

PROPERTY WATCH
DISCOVER INFORM INSURE

NEMC CLOSES DOWN CHINESE FACTORY IN MKURANGA AFTER DEATHS OF WORKERS

Wind and solar power need to be adopted more quickly to avoid fossil gas traps

SIL chief pledges continued support to agriculture extension officers training

Lamu braces for revenue growth after port launch

ENERGY



GOVT TO BUY MACHINERY FOR GEOTHERMAL PG 2

INFLATION



SUGAR, COOKING OIL PRICES RISE IN ARUSHA PG 3

TOURISM



TATO ENGAGES SPEAKER ON TOURISM RESILIENCE PG 4

VACCINES



KISARAWA LAUNCHES ANTI-RABIES CAMPAIGN PG 5

Govt readies LNG talks with investors

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

A team of negotiators is ready to meet two international companies that have expressed interest in developing the long delayed liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant.

Energy minister Dr Medard Kalemani made this affirmation here on Wednesday after meeting with the team ahead of anticipated LNG implementation negotiations with Shell and Equinor.

The government wants to implement the project as quickly as possible at the end of such negotiations, he stated, noting that the project is important for Tanzania.

For now all required procedures have been finalised and the government is ready to start negotiations to ensure that the project is mutually beneficial, he further noted.

The government has set out a six month period to complete the negotiations, saying it was important that the public understands about the project so that when it starts it will have popular backing.

"People need to know what is going on, its benefits and what should be their responsibility as well as the limits," he stated, telling officials that they should embark on the task now as this does not need the negotiations to be completed.

The negotiating teams should be mobilised to avoid delaying the talks as the country needs the project. The government has been preparing for the fast implementation of the project, he stated.

Deputy Minister Stephen Byabato said the government has provided ample time for the implementation of the project, urging those in the negotiating team to work hard to finalise the issue.

The Equinor manager, Ms Unni Fjaer said the company was ready to talk with the government and work on the issue, pledged to cooperate to ensure the project becomes a success.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan chairs a Cabinet meeting at Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: State House

Ministry drawing up 1,600 water projects

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE government plans to implement 1,527 water projects in rural areas and 114 others in cities and towns to address shortages of the precious liquid all over the country.

Tabling ministerial estimates for the next financial year, the minister, Jumaa Aweso said the plan includes new projects and expansion of existing sources.

He requested approval of 680.388bn/- for recurrent and development expenditures, listing drilling 516 wells and

In the second phase of the project, we are expecting to construct a water pumping station which will take the precious liquid to a 15m litres reservoir in Kisarawe II project, which has been implemented by 35 percent

constructing 33 dams in dry areas among the key projects. The government intends to strengthen the Community

Based Water Supply Organizations (CBWSO) as well as rural and urban water agencies to ensure close follow-up of implementation of projects, he said.

For Dar es Salaam and other regions, Aweso said the government is still progressing with the World Bank project to tap water from Ruvu river at a cost of 200.818bn/-.

About 130bn/- in the loan is meant for construction of tanks and expanding water dispersing network to a distance

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Scores held over fake medicines, equipment

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

POLICE in Dodoma and elsewhere are holding scores of individuals suspected of producing, distributing and selling a range of fake and expired medicines and medical equipment in several regions.

The suspects were arrested in a five-day operation carried out by police detectives accompanying inspectors from the Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA), along with officers of the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children. Other inspectors were drawn from the Pharmacy Council of Tanzania, the Veterinary Council of Tanzania and the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments). Health minister Dr Dorothy Gwajima said at a press conference that the suspects would be hauled before the court when investigations are completed.

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“People need to know what is going on, its benefits and what should be their responsibility as well as the limits,” he stated, telling officials that they should embark on the task now as this does not need the negotiations to be completed

Samia to address Dar elders today

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan will continue the tradition of national leaders meeting with elders, with the first gathering taking place in Dar es Salaam, today.

Regional commissioner Abubakar Kunenge (pictured) told reporters yesterday that the meeting, which will be held at the Mlimani City Conference Hall, will be attended by around 900 city elders.

“We had special criteria to pick elders who will represent other elders in the city and elsewhere in the country,” he said,



urging other senior citizens to follow up the meeting through the media.

Arrangements have been made to facilitate seamless transport of the invited elders to and from the meeting venue, with a stretch of city buses made available. All participants will have taken their seats by 2pm ready for the presidential address.

“We thank the president for holding her first meeting with elders in Dar es Salaam because she could have picked any other

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Ministry drawing up 1,600 water projects

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of 1,440 kilometers and connect 64,000 clients, he said.

Costs totalling \$20m (46.376bn/-) are expected in implementing a project to control water losses, with the search for implementing experts underway at present, he said, noting further that \$10m (23.188bn/-) is set aside for purchasing 50,000 flow meters, with the tendering process being arranged at the moment.

Up to the end of last month, a project to supply water from tanks based at the University of Dar es Salaam hilltop to Bagamoyo in Coast Region had been implemented to around 22 percent, billed for completion late next year, he stated.

Projects aimed at improving sanitation and water services are being carried out in Dar es Salaam as well as in Coast region urban centres of Kibaha, Kisarawe, Mkuranga, Chalinze and Bagamoyo.

The projects include deep water wells at Kimbiji and Mpera in Kigamboni District, in the city, where Kimbiji will have 12 water

wells and Mpera, eight water wells. The project is implemented at a cost of 18bn/- and is expected to produce 260m litres of water per day.

By end of March, a total of 14 water wells had been completed, 11 located at Kimbiji and three in Mpera, with engineers soon starting installing water distribution infrastructures. The remaining water wells will be completed by end of this year, he affirmed.

"In the second phase of the project, we are expecting to construct a water pumping station which will take the precious liquid to a 15m litres reservoir in Kisarawe II project, which has been implemented by 35 percent," the minister noted.

Preparations are underway for implementation of the third and fourth phases, he stated.

The government continues to implement the 41.3bn/- water project in Chalinze which will benefit 68 villages along the Wami River. The project has been completed by 87.5 percent and will be fully completed by late October, he added.



Folorunso Fasina (R), the UN-Food and Agriculture Organisation's team leader in Tanzania, pictured on Wednesday presenting rabies vaccines to Kisarawe district commissioner Jokate Mwegelo (in light blue). It was during the launch of a week-long campaign meant to vaccinate over 4,000 dogs and cats in the district against rabies. Looking on (C) is Prof Hezron Nonga, director of veterinary services in the Livestock and Fisheries ministry. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

'Over 60,000 tourists visited Mikumi park in FY 2018/19'

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

MIKUMI National Park in Morogoro Region has recorded an increased number of tourists to 60,077 in 2018/2019 from 46,908 visitors in the year 2012/2013.

The park's Assistant Conservation Commissioner, Mathew Michael, said most of the visitors were Tanzanians. He linked the increase with the continued government efforts to improve the tourism sector.

Commissioner Michael made the statement briefing members of the Parliamentary Committee on Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism under the chairmanship of Aloyce Kwezi.

He said the increase of 13,169 tourists is equivalent to 28.1 percent within four years (2012/2013 to 2019/2020). He said Tanzanians are motivated enough to visit national parks including Mikumi.

"Domestic tourism is growing; we have been witnessing many people visiting Mikumi and other national parks in the past four years," he noted.

According to Michael, in the 2016/2017 financial year, a total of 32,050 locals and 27,668 foreign tourists visited Mikumi National Park.

In 2017/2018 the number of tourists was 26,540 (Tanzanians) and 24,639 foreigners. In 2018/2019 the number of locals who visited the park was 35,281 and 24,796 foreigners. In the 2019/2020 financial year, a total of 31,490 local tourists visited the park while the number of foreigners was 22,345.

The commissioner asserted that the park has a good relationship with the surrounding community (villages) whereas they have been collaborating in various

conservation activities as well as implementation of development projects.

He said the park has been involving the villages through provision of conservation education and finding solutions to land disputes.

Special Seats MP, Asia Halamga called upon youth to build a culture of visiting nearby tourist attractions and promote them accordingly. She urged them to wisely use their social media networks to promote the available tourists attractions.

Chairperson of the committee, Aloyce Kwezi directed the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to improve infrastructures at the Mikumi and other tourist destinations across the region.

Kwezi was concerned that improvement of infrastructures at the parks would attract more visitors, thus boost government coffers.

"We need to improve communication at our national parks to encourage people to visit them. This will reduce people's complaints on the poor state of roads and communication services within the park," he noted.

Speaking in the National Assembly last month, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said that despite challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, the country hosted a total 624,096 tourists in the 2020/21 fiscal year surpassing the set targets of receiving 437,000 visitors.

The premier acknowledged that due to Covid-19, Tanzania didn't expect even to reach half of the number of tourist arrivals as it was in previous years.

Established in 1964, Mikumi is the fourth-largest national park in Tanzania covering an area of 3,230 km.

Scores held over fake medicines, equipment

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About 20 case files were opened at police stations in inspection areas, with disciplinary measures taken against owners of health centres, dispensaries, pharmacies and hospitals distributing and selling fake and expired medicines, she said.

The minister directed boards of the pharmacy council and the veterinary council to revoke the licences of their

members involved in gross infringement of regulations of the medical drugs business. During the operation, fake medicines were forfeited, including Alben blue, found to be lacking active ingredients. The TMDA assessment of the laboratory found out another medicine, Gentrison Cream 10g, which turned out to be counterfeit, she said, pointing out that several medicines worth 691,000/- that ought to be obtained at public health facilities were found being

sold at private health centres. Sub-standard medicines valued at 6,591,400/- were seized during the operation conducted for five days from March 15, with TMDA finding out that medicines valued at 51m/- were seized in Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Kigoma. "We also seized expired medicines valued at 13,846,790/- meaning that if they were supplied to people, they would have caused unpredictable health complications," she stated.

The minister directed district and regional medical officers to intensify supervision of fake drugs, including conducting inspections to ensure that health service providers were abiding by laws, guidelines and regulations. Hospital administrators must zero in on acts of stealing medicines, as stern legal measures and professional actions would be instituted against them, she added.



Zanzibar's Lands and Human Settlements Development minister, Riziki Pembe Juma (L), has a word with Dimani's Zanzibar House of Representatives member Mwanaasha Khamis outside the House at Chukwani Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Rahma Suleiman

'Govt ready to acquire machinery for thermal energy drilling'

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

The government has embarked on the process to purchase machinery for drilling of wells for harvesting thermal energy in the country for production of electricity for the establishment of development projects using the energy.

This was revealed by the Tanzania Geothermal Development Company (TGDC) General Manager Eng Kato Kabaka during a two-day training to reporters from Mbeya and Songwe regions on the thermal energy development in the country.

"TGDC responsibilities is to mobilise thermal energy resources development in the country, to assess thermal energy from the research stage up to its develop-



TGDC responsibilities is to mobilise thermal energy resources development in the country...

ment for final use, and to manage thermal energy areas for reliable accessibility of the steam emission at the power generating plants," Kabaka said.

He said the aim to start the process was to deal with the challenge on power shortage in the country due to various reasons hence, he said, the government decided to have various sources for elec-

tricity generation including solar, wind and thermal.

TGDC Commercial Development Director Eng Shakiru Kajugus said thermal energy is also used to produce electricity by employing various technologies with thermal energy having 107 Degrees F.

He said the direct use of thermal energy including the heating up of plant and machinery in factories, heating up crop fields, heating and drying up agricultural crops as well as in medical treatment.

Closing the training seminar, Mbeya Regional Administrative Secretary Mariam Mtunguja said the training will enhance the understanding and importance of thermal energy for the ordinary people.

Samia to address Dar elders today

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region," he said.

The tradition of meeting with city elders dates back from the 1980s under founder president Julius Nyerere, and later fourth phase president Jakaya Kikwete and his successor, the late John Magufuli. During the third phase, the late president Benjamin Mkapa used monthly radio and television nationwide addresses.

National leaders use such meetings address issues of

public policy and ideological direction, in the place of routine party meetings which are devoted to electoral or other procedural issues.

Today's meeting comes just after the president ended a two-day state visit to Kenya where she and her counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta agreed on a number of bilateral issues including boosting trade and investment between the two neighbours.

In a gesture of unanimous attachment to her mission

in Nairobi, the president was granted a rare honour of addressing a joint session of the Kenyan legislature, namely the National Assembly and the Senate, meeting in the Senate chamber.

In private talks with President Kenyatta, the leaders agreed to end wrangling at border points as part of a wider consensus on harmonizing most aspects of doing business between the two countries, taking East African integration to another level.



Works and Transport deputy minister Mwita Waitara opens a consultative meeting between the Contractors Registration Board consultative and Tanzanian contractors in Arusha city yesterday. Others (from-R) are CRB chairperson Consolatha Ngimbwa, registrar Rhoben Nkori and vice chairperson Joseph Tango. CRB and Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Sugar and vegetable oil prices rise in Arusha

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

SUGAR scarcity is worsening in Arusha Region with the demand for the product increasing, something which affects both traders and consumers.

Ally Manji, acting manager of the Mohamed Enterprises-Arusha said that most of the local factories have suspended production to pave way for maintenance of the machines.

"Those who have stocks of sugar in their warehouses are the ones who continue to sell the products. However, the situation may stabilize as there are consignments of sugar from Uganda that have started to enter the country," he said.

Manji said that imported sugar from Uganda is still sold at high price of 122,000/- per 50kg while the locally produced is sold at 120,000/-

Meanwhile, edible oil traders in Arusha said that the price of the product started to rise since last year and it is over six months now the prices haven't reduced.

Some of the shops sell edible oil at 45,000/- for a 10 litre gallon; 89,000/- for a 20 litre bucket; a five litre gallon is sold at 25,000/- while three-litre of edible oil is sold at 16,000/-.

A 10 litre bottle of Sunbelt cooking oil is sold at 62,000/-, five litre is 32,000/- and 20 litres is sold at 125,000.

For Sundrop a 10 litre bottle was sold at 60,000/- five litres sold at 30,000/- and three litres is sold at 20,000/- while fresh free five litre bottle is sold at 25,000/- respectively.

In Kilimanjaro Region cooking oil prices have increased from 2,500/- to 7,600 for a one litre while sugar has increased from 2,200/- to 2,900/-.

In an interview, one of the businesspeople in the region Anastasia Jones said cooking oil prices have increased but did not divulge more details on the reasons for the increase in prices.

Nchemba wants Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries to actively manage the sector

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

MINISTER For Finance and Planning, Dr Mwigulu Nchemba yesterday advised the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, to actively manage the livestock sector by devising various ways that will increase productivity in the sector.

The minister gave the advice in Dodoma, where he met and held talks with the ministry's officials and those from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, to discuss vari-

ous issues related to how to improve the livestock sector so that it can increase the country's economic growth and human development.

"As we put in place modern programs to promote productivity in this area of livestock, we will create a large base of taxpayers, we will change the lives of our people, we will grow the economy and employment," said Dr Nchemba.

He said that the rapid development of the industrial sector in the country needs raw mate-

rials to feed industries and that the opportunities available in the livestock sector are great and advised modern methods of developing livestock should be clearly identified and implemented accordingly.

He said the current system of nomadic pastoralists in search of pasture and water was outdated and pledged that his ministry was ready to provide co-operation to facilitate plans to develop the livestock sector in the country.

For his part, the Minister

of Livestock and Fisheries Mashimba Ndaki, thanked the Minister for Finance and Planning for meeting with the leaders of the two ministries and promised that the advice given will be fully implemented where he has formed a team of experts to analyze the various proposals made in the session which he said was important.

"We will look at how to expand and have special grazing areas for our livestock as well as improve animal husbandry to change from traditional

pastoralism to modern animal husbandry to increase productivity," he explained.

He said that pastoralists who are willing to change their farming practices will be sent to the areas where all the necessary livestock infrastructure including water, pasture leaves, and water will be provided.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, Emmanuel Tutuba, advised the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to establish


ranch areas in each region and build infrastructure that will help pastoralists to modernize their livestock so that they can increase their income, contribute to the country's economic growth and eradicate poverty.

For his part, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Prof Elisante Ole-Gabriel requested the Ministry of Finance and Planning to enable its ministry financially to conduct research in the livestock sector to increase modern methods of in-


creasing productivity.

According to Prof Gabriel, Tanzania is the second largest producer of livestock in Africa with 33.4 million cattle, 21.29 million goats, 5.65 million sheep, 657,380 donkeys, but its productivity is still low.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism Dr Allan Kijazi, suggested that in order for the livestock sector to make significant strides, the issue of finding markets for livestock products, increasing educa-



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
TANZANIA FERTILIZER REGULATORY AUTHORITY



PUBLIC NOTICE


FERTILIZER BULK PROCUREMENT

Tanzania Fertilizer Regulatory Authority (TFRA) in accordance with the Fertilizer (Bulk Procurement) Regulations of 2017, is inviting all Agro-processors, Farmers' Co-operative Unions (FCUs), Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS), Village Community Banks (VICOPA), Savings & Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), fertilizer traders and other agriculture stakeholders to submit importation requirements for DAP and Urea fertilizer for utilization from **July, 2021 to June, 2022.**

Please avail hard copy to TFRA offices located at Plot No. 15471, 1 Kilimo Street, Kilimo I complex or send to email info@tfra.go.tz copy to bps@tfra.go.tz before **May 15th, 2021** using the requirements formats available at www.tfra.go.tz.


In order to ensure that farmers get quality fertilizer, timely and at affordable prices, TFRA coordinates the Fertilizer Bulk Procurement System (BPS) as a way of enabling farmers benefit from economies of scale resulting from bulk purchase and transportation.

TFRA is an institution under the Ministry of Agriculture established through the Fertilizer Act (2009) and carries out its functions through the Fertilizer Regulations, 2011 and the Fertilizer (Bulk Procurement) Regulations (2017).



Moses R. Mabamba
Ag. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For more information
Visit our office located at Plot No. 15471, 1 Kilimo Street, Kilimo I complex, P.O. Box 46238, Dar es salaam, Tanzania or call +255 739 002 012 or email info@tfra.go.tz copy to bps@tfra.go.tz



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PRE-QUALIFICATION

TENDER TITLE: PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR CIVIL WORKS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF RUSIZI II ONE STOP BORDER POST (OSBP) IN RWANDA


TENDER NUMBER: PRQ20200860

TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) is an organization funded by a range of development agencies to promote regional trade and economic integration in East Africa. The Government of Rwanda has been allocated grant funds from TradeMark East Africa which are administered by TradeMark East Africa and executed by Rwanda Transport Development Agency. TMEA intends to apply the funds to eligible direct payments under the contract for which this Invitation for Prequalification is issued.

As a result, TMEA now invites for Pre-Qualification for Civil Works for Construction of Rusizi II One Stop Border Post (OSBP) in Rwanda

The tender documents can be obtained at <http://www.trademarkea.com/get-involved/procurement/>. All queries quoting the Tender Title and Number in the email subject should be emailed to procurement@trademarkea.com. The closing date for submissions is 3 June 2021 at 11.00 am (Kigali time).

TMEA cannot answer any query relating to this tender 7 days or less prior to the submission deadline



TRADE
MARK
EAST AFRICA
Growing Prosperity Through Trade



Katavi regional commissioner Juma Homera (3rd-R) cuts the ribbon earlier this week to launch an NBC Bank Wakala Plus agency point in Mpanda municipality. Flanking him are NBC managing director Theobald Sabi (L) and NBC Wakala general manager Robert Madaki. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

'NDC looks for investor with new technology to revive General Tyre'

By Guardian Reporter

THE government through National Development Corporation (NDC) is still looking for a serious investor with new technology to revive General Tyre industries in the Arusha region.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture Hussein Bashe made the remarks when answering a question from Arusha legislator Mrisho Gambo on behalf of the minister for Trade and Industries.

In his preliminary question the MP wanted to know the government plans to revive the factory as well as Pharmaceutical Industries to address shortage of drugs in the country.

In response the deputy minister said the new investment should go hand in hand with the current needs of the market especially on tires.

He said the process to announce a tender for finding a co-investor to revive the tire manufacturing factory in Arusha.

He however said in the third national development plan and the policies indicate that pharmaceuticals is an important element taking in consideration that the coun-

try imports almost all the drugs entering the country.

"The ministry sees the importance of reaching a final decision on the case facing TPI taking into the consideration that the government owns 30-percent in the industry," he said.

He said the government recognizes the importance of having industries including those manufacturing tires and pharmaceuticals top generate jobs.

Earlier, Bashe said general tire was among the largest factories in the East African region but production stopped in 2007 when the factory stopped operation due to lack of capital.

"The ministry has been taking various steps to revive the industry so that the huge amount of money which is used to import tires is saved," he said.

Among the steps was the forming of a team of experts which carried an analysis of how to run the factory.

The analysis showed that the technology at the factory was outdated and it was ordered that it should be switched off and new machines should be brought up to revive the industry.

TATO engages Speaker on tourism industry resilience and recovery support

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

TOUR operators have pleaded with the Speaker of National Assembly, Job Ndogai and the Parliamentary budget committee to guide the government to embrace some urgent measures to support the industry rebound on the back of the coronavirus crisis.

Transparency in handling the Covid-19 pandemic in order to restore confidence to the outside world is among the key

issues featured prominently in the crucial meeting between the Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO) delegation, Speaker Ndogai and the house budget committee held in Dodoma mid this week.

The TATO mission led by its Chairman, Willy Chambulo travelled to Dodoma to engage the speaker and the key house committee to advise the government on some important steps to take in order to support tourism's recovery and resilience, amidst the

Covid-19 pandemic. Chambulo said that Tanzania being part of the global tourism and business equations stands to lose in the long run, should it maintain its halfhearted attitude on Covid-19 pandemic measures.

"For instance, we ask you to advise the government to lower the cost of PCR test, put more testing centers, allow private hospitals and laboratories to test and issue the certificates within 24 hours at most," Chambulo said in his presentation.

The delegation said that Tanzania loses nothing, for example, for being transparent and compliant to the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance such as to recognize the vaccinated tourists. TATO chief also asked the Parliament to counsel the government to offer the tour operators the tax amnesty as an incentive for them to be able to concentrate to revive business.

"We urge you to guide the government to introduce Tax Amnesty Law for individual and

corporate taxpayers who have either failed to fulfill their tax obligations in previous year due to Covid-19 or having huge tax liabilities currently under litigation following special audit done by Task Force team to offer them a breathing space to start afresh," Chambulo said.

TATO proposed that the tax amnesty should benefit individuals and corporate companies who could settle their past liabilities under favorable conditions including avoiding penalties

which exceed the net worth of many companies issued with an assessment. "More importantly, we propose a Taxpayers Bill of Rights to defend assessments issued arbitrarily by special task force audit teams," he added.

TATO also asked the Parliamentary budget committee to remove VAT on government levies and taxes, defer enforcement of tourism related new taxes or fees, and abolish visa fees for the children below 16 years in a bid to boost family travel.

In terms of improving business and investment climate, TATO recommended ample time to comply with issues raised by some of the government regulatory agencies such as Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA), the National Environment Management Council (NEMC), Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and the Labour department owing to the fact that tourism industry is most hard hit by Covid-19 impacts.

Education ministry launches customers-ministry contract

By Guardian Correspondent,

Dodoma

THE Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has officially launched the contract for customers' services while calling officials and other workers of the ministry to abide by the pledge made in the contract.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, deputy education, Science and Technology Minister Kipanga said any official who will go against the contract will be dealt with and those who will do well will be congratulated.

Kipanga also instructed all institutions under the ministry including all universities to make sure they have such contracts and those who are yet to do so should hurry up to do so. He said the aim of the contract is to improve the relationship between the ministry and its officials but also to enhance the knowledge on the quality of services given, the rights and responsibilities of customers and how to communicate with each other.

"The contract directs and provides opportunities to the public to submit their views on the quality of our services as well as

responding to the complaints aired to satisfy the expectation of our customers," he added. He also called on all officials and workers of the ministry to work hard, ethically and abide by their profession in implementing the contract.

For his part, the Ministry's Permanent Secretary

Dr Leonard Akwilapo said the contract has classified the type of customers to be served, but also would enhance the ministry-customers relationship.

CODERT INVITATION

The Community Development and Relief in Tanzania (CODERT) is a nongovernmental (NGO) working in collaboration with an International partner to offer microfinance services in the Southern Highlands zone. CODERT is inviting bidders for the supply of microfinance HISA Kits and Printing of books from experienced suppliers of HISA Kits who have proven evidence.

265 Complete VSLA Kit with the following items: -

- Strong, well-made lockable metal cash box, able to be closed with 3 locks.
- Three good quality padlocks (this is very important), each with two keys.
- Ledger book
- 35 passbooks
- Rubber stamp for marking shares.
- Ink pad and spare bottle of ink
- Ruler
- Two ball point pens: one black or blue, the other red
- Good quality calculator
- 3 plastic bowls in different sizes, about 25-30 cm in diameter and 12 cm deep (one for fines, one for share and one for money-counting)
- Marker pen

2. PRINTING SERVICES

250 Printed VSLA village agent guide Swahili version 1.05.

Prospective bidders should meet the following requirements: -

1. Copy of Tenderer Tax clearance certificate
2. Valid and updated business license
3. Past experience in works of similar nature
4. Tender security in terms of bank guarantee, Banker's cheques and/or others

Bidders should request tender documents and forward quotations via the following email address: geitacodert19@gmail.com not later than 21st May, 2021. Tax will not be considered for price evaluation since the goods are under EU donated funds and are thus tax exemption.

TANZANIA BUREAU OF STANDARDS (TBS)



ANNOUNCEMENT TO CONSTRUCTION STAKEHOLDERS

Dar es Salaam, 07 May, 2021

Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) would like to inform all construction stakeholders that, through its Materials Testing Laboratories, the Bureau provides testing to ensure the quality of various products such as **cement, tiles, blocks, sand, aggregates, plastic pipes, timber, gypsum boards, bitumen, steel bars, steel sections, culverts, nails, concrete, roofing sheets, glass, aluminium products, road signs and markings, electric cables, rubber, helmets, washing basins, car batteries, solar batteries, other batteries, electrical accessories like iron boxes, fridges, TVs, kettles, telecommunication equipment, generator motors, sockets, main switches, switches, etc.**

The Bureau offers affordable testing services and our laboratories are accredited, thus test reports are accepted and recognized nationally and internationally.

