world's population and gross domestic product. Given

World's biggest trade deal takes effect as boost for global economy

its size and terms, the RCEP is widely expected to bolster regional trade and investment flows, and boost economic integration and prosperity in the region and beyond.

BOON FOR REGIONAL TRADE, INVESTMENT

“The golden age of durian trade is coming,” said Edwyn Chiang, secretary general of the Malaysia International Durian Industry Development Association, expecting the RCEP to spur exports of the thorny “king of fruits” by 50 percent by the year 2030. The

RCEP will open up a broader market and development space for Malaysia's agriculture sector, strengthen the country's agricultural product trade as well as the sector's investment and cooperation with other member countries, Chiang said.

“This (RCEP) will not only present new opportunities for Malaysian businesses, but also for regional business communities tapping into RCEP to access Malaysian and ASEAN markets more broadly,” Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said.

The free trade bloc is expected to eventually eliminate tariffs on more than 90 percent of goods, expand market access for investment, harmonize rules and regulations, streamline customs procedures, and set common rules concerning the development of e-commerce as well as small and medium-sized enterprises, according to business insiders.

ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi said the pact will “open up opportunities that could catalyze the expansion of regional trade and

investment.” “Under the RCEP agreement, the region will become a single production base as well as a market for its products,” he said.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development said the RCEP will create “a center of gravity for global trade,” expecting the agreement's tariff concessions to boost exports within the region by 42 billion U.S. dollars. Businesses with global supply chains might face tariffs even within a free trade area (FTA) if their products contain components that are made else-

where. Under the RCEP's rules of origin, parts from any member country would be treated equally, which might give companies in RCEP countries an incentive to look within the region for suppliers, analysts said.

The RCEP's tariff concessions, unified rules of origin and simplification of customs procedures “will enable our company to purchase raw materials and equipment as well as distribution of products more efficiently and at a lower cost,” said Qiu Jinliang, managing director of Himile (Thai-

land) Co., a tire mold supplier.

Li Yanqiang, chairman of Beibu Gulf Port Group in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, expected the RCEP to promote economic and trade cooperation within the region and increase the port's container throughput. Of the 44 shipping routes linking the port with overseas ports, 28 are connected to RCEP countries, Li said. By 2030, the RCEP will increase the member economies' incomes by 0.6 percent, adding 245 billion dollars annually and 2.8 million jobs to the regional economy, according to a study by the Asian Development Bank.

The Guardian

SPORT



Los Angeles Lakers forward Carmelo Anthony drives as Minnesota Timberwolves forward Nathan Knight (13) gets airborne on a fake during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022. (AP Photo)

James, Monk help Lakers edge Timberwolves 108-103

LOS ANGELES

LeBRON James scored 26 points, Malik Monk added 22 and the Los Angeles Lakers hung on to beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 108-103 on Sunday night for the first time in three meetings this season.

A couple of streaks came to an end in the Lakers' first game of the new year: James' run of seven straight games with at least 30 points and Russell Westbrook's stretch of four straight triple-doubles. Westbrook finished with 20 points, three rebounds, five assists and nine of the Lakers' 28 turnovers.

"We did a good job of holding our own, gutting it out," said Westbrook, who had just one turnover in the second half.

Naz Reid led the Wolves with season highs of 23 points, making 10 of 17 from the floor, and 11 rebounds, the first 20-plus points and 10-plus rebounds effort of his career. Jaylen Nowell added 17 points off the bench.

The Lakers (19-19) climbed back to .500, with their 30-something veterans carrying them in the fourth quarter. Carmelo Anthony scored five in a row to help erase a four-point deficit. Clinging to a one-point lead in the final minutes, Anthony hit a 3-pointer, got fouled and made the free throw. He finished with 14 points.

"He's done a great job for us all year," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "He's brought a great deal of basketball integrity to our team, making sure guys are playing the right way offensively."

Asked his definition of basketball integrity, Anthony joked, "Frank be using words."

Then Anthony explained that it's about his love of the game.

"It's my commitment to the game and being better to myself and my teammates," he said. "That role is going to change night in and night out. I'm still motivated."

Avery Bradley beat the shot clock to extend the Lakers' lead to 105-100. Monk made one basket in the fourth – a 3-pointer – as the only Laker under age 30 to score in the period.

