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TANZANIA

SATURDAY 29 FEBRUARY, 2020

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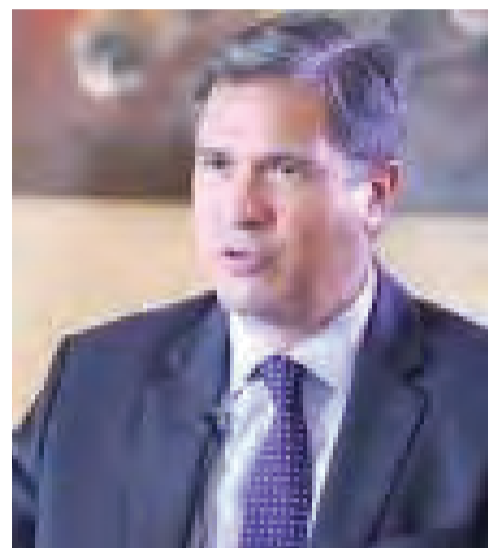
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France grants 4.2bn/- to lift organic crop agriculture in four districts

By Francis Kajubi, Zanzibar

TANZANIA is one of three African countries selected for a 4bn/- organic agriculture project to be implemented in the Mainland and Zanzibar.

The project is being conducted by Institutional Innovations for Ecological Organic Agriculture in Africa (IIABA), part of the African Organic Network (AfrONet), projected for three and half years, costing euro1.666m and set to benefit 100,000 farmers in four districts.

Speaking at an event to launch the project, Moses Aisu, AfrONet Program



The project will also uplift public policy governing the agriculture sector for influencing ecological organic agriculture

Director said that already the French Development Agency (AFD) has disbursed a sum of euro 1.498m (3.810bn/-) for farmers, businessmen and processors engaged in organic agriculture with priority for farmers.

Organic and non-organic farmers from four districts of Zanzibar, Dodoma, Ruvuma and Mafia will through the project be exposed to networks of production and sourcing of organic inputs, participatory and farmer-led research on new practices and knowledge that can improve ecological and productive performances.

"Both organic and non-organic farmers are targeted. For the non-organic component the project will focus at convincing them to venture into organic

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CCM: Axed Membe was serial offender



Yusuph Makamba

Abdulrahman Kinana

Bernard Membe

By Guardian Reporter

CHAMA Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) yesterday stripped former senior minister Bernard Membe of party membership, saying he was a serial offender who could no longer be tolerated.

The NEC Secretary for Publicity and Ideology, Humphrey Polepole told reporters in Dar es Salaam that Membe's membership was withdrawn by a resolution of the party Central Committee chaired by national chairman, President John Magufuli at the party's offices in the city.

"The decision has been made after serial misconduct since 2014, some of which he had been penalized for earlier," Polepole explained.

The penalties were meant to serve as a warning to the former senior cadre to change his ways but this did not come about.

"Because of this, the central committee of the party has unanimously decided that Bernard Kamillius Membe be ejected from the party," he



Because of this, the central committee of the party has unanimously decided that Bernard Kamillius Membe be ejected from the party

said.

However, Polepole did not divulge the misconduct that led to the expulsion of one of CCM's more influential members.

Now that he is out of the party, the question is whether the politician with presidential ambitions will remain in the cold or find a new outfit.

If he chooses to pursue politics, he will most likely join existing opposition parties—the more lively ones being Chadema, ACT-Wazalendo, CUF and NCCR-Mageuzi.

But the main opposition party, Chadema, has recently indicated that it resents accepting members from the ruling party after former prime ministers Edward Lowassa (its presidential candidate in the 2015 polls) and Frederick Sumaye rejoined CCM.

If the former minister for Foreign Affairs and long-serving MP pursues opposition politics,

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EALA session split over customs bill

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

MEMBERS of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) from Tanzania on Thursday walked out of a session here in protest of a bill seeking to extend time for removal of goods at seaports.

Speaking to reporters outside the assembly building after they stepped out, the members said the Customs Management (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which was being debated is not in the interest of Tanzania.

The object of the bill moved



If passed, the law will destroy our economy. The bill does not indicate any benefits for Tanzania but other member states

last year by Kenyan member Abdikadir Aden is to amend section 34(5) of the East African Community Customs Management Act of 2004 to

extend the time for removal of bulk non-containerised goods from a port of discharge, beyond the 21 days prescribed by subsection (1) of the law.

The chairman of Tanzanian EALA members, Dr Abdullah Makame said more consultations need to take place to ascertain repercussions to countries with ports before the bill is adopted.

"The extension will be bad for Tanzania as it provides a loophole for tax avoidance. We will not allow it," he declared.

Another Tanzanian member Mariam Ussi argued that Tanzania stands to lose a lot

of money in uncollected revenues if the bill is passed into law, noting that the bill was designed to benefit some member countries.

"If passed, the law will destroy our economy. The bill does not indicate any benefits for Tanzania but other member states," she said.

Speaking to this paper, Aden defended the bill which sailed through the first reading last year, saying that governments have the right to collect due taxes but

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BoT: Commercial loans rise show financial sector health

By Getrude Mbago

LOANS extended to the country's private sector by banks grew by 11 per cent by December 2019 compared to the negative 1.7 percent growth three years earlier, authorities say.

Bank of Tanzania (BoT) Governor Prof. Florens Luoga (pictured) said yesterday that this trend indicates the steady recovery of the financial sector.

Addressing journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the governor said that the growth is associated with the ongoing improvement of the business environment, proper supervision of the monetary policy stance and better credit risk management by banks.

"The credit that banks provided to private sector in the past three years stood at -1.7 percent but increased to 2.4 percent in 2018 and then 11 percent by December 2019. This



is remarkable growth within a short period of time; our aim however is to ensure that the loans grow up by 20 percent," he said. Prof Luoga said that the new monetary

policy introduced led to a fall in interest rates and a pick up in the growth of credit to the private sector, while being consistent to maintaining low inflation.

Growth of money supply has remained positive and there was no shortage of money in circulation, he stated.

BoT has been working closely with the Tanzania Bankers Association (TBA) to ensure that they improve and maintain quality service provision which include improving customer service to build confidence among customers, he said.

Prof Luoga further said that the country has enough foreign reserves which stand at US \$5.4 billion so the public should have nothing to worry about.

"The \$5.4 billion is sufficient to cover five months of projected import of goods and

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BUT the main opposition party, Chadema, has recently indicated that it resents accepting members from the ruling party after former prime ministers Edward Lowassa (its presidential candidate in the 2015 polls) and Frederick Sumaye rejoined CCM.



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France grants 4.2bn/- to lift organic crop agriculture in four districts

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agriculture," he said.

"We expect to increase farmers' participation in organic agriculture by five per cent by the end of the project period. Earmarked farmers are those engaged in spices, avocado, vegetable and sunflower cultivation," said Aisu.

He asserted that from the already issued money, Tanzania will secure about 775.2m/- for the project. IABA will consolidate and construct innovative markets at the territorial level, innovate in production guarantee systems (PGS) to create trust between producers and consumers. They will innovate in public policy processes and dialogues that can support the emergence, development and scaling of a range of organic innovations and build capacities of AfrONet members to accompany scaling up processes.

AfrONet president Jordan Gama explained that building innovative markets aims at establishing conducive and accommodative market opportunities.

The idea is for farmers at all levels to have platforms to sell their produce to willing buyers through formal and informal markets, he explained.

"The project will also uplift public policy governing the agriculture sector for influencing ecological organic agriculture," he said.

The Isles Minister of Trade, Industry and Marketing, Amina Salum Ali, who graced the launch of the project, said this is a major opportunity for organic agriculture products destined to global markets for which Tanzania should take advantage.

So far Tanzania is a second producer of organic farm products behind Morocco, with about 270,142 metric tons.

"We in Zanzibar had established a committee chaired by the president and are working on having a policy on organic farming so that different programs can be brought in. Our 2020 to 2023 mission also involves initiatives to change Zanzibar into a green island," she said.

Frederic Clavier, the French ambassador to Tanzania, said that organic agriculture if practiced to its fullest will play a major part in resilience to climate change that results into floods and droughts, hence putting the world under the threat of hunger and desertification.

"Organic agriculture means sustainability for the agriculture sector that guarantees food security in addressing nutritional challenges. In support of organic agriculture in Zanzibar the AFD has set aside US\$1.5million to empower small scale farmers of spices, and I call upon farmers to use this opportunity effectively especially by forming groups to access the funds," the envoy urged.

On his part, Nyasebwa Chimangu, the Director of Crop Development in the Ministry of Agriculture said that the project will help the ministry in capacity building for extension officers and in linkage of organic agriculture towards the growth of the agriculture sector as a whole.

The project is funded by AFD funded by 90 per cent at euro 1.666m (4.239bn/-) and the remainder will be issued by organic agriculture implementers in Tanzania, Uganda and Morocco, where altogether around 300,000 farmers in those countries are expected to benefit from the project.

BoT: Commercial loans rising show sector's health

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services. These funds can also finance all strategic public projects in the country for a year," the governor intimated.

BoT will continue improving the performance of the financial sector so as to reduce credit interest rates and improve lending to the private sector. "This includes measures to improve payment systems in the process of digitization of the economy as well as spearheading financial inclusion initiatives and development of financial markets," he pointed out.

The government's decision to close bureaux de change has helped to curb the circulation of illicit money in the country.

"The huge number of bureaux de change was facilitating illegal foreign exchange outflows and money laundering activities, risking the country's foreign reserves," he stated.

BoT in collaboration with the Police Force is strengthening systems to raise public awareness on the production and circulation of fake banknotes.

Tanzanians need to invest in processing and packaging technologies so as to add value products and thus win local and international markets, he added.



President John Magufuli shares a light moment with Chief Sheikh Abubakar Zubeir bin Ally (L) and Dar es Salaam regional sheikh Alhad Mussa Salum (R) in Dar es Salaam yesterday when the president made an impromptu inspection tour at the Kinondoni site of the construction a National Muslim Council of Tanzania (Bakwata) mosque being built with funding from King Mohammed VI of Morocco. Photo: State House

Alarm as coronavirus enters sub-Saharan Africa

LAGOS

THE first case of the coronavirus in sub-Saharan Africa was yesterday confirmed in Nigeria.

The patient is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and flew into the commercial city of Lagos from Milan on 25 February.

Authorities say he is stable with no serious symptoms and is being treated at a hospital in the city.

Elsewhere on the continent, Algeria and Egypt have also confirmed cases of the disease.

The World Health Organization

(WHO) had warned that Africa's "fragile health systems" meant the threat posed by the virus was "considerable".

Meanwhile, South Africa's health ministry has announced that two nationals aboard a cruise ship docked in Japan have tested positive for the virus.

In Kenya, the High Court yesterday ordered the temporary suspension of flights from China following a petition by the Law Society of Kenya.