For further information please contact:-

Director General,
Tanzania Bureau of Standards
P.O. Box 9524,
Dar es Salaam.
Phone: +255 (022)2450298
Hotline: 0800110827
Email: info@tbs.go.tz

NBC expands its wings to Mpanda, introduces 'Wakala Plus' services

By Guardian Correspondent, Katavi

KATAVI Region residents have hailed the National Bank of Commerce (NBC) for launching "NBC Wakala Plus" services in Mpanda Municipality, saying the services will open up economic opportunities for the region.

Speaking to various stakeholders including businessmen at the event to launch the NBC branch that will offer the services, Mpanda Regional Commissioner Juma Homera hailed the Bank officials for coming to invest in the region whereby more than 1,000 have already opened accounts at the bank branch.

He also praised the bank for providing two-day entrepreneurs training on how to conduct business and managing of finances.

Homera also called upon the bank to provide loans to the entrepreneurs

in Katavi Region for them to reap the fruits of the training.

He also thanked the bank for donating 300 bags of cement, 60 roofing sheets, and 5 pails of distemper for the construction of classrooms at Mpanda Health and Allied Sciences College.

"The launching of the "NBC Wakala Plus" services in Katavi Region means bank services would be easily obtained hence workers, farmers and business people should grab the opportunity to open bank accounts with the branch and conduct various transactions including the payment of government tax," Homera added.

For his part, the NBC Managing Director Theobals Sabi said they decided to open the "NBC Wakala Plus" bank branch at Mpanda in order to speed up economic development

due to many ongoing strategic projects initiated by the government.

He added: "We have decided to open the branch here so that we work together with the people and businessmen in Katavi Region to ensure these economic opportunities are developed considering that the country is still in strategies to develop industrially.

Sabi added said the bank also has loan opportunities for businessmen, workers, and farmers to enable them to add value to their crops, purchase farm inputs including tractors and other farming equipment.

Mpanda prominent businessman Raymond Kamtoni said the opening of the "NBC Wakala Plus" branch is a huge opportunity for the people of Katavi Region and called upon fellow businessmen to open bank accounts with the branch.



Zanzibar House of Representatives Speaker Zubeir Ali Maulid (2nd-L, seated) has iftar Equity Bank hosted for its customers of Zanzibar on Wednesday. With him are Equity Bank head of loans Ramadhan Chakinja (2nd-R), head of marketing Godwin Semunyu (R) and Zanzibar branch manager Mbuka Sure. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Zanzibar determined to have indicative price for edible oil

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR government is working to announce new indicative price for edible oil so as to control irregular hiking prices of the product and thus provide relief to the population in the Isles.

Minister for Industries and Trade Omar Said Shabani told members of the House of Representatives yesterday here that the government recognizes the economic burden which its people carry due to price hiking of edible oil.

Shabani was responding to a question by Micheweni Representative Shamata Shaame Khamis who queried on why the price of products in Pemba was much higher than

Unguja, a situation which affects the residents.

According to the minister, the government had already issued indicative prices to some of the key food products including sugar, wheat flour and it is now working to come up with indicative prices for edible oil.

He also said that the product price difference between the two islands was due to expenses of transportation.

"Usually all traders unload their products at the Malindi Port in Unguja and then transport them to Pemba. So it is normal to spot the price difference of products in Unguja and Pemba," he said.

Shabani said that the government

has also reduced levies and taxes in food products so as to provide relief to consumers.

"The government also plans to construct a modern port in Pemba and this will enable other ships to dock in the Island. This will automatically reduce prices of the products in the island," he added.

Contributing the income and budget estimation of the Second Vice President, Mtambwe representative Habib Ali Muhammed wanted the government to focus on investing durable measures so as to reduce prices of food products.

He said that currently the price of a 5-litre gallon of edible oil has hiked to 32,000/- from the previous price of 17,000/-.

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Advisor for External Audit at the National Audit Office of Tanzania

As an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations, the federally owned Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH supports the German Government in achieving its development-policy objectives.

GIZ is looking to fill the position of an Advisor for External Audit in the Good Financial Governance Programme (GFG).

Duty station: Dodoma
Fixed term contract

A. Responsibilities

The Advisor is responsible for

- managing support to the partner institution i.e the National Audit Office of Tanzania (NAOT) in the context of GIZ's Good Financial Governance Programme (GFG)
- in collaboration with the GIZ Senior Technical Advisor provide professional advisory services to institutional development programme initiatives and cooperate with a broad range of target groups within and outside NAOT
- facilitating innovation, knowledge management and capacity building in both core and support functions of NAOT
- assisting with analysis of complex technical processes on External Audit to facilitate adherence to International Audit Standards regarding Supreme Audit Institutions
- proactively facilitate capacity building for NAOT staff and Oversight Committees of Parliament
- applying of principles, concepts, practices and standards in the area of Public Financial Management (PFM), Risk Management, Systems and Control.

B. Tasks

1. Advising the partner institution

The Advisor

- assists and monitors the development and implementation of programme plans and activities in close consultation with counterparts
- contributes to preparing and implementing the coordination process, joint programme activities and work at the regional level
- deals with the design, preparation and implementation of workshops, seminars and other events on issues connected with the programme's area of activity
- develops and organises quality assurance measures and suggests necessary changes, improvements and initiatives
- contributes to achieving the objectives of GIZ's Good Financial Governance Programme (GFG) in the Field of Action on External Audit.
- provides technical in-depth advice on External Audit processes for NAOT, primarily as regards Compliance and Financial Audit using electronic working documentation programmes such as TeamMate.
- facilitate that high-quality management and professional practices are well established and applied in the Tanzanian Supreme Audit Institution
- promotes norms, standards and best practices of External Auditing in the Public Sector in accordance with international standards
- assists NAOT in developing performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of External Audit processes and results
- assists in strengthening dialogue with the Legislative and Executive Branches of Government so as to promote a common understanding of the role and need for independence of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Tanzania in exercising accountability in the public sector
- facilitates in cooperation with NAOT staff ready-to-use strategies and technical concepts, including guidelines, manuals and procedures
- facilitates in formulating need based Terms of Reference (ToR) for and hiring of consultants to implement development activities
- prepares appropriate inputs for various programme reports

2. Networking and cooperation

The Advisor

- supports cooperation, regular contact and dialogue with partners, assists with Public Relations (PR) work and cooperates with local communities, relevant organisations, non-governmental agencies and individuals in the programme environment and with other programmes to improve and maintain good working relationships
- communicates local interests and efforts, forwards these and encourages sharing ideas and information for the benefit of the programme

3. Knowledge management

The Advisor

- ensures knowledge transfer to programme information
- develops ready-to-use strategies and technical concepts, including guidelines, manuals and procedures
- draws up reports and presentation documents
- prepares appropriate input for various programme reports including annual reports, and contributes to the other reports required by the programme manager and GIZ Head Office
- assists with research activities and studies on political issues which benefit joint programmes.

4. Coordination tasks

The Advisor

- assists with general programme planning and develops programme concepts including preparation, organisation and moderation of planning exercises and their implementation, management, monitoring, quality management, evaluation, communication and documentation
- coordinates relevant programme activities at local level in consultation with the manager and in cooperation with the partners, both as regards implementation and preparing organisational aspects
- compiles the relevant information for joint activities and assignments
- handles order management on behalf of GIZ (e.g. offer preparation, impact monitoring, programme progress review, reporting)

5. Other duties/additional tasks

The Advisor

- performs other duties and tasks at the request of management
- is working on cross cutting topics for the overall programme (e.g. Gender, impact monitoring)

C. Required qualifications, competences and experience

Qualifications

- A University Degree in a relevant discipline such as economics, finance, accounting, business administration or public administration,
- Professional Certifications such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)

Professional experience

- At least 5 years of recent and relevant experience in Public Sector Auditing.
- Preferably, experience from working with or in a Supreme Audit Institution
- Working experience from Performance Audit would be an added value
- Skills and experience in executing control design assessments, identifying and mapping key risks, controls and gaps
- Experience and knowledge in creating, maintaining and interpreting technology policies, standards and procedures, and understanding their impact across organizations

Other knowledge, additional competences

- in-depth knowledge of the (political) environment, administrative structures and procedures
- profound knowledge of complex public sector reform processes and their challenges/dynamics
- fluent written and oral knowledge of English and Swahili
- willingness to frequent travels as required
- excellent team, communication and reporting skills including the application of basic IT tools (e.g. MS Office 365)

Applications:

Interested candidates are requested to send their letter of application together with the CV and academic certificates by email to hr.giz-tanzania@giz.de

Please use the subject line 'Advisor External Audit'

Closing date for submission: 17.05.2021

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

GIZ Tanzania is an equal opportunities employer and encourages applications from all qualified and eligible candidates regardless of their gender, origin, religion/belief, disability or any other minority group.

(NBAA) THE NATIONAL BOARD OF ACCOUNTANTS AND AUDITORS AND THE BANK OF TANZANIA



NBAA AND BOT JOINT SEMINAR

THEME: "BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND REPORTING BEYOND COVID-19 PANDEMIC"

DATE	: Wednesday 26 th to Friday 28 th May 2021 (3 days)
VENUE	: Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC) - Arusha
TARGET GROUP	: Auditors, Accountants, Bankers, Financial analysts, Economists, Lecturers, Directors of Entities, Accounting Officers of Public Entities, Students of the Profession and all other interested persons
TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION	: (1) Implementation of IFRS 9: Challenges and Successes made by Banks and other Financial Institutions in Tanzania (2) Leadership and Governance: The Board of Directors' Role in Managing Crisis (3) Investment Sustainability and Governance: Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic (4) The Role of Internal Auditing in Public Financial Management (5) Building Resilient Capital Markets in Post- COVID-19 Tanzania (6) The Economics of the Digital ID for businesses prosperity and effectiveness in government service delivery (7) The Duties and Responsibilities of Accounting Officers in Management of Public Finance (8) Tanzania Financial Reporting Standard (TFRS) No. 1: The Report by Those Charged with Governance (9) COVID-19 Crisis: Tax Administration and Recovery Policy Measures for Tanzania Tax System (10) Currency Convertibility in East Africa (11) Mobile Transactions and Cash Demand in Tanzania (12) Investment in Government Securities: Treasury Bills & Bonds (13) Covid-19: Reflections for digital payments and financial inclusion
AWARD	: 24 CPD Hours
SEMINAR FEES	: Seminar fee is Tshs.450,000/= (for payment made before 26th May 2021) and Tshs.500,000/= (for payment made thereafter) to cover for seminar materials, tea/coffee and lunch. Visit NBAA web payment portal, sign up (if you have no account)/login to request bill and obtain payment control number. Make payment through Bank (NMB/CRDB) or Mobile (Airtel Money/Halo Pesa/Mpesa/Tigo Pesa/TPesa/) by selecting ('Government Payments') and use provided Payment Control Number as your payment reference. Save the received confirmation message from the Service Provider as a proof of payment, in case the Board requires it.

All enquiries should be addressed to:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NBAA,
AUDIT HOUSE, 8TH FLOOR, 4 UKAGUZI ROAD,
P.O. BOX 1271, 41104 TAMBUKARELI,
DODOMA, TANZANIA.
TEL.NO.: +255-26-2963318-9
E-MAIL: info@nbaa.go.tz
WEBSITE: www.nbaa.go.tz



Multimedia services for the USAID Tanzania Public Sector Services Strengthening Plus (PS3 +) Project

Issue Date	May 07 th , 2021
Reference	RFP No. REQ-621-20-000032
Due Date for receiving questions/clarifications on the RFP	7 days from date of issue of RFP
Due Date for Response to questions	4 working days from receiving questions
Proposal Due Date	May 14 th , 2021
RFP Title	Multimedia Services for the PS3+ Project

PART I: INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Activity- Abt Associates Inc is the prime contractor on the USAID Tanzania Public Sector Services Strengthening Plus (PS3 +) Project, Task Order 72062120M00002 issued under GS-00F-252CA Abt Associates Inc, invites experienced **Public Relations (PR) agencies** to compete for a contract to provide services for **"Multimedia activities for the USAID Tanzania Public Sector Services Strengthening Plus (PS3 +) Project" as specified in Annex A "Statement of Work" of this RFP.**

1.2 Definitions and Headings. Except as otherwise specifically provided herein, all time periods specified shall be consecutive calendar days. The term RFP is used throughout this RFP to refer to the entire document, including all attachments thereto. Any headings contained in the text of the RFP are for reference only, and do not alter limit, or waive the content of the full provisions.

1.3 Bidding Costs. Issuance of this solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Abt Associates, nor does it commit Abt Associates to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of an proposal. Abt Associates reserves the right to reject any and all offers, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of the agreement.

1.4 Review of RFP. Prospective Bidders are solely responsible to examine carefully all of the terms and conditions of this RFP and to comply fully therewith. Failure to do so will be at the prospective Bidder's risk and expense. Any patent ambiguities or inconsistencies between or among the various provisions of the RFP shall be resolved against the Bidder if it fails to seek clarification of same prior to award.

1.5 Language. All documents submitted in response to this RFP, as well as all correspondence in connection with the RFP, shall be in the English language.

1.6 Inquiries. Inquiries concerning this RFP must be submitted in writing, to be received sufficiently in advance of the Last Date for Receipt of Further Information i.e., Wednesday May 12th, 2021 by 11:59pm to permit a thorough and accurate response by Abt Associates. Such inquiries shall be sent by email, directed to Attention: Request for Further Information, "Multimedia Services for the PS3+ Project" RFP No. REQ-621-20-000032 to Kusekwa.Sono@ps3plus.org Abt Associates is under no obligation to consider or respond to questions that are not received in a timely manner. All responses to questions will be issued to Offerors as an amendment to this RFP on May 13th, 2021 at 04.00pm.

1.7 PART I, This Part 1, Bidding Instructions and Procedures, will not form part of any resulting award or contract. It is intended solely for the information of prospective Bidders.

1.8 Abt Associates intends to issue one firm fixed price contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible Bidder whose offer conforms to the solicitation and provides the best value to Abt Associates. In addition to Abt Associates standard terms and conditions the prime contract terms and conditions will be flowed down. A draft agreement with applicable terms and conditions is available upon request.

1.9 Bidders are informed that Abt Associates Inc. complies with U.S. Executive Order #13224 on Terrorist Financing, which effectively prohibits transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit or support terrorism. Any person or entity that participates in this Application process, either as a prime or sub to the prime, must certify as part of the proposal that it is not on the U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List and is eligible to participate. Any Application received by a person or entity that is found to be on the list or otherwise ineligible will be disqualified.

1.10 Requirement for Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number: The Bidder selected for the contract must be registered with DUNS and must provide the DUNS number to Abt Associates before the subaward can be issued

2.0 Procurement Procedure: Competitive Bidding

2.1 RFP. This RFP constitutes an invitation to prospective firms to submit Proposal for the services described herein. It consists of (1) Part I, Instructions and Procedures, (2) Part II, Statement of Work (Sections I and II), (3) Annex A, Statement of Work, and (4) Annex B, Cost Proposal. All of the foregoing are fully incorporated herein and form an integral part of this RFP.

2.2 Form and Content of Proposal.

(a) All proposals must be in writing, in the English language, and signed and dated by an authorized employee of the bidder. Bidders must use the Forms provided in Annexes of this RFP.

(b) The proposal validity period should be at least **ninety (90) days** following the Last Bid Receipt Date. This should be clearly mentioned in both technical and cost proposal.

(c) All documents should be sent in pdf format unless otherwise specifically mentioned.

2.3 Submission and Handling of Proposal.

(a) Proposals are to be delivered to: **Abt Associates Inc., USAID Public Sector Systems Strengthening Plus Activity (PS3+), P.O.BOX 32444 Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania Plot No. 1132 | Block 56 Msasani Road | Oyster Bay | Dar es Salaam (Adjacent to UNFPA Offices - UN Road) The Subject line to state "Multimedia Services for PS3+"**

(b) In order to be considered, the original bid must be received at PS3+ Offices no later than the Last Bid Receipt Date, which is defined May 14th, 2021 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania time. Bidders are solely responsible to ensure the timely receipt of their proposals. Proposals received after the date and time required will not be considered.

(c) Proposals need to be submitted in **two separate documents**, one marked "Technical Proposal" and the other marked "Cost Proposal." Once received, they will be held secure and intact.

(d) **Technical Proposal.** The Technical Proposal typed with each page numbered consecutively can be in word document, pdf or power-point presentation format. The maximum number of pages or slides for each component of the technical proposal is given in the table below under Technical Evaluation Section. The Technical Proposal shall include:

- Cover Page (Maximum: 1 page or 1-2 slides)
- State that the proposal is made to Abt Associates Inc.
- The full legal name, address, telephone number, fax number, website and email of contact person of the organization submitting the proposal.
- Date of submission
- Include RFP number
- Signed and dated by authorized bidder's employee
- Bid validity period of at least 90 days
- Technical Proposal (Maximum: 30 Pages or 50 slides)

A complete and comprehensive narrative or outline presentation describing how the Scope of Work will be implemented and desired outcomes, accomplished. The technical approach should be organized along the technical selection criteria and should include timeline showing the dates when activity milestones will be met and deliverables will be submitted for approval.

Samples of prior work must be mentioned/provided electronically or with website links in the proposal.

Cost Proposal: The Cost Proposal shall be typed with each page numbered consecutively. The Cost Proposal shall include:

(i) Transmittal Letter and Price
A statement indicating that the proposal remains available for acceptance by Abt Associates for a minimum of ninety (90) calendar days after the closing date of this RFP. The transmittal letter must include a summary of the offer and its price and be signed by an individual authorized to commit the bidder. A price for each deliverable listed in the Statement of Work shall be proposed and an overall firm fixed price for completion of the entire statement of work.

(ii) Budget: To permit price analysis the Bidder shall provide a complete budget, in Tanzanian Shillings, by the cost elements described in the budget template provided in Annex B. The Excel template must be unlocked, with no hidden cells. Formulae should be used for calculating costs rather than calculating costs elsewhere and typing values into cells.

(iii) Budget Narrative: The budget narrative shall provide a budget narrative or budget notes further explaining the method of calculating costs listed in the budget. The cost narrative should include any methodology or algorithm used for calculating the proposed cost.

(iv) The cost proposal must include all costs associated with implementation of the technical proposal. The Cost proposal must be realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a clear understanding of the technical requirements, and must be consistent with the methods of performance and materials described in the technical proposal. Please note that the Bidder may be asked to verify/substantiate the proposed costs.

(f) Proposals may not be altered, corrected, or withdrawn after the Last Bid Receipt Date, except that Abt Associates, at its sole discretion, may permit correction of arithmetic errors, transposition errors, or other clerical or minor mistakes, in cases in which Abt Associates deems that both the mistake and the intended bid can be established conclusively on the face of the bid. Other than the mistakes listed in the previous sentence, no mistakes alleged by a bidder after the Last Bid Receipt Date will be permitted to be corrected.

2.4 Evaluation of Proposal

(a) Proposals received after the date and time required will not be considered. Abt Associates may reject any bid that (1) is not signed and dated by authorized employee (2) is not substantially responsive to the terms and conditions of the RFP, (3) is incomplete, including and without limitation, does not have requested supporting documents, and (4) is otherwise not generally in order. Such proposals shall be deemed inadmissible.

(b) In evaluating proposals, Abt Associates will follow a Best Value or Quality and Cost Based Selection, using a **two-stage value** selection procedure. The principal evaluation criteria are weighted as follows:

- Technical: 70
- Cost: 30
- Each proposal will be evaluated against a pre-defined set of criteria as follows:
 - "Technical Proposal:" Each technical proposal shall be evaluated on (i) Agency Experience (ii) Personnel on the account (iii) content and product development (iv). Please see the illustrative table in section (d) below for scores.
 - "Cost Proposal:" Abt Associates will determine the overall proposal score by adding the weighted scores for the technical and cost proposals.
- If necessary, Abt may invite the best of final agencies for an in-person or virtual presentation to discuss and clarify the proposal. Abt expects that at a minimum the named bidder's principal investigator shall be in attendance.

(d) **Technical Proposal Evaluation.** The technical proposal is evaluated on the basis of its responsiveness to the Statement of Work (SOW) as follows:

	Criteria	Score
1	Agency experience	35
2	Personnel composition	20
3	Content and product development approach	45
	Total Score for Technical Proposal	100

2.5 Amendments. If at any time prior to award Abt Associates deems there to be a need for a significant modification to the terms and conditions of this RFP, Abt Associates will issue such a modification as a written RFP amendment to all competing bidders. No oral statement of any person shall in any manner be deemed to modify or otherwise affect any RFP term or condition, and no bidder shall rely on any such statement.

2.6 Post-RFP and Iterative Negotiation. Abt Associates reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to conduct negotiations in accordance with Abt and/or donor's policies and procedures and to request additional information from prospective Bidders to supplement or clarify any aspect of the proposal documents. However, Bidders are strongly encouraged to submit their best offers as Abt Associates may not exercise its right to conduct any negotiations.

2.7 Extension of Bid Validity Dates. When necessary and appropriate under the circumstances, Abt Associates may request bidders, in writing, to extend the validity period of their bids. A bidder may refuse to extend; however, its bid will be disqualified. Subject to Section 2.9, a bidder agreeing to extend will not generally be permitted or required to modify its bid in any manner other than to extend it.

2.8 Responsibility. A successful bidder may be required, in order to be awarded a Contract pursuant to this RFP, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of Abt Associates that it is a responsible firm with regard to the specific transaction described in this RFP. In order to be determined responsible, a bidder must (1) have adequate personnel, financial resources, equipment, and material to perform the Sub-Agreement, or the ability to obtain them; (2) be able to comply with the required or proposed delivery schedule and, (3) have a satisfactory record of performance, business ethics and integrity. Abt Associates reserves the right to request additional information relevant to responsibility at any time prior to award.

2.9 Rejection or Award.

(a) Abt Associates is not bound to accept the lowest priced or any proposal and reserves the right to accept any proposal in whole or in part and to reject any or all proposals. Circumstances in which rejection of all proposals may occur include, without limitation, the following: (1) Supplier is ineligible to tender under this RFP on any grounds laid down by our donors' procurement laws, regulations and policies, (2) the bid is not accompanied with the required supporting documents, (3) the bid is not substantially responsive to the terms, conditions and specifications in the RFP, and (4) the bid is not otherwise generally in order. A decision by Abt Associates regarding whether or not to reject any bid that is or may be inadmissible shall not be subject to question by any Bidder whose bid is not itself fully responsive and admissible.

PART II. STATEMENT OF WORK

See Part III Annex A to this RFP.

PART III:

Annex-A: Statement of Work Multimedia for the Tanzania Public Sector System Strengthening Project Plus (PS3 Plus)

1. Background

USAID/Tanzania Public Sector Systems Strengthening plus Activity (PS3+) is a new five-year program to institutionalize Government of Tanzania (GOT) public systems that respond to citizens' needs for local quality services, particularly for underserved populations. With the GOT, PS3+ is extending stronger management systems to communities, engaging citizens in planning and oversight of services, improving governance through transparent budgeting, and expanding payment reform as important next steps in Tanzania's journey to self-reliance. PS3+ will achieve these objectives through three key strategies:

- Strengthening key management systems.** PS3+ will enable their interoperability with other government systems and train administrators to use them for evidence-driven decisions. PS3+ will also continue to support direct facility financing and payment reform; and build the capacity of Regional Secretariats, local government authorities, and facility governments to plan for, generate, and use financial and human resources.

- Extending access to these management systems to village (rural) and mtaa (urban) community structures,** expanding their use for work in new sectors (such as agriculture) and enabling citizens and the private sector to engage in planning, budgeting, and oversight of public services. PS3+ will also help expand health and education financing reforms to other government sectors.

- Institutionalizing capabilities in system maintenance and use,** and the roles and relationships needed for effective governance. PS3+ will ensure Tanzania can use resources to deliver quality services that meet the needs of underserved communities, including women and youth.

PS3+ is implemented in all 26 regions in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar with focused interventions in Dodoma, Iringa, Kagera, Kigoma, Lindi, Mara, Mbeya, Morogoro, Mtwara, Mwanza, Njombe, Rukwa, and Shinyanga. This large, complex, and integrated project works across all systems functions, all levels of government, and all public services, with a focus on health, nutrition, social welfare, education, and agriculture. The consortium implementing PS3+ includes six organizations: Abt Associates as the prime contractor, IMA World Health (IMA), Local Government Training Institute (LGTI), Management Sciences for Health (MSH), Tanzania Mentors for Action (TMA) and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM).

2. Scope of Work

PS3+ communication products should build awareness that strong, interoperable planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems ultimately lead to higher citizen engagement, more resources for quality services, and transparent use of public resources. The firm will work closely with the PS3+ project team to develop thoughtful, compelling videos, podcasts and photographs that convey project achievements and their benefits to citizens. Stories must show results and broad-scale sustainable development. They should also demonstrate new, cutting-edge development innovations and/or the USAID Forward reform agenda in action (empowering local groups, science, technology, and innovation).

Audiences

- USAID/Tanzania and USAID/Washington
- GOT
- Development community, in and beyond Tanzania
- Tanzanian general population

Objectives

- In collaboration with PS3+ technical team, communicate the generous support of the American people through memorable visual products
- Contribute to creative storytelling that demonstrates specific benefits of good governance for ordinary Tanzanians, aimed at PS3+ key audiences
- Impart basic visual communications storytelling skills to key PS3+ staff

Approach

The selected local firm will produce:

- Concept note(s) that identify opportunities for visual storytelling derived from published PS3+ reports and consultations with PS3+ staff.
- Storyboarding, filming, and production of videos
- High-quality photography that demonstrates PS3+ impact on ordinary Tanzanians
- Guidelines for PS3+ communications staff to use smartphones to film short videos and take better photos.

3. Deliverables

The table below details products needed for one year.