The Lakers ended last year with a 33-point rout of Portland only to start the new year being challenged throughout by the Wolves, who dropped their third in a row and fifth of six.

"We're playing good basketball of late," James said. "Even with some of the losses we've had, we're still trending in the right direction."

The Wolves won the teams' first two meetings by 24 and 18 points, with James missing the second game.

Anthony Edwards scored 18 points for the Wolves in his return from reconditioning after being in COVID-19 protocols.

The teams traded leads throughout the fourth, with neither leading by more than seven. The Lakers got sloppy down the stretch. James lost the ball while double-teamed down low.

But they caught a few breaks, too. The Wolves were limited to one basket by Edwards in the final minute after he missed others and turned the ball over late.

"We're not here solely just to develop talent," Wolves coach Chris Finch said. "We're trying to win these games."

Malik Beasley and Patrick Beverley hit back-to-back 3-pointers as part of an 8-0 run early in the third that gave Minnesota a six-point lead.

The Lakers ran off 10 straight points, including five by Monk, to take a 76-72 lead. But the Wolves closed on an 8-2 spurt to lead 80-78 going into the fourth. The Lakers blew all of a 10-point lead in the second, allowing a 9-0 run by the Wolves that tied it 45-all. Reid scored 11 points in the quarter, including back-to-back dunks, and his three-point play left the Wolves trailing 57-54 at the break.

AP

TBF traditionalist polls of office bearers: Sponsorships or habits?

By Correspondent John Kimbute

REGIONAL officials of the Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF) were lately holding an election of office bearers, which appeared to be of another age concerning the polls to choose leaders of the soccer counterpart federation, for the past 20 years more or less.

There were polls for the president of the federation, vice-president, secretary-general, assistant secretary, and treasurer, alongside executive committee members, a format that Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) abandoned 20 years ago or earlier.

But it still works for basketball and several other federations, which means for some reason there is no need for change.

Instead of seeking to find out why there is no need for change, as the basketball leadership structure used to be 'normal' until soccer changed its format, maybe the real issue is why soccer changed its format – and when the reasons are taken into account – when other federations may alter their structures too.

The matter wasn't being raised by pundits discussing the TBF polls, merely inviting remarks from outgoing president, Phares Magessa, who acknowledged defeat and promised cooperation.

That again wasn't the situation in the old Tanzania Football Association (FAT) as its elections were cut-throat, nasty theatrics.

Even those without habitual monitoring of basketball events might in large numbers already have heard of Magessa as a veteran basketball leader, in which case his departure from the helm is something of a milestone.

Still, the polls were outwardly peaceful and without any disputes or haggling, and this needs to be explained, and it is in this context that the issue of sponsorships comes up, that there isn't so much money that TBF leaders oversee, and not much commotion comes up in getting leaders.

It also implies that the game is still amateur, the fan base is scattered, and seeks out one another collegially.

It thus underlines an impression that the game is conducted in amateurish enthusiasm, which extends to leadership in the sense of some prominent fans of the game picked to lead, with no visible large sums of money that attract organized contention for leadership, as in political elections.

Thus TFF has removed a model of leadership that shares out executive power for the concentration of power in the president so that no doubt is elected to lead, not a collegial team as in amateur sports.

The point is that when decisions involving the use of cash



Unguja women's basketball squad's forward, Caren Anderson, slots in a point when her side battled it out in last year's national basketball tournament, known as the 'CRDB Bank Taifa Cup', which was played at Chinangali courts in Dodoma. PHOTO: COURTESY OF CRDB BANK PLC

are momentous to participants in a sport collegial leadership must end.

Basketball still has time before it scales the ladder of amateur sports and collegial leadership to more professional basketball and greater flows of money into the game, which leads to concentration of power and bitter wrangling in organizing periodic elections.

These skirmishes often tarnish the game before the eyes of the public, but they are equally indispensable in that it takes to make a game popular, that earning is part of what it takes to make it popular, so attracting good players requires money, as well as hiring technical and administrative staff. Not much of this is taking place in basketball but at a voluntary level.

Teams still tend to be tied to either the workplace or residential areas, with declines in the standing of one team or another but the dominant names have remained over the years, Oilers, Pazi, University of Dar es Salaam, to cite the more ac-

cessible to the wider public.