It comes amidst public outrage after China's Southern Airlines

resumed flights to Nairobi amid concern about the spread of coronavirus.

Globally, more than 80,000 people in nearly 50 countries have been infected. Nearly 2,800 have died, the vast majority in China's Hubei province.

Japan's health ministry yesterday confirmed the reports that a British man who tested positive for the coronavirus after travelling on the Diamond Princess cruise ship has died.

He is the first Briton and sixth Diamond Princess passenger to

have died from Covid-19 - the disease caused by the coronavirus.

British officials have not yet confirmed the death, with Health Minister Jo Churchill telling the BBC only that she was aware of a British man who was "very poorly".

Dozens of British nationals were on board the Diamond Princess cruise liner when it was quarantined on 5 February, after a man who disembarked in Hong Kong was found to have the virus.

Some Britons on board were flown back to the UK after more than two weeks of quarantine on

the ship, but those who had tested positive remained in Japan for treatment.

Mexico, a country of 116 million people, also yesterday confirmed its first coronavirus case.

The government previously said it was reviewing a suspected case in a 35-year-old man who had recently been in northern Italy.

Confirmation of the infection followed a second round of tests.

Brazil is the only other country in Latin America to have reported a case of the virus so far - that patient had also recently been to Italy.



Home Affairs deputy minister Hamad Masauni (R) in talks with Kagera regional commissioner Brig Gen Marco Gaguti on defence and security issues shortly after arrived in the region yesterday for an official visit. Photo: Ministry of Home Affairs

EALA session split over customs bill

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should not milk businesspeople to the point of killing enterprises.

"What is the use of squeezing more taxes on transit cargo that has already been taxed upon entry?" he demanded.

At the moment, under the existing Act, the entry of cargo is required to be made within 21 days from the date of discharge of the vessel failing to which, the goods contained in the cargo begin to attract demurrage charges.

Aden, who was granted leave in October last year to introduce the Bill, avers that extending the time for removal of large consignments from the port of entry would eliminate demurrage charges and hence make goods more affordable and allow for longer storage period to facilitate clearance.

CCM: Axed Membe was serial offender

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this is likely to cause political realignment ahead of the general election slated for October.

Early this month, Membe was questioned for five hours by the party's Ethics Committee about issues pertaining to "our party and country" but did not reveal the particulars.

Speaking after the questioning, Membe, who was accompanied by his wife Dorcas, said he was given a chance to explain various issues on which the party was interested in his view of things.

"We had five hours of discussions on our party and our country. I am happy because I got the chance to

deliberate and dialogue about national and party issues," he said after the much-awaited, path breaking session.

Speculation had been rife that Membe intended to challenge President Magufuli in the party nomination for candidate ahead of general election this year. He never denied or affirmed the rumours.

Membe was among three CCM heavyweights who were questioned after being accused of violating party procedures and norms. The other two targets of the ethics and security committee were former secretaries-general, Abdulrahman Kinana and Yusuf Makamba.

Membe was among the selected five contesters for

the nominations as CCMo presidential candidate in the 2015 polls, where Dr Magufuli clinched the ticket.

Who is Bernard Kamillius Membe? Membe was born on 9 November 1953 in Lindi Region. He attended Rondo-Chiponda Extended Primary School and Namupa Seminary Secondary School for his O Levels.

He went to Itaga Seminary High School for his A Levels before proceeding to study political science at the University of Dar es Salaam. He later did national service for one year at Oljoro Central Training School in Arusha Region.

Membe served as a national security analyst at the President's Office from 1978 to 1989. He thereafter went

to Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C. where he studied international relations from 1990 to 1992. In 1992, he was assigned to serve as advisor of the Tanzanian High Commissioner in Ottawa, Canada, where he served until 2000.

In 2000, he was elected CCM MP for Mtama constituency and re-elected in 2005 and 2010 and in 2015 he was succeeded by Nape Nnauye as he did not stand for the constituency nomination.

He was appointed Deputy Minister of Home Affairs by President Jakaya Kikwete after the 2005 general elections. After a cabinet reshuffle in October 2006, he was appointed as Deputy Minister of Energy and

Minerals.

In January 2007, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation after his predecessor Dr Asharose Migiro was appointed by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as Deputy Secretary-General.

He has also served as a member of the National Executive Committee from 2007 and re-elected in 2012 at the 8th CCM Congress in Dodoma.

In January 2013, Membe informed his constituents that he would not be vying for the position in the next general elections, as he was beginning to canvass support in party rank and file to seek the CCM nomination for the presidency.

Government cautions councils and municipal directors over fund use

By **Aisia Rweyemamu, Kisarawe**

MINISTER of State in the President's Office, Regional Administrative and Local Governments Selemani Jafo, has cautioned councils and municipal directors to ensure they abide by the country's regulations and procedures when executing their duties.

Jafo insisted that measures will be taken against officials failing to comply with the set rules, and that they should not look for lame excuses.

The minister was concerned of council directors who failed to comply and fulfill government directives especially on allocation of funds meant for provision of loans to youth, women and people with disabilities.

He was speaking yesterday at Kisarawe district in Coastal region when launching the 'Kisarawe Mama Lishe Festival' held at Chanzi ground in the district.

Jafo issued a four-month ultimatum until June 30th this year, insisting that each of the districts countrywide have the funds for provision of loans to special groups.

"Any district director who will fail to fulfill this order should himself/herself count out by June 30th", said the minister.

The central government requires councils to set aside 10 per cent of their internal revenues that are given on loan basis to women entrepreneurs, youth and groups with special needs.

Minister Jafo commended the Kisarawe council direc-

tor for setting an example by successfully implementing government directives. He insisted that special groups should be considered by the councils since may find it difficult to get loans from private financial institutions and banks.

Commenting on the 'Kisarawe Mama Lishe Festival' Jaffo urged other districts in the country to follow suit by recognizing the good job and valuable contributions of 'Mama Lishe'.

Kisarawe District Commissioner, Jokate Mwegelo said in the 2018/2019 financial year, the district provided loans worth 220m/- to women entrepreneurs, youth and groups with special needs.

However, the DC said, they organized such festival in order to honour the con-

tributions made by 'Mama Lishe'. She said the aim is to empower them to expand and operate their businesses more professionally.

The DC informed that empowering women economically puts them on the right path in development as well as enabling them to contribute in government's industrialization drive.

"Most of the women in our district find it difficult to get loans from financial institutions and banks because they cannot meet the requirements. These women operate small businesses and do not have collateral to submit at the banks", said Mwegelo insisting the district will continue providing support to women and other entrepreneurs.



Painting in progress yesterday on buildings at Ngorongoro District Hospital, where construction is yet to be completed. Photo: Correspondent Woide Shizza



For lack of a safer option, it is now routine for primary school children make do with this narrow makeshift wooden bridge as they shuttle between home and school at Kinyerezi in suburban Dar es Salaam - as captured earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Jumane Juma

Six French senators arrive today for tour

By **Guardian Reporter**

A DELEGATION of six French senators is expected in the country for a week-long visit from March 1st to 8th 2020, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation.

A statement issued by the ministry stated that the senators will arrive in the country today through Abeid Amani Karume International Airport in Zanzibar.

The senators' delegation will be led by Hervé Maurey, President of the Parliamentary Committee on Sustainable Development and Deputy President of the Friendship group with Indian Ocean countries.

Their visit follows the visit of the senators from France-Tanzania Friendship Group that took place in Tanzania in September 2018.

While in the country, the senators will visit various projects funded by the French Agency for Development (AFD) and other local projects that may need France's support. On February 29th the delegation will visit a sustainable city project at Fumba, Zanzibar.

The delegation will also visit other projects in Dar es Salaam

including the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Infrastructure and a waste management project on March 2nd.

According to the statement, on March 3rd, the French Senators will be in Morogoro region where they will visit an agro-ecology project coordinated by the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Morogoro urban water supply and sanitation authority (MORUWASA) and Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT) project.

On March 4th and 5th 2020, the delegation will meet and hold talks with various government officials in the country's political capital-Dodoma. The leaders include National Assembly Speaker Job Ndugai, Deputy minister in the Vice-President's Office responsible for Environment, Mussa Ramadhani Sima, Natural Resources and Tourism Minister, Dr Hamis Kigwangala and Dodoma Mayor, Prof Davis Mwamfupe.

While in Dodoma, the senators will also visit development projects including the current developments infrastructures for possible funding through AFD.

They will be in Arusha on March 7th 2020 where they

will visit empowering youth programme through vocational training. The programme is being implemented by the Kilimanjaro International Institute for Telecommunications Electronics and Computers (KIITEC).

The list of senators includes Senator Marta de Cidrac, member of the committee for regional planning and sustainable development. Senator Françoise Ramond, member of the committee for regional planning and sustainable development. Senator Joël Bigot, member of the committee for regional planning and sustainable development. Senator Jérôme Bignon, member of the committee for regional planning and sustainable development and Senator Guillaume Gontard, member of the committee for regional planning and sustainable development.

The French senators' visit to Tanzania is generally intended to continue cementing the cordial relations between the French and Tanzanian parliamentarians especially in issues related to sustainable development and also to increase people-to-people contacts between French and Tanzanian nationals.

TRA sensitises Iringa traders on tax payment

By **Guardian Reporter**

TANZANIA Revenue Authority (TRA) has reached about 20,000 traders in Iringa region with tax compliance education to enable them recognize the importance of paying taxes on time for the coun-

try's development. Speaking when closing the campaign which was conducted between February 17th and 27th, this year TRA Tax Officer, Catherine Mwakilagala said the campaign got a positive response from the traders in the region.

She said the ten-day campaign was conducted in the districts of Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa Municipal Council.

"We are happy that in these ten days we have managed to reach at least 1,950 taxpayers with essential tax education. We

also had time to listen to their complaints and advice on how to improve the area," she said.

She said that the authority will continue enhancing its education and awareness programmes to tax payers in order to enhance voluntary tax com-

pliance and thus expand tax base.

Rregional TRA Manager, Lamson Tulyanje urged traders and other taxpayers to utilize the education by making sure that they conduct their activities as the country's laws and pay their taxes on time.

Richard Kilawa, one of the traders at Mafinga town commended TRA for feeding them with enough knowledge on tax issues vowing to pay continue paying taxes voluntarily.

"I was so surprised to see the TRA officers visiting me at my shop, they

taught me a lot of things especially in tax compliance, I will also be a good ambassador to educate others on the importance of paying tax for the development of our country," he said. Another trader, Maura Ng'umbi said the campaign has transformed

minds of a number of traders in the area and most of them are now taking TRA as their development partners and not strangers.

The TRA tax compliance campaign has also reached traders in the regions of Morogoro, Coast and Dar es Salaam.

Govt spends 1bn/- annually on victims of wild animal attacks

By **Guardian Reporter**

RESOURCES and Tourism, deputy minister Constantine Kanyasu has said the government spends 1bn/- annually to compensate victims of wildlife attacks across the country.