#	Table Deliverables	Description	Unit Price (TZS)	Price (TZS)
1	Video testimonials (10)	Produce 20-30 second video beneficiary testimonials for USAID/GOT social media feeds	TBD	
2	Video stories (2)	Develop 2-3-minute high-quality videos as part of an online storytelling blog and/or for social media	TBD	
3	Photographs (30)	Take high-quality, high-resolution photographs of PS3+ staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries that can be used as digital or printed content	TBD	
4	Tipsheets (2)	Tips for PS3+ staff on filming short video testimonials via smartphone and taking higher-quality photos on a smartphone	TBD	

4. Requirements

Agency experience

The local firm should have hands-on experience in developing multimedia products for large audiences. Staff assigned to work on this contract should have knowledge of donor or government programs—ideally USAID. Experience working on programs involving improved public finance, social welfare, or citizen engagement is a plus. Knowledge of USAID branding guidelines is a plus. Please provide at least three samples of previous work and references.

Personnel on the account

- Overall team composition to handle all the components as stated in the RFP and meet the necessary requirements
- Profile and experience of overall team on the account, including technical and administrative support.
- Any other relevant information

Content and product development approach

The firm will submit a plan for completing all deliverables, including timelines and key personnel. The process should detail consultations, concept note(s), production, review periods, finalization, and mode of delivery. For all deliverables, please provide unit costs.

PART IV

Annex B. Cost Proposal

The attached excel workbook Contains the budget template with the following tabs/worksheets.

B.1 Fixed Price Offer

As part of the Cost Proposal, the Bidders shall propose a FFP for the entire SOW as well as for each deliverable.

B.2 Budget Detail Template

In order to determine price reasonableness, the offer should provide a breakdown of the price cost required to produce the deliverables.

A budget narrative column or separate document shall provide a written description for each item of cost

CTI calls upon industrialists to produce quality products, win national, international markets

By Getrude Mbago

THE Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) executive director, Leodegar Tenga has urged industrialists in the country to invest in technology and be more innovative to produce quality products which will win national and international markets.

Tenga made the advice in Dar es Salaam yesterday when launching a 'Governmax Roofing Steel Campaign' initiated by ALAF Tanzania.

He said that as the country is implementing the industrialisation drive, industrialists should focus more on the strategies which will enable more quality products to be produced to meet the country's demand.

Tenga commended the government for its continued efforts to improve the business environment through dialogue and engagement with industrialists.

"We have witnessed how committed is the government in supporting the growth of industries, it has always been willing to meet and discuss with local and international investors particularly, the manufacturers with the objective of addressing challenges that hamper the development of the industrial sector," he said.

According to him, having conducive laws and policies will attract more investments thus stimulating the pace of economic growth and job creation.

Daniel Kahabi, quality assurance officer from the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) commended ALAF for always adhering to standards and quality in their products, something which enables them to penetrate easily in the market.

He said producers and sellers of roofing steel in the country should ensure that their products have all the required qualities for them to operate smoothly.

According to Kahabi, producing sub-standard products does not only have health and income impacts but also blocks traders from accessing local and international major markets.

ALAF general manager Paul Ray said the company is committed to delivering value for money to its customers, by offering not just products, but also quality roofing and building solutions.

"We have launched this campaign to encourage citizens to make use of ALAF steel as they have long sustainability. We have also been engaging technicians in the new era of technology in order to promote the digital shift in the construction sector, which will help to improve service to customers," he said.

ALAF Limited Tanzania, is part of SAFAL groups of companies, leading producer of steel roofing and related products in the country.

The company graduated to use Aluminum-Zinc steel coating technology in 2010, thus manufacturing roofing sheets that offers a much longer service life than traditional zinc coated (so called "galvanized") steel.

Today ALAF offers a wide range of roofing products, pipes and hollow sections; Aluminium-Zinc coated steel coil, cold-rolled products, structural steel and engineering products. It also offers pre-painted roofing sheets made from coils sourced from our sister company, Safal Steel in South Africa.

Government challenges local contractors to be more creative

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole, Arusha

THE government has challenged local contractors to be more creative, join forces to form strong companies which would be able to compete in tenders and implement major projects that are mostly undertaken by foreigners.

Deputy Minister for Works and Transport, Mwita Waitara made the call yesterday here when speaking during the opening of consultative meeting between Contractors Registration Board (CRB) and local contractors. According to him, the government wasn't happy to see all strategic construction projects being executed by foreign companies while the country has a number of experts but what they lack is unity.

He wanted the local contractors to put aside selfishness and go for joint ventures to reverse the situation.

Mwita said government wish to see all big projects that cost trillions of money are implemented by local contractors because by doing so the money will be retained within the country and more locals will benefit from employment opportunities.

The Deputy Minister said if local contractors will opt for joint ventures, they will win all big construction projects and the money will remain circulating within the country.

He said he is not happy to see many local contractors companies doing small construction projects while strategic projects like Standard Railways Gauge (SGR) and Mwalimu Nyerere Hydro Power Project (JNHPP) which cost trillions of money are done by foreign companies.

The deputy minister said he visited one construction site in Tanga Region previously and was surprised to see over 90 percent of experts who were present in the project were locals while there were only two foreign experts.

"For sure the situation surprised me, because if that is the case why they take trillions of our money and use our experts to implement their projects and pay our experts very little I think it is high time to build our capacity and we will be happy to see them doing subcontract from our local companies," said deputy minister.

Mwita added: "Am confident that we can make it only if we put aside selfishness, because sometimes you go for joint ventures but when you are paid the problem start, some of you start to visualize the new car, new house before even the implementation of the project, if you continue with this trend you can't make it."

Insurance company vows to help govt in achieving universal health coverage

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

ASSEMBLE Insurance Company Limited has vowed to complement government's efforts towards achieving 100 percent universal health coverage (UHC) by providing the best insurance services while complying with the country laws.

Firm's board director, Dr Edmund Mndolwa made the pledge on Wednesday evening when speaking during iftar organized for its stakeholders in Arusha aiming at introducing its new brand identity. Formerly AAR Insurance, the company also wanted to thank its stakeholders for the support they have provided to the company as well as highlighting the improvement associated with the name changing measures.

The event came after official launch of the new brand identity of Assemble Insurance that was held in Dar es Salaam last week.

He said: "It is our promise that Assemble will always support the efforts towards achieving 100 percent universal health coverage, providing the best insurance services while complying with the country laws."

"I would like to assure you that, by joining and being a part of Assemble Insurance Company Limited, you are in safe hands, and we will always strive to provide you with better insurance services, with Assemble your future is protected," Dr Mndolwa said.

He assured stakeholders that the company will continue offering the best quality and unique services that will meet and exceed customer needs.

Speaking during the event, Assemble Insurance Managing Director, Violet Mordichai said that many institutions, stakeholders, and individuals contributed to one form or another to make the company spread its roots to Tanzania.

"The very efforts sowed the seed of success which passed through multiple necessary transitions. I would like to heartedly take this opportunity to express our most sincere gratitude to all our Arusha customers, institutions and all stakeholders for showing trust in us and for your boundless support to this company. This is a huge and historical step for the company, and we wouldn't have done this without you," she said.

She insisted that AAR Insurance Company was known in providing health insurance services, but now through Assemble Insurance Company they will provide health and non-health insurance services, hence the reasons for choosing the name 'Assemble' as it reflects the collection of various types of insurance services that will be provided under one umbrella.

The company is serving more than 50,000 members and beneficiaries. It also plans to open more branches in other regions in the country.

Assemble Insurance Company Limited is currently in Dar es Salaam with its headquarters in Mikocheni and branches in the cities of Arusha, Mwanza, Dodoma and in Zanzibar.

The Dar es Salaam event was the culmination of enormous collective efforts which began 35 years ago when AAR Insurance started its operations in East Africa.

Z'bar President joins Pemba South Region residents at iftar event

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi on Wednesday joined residents of Pemba South Region for the Ramadhan iftar and called on them to pray for the country to maintain peace.

The iftar hosted by President Mwinyi for the residents took place at Tibirizi children's Playground and Chake Chake and attended by government officials, religious leaders, political leaders and other ordinary people.

Dr Mwinyi stressed need for the people of Zanzibar to continue praying for the country to remain peacefully in order to develop.

He praised the people of South Pemba Region for accepting his invitation to the iftar, and added that he saw the need to be with them during the Holy Month of Ramadhan.

Dr Mwinyi said there has been a tradition by national leaders that during the Holy Month of Ramadhan, they prepare the iftar for the people in their areas, saying it was a good tradition which he has decided to develop.

Dr Mwinyi was also expected to organize the iftar for Zanzibar urban West Region at Michenzani Mall Conference Hall yesterday.

For their part, residents of the South Pemba Region, represented by Sheikh Omar Khamis Othman said they were pleased with the invitation and applaud Dr Mwinyi's efforts to develop Zanzibar.

Pemba South Regional Commissioner Matar Zahor Massoud said the step taken by President Mwinyi was a big one and praised his kindness to organize the iftar for the residents in the region.

Matar assured President Mwinyi that the residents of Pemba South Region will continue to support him to ensure Zanzibar receives development.

For her part Zanzibar First Lady Miriam Mwinyi separately joined other women and national leaders in the special iftar for the Pemba North Region residents.

Later President Mwinyi joined with other Muslims in the region for the 'taraweh prayers' at Gombani's Al-Rahmaan Mosque in Chake Chake Pemba after which he conveyed his greetings, saying he was a believer of peace and understands that development cannot be achieved without peace.



INVITATION FOR QUOTATIONS FOR PRINTING STORY BOOKS

- Right To Play is a global organization committed to improving the lives of children and youth affected by conflict, disease and poverty. Established in 2000, in its headquarters in Toronto, Canada Right To Play has pioneered a unique play-based approach to learning and development which focuses on quality education, life skills, health, gender equality, child protection and building peaceful communities. With programming in over 20 countries, Right To Play transforms the lives of more than one million children each week using play and sports, both inside and outside of the classroom. In Tanzania Right To Play has been successfully implementing sport and play-based programs as a tool for development to enhance quality education and transform health practices to about 600,000 children and youths in 143 primary schools.
- Right To Play now invites quotations from eligible Suppliers for Printing of Story books specifically in a gloss paper with cover lamination finished by stitch binding. The books are detailed as follows;

Description				Unit price	Total
Book title	Pages	color	design		
1 Bustani ya Maua	16	colored	A4 -		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
2 Kole na Kode	24	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
3 Kuku na Kanga	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
4 LUKO Mchungaji	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
5 Moto	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
6 Mtoto Furaha	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
7 Napenda Nyumbani Kwetu	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
8 Natamani Kuanza Shule	8	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
9 Nyoka Mkubwa	23	colored	A4 Spread		
Cover page	4	colored	A4 Spread		
10 Shule Yangu	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
11 Tatu na Bata	16	colored	A4		
Cover page	4	colored	A4		
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Cover page	4	colored	A4		

PRIMARY SCHOOL STORY BOOKS

Description	Pages	Unit price	Total
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Cover page	1	colored	A5
2 Dogo na Sisimizi	16	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
3 hamisi Ajifunza Kusoma	16	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
4 Herufi Zetu	26	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
5 Hii ni kazi ya nani	15	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
6 Jasiri Arudi Nyumbani	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
7 Kabula	16	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
8 Mifugo ya Nyumbani Kwetu	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
9 Mimi na Bibi yangu	8	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
10 Musa si Mzigo	20	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
11 Napenda Kwenda Shule	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
12 Rafiki Yetu Jua	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
13 Rangi Zetu	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
14 Safari ya Mjini	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
15 Shani na Mazingira	16	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
16 Sungura Mjanja	20	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
17 Tatu na Paka Wake	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
18 Tausi na Rafiki Zake	16	colored	A5
Cover page	2	colored	A5
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Cover page	1	colored	A5
20 Tunacheza pamoja	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
21 Tujifunza Kuhesabu	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
22 Upile na Bustani	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
23 Viembe katika Maji	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
24 Vyakula Vyetu	12	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5
25 Yuko Wapi Rafiki Yangu?	20	colored	A5
Cover page	1	colored	A5

Book title:-	Pages			
1 Bustani ya Maua	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
2 Adhabu	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
3 Akili ni mali	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
4 Anansi, Kunguru na Mamba	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
5 Asiyesikia la Mkuu	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
6 Asiyetii Wazee	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
7 Bahati Mbaya	12	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
8 Biantaka na Chungu Kilichokufa	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
9 Bibi, Sungura na Tembo	8	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
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Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
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Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
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Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
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Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
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Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
28 Wanyama Hushukuru	10	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
29 Watazame Wanyama	6	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
30 Wimbo wa Sakima	12	Colored	A5	
Cover page	2	Colored	A5	
31 Yatima	6	Colored	A5	
Cover page	1	Colored	A5	
32 Zawadi ya Sisanda	10	Colored	A5	

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Please your quote should be in English language, include all necessary information to enable the committee to evaluate your bid like company Profile, Certificate of Registration, Business License, TIN, VAT and any supporting document

Interested eligible Supplier must submit by hand the quotation in a **sealed envelope** marked on top **"QUOTATION FOR PRINTING OF STORY BOOKS"**. Address; Attn. Procurement Committee, Right To Play Tanzania, Plot # 446, Darui Street, Mikocheni A, Dar es Salaam Tanzania.

Our office is nearby School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Kindly remember to sign the submission sheet at the security gate.

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Note:

- Quotation should be in local currency Tanzania Shillings (TZS)
- Supplier will deliver the books at RTP Dar Es Salaam office
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- The organization is not bound to accept the lowest or highest bids
- Late Bids or online bids shall not be accepted.
- Unsealed bids will not be considered on the process
- Only qualified supplier will be contacted.

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ICT tool kit double-edged, not panacea for the youth

IT is a new season, with different groups in society generally and the economy in particular coming together to formulate positions and demands to put across to the government.

Many of these are partially linked with the current Budget session of the National Assembly and otherwise addressed directly to the president. One reason is that a new orientation has been formulated, and naturally interest groups are figuring out what they can get from the government either in the form of reduced taxes or handed over as subsidies.

The latest in this run of things is having private sector stakeholders urging that the government establish a special fund for promotion and development of information and communication technology (ICT).

Since the recent Cabinet changes, a few months earlier, an ICT ministry has been created, and the stakeholders have plenty of expectations in the area.

They are aware that the government has a keen interest in a sector seen making a difference for large numbers of youths. That is true but there is also a limit as to what government can do.

One such suggestion was given by a sector start-up, Sahara Ventures, whose managing director said recently that ICT is the new frontier with more businesses being conducted online and youths being on the forefront.

All that is true, as many youths are surprisingly good at working with ICT tools, though obviously not everyone can gain a modicum of living on that basis. In that case, ICT can't be raised to an overriding policy cause, but it is doubtless a cross-cutting lateral need.

In the stakeholders' meeting convened to discuss challenges facing the sector, various speakers stressed that the sector was encumbered by many problems, urging the government to estab-

lish a special fund to promote the use of ICT.

The idea is that the fund could constitute an anchor for youths to obtain the working capital they need for start-ups, particularly in that many are eager to create gainful occupations using ICT.

It wasn't just an idea by ICT firms and frontline customer service professionals but also taken up by the Tanzania National Business Council, whose executive secretary backed the proposition.

Stakeholders pointed at the computer-driven fourth industrial revolution, with technological progress at the helm of global development.

This leads to affirming that it is high time Tanzania increased ICT speed and caught up. They said we should focus on areas where a technological changeover is possible in the next five years.

Still, it must be noted that the ICT tool kit is a double-edged sword, as it were, as it is also part of the problem.

Whole sectors where many youths graduating from college or vocational training centres expected gainful occupations are nearly out of reach on account of ICT.

This empties many in the streets, as company managements compress functions with ICT tools helping out.

In that case, the issue here isn't really or merely mastering ICT to jump into the new environment but rather to enable youths to do other things.

This largely depends on reforms in other areas to create new fields of enterprise now, in cases where the State sector is not readily accommodative or conducive.

Mobile telephony has shown how this is done, and there are plenty of such reforms being awaited, though not actively discussed - which calls for continued innovation and greater consideration.

Complement Tanzania-Kenya relations with macro reforms

CHANGES are expected in the conduct of trade and investment between Tanzania and Kenya, with strictures in markets being removed to smoothen business transactions.

There is what can be termed as 'convinced pragmatism' in the tone and character of the changes, as an informed way of improving business, and trusting that business propels broad welfare.

How far that is correct is either an academic issue or a policy question but what is key is how to make it sustainable.

In her ground-breaking address in Nairobi on Wednesday, President Samia Suluhu Hassan tasked those in Tanzania and Kenya look at the two countries as competing in their economies to disabuse themselves of the view.

Some business leaders rightly stated at a business forum in the Kenyan capital, where both the visiting and host president attended, that an integrated East African market would likely attract large investments and provide thousands of job opportunities to educated youth in the region.

Fragmented and competitive markets would, on the other hand, attract only small chunks of capital - a lesson in integration which has for decades clashed with parochial priorities. One area where critics will shout to the top of their voices is that Tanzanian industries will be closed down when Kenyan goods flood the market.

Unless the government comes

up with further policy reforms to obviate the danger, this prophesy will likely come true.

That Kenyan goods may truly overtake plenty of Tanzanian goods is factually right. However, Tanzanian asset owners will be competing with Kenyan asset owners as to which part of the zone incoming capital wishes to locate so as to produce with the zonal market in mind. With lower land prices and cheaper labour, Tanzania definitely will gain. In that case, the trouble with reforms is going about it halfway.

The crucial issue may be to ask our Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development ministry to raise land occupancy certificates from so-called customary ownership to individual ownership, say, by paying a redemption fee at local government level and registering such emancipation of land in the district or regional registry.

This would create a land market that is the point of departure of large investment, as land constantly rises in value as money supply declines.

Dual citizenship could also be considered, including "allowing greater leg-room" to our own people who went to study and obtained work abroad but are still attached to their home country.

The matter came up some years ago - in the Constitutional Assembly - but was shouted down. Thus, the matter essentially remains in need of leadership.

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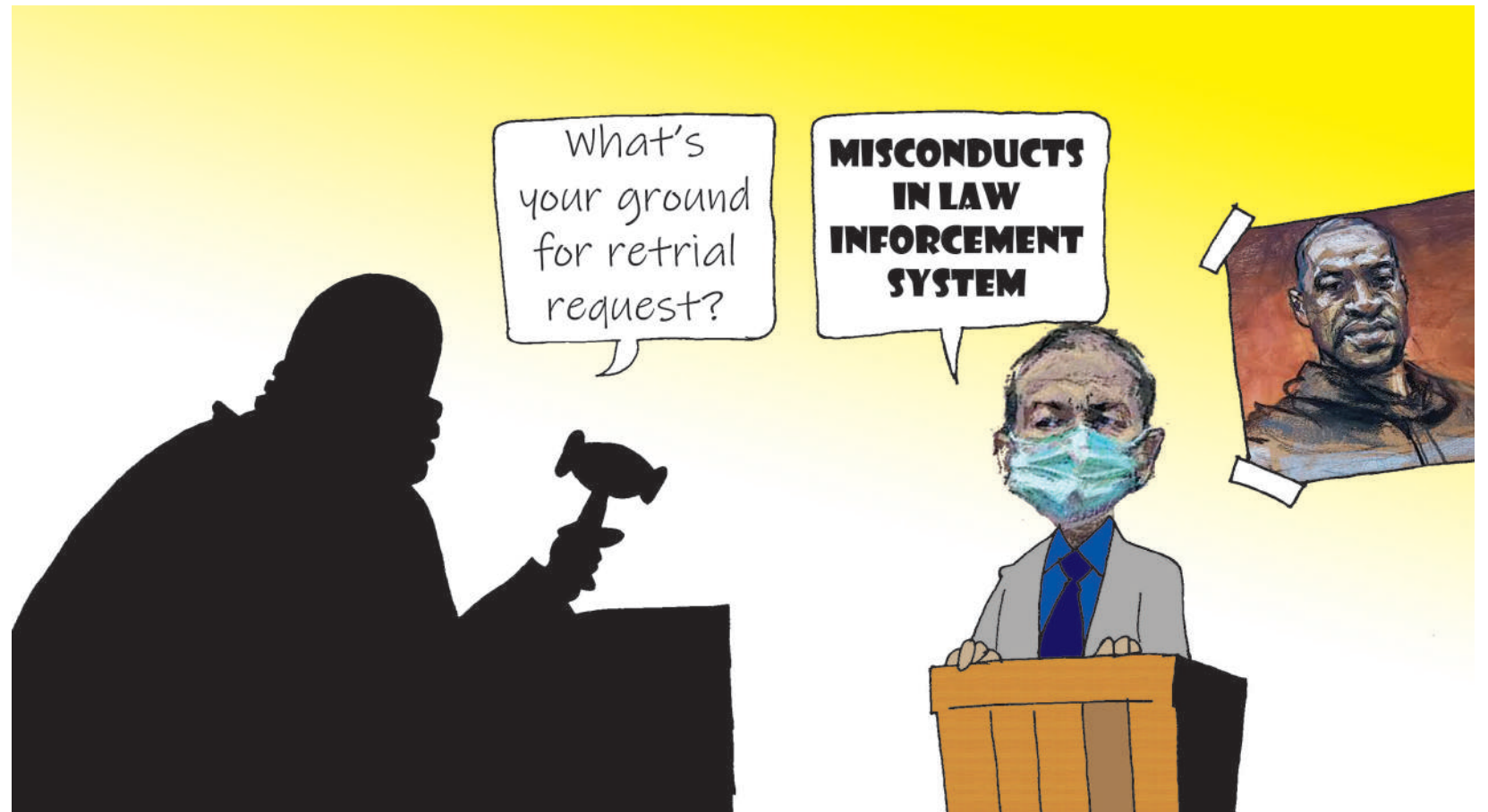
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Green gold: Avocado farming on the rise in Africa

By Special Correspondent

IN East Africa and Nigeria, avocado farmers want to enter the insatiable export market. Environmental concerns cast a shadow over the crop in other parts of the world, though. So, what will African farmers do differently?

Baker Ssendendo's vision for the future of Uganda starts with an avocado seedling. "The avocado tree has a lifespan of about 50 years. The life expectancy of an average Ugandan is about 60 years. A tree can benefit them their entire life," he said.

Ssendendo works on the 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) of Musubi Farm in Mayuge District in eastern Uganda - the largest Hass avocado farm in the country. "By working in avocado farming, I am fulfilling my life dream. We want to lift our communities out of poverty," he said.

Largely owing to high global demand, the avocado has become a lucrative export product. Its consumption per capita increased by 406 per cent between 1990 and 2017 in the United States alone.

The so-called green gold is rapidly gaining popularity on the African continent. Both Nigeria and Uganda say they are determined to drastically increase production of the crop and become top exporters in the next decade.

Kenya is meanwhile already among the global top ten. Export revenues in the country surged by one-third between 2019 and last year. Farmers are hailing the crop as an antidote to poverty in rural areas.

But the sought-after fruit crop has been making negative headlines around the world. Water shortages and the destruction of biodiversity have been linked to its production.

The environmental issues have cast a dark shadow over the commercial farming of avocados in Latin America's top exporting countries, among them Mexico and Chile.

But African avocado farming is promising a brighter future, according to both farmers and scientists. Following an emphasis on smallholders and beneficial rain patterns, the crop's production is expected to be less environ-



mentally harmful than on the American continent.

Avocados the new oil?

"Avocado is actually a godsend because farmers can use it as an alternative to coffee farming," Sammy Carsan, agroforestry scientist at the World Agroforestry Centre in the Kenya capital Nairobi, told DW (Deutsche Welle).

In recent years, fierce competition between large retailers has driven coffee prices down. In 2019, coffee farmers' earnings dropped to their lowest in 13 years. Now, hopes are high for avocado to fill the income gap.

According to media reports, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo called the fruit "the new oil of Nigeria" during a meeting with members of the Avocado Society of Nigeria (ASN) late last year.

The politician-turned-avocado-enthusiast is the largest stakeholder in the society and owns 20 hectares of Hass avocado farming land himself, with the avocado variety the most commonly used for exports.

"He gave us the mandate of making the country Africa's largest avocado exporter by 2030," Adeniyi Sola Bunmi, executive director of ASN, told DW.

Currently, there are only 120 Hass avocado farmers in Nigeria. ASN is training smallholders wishing to switch to the crop and provides them with Hass seedlings.

In Uganda, the Agriculture ministry recently partnered with Musubi Farm, hoping to start commercial export next year. Musubi is already employing 1,000 people from the local community.

"We are also financially supporting a local school and are providing land for a local police force in order to deal with crime in the community. Avocados can transform our community," said Ssendendo, the director of com-

munications.

Promise of smallholder farming

Large-scale commercial avocado farming is at the core of environmental issues, such as soil degradation, in Latin America. However, in East Africa and Nigeria, smallholders are at the centre of a more sustainable avocado farming approach.

"Our plan is to have 75 per cent of avocados produced by smallholder farmers and 25 per cent by our farm," Ssendendo said of his vision for Uganda.

In neighbouring Kenya, smallholders are already spearheading avocado production, with most avocado farmers only owning about 2 hectares of land each, according to Carsan.

Small farms mean less strain on the environment, Ruben Sommaruga, professor of limnology (that is, inland aquatic ecosystems), at the University of Innsbruck, told DW.

"Large industrial production always implies a large use of pesticides. That is usually not the case with smallholder farmers, who can control their small number of trees more easily," he said.

In smallholder settings, the crop is often complemented with other farming enterprises, such as maize and bean crops, planted for subsistence.

According to Samson Ogbole, a sustainable farmer in Nigeria, mixing avocado trees with agroforestry systems can curtail negative environmental effects. "Planting crops like legumes around the tree crops helps replenish the soil," he said.

Avocados for rainy days

According to the Water Footprint Network, it takes 2,000 litres of water - or 10 full bathtubs - to grow just one kilo of avocados.

Planting the fruit has been linked to water shortages in Chile, for example, where farming has affected availability of water for human consumption.

But the crop's water consumption shouldn't be removed from its local context, according to Sommaruga. "It's always a matter of how much and what kind of water you have in the countries where you grow the trees."

In Uganda and Nigeria, avocado farms are mainly located in areas with beneficial rain patterns, according to Sommaruga.