The game has also attracted a few powerful individuals among youths of past decades, the most noticeable being former President, Jakaya Kikwete, but in his social spare time, he devotes his energies not to basketball but soccer.

He is a powerhouse at Young Africans SC, popularly known as 'Yanga', and son Ridhiwani was becoming a sort of club elder, and now rubs shoulders with big businessmen to make things work.

Not so much like in the old skirmishes but professional organization.

What will enable basketball to become professional, and indeed after how many decades, is anyone's guess.

Most sports or games will unavoidably remain amateur as they don't have the fan base to attract money, players, and competition at high levels, as national competitions are merely a city affair, and largely unremarkable to the breadth of the public.

It is like a billionaire wedding

ceremony – attracts thousands of people but it is socially unremarkable, just a largely private affair.

It is something that basketball must live with, not far from what in golf is known as a handicap – having its good and negative aspects.

So plaudits need to be sounded out to the basketball fraternity for organizing successful polls and showing what it is to be enthusiastic about sports without putting forward the money.

The trouble is that this isn't an ethical capacity ingrained in basketball per se as different from other sports (as some pundits would say if basketball was an organized society) but it arises from the fact that the money isn't there in the first place.

With a changing landscape and maybe private basketball grounds in the future, some of that could come around with some foreign companies starting to sponsor the game. It is still early in the day.

New Year's Expectations

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

ALTHOUGH we are still firmly in the grip of the dreaded global pandemic, there is still just cause for merry-making and jubilation over the fact that a New Year has begun.

Many of us will have laid out plans for the New Year while others will view the next 12 months as a priceless opportunity to pick up new habits and ditch self-destructive ones.

In the realm of sports, teams, and sportsmen alike will be champing at the bit to intensify their hunt for titles and personal honours.

Judging from the fact that the New Year is heavily laden with sporting extravaganzas, this sporting narrative will take a stab at trying to highlight what many of our expectations will be for a new annual sporting calendar.

The first order of business this year is the Mapinduzi Cup in Zanzi-

bar, which traditionally commences at the very beginning of every new year.

Since the draw for the tournament was announced, tongues have been set a-wagging over the fact that Simba SC and Yanga appear, on paper at least, to have been drawn in supposedly easy groups.

For Yanga's part, the Jangwani Street side will be gunning to regain their title and it is to be expected that they will be loathed to relinquish their grip of the much sought-after trophy.

As for Simba SC, they will be out to unstopably claim the title in a tournament where they have finished as runners-up a whopping five times.

Azam FC, too, will have a lot of say over which team will be destined to emerge as undisputed champions.

Axiomatically then, the hope is that this year's Mapinduzi Cup will serve up plenty of thrills and spills

and breathtakingly irresistible football action to boot.

Let us move on to women's football where the national women's game has come along by leaps and bounds in recent years.

Apart from the international successes of our various age-grade national women's football teams in the COSAFA Cup, for instance, our Mainland Women's Premier League has also continued to go from strength to strength.

Indeed, consider this, in the inaugural Mainland Women's Premier League in 2018, the competition only featured eight teams.

However, thanks to the generous sponsorship of the league's bank-rollers, Serengeti Breweries, that number has now shot up to 12 teams, which is a huge step forward.

It is hoped then that women's football will continue to soar along the same positive trajectory which it has

exhibited in recent years.

Another mouthwatering football event that many fans will be eagerly waiting for is the 2021 AFCON finals which will kick-off in Yaounde, Cameroon on January 9, this year.

The pre-eminent continental football championship was initially supposed to take place last year but could not due to the ravages of the lethal global pandemic.

All eyes will again be fixed on the Desert Warriors of Algeria, who as the tourney's defending champions, are expected to mount another superb campaign to win a 2nd trophy on the trot.

Individually, African football spectators will likely feel elated to be able to feast their eyes on the peerless skills of a who's who of African football, which includes household names like Senegal's Sadio Mane, and Egypt's talismanic marksman Mohamed Salah among others.



Yanga midfielder, Zawadi Mauya (C), celebrates with teammates, Abdallah Shaibu (R), and Adeyum Saleh after the former netted a goal in one of the 2021 Mapinduzi Cup tournament's fixtures which took place in Zanzibar in January.