Kanyasu however said the funds were still insufficient as the total amount needed to accommodate the families stands at 3bn/-.

Speaking during the investment

dialogue in Simiyu, the deputy minister said that wildlife attacks have been causing a lot of destruction to property as well as affecting people's lives and economic development.

During the meeting, stakeholders complained on small payments by the government compared to the actual destruction caused by the wild animals.

Kanyasu acknowledged that despite causing huge destruction

to people's lives and property, the government hasn't been real compensating them but rather provide some incentives to reduce harm.

"We cannot manage to compensate the whole actual losses caused by the wildlife, the amount is high, sometimes these animals takes people's lives, but we have been doing all of our best to ensure that everyone gets something as per available budget," he added.

He however said that the govern-

ment is reviewing the payments procedure to at least address complaints raised by stakeholders.

The deputy minister further said that the government doesn't compensate families that lose their relatives due to wildlife attacks because you cannot buy the lives of people who have died.

"We only pay the deceased relatives some amount of money as a good will gesture, we have been doing the same for those who

lost their property," Kasanyu explained.

Meanwhile, the deputy minister directed the conservation institutions in the country to form antipoaching task forces to provide immediate support to communities during wildlife attacks.

According to him, following the increase of wild animals in various parks and forest reserves, elephants and other animals have been freely invading even in peo-

ple's settlements.

One of the residents, Zubeda Kawala complained that more than two years since her 10-acres watermelon farm was destroyed by elephants nothing has been done to date.

The meeting brought together various investors, business communities, key government officials and other stakeholders in Simiyu region to discuss challenges facing their operations.

NOTICE OF CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION

Mr/Ms. IKRAM ULLAH, P.O. Box 483 TANGA
The person whose photograph is shown is applying to the Minister for Home Affairs for Tanzania Citizenship. His/Her Nationality at present is PAKISTAN His/Her Occupation is PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR He/She has been in this country since 2009 that, any person who knows as to why citizenship should not be granted to the applicant, should send a written and signed Statement to the Principal Commissioner of Immigration Services P.O. Box 512 Dar-es-Salaam.

Ref: DN/TA/TP/4318
For: COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION SERVICES



Kisarawe District Commissioner Jokate Mwegelo (R) receives 300 bags of cement from TPB Bank marketing and business development director Deo Kweyuka at Kisarawe in Coast Region on Thursday. The donation is aimed at supporting the construction of girls' dormitories in schools in the district. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

US citizen fetes Tanzania by running health facility

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

DRIVEN by a desire to give back to the medical profession, a man from Long Beach in the United States uprooted his life to move to rural setting in Karatu District, Arusha Region to help a run non-profit hospital.

Robert Kovacs runs communications for the Foundation for African Medicine and Education

– an organisation that ensures members of the Karatu community have access to quality affordable healthcare.

"I've always been interested in doing work that helps other people," Kovacs told American network CBSN in an interview.

In his role, Kovacs runs the social media campaign that helps with fundraising that enables the hospital to treat more than 28,000

patients per year.

"Working here has been really rewarding," Kovacs said. "For me, it's a way of giving back."

Kovacs said his own experience seeking emergency medical care inspired him to work at the remote hospital.

"I got in a bicycle accident, and I ended up losing the third bone in my middle finger," he said. "I nearly passed out from blood loss

before I got to Memorial Hospital, and that was only like a 15 minute, 10 minute drive."

In Karatu, patients often travel via taxi or on foot to see doctors and have routine tests done.

"Before FAME was established here, there were three doctors for a population of 220,000 people," Kovacs said.

First opened as an outpatient clinic in 2008 by Dr. Frank Artress

and his wife Susan Gustafson, both of California, the hospital has grown to offer CT scans and x-rays – both uncommon in rural Tanzania – and employs 159 locals.

"I consider FAME as home," Dr. Anne Ghati said. "FAME is where my heart is."

Kovacs lives in volunteer housing at FAME and said he was slowly learning Swahili, the local language.

Magufuli applauds the headway made in construction of Mohammed VI Mosque in Dar

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli has expressed satisfaction with progress of the construction of a mega mosque in Dar es Salaam under the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA).

The mosque is constructed with the support of Moroccan King Mohammed VI and will be named – the 'Mohammed VI Mosque'.

Funding of the mosque construction project in the country's commercial capital is part of a series of bilateral agreements between Morocco and Tanzania.

A statement released by Directorate of Presidential Communications yesterday, stated that King Mohammed VI of Morocco announced to fund construction of the mosque during his visit in the country in October 2016.

The President also inspected construction of the King Mohamed VI office building.

"I am impressed with construction progress of both, the mosque and office building, the structures are being constructed at required standards", said Magufuli as he commends King Mohammed VI of Morocco for fulfilling his promise to construct a mega mosque in Tanzania.

He noted that completion of the mosque will guarantee Muslims a better prayer's house.

Tanzania Mufti, Sheikh Aboubakar Zubeir bin Ally, commended the President for taking care of Muslims. He informed that construction work has now reached 97 percent.

During the tour of King Mohamed VI of Morocco in Tanzania in 2016, Mufti Sheikh of the National Muslim Council of Tanzania expressed the need for a mosque and its facilities in Dar es Salaam.

The area of the religious and cultural landmark is 7,400 square meters; it includes a prayer room that accommodates more than 5,000 worshippers, a library, a conference hall, administrative facilities, a parking lot and green spaces.

During the visit, the King offered 10,000 copies of the Holy Koran to the National Muslim Council of Tanzania.



Evanse Luhimbo, NBC's head of SME and retail banking, briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam on Thursday on the strategies the bank has been deploying in helping farmers in Tanzania to boost productivity. This was at an agricultural and livestock stakeholder conference. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Minister calls for review of remandees offences to ease congestion in prisons

By Guardian Reporter

HOME Affairs Minister, George Simbachawene has challenged the police force to review the list of offences and release some of the remandees whose offences are bailable to ease congestion in prisons.

Speaking to journalists at the police headquarters in Dodoma, Simbachawene said the prison force faces a major challenge of congestion in almost all the prisons coun-

trywide whereas the number of remandees in various jails is bigger than that of prisoners.

"Congestion in our jails remains a challenge calling for measures to avert the situation. You should consider giving bail to some remandees with certain offences, this will not only reduce congestion but also ensure justice to the people in custody", said the minister.

Releasing remandees on bail would help reduce the huge cost the

government incurs in taking care of them, he noted.

"We are making our prisons full of remandees for offences that are bailable, why should we keep people in custody for minor offenses like stealing chicken or engaging in a fight? he questioned

Earlier, Commissioner General of Prisons, Brigadier General Suleiman Mzee said there are a total of 14,502 prisoners in various prisons across the country. He said the number

of remandees in all the prisons is 17,396.

"We will continue working to see how we can reduce congestion at our prisons", said the Commissioner applauding the minister for visiting their offices.

In his address to the nation to mark 58 years of the Tanzanian mainland's independence in December last year, President John Magufuli pardoned a record 5,533 prisoners serving jail terms across the east African nation,

saying the move was aimed at easing congestion in prisons.

He said recently he visited Butimba prison in Mwanza region and found inmates crowded, a situation that was also reflected in other prisons across the country.

Magufuli said current statistics indicated that there were 17,547 prisoners and 18,256 remand prisoners awaiting trials, bringing to 35,803 the total number of inmates in the country's jails.

First lady to launch treatment drive to eliminate Hepatitis C in next two years

By Hudson Kuteesa

FIRST Lady Jeannette Kagame is today expected to officiate at the launch of a treatment drive for about 2000 people living with Hepatitis C as Rwanda looks to reduce the duration of its Hepatitis C elimination plan from 5 to 2 years.

The drive is part of the measures for the country to achieve its Hepatitis C elimination plan in 2021 instead of 2024 as earlier planned.

In August last year, the government launched a plan aimed at critically reducing the HCV prevalence from the current 4 per cent to close to 1.2 per cent and achieving 90 per cent treatment coverage for people aged 15 years old by 2024 - now aiming to achieve it by 2021.

The plan also looks to screen about 4 million people aged 15 years and above, carry out viral load tests for about 230,000 people, and treat 112,000 chronically affected patients.

As part of the implementation of the plan, the first lady together with other partners will launch the treatment drive in Gatsibo and it is aimed at offering treatment to over 2000 patients recently diagnosed with HCV.

The drive is also aimed at reiterating national commitment to improve the health of Rwandans up to the community level.

In Rwanda, the estimated number of people infected with Hepatitis C is 4 per cent and the most affected population are adults above 50 years.

Hep C is also believed to be the second largest contributor of cancers in the country.

The Hep C elimination plan was earlier estimated to cost \$44 million (approximately Rwf40 billion), mainly focusing on investing in new technologies to enable more effective and affordable care, and innovative models of service delivery to reach affected populations.

Rwanda is said to be the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to propose an elimination plan of this size.

Initially, it was planned that 80 per cent of the \$44 million will be allocated for lab tests and treatments, while 20 per cent will be for community mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation, personnel and programme coordination.

Throughout the years, Rwanda has made important developments in HCV control; these include screening of blood products, training and enforcement of safe injection practices, and the publication of Viral Hepatitis Policy and Guidelines in 2013.

The Government also conducted major price negotiations resulting in cutting treatment cost per person from \$86,000 to \$350, making the treatment nationwide more accessible for chronic HCV patients.

According to the World Health Organisation, globally an estimated 71 million people have chronic hepatitis C virus infection.

WHO says that a significant number of those who are chronically infected will develop cirrhosis or liver cancer.

The hepatitis C virus is a blood-borne virus: the most common modes of infection are through exposure to small quantities of blood.

This may happen through injection drug use, unsafe injection practices, and unsafe healthcare, transfusion of untested blood and blood products, and sexual practices that lead to exposure to blood.

Antiviral medicines can cure more than 95 per cent of persons with hepatitis C infection, thereby reducing the risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer, but access to diagnosis and treatment is low.

There is currently no effective vaccine against hepatitis C, however, research in this area is ongoing.

Hepatitis C virus causes both acute and chronic infection. New HCV infections are usually asymptomatic. Some persons get acute hepatitis which does not lead to a life-threatening disease.

Around 30 per cent (15-45 per cent) of infected persons spontaneously clear the virus within six months of infection without any treatment.

The remaining 70 per cent (55-85 per cent) of persons will develop chronic HCV infection. Of those with chronic HCV infection, the risk of cirrhosis ranges between 15 per cent and 30 per cent within 20 years.



Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) chairman Judge (rtd) Mathew Mwaimu speaks during talks the commission held in Dodoma on Thursday with Legal and Human Rights Centre officials, led by executive director advocate Anna Henga (L). Photo: Courtesy of CHRAGG

CHRAGG, LHRC partner to prepare human rights protection joint strategies

By Mbaraka Kambona

THE Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) in partnership with Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) are working to prepare joint strategies that would enhance promotion and protection of human rights at schools and the public.