"The central and southern part of Nigeria receives relatively high precipitation. The south of Uganda does as well. In Kenya, much of the avocado farming is done north of Nairobi, where mountains retain most of the rain," he said.

Frequent rainfall means farmers do not have to rely on irrigation systems, which artificially apply water to the soil. "In smallholder settings, avocado is produced on a rain-fed basis with few irrigation systems," Carsan said about avocado farmers in Kenya.

For now, avocado production has not been linked to water shortages across African farmlands. But, as Sommaruga points out, the rain patterns that avocado farmers in sub-Saharan Africa are benefiting from today are expected to decrease in the future due to climate change.

Bunmi from the Avocado Society of Nigeria has also been engaged in avocado farming on his land, hoping to export to Ukraine and the United Kingdom in five years. "Regarding water, I don't see any problem in the next 20 years. But maybe as time goes on," he said.

By Chido Pamela Mafongoya & Veedushi Mooloo

How can Mauritius take advantage of AfCFTA?

MAURITIUS, being strategically located between Asia and Africa, prides itself as having one of the continent's most stable regulatory environment.

The Mauritius Financial Centre has built a reputation as a safe, trusted and competitive financial centre, which has enabled it to position itself as the preferred jurisdiction for Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) flows to the continent, since the country can serve both the Francophone and Anglophone Africa.

Mauritius and the other Africa countries are long known for the links they share, both politically and economically. Mauritius ranks first in Africa and has made its way by being a member of two of the continent's most important trade blocs - the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Through these memberships, many foreign entrepreneurs have set up their businesses in Mauritius to gain from the trade advantages offered.

Apart from SADC and COMESA, Mauritius is now part of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Launched this New Year's Day, this is an exciting game changer for African trade.

Currently, Africa accounts for only 2 per cent of global trade and only 17 per cent of African exports are intra-continental, compared with 59% for Asia and 68 per cent for Europe.

AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area in terms of the number of participating countries since the formation of the World Trade Organisation with all African countries being signatories except for Eritrea.

The main purpose of the agreement is for members to remove tariffs from 90 per cent of goods, allowing free access to commodities, goods, and services across the continent. The general objectives of AfCFTA can be summarized as follows, to:

Create a single market, deepening the economic integration of the continent.

Establish a liberalized market through multiple rounds of negotiations.

Aid the movement of capital and people, facilitating investment.

Move towards the establishment of a future continental customs union.

Achieve sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformations within member states.

Enhance competitiveness of member states within Africa and in the global market.

Encourage industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development, and food security.

Mauritius has over the years been an offshore gate-



way to the continent. It has long been an advocate for developing economic bridges between itself and other African states, leveraging its position as Africa's best place to conduct business as recognized by The World Bank.

Through its Global Business sector, Mauritius has firmly established and promoted itself as a regional hub for facilitating investments on the continent. It is thus undeniable that AfCFTA will add further to the attractiveness of Africa as a place to do business.

The AfCFTA provides a platform for Mauritius to contribute significantly to the new African impetus by making available to investors

and businessmen an ecosystem that not only makes it easier for them to do business with Africa, but also enhances and safeguards their investments.

AfCFTA also gives Mauritius market access estimated to be as large as 1.3 billion people across Africa, with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$3.4 trillion which covers most service sectors, including financial services, telecommunications, ICT, professional services, construction, and health. AfCFTA will eventually reach zero tariffs on most of traded items, boasting trade outside of its borders.

The Mauritius economy is a

mixed developing one based on agriculture, exports, financial services, and tourism. Since the 1980s, the government there has sought to diversify the country's economy beyond its dependence on just agriculture, particularly sugar production.

In 2018, Mauritius' intra-Africa exports accounted for 23 per cent of the country's total exports and imports for 13 per cent of total imports.

Mauritius mainly exports textiles to the rest of Africa. Half of the top ten intra-Africa export products are items of clothing or fabric, accounting for 30 per cent of the country's intra-Africa exports for 2018.

AfCFTA will provide the country access to an African textile market worth billions of dollars such that the country will be poised to become a major supplier of textile in the African market.

The government's recent 2020/2021 budget has announced one measure that can boost Mauritian exports from the already existing supply capacity to the region.

The plan to set up Mauritius Export Warehouse in Tanzania and Mozambique is sure to support a number of Domestic Oriented Industry. Some are already gearing for Tanzania, which is a more immediately obvious market than Mozambique.

Mauritius has good potential to export a range of services in the context of the lines of priority services set by AfCFTA - namely, business services, financial services, tourism and travel.

Mauritius mainly imports manufactured goods, petroleum products, cars and packaged medications from China, India and South Africa.

AfCFTA calls for a reduction in tariff in intra-Africa, which means that there will be a lower expenditure on importation of the above-mentioned goods from South Africa. As a result, there will be a reduction in prices, bettering the country's negative balance of trade.

The movement of goods and services among African countries stands to create employment opportunities for citizens in Mauritius and provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs to work together in a liberalised trade environment.

Further, AfCFTA is seen strengthening the existing commitment of deepening regional trade integration initiatives under regional bodies such as the African Union, COMESA and SADC. The geographical diversification brought about by AfCFTA will likely open up new markets for Mauritius, thus boosting its economy.

AfCFTA also offers an opportunity for Mauritius to promote good governance both globally and across Africa, through the concept of "trade integrity".

This is defined as international trade transactions that are legitimate, transparent and properly priced as a way to ensure the legitimacy of the global trading system. Trade integrity will provide investors with more confidence to increase their investments in the country.

AfCFTA will also help alleviate some of effects brought about as a result of Covid-19. The African Development Bank Group's African Economic Outlook (AEO) 2020 Supplement estimated that Africa could suffer GDP losses in 2020 between US\$145.5 billion (baseline) and US\$189.7 billion (worst case), from the pre-Covid-19 GDP estimates.

Further, trade in medical supplies and food has been disrupted. It is being fully recognized across the continent that AfCFTA presents a short-term opportunity for countries to "build back better" and cushion the effects of the pandemic. In the longer term, the impact will increase the continent's resilience to shocks.

Diversifying exports, accelerating growth in its trade, competitively integrating into the global economy, increasing foreign direct investment, increasing employment opportunities and incomes, and broadening economic inclusion are just a few of the positive economic outcomes that AfCFTA can bring to Mauritius.

Having undergone a remarkable economic transformation from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a diversified, upper-middle-income country that has attracted considerable foreign investment, Mauritius should ensure that it fully takes advantage of the opportunities offered by AfCFTA.

• **A Centurion Law Group dispatch filed from Port Louis, Mauritius.**

'Renewables supplies only one-third of Africa's power demand growth'

LONDON

AN analysis of global electricity has revealed that wind and solar showed resilient growth last year despite the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing a record decline in global coal power.

The Global Electricity Review, published by energy think tank Ember, analysed electricity data from every country in the world to give the first accurate view of the global electricity transition for the year.

It revealed that almost one-tenth of global electricity was generated by wind and solar last year. Morocco and Kenya are the clear leaders in Africa, already ahead of the world average.

However, data from 2014 to 2019 show that only one-third of the rise in the continent's electricity demand was met with renewables, and two-thirds met with fossil gas.

The year saw Covid-19 pandemic bring the world to a halt and pause the world's rising demand for electricity. The slight drop in demand (-0.1 per cent) was the first drop since 2009, although it was smaller than the impact of the financial crisis.

Wind and solar power showed resilient global growth in 2020 despite the pandemic, up by 15 per cent (+314 TWh) versus 2019. The growth in wind and solar helped push coal power to a record fall of 4 per cent (-346 TWh). One terawatt hour (TWh) is equal to a billion kilowatt-hours.

Globally wind and solar doubled in the last five years to supply almost one-tenth of global electricity in 2020. Among Africa's leading economies, Morocco and Kenya had the highest levels of wind and solar, respectively generating 16 per cent and 15 per cent of their electricity from wind and solar in 2019.

Morocco has achieved a rapid increase in solar power, increasing from near-zero in 2015 to 4 per cent of its electricity in 2019. It also increased its wind power from 9 per cent of its electricity in 2015 to 12 per cent in 2019.

Kenya has seen a rapid acceleration in wind power, increasing from less than 1 per cent in 2015 to 14 per cent in 2019. Solar power remains at less than 1 per cent of Kenya's electricity.

Many of Africa's leading economies have yet to harness the potential of wind and solar power, which are now amongst the cheapest forms of new electricity.

In 2019, Nigeria and Algeria generated less than 1 per cent of their electricity from wind and solar, while Egypt increased to 3 per cent in 2019 after recent growth in solar power.

South Africa generated 6 per cent of its electricity from wind and solar in 2020, tripling since 2015, but still below the world average of 9.4 per cent.

Across the G20, many countries mirrored the global average wind and solar share (9.4 per cent) in 2020, including India (9 per cent), China (9.5 per cent), Japan (10 per cent), Brazil (11 per cent), the US (12 per cent) and Turkey (12 per cent).

Europe is leading the way, with Germany at 33 per cent and the UK at 29 per cent, giving confidence in how wind and solar can be quickly built and integrated into



the electricity system.

Emerging economies such as India and Turkey have accelerated their deployment of wind and solar to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

India's wind and solar generation tripled in five years to provide 8.9 per cent of total electricity production in 2020, now just below the global average. Lower electricity demand and wind and solar growth led to coal's market share falling by 5 per cent since 2015.

In Turkey, wind and solar provided 12 per cent of electricity generation in 2020, this share has tripled since 2015. This helped to reduce gas and oil's market share by 11 per cent over the same period, however coal's market share continued to grow.

Fossil fuels still dominate world's electricity

Fossil fuels generated 61 per cent of the world's electricity in 2020, down from 66 per cent in 2015 when the Paris Agreement was signed. Coal was the single largest source, responsible for 34 per cent of global electricity in 2020.

The dataset of global electricity generation revealed that major African economies were significantly more reliant on fossil fuels for

electricity than the world average of 61 per cent.

Above-average levels of fossil fuels were observed in Nigeria (81 per cent) and South Africa (89 per cent) in 2020, also in Egypt (90 per cent), Algeria (99 per cent) and Morocco (79 per cent) in 2019. South Africa stands out with by far the largest share of coal (86 per cent) in Africa, over double the world average.

However, fossil fuels' share of electricity is hugely varied across Africa, as many countries have far higher shares of clean electricity than the world average in 2020 (39 per cent).

Ethiopia, Kenya, Angola and Zambia all generated over 80 per cent of their electricity from clean sources in 2019. Kenya recently pledged 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2030, showing their commitment to a clean energy future.

Across the G20 there were also many countries with fossil fuel shares above the global average in 2020. Five G20 countries had over three-quarters of their electricity supplied from fossil fuels in 2020: Saudi Arabia (100 per cent), South Africa (89 per cent), Indonesia (83 per cent), Mexico (75 per cent) and Australia (75 per cent).

In comparison, France and Brazil only generated 9 per cent and 14 per cent of their elec-

tricity from fossil fuels, respectively.

Africa's rising electricity production

In Africa, electricity production is still increasing every year. From 2014 to 2019, renewables met one third of Africa's growth in production, with gas making up the remaining two thirds.

Renewables growth in Africa has been accelerating since 2015, but it has not yet been fast enough to meet all of the rising demand. The rise in gas was particularly marked in North Africa, where there were the biggest increases in electricity demand, and very little build-up of renewable electricity.

Africa - unlike Asia - has avoided a coal-reliant electricity grid. There has been no growth in total coal generation since 2014, as South Africa's falling coal generation was cancelled out by increases in Morocco and Zambia.

In addition, there is very little coal capacity under construction or planned in Africa - only South Africa and Zimbabwe are building new coal.

Peter Tunbridge, analyst at Ember, said: "The challenge remains to build renewables fast enough to keep up with rising electricity demand, not just for Africa, but across the world."

"Emerging economies such as India and Turkey are accelerating their deployment of wind and solar beyond the increase in electricity demand, to actually reduce their dependence on fossil fuels."

"Wind and solar have the potential to power Africa's electric future, and rapid deployment of these technologies will be essential for African countries to meet their rising demand for electricity, whilst avoiding a fossil gas trap."

Prof Anton Eberhard, Power Futures Lab, University of Cape Town, meanwhile noted: "Solar and wind energy are now the cheapest sources of new power generation in Africa."

"Countries such as Morocco and Kenya have made impressive progress. Other countries, including South Africa, will add significant

new investments in these technologies in 2021 and beyond.

"As the share of these variable energy sources grows, there will be new challenges for power systems in Africa, especially for system operators who will have to procure and manage complementary flexible resources to ensure supply security and stability."

Duncan Gibb, Renewables Project Manager and Analyst, REN21, chipped in: "It's encouraging to see that Morocco and Kenya have made such progress with solar and wind power, and have reached high shares among African countries."

"Their success shows the huge impact of effective political leadership and well-designed regulatory frameworks that create market conditions where renewables thrive."

"At the same time, more than half of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa still lacks access to electricity. Renewable energy, including solar and wind, can quickly and inexpensively help fill this gap."

"Ember's Global Electricity Review shows the huge potential for African nations to build affordable renewables and provide electricity for their citizens."

Ember is an independent, not-for-profit energy think tank that produces cutting-edge research and high impact policies that aim to accelerate the global electricity transition from coal to clean.

Ember's Global Electricity Review is an annual report that analyses electricity data from every country in the world to give the first accurate view of the global electricity transition in 2020.

It aggregates generation data by fuel by country from 2000. 68 countries comprising 90 per cent of world electricity generation have full-year data to 2020 and have formed the basis of an estimate for changes in worldwide generation.

All remaining countries have full data as far as 2019. G20 countries, which comprise 84 per cent of world electricity generation, each have a separate in-depth country analysis.

• Ember

China-Africa cooperation is vital in the post-Covid-19 global economy

By Yi Fan

WITH COVID vaccines rolled out in more countries, we have reason to expect to be more equipped in the fight against the pandemic. Exiting the pandemic and re-viving the economy is a first-order priority for all countries.

Africa, like other parts of the world, has fought hard in containing the virus and reinvigorating the economy. Addressing the fallout and looking forward to post-COVID recovery, governments of African countries have adopted comprehensive response plans. In Ethiopia, for example, relief assistance has reached families and businesses, in addition to tax cuts and liquidity support.

For us all to navigate this trying time, cooperation and mutual help between China and Africa are critically important. Last week, China hosted the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia, a China-based international forum with a mandate to explore better solutions for the common good of the whole world despite its name. Delegates from both online and offline discussed how the world can best recover from the pandemic. As countries in Africa are also striving for a stronger emergence from the pandemic, perhaps here are some of the priority areas where greater synergy can be built:

No. 1: China and Africa can grow faster together with the help of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The pandemic brought the world to a sudden halt. But for most of the time, the Belt and Road projects have remained resilient in keeping global supply chains running. The freight trips along the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor were up by 104.9% in 2020. New routes were opened, such as the one from the southwestern Chinese city of Nanchong to Nigeria. A record number of goods, including the much-needed medical supplies, were shipped to cities in Africa, Asia and Europe. On this continent, the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway, a flagship Belt and Road project, recorded an over 51 percent increase in revenue in the first half of 2020, when the pandemic was at its height. The railway was instrumental in ensuring the transportation of supplies in Ethiopia.

With China at the beginning of implementing its 14th Five-Year Plan, a guideline toward more efficient, equitable and sustainable growth, the Belt and Road Initiative is now aiming at higher-quality development. This, along with China's own economic recovery, will foster greater connectivity, openness and inclusiveness, further energize the development of participating countries, and, as a result, inject greater confidence and impetus to global post-COVID growth.



The Chinese-built Ethiopia-Djibouti railway

No.2: China and Africa can embrace new prospects with a digital boost.

The pandemic has, to some extent, given a strong boost to the already-flourishing digital economy worldwide. New technologies and creative forms of business including 5G, online shopping and remote learning are gaining momentum, providing a new pathway for economic growth.

Both China and Africa will benefit from this digital boom. Africa, a continent with around 1.3 billion people, is now enjoying fast growth in telecommunications and e-commerce. As it seeks to improve its digital infrastructure, China is ready to share its experience in e-commerce, digital payment and logistics management.

Such mutually-beneficial cooperation is already paying off during the pandemic, as the

two cooperated in selling African agricultural products, including coffee and chili sauce, on Chinese e-commerce platforms. Likewise, Kilimall, an online shopping mall set up by Chinese founders in Africa, has served as a window for African consumers to purchase Chinese products.

No.3: Multilateral economic cooperation can make us all better off.

The pandemic has reminded the world of the significance of cooperation. This is what both China and Africa have advocated as staunch supporters for multilateralism and free trade.

For Africa, the recently-commenced African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has made the continent the world's largest free trade area in terms of participating member states after the formation of the World

Trade Organization. Signed by 54 African Union members, the AfCFTA will increase Africa's capacity to respond to future crises, disease outbreaks and global economic shocks, and also assist in Africa's economic recovery.

China too has made similar endeavors: setting up platforms for international economic cooperation, including the China International Import Expo and the China International Fair for Trade in Services; facilitating the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, one of the largest free trade agreements in recent history.

These efforts of China and Africa illustrate the critical importance of

cooperation and multilateralism in unlocking economic potential. They may also present major opportunities for each other and the world at large, and pave the way for closer economic ties among countries and shared prosperity in the post-COVID world.

For a changing world eyeing for closer cooperation and a stronger, more resilient post-pandemic global economy, China and Africa, coming together, will surely set for the world a fine example of mutually beneficial cooperation, and contribute their share to the post-COVID global economy.

(The author is a Beijing-based observer of international affairs.)

How can AI help improve newsroom productivity?

THE GAMI Briefing #1 looked at how news publishers and journalists are using AI-powered solutions to work more efficiently, what kinds of issues arise when these tools are introduced in the newsroom, and what solutions exist to deal with such challenges.

BY TEEMU HENRIKSSON

THE virtual GAMI Briefings are an opportunity for the media innovation community to learn and exchange ideas and experience on the most pressing technology trends that impact the news publishing industry.

Each event explores a specific topic with a solution-based focus, highlighting case studies from a network of media organisations and startups.

The first event in the series focused on the challenges and opportunities that artificial intelligence (AI) represents for newsrooms.

As new AI-based tools are becoming increasingly available, many news publishers are rapidly investigating how this technology can help them work more effectively - and how they can deal with the challenges that sometimes arise when such tools are put to use.

First, David Caswell, Executive Product Manager at BBC News Labs, discussed how the UK's public broadcaster uses an AI-solution that extracts information from existing text articles in order to create new editorial formats for news stories. This allows the BBC to tailor the content based on the needs of its readers, in a context where news audiences are more fragmented than ever.

"We're trying to compete to serve value to all these diverse audiences, and we basically got one website and one app to do that with," he said, adding: "And that's a problem if we're trying to deliver a universal service, because our mandate as a public service organisation is to deliver value to everybody."

"If those audiences are very diverse, if they have almost infinite choice, and we have one app and one website, then we're limited in what we can do. Because of that limitation we're essentially required to personalise," Caswell noted further.

The BBC's solution is to use a different presentation of news content to different people. It uses semi-automated tools, operated by journalists, that use existing articles to create draft outputs in different formats.

Journalists can then verify the content and make edits on wording and images before publishing it. "So with small changes to the existing workflow we can get multiple story formats," Caswell said.

Next, Katarina Ellemark, Product Owner at Bonnier, talked about how Bonnier News Local has implemented new technical solutions, and how it has learned from these experiences and fed them back to the newsroom.

Ellemark described different examples where the publisher was trying to introduce new tools into the workflows but faced opposition from the newsroom.

One case concerned including granular metadata into news articles. Journalists initially protested to this, citing



a lack of time for this process but, through discussions, the newsroom realised that adding more metadata would help the publisher serve the right content to the right people.

Another case involved personalised news feeds, which increased readership levels but made it impossible for editors to see what stories were displayed for each individual reader.

"Editorial teams needed a great amount of time to get used to this. For a while I was working as a therapist," Ellemark said.

She elaborated: "We talked a lot about the edge cases, the newsroom kept sending screenshots so that I could see how the system was working, and a frequent question was: 'Why wasn't my piece pushed?'"

But also in this case, after numerous meetings and discussions, the newsroom was ultimately convinced of the benefits of the personalised feed.

Can digital technology augment both journalistic creativity and productivity? This was the argument by Neil Maiden, Director of CebAI, the National Centre for Creativity enabled by AI at City, University of London: "There may be an interesting sweet spot that certain types of technologies deployed in certain types of way may help us reach towards in newsrooms."

Maiden specifically discussed JECT.AI, a digital tool that assists journalists and editors to discover new horizons, angles and voices for stories.

Maiden said that currently, when seeking an angle for

a story, most journalists use tools such as search, Google News, specific websites, other news sites, and contacting people. "However it's quite a clunky activity, and there's surprisingly little guidance for that."

Instead, JECT.AI pulls in a lot of this information in one place, Maiden said, adding: "We didn't just automate the journalists' research activity, we sought to augment it by bringing in filtering to reduce information clutter so you could see essentially one relatively small information box in the tool."

Moreover, when journalists look for experts or new sources, JECT.AI can suggest scientists that have published on a specific topic.

"We also discovered an opportunity to not just present the usual suspects related to a topic. We integrated an additional algorithm that would seek to balance the experts by both gender and ethnicity," Maiden noted.

Finally, Dina Shatner, Co-founder & CEO of the startup Trenario, talked about how the company's solution automatically generates video content with AI-driven news presenters.

There's an increasing demand for video content, and video gets more engagement on social platforms and among younger age groups, but newsrooms struggle to take advantage of this with limited budgets and resources.

Trenario's tool allows publishers to use text to create newscasts with digital hosts, which can be of different genders, age groups and ethnicities, and can speak differ-

ent languages. The company's solution also allows for the personalisation of the video content.

"Our mission is to make it easy for newsrooms to leverage what they are doing by automatically turning text content into a wide range of video stories," Shatner said, adding: "There's no need for cameras, crew or video editors to create a presented-led video. And there's no need to learn a specific skill set to work with complicated platforms."

New tech comes with new challenges

The Q&A after the presentations started with a conversation about how audiences relate to automated news content.

Caswell referred to work by Neil Thurman at LMU Munich (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, also referred to as LMU or the University of Munich), which perhaps surprisingly has showed that audiences seem to trust automated news content slightly more than human-written stories. On the other hand, they rank the readability and enjoyability of automated content a little bit lower.

Some wonder if journalists should try to explain to their readers what technologies they use to generate content, but Maiden pointed out that many of these technologies are so complex that this is not a realistic goal. Moreover, keeping a human element in the publishing process may help alleviate potential trust issues.

"To what extent should a tool be able to explain its own creative processes, when we probably don't have the same expectations on humans when they create stories? Do we sit the journalist down with a spotlight and drill them on how they came up with an angle?" Maiden asked, rhetorically, adding: "As long as there's human agency in there to intermediate decisions, I'm relaxed on that."

Shatner meanwhile noted that, on the other hand, as it gets easier to create deep fakes and other misleading photo and video content, it is important for people to know when they are watching digitally created humans.

According to Caswell, one big challenge in newsrooms is that their cultures are not suited for the kind of thinking that forward-looking tools require.

He explained: "The need to think abstractly and strategically about all of this stuff is difficult, and it's particularly difficult for newsrooms because the whole business of news has been about specific stories on a specific deadline. It hasn't traditionally been a field where there's a lot of standing back and thinking about the wider patterns."

He elaborated: "Someone is going to use all this stuff for news purposes in one way or another, and I really hope that we're able to do it with professional values-drive journalism."

"But the same tools are available to the entire media ecosystem. I sometimes worry that folks don't appreciate that it's not decades away, it's months or maybe a few years away at most."

FAO, BADEA scale up partnership in bid to support African countries

KHARTOUM

THE Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) have formalized their partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU was signed by FAO Director-General Dr QU Dongyu and BADEA Director General Mr Sidi Ould Tah in a virtual ceremony on the margins of the 'High-Level Dialogue on Feeding Africa: Leadership to Scale up Successful Innovations' Event, co-hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

FAO Director-General QU Dongyu said he was pleased to sign the MoU with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, adding that the agreement was "timely" because of the need to "build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic."

He continued: "Africa is a top priority for FAO and we are working with Africa and BADEA for the modernisation of agriculture. We offer support to transform agri-food systems to be more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable for better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, leaving no one behind."

FAO Director-General QU concluded by underlining that he "looked forward to working together, with BADEA hand in hand".

For his part, BADEA Director General Mr Sidi Ould Tah highlighted that the signing of the MoU with FAO clearly shows BADEA's commitment to leverage on partnership synergy to meet beneficiaries' national priorities, while accounting for their commitments to the Global Development Agenda 2030 and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

FAO and BADEA began working together in 1975 and have previously collaborated on projects in several African countries. This includes recent assessment studies to prepare for large investments in Mali's cotton value chain and in a pilot project in Niger for integrated support to pastoralism. The new MoU will scale-up the partnership even further.

BADEA is a multilateral development bank owned by 18 Arab countries, members of the League of Arab States. It works to promote economic development in Africa and foster cooperation between the beneficiary countries and the Arab World through investment and trade.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger, working to ensure that people have access to high-quality diets and achieve food security for all. FAO's goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With 194 Member Nations, one Member Organization, and two Associate Members, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.



Building on FAO and BADEA's common interest in promoting agricultural development and food security, both parties have agreed, through this MoU, to further intensify their collaboration in order to strengthen the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of their development work. The signed memorandum covers a number of areas

of future collaboration, including agricultural infrastructure development, private sector engagement in agriculture, market information, agricultural value-chains develop- ment, skills development for women and youth, scaling up production and productivity for pastoralists as well as boosting Climate-Smart Agriculture.

AfDB country gender profiles highlight prevalence of stereotypes

By Special Correspondent

AFRICAN women are still disproportionately affected by poverty and the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating gender inequalities, according to new African country gender profiles developed by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The AfDB released country gender profiles for Burkina Faso, Malawi, Niger and Chad, which examine the state of gender equality in each designated country and provide concrete recommendations for governments, the Bank and development partners to accelerate gender equality in key sectors.