Ancelotti slams Madrid loss: We were on holiday

MADRID

CARLO Ancelotti said his Real Madrid players looked like they were "on holiday" in their 1-0 loss at Getafe on Sunday, calling the defeat "a wake-up call" for the LaLiga leaders.

A mistake from defender Eder Militao gifted Getafe's Enes Unal an early goal at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez in the first LaLiga match of 2022.

Luka Modric hit the post and Casemiro had a shot well saved by goalkeeper David Soria -- who also kept out substitute Isco's late header -- as Madrid experienced defeat for the first time since October.

"We gave away the first goal, from a player (Militao) who usually stands out in defence," Ancelotti said in his post-match news conference.

"There isn't much to say about the game, we just stayed on holiday for one more day. The team didn't look like the one that played before Christmas."

Real Madrid went into the match on a 15-game unbeaten run in all competitions, while opponents Getafe had only recently climbed out of the relegation zone.

"We looked like another team, with less concentration, less commitment," Ancelotti said.

"We didn't deserve to lose of course, a draw would have been fair, but we gave away a goal and you end up with a loss. It could be a wake-up call. Today the team was on holiday."

Despite the setback, Madrid have built up enough of a lead at the top of the LaLiga table that they remain eight points clear of second-placed Sevilla -- who play on Monday -- although Ancelotti's side have now played two extra games.

"Preparing for these games after Christmas, with players who travel, isn't easy," Ancelotti said. "But talking about that would be looking for excuses, and I don't want that. We didn't play well."

"I said exactly the same thing to the players. We take responsibility. Maybe the coach was on holiday too. We take responsibility. But no dramas, no criticism, no tragedies, because we're still leaders."

Real Madrid travel to Alcoyano in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday -- having suffered an embarrassing cup defeat to the same side in January 2021 -- and then host Valencia in LaLiga next weekend.

They then travel to Saudi Arabia for the Spanish Supercopa in a busy start to the new year.

Meanwhile, Luuk de Jong scored the only goal of the game as a depleted Barcelona won 1-0 at Mallorca on Sunday to move within one point of the top four in LaLiga.

De Jong headed in Oscar Mingueza's cross on the stroke of half-time as Barca took advantage of Rayo Vallecano and Real Sociedad slip-ups this weekend to climb to fifth in the table.

Mallorca, who had lost just once at San Moix in nine league games prior to Barca's visit, almost levelled late on, but Jaume Costa saw his effort brilliantly saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen. They remain 15th, four points clear of the drop zone.

A COVID-19 outbreak among the Barca squad, coupled with injuries and suspensions, meant they travelled to Mallorca with just 11 first-team players available, including two goalkeepers.

Coach Xavi Hernandez called up eight B team players to make up the numbers, with Barca left particularly short in attack.

Ansu Fati, Memphis Depay and Martin Braithwaite were all missing with injuries, while Ousmane Dembele, Abde Ezzalzouli and Philippe Coutinho were among eight players to miss the match after testing positive for coronavirus. New signing Ferran Torres is not yet available.

De Jong, therefore, was the only first-team forward available and, flanked by youngsters Ferran Jutgla and Ilas Akhomach, he starred in an impressive first half from Barca.

"I feel delighted, really happy we won today, especially with my goal, which was important for the team. The most important thing is the win. It's been a tough first half of the season and it's a good step by winning this game today," De Jong said after the match.

Gerard Pique struck a free-kick wide and Ilias brought a save from Manolo Reina as Barca's makeshift side took control of the match early on.

Jutgla then curled just off target before De Jong twice struck the woodwork. The Dutch striker flicked a Jutgla pass onto the post before hammering a brilliant overhead kick off the bar.

De Jong's luck finally changed in the 45th minute. Reina came for Mingueza's cross but got nowhere near it and De Jong headed into an empty net.

"Luuk's an exemplary professional. There's talk about him leaving, but he works hard and sacrifices himself for the team," Xavi said after the match. "He's an amazing professional. I am happy with him. Of course I consider that he could stay, he was useful today. We will see in the future, everything is just a hypothesis for now."