The agreement was reached early yesterday during discussions held by CHRAGG delegation and LHRC leaders at the Centre's offices in Dodoma.

Director for Public Education, Training, Research, and Documentation from CHRAGG, Alexander Hassan raised the idea that if it is to maintain productive working relations between the commission and LHRC, it would be fruitful to merge efforts in areas with similar activities.

Alexander pointed out the area

where both sides have established human rights clubs in schools, saying it will be better for them to join efforts to enhance human rights education to students to find big results.

Responding, LHRC Executive Director, Anna Henga said joining efforts would be a better move towards enhancing human rights to students insisting it is important that officials from both sides convene to prepare implementation plans.

Henga said LHRC has for a long period been fostering human rights education to schools and the public through various channels including media, leaflets and public rallies.

She said joining efforts with CHRAGG would help to stage human rights education to a better level and control duplication of efforts.

Henga also expressed her views on appointment of CHRAGG Commissioners saying it was the

move that was long-awaited adding that the decision would quicken services to the public.

CHRAGG chairman, Retired Judge Mathew Mwaimu said the centre has been doing a commendable job towards helping the public to understand and defend their rights.

Mwaimu asserted that the commission will continue working closely with LHRC with a view of improving human rights situation within the country.

"We CHRAGG recognises your important work in promoting human rights and good governance in the country, the commission will continue working closely with you to facilitate the promotion and protection of human rights, our doors are open for consultations", Judge Mwaimu insisted.

He reiterated that both institutions are in a good position to help citizens and the government.

Belgium to support the fight against locusts in East Africa

By Guardian Reporter

BELGIUM is donating 462,000 Euros to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to combat quickly a locust plague in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is badly affected. The country is suffering its worst locust crisis in 25 years.

Around 90,000 hectares of farmland and meadows have already been affected. 80 percent of Ethiopians depend on agriculture and pastoralism for their food and income.

An estimated 8.5 million people will risk malnutrition between February and June 2020.

The FAO is attempting to contain the locust plague aided by Belgium's contribution of 462,000 Euros.

FAO will support the Ethiopian government in dealing with the swarms. The UN organisation's help will include providing materials, such as spraying equipment for pesticides and GPS devices. It also wishes to try out the bio pesticide Green Muscle, which causes less damage than chemical pesticides.

Rapid action is critical. 'If we delay, the numbers of locusts could already be 400 times greater by June 2020,' says the FAO.

Last year, Belgium donated 100,000 euros to combat locusts in Yemen.

Gigantic swarms of desert locusts are ravaging East Africa. Favourable weather conditions - 2 big cyclones with lots of rain - optimised their reproduction in the Saudi Arabian desert in 2018. This caused the swarms to suddenly infest East Africa, where it was also wetter than usual.

Locusts cause an enormous devastation to food production. After all, each locust eats its own weight in food every day.

This means that even a small swarm of 1 km² can consume as much food per day as 35,000 people. A typical swarm can comprise up to 150 million locusts and travel 150 km a day.



Salesian Missions New York director Fr Augustine Woon (C, with scarf) and Charles Stewart Mott Environment Programme director Sam Passmore (to his left) cut a ribbon to inaugurate a solar energy mini-grid system at Don Bosco vocational training centre in Iringa municipality earlier this week. Over 150 youths trained in renewable energy at Don Bosco VTCs in Iringa and Dodoma have completed training in solar energy generation funded by the US-based Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Mbeya featured among seven regions with highest rate of teen pregnancies

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA has been mentioned among seven regions in Tanzania with the highest rate of teen pregnancies.

United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF) Chief Field Officer in Southern Highland Regions, Pamela Shao made the remarks yesterday when speaking at the launch of the African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN)-Mbeya and Songwe branches that are funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

According to Shao, Mbeya has 33 percent of girls aged between 15 and 19 years who have already become mothers. She said the rate is above the national rate of 21 percent.

She said teen pregnancies are largely

contributed with difficult living conditions for girls especially those from poor families.

Shao noted that apart from being among the leading regions for early pregnancies, Mbeya region is leading with the highest rate of new HIV/Aids infections, with the most infected being girls.

The official said UNICEF has been working with the government in educating adolescent girls on reproductive health as well as on how they protect themselves from being infected with HIV/Aids.

Coordinator of AfriYAN, Jacqueline Mahone who is UNFPA's Country Representative, said they are working with the government to improve reproductive health services. She said although health issues are crosscutting, UNFPA will concentrate on provision of

reproductive health to help youth prevent themselves from HIV/Aids.

Mahone highlighted that launching of Songwe and Mbeya AfriYAN branches would enable the organisations to meet a good number of youth. Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr Tulia Ackson called upon youth to make sure they achieve their life and education dreams.

Mbeya Regional Youth Officer, George Mbijima said they have been supporting youth with loans to enable them establish income generating activities. He said a total of 731 youth have benefitted with the loans between October and December 2019.

Adolescent pregnancy is a worldwide problem. In Sub-Saharan Africa, an increasing number of girls are becoming mothers by the

age of 18 years old. Tanzania as one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where teen pregnancy is a very big problem among adolescent girls.

In 2016, there were 69,000 teen pregnancies in Tanzania, according to government's data. About 21 percent of girls aged 15-19 have given birth, with the figure rising to 45 percent in some areas of the country.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the risk of death following pregnancy is twice as high for girls aged 15-19 than for women aged 20-24.

The maternal mortality rate can be up to five times higher for girls aged 10-14 than for women aged 20-24. Illegal abortion also holds many risks for teenage girls in sub-Saharan Africa.

No new Ebola cases reported in DRC for a week

KINSHASA

AMID grave concerns over the spread of the coronavirus, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is more optimistic about efforts to contain its other global health

emergency, Ebola, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The WHO said on Wednesday via Twitter that no new cases had been confirmed or reported for the past seven days, nor had any

deaths been confirmed.

The epidemic is now reduced to a single sanitary zone, Beni, in the east of the country, WHO added.

In July, WHO had upgraded the Ebola epidemic in the DRC to a

global health emergency due to the risk that it could spread to neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda.

WHO said its team and partners on the ground were constantly on the alert and continued to work hard, despite the

insecurity and many other obstacles, to arrive at zero cases.

The Ebola epidemic was declared on 1 August 2018 in the eastern part of the DRC. So far, there have been 2,264 deaths (2,130 confirmed and

130 probable), according to the latest bulletin by the Congolese health authorities. Another 1,167 persons had overcome the virus, by being cured or by surviving it, while 453 suspected cases were under investigation.

The Ebola response has been complicated by insecurity in the affected areas, Beni, Butembo and the extreme south of Ituri.

By 22 February 2020, a total of 16,637 persons had been administered the Ad26.ZEBOV/MVA-BN-

Filo (Johnson&Johnson) vaccine in two health zones in Karisimbi in the eastern area of the city of Goma.

In total, over 300,000 persons have been vaccinated.

Heavy rains, floods destroy over 100 houses in Kahama

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

TORRENTIAL rains and floods had destroyed more than 100 houses and left hundreds of people homeless in Bugarama ward in Msalala Council, Kahama district.

Bugarama ward disaster management secretary Benjamin Ngamba made the remarks here when presenting a report to a meeting which brought together various disaster management groups organized by a non-profit organization 'Capacity Building Initiative for Poverty Alleviation (CABUIPA).'

According to him, since the 'masika rains' commenced this year, 117 houses have been destroyed thus leaving hundreds of people homeless.

"Most of the victims are living with their relatives. So we are calling for disaster management groups and other people to extend their support

for the families," he said.

CABUIPA-disaster risk reduction project officer, Projestus Bakenga said the organization will continue working closely with the community to reduce disaster risks.



Most of the victims are living with their relatives. So we are calling for disaster management groups and other people to extend their support for the families," he said.

According to him, the disaster risk reduction project is funded by Oxfam whereby among other things, works to support communities engage in modern agriculture to boost productivity and their incomes.

Agnes Kalumina from Tupendane group said that majority of the people had little knowledge on how to respond and overcome disaster risks so the government and other stakeholders have an important role in disaster risk management by contributing to the enhanced awareness and preparedness of their communities.

In his remarks, Msalala acting district executive director (DED) Ezedia Solomon said that the government has been educating the public on measures to reduce risks of disasters and it will continue strengthening efforts to ensure that every community is reached.



GT Bank managing director Jubril Adeniji (L) presents an assortment of items to Richard Kweka, deputy head teacher of Dar es Salaam's Buguruni primary school for the hearing impaired, at a ceremony held in the city on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

'KADCO has spent over 140m/- on development projects in villages surrounding KIA in 2019/20'

By Correspondent James Lanka, Moshi

THE Kilimanjaro Airports Development Company (KADCO) has in 2019/2020 financial year donated over 140m/- in various community development projects to villages surrounding the Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) in Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions.

Supported projects include construction of dormitories, kitchen, desks and modern toilets at primary and secondary schools, environment conservation, tree planting and fire rescue.

The firm's Director of Operations and technical Services at KADCO, Eng Martin Kinyamagoha, said the

company is working hard to ensure local communities have a sense of ownership and a vested interest in the future of the parks by sharing the rewards of sustainable airport services.

"The projects we implement are part of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)", he said.

Eng Kinyamagoha explained that between April to December 2019, KADCO provided free conservation training and donated a total of 47,251 trees to the villagers surrounding Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) for sustainable environmental protection and conservation.

He added that, his institution will in this year donate a total of 50,000 trees that will be planted

in various villages in Arumeru District, Arusha Region and Hai District, Kilimanjaro Region as part of efforts to boost ongoing environment conservation initiatives.

Benefitted villages according to Eng Kinyamagoha include, Mtakuja, Chemba, and Rundugai in Hai District, Kilimanjaro region, Malula, Majengo, Samaria and Maroni villages in Arumeru District, Arusha region, and Ormelili village in Siha district.

KADCO's Business Development Officer, Shaaban Towo explained that apart from donating in various community development projects, the institution has also rescued people and properties in the fire outbreak incidents in Mirerani

Mining sites and Gypsum Industry located in Arumeru district.

He said KADCO helped to rescue properties when fire broke at nuns house at Bomang'ombe town, Hai district in Kilimanjaro region early this year.

Kilimanjaro International Airport was built in 1971, to mark the tenth anniversary of Tanzania's national independence. Ever since, it has required much effort to upgrade the airport into a world-class point of entry to the region and this is something of a symbol of Tanzania's prime outlook on tourism.

To make the airport more efficient and modern, the airport is operated by Kilimanjaro Airports Development Company (KADCO),

a development company owned by the government of Tanzania.

With a vision to develop the airport into a regional and international hub, KADCO has spent in the past 15 years a significant amount of its revenues to increase the airport's operation performance which included resurfacing the runway, installation of automatic terminal information system, positioning automatic weather stations, improving cargo handling facilities and upgrading the fire rescue services and security systems to International Civil Aviation Organisation standards.