The country gender profiles were prepared in collaboration with the Bank's Regional Member Countries, civil society organisations and development partners like UN Women.

The profiles found that gender stereotypes are present in most countries and have a negative impact on women's lives and livelihoods. Some of these impacts include a rise in gender-based violence, the heightened load of unpaid work and loss of livelihoods due to over-representation in the informal sector. The profiles call for gender issues to be prioritised in the COVID-19 recovery process-

es. Vanessa Mungar, director of the AfDB's gender, women and civil society department, commented: "The country gender profiles aim to spark dialogue and support evidence-based reform on gender equality at national level. The profiles are a guide to inform development policy makers and enrich development programs to better address gender disparities."

Despite the gloomy picture, the reports show that there has been improvement in African countries' ability to address discriminatory laws and policies. Also, the four countries covered in the publica-

tions have national gender policies and specific institutional mechanisms dedicated to gender equality.

The highlights from the country gender profiles show that in Burkina Faso: Women's enterprises dominate trade (65.4%) in the informal sector.

Women engaged in cross-border trade have been particularly vulnerable financially because of border closures. In Chad: Early marriage is very common and it is estimated that about 67% of girls are married before the age of 18, 30% before the age of 15. Cases of early marriage are expected to rise

because of school closures. In Niger: The primary school completion rate for girls is 73%, compared to 88% for boys, in the landlocked West African country.

This drops to 59% for girls in rural areas and school and education institution closures during epidemics tends to increase girl dropout rates and in Malawi: 59% of women reported they are not paid for their labour, compared to 26% of men and the pandemic has exacerbated women's unpaid workload.

The Malawi gender profile suggests enhanced dialogue is needed to facilitate changing gender

norms through men's groups challenging the status quo.

Amel Hamza, AfDB division manager for gender and women empowerment, said: "Gender data and analysis are critical but remain limited, slowing the achievement of the gender agenda. These reports, we hope, will help address this important challenge."

The AfDB started creating country gender profiles in 2004 and the latest four publications in the series are part of the Bank's roll-out of its new Gender Strategy for 2021-2025, subtitled Investing in Africa's women to accelerate inclusive growth.

Covid-19 pandemic is 'boon' for some African wealth funds

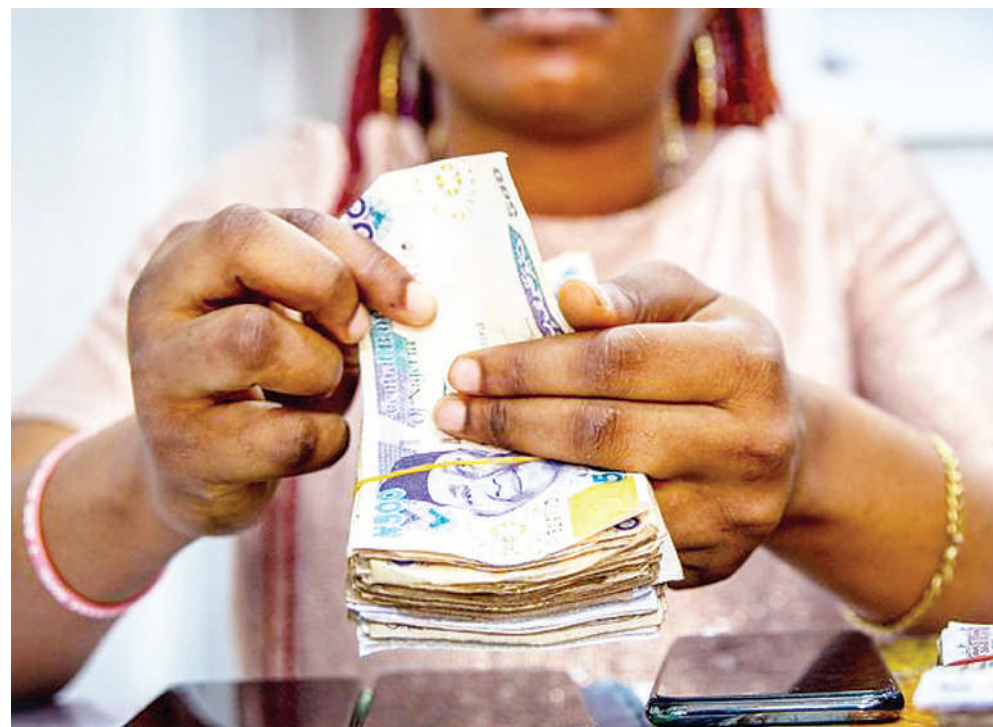
By Special Correspondent

THE COVID-19 pandemic presented Africa's sovereign wealth funds industry with the opportunity to accelerate investment themes they had already identified, such as health care, agribusiness and digital technology.

A report by the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds, in partnership with Franklin Templeton, found that of those funds that invest domestically, "the pandemic has been a boon." Demands as a result of the crisis stimulated domestic industries in which these funds already invested since their products and services were in high demand.

Two of the funds surveyed for the report said their existing investments in medical facilities, supplies and pharmaceuticals paid off as demand increased, with plans to invest further in the sector and improve their countries' health-care services overall. "Such investments will make these countries more resilient to economic and health shocks in the future," the report said.

Sovereign wealth funds based in Angola, Botswana, Ghana and Nigeria, which largely have stabilization and savings mandates, were used by their governments to finance public spending. One fund was forced to rebalance its portfolio and "cash in on some of the gains" from equity holdings in the second quarter. That fund – which was unnamed – also looking at its governance structure and whether the withdrawal



rules needed strengthening to protect the fund's value.

COVID-19 also caused some African sovereign wealth funds to think about their risk and return appetites, since inflows slowed "to a trickle." Those funds with a purely stabilization and savings mandate said portfolios were largely invested in low-risk securities, with one stating they could no longer afford to be so conservative.

Two of the funds increased returns by allocating more to emerging markets or alternative sources of income.

Regarding attracting foreign investment, Africa is an "attractive investment location," the report said, with a booming middle class, strong investment reruns and the capacity to develop new, transformative domestic industries. However, throughout the research for the report, "it was clear that the funds we spoke to have the common challenge that investment in the fifty-

plus countries of Africa is perceived to be either extremely risky of humanitarian," the report said.

In terms of assets, "African sovereign wealth funds are minnows" compared with the huge Middle East and Asian funds. Total assets – excluding the \$65 billion Libyan Investment Authority, Tripoli, which are frozen under international sanctions – were \$22.8 billion in 13 funds. More than half of that was in The Sovereign Fund of Egypt, Cairo's \$12.7 billion portfolio, according to IFSWF data.

Eight sovereign wealth funds in Africa were surveyed for the report, with a further 11 executives either at institutions operating a wealth fund or planning to establish one also taking part in interviews.

The majority (37.5%) of respondents were based in West Africa, 25% in Southern Africa, 25% in North Africa and 12.5% in East Africa.

Vaccine supply crunch adds to risk of resurgence of COVID-19

By Special Correspondent, Brazzaville

WITH Africa-bound COVID-19 vaccine doses from the Serum Institute of India delayed for the foreseeable future, slow vaccine roll-outs and new variants making inroads, the risk of a new wave of infections in Africa remains high.

Delays and shortages of vaccine supplies are driving African countries to slip further behind the rest of the world in the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and the continent now accounts for only 1% of the vaccines administered worldwide, down from 2% a few weeks ago.

COVID-19 vaccine rollouts have been exemplary in some African countries, yet around half, or 19 million, of the 37 million COVID-19 vaccine doses received in Africa have been administered so far, according to reports from African countries.

Initial deliveries through COVAX to 41 African nations have been staggered since early March, yet nine countries have administered less than a quarter of the doses they have, and 15 countries have given less than half. Eight countries have given all of their COVAX doses.

"While we call for vaccine equity Africa must also knuckle down and make the best of what we have. We must get all the doses we have into people's arms," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa. "It's a race against time and the virus. Given the limited supply we recommend that countries prioritize giving the first dose to as many high-risk people as possible in the shortest amount of time."

Modelling suggests that vaccinating more people in the highest priority population groups with one dose as opposed to vaccinating half that number with two doses will

substantially reduce death rates.

Africa's vaccination coverage is the lowest for any region of the world. While globally, 150 doses of the vaccine have been administered per 1000 people, in sub-Saharan Africa it's about 8 doses per 1000 people. Low vaccination coverage places African countries at higher risk of a massive upsurge in cases.

Vaccine patent waiver could be 'game changer'

South Africa and India are leading efforts to temporarily waive patent protections for COVID-19 vaccines and medicines at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The United States has offered its support to waive intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines.

"This could mark a game-changer for Africa, unlocking millions more doses and saving countless more lives. We commend the leadership shown by these countries and urge others to back them at the WTO, including for life-saving therapeutics. We hope negotiations are quickly wrapped up so we can ramp up the manufacturing and roll-out of safe and effective vaccines. No country is safe until all countries are safe," said Dr Moeti.

COVAX and WHO are exploring all options to mitigate the impact of the global vaccine supply shortage, including supporting the reallocation of excess doses, boosting manufacturing and encouraging suppliers with extra capacity to support and prioritize COVAX.

WHO is assisting African member states efforts to roll-out COVID-19 vaccines with preparation, coordination, training of health professionals, providing policy and technical guidance and assisting with communications to boost the uptake of vaccines.

Brazil relies on rainfall that depends on forests

RÍO DE JANEIRO

“RAINFALL is fundamental: the streams and rivers we have would not suffice for irrigation, even if they were the Amazon River,” said Dirceu Dezem, referring to the amount of water required for the extensive crops in Brazil’s midwest.

This country of continental dimensions boasts 12 percent of the world’s fresh water, but the droughts that have aggravated poverty in the semi-arid Northeast and led to water rationing in a number of large cities in the last decade showed that rainfall – partly generated by forest ecosystems that have been mutilated – is more important.

It is not only a question of quantity, but of timing as well: “Rain at the right time” is also key to productivity, said Dezem, president of the landowners’ Rural Union of Tapurah, a municipality in the northern state of Mato Grosso.

This is where the largest national production of soybeans, corn and cotton is concentrated in Brazil, the world’s leading producer and exporter of soybeans.

Rainfall is not declining in that region, said the 64-year-old farmer, who migrated from southern Brazil in 1986 and prospered where “there was nothing” before. The reports of a decrease in rainfall “are just hunches expressed by people who aren’t familiar with the situation,” he told IPS by telephone from his hometown.

Dezem based his assertion on the measurements he has made for more than 20 years, using a rain gauge that he admits is not totally precise but that shows variations of 1600 to 1800 millimetres per agricultural year (September to September), with peaks of 1500 and 2500.

But the electricity sector, which also depends mainly on rainfall since rivers provide two thirds of the country’s electric power, is experiencing a different situation.

The water level is low in hydroelectric power plant reservoirs, especially in two key Brazilian regions, the midwest and southeast, due to reduced rainfall across the country, warned the National Electric System Operator, which controls the sources that generate electricity.

Water scarcity makes it necessary to activate thermoelectric power plants driven by fossil fu-

els, that generate more expensive electricity in addition to greenhouse gases.

Some metropolitan regions already face difficulties in water supply. São Paulo, with 22 million inhabitants, suffered severe shortages from 2014 to 2016, followed by Brasília (population three million) in 2017-2018, and Curitiba (population 3.7 million), where rationing measures have been in place since 2019, with no prospect that they will be lifted this year.

“The intensity and frequency of drought have increased in all regions of Brazil since the 2000s, with the exception of the south,” reported Ana Paula Cunha, a researcher at the state-run National Centre for Natural Disaster Monitoring and Alerts (Cemaden), based on a study conducted with 13 of her colleagues using data since 1961.

The southern region benefits from its greater proximity to Antarctica, because of the cold fronts that bring rain. The southern tip of Brazil, as well as the north, has year-round rainfall, without the dry season experienced by other regions, Cunha told IPS from São José dos Campos, where Cemaden is based.

“Atmospheric circulation is the main rainfall-forming mechanism in south-central Brazil, with cold fronts and the South Atlantic Convergence Zone producing rainfall during the summer,” added climatologist José Marengo, another Cemaden researcher.

This convergence zone carries clouds from the Amazon rainforest in the northwest to the southeast, passing through the midwest, ensuring rainfall also to the large-scale agriculture of Mato Grosso, which mainly occupies part of the Cerrado savannah biome that also benefits from being surrounded by jungle to the north and southwest.

If this system ceases to operate, rainfall can be reduced by up to half, as happened in the Pantanal (on Brazil’s central-western border), which suffered terrible fires in the last two years.

“The dry season seems to be getting drier, hotter and longer, delaying the onset of rains and amplifying the risk of fires,” Marengo told IPS from São José dos Campos, in the state of São Paulo in the southeast.

“Forests in general are a source of moisture for rainfall in their region and adjacent regions, in



The monotony of soybean monoculture dominates the landscape in many areas of Mato Grosso and other Brazilian states. The regularity of rains in the Cerrado biome – Brazil’s savannah – favours this crop at the start of the rainy season, in September or October, and allows a second planting of corn or cotton before the dry season.

addition to protecting the soil and rivers,” he stressed.

The Amazon forest recycles an enormous volume of water, generating three-quarters of the local rainfall and “transporting moisture, the so-called flying rivers, to the La Plata basin” and south-central Brazil, he explained.

The Atlantic Forest, a forested strip along the Brazilian coast hundreds of kilometres wide at some points, carries moisture from the ocean inland, especially in the south and southeast where the forest is more extensive. In the Northeast the forests occupy few coastal areas and it is the trade winds that carry ocean clouds inland.

“The destruction of the Atlantic Forest on the coast contributed to a warmer climate and less rainfall in the Northeast,” Cunha said. Most of the region – 61 percent – has a semi-arid climate, with rainfall ranging from 200 to 800 millimetres per year.

The Caatinga, the biome exclusive to the semi-arid region, with low, twisted vegetation with few leaves, has also suffered great degradation, resulting in less rain and higher temperatures, said the researcher, a phys-

icist with a doctorate in meteorology.

She said it is important to consider that higher temperatures aggravate the water deficit by causing more water loss through evapotranspiration (evaporation plus plant transpiration). In other words, drought intensifies with heat.

“Removing vegetation does not have an immediate impact on the climate, it takes time, it has a cumulative effect. But it does impact the climate and the alteration of the climate impacts the vegetation,” in a vicious circle that explains the “changes in local microclimates,” with growing differences between neighbourhoods as observed by local residents, Cunha observed.

This process is visible in the differences between the rainy woodland along the coast where the original vegetation survived and a transition zone with less rain and less copious forests before reaching the semi-arid “sertão”.

Environmental damage is reflected in the advance of desertification in some areas, but semi-aridity and eventual droughts are due to the ocean-atmosphere circulation affected by both Atlantic and Pacific climate phenomena,

such as El Niño and La Niña, said Cunha.

With mainly intermittent and few perennial rivers, rain is vital in the semi-arid Northeast. Collecting rainwater in household tanks and by other means has become a massive micro-infrastructure in rural areas, which mitigated the damage of the longest drought in the region, from 2012 to 2017.

In the soy-growing region of Mato Grosso, rainfall is more of an economic factor.

“It varies a lot. It rains a lot one year, less the next, but the average stays the same. This year, for example, the rains were a little late. It was possible to plant as early as Sept. 20, but we held off until October,” said Dezem, the landowner.

The life cycle there follows the rains. From Jan. 10 to Feb. 25, soybeans are harvested and corn is planted at the same time, because “90 days of moisture are needed for a full harvest” and in April rainfall begins to decrease, ahead of the May to August dry season.

Timely rainfall and flat land, conducive to mechanisation, make up the basic conditions for large-scale production that attracted farmers from the south to what is now the breadbasket of Brazil.

What to expect from China’s first consumer products expo

HAIKOU

THE first China International Consumer Products Expo is scheduled for May 7-10 in Haikou, capital of south China’s Hainan Province.

The event will be the first international expo to be held in Hainan since China released a master plan last June to build the island province into a globally influential and high-level free trade port by the middle of the century.

It is also the first-ever expo focusing on consumer products organized by the world’s second largest economy. It is expected to showcase the country’s consumption power, facilitate the construction of the free trade port and contribute to the establishment of the new development paradigm of dual circulation.

SHOPPING PARADISE

More than 1,300 global brands from 69 countries and regions and over 1,200 domestic labels will participate in the expo, which is expected to attract more than 20,000 purchasers and 200,000 visitors, organizers said.

Co-hosted by China’s commerce ministry and the Hainan provincial government, the expo will cover a total area of 80,000 square meters, including 60,000 square meters of international exhibition space featuring products including cosmetics, automobiles, yachts, and garments.

A total of 650 international enterprises and over 800 domestic companies will take part in the expo.

A series of new products will debut at the event.

The country has unveiled import-duty exemptions within specified limits for foreign goods sold at the expo, and purchases at the event will not affect one’s annual offshore tax-free shopping quota of 100,000 yuan (about 15,462 U.S. dollars).

DUAL CIRCULATION

China’s dual circulation development paradigm, in which domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other, with the domestic market as the mainstay, is expected to be another hot topic during the expo.

Holding the expo is a practical move to serve the es-



Workers prepare the venue for the first China International Consumer Products Expo at the Hainan International Convention and Exhibition Center in Haikou, south China’s Hainan Province, May 1, 2021. (Xinhua)

establishment of the new paradigm, said Wang Bingnan, vice minister of commerce.

With a population of over 1.4 billion and more than 400 million middle-income residents, China has become the world’s most promising consumer market.

Thanks to the steady increase in people’s disposable income, Chinese demand for quality consumer goods and services from abroad has been soaring in recent years.

In 2020, despite the impact due to the pandemic, China’s imports of consumer products rose 8.2 percent year

on year to 1.57 trillion yuan, 8.9 percentage points higher than the expansion of the import sector.

As the broader economy continues to recover on a firm footing, China’s retail sales of consumer goods, a major indicator of consumption strength, picked up further. Official data showed that retail sales increased 33.9 percent year on year to 10.5 trillion yuan in the first quarter of the year.

The expo will pool high-quality consumer products from home and abroad as well as global buyers and sell-

ers, becoming a bridge for the international and domestic markets, according to Wang.

FREE TRADE PORT

The expo was first proposed in the master plan on building the Hainan free trade port issued by China’s central authorities on June 1, 2020.

The central government has also included a blueprint in the plan for the tropical resort province to strive to build itself into an international tourism and consumption center.

The holding of the expo is a concrete measure to build Hainan into an international tourism and consumption center and will play a significant role in boosting the construction of the Hainan free trade port, Wang said.

WIDER OPENING-UP

China has long been committed to opening the domestic market and contributing to the global economy. Facing an increasingly complex and uncertain world, China’s pace of opening up was not hampered, but accelerated.

In early April, the country issued a guideline to support easing market access in the Hainan free trade port, which further detailed measures to innovate market access in the pharmaceutical and health sectors, optimize financial market entries and development environment, and promote wider entries in the fields of culture and education.

Market access in the cultural relics sector will be widened, and Hainan will be supported to develop the industries of cultural performances and online gaming.

Efforts will also be made to widen access in the field of education and entry into civil aviation, sports and seeds markets in Hainan will also be eased, according to the guideline.

The majority of participants of the expo are foreign-funded firms and overseas brands, which once again reveals China’s firm commitment to promoting high-level opening-up as well as foreign-funded firms’ upbeat outlook on the China market, Wang said. **Xinhua**

NEMC CLOSES DOWN CHINESE FACTORY IN MKURANGA AFTER DEATHS OF WORKERS

Wind and solar power need to be adopted more quickly to avoid fossil gas traps

CAPE TOWN

An analysis of global electricity revealed that wind and solar showed resilient growth in 2020 despite the pandemic, forcing a record fall in global coal power. The Global Electricity Review published by energy think tank Ember analysed electricity data from every country in the world to give the first accurate view of the global electricity transition in 2020.

It revealed that almost a tenth of global electricity was generated by wind and solar in 2020. Morocco and Kenya are the clear leaders in Africa, already ahead of the world average. However, data from 2014 to 2019 shows that only a third of the rise in Africa's electricity demand was met with renewables, and two-thirds of the rise was met with fossil gas.

The pandemic brought the world to a halt in 2020 and paused the world's rising demand for electricity. The slight drop in demand (-0.1%) was the first fall since 2009, although it was smaller than the impact of the financial crisis. Wind and solar power showed resilient global growth in 2020 despite the pandemic, up by 15% (+314 TWh) versus 2019. The growth in wind and solar helped push coal power to a record fall of 4% (-346 TWh).

Globally wind and solar doubled in the last five years to supply almost a tenth of global electricity in 2020. Among Africa's leading economies, Morocco and Kenya had the highest levels of wind and solar, respectively generating 16% and 15% of their electricity from wind and solar in 2019.

Morocco has achieved a rapid increase in solar power, increasing from near-zero in 2015 to 4% of its electricity in 2019. It also increased its wind power from 9% of its electricity in 2015 to 12% in 2019. Kenya has seen a rapid acceleration in wind power, increasing from less than 1% in 2015 to 14% in 2019. Solar power remains at less than 1% of Kenya's electricity.

Many of Africa's leading economies have yet to harness the potential of wind and solar power, which are now amongst the cheapest forms of new electricity. In 2019, Nigeria and Algeria generated less than 1% of their electricity from wind and solar, while Egypt increased to 3% in 2019 after recent growth in solar power. South Africa generated 6% of its electricity from wind and solar in 2020, tripling since 2015, but still below the world average of 9.4%.

By Francis Kajubi

A Chinese owned construction materials manufacturer in Mkuranga District of Coast Region has been ordered to suspend production indefinitely for gross violation of environmental regulations and workers' rights.

National Environmental Management Council (NEMC)'s Director General, Dr Samuel Gwamaka ordered suspension of operations at Fujian Hexingwang Industries until such time that remedial measures as directed by the council are implemented.

Dr Gwamaka also ordered the factory's owners to ensure that they take into account the safety of workers as per the country's labour laws while warning that stern legal measures will be instituted if lives of the employees are put in danger.

The NEMC chief, who visited the dilapidated factory mid this week, accused the management at Fujian Hexingwang Industries which manufactures steel bars, of causing death of two of its workers earlier this week from burns caused by red hot liquid iron.

"In consideration of previous warnings we have issued to the factory and

in respect of the latest tragedy, I am suspending operations of this factory until such time when my office will be satisfied with investment made to rectify the identified shortfalls," he added saying the iron smelting infrastructure is poor hence exposing workers to health and death risks.

According to Dr Gwamaka, high melting point temperatures of between 1,400 and 1,500 degrees Celsius, more than 15 times the normal steam temperature, needs special equipment for the workers' protection.

"This sad incident is a result of negligence in observing the law and its regulations pertaining to workers' safety while at work which we cannot continue to entertain as it endangers Tanzanians lives," added the NEMC chief.

Briefing the NEMC chief, Mkuranga District Medical Officer, Steven Mwandambo said they received bodies of two young men who were identified as Juma Pembe and Gerald Andrew this week. The deceased were badly burnt from neck to their chests and that more information will be available after the post-mortem. "These two bodies came from Fujian Hexingwang factory according to those who brought them," said Mwandambo who said a post-mortem will be



Iron bars manufactured at the ill-fated Fujian Hexingwang factory in Mkuranga District, Coast Region. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

available before end of the week.

The factory's Managing Director, Xu Xingda confessed that something had seriously gone wrong which led to the unfortunate death of the two employees. "I was told by

my supervisors that after the melted iron was poured into next stage, an unknown object fell into the container which led to an explosion that caused the two deaths," Xingda explained.

SBL chief pledges continued support to agriculture extension officers training

By Property Watch Reporter, Kagera

SERENGETI Breweries Limited will continue to sponsor training of agriculture extension officers through its 'Kilimo-Viwanda' scholarships to support the government's industrialization agenda.

SBL Managing Director, Mark Ocitti said mid this week that the brewer also supports the government's efforts to modernise agriculture production as a prerequisite for industrialization as factories need commodities as raw materials.

"SBL supports over 400 cereal farmers who produce commodities such as maize, sorghum and barley which we use in beer production," Ocitti said while talking to 'Kilimo-Viwanda' sponsored students at Igabiro Training Institute of Agriculture in Kagera Region.

He said through the scholarship scheme, some 70 students who come from low income agriculture families get trained on farming related subjects in order to assist their parents in adopting agribusiness practices.



SBL factory in Mwanza.

"Kilimo-Viwanda program builds on both the student's theoretical learning as well as practical exposure through field visits to SBL breweries and affiliated farms to practice what they learn in class," the SBL chief noted. The program covers school fees and other academic-related expenses for the student's entire two years of study.

SBL is a commercial beer brewer that relies on local grain for beer production. Last year the brewer bought 17 tonnes of maize, sorghum and barley from local farmers which was an equivalent of 70 percent of its annual raw material needs, he said.

The 70 'Kilimo-Viwanda' students are studying in four local agricultural colleges including Ka-

ole Wazazi College of Agriculture of Bagamoyo, Kilacha Agriculture Training Institute in Moshi and Saint Maria Goretti Agriculture Training Institute in Iringa.

In a vote of thanks, Principal of Igabiro Training Institute of Agriculture, Sadock Stephano paid tribute to SBL for the support saying it helps build capacity in the agriculture sector. "I urge other

private companies to emulate SBL's generosity which displays the highest standards of corporate social responsibility," Stephano said.

Incorporated in 1988 as Associated Breweries, SBL is the second largest beer company in Tanzania, with its beer brands accounting for over 25 percent of the market by volume. SBL has three operating plants in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Moshi.

Since the creation of SBL in 2002, the business has grown its portfolio of brands year on year. The majority stake acquisition by EABL/Diageo in 2010 has seen increased investment in international quality standards leading to greater job opportunities for the people of Tanzania.

SBL Brands have been receiving multiple international awards and include Serengeti Premium Lager, Serengeti Lite, Pilsner Lager, Pilsner King, Tusker Lager, Tusker Lite, Kibo Gold, Guinness stout and Senator. The company is also home to world's renowned spirits such as Johnnie Walker Whisky, Smirnoff Vodka, Gordon's Gin, Captain Morgan Rum and Baileys Irish Cream.