Mallorca, who were missing four players through COVID-19 themselves, improved after the break as Barca handed debuts to two youngsters, Alvaro Sanz and Estantis Pedrola.

The home side threw everything forward late on, with Fer Nino heading over before Costa's late chance was beaten away by the arm of Ter Stegen as Barca held on for three points.

Barcelona's Eric Garcia praised Ter Stegen for his performance, saying: "We owe 70% of the win to Ter Stegen."

(Agencies)

Man City's 'title to lose' after Chelsea, Liverpool fall on their swords

LONDON

EVEN after a weekend in which Manchester City produced the worst performance of the Premier League's top four, the champions streaked further clear towards a fourth title in five years.

City manager Pep Guardiola admitted his side were second best despite coming from behind to beat 10-man Arsenal 2-1 with a 93rd minute winner that secured an 11th consecutive league win.

As Guardiola's men have hit their stride, Chelsea and Liverpool have run out of steam to turn a tight three-horse race, into a procession.

Struck down by coronavirus outbreaks and injuries, the two challengers for City's crown threw themselves into a titanic battle at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, but a 2-2 draw did little for either side's hopes of reeling in the leaders.

City's advantage now stands at 10 points from Chelsea, with Liverpool a further point back with a game in hand.

"It's a big gap, so they have the title maybe to lose at the moment," said Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk, one of those forced into a swift return to action after testing positive for COVID-19.

"We just have to get results, play good foot-



A 2-2 draw did little to aid Chelsea or Liverpool's title challenge on Sunday (AFP)

ball and win games. It sounds pretty easy but it's tough."

Rather than cutting the gap, there is a likelihood it could grow in the coming weeks as Chelsea and Liverpool tackle their own issues.

Both are involved in two-legged League Cup semi-finals over the next

two midweeks despite calls from managers for the ties to be switched to one-off games.

Chelsea's record signing Romelu Lukaku was dropped for Sunday's crucial clash after an explosive interview with Italian media in which he revealed his displeasure with how his first season

back at the Bridge is going.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was also absent due to a Covid infection, along with Alisson Becker, Roberto Firmino and Joel Matip.

- Salah, Mane to be missed -

And the Reds now have to cope without their top

goalscorers, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, for up to a month due to their international commitments at the Africa Cup of Nations. Chelsea will also lose goalkeeper Edouard Mendy to the AFCON, while first choice wing-backs Reece James and Ben Chilwell face months out injured.

Title race all but over yet Chelsea, Liverpool still excite

LONDON

MA N C H E S T E R City have shown themselves to be in a league of their own, so the Premier League should be thankful that Chelsea and Liverpool are still able to keep us all entertained.

Sunday's 2-2 draw at Stamford Bridge helped neither team and only consolidated City's vice-like grip on the top spot, but football is about jeopardy, risk and overcoming flaws, and when it all comes together, you get an unforgettable game like this one.

Even before City moved 11 points clear at the top of table with a 2-1 win at Arsenal on Saturday, this second-versus-third clash was always a case of both sides needing to win to maintain faint hopes of catching Pep Guardiola's winning machine. City's win at the Emirates was their 11th successive Premier League victory and they have all been won with such monotonous ease, scoring 33 goals and conceding just seven, that every three points is now met with little more than a shrug of inevitability.

Barring an unlikely collapse in the second half of the season, City will win a fourth league title in five years and you will struggle to count on the fingers of one hand the times they have had to dig deep into their reserves to overcome adversity during that period. Guardiola has built one of the all-time great teams in English football history during his six

years at the Etihad, but they may simply be too good to contribute to games like this one.

Chelsea and Liverpool gave us such a pulsating encounter because they both have weaknesses that can be exploited by their opponents. And as a result, they both had to take risks in an attempt to secure a crucial victory.

And they also had to go into the game with unwanted distractions hovering over both clubs.

Chelsea, with three wins from their past eight in the league, were without £97.5 million striker Romelu Lukaku, dropped by coach Thomas Tuchel because of an outspoken interview about his failure to impress so far at Stamford Bridge since returning to the club from Internazionale in the summer. And Liverpool were without manager Jurgen Klopp, goalkeeper Alisson, defender Joel Matip and forward Roberto Firmino -- all isolating because of COVID-19.