Currently, KADCO has embarked on a new terminal renovation and expansion project.

Peace Corps offers window into long-term impacts of anti-malaria drugs

WASHINGTON

A new report on potential long-term health effects of malaria drugs reached few definitive conclusions. Researchers were clear on one point though: There has not been enough good research into potential links between malaria prophylactics and a variety of health outcomes experienced by people who have taken them.

The study, published on Tuesday by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, sought to respond to questions raised mainly by advocates for U.S. military personnel deployed in malaria-endemic countries. They wondered if some health conditions experienced by service members – particularly neurologic and psychiatric outcomes – might have been precipitated by their exposure to malaria drugs at some time in the past.

David Savitz, chair of the review committee and a professor at Brown University, thinks it's a question worthy of continued exploration.

"The evidence base to make a determination is really quite limited, but as far as the question being a reasonable and appropriate one to ask, we think that is the case," Savitz told Devex.

The implications of that question are not limited to American military personnel. Half the world's population lives in places where malaria is present, leading to over 220 million cases, and more than 400,000 deaths per year.

In addition to military personnel and others deployed overseas, the researchers looked at available research on malaria drug use and effects among U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, many of whom serve in malaria-endemic countries, and who are required to take malaria prevention medication.

Approximately 10% of malaria cases reported annually in U.S. citizens by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention occur in Peace Corps volunteers, according to the report. Most of these originate in Africa. Two people in Peace Corps have died from malaria since 2000, with both cases occurring in people who were "non adherent" with prophylaxis, according to the report.

There are currently six malaria prophylactic drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: chloroquine, primaquine, mefloquine, doxycycline, atovaquone/proguanil, and tafenoquine. Each of these comes with recommendations for who should take them and the concurrent and short-term adverse effects of taking them – those that occur during the drug course – are well documented.

The researchers looked at the available evidence for associations between specific malaria drugs and persistent health outcomes – those that appear during the period of the medication and persist after the course has ended – as well as latent health outcomes – those that appear after use is completed.

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The review was only able to find sufficient evidence between one malaria medication and one persistent health outcome, and it should probably not be cause for great concern, Savitz said.

The researchers found that the drug tafenoquine was associated with a condition called vortex keratopathy, which results in deposits in the cornea of the eye that disappear after the drug course ends and cause no functional vision changes.



Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority central zone manager Stella Rutagaza addresses journalists at a seminar on insurance held in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Help comes to Mwang'ombe Primary School pupils

By Correspondent George Sembony,

Tanga

TANGA based organisation–Tanga International Competence Centre (TICC) has constructed a 6.6m/- worth toilet at Mwang'ombe Primary School giving relief to over 1,400 pupils.

The toilet building comprises of two toilet rooms for girls and one for boys. TICC constructed the toilet as part of cooperate

social responsibility as well as the organization's school health programme.

The school Head Teacher, Rachel Temu said the school was facing a shortage of toilets as the existed pit latrines were not enough for both, girls and boys.

She said the school has a total of 1,411 pupils, of which 882 are girls and 729 boys.

"We had eight pit latrines but two have collapsed. Children were using the remained few holes which were

in bad state," said the Head Teacher noting that the school needs at least 62 toilet holes to meet the demand.

She said guidelines from Ministry of Education states that at least 33 boys should use a single toilet hole while the ration for girls is 1: 29.

Tanga Regional Education Officer, Enedy Mzava said the city council has already allocated some funds for construction of new six-hole toilet at the school.

TICC Director, Ruth Nesje said the organization constructed the

toilets as part of its school health programme, primarily to protect school children's health against infectious diseases.

She revealed that TICC is seeking funds to execute a toilet building programme at various primary schools within the city. She said they are aware that most of the primary schools face pit latrines shortage hence the need to seek additional funds to implement similar projects at the schools.

"Almost 70 percent of the

city primary schools face toilet shortages. We will continue to help in construction of toilets for the betterment of our children," she noted.

Mzava said the organisation has already built toilets at various primary schools including, Tongoni and Mwakidila. She said although they cannot reach all the schools in the city, their support helps protect a good number of pupils from diseases as they use modern hygienic toilets.

Government is doing well, states TCCIA chairman for Mara Region

By Guardian Correspondent, Mu-soma

THE government is doing well as a facilitator of investments and doing businesses in an easy and orderly way, Mara Regional chairman of the Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Boniphace Ndengo, declared here yesterday.

Commenting on the outcome of the joint meeting of public and private sector representatives which ended here recently, Ndengo said that it was his first time to witness a minister and two deputy ministers participating devotedly in a meeting of that nature and at that level.

"This was a meeting that discussed issues openly and in depth. We discussed complexities, problems and challenges that have always stood in the way of attracting investments and doing business in our region. There was vivid sincerity in having all the issues cleared," he reported, adding: "we have faith in this government and in its determination to create conducive environment to doing business and attracting investments into this region."

The chairman said he had never seen ministers sharing a common table and jointly finding solutions to problems and challenges put before the meeting.

"The just-ended meeting was a sufficient proof of the sincerity of the government when it addresses issues about promoting investments and an enabling environment for doing businesses. We shall cooperate with the government in implementing socio-economic development objectives," he pledged.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Investment) Angellah Kairuki, Deputy Finance Minister Ashatu Kijaji and Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry Stella Manyanya. The meeting adopted guidelines for attracting investments into the region and for doing of business that looks orderly. Kairuki ordered the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) to work closely with the region in implementing the guidelines.

Mara Regional Commissioner Adam Malima said the meeting presented members of the business community a good opportunity to present their grievances so that the government can solve them.

The RC also identified key and potential sectors of economy, saying that they needed to be fully utilized and stimulate economic growth and development of the region.

"It is the high time now to create wealth and wellbeing of our people if all these investment and business opportunities are fully exploited. I am confident that through these consultative meetings we can move ahead," Malima explained.

TIC Lake Zone Manager Pendo Gondwe promised to ensure identified investment and business opportunities in Mara Region were posted on TIC website.

"I am happy to see the government and members of business community meet and discuss to remove bottlenecks frustrating investment and business growth in the region. The region has a lot of opportunities," she said.

She commended minister Kairuki for taking bold steps towards winning back confidence of investors and businessmen, pledging to work hard and meet the targets of fifth phase government of turning Tanzania into a medium size economy and industrial base.



Singida regional traffic officer Edson Mwakihaba (L) and Serengeti Breweries government relations manager Neema Temba (R) present road safety jackets in Singida municipality yesterday to Abdul Misigo, chairman of Singida Urban motorcycle-taxi riders (bodaboda), as part of the firm's 'Don't Drink and Drive' campaign. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Educate people on CCTV cameras' efficacy, Dr Shein tells technocrats

By Guardian Reporter

LEADERS in the Zanzibar's Presidents Office, Regional Administration, Local Government and Special Departments (PO-RALGSD) have been tasked to ensure that people are well informed on the effective use of the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Camera Security Project.

CCTV cameras were installed in the Zanzibar stone town in 2015 to keep the town safe from criminals and drivers who violate traffic regulations. Zanzibar' President Dr

Ali Mohamed Shein made the call yesterday when he met with PO-RALGSD leaders, who presented to him implementation of the action plan between July and December last year.

Dr Shein said that PO-RALGSD need to ensure that ordinary Zanzibaris are well informed through media on a number of events that are recorded by the project through CCTV cameras, which are almost all over Zanzibar city.

"This will make people believe that the project is operating effectively," he said, adding that there

are many criminal events which are being captured by the project, but they are not aired by the media, including the state-run Zanzibar Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Television.

According to Dr Shein, there are many people who don't believe that the installed CCTV cameras are working effectively.

"So, airing events that are captured by those cameras will make them believe that the project is working and is meant to improve security in the city," he said, adding: "Those events should also

include traffic offences." He however said that the project has achieved a lot in Zanzibar and the government is working hard to scale up the project in Pemba Island.

Chief Secretary and Secretary of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council, Dr Abdulhamid Yahya Mzee stressed the need for the PO-RALGSD to provide education to the people of the Indian Ocean Archipelago on the benefits of the Safe City Project, so that every Zanzibari is fully aware.

Deputy Minister of PO-

RALGSD Haji Omar Khair said that the project is meant to ensure Zanzibar is free from criminal activities, taking into account that ordinary people and tourists have been the victims of insecurity yet economy of the Islands relies heavily on tourism.

He said that it is quite necessary to have organised CCTV cameras and unified commanding system which can protect both people's security and ensure the tourism economy for Zanzibar.



Charcoal business is dying hard across Tanzania, apparently because many ordinary citizens find more affordable and more environment-friendly sources of energy hard to come by. These motorcyclists were caught at Chanika in suburban Dar es Salaam yesterday hunting for customers for the popular item - and it's not a rare occasion in the country. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Burundi opens consulate in Morocco city Laayoune

RABAT

BURUNDI opened on Friday its general consulate in Laayoune, a city in Morocco's southern region of Western Sahara. The city is already home to a number of diplomatic missions representing African states.

Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser

Bourita chaired the inauguration ceremony with his counterpart Ezechiel Nibigira.

The opening of Burundi's consulate is another show of support for Morocco's position on Western Sahara. The inauguration of Burundi's consulate coincided with a landmark event taking place in

the region to reinforce cooperation between Morocco and Pacific Island States.

The 3rd Forum of the Pacific Island States opened yesterday with the participation of high-level delegations to discuss ways to boost South-South cooperation.

Burundi's consulate in

Laayoune is the eighth diplomatic representation after seven other states opened offices in Morocco's Laayoune and Dakhla in Western Sahara.

Cote d'Ivoire is the latest country to open the representation in Laayoune. The opening was on February 18.

Following the

inauguration, Ivorian FM Ally Coulibaly said that the decision is a "sovereign act."

"In foreign policy, as in other fields, we are careful not to give moral lessons, nor do we want to be told what to do or not to do," said the Ivorian official. The statement came to refute any potential questions on the validity of the embassy

African malaria vaccine study conducted by WHO widely seen as a serious breach of ethical standards

GENEVA

A LARGE-SCALE malaria vaccine study led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been criticized in a special report published in the BMJ for committing a 'serious breach' of international ethical standards.

Bioethicists claim that the pilot study does not adequately inform parents and caretakers that their children are participating in the study and fails to address potential side effects associated with the disease.

The WHO says that its rollout of the Mosquirix (RTS,S) vaccine currently underway in Malawi, Ghana, and Kenya is a "pilot introduction" and not a "research activity". The report argues otherwise.

"If an activity is classified as research, then all sorts of rules and oversight mechanisms are activated. For example, the activity must receive the prospective ethical review. Unless certain conditions are met, human subjects must provide informed consent," said bioethicist Jonathan Kimmelman in the report.

"The fact that the activity has been registered in clinicaltrials.gov [NCT03806465] amounts to an open declaration that this is research," he adds.