Lamu braces for revenue growth after port launch

NAIROBI

Increasing activities at the port of Lamu in the past three years have provided a stable base for the economic growth of Lamu County leading it to exceed their annual revenue targets.

Revenue collected from hotels, land rates and other logistic units boosted the county's income and now with the operationalisation of the port from June 15, the devolved unit expects to double its revenue collection in the next coming years.

County Executive Committee Finance Fahima Arafat said influx of people to Lamu due to different Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (Lapsset) Corridor projects including construction of the port had significantly increased county's revenue.

"We have had increased land rates collection as more infrastructure projects

take shape. We have also had more people visiting and living in Lamu to undertake the ongoing projects which has benefited hotel sector where the county has collected most of its revenue in the past two years," said Ms Arafat.

She added: "In the past three years, we have experienced increased number of public service vehicles (PSVs) and airlines making trips to Lamu. This has seen us collect more than Sh100 million, surpassing our target even during Covid-19 pandemic."

According to Controller of Budget (CoB) report for 2019/20 financial year, only five out of the 47 counties met and exceeded their annual revenue targets. Lamu was among the only three counties to surpass their targets. Other counties include Migori and Tana River.

Lamu County government generated Sh109 million from their main economic activities which include fishing and

tourism, which was a 34 per cent increase compared to the Sh71.8 million collected in the 2018/19 financial year.

Other economic activities which boosted the county's revenue include mangrove export, agriculture, traditional maritime activities, and traditional woodcarving, among others. Ms Arafat said the new Garsen-Lamu road had particularly attracted many investors acting as an incentive to locals who set up complementary businesses.

"The road, which is about 83 per cent complete has cut the cost of doing business. It now takes less than five hours to travel to Mombasa unlike before where the same journey took more than eight hours. Fares have drastically reduced by more than a half," said the CEC.

The road will be a major transshipment route facilitating movement of cargo to Ethiopia and South Sudan. Lamu governor Fahim Twaha said the county government



A bird's eye view of Lamu Port.

was collaborating with the private sector to capitalise on the new Lamu Port to boost export of cattle, cotton and fish.

"We are at final stage of setting up cold rooms and ice making plants in Lamu to increase

local fishermen's income by ensuring more fish is exported. To fetch more prices, we shall be processing them here and already we are partnering with a private investor on that," said governor Twaha.

NMB PARTNERS WITH TWO COMPANIES TO DRIVE RAPID INSURANCE PENETRATION IN MARKET

By Property Watch Reporter

In a bid to speed up insurance penetration in the local market, NMB Bank Plc has partnered with Metropolitan Life Tanzania and Sanlam Life and launched two innovative products for clients.

The NMB Head of Bancassurance Department, Martine Massawe said in Dar es Salaam this week that the two insurance products are responding and addressing the current needs of the changing lives of the society.

"The insurance products introduced are Faraja Life Insurance and group insurance scheme that will benefit both NMB and non-NMB customers," Massawe said, noting that the products will give confidence to customers in case of unforeseen circumstances.

He said the new partnership is in line with the government's 10 years Financial Sector Development Master Plan that among other things, seeks to have 80 per cent of adults using financial services have at least one insurance cover.

Through the partnership, NMB and Sanlam have introduced an improved Faraja Insurance product with more benefits to customers where condolence compensation has been increased to 2m/- from 1m/- previously.

Speaking at the event, Sanlam Life General Manager for Corporate Business, Nura Masoud said the improved Faraja Insurance product covers all funeral service costs in the case of incidences of death or permanent disabilities to a customer or partner. Masoud added that a customer needs only to be an account holder of NMB to benefit from Faraja Insurance that covers the costs for funeral services and in case of permanent disabilities.

In the same vein, NMB in collaboration with Metropolitan Life Tanzania Insurance have introduced a new group insurance for formal and



NMB Bank Plc's headquarters in Dar es Salaam.

informal groups such WhatsApp groups, Village community banks (Vicoba), clan groups and family groups.

When a member of the group dies, the new insurance arrangement covers all the funeral services costs and also to at least four members of the family including wife and children.

In remarks after the deal was agreed, Metropolitan Life Tanzania Insurance's CEO, Amani Boma said with the new arrangement with NMB, more people are set to be reached through the bank's wide branch network.

"This new group insurance cover will definitely reduce the burden of making contributions in case of death of a member, wife

or child by covering all the funeral services costs," Boma said adding that the deal will more than three million customers.

NMB which is the market's most profitable, was the first bank in the country to secure bancassurance licence last year from Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority with Bank of Tanzania approval.

WTO: Port of Durban to be repositioned as a hub for the continent

DURBAN

BLOCKAGE, which saw some of the world's largest shipping container companies redirect their vessels to the route around South Africa, disrupted trade activity and global supply chains for nearly a week, costing more than an estimated \$9 billion (R128 billion) per day according to the World Trade Organisation.

The blockage also exposed the vulnerabilities of global trade flows, bringing to the fore the critical role of efficient ports that are able to respond to the needs of the current global trade ecosystem. For South Africa, this has reignited the urgent need to expand capacity and improve efficiencies at our ports in order to boost the competitiveness of our economy and the broader South Africa Development Community (SADC) region.

Over the past few years, South Africa's logistics performance has fallen behind its peers, thus there is a need to focus on enhancing competitiveness in logistics, as it has a direct impact on South Africa's trade and export competitiveness.

For example, it is far cheaper to ship a container from China to Europe than it is to ship from South Africa to Europe, even though this is almost half the distance. As far as South Africa's competitiveness is concerned, this will present a renewed opportunity for the country to implement its economic strategy.

The Port of Durban already handles 60% of trade to and from South Africa. By increasing its capacity to handle larger ships – those vessels with 15 000 20-foot equivalent (TEU) capacity, the port can be repositioned to serve the dominant southern hemisphere shipping lines.

The real benefit to South Africa is that the unit cost of inter-continental shipping will reduce over time (by as much as 20-30%). Government's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan recognises the catalytic role infrastructure investment plays in reigniting the economy.

Transnet, which is mandated to assist in lowering the cost of doing business, enabling economic growth and ensuring security of supply through the provision of port, rail and pipeline infrastructure, must be a key player in this regard.

Completion of the project has been accelerated to the year 2032, from the initial projection of 2048 as per Transnet's Market Demand Strategy (MDS). The acceleration of this massive infrastructure project is driven by the fact that the Port of Durban, ranked the third-best performing port on the continent, has limited capacity to deliver on this mandate.

On the continent, Port Tanger Med in Morocco and Port Said in Egypt have surpassed the Port of Durban in terms of ranking and performance. The capacity constraints at the port have become more apparent in recent years. The port handled approximately 2.8 million TEUs in the 2019/2020 financial year, compared to its design capacity of 2.9 million TEUs.

Economic recovery: Mining sector could record 100,000 jobs this year



Workers at a mine in Gitenga.

KIGALI

Supporting the mining sector to recover from Covid-19 related slowdown is expected to preserve jobs and create new ones, according to Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union (REWU).

In 2019 before the Covid-19 outbreak, the mining sector employed about 71,205 workers, an increase from 47,727 workers in 2017, according to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR).

However, due to the slowdown in mining and mining processing operations as a result of the pandemic, the number fell by 19 per cent to 57,379. The sector's standing emerged as the world celebrated the International Labour Day on May 1.

Industries in China and Europe had stopped operating or had significantly scaled down operations, which sent the minerals market tumbling consequently impacting Rwanda's mineral exports. This was especially the case for tin, tungsten, and tantalum (3Ts) while mining operations were also affected in

Rwanda laying off thousands of workers.

"As government helps the sector to recover from Covid-19 effects, there is hope that the number of jobs in the mining and extraction sector could increase to 100,000 jobs in 2021. Following the lesson learnt from the pandemic effects, we urge workers to embrace the saving culture," said Andre Mutsindashyaka, the Secretary-General of Rwanda extractive industry workers Union.

While jobs in the mining and extraction sector are expected to increase this year, the union urges mining companies to embrace modern mining technologies to maximize productivity and improve workers' wellbeing. "We urge mining and extraction companies to provide written contracts to workers and safety insurance to ensure workers' rights," he said. Among workers' rights that the union is advocating for also includes reduction of retirement age from 60 years old to 50 years old considering the physical strength required in the sector.

"The Ministry of Labour should also fast-track the establishment of minimum wage

seeing that lack of minimum wage particularly affects the welfare of workers in the mining sector. We have observed that some work but are not paid," he said.

Mining fund
 The union has also appealed for a 'Mining Fund' that could support investors in the mining sector. "The fund could help the investors to afford modern mining equipment to increase productivity and recover from the pandemic effects," Mutsindashyaka said.

At least 50 per cent of minerals are lost due to artisanal mining with expectations that with modern technology could curb the losses and propel the country towards the Government targets \$1.5 billion in annual revenues from mineral exports by 2024.

Covid-19 and the recovery fund
 Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda (CESTRAR), an umbrella for trade unions in Rwanda has

urged the government to ensure that the National Recovery Fund also supports workers affected by the Coronavirus pandemic in all sectors of the economy.

"Many workers lost their jobs that would be feeding the families. The recovery fund should take this into account," said African Biraboneye, the General Secretary of CESTRAR. He reiterated there is a need for fast-tracking the establishment of minimum wage for workers. "Lack of minimum wage leads to wages that are not in line with the current cost of living," he said.

He also urged employers to give written employment contracts to their employees adding that over 80 percent of workers in Rwanda are in the informal sector. "We need the transition from informal to formal economy. This could change workers' lives and also boost the national economy through paying taxes and others," he noted.



Port of Durban.

CONSTRUCTION

The Guardian PROPERTY WATCH

DISCOVER INFORM INSPIRE

ASCENDAS REIT BUYING 75PC OF GALAXIS FROM CAPITALAND

SINGAPORE

Showing continued faith in demand for Singapore office space among corporate giants, Ascendas REIT has agreed to buy the 75 percent stake in a top-end business park property held by its sponsor, and partner in the project, Capitaland.

The SGX-listed commercial and industrial trust is set to pay S\$534.4 million (\$400 million) to establish 100 percent ownership in Galaxis, a six-year-old commercial project in the city's One North tech park which provides much of the office space for the NYSE-listed parent of e-commerce giant Shopee.

"Galaxis is a prime example of the type of assets that Ascendas REIT looks to acquire to achieve a stable, long-term revenue stream," Beh Swan Gin, chairman of Ascendas REIT's manager, said in a statement.

The purchase in One North's Fusionopolis technology cluster is being announced just over two weeks after Blackstone completed its acquisition of the Sandcrawler building – just one minute walk to the east – as more investors bet on large scale enterprises leasing office space in Southeast Asia's wealthiest city.

Through buying out its sponsor's stake, Ascendas REIT will now be



Galaxis floors are home to Shopee and Oracle.

the sole owner of a property which features floor plates measuring 1,740 to 3,867 square metres (18,729 to 41,624 square feet). That large format approach has helped it to attract Shopee parent firm, Sea Ltd, as well as Oracle and Japanese electronics maker Canon.

Ascendas REIT had acquired its existing 25 percent ownership interest in Gal-

axis from Japan's Mitsui and Company last year for S\$102.91 million. Located near One-North MRT station, the Green Mark Platinum-rated Galaxis encompasses a 17-storey business park and office tower, a five-storey work lofts building and a two-storey retail podium.

The property's 60,935 square metres (655,899 square feet) of net lettable area

includes 44,556 square metres of business park space, 10,305 square metres of office space, 4,106 square metres of retail and F&B space and 1,968 square metres of work lofts.

Ascendas REIT's agreed consideration values the 60-year leasehold asset at S\$11,816 (\$8,847) per square metre of NLA. The occupancy rate as of March was 98.6 percent, and the weighted average lease expiry was 2.4 years.

With the acquisition, the trust is expanding its Singapore business and science park holdings by 8.8 percent in terms of NLA, from 689,980 square metres to 750,915 square metres, the manager said. Ascendas REIT's full ownership of Galaxis will enlarge its business and science park portfolio in Singapore by 18 percent to S\$4.9 billion. Including Galaxis, Ascendas REIT expects to own five properties with a total NLA of 188,225 square metres within One-North, a collection of tech campuses, by the end of 2021.

Coinciding with the acquisition announcement, Ascendas REIT on Wednesday posted notice that it had closed a private placement of 142,664,000 new units at a fixed issue price of S\$2.944 per new unit. The private placement was 2.6 times covered and drew strong demand from new and existing institutional, accredited and other investors, the manager said.

About S\$240.1 million, or more than half the gross proceeds, will be used to partly fund the Galaxis acquisition, the Business Times reported. The manager anticipates an initial net property income yield of 5.4 percent, or 5.3 percent post-transaction cost, from the Galaxis asset.

Blackstone announced on 20 April that it had taken possession of the Sandcrawler building, after completing its S\$175.8 million purchase of the tech park property from a unit of Disney-owned Lucasfilm through an agreement signed in January.

Singapore's ability to at-

tract both western multinationals and Chinese tech giants, on top of its growing list of domestic players has boosted rents and bolstered investor interest in office properties in the city, particularly in suburban tech park projects, according to Tricia Song, who leads the research team at Colliers International in the city.

"With new demand driven by the technology sector, CBD Grade A office net absorption turned positive in Q1 2021 after two consecutive quarters of contraction", Song said in a statement. "This is a sign of recovery, and we can expect rents to rebound 5.5% by end-2021, in line with the GDP growth, as supply stays at benign levels."

During the first quarter of this year, Bytedance, the Chinese company behind the Tiktok video app, took up another floor at One Raffles Quay South in Singapore and UK appliance maker Dyson agreed to lease 110,000 square feet at St James Power Station.

LONDON

British mortgage lending rose by £11.8 billion (\$16.36bn) in March in the strongest net increase on record after Chancellor Rishi Sunak extended a tax break for property buyers.

The rise in mortgage borrowing, the biggest increase since records began in 1993, came as British lenders approved 82,735 mortgages in March, a decrease of almost 5,000 from February and down from the peak of 103,100 seen in November, Bank of England data showed. "The strong borrowing was driven by the expected ending of the temporary stamp duty tax relief at the end of March, which has now been extended to the end of June," the BoE said.

The mortgage approval level was still above pre-pandemic rates, with 73,000 mortgages approved in February last year. Britain's housing market soared last year after the first coronavirus lockdown created pent-up demand and Mr Sunak's stamp duty break, unveiled in July, boosted activity in the sector even more.

The tax break was due to expire at the end of March, but Mr Sunak extended it until June in his March budget statement, with the first £500,000 of any property purchase in England or Northern Ireland remaining exempt from the levy. There

Highest rise in UK mortgage lending on record after stamp duty extension



Britain's mortgage approval level is still above pre-pandemic rates, as the country's housing market continues to boom.

will also be a £250,000 tax-free allowance until the end of September.

The average British house price hit a record high of £254,606 in March, according to the Halifax House Price Index, as the market saw a resurgence in activity, with prices 6.5 per-

cent higher than in March 2020 – the equivalent of £15,430 in cash terms.

The actual interest rate paid on newly drawn mortgages rose 4 basis points to 1.95 per cent in March, the BoE said, above the low of 1.72 per cent in August last year, with the average rate

paid by borrowers sitting at 2.1 per cent.

"Low interest rates, the stamp duty holiday, and a paradigm shift in homeworking, are collectively proving a heady cocktail for the property market, and consumers are looking to make the most of favourable

financial conditions to climb the housing ladder," said Laith Khalaf, financial analyst at AJ Bell.

Mr Khalaf said alarm bells may be ringing because the previous peak in borrowing came in October 2006, just before the global financial

crisis, but he said banks are much better capitalised this time around and much stricter in terms of their lending activity, with higher deposits taken on mortgages. "This doesn't prevent a downturn in the housing market, but it reduces the chance of a catastrophic systemic meltdown if property prices falter," Mr Khalaf said.

Meanwhile, Britons made a £0.5bn net repayment of consumer credit in March, slightly lower than the average £1.9bn seen each month over the past year. March was the last month of full lockdown in England before non-essential shops reopened in April along with outdoor cafes and restaurants. Unsecured lending to consumers was 8.6 per cent lower than in March last year when Britain's first coronavirus lockdown started.

However, household deposits remained strong in March, with a net flow of £16.2bn, higher than the £15.2bn monthly average seen since March last year. "Consumers continue to save large chunks of money into bank accounts paying little or no interest. These latest figures show the state of play in March, when full lockdown was still largely upon us," said Mr Khalaf.

"When the Bank of England next updates us on April's consumer activity, we'll be able to see if the reopening of the economy is beginning to put the pandemic savings habit into reverse. Consumers paid down less credit card debt in March, which tentatively suggests that might be beginning to happen."

Saudi Arabia's Tourism Development Fund to co-finance \$346m tourism project in Madinah

RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's Tourism Development Fund (TDF) will jointly finance a 1.3 billion Saudi riyals (\$346 million) project in Madinah aimed at capitalising the tourism potential of the holy city. The fund signed an agreement on Thursday with Knowledge Economic City and Riyadh Bank to finance the development of "KEC Hub", a 68,000 square metre tourism complex in Madinah.

"This agreement is one of several successful agreements with local banks aimed at providing investors with attractive financial solutions that encourage investments into this promising sector," Qusai Al Fakhri, chief executive of TDF said in a statement. "It exemplifies our commitment to delivering on the National Tourism Strategy, increasing the GDP contribution of the tourism sector from 3 per cent to 10 per cent by 2030 and creating one million new jobs."

The project, formerly known as Madinah Downtown, is based on King Abdulaziz Road about 6 kilometres from the Prophet's Mosque. It will contain a shopping mall, a five-star hotel, an interactive museum about Madinah, a cinema, health club and a commercial boulevard overlooking a garden and green spaces, developer KEC said in a statement to the Tadawul stock exchange, where its shares trade.

In a series of other statements, it said it had agreed a deal with Hilton Worldwide to manage the hotel, with engineering consultancy Ehaf to act as structural engineer and Al-Saad Contracting Company to build it. The first phase of the project will be completed by 2024, KEC said.

As part of the deal, TDF will provide funding of 391m riyals to the development, while Riyadh Bank will provide equal funding as a result of an earlier agreement signed with TDF to facilitate and finance tourism investments in the kingdom. "With

its rich culture and heritage and the government's unwavering commitment to boost tourism, Saudi Arabia presents invaluable investment opportunities," Mr Al Fakhri, said.

"Our mission at TDF is to unlock these opportunities by providing viable funding options, investment know-how and access to support services; all to make the investor experience more attractive." Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, is rapidly transforming its economy as it looks to reduce its dependence on oil, nurture domestic industries, boost jobs and diversify revenue.

It is developing a number of projects, including Neom – a \$500bn futuristic city comprising a nature reserve, coral reefs and heritage sites on about 50 islands off the Red Sea – and a mega entertainment and sports project, named Qiddiya, in the capital.

The TDF was set up last year with an initial investment of \$4bn to drive the growth of the tourism sector in



A bird's eye view of "KEC Hub" complex in Madinah.

the kingdom. It also signed an agreement with Riyadh Bank and Banque Saudi Fransi, to finance tourism projects worth up to 160bn riyals in the country.

KEC also said on Thursday that Riyadh Capital is providing an additional 97m riyals of funding to the Madinah Gate project – a scheme being built on land next to the Haramain

High Speed Rail terminal. It will also have a mall, restaurants and entertainment space as well as a four-star hotel and hotel apartments.

WORLD

COVID-19 spreading in rural India, record daily rises in infections, deaths

NEW DELHI

HOPES that India's deadly second wave of COVID-19 was about to peak were swept away yesterday as it posted record daily infections and deaths and as the virus spread from cities to villages across the world's second-most populous nation.

India reported a record 412,262 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours and a record 3,980 deaths. COVID-19 infections have now surged past 21 million, with a total death toll of 230,168, health ministry data show.

Government modelling had forecast a peak in second wave infections by Wednesday.

"This temporarily halts speculations of a peak," Rijo M John, a professor at the Indian Institute of Management in the southern state of Kerala, said on Twitter.

With hospitals scrambling for beds and oxygen in response to the surge in infections, the World Health Organization said in a weekly report that India accounted for nearly half the coronavirus cases reported worldwide last week and a quarter of the deaths.

India has 3.45 million active cases.

Medical experts say India's actual figures could be five to 10 times the official tallies.

India's COVID-19 crisis has been most acute in the capital, New Delhi, among other cities, but in rural areas - home to nearly 70% of India's 1.3 billion people - limited public healthcare is posing more challenges.

"The situation has become dangerous in villages," said Suresh Kumar, a field coordinator with Manav Sansadhan Evam Mahila Vikas Sansthan, a human rights charity.

In some villages where the charity works in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh - home to about 200 million people - "there are deaths in almost every second house", he said.

"People are scared and huddled in their homes with fever and cough. The symptoms are all of COVID-19, but with no information available many think it is seasonal flu."

India's Goa state, a hugely popular tourist destination on the western coast, has the highest rate of COVID-19 infections in the country, with up to one in every two people testing positive in recent weeks, government officials said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been widely criticized for not acting sooner to suppress the second wave, after religious festivals and political rallies drew tens of thousands of people in recent weeks and became "super spreader" events.

The surge in infections has also coincided with a dramatic drop in vaccinations because of supply and delivery problems, despite India being a major vaccine producer.

Several states have imposed various levels of social restrictions to try and stem infections, but the federal government has refused to impose a national lockdown.

India's southern state of Kerala, which has 376,004 active cases, announced it will impose nine days of curbs on movement from



A man wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) stands next to a burning funeral pyre of a relative, who died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), before his cremation, at a crematorium in New Delhi, India on Wednesday. REUTERS

Saturday.

LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS

In the capital Delhi, fewer than 20 of more than 5,000 COVID-19 intensive care beds are free at any one time.

Student doctors like Rohan Aggarwal, 26, recruited to fight the second wave, are being forced to make life and death decisions.

His Holy Family Hospital in Delhi normally has a capacity for 275 adults, but is currently caring for 385.

"Who to be saved, who not to be saved should be decided by God," Aggarwal told Reuters during a grim overnight shift.

"We are not made for that - we are just humans. But at this point in time, we are being made to do this."

In the office of a Hindu crematorium in Delhi, the floor and shelves are overflowing with earthen pots, plastic packets and steel containers filled with the ashes of the city's many COVID-19 victims who have been cremated.

Practising Hindus collect the ashes of the dead a few days af-

ter the funeral for immersion in a river or sea, one of the many rituals that they believe lead to salvation of the soul.

"Our lockers are full. We cannot store any more ashes. We used to get around 40 COVID-19 bodies a day. We are now telling relatives to take the ashes with them on the same day." Pankaj Sharma, a manager at the crematorium told Reuters.

While India is the world's biggest vaccine maker, it is struggling to produce enough product for the surge in infections. Its two current vaccine producers will take two months or more to boost total monthly output from the current 70 million to 80 million doses.

The country's top scientific adviser has warned of a possible third wave of infections.

"Phase 3 is inevitable, given the high levels of circulating virus," the government's principal scientific adviser, K. VijayRaghavan told a news briefing on Wednesday.

"But it is not clear on what time scale this phase 3 will occur... We should prepare for new waves."

Ex-Ugandan rebel commander sentenced to 25 years in prison

AMSTERDAM

THE International Criminal Court yesterday sentenced a former Ugandan child soldier who became a commander of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army to 25 years in prison for crimes including rape, sexual enslavement, child abduction, torture and murder.

Dominic Ongwen (pictured), who was taken into ICC custody in 2015, was convicted in February of 61 out of 70 alleged crimes. In many, the victims were women and children.

Presiding Judge Bertram Schmitt said the panel of judges had considered sentencing Ongwen to life imprisonment, the court's harshest punishment, but had decided against it due to the defendant's own personal suffering.

Ongwen, who is his early 40s, sat in court in a grey suit and red tie looking impassively as the decision was read aloud. He is appealing his conviction.

Led by fugitive warlord Joseph Kony, the LRA terrorized Ugandans for nearly 20 years as it battled the government of President Yoweri Museveni from bases in northern Uganda and neighbouring countries. It has now largely been wiped out.

Ongwen was abducted as a 9-year-old boy and forced into a life of violence after the group killed his parents. At the same time, the judges found, he knowingly committed a vast range of heinous crimes as an adult, many of them against defenseless children and women who were forced into slavery or to take up arms.

He was "a perpetrator who willfully brought tremendous suffering upon his victims, however, also a perpetrator who himself has previously endured extreme suffering at the hands of the group of which he later became a prominent member and leader," Judge Schmitt said.

Prosecutors had demanded he get at least 20 years in prison, while his defense argued he should get no more than a 10-year sentence because he was traumatized as a child soldier. But the crimes were so grave, including "instances where murder was committed by burning people alive in houses and the harsh treatment of children," that a longer sentence was fitting, the court found.

"Dominic Ongwen fully intended all of these crimes. He played a key role in their commission, he participated in the planning and personally took part in it. It was he who decided to launch the attacks, he selected the fighters and issued the specific instructions ahead of each attack," the ruling said.

Agencies

UK sends navy patrol ships to Jersey after French threats

BY BLOOMBERG

THE UK has sent two military patrol vessels to the British isle of Jersey ahead of a potential blockade by French fishermen, as a row with France over post-Brexit fishing rights deepened.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with Jersey's political leaders on Wednesday and said any blockade would be "unjustified," according to a statement from the UK government. France responded by dispatching its own naval observation vessel, the Athos, to the area, after previously threatening to cut off electricity supplies to Jersey in protest at a lack of licenses for its fishermen.

The British patrol ships are of a type that is generally armed with 20mm and 30mm guns and can carry 45 crew with as many as 50 Royal Marines, according to the Ministry of Defence website. The two vessels are being sent as a precautionary measure, the UK said.

The French government is following the situation closely and is in touch with the British, according to a French diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The prime minister and chief minister stressed the urgent need for a de-escalation in tensions and for dialog between Jersey and France on fishing access," the UK statement said.