City, in contrast, have enjoyed a remarkably serene run of successes since losing to Crystal Palace in October, which is why they are free-rolling to another title. But the Premier League is regarded as the most exciting in world football because of games like this, and teams like Chelsea and Liverpool and the drama they create.

From the first minute, when Sadio Mane was fortunate to escape a red card for appearing

to strike Cesar Azpilicueta in the face with an elbow after just 14 seconds, the game was incident-packed. Azpilicueta later said it was a "clear red card" when interviewed after the game.

Christian Pulisic, playing centrally in the absence of Lukaku, wasted a golden chance to open the scoring on seven minutes when, with only stand-in keeper Caoimhin Kelleher to beat, he was indecisive and allowed the youngster to smother the ball. It proved a costly miss when, two minutes later, Mane took advantage of his lucky escape from a sending off by pouncing on a mistake by Trevoh Chalobah to score.

Chelsea were in disarray and Liverpool looked like the team that won the title in 2019. When Mohamed Salah made it 2-0 on 26 minutes with a stunning near-post finish after gliding past Marcos Alonso, it seemed as though Liverpool were

about to give Chelsea the kind of hammering they inflicted on Manchester United during a 5-0 rout at Old Trafford earlier this season.

Liverpool were unable to score a third, though, and two Chelsea goals in the space of three minutes at the end of the first half turned the game on its head.

When Kelleher punched Alonso's in-swinging free kick clear on 42 minutes, the keeper looked to have done well to deny the Chelsea defender. But the ball dropped the Mateo Kovacic on the edge of the penalty area and, as he was backpedaling, the midfielder somehow guided a volley beyond Kelleher and into the net. It was a spectacular display of technique by the former Real Madrid player and it gave Chelsea a foothold back into the game.

And it took them just three minutes to score the equaliser when Pu-

lisic atoned for his earlier miss by latching onto N'Golo Kante's pass before beating Kelleher with a precise left-foot shot past the Republic of Ireland international. As the chaos continued on the pitch, Mason Mount almost put Chelsea 3-2 up in first-half stoppage time with a scuffed volley that bounced just wide of the post.

When a game is so eventful in the first half, it rarely delivers a second half of the same quality because of coaches plugging the holes that had led to the earlier excitement. But while the goals stopped flowing, the entertainment didn't.

Salah forced a crucial save from Edouard Mendy with a 25-yard lob on 57 minutes and Mane was also denied by the Chelsea keeper. Kelleher, not to be outdone, then produced a stunning save to prevent Pulisic from scoring his second of the game.

"How should we compete in a title race?" Blues boss Thomas Tuchel complained earlier this week after his side were forced to fulfil all of their December fixtures, while 18 other Premier League games were called off due to Covid outbreaks.

Even if Tuchel and Klopp's men recovered their early season form, City's relentless consistency shows no signs of offering a ray of hope.

They have averaged a total of 95 points in each of Guardiola's three title-winning seasons in England and are on course to hit that mark again.

"We showed our champion mentality, we never give up," said midfielder Rodri after his late strike at the Emirates kept City's winning run going.

"We know how tough it is to win the Premier League and we are not going to drop it."

"We don't look at the others much and winning 11 games in a row, it shows that we are focused on ourselves."

Should Manchester United beat Wolves on Monday, the same 10-point gap between first and second will separate Chelsea to Tottenham in seventh, who have three games in hand.

With City in a league of their own, the title race has quickly fizzled out into a familiar fight just to join them in next season's Champions League.

AFP



ESPN

SPORT

**Ancelotti slams Madrid loss:
We were on holiday**

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Smith's search for rhythm

SYDNEY

On a scale of problems, it's pretty low down the list - and one that England would love to have.

A Test batting average last year of 53.75 and three innings ago a score of 93, but Steven Smith admitted he is still searching for his best rhythm in a series where he feels conditions have favoured the bowlers, adding he had never seen the ball move as much as it did in Melbourne.

England have managed to keep Smith under a reasonably tight leash in this series, certainly compared to the 2019 edition in which he made a chart-topping 774 runs, with scores of 12, 6 and 16 aside from his major contribution in the first innings in Adelaide when he had been rushed into the captaincy.