First developed in 1987, Mosquirix is the world's first licensed malaria vaccine. The European Medicines Agency reviewed its use in children between 6 weeks and 17 months, followed shortly by a WHO recommendation for large-scale pilot implementations in children 5 to 9 months of age despite outstanding safety concerns brought up in previous clinical trials during which children who received the vaccine were 10 times more likely to contract meningitis or had an increased risk for cerebral malaria. The risk of death was doubled in girls who had received the vaccination.

An estimated 720,000 children are expected to receive the RTS,S vaccine over the next two years in randomly assigned areas as a part of other routine vaccinations. However, it is not clear whether health care professionals will disclose whether or not the child is receiving Mosquirix. The WHO argues that consent is implied; if a parent or guardian wants to be informed about the potential vaccine then they may turn to local community initiatives meant to provide outreach about the vaccination. Furthermore, parents still have the option to vaccinate their child or not.

UNICEF reports that malaria kills one child every 30 seconds, or around 3,000 individuals each day.

The report argues the failure to obtain informed consent from parents who are told that they are part of a study violates the Ottawa Statement, a consensus statement regarding the ethical design standards for cluster randomized trials. Charles Weijer, a bioethicist at Western University in Canada, tells The BMJ that implied consent is "no substitute for informed consent. Indeed, implied consent is no consent at all. We have no assurance that parents, in fact, received information about the study let alone that they understood it."

The report also states that WHO sent training information to country partners about the potential risk of Mosquirix but failed to mention the increased risk of death in girls. When asked why it did not include female mortality findings, the organization cited "insufficient evidence to classify gender-specific mortality as a known or potential risk."

"I think parents should be made aware of this doubled female mortality. Imagine that this mortality was a true finding. If true, then how will this be perceived by the participants—that their children were unknowingly involved in a huge experiment by the authorities? This could be a disaster for public trust in vaccines and health authorities," said vaccine expert Christine Stabell Benn of the University of Southern Denmark.

Weijer doubts that the ethics committee would have granted permission for any potential waiving of informed consent requirements. He also adds that the human rights provision of the Malawi constitution reads: No person shall be subjected to medical or scientific experimentation without his or her consent.

The Central African Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Comoros, Gambia, and Guinea have all opened consulates in Morocco's southern region of Western Sahara.

The openings reflect the growing support for Morocco's sovereignty over the region from countries throughout Africa.

The Guardian

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SATURDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2020

**Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995**

Making the Zinjanthropus story more reader-friendly is laudable

KISWAHILI is widespread use in most of Africa's Great Lakes region and other parts of eastern and south-eastern Africa. Various estimates have been put forward and they vary widely, ranging from 100 million to 150 million. Kiswahili is also one of the working languages of the African Union and officially recognised as a lingua franca of the East African Community. In 2018, South Africa legalised the teaching of Swahili in South African schools as an optional subject to begin in 2020.

Kiswahili is gradually expanding into countries that never used to speak the language. For example

Kiswahili began to be taught in the United States as early as 1961 at the University of California, Los Angeles the language.

It is against this backdrop that scholars and scientists from four higher learning institutions in Tanzania and the United States have partnered to translate the story of the world's earliest humanoid species, Zinjanthropus, into reader-friendly English and Kiswahili books.

The agreement was reached during discussions in the researchers' symposium on Zinjanthropus, the earliest documented discovery, which has just clocked 60 years since it was unearthed by Dr Mary Leakey on the rocky escarpments of Olduvai Gorge, soon converted into the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Participants for the 60th Anniversary of Zinjanthropus included scholars from the University of Dar es Salaam, the University of Dodoma, Saint Augustine University of Mwanza and Indiana University College of the United States.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism,

Prof Adolf Mkenda said already the process to execute the task of writing a proper book on the scientific discovery has started. "I have contacted various researchers and scientists to come up with two books, one in reader friendly English and another Kiswahili," he said.

We hope that The books should eliminate all scientific jargon so that, they can easily be consumed by ordinary people as well as being used in all levels of education in local schools.

As of now, the 'Zinjanthropus Skull,' which is the only evidence of oldest human evolution, is still a subject that few can comprehend as it is always discussed in rarefied scientific language.

In the same vein that Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa in February, this year inaugurated an edifice erected to honour the site of the earliest trace of mankind at Olduvai Gorge, in addition to gracing the launch of the Dr Leakey Research Centre which has been converted into a museum.

The Commissioner Conservator for Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, Dr Fred Manongi stated during the meeting that the NCAA will create a friendly environment enabling ordinary Tanzania to visit, see, learn and understand all about ancient discoveries that have immortalized traces at Laetoli and Olduvai Gorge.

The Zinjanthropus Skull was discovered by Dr Mary Leakey on the 17th of July 1959 following painstaking efforts of herself and scholar husband Dr Louis Leakey, working in that environment, seeking fossils, since the early 1930s.

Tanzania is also home to earliest human footprints immortalized at the Laetoli archaeological site, also found in Ngorongoro and these three sets of prints are believed to date back some four million years.

Indeed, everyone ought to play a part in war on discrimination

Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the UN and other international organisations. The day aims to promote equality before the law and in practice throughout all of the member countries of the UN. The day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was launched by UNAIDS executive director Michel Sidibé on 27 February of that year with a major event in Beijing.

In February 2017, UNAIDS called on people to make some noise around zero discrimination, to speak up and prevent discrimination from standing in the way of achieving ambitions, goals and dreams.

In Tanzania in 2018: 1,600,000 people were living with HIV. HIV incidence per 1000 uninfected – the number of new HIV infections among the uninfected population over one year – among all people of all ages was 1.41. HIV prevalence – the percentage of people living with HIV – among adults (15-49 years) was 4.6 per cent. 72,000 people were newly infected with HIV. 24,000 people died from an AIDS-related illness.

There has been progress in the number of AIDS-related deaths since 2010, with a 49 per cent decrease, from 48,000 deaths to 24,000 deaths. The number of new HIV infections has also decreased, from 83,000 to 72,000 in the same period.

The 90-90-90 targets envision that, by 2020, 90 per cent of people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90 per cent of people who know their HIV-positive status will be accessing treatment and 90 per cent of people on treatment will have suppressed viral loads. In terms of all people living with HIV, reaching the 90-90-90 targets means that 81 per cent of all people living with HIV are on treatment and 73 per cent of all people living with HIV are virally suppressed.

Ninety-three per cent of pregnant women living with HIV accessed antiretroviral medicine to prevent

transmission of the virus to their baby, preventing 14,000 new HIV infections among newborns. Early infant diagnosis the percentage of HIV-exposed infants tested for HIV before eight weeks of age stood at 47 per cent in 2018.

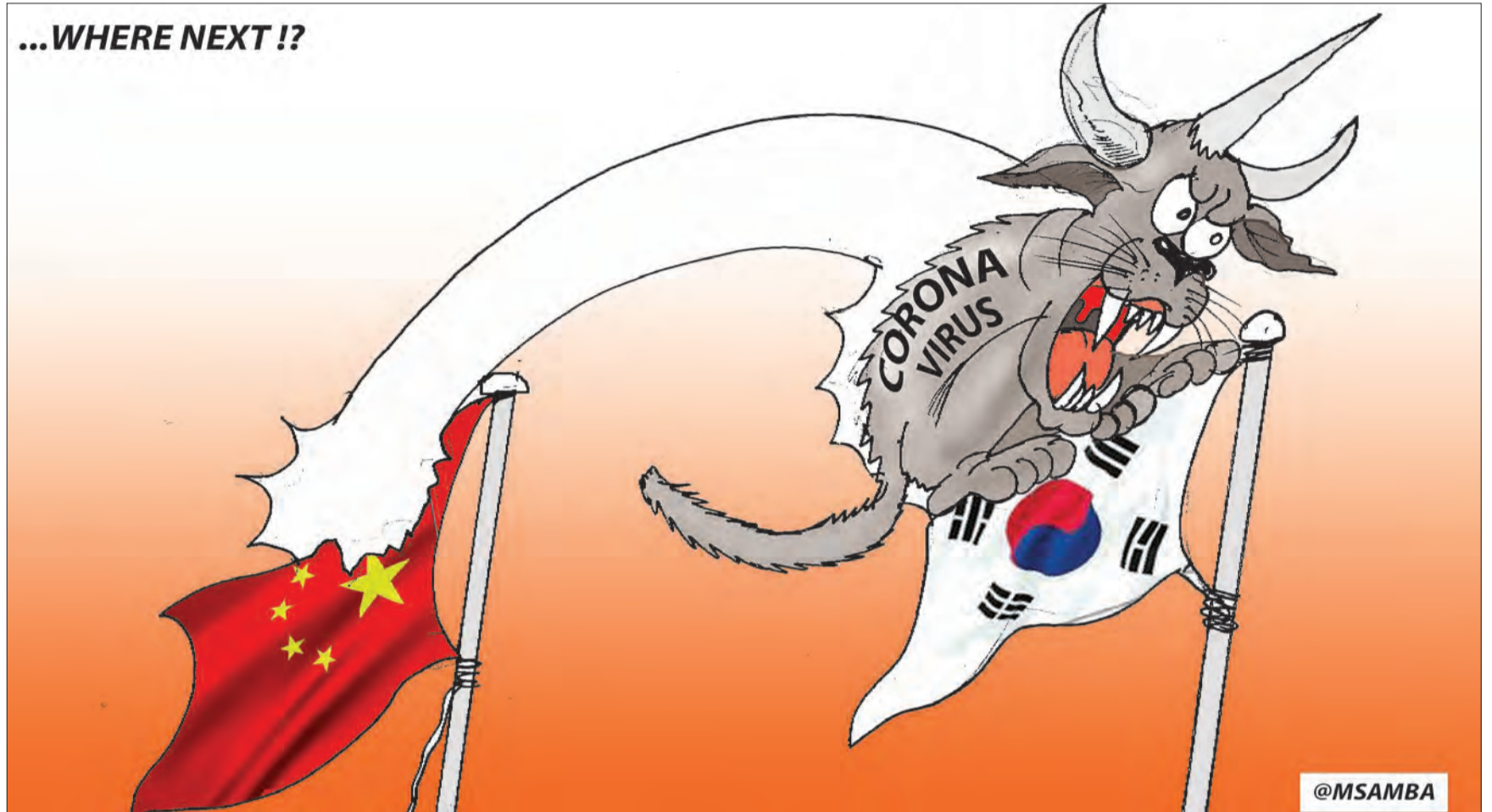
Women are disproportionately affected by HIV in Tanzania: of the 1,500,000 adults living with HIV, 880,000 (58.67pc) were women. New HIV infections among young women aged 15-24 years were more than double those among young men: 16,000 new infections among young women, compared to 7,600 among young men. HIV treatment was higher among women than men, however, with 82 per cent of adult women living with HIV on treatment, compared to 57 per cent of adult men.