Deployment of the ships marks a striking intensification of the spat between two NATO allies and is a sign of the ongoing frictions caused by Britain's departure from the European Union. Negotiations over fish were one of the most contentious elements of the post-Brexit accord, and France has separately threatened to limit access for UK financial services companies into the EU if its fishing boats aren't treated fairly.

Tensions rose earlier this week after France's maritime minister, Annick Girardin, said she was "revolted" when she heard that Jersey had granted fishing licenses that included extra conditions and criteria which were not compliant with the Brexit deal. Girardin said she had flagged the non-compliance to the European Commission.

"We're ready to resort to retaliatory measures" that are in the Brexit accord, she told lawmakers in the National Assembly on Tuesday. The European Commission has notified the UK that the way it has imposed additional restrictions on French fishermen leaves it in breach of the Brexit trade deal, commission spokeswoman Vivian Loonela said Wednesday night.

Agencies

Chinese embassy deplores NZ parliament motion on Xinjiang

HONG KONG

THE Chinese Embassy in New Zealand on Wednesday deplored the decision of the country's parliament to pass a Xinjiang-related motion, saying it made a groundless accusation against China and contravened international law.

In a statement, a spokesperson of the embassy said the move grossly interferes with China's internal affairs and runs counter to basic norms governing international relations.

"The Chinese side deplores and firmly opposes such action. We urge the New Zealand side to respect truth and facts, stop the erroneous practices immediately and uphold China-New Zealand relations

through concrete actions," the spokesperson was quoted as saying in the statement.

"We hope the NZ Parliament will do more to strengthen the friendship and cooperation between our two countries and people, not the other way around."

The spokesperson said Xinjiang-related issues in essence are about countering violent terrorism, radicalization and separatism.

"They concern China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security. A few years ago, Xinjiang witnessed thousands of violent terrorist attacks, bringing sufferings to hundreds and thousands of innocent people," the spokesperson said.

"In this context, the Chinese



Villagers learn to make handicrafts at Kurti village in Sarhulsun township, Altay prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Jan 30, 2021. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

government firmly cracked down on terrorism and took preventative counter-terrorism measures to achieve eradication through education and vocational training."

The spokesperson said the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region has been earnestly

implementing the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which is consistent with the principles and spirit of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

"Thanks to the efforts of the local people of all ethnic groups, there has been

no single terrorist attack for more than four years in a row in Xinjiang. The region now enjoys social stability and a sound development momentum, and the people are living a safe and happy life," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also said that all residents including Uygurs in Xinjiang fully enjoy their human rights, including the right to subsistence and development.

"Languages, traditional cultures and customs of all ethnic minorities in Xinjiang have been well protected and inherited. These achievements in Xinjiang are widely recognized by the international community," the spokesperson said.

Xinhua

Netanyahu's main rival tasked with forming Israeli government

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI President Reuven Rivlin on Wednesday tasked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's main rival, Yair Lapid, with the formation of a new coalition government, a day after Netanyahu failed to do so.

In a broadcast statement, Rivlin announced that following a series of consultation talks earlier in the day with

leaders of other parties, he came to the conclusion that Lapid, leader of the centrist party of Yesh Atid, has "the highest chances" of forming a new government.

Lapid has the support of 56 lawmakers, Rivlin said. He now runs short of five lawmakers to form a majority coalition in Israel's 120-seat parliament.

During the consultation talks with Rivlin, Naftali Ben-

net, leader of a seven-seat nationalist party called Yamina, said he is not ruling out a coalition with Lapid.

Mahmoud Abbas, leader of Ra'am, the party of the Islamic movement in Israel which holds four seats in the parliament, said he "will cooperate

in a positive way with anyone who will be tasked with forming the government."

Rivlin said he is hopeful that "a stable government" will be established to avoid a fifth round of elections in two years, following a series of inconclusive previous ones and a lingering political deadlock.

Lapid now has 28 days to put together a new governing coalition.

Lapid said on Wednesday

he will work to form a unity government "as soon as possible."

On Wednesday night, Lapid talked with possible coalition partners after Israel's longest-serving leader Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a new government by the deadline on Tuesday.

"A unity government is not a compromise -- it's our goal," Lapid said in a statement.

Agencies

YEREVAN

THE situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has substantially normalized and Russian peacekeepers are settling minor incidents promptly and effectively, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said yesterday.

"We are observing positive trends in the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. The situation on the ground has substantially normalized. The Russian peacekeeping contingent deployed along the engagement line and the Lachin corridor is acting as a guarantor of security," Russia's top diplomat said at a meeting with his Armenian

Russia's top diplomat satisfied with situation in Nagorno-Karabakh normalising

counterpart Ara Ayyvazyan.

"Minor incidents that perhaps can't be avoided in any operation are being ironed out by our peacekeepers promptly and effectively. They are also paying constant attention to completing a POW swap," he said.

A trilateral working group at the level of deputy prime ministers "is working very actively and smoothly," the Russian foreign minister pointed out.

"We are interested in this work to proceed further and contribute to building a dia-

logue between Baku and Yerevan to ensure the sustainable development of the South Caucasus," Lavrov stressed.

For his part, Armenia's top diplomat noted that the sides "had already discussed a couple of issues on settling the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh." "In this context, we stress the importance of cultivating conditions for resuming the peace process under the aegis of the OSCE 'Troika' of co-chairs," Ayyvazyan said.

"The most important issue is that Azerbaijan should release



all prisoners of war and individuals held in custody and this task has to be resolved as soon as possible, which is also

evidenced by a lot of information on continued crimes," the Armenian foreign minister added.

Creating conditions for the return of refugees to their homes, providing humanitarian aid to civilians, restoring the economy of Nagorno-Karabakh and unblocking transport links must also be seen as urgent issues, Ayyvazyan stressed.

Renewed clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia erupted on September 27, 2020 with intense battles in the disputed

region of Nagorno-Karabakh. On November 9, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signed a joint statement on a complete ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh starting from November 10.

Under the document, the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides maintained the positions that they had held, some districts passed over to Baku's control and Russian peacekeepers were deployed along the engagement line and the

Lachin corridor in Nagorno-Karabakh. The statement also envisaged an "all-for-all" POW swap.

After the Russian peacekeepers had been deployed to the region, the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh stabilized. Tens of thousands of Karabakh residents who had fled their homes during the hostilities returned to the region with the help of the Russian peacekeeping contingent.

Talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement have been ongoing since 1992 under the OSCE Minsk Group, led by its three co-chairs - Russia, France and the United States.

Save the nation -- Revisiting overseas footprints of CPC early leaders during their youth

BEIJING

AS the Communist Party of China (CPC) celebrates its centenary this year, the footprints of the party's founders and early leaders across the world in pursuing a new China have drawn attention from historians and scholars.

Starting in 1919, thousands of young Chinese arrived in Western Europe and other parts of Asia to study while working, some of whom, inspired by Marxism, established the earliest CPC groups in local countries and became pioneers of salvaging China in the coming decades.

MONTARGIS, FRANCE: A BIT OF EMBRYO FOR CPC

A plaque standing in Durzy Garden, downtown Montargis, displays a black-and-white group photo of a dozen of Chinese students. They were participants to the "Work-Study Movement," during which thousands of progressive young Chinese were sent to France, where they worked in factories in Paris, Lyon and Montargis to pay for their studies.

Among those sent to Montargis, a small city around 100 km to the south of Paris, there was a young man called Deng Xiaoping, who later became the Chinese leader and the chief architect of China's reform and opening-up. From July 6 to 10, 1920, those young Chinese met in the garden to discuss ways "to transform China and the world," and the idea of founding a communist party in China came up.

Cai Hesen, one of the founding members of the CPC and a friend of Mao Zedong, was of particular importance among those students, said Jean-Louis Rizzo, a retired history professor of Sciences Po, a Paris-based research university.

"The ideas drawn from these discussions were sent to a friend of Cai, who stayed in China. That is Mao," Rizzo told Xinhua. "The two would exchange letters, telling each other that they agree with this theory ... The ideas from Montargis then marked a bit the ferment, the embryo of the CPC," he said. Hundreds of

meters away from Durzy garden stands an about-300-year-old townhouse. Some rooms in the house were leased to the young Chinese in the 1920s. The building has now been turned into a museum.

An introduction on the first floor of the museum about Deng Xiaoping told visitors how he arrived in France in October 1920, when he had just turned 16.

Deng settled in Montargis and worked there as a laborer in the Hutchinson rubber factory in February 1922, when he experienced a major turning point of his life.

Following meetings and discussions with peers, Deng was attracted by Marxism and developed a better understanding of the world and China. From then on, he grew into a firm believer in Communism.

GOETTINGEN, GERMANY: TEMPORARY HOME TO FUTURE TOP MARSHAL OF CHINESE ARMY

The library of Goettingen, Germany's time-honored city, hosts a series of documents that record the life of Chinese students there about a hundred years ago.

Among the students was Zhu De, one of the major founders of the People's Republic of China and the first of the top ten marshals in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). A registration card yellowed with time in the library carries Zhu's handwriting, which shows that he declared himself as a "Chinese" "from Sichuan Province," studying "Sociology, Department of Philosophy" and living in "Planckstrasse 3."

Zhu was born in 1886 and a graduate from China's Yunnan Military Academy. He joined the 1911 Revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty and the following wars against the then-sprouting warlords in China, before coming to Europe.

"He was not young and spent a lot of years in the military. He wanted to expand his vision here, in a Western industrialized country," said Rolf Kohlstedt, a historian at the Goettingen City Archive.

Another card can be found is Zhu's household registration report to the lo-



A sculpture of a group of Chinese revolutionaries is unveiled in the China Cultural Center in Paris, France, March 23, 2019. (Xinhua)

cal police. On a stamped portrait photo, Zhu was a bright-eyed 36-year-old in a suit. Zhu stated in the card that before moving to Goettingen, he was in "Wilmsdorf, Berlin."

According to historical documents, Zhu met Zhou Enlai, another future prominent leader of the CPC, who resided in Wilmsdorf in 1922, and joined the CPC with the faith that the party is the only remedy for the then war-torn, poverty-ridden, imperialist-bullied China. On Planckstrasse street in the eastern part of Goettingen, a two-floor red-bricks house where Zhu was believed to live during his stay in Germany, is still a major attraction for Chinese tourists.

Zhu obtained important insights in military strategic thinking and communication techniques during that time, said Dagmar Yu-Dembksi, former managing director of Confucius Institute at the Free

University of Berlin, citing memoirs of Zhu's friends and comrades, and historical documents. "Zhu attended the Chinese language group of the German Communist Party and was an industrious learner, who regularly took part in the weekly debates on Marxist theory and problems of international political struggles seeking independence," Yu-Dembksi said.

"Zhu had an active role in the anti-imperialist demonstrations and meetings at that time," she said.

For Duanmu Mei, a historian from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, "these outstanding representatives of the Work-Study Movement played an epoch-making role in the future revolution, development and reform of China."

"Their work-study experience in Europe gave them a far sight, a broad vision and an open heart. It is precisely these three extraordinary qualities that made them outstanding and become leaders of the revolution, of the party and the country," she said.

TOKYO, JAPAN: A WITNESS TO

CPC PIONEER'S PURSUIT OF SAVING CHINA

Thousands of miles away from Europe, a young Chinese called Li Dazhao went to study in Japan and started living in Tokyo in the winter of 1913. In September 1914, he formally began his study of political economy in Waseda University.

In a book written by Honorary Professor Hikotaro Ando at Waseda University, not only Li's transcripts, but also lists in detail of the 11 subjects he had studied at the university and their corresponding teachers are included. "Compared with other Japanese students, Li Dazhao's performance was quite good," Ando commented.

In January 1915, during Li's first year of study at Waseda University, then Japanese Prime Minister Shigenobu Okuma and his cabinet secretly proposed the "Twenty-one Demands" against China. Chinese students studying in Japan responded very strongly to the incident, and Li also actively joined the students' protests.

Xinhua

EU chief defends vaccination drive amid rising exports

GENEVA

THE head of the European Union's executive arm mounted a spirited defense of the bloc's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, taking a swipe at countries like the US and the UK as she hailed her region as the world's top vaccines exporter.

"It is clear that our European vaccination campaign is a success," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told an online conference. "What counts is the steadily increasing, daily delivery of vaccines to our people - and to the world."

"Some might say that countries like the US and the United Kingdom have been faster at the beginning," von der Leyen said. "But I say: Europe achieved this success, while remaining open to the world. While others keep their vaccine production for themselves, Europe is the main exporter of vaccines worldwide."

The EU's vaccine production capacity has been keeping the global rollout of shots going, even as it dealt with early setbacks in its inoculation campaign, especially delays by AstraZeneca Plc. Governments initially criticized the Commission but the bloc's vaccination push has picked up pace in recent weeks.

WTO

As the US President Joe Biden has backed a proposed waiver for COVID-19 vaccine intellectual property rights, the next stop is for the World Trade Organization to hammer out a deal - a process that could take months.

Not only are the negotiations expected to be lengthy, they are also likely to result in a waiver that is significantly narrower in scope and shorter in duration than the one initially proposed by India and South Africa, trade experts said.

Jordanian communist party leader praises CPC's people-centered philosophy

AMMAN

UPHOLDING the people-centered philosophy, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has kept the Chinese people as the top priority and striven to serve them wholeheartedly, Secretary General of Jordan's Communist Party Faraj Itmeiza has said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua on the occasion of the 100th founding anniversary of the CPC, Itmeiza praised China's comprehensive achievement under the CPC's leadership, noting that he could feel that the CPC and the Chinese people have been engaged in unceasing endeavors for a better future.

"What struck me the most was that some projects that usually take several years in other countries can be finished only in a few months or weeks in China," he said.

"It seems that China is in a race against time for realizing the best future for the Chinese people and humanity," he added.

Itmeiza (pictured), who has visited China twice in the past years, said that though some Western media slandered and misrepresented the facts about China, the reality he has witnessed is that "China is a large



This undated photo shows the core module of China's space station in research.

productive country and open to other civilizations and international dialogues."

The Jordanian party chief said that his party publishes a biweekly newspaper, including local, regional, and international reports, with China's latest development often available in the international section.

During the interview, Itmeiza highlighted the distinguished leadership of the CPC, the support of the Chinese people for the party, and the country's sustainable development plans as the pillars to China's achieve-

ment "miracle."

"It was apparent that the Chinese people were united under the CPC's leadership in eradicating extreme poverty as well as combating the COVID-19 pandemic," he added.

Notably, he spoke highly of China's contribution to the global fight against the pandemic, adding that China has also made its vaccines accessible as a global public good and provided humanitarian assistance to other countries, especially developing countries.

In terms of bilateral rela-

tions, Itmeiza said he looked forward to closer cooperation between the two countries and the two parties, and appreciated China's support and assistance to Jordan, especially in the fields of technology and education.

Suggesting other countries learn from the CPC's governance experience, he said that "it is not to fully copy it, but we have to act like China by first studying issues, and then adopting the positive sides to serve our country and people."

Xinhua

West annoyed that truth about developments in Ukraine is reaching UN - Russian diplomat

UNITED NATIONS

RUSSIA will continue to infuriate the West by telling the truth about the developments in Ukraine at the United Nations, Russia's First Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyansky said on Wednesday after the UN Security Council's Arria-formula informal meeting on Ukraine.

The meeting was convened at Russia's initiative to hear witnesses of the May 2, 2014 developments in Odessa.

The Western colleagues "did not even bother to try to establish dialogue and ask those who knows more better than others about the details of what is going on in Ukraine," he wrote on his Telegram channel.

"In response to sincere, fact-based stories about those hideous events that cannot leave any normal person indifferent, in response to personal recollections of what happened then, we heard the same old Western mantra about our destructive actions against Ukraine."



"But the truth about the tragedy in Odessa, about what happened and what is happening in southeastern Ukraine is gradually reaching the United Nations," he stated. "It is becoming part of the public domain, is reaching out those who wants to understand what is going on. And it annoys our Western colleagues, it was clear from their remarks."

"Well, we will continue to annoy them. We have no other way out. People say, constant dropping wears away a stone," he added.

The Odessa tragedy

On May 2, 2014, Ukrainian radical nationalists, includ-

ing members of the Pravy Sektor organization (or Right Sector, outlawed in Russia) set fire to the House of Trade Unions in the city of Odessa, where people protecting against the 2014 Ukrainian coup had found shelter. According to official estimates, the clashes killed 48 people, most of whom lost their lives in the Trade Union House fire, while 240 more people were reported to be injured in the inferno and its aftermath.

The government accused "anti-Maidan" supporters of being the instigators, however, the investigation was unable to prove their case in court. As a result, everyone initially detained in relation to this case was released.

In September 2019, Ukraine's National Bureau of Investigation opened a case against former speaker of the Ukrainian parliament Andrei Parubiy in relation to the events in Odessa. Parubiy himself said that his actions in the criminal case are classified as "creation and coordination of armed groups with the aim to organize mass disturbances."

Agencies

Experts warn against cliquism as G7 meeting ends

LONDON

AS the first in-person meeting in two years of the Group of Seven (G7) foreign and development ministers ended here on Wednesday, officials vowed to tackle economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and various regional security issues.

Experts, however, have said the club of rich countries may prove to be inadequate to address global challenges if they fail to be more inclusive and seek exclusion of certain countries for reasons like ideological or political differences.

To forge an alliance of "like-minded" countries, the G7 has invited representatives from the European

Union, Australia, India, South Korea, South Africa, and this year's chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Brunei, for the three-day meeting.

Experts, however, have said divisions among the countries and groups might not be easy to overcome, especially those regarding China, and therefore shutting out China by an expanded alliance is not possible.

"For many, China is an indispensable trading partner," Khairy Tourk, professor of economics at Chicago-based Illinois Institute of Technology, said Wednesday on the

Financial Times.

"For example, industrial associations such as the Federation of German Industries (BDI) in Germany and Keidanren in Japan, as well as the chaebol in South Korea, are all eager to participate with China in building projects in third (BRI) countries," he added. "India, the largest beneficiary of the (China-led) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank loans, is also reluctant to join an anti-China alliance."

Robin Niblett, director and chief executive of London-based think tank Chatham House, pointed out that the

motive to contain China is doomed.

"This more inclusive G7 should have positive core objectives this year. ... not to seek to contain China or oppose Russia, on which there would not be agreement," he said. Niblett called on the group to focus on such a positive agenda as strengthening the countries' economic and technological resilience as well as agreeing on common positions in the World Trade Organization on upgrading world trade rules.

Agreement in these areas could provide the platform for cooperation on sharing

digital health data or building smart grids, thus tackling two of the biggest global challenges of the present day, resilience to the next pandemic and a successful energy transition away from reliance on fossil fuels, he added.

David Phinnemore, professor of European politics at Queen's University Belfast, has told Xinhua that for the G7 to stay relevant and tackle global challenges, it needs to engage with China.

"I think it (G7) has always served as a forum where you bring together some of the most powerful economists in the world," he said. "But

increasingly, it's only some, it's not all of them as they used to be the case. So we're obviously missing quite significant power, economic powers there ... China most obviously."

"I think we're not in the position, we were a couple of decades back where the G7 was seen by some people as the key to how the world was going to be economically, it doesn't hold that same power and position that it did back then," he said.

"We shouldn't overstate its influence or importance," he added. "We shouldn't be over exaggerating our expecta-

tions from what's going to come out of it in the coming years."

Meanwhile, Phinnemore urged the G7 to welcome "healthy competition," including with China, while avoiding competitions where certain countries are shunned out.

"While competition can be healthy, you want to have that competition managed in a way such that the detrimental impacts of it are minimized and that arguably everybody ideally can benefit from the cooperation," he said.

John Vogler, professor of international relations at Keele University, also agreed that the concept of the G7 "is beginning to look a little bit dated" in the current global context.

Xinhua

Soccer stakeholder blames outfits' leaders for entertaining match fixing



Morning Star soccer squad's players take part in a recent training in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA's veteran football administrator, Jonas Tiboroha, has blamed local clubs' leaders for being main perpetrators of match fixing and corruption cases in the country.

The former Yanga secretary general admitted in a recent interview that due to recent cases of match fixing and corruption, the integrity of the game in the country is under threat.

He asked football stakeholders in the country to tighten loose ends so as to ensure that the game is safe.

The University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) senior lecturer said match fixing and corrupt activities are the attitude of the mind which is slowly getting out of hand mainly due to a desire to please people by using illegal means.

He noted for clubs to yield the desired results there is a need for clubs to make significant investment.

He pointed out: "In my view leaders of our local football clubs are to blame for being behind match fixing, cases of corrupting referees, match commissioners and players."

"The clubs' leaders are involved in the malpractice as one way of pleasing their clubs' fans and supporters, the problem is that at elections the leaders gave their clubs' fans false hopes, when they fail to achieve what they promised they resort to corruption," he said.

He reasoned that if clubs' leaders cannot entice referees, match commissioners and players with either money or materials, corruption and match fixing can not take place.

Tiboroha advised that for the malpractice to end in the country, there is a need for stakeholders to conduct civic education.

The remarks by the sports administrator come after recent allegations had it that Tanzania Prisons were offered 40m/- by Yanga so they can lose to the latter in this season's Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC) round of 16 tie, which took place in Rukwa.

Recently FIFA, in collaboration with

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has designed to improve education and build integrity capacity within all 211 member associations including Tanzania.

In a bid to strengthen the fight against match-fixing, FIFA launched Global Integrity Program in March.

During the launch, FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, said the program was aimed at safeguarding the integrity of the game.

Infantino pointed out: "Match-fixing is an issue that is very real and threatens the integrity and credibility of football in many countries around the world."

"Working in close collaboration with the experts at the UNODC and alongside other ongoing efforts that FIFA is taking, the FIFA Global Integrity Program is another important step by FIFA to protect the integrity of football and will play an important role in educating and building capacity within member associations to help fight match-fixing at a local level," Infantino was quoted as saying.

The FIFA is expected to launch the FIFA Integrity Officers Community Platform which will be the first-ever community-driven online platform dedicated exclusively to integrity officers across all member associations.

The FIFA Global Integrity Program is designed to improve education and build integrity capacity within all 211 member associations by sharing advanced know-how and resources with integrity officers.

The program also reflects the UNODC's aim of supporting governments and sports organisations in their efforts to safeguard sports from corruption and crime.

The approach aims at setting up successful and sustainable integrity and anti-corruption initiatives at local level.

The new program is organised regionally per confederation and includes a series of three-module virtual workshops to be delivered to all FIFA member associations.

Soccer clubs ought to go for better talent scouting

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THIS season's mini transfer window, as it was the case for the previous ones, was meant to give Vodacom Premier League, First Division League and Second Division League clubs opportunity to make improvement in their respective teams.

This window is not necessary for a team to rope in players, if there is no such requirement.

They should particularly not do so when there is no recommendation by members of the technical bench.

Mini transfer windows are often meant for teams which seek to register players based on weaknesses the clubs have discovered in their first round matches.

However, Premier League sides are often the ones which seem to make the most of the registration for new players in mini transfer window.

The period normally witnesses a lot of competition, compared to teams which take part in lower divisions.

The transfer gears towards seeing to it the outfits get the opportunity to make improvement to some of the positions that seem to have shortcomings and lead to less impressive results for the team.

The signings' recommendations are made by the coaches after holding consultation with the technical benches' colleagues.

The recommendations are thereafter forwarded to the officials for implementation.

This season's Premier League seems to be very competitive, only a few teams get good results and score a lot of goals in their matches.

But at the same time, some teams are clearly having problems with the signings they did so they must make improvement if they decide to do so.

I do not see the need for



Mtibwa Sugar's midfielder, Abubakar Ame (L), challenges Azam FC midfielder, Bryson Raphael, in a recent Vodacom Premier League match in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: COURTESY OF AZAM FC

clubs to sign players when the team do not have any problems as that will be deemed as a waste of resources.

This may result into loss as it has already been seen by some teams that have signed a bunch of footballers who have not clicked within their teams.

Clubs' officials who are the ones providing the signing fees should look into it.

They should not spend money based on the fact that a certain team have brought in good players.

Premier League teams should avoid posing such questions to their fans like in which competition will the outfits use the players, which positions will the players play in?

Clubs should not go on the market emotionally, they should rather stay calm.

Coaches, especially the ones whose outfits are seeking to avoid relegation, should be careful with the matter.

Several Premier League clubs seemed to be in need of strengthening their squads during mini transfer window.

They are, among others, Ihefu SC, Mbeya City FC, Mwadui FC and others whose team structure are not competent.

Some can say these teams

seem to be unprepared for league during the main transfer window.

Much as the league is competitive, soccer followers can see either one or two players fight hard for the outfits.

It is nevertheless not easy for such players to see to it their sides get good results because success comes with either quality or collective concentration of all players and the technical bench.

So, coaches need to calm down and add strength to get the best out of their outfits.

They should not simply register players in an effort to complete the required number of players.

Similarly, clubs which are not in need of roping in players should better keep their existing players.

They should not simply register players that will end up either sitting on the bench or on the podium due to lack of opportunity to prove their worth.

Such teams like Simba and Yanga do not need the mini transfer window much.

If they seek to bring in new

players then they should not carelessly do so because if the ones recruited do not get a chance to play, what will the clubs do to the newly recruited ones?

It is obvious there will be an increase in the number of players failing to secure a place in the first team.

What will happen to those clubs that are incurring losses brought about by their newly signed players?

There is no doubt the outfits will still suffer even when they decide to take the players out on loan.

Soccer players who do not get chance to make the first team will too find the going tough.

Such players will not be able to live up to their own expectations.

Will such players get opportunity to play or simply sit on the bench for the remainder of the season?

Those players' chances will hinge on either injury lay offs facing first team players or when the first team players have emergencies that keep them away from duty.

The second round has by far turned out to be quite tough for each team especially for those who are in relegation zone in all league divisions.

Domestic clubs' officials should realize that the technical aspect of the sport hardly applies to them.

Well established soccer outfits in Europe, for instance, give coaches freedom to take charge of technical matters.

The European clubs' managers and coaches have final say on players that are to be roped in, players who should be offloaded or the players who should sit on the bench.

The coaches reach decision on who should play, who should go out on loan, what they should do to make their sides perform well and so on.