After a brief slump against India in the 2020-21 series, where he was dismissed for three single-figure scores in a row, Smith rebounded with 131 and 81 at the SCG. That century remains his only Test hundred on home soil since returning from his ban.

"It's been a little while since I've scored a hundred; [I] got close in Adelaide," Smith said.

"Think we've played on some pretty bowler-friendly wickets in the first three Tests. You've never really felt in. Anyone can bowl a good ball at a certain time.

"It's about hanging in there as long as possible, defending well and leaving well and pouncing on anything loose. Think that's what the guys who have scored runs in this series have done well. It's been tough to get rhythm and to get into a groove but hopefully this week [I] can score a big one."

In Melbourne, Smith fell to James Anderson during an excellent spell on the second day before being able to watch the excellence of Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins during the final hour stood in the slips.

"I've probably never seen seam movement like that in my life," he said. "One of those balls that [Haseeb] Hameed left that evening when it hit him, that came back like an offspinner. The ball was seaming as far as I've seen on any wicket in my career. It was never going to be easy. Our bowlers were relentless with their line and length."

Steven Smith looks back to see his bails missing during the MCG Test Getty Images

Despite being what Smith termed a "bowler-friendly" series, Australia twice passed 400, in their first innings in Brisbane and Adelaide, to set up their victories.

Of the top order, only Cameron Green has not contributed at least a half-century but they will be without Travis Head in Sydney after his positive Covid-19 result.

Two days out, the SCG pitch was proving a tricky one to read with a significant covering of grass which is likely to be trimmed before the game. However, with that and the dodgy forecast, any chance of a debut for legspinner Mitchell Swepson appears to have receded.

"It's pretty green at the moment, so what it'll do I'm not sure, but [will] sum it up when we are out and there and play accordingly," Smith said.

"If it starts with a lot of grass it doesn't seem to break up that much whereas if they take it off it has the ability to break up a bit more and the footmarks come into play a lot more. I dare say it may not take too much spin late in the game which was the traditional SCG...which I would like to see personally."

Josh Hazlewood is continuing his recovery from a side strain that has kept him out of action since the Gabba Test and had a lengthy run out on Monday. "The ball seemed to be coming through quite nicely," Smith said. "Not sure how he's pulled up. I know that the guys have a lot of trust in him to make the right decision."

There are fast-bowling riches for Australia to pick from, with Jhye Richardson having taken a five-wicket haul in Adelaide before being left out as a precaution in Melbourne where Scott Boland grabbed a stunning 6 for 7 which may yet not be enough for him to retain his place. Another of the good problems to have that England would dearly like.

AGENCIES

Ntibazonkiza says ready for challenges at Yanga



Yanga's attacker, Said Ntibazonkiza. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YANGA striker, Said Ntibazonkiza 'Saïdo', has said he is ready to face challenges at the club, with the side roping in several new footballers during this season's mini transfer window.

The Burundian forward stated: "I have no problem with competition within the squad, as it is normal for a big team to have a lot of good players."

"I believe in my quality and whenever I get a chance I try to do better," he revealed.

Last season Ntibazonkiza did not feature in every match even though he was training with the team.

The situation was described by some soccer fans as an outcome of a misunderstanding between the forward and the team's head coach, Nasreddine Nabi, but the former explained that

it was over.

"That is gone and I do not want to talk about it at all. At the moment I thank God for the performance I am showing, so I just want to be healthy so that I can continue to fight for the team and make Yanga fans happy," he said.

He stopped short of issuing comments on his contract with Yanga which expires at the end of this season.

The attacker further offered his opinion on his outfit's showing this season, based on his experience of

being in the squad since last season.

"There is a huge difference between the previous season squad and the current one. This season the outfit has recruited the best players, the footballers, have forged good coordination with fellow players who were here since last season," he stated.

"The team is high in morale and if you look at how we play you realize we are seeking good results as every player is committed to making sure the positive results are achieved."

Ntibazonkiza joined Yanga from

Burundi's Vital'O during last season's mini transfer window and since joining the Jangwani Street outfit he has been playing well.

The striker is serving as a leader in the squad based on his experience.

Reports from Burundi reveal that Ntibazonkiza is one of the most accepted heroes in football, especially as the national team captain of 'Intamba m'Urugamba'.