Same-sex sexual relations are illegal in Tanzania.

Only 43.08 per cent of women and men 15-24 years old correctly identified ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV. In 2017, the percentage of people living with HIV and tuberculosis who were being treated for both diseases was 42.1 per cent, up from 29.5 per cent in 2015.

The day is particularly noted by organisations like UNAIDS that combat discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. In 2015, Armenian Americans in California held a 'die-in' on Zero Discrimination Day to remember the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian genocide was the systematic killing and deportation of Armenians by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire. In 1915, during World War I, leaders of the Turkish government set in motion a plan to expel and massacre Armenians. By the early 1920s, when the massacres and deportations finally ended, between 600,000 and 1.5 million Armenians were dead, with many more forcibly removed from the country. Today, most historians call this event a genocide: a premeditated and systematic campaign to exterminate an entire people.

...WHERE NEXT !?



Increased investment in technology could reduce corruption in Liberia

By Foldestine Payne

Liberia is a West African nation in which there has been corruption since its inception as a nation. As a Digital Ambassador that digested the history of Liberia with clarity and distinction, I have understood During the Tolbert administration in the 1970s, he identified three enemies to combat: ignorance, disease, and poverty. Tolbert also established the Anti-Corruption Bureau; however, the bureau did not administer any blow to the corruption it was established to fight. In fact, Liberians trivialized the fight by calling the bureau a "corruption bureau" since itself was very corrupt.

Then came President Doe who overthrew Tolbert in a coup d'état because of "rampant corruption." Then Doe Government became an embodiment of rampant corruption and dictatorship. Doe replaced nepotism from the Tolbert regime with tribalism which was very dangerous. Taylor launched the civil war to get rid of Doe for "corruption, financial malfeasance", and with the help of Prince Johnson, Doe was brutally murdered by Prince Johnson. Taylor was elected in 1997; with Liberians again singing: "you killed my ma, you killed my pa, [but] I will vote for you". Taylor pillaged the resources of the nation with impunity and corruption was at an all-time high in the nation.

After Taylor, there came Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005, making her Africa's first female president. On her inauguration day, Sirleaf declared Corruption as public enemy number one and received wide applause from international partners and Liberians. Later, she got married to "Mr. Corruption and Nepotism in her government was more than what Liberia experienced during the Tolbert administration, I must admit. The most corrupt government officials were either her family members or members of her inner circle.

Presently, His Excellency George M. Weah is the president of Liberia and the issues of corruption is still high on the agenda such as followed, Mansions Built by the President, The Missing 16 Billion Liberians dollars, The 25 Million US Dollars, and the list goes on. Since 1847 to presence the primary problem of Liberia is the issue of corruption and the solution to this problem is technology which can help to minimize this nightmare.

Increase investment in Technology can reduce corruption in Liberia by using this three (3) major pillars that government stands-on e.g. Administration, Finance, and Judiciary. The steps to be taken may include the following:

Conversion from traditional method of operation to an e-governance (e-government).

Provision of electronic means for Identification (National Identity Card).

Integration/harmonizing related government agencies databases to avoid duplication in the citizens' biometric data.

Agencies/Commissions/Ministries has to post and keep updating (continuously) their financial status on their website for transparency.

Each and every Ministry should provide an avenue for reporting corruptions through their website or mobile applications.

Use of social Network.
E-taxation.
E-judiciary.
Electronic asset declaration to replace the existing paper based system.

E-government
E-government is all about bringing government services closer to the citizens through the use of technological platforms such as pervasive computing, and facilitates access to government information and services easily via online platforms. Most of the government initiatives place a barrier between citizen and those officials who intend to extract bribe from them.

“**Increase investment in Technology can reduce corruption in Liberia by using this three (3) major pillars that government stands-on e.g. Administration, Finance, and Judiciary. The steps to be taken may include the following:**

Moreover, computerized procedures allow tracking decisions and actions and thus serve as an additional deterrent to corruption. Australia, Hong Kong, China, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Singapore have undertaken extensive efforts to implement e-government and Liberia need to follow their blueprint. In Korea, for instance citizens can real-time monitor the progress of an application for permits and licenses online. In Pakistan, the entire tax department is currently being restructured; and information technology is being introduced with the purpose of reducing contact between tax collectors and taxpayers. In India and the Philippines, documents related to public procurement must now be made available online. Cambodia enhanced the use of information technology to provide administrative services.

Identification
The Liberia government should give more emphasis on the importance of obtaining a national identity card for by all its citizens' as a unique identifier; and then linked the citizens' biometric data to both the government and nongovernmental sectors e.g. Banks, Insurance Companies

and other institutions where user's authentications are required. The registration for Bank Verification Number would have been at ease when such amalgamation has been made earlier.

Therefore, Liberian government should provide: Single official website or mobile application to users for the purpose of reporting corruption and corrupt practices in public service, abuse of office, bribery, and any form of public fund mismanagement.

Enforce a standard by which governmental and non-governmental institutions should establish a channel (website, Mobile application, SMS, or MMS services) to receive a corruption report from its citizens' based on services offered, and take further necessary action to punish offenders accordingly. In India, I Paid is a Bribe works to defy widespread tolerance of bribery as a normal way of dealing with corrupt government officials by encouraging citizens to refuse to pay bribes, and investing in the capacity of civic engagement to support shifts in public attitudes.

E-taxation
Automating tax collection and payments are essential for developing countries like Liberia.

Governments uses ICT to improve the effectiveness of tax collection, thereby accelerating the tax collection and payment processes through the use of electronic medium to ensure transparency and prevent corrupt practices. Most of our cities use toll-gate for tax collection from incoming and outgoing vehicles manually, which require human intervention throughout the process, no doubt corruption is bound to take place in such process. Singapore has engaged in using Electronic Pricing System (ERP) multi-lane automatic toll-gate tax collection system; an efficient and convenient way to charge motorists the cost of using the roads. Under this system, all vehicles will be fitted with a Smart card reader, called the in-vehicle unit (IU), which accepts a stored-value Smart card. Upon entering a Pricing Zone, the ERP system will automatically transact with the Smart card reader using Radio Frequency (RF) communications to debit the appropriate value. To assist law enforcement, the system also includes a camera unit to capture the image of violators' vehicles. Electronic Road Pricing for

Electronic Asset Declaration to Replace Paper Based

The use of ICT can greatly contribute by reducing data entry errors in the submission, processing, verifying, and automatically authenticating asset declaration information of both Politicians and Public servants, to enable the general public access to asset declaration information; this will greatly improve transparency in public service, thereby reducing illicit enrichment by public civil servants/officials. By automating asset declaration several benefits

could be derived such as: calculating numerical in-balance by the software, making the publication of declared information easier to access online by public and investigative journalist, and also easy to conduct formal review of such information.

Recommendations
Based on the research conducted by the authors for the formation of this document, it was gathered that to fight corruption in Liberia an alignment with telecommunication service providers is highly needed to achieve possible implementation and utilization of tools, machineries or computer system in order to fight corruption in Liberia.

Liberia telecommunication Authority should enforce a standard by linking Subscriber Identification Module Card (SIM Card) with National Identification Card (National ID), and also restrict the number of SIM cards to be acquired by each and every citizen of the country to at most only three (3) SIM Cards per single person.

Similarly, in order to sanitize and make reporting of corrupt practices as genuine as possible, the use of website could not be the final solution because it has a limited security, where email address is required as a means of authentication to have access to share one's bribe and corruption experiences. Hence, to overcome this problem a mobile phone application would be a better option. The mobile application which will be designed in such a way that users can only be allowed to register with his/her mobile phone number so that the details about user reporting a corruption can easily be accessed from the database of the Mobile Network Service Providers in the country by Corruption Report Receiving Officers at the other end, for further verification, before moving forward to investigate the case and abuse associated with such report.

Conclusion
Implementing ICT in tackling corruption is crucial to any nation for National development. Therefore, developing countries like Liberia need to be awakened, current, and be up to date with the new trends in technology to put a stop to innumerable challenges posed by corruption. It is well understood that information technology will not bring a long lasting solution without reshaping government policies. When government reshape its policies and implement ICT in its operations, this will surely pave the way for success. The role that automation plays will cut down to the lowest minimum if not eliminating corruption in Nigeria legal system and finance when carefully implemented. The study has also reveal that some public officials faces challenges like demotion or losing their positions over the stance they have taken against corrupt practices, but using computer machinery to handle some of these task will save the positions of such good citizens.

Africa is a youthful continent: We need to have new generation of young leaders

By Noxolo Ntaka

A new report by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), has highlighted the urgency for the South African government to take the rising unemployment statistics in the country seriously. As it stands, the number of people who were looking for employment between 2008 and 2019, but could not find any work, increased from 6.5 million to 10.3 million.

The reality for young people in South Africa aged 15 to 34 is even more dire. The report indicates that between 2008 and 2019, the number of young people increased by 2.2 million, yet the number of those employed fell by more than 500,000. In a country where the youth make up almost a third of the population, this is most concerning.

Beyond this, there is something else that requires further scrutiny: Africa's youth population (aged 15-24) was reported in 2015 to be 226 million - making up one-fifth of the global youth population - but why are its leaders old? The continent's growing youth demographic has nothing to show for it as political positions still remain predominantly in the hands of the older generation,

with an unwillingness from its leaders to make space for the next generation.

The discussion around Africa's youth demographic needing to be harnessed has often been used by African leaders, particularly in 2017 when the official African Union theme adopted by heads of state was, "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth".

One might ask, however, what results and what investments have been made in the youth since then with regards to the provision of jobs? In South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa has previously stated his commitment to tackling youth unemployment, however, the picture is seemingly bleak in the absence of sustained economic growth.

Research conducted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicates that to make headway with unemployment - youth unemployment in particular - stable economic growth and decreasing inequality levels are required. If anything is clear, South Africa's youth unemployment pandemic is one that will only worsen if it is not adequately addressed in conjunction with economic growth. The last time significant reductions in unemployment were



seen, was between 2004 and 2006 when South Africa's real GDP growth rate averaged about 5% for three years in a row.

A second factor related to the country's high unemployment rate includes the country's poor education system and low skills' levels, both of which are critical for entry into the labour force. This tells the story of a generation of young people who have not been ad-

equately prepared to meet the necessary requirements of what the economy needs.

The kind of investment that is ultimately required is one that will need to take a multi-pronged approach in its reforms: the focus should primarily be on sustaining inclusive and equitable economic growth in order to attract international investment while the state invests in youth development by providing

training, and opportunities that enable young people to enter the job market.

As part of this understanding and the need to grow a new generation of leaders, Democracy Works Foundation established the Democracy Works Academy. The academy is a seven-month leadership development training aimed at helping young people develop skills while increasing their knowledge

on the challenges South Africa faces.

The training provides an online learning platform - developed in partnership with the University of Pretoria - which provides a project management course that fellows must complete. Additionally, three residential seminars are hosted throughout the year.