The outfits' leaders hardly interfere with the tacticians' decisions.

Our clubs should emulate European sides' approach, when it comes to running outfits, with a view to seeing to it they achieve success.



A section of Tanzania's wheelchair tennis team's members pictured with their coach, Riziki Salum (standing), at a recent training, which took place in Dar es Salaam.

Wheelchair tennis players travel to Portugal for BNP Paribas World Team Cup qualifiers

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA's national wheelchair tennis squad's players, Novatus Temba and Hamisi Juma, depart for Portugal tomorrow to take part in BNP Paribas World Team Cup qualifiers.

Wheelchair Tennis Tanzania (WTT) association secretary general, Riziki Salum, the team's head coach, said the two are expected to leave for Portugal on Saturday evening.

The Portugal event will take place from May 10-16 at Vilamoura

Tennis Academy.

It will serve as qualifiers for BNP World Team Cup which is slated for Olbia Sport Centre Geovillage in Sardinia, Italy, from October 4-10 this year.

Salum complained that the country was given six places at the event but managed to only send two players due to financial difficulties the WTT is facing.

He said WTT used 11m/- used for air tickets for the two players, a coach, Coronavirus tests and other expenses.

He noted: "The organizers of

the event gave us six places, we planned to send three male players (Jumanne Nassoro, Novatus Temba and Hamisi Juma), while females are Rehema Selemani, Monica Boniface and Lucky Julius."

"We needed 25m/- to send all six, we though failed to raise that money and so far two, Temba and Juma, are going," he said.

He said the two players' air tickets were provided by BQ Constructors firm and International Tennis Federation (ITF), who provided a ticket.

Salum thanked the two for their gesture which he described as welcome.

Over 300 players will represent their respective nations for the chance to be crowned BNP Paribas World Team Cup champions.

Teams from the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia/Oceania will face off to join the automatic qualifiers at the World Group event.

Automatic qualifiers for the men's World Team Cup World Group event are Great Britain, France, Japan, Argentina, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, United

States of America (USA), Republic of Korea and Brazil, with four qualifiers and two wild cards completing the 16-team field.

While in women's event, teams with automatic qualification are Netherlands, Japan, Great Britain, South Africa, China P.R., USA, Thailand and Colombia, with four qualifiers completing the 12-team field.

In quad, participants are Japan, Israel, South Africa, Great Britain, USA and Canada, with two qualifiers completing the eight-team field.

The juniors' showdown has Australia, Great Britain, Turkey and Brazil, with four wild card nations completing the eight-team field.

Tanzania's wheelchair tennis team have in the past competed at BNP Paribas World Team Cup in Turkey and Italy.

The BNP Paribas World Team Cup is International Tennis Federation (ITF) flagship showpiece for wheelchair tennis.

Teams compete at the championship through qualification at zonal level.

Real Madrid outclassed by Chelsea as defeat raises fresh doubts around old guard

LONDON

REAL Madrid were not just beaten but outplayed, their defeat by Chelsea on Wednesday clear enough to spell the end of a team that has gone on and on but can no longer match the best in Europe.

After a historic run that has seen Zinedine Zidane's grandees win three consecutive Champions League titles and four in eight years, Real Madrid can be under no illusions.

This is the third year they have failed to reach the final and the second in a row they have faced elite English opposition and been found wanting.

"Chelsea were the better team," said midfielder Casemiro. "We have no excuses."

Madrid were outclassed by Manchester City last season in the round of 16 and while the 3-1 aggregate score against Chelsea made the tie look competitive, they were fortunate to escape a thrashing.

The second leg could have been comparable to Barcelona's humiliation by Bayern Munich, if only Chelsea were less wasteful with the string of golden opportunities they created.

Barca were thrown into crisis by that 8-2 loss in Lisbon last season, jolted to begin a painful transition that required unpopular decisions about some of the club's leading players.

Madrid, in contrast, have resisted change, Zidane opting instead to extract every last ounce of experience, character and class from his trusted lieutenants, than begin to look to the future.

It has worked too, the club overcoming a year without a single signing, on the back of another in which they spent 100 million euros on Eden Hazard, money that now looks completely wasted.

Without signings and largely without Hazard, Zidane revived and cajoled the old spine of Sergio Ramos, Luka Modric, Toni Kroos, Casemiro and Karim Benzema to reset and win again.

They won La Liga last season and if they beat Sevilla on Sunday, they could be favourites to win it again, on the cusp of Zidane's third La Liga title in four full seasons in charge.

With a depleted squad, ravaged all season by injuries and lately drained by fatigue, that would be an immense achievement.

- Real's reduced status -

This Real Madrid era will deservedly go down as one of the greatest of all time, for whom winning mentality was not just an asset but the defining feature.

Yet increasingly the level needed to win in Spain appears significantly lower than what is required in Europe, where Paris Saint-Germain were too good for Barca and Chelsea have shown themselves superior to both Real and Atletico Madrid.

If any of La Liga's top three had come up against either Bayern or City, it is hard to imagine a different result.

Madrid's reduced status is not lost on the club's president Florentino Perez, whose passion for a European Super League is driven in part by desperation to prevent the gap getting bigger.

Perez said without the millions on offer from the breakaway, Madrid cannot afford the likes of Kylian Mbappe this summer, the kind of statement signing to launch a new cycle in one-fell swoop.

But there is change that could be slower and smarter, that does not involve buying only the best players in the world at the very highest price.

Sergio Ramos and Luka Modric are both out of contract this summer, with the future of Ramos particularly uncertain.

Yet it is the role of Zidane that could now come into sharp focus, not so much around his proven capabilities with this current team, but his suitability for ushering in a new one.

AFP

Tuchel salutes Chelsea's desire as Blues reach Champions League final

LONDON

THOMAS Tuchel hailed the hunger of his "fantastic" Chelsea stars as they reached the Champions League final with a 2-0 win against Real Madrid on Wednesday.

Goals from Timo Werner and Mason Mount booked Chelsea's first Champions League final appearance since they won the competition for the only time in 2012.

Tuchel's side will face Premier League rivals Manchester City in the final in Istanbul on May 29. Chelsea's 3-1 aggregate victory was well deserved as they produced a commanding display in the semi-final second leg at Stamford Bridge, stifling Real's sporadic attacks and repeatedly hitting them on the counter.

They could easily have won more convincingly and Blues boss Tuchel was impressed by their tenacious performance.

"It was difficult in the first half when they had a lot of possession and made us suffer," Tuchel said. "We were dangerous on counter attacks, but never lost the desire or hunger to defend."

"It was a fantastic performance in the second half and we could have scored more earlier to be safe. It is a fantastic achievement and big congratulations to the team."

AFP

Win La Liga or be sacked? The high stakes facing Koeman, Simeone

By Graham Hunter, Spain writer

WHEN Barcelona host Atletico Madrid on Saturday, and Sevilla travel to reigning champions Real Madrid the following day, each club will be within four games of potentially becoming Spain's champions.

This is the tightest (six points separate first from fourth), most open (four teams) La Liga title race in living memory. Still more remarkable is that this weekend's potential title decider at Camp Nou will also be a "summit" for two coaches in Barca's Ronald Koeman and Atleti's Diego Simeone. Both either are or should be considered to be fighting to save their job.

That's right. A flurry of points for Barca over the next four matches and Koeman can lift the Liga-Copa double for the Catalans in his debut season. I know.

And if Simeone's Rojiblancos win against Barcelona, Real Sociedad, Osasuna and Valladolid, then they are champions -- nobody can prevent that. As league leaders, Atleti will lift the trophy if they secure all 12 available points.

Yet the harsh fact is that Koeman is fighting to ensure that he can see out the remaining 12 months of his Barcelona contract. And as far as Simeone goes, nobody who watched the apathetic, fear-ridden, apology of a performance which his team, patently on the Argentinian's orders, turned in to hang on to their 1-0 lead at Elche last weekend, can properly argue that Simeone even vaguely resembles the man who took over the club in 2011, or won them the title in 2014. Never mind Atleti's league position -- he's in decline.

OK, OK, hold your horses. I can imagine some of you are spluttering in apoplectic fury.

This is, I promise, neither an attempt to generate the kind of controversy which gains attention nor, unequivocally, is it any kind of personal attack on either the 58-year-old Dutchman or his Saturday night opponent.

Football -- especially in the age of instant opinions, brands, marketing, social media, ultra-important TV contracts and money, money, money -- feeds voraciously off characters like these two men. Even before we begin to evaluate what they've achieved this season it's a fact that both Koeman and Simeone are iconic. Their very presence in Spanish football, be it La Liga or the Champions League, is hugely beneficial.

Some may argue that Diego Martinez (Granada) or Julen Lopetegui (Sevilla) are "better" coaches. That the minor miracle Jose Luis Mendilibar achieved at Eibar by keeping a club from a town with a population of 28,000 in the top division these last few years is, pound for pound, easily a match for anyone who does "quite well" while in charge of



Ronald Koeman -



Diego Simeone

super-talents like Lionel Messi, Jan Oblak, Antoine Griezmann and Marcos Llorente.

But regardless of whether those people were right or wrong, it would ignore the fact that Koeman and Simeone sell. Hugely. TV companies, radio stations, sponsors, magazines, newspapers, fans, player-agents, rival footballers -- these and many more from the global football population feel irrevocably drawn to super-icons like these.

For Barcelona to be coached by the man who smashed home a howitzer 1-0 goal to ensure their first victorious European Cup final in 1992 is sexy. It's that simple.

To his credit Koeman, nearly 30 years later, doesn't look all that different. He is identifiable. Iconic. Special. The 'I'm elite, I proved it repeatedly' magical sheen which he's taken onto Barcelona's Tito Vilanova training ground and used to impose his will on this previously stumbling squad can help Barca's board sell the cash-strapped club to all kinds of customers.

Ditto Simeone. Again, he looks an almost carbon copy of the guy who snarled and brawled his way around La Liga's midfield battlegrounds when, under Raddy Antic, Atleti won the league and cup double in 1996.

And, whether you're a dedicated follower of word football or not, that gnarled, mischievous, "Who are YOU looking at?" face of his remains utterly evocative of Serie A, La Liga and Argentinian international football of the 1990s.

The fact that Simeone has already "done a Koeman" by returning to the club he loves, where he's adored, to win them European trophies PLUS their first La Liga title since he anchored their midfield in 1996, is a magical elixir. It's a good story and it enshrines his greatness. And while 99% of those who use his nickname, El Cholo, don't have a clue what it is or why it exists, it's a globally known brand name. Companies spend millions to try and establish an identity that strong.

The case for the defence doesn't rest there. Each man can point to their body of work this season and use an expletive in response to the idea that they might be fighting for the right to continue in their jobs.

At the start of this campaign, Koeman was a bit like a homeowner who has returned from a long holiday to find that someone's broken in his house, lived there for a bit and left behind

a shameful mess. That's what the former club captain was confronted with when he took over at Barcelona.

In relatively quick time, Koeman has restored order. For long parts of this season, he's unified the senior strata of the squad, the guys who've seen and done it all, with the emerging kids and occasionally even made the "whole" beautiful to watch again.

He's taken Barca to two finals, with a 50% win rate, he's lifted them their first trophy since May 2019, he's put something of a happy countenance back on Messi's face, and he's coped despite the president who appointed him (Josep Maria Bartomeu) abandoning ship in the most undignified and embarrassing manner.

The trust in Pedri, the promotion of Ilaix Moriba, finally getting a reliable tune out of Ousmane Dembele, a playing system which has suddenly made midfielder Sergio Busquets not only crucial again but happy, relevant, a fulcrum -- Koeman hasn't failed. No.

Now Simeone. I pointed out recently, and thus won't repeat at any length here, how financially vital he's been to Atleti since joining. Not winning La Liga or the Champions League seems less important to the club than the many, many hundreds of millions he's earned Atleti for repeatedly going to the "close but no cigar" stages in Europe.

Right now, they'll be title favourites in some quarters. They have halted the awful slide, in February and March, which saw just 16 points won out of a possible 33. Crucial in Los Colchoneros sitting proudly on top of the table has been Simeone persuading 34-year-old striker Luis Suarez that this was the right place to come and plot revenge on Barcelona -- 19 goals and two assists later, kudos Cholo.

It was also Simeone who reinvented Llorente as a roaming second striker with the Llegada (timing of arrival) on the

edge of the box which has bagged him 12 goals and 10 assists. The Argentinian's patience has revitalised €70m forward Thomas Lemar. And occasionally his use of the 3-5-2 formation, almost unheard of during the previous years of his reign, made Atleti look Liga-dominant. His team are top at the time of writing. Who wouldn't have signed up for that if offered at the start of the season?

But there are reasons that undermine the two men -- some that I'm wholly certain leave Koeman suspecting that unless he wins the title, he's very likely to depart. And which leave anyone who's been watching Simeone closely admitting that he has, even if temporarily, rusted badly -- especially tactically.

First the Dutchman. He's a foundation-layer. His ideas, his personality, have combined to allow a rebuild. But across the season he has failed to look like a man whose coaching habits and tactical match-reading make him as attractive for a different, better future.

Would you trust the guy who digs your foundations, lays the cement and bricks (and curses like a trooper while doing so) to nail the garden sculpturing, the interior design and plan the guest list for your first high-society party once the house is ready?

For example, Koeman was badly second best in both Clasicos. It wasn't just a pair of Real Madrid victories, Zinedine Zidane out-did his Dutch opposite number and quite clearly so.

Also, Koeman has a coaching tendency which I'm afraid looks anachronistic. Johan Cruyff, Koeman's coach in the Barcelona Dream Team era, used to tell his early 1990s squad to stop bothering him with requests to train their defensive play better. Especially set pieces. "You are the defenders -- YOU sort it out," he famously told them.

Modern football can't cope with that idea.

There are now so many fitter, faster, better-informed footballers that improvised defence as a central philosophy is, literally, out of date. Cruyff's era didn't have endless, brilliantly edited data via which weaknesses could be pinpointed and exploited, particularly at set plays. Koeman's era does. The fact remains that after every seismic defeat, whether it's Cadiz away, the Juventus and Paris Saint-Germain thrashing at home, or losing to Granada the other day, Koeman can express very clearly where he thinks his defenders went wrong.

But why isn't he teaching them to avoid these very errors? Because he's largely ceding to the defensive unit the duty to think through how they want to play, how to practice it, who should fine-tune things and he's ordered his players to avoid conceding set play goals by avoiding conceding... set plays.

Positionally and possession-wise Koeman's Barcelona play better than when he took over. Defensively it's a lucky dip, and too often an unlucky one. Just think back at how many times Barcelona concede from set plays or well-worked counter attacks which leave them looking all at sea. I'll tell you now -- often enough to have tossed away sufficient points to have already had this league title in the bag.

I have the strongest impression that Messi respects Koeman, and knows he's benefitted from the Dutchman, but severely doubts whether they'll be winning the Champions League any time soon if Koeman is in charge. If Messi is communicating that to new club president Joan Laporta, then look out Koeman. Laporta has had a handful of opportunities to 100% confirm the Dutchman for next season and has eluded doing so thus far.

Hence, I think, Koeman's increasingly frantic and irascible touchline attitudes which led

to a sending off against Granada. The Dutchman knows: It's win or bust.

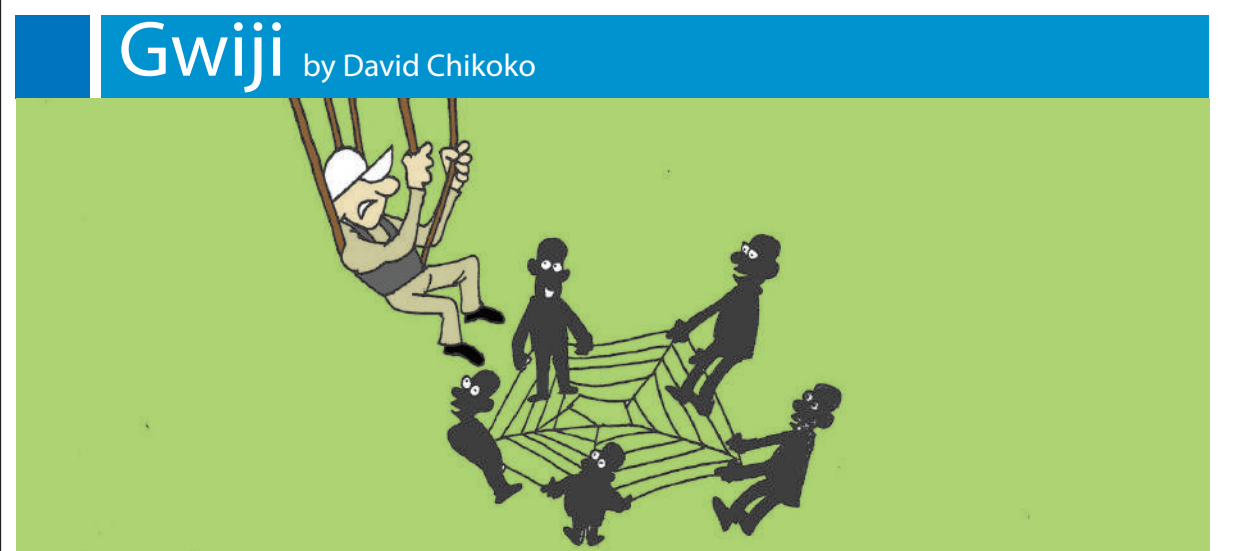
And what of Simeone? From the turn of the year on, Atletico have turned in a handful of absolutely abject performances. Think of both Chelsea games in Europe, the defeat and draw to Levante, losing at Sevilla or San Mames and, frankly, the ridiculous "let's drop back and defend for our lives" tactic after taking the lead against second-bottom Elche in the 23rd minute on Saturday. They nearly blew it -- surrendering all initiative, taking off the attacking players, giving up a last-minute penalty which Fidel Chaves missed, and the worst thing is that we've seen it all before. Repeatedly.

Simeone has been hugely slow to use Geofrey Kondogbia, and Felipe was happy to be quoted about his coach being uncommunicative and slow to help the defender understand the club's new playing system. Moreover, the Argentinian is completely manacled to the "let's not lose" dictum rather than the "we play to win, let the opponents worry about US!" The club's €126m record signing, Joao Felix, looks green with worry about how he's ever going to get three or four starts in a row and, honestly, he's not performing at anything like the level he should be.

And so, the box office questions are: What happens to Atleti and Barcelona on Saturday? What happens to them between now and the end of the brilliant title race? Can either of them take Real Madrid's title away? But that's the short term, not the medium term, not the development plan. Not the way to encourage big players to remain and still bigger stars to be willing to join.

Both Koeman and Simeone have proved certain, important, things this season. But each has left himself mired in doubts, unanswered questions, and has specifically shown major weaknesses which bring into question not whether they're capable of reaching the tape first in this crazy, topsy-turvy season. But whether they have the vision, skill, hunger, and strategic excellence to make their club consistently challenge to win La Liga and the Champions League against Spain's and Europe's biggest clubs over the next few years?

The jury, in both cases, has masses of evidence to consider. But it's not yet clear what the verdicts will be.



Gwiji by David Chikoko

SPORT

Win La Liga or be sacked?
The high stakes facing
Koeman, Simeone

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CAF postpones Taifa Stars' World Cup Qualifiers' matches



Senior national soccer team 'Taifa Stars' players participate in training in Dar es Salaam recently to shape up for international assignments. PHOTO: TFF

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE Confederation of African Football (CAF) has confirmed the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers for Africa have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Qatar 2022 World Cup qualifiers for Africa was set to commence next month, with several nations in Africa setting out preparations.

Tanzania, who are placed in Group B, were set to begin their campaign by visiting neighbours, DR Congo, between June 5-8 before hosting Madagascar between June 12-14.

However, the schedule has now been postponed due to the disruptions of the pandemic on the continent, which was confirmed by the continental football governing body on Thursday.

The CAF has announced the postponement of the FIFA World Cup qualifications matches from June 2021 to

September 2021.

The other match days of the qualifiers have also been pushed backwards to the international football windows of October 2021, November 2021 and March 2022 respectively.

The CAF Emergency Committee in consultation with FIFA took the decision to postpone the qualification matches after taking into consideration the current challenges caused by COVID-19.

The CAF is reassessing

its protocols and processes to enhance the implementation of COVID-19 related protocols.

This specifically includes the focusing on pre-match testing which had been the source of some challenges in the previous windows.

"FIFA can confirm that in conjunction with CAF and taking into consideration the current disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to ensure optimal playing conditions for all teams," the

statement read.

The statement said: "It has been decided to postpone the African qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 that were due to be played in June 2021."

"The qualifiers are now scheduled to take place in the existing windows of September, October and November 2021, and March 2022," the statement said.

The postponement will also give countries who had their stadiums or venues rejected have ample opportu-

nity to renovate or correct the defects.

This development is likely to cause the rescheduling of Vodacom Premier League fixtures.

It was earlier agreed for the league to take a two-week break to allow Taifa Stars to prepare for the DR Congo and Madagascar games.

The 2020/21 season, which was set to end on July 8, can now be completed earlier than scheduled.

EATV FRIDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 Mid Week Movie (r)
13:30 Kali Za Wana
14:00 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Wakilisha (r)
16:00 Ujenzi (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Skanga
19:30 EATV SAA I
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 Friday Night Live
23:00 Kurasa (r)

TONIGHT @ 9:00

Friday Night Live The Weekend begins here! Listen to upbeat mixed music by the hottest DJs, Gossip, showbiz updates and exclusive interviews with celebrities from home and abroad. Don't you dare miss this.

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 Friday Night Live

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Bumper entry for MR UK Marathon

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

AS the first edition of Mr UK Marathon has two months left before the race takes place in Dar es Salaam, the event is expected to attract more participants.

The Mr UK Sports agency-organized event, which will take place at Leaders Club in July, is to be held under the theme 'Run Towards Investment'.

The race will take place on July 24 and it will involve Half Marathon, 10km and 5km events.

The Half Marathon's organizer, Nelson Mrashani, said so far 300 athletes have registered for the event.

He said they initially planned to have 2000 athletes at the event, but with the good response so far, the number is expected to reach 3000.

Mrashani asked those who want to compete at the event to register at various platforms which the firm has set.

"So far, the response has been good, as I am speaking to you more than 300 people have registered to compete at the event," he noted.

"We expect the number to reach 3000 by July, we are asking those who are interested in featuring in the event to register now at various platforms," he said.

He noted the race gears towards promoting investment through sports and during the event there will be exhibitions of various products and services.

He thanked sponsors of the event, MR UK Sports, through its sports agency firm, Touchroad International Holdings Group of Shanghai, China, 1000km medals of South Africa and Msata-based Makmar Hotel.

The MR UK Marathon will run alongside exhibitions from food processors, financial institutions and insurance companies.

Winners in 21 km event (both male and female) will be awarded 1m/-, runners-up will take home 700,000/- apiece and third-placed winners will receive 500,000/- apiece.

There will also be cash prizes for those who will finish fourth to 10th in both categories.

Mrashani said the cash prizes are very attractive as the top 10 winners in 21km in both men and women categories shall be awarded.

He stated there will be trophies for winners in 10km event and the other good thing is that all those who will compete will be given medals.

"The marathon's other unique aspect is that if winners in 21km in both categories who will reach 60 minutes in men's race and 70 in women's race, a 1m/- awaits each of them," he said.

He said registration for the event has already started and it will end on July 10.

He said they started registration early so as to enter names and details of all competitors on the results timing system, which is a fully automatic race timing.

Simba SC, Yanga in mind games ahead of Dar Derby

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA'S age-old soccer rivals, Simba SC and Yanga, have stepped up the hype ahead of tomorrow's Vodacom Premier League's clash bringing together the two sides, nicknamed 'Dar Derby', with a flurry of mind games.

The latest most sought after domestic fixture will be staged at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam and promises an outstanding feast of football.

Yanga's spokesman, Antonio Nugaz, set the ball rolling by declaring that they want to win, as the three points will assure them of winning this season's Vodacom Premier League top honour.

He vowed that Yanga will make life tough for Simba.

"We are prepared for them, our aim is to beat them, we know that a win tomorrow will give us the upper hand to become this season's champions," he said.

He asked his outfit's supporters to turn in large numbers to give the players vociferous support.

However, Simba's informa-



Yanga's players attend training in Dar es Salaam recently to shape up for the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) fixtures. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

tion officer, Haji Manara, spoke tough, saying their rivals are just playing some mind games.

He described Yanga's talk ahead of the game as wishful thinking and he swore that his team would go flat out to tame the Jangwani Street-based side.

Manara said Simba are ready to trim Yanga to their size.

He noted: "This league is slowly becoming ours to lose. But it won't be that sweet without beating them."

"We are one of the best

teams in Africa, locally you can not compare us with them. We will show them that we are far better than them on Saturday at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium," he said.

Simba sit pretty at the summit of the top flight table with 61 points from 25 games while Yanga are placed second with 57 points from 27 games.

The Saturday encounter will be the first derby for both teams' tacticians.

The game is expected to be

determined by the individual brilliance of players, as well as tactical and technical acumen of the coaches.

Both sides boast of top-class players in domestic football. In comparison, Simba have more experienced and top class players whereas Yanga boast of a mixture of experienced players and gifted youthful performers.

Simba boast of Luis Miquissone, Clatus Chama, Larry Bwalya, Bernard Morrison,

Chris Mugalu, Meddie Kagere and John Bocco who are capable of dictating the results of any encounter.

The outfit's defense is led by Joash Onyango who is always supported by Paschal Wawa, Erasto Nyoni, Shomari Kapombe and Mohamed Hussein.

Yanga's head coach, Nassredine Nabi, is likely going to rely on leading strikers, Michael Sarpong and Yacouba Songne, as well as midfielders, Haruna Niyonzima, Mukoko Tomombe, Tuisila Kisinda and Deus Kaseke.

In defense the Tunisian coach is likely going to depend on Bakari Mwangeto, Abdallah Shaibu and Dickson Job.

Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) has named Emmanuel Mwandembwa as the clash's central referee, while Frank Komba and Hamdan Said are first and second assistant referees respectively, Ramadhan Kayoko is the fourth official.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