"Our national team is doing well, it has a lot of talented and very patriotic players."

"We slipped and failed to qualify for AFCON but we are still planning to make sure we participate in CHAN next year," Ntibazonkiza noted.

Ntibazonkiza said revealed Burundian athletes' self-awareness has proved to be crucial to their achievement when they play professional football elsewhere.

"It's not that Burundians dream of either playing or working in Tanzania, they have big dreams, so they use Tanzania as a route, that's the big secret," Ntibazonkiza disclosed.

In recent years many players from Burundi have come to Tanzania to play football and some have become famous and left.

The footballers include Laudit Mavugo, Didier Kavumbagu, and Amissi Tambwe who is currently playing for DTB FC 2021/22 Championship.

The footballers are among the Burundian players who won fame in Mainland Tanzania's top-tier football due to their scintillating performance.

Several other players from Burundi have joined various Mainland Premier League sides this season.

They are Steven Nzigamasabo (Mtwara Sugar), Bigirimana Blaise, Jonathan Nahimana, and Erick Kwizera (Namungo FC), Emmanuel Mvuyekure (KMC FC) and others.

Booker scores 24 points, depleted Suns rout Hornets 133-99

CHARLOTTE

DEVIN Booker scored 24 points, Jalen Smith tied a career high with 19 points and 12 rebounds and the short-handed Phoenix Suns hammered the Charlotte Hornets 133-99 on Sunday night.

Chris Paul had 16 assists to help the Suns improve to 28-8 - a half-game behind Golden State for the NBA lead - after they lost three of their previous four.

The Suns got 11 points and six rebounds from Bismack Biyombo, who signed a 10-day contract Saturday with four Phoenix players in the NBA's health and safety protocols, including starting center Deandre Ayton, starting forward Jae Crowder and backup center JaVale McGee. Coach Monty Williams also is out.

Paul said acting coach Kevin Young talked to the team after the morning shootaround about their lack of physicality in a 123-108 road loss to Boston on Friday.

"We knew it," Paul said. "So we wanted to come out strong first and foremost on the defensive end."

"This was all you can ask for, especially after you just took it on the chin against Boston," Young said.

"Sometimes as a coach in your heart you feel like you are doing the right thing and you think it's going to resonate, and when it does come to fruition it's rewarding."

Biyombo, playing in his first



Charlotte Hornets guard, Terry Rozier (C), shoots between Phoenix Suns guard, Chris Paul (L), and guard, Landry Shamet, during the first half of an NBA League's game on Sunday, in Charlotte, North Carolina. AP

game of the season, made an easy transition into the Suns' rotation, including a dunk off an alley-oop lob from Landry Shamet. Biyombo played 18 minutes against his former team.

"He fit in better than I even would have hoped," Young said.

"... I had a really good feeling that he would be able to help us. He's the ultimate pro and knows how to play at

both ends. He was awesome."

Shamet added 17 points, Mikal Bridges had 15, and Cam Johnson and Cam Payne 14 each.

LaMelo Ball had 17 points for the Hornets. They had won three in a row. "They got off to a great start and they were a hungrier team," Hornets coach James Borrego said about the Suns.

"They looked like a team that had lost three in a row and we looked like a team that had won three in row. They handled their loss better than we handled our win."

Despite missing more than 48 combined points per game from players who were out, the Suns bolted to a 73-47 halftime lead behind 20 points from Booker and 10-of-22 shooting from beyond the 3-point arc.

Smith, who got the start at center for Phoenix, isn't known as a particularly emotional player, but the 21-year-old got so excited after he throwing down a one-handed dunk over Hornets' 7-foot center Mason Plumlee he was whistled for a technical foul for talking trash.

"It's so great to see," Paul said. "We have been waiting for that emotion from him for a year. You just never know when you are going to get your opportunity and to see him play with that emotion... You can get down in this league especially when you are on a team as good as ours and you find yourself out of the rotation. But he's been working and has stayed ready."

Smith called it his most complete game as pro, and credited playing with Paul - who he said is always in his ear giving advice - as a big reason for his development as a professional.

"The whole time I have been picking his brain and he's been able to tell me how to get on the court and how to keep him improving," Smith said.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