In 2019, the inaugural class of Democracy Works Academy fellows was ad-

mitted into the programme.

Thirty young people from across South Africa received the opportunity to be a part of an initiative that provided them with hands-on mentors who would support their development; a space in which they could learn about the key socio-economic challenges South Africa currently faces; and to engage leaders in government, civil society and business.

This is an initiative, which at no cost to the participants, provides young people with the chance to enhance their skills set and networks. Much more needs to be done to engage young people - rather than leaving them on the periphery - regarding the challenges the country faces and how best they can contribute towards making the "face of leadership" in the country more inclusive, and to plough back into their communities on what the academy has taught them.

Democracy Works Foundation's commitment to work with young people is a stepping stone towards contributing to the creation of a country that centres on and addresses the challenges faced by young people. This comes with the understanding that in order for democracy to thrive in a healthy environment, it needs to engage with those who are marginalised in society in order to create impactful change.

Much more needs to be done to engage young people on the challenges South Africa and the continent face and how best they can contribute towards making the 'face of leadership' more inclusive.

Agencies

Anguish for Dar's Msumi suburb as ponds turn into death traps

By GAUDENSIA MNGUMI

IN Msumi, some 15 kilometers away from Mbezi bus station on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, the story of deaths in the killer ponds starts. It begins with the family of Joseph Felix who lost his life while a family in the neighborhoods also lost their 10 years boy Daniel, when the two fell into the water and died on the same day.

The huge water pond that killed them is one among several others which were dug by traders involved in brick making and sand quarrying. In this process sand was being sold to local people to build houses in Msumi and in the neighborhood. This happened in the early 2000s, well before the ponds became death traps for people, school children and domestic animals like dogs, chicken, goats and cows.

The more recent death traps situation started when the ponds entombed a 10 year boy who was washing his clothes using the Msumi pond water. When the boy was trapped there was a boda boda rider around who was cleaning his motorcycle.

"The boda boda rider heard a sound ... he noticed that the boy dived into the water. However he didn't emerge and the boda man rushed to help. He jumped in to the water to see what was happening to the boy, but in vain," says a resident of Msumi Kwa Bintimbingu, as the two were drowned.

"He dived into the pond, but it was too late; he couldn't do it. The man was

already gulped. Trapped in mud, silt, wastes... he didn't save the boy. There was nobody around to help. The two died concurrently. It was so painful they both couldn't be helped. The family of Felix was mourning ... as the wife lost the husband, and the neighbours lost their young one, the 10 year old Daniel. It was a grief moment for Msumi people," said Lucy Mushi, another Msumi resident.

The residents thought that perhaps because of the deaths of the two, the local authorities would take action and cover the water ponds, as they have seen the 'killer ponds' eating lives of the residents. But up to now nothing has happened and Msumi people have continue to die, residents affirm.

Police reports that in the second week of January say that another moment of agony, a grieving moment for Kwa Bintimbingu residents, Paschal died. His body was seen floating in the water pond, facing upward. It was retrieved and immediately buried, but nobody talked about covering the ponds.

The local government official (chairman) for Msumi Daraja, Ismail Mbinda admitted to being aware of young Paschal's death but didn't say anything in particular as to whether local authorities were going to backfill the ponds.

He said he met with Msumi residents mid-January but the topic discussed wasn't the killer ponds. The meeting dwelt on improving daladala trips from



Mbezi to Msumi. However, many people didn't support his plans on daladala transport because it was not their priority, residents said. The major challenge of the area is water, instead they wanted the tap water matter to be sorted out first.

Ponds and shallow wells, have killed several children, with last year two kids dying when they were drowned in shallow wells accidentally. Police officers said they were present when the residents retrieved the body of Paschal. The water pans now oc-

cupping more than five acres of a farm (when put together) for years now have been the cause of several deaths since mid last year and so far four people - two men and two children - have died.

The people in Msumi have been left with 'the killer pans' which are dangerous to their lives, their children and domestic animals. "This is not fair as first we didn't benefit from these projects. People have been using the sands that produced the ponds to get money but we the commu-

nity didn't earn anything," Lucy intimated.

Several people say that they didn't know that the sand fill ponds which are locally will turn into graveyards after people dug tons and tons of sand two decades ago.

WHY DEATHS?

Investigations conducted by this paper found that the Dar es Salaam Water and Sewage Authority (Dawasa) failure to provide clean and affordable water has caused people to rely on dirty and polluted swampy, pond and

shallow waters for years.

There is a scarcity of water in Msumi that causes people to use the swampy and pond waters for domestic needs, ranging from washing their cloths or cooking and some is boiled for drinking.

DAWASA issues licenses to carry out commercial distribution of water in the areas, which the residents say the service they provide is too expensive.

Dawasa permits water transporters to sell water to Msumi buyers but they have the feeling that the

distributors don't provide poor people avenue to buy small quantities of waters which they can afford.

Additionally, the small number of distributors are serving the wide market in Msumi and other areas in the neighborhoods particularly Makabe, Mbopo and Madale. Hence they monopolize the market mostly when they plan and agree together that a buyer should buy large quantities of waters. Usually it is the entire three cubic meters capacity water tanks which they carry as is their stand-

ard distribution measure.

However, some residents wanted and still recognize the importance of government support in water distribution, taking into account that women and girls are mostly frequent collectors of water. They experience serious challenges in times of scarcity by heavy expenditure of time and energy.

To ensure that unsafe water consumption which is risky is stopped people wanted the government to think about putting up kiosks as relevant selling points for safe water in Msumi.

Officials of the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC), when asked if there are ways to save lives, said the people need to report to the Ubungo municipal authority or NEMC zonal offices for action.

The situation in Msumi is like the one reported in Pugu Kajiungeni in Temeke municipality.

The killer pond in Pugu Kajiungeni has led to several houses being partly submerged, after 16 were submerged and abandoned.

The abandonments meant that several families have become homeless, and all this needs Dawasa's attention. Can the authority be innovative enough to deploy low-cost technologies for cleaning and distributing safe water to the thirsty customers in Msumi and Pugu Kajiungeni instead of ditching them to the pond graves?

COVID-19 impact on sport comes closer to South Africa

By Craig Ray

Global sporting events are increasingly facing postponements and cancellations as COVID-19 spreads. The pandemic has had its first direct impact on South Africa and South African sportspeople this week.

COVID-19, was first encountered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, and has gone on to affect over 80,000 people in 41 countries around the globe, causing over 2,700 deaths.

The Cape Town Cycle Tour, the largest timed cycling race in the world, confirmed that a group of riders from Italy, where there has been a severe outbreak of the virus, informed organisers that they would not travel to the event because of COVID-19.

The Cape Town Cycle Tour takes place on Sunday, 8 March.

"I can confirm the party from Italy cancelled specifically because of COVID-19," Cape Town Cycle Tour organiser Dave Bellairs told Daily Maverick on Friday. "It had to do with their insurance and the fact that they wouldn't be covered if they travelled under these circumstances. That's as much detail as I have on that."

"The guy who has cancelled has been bringing a group of Italian cyclists over here for the past five years. Two days before he cancelled he had sent me the list of the party's names and documentation.

"We, as the Cycle Tour, have been taking a closer look at where international participants are coming from. We have participants from 74 different countries.

"There are no entries from China this year. We don't normally have a lot of entries from China. There are none from Algeria and Egypt, two other areas where COVID-19 has been detected.

"We have an entry from Nigeria, which has just had its first case. We have a significant number of participants from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). There are 132 listed this year.

"We are monitoring the situation but we are not seeing massive numbers of people from affected areas. Our Italian numbers are down to 28 participants. We normally have close to 100 Italians but I can't be sure if that is directly linked to COVID-19."

On Thursday night the Abu Dhabi Sports Council cancelled the remaining two stages of the 2020 UAE Tour after two staff members of an unspecified Italian professional team tested positive for COVID-19.

The South African owned NTT Pro Cycling team (formerly Dimension Data) is participating in the race. All its riders and staff are quarantined in their hotel and will undergo screening for the virus on Friday according to the team spokesperson.

Super Rugby, which included four South African



teams, has also been affected by the pandemic with matches involving the Japanese-based Sunwolves postponed.

The tournament's organising body, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina Rugby (Sanzaar), has put all participants on alert.

"The international cross-border nature of Super Rugby has led Sanzaar to review its playing schedule and to implement specific tournament protocols to minimise any risks of the ongoing effects of the Covid-19," a statement read.

"Presently a number of

countries including Australia, New Zealand and Singapore have placed travel and country entry restrictions on passengers travelling from or through mainland China [the virus epicentre] within 14 days of entry to reduce the potential spread of infection.

"However, at this time travel restrictions into and out of Japan by the respective Sanzaar governments have not been further escalated from their latest positions earlier in the week.

"Sanzaar has now been informed that the Japanese Government has requested the cancellation of sporting events in the country for the

next two weeks with specific mention of the Japanese professional sports leagues.

"This includes the Sunwolves versus Brumbies match that is scheduled to be played in Osaka on 8 March 2020.

"Sanzaar has therefore been in communication with all relevant stakeholders regarding the match and advanced discussions have been held to adequately address this recent announcement by the Japanese government.

"Sanzaar is now working to determine if this match can be relocated. Sanzaar will issue further details on

the position of this match and any potential further disruptions in the near future."

The Six Nations rugby tournament, Europe's premier international competition, has also been hit with the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) cancelling Saturday's match in Dublin against Italy.

"We were then advised, formally, that the National Public Health Emergency team has determined that the series of matches should not proceed, in the interests of public health," IRFU chief executive Phillip Browne said. "The IRFU is perfectly

happy to comply with this instruction.

The 7 March men's game at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin as well as the women's match on 8 March and an Under-20s Six Nations fixture between the countries on 6 March have all been postponed.

"We will immediately begin to work with our Six Nations partners to look at the possibility of rescheduling those matches," Browne said. "I would hope to have an update on that in the coming days."

Meanwhile provincial PRO 14 tournament, which also features the Cheetahs and Southern Kings from South Africa, has been disrupted because of the outbreak of COVID-19 in Italy.

Organisers have cancelled Welsh club Ospreys' visit to Zebre in Parma this weekend and Irish province Ulster's match in Treviso against Benetton.

The decision was made "to ensure the safety of our players and spectators Pro14 Rugby fully supports the preventative measures taken in Italy", the tournament organisers said in a statement.

The 2020 Olympic Games, which are due to start in Tokyo on 24 July this year, are also under threat.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Dick Pound told the Associated Press that a full cancellation of the Summer Games in Japan was a possibility.

"You're probably looking

at a cancellation if the committee decides the Tokyo event cannot go on as scheduled," Pound said. "You just don't postpone something on the size and scale of the Olympics.

"There's so many moving parts, so many countries and different seasons, and competitive seasons, and television seasons. You can't just say 'We'll do it in October'."

On 13 February World Rugby took the unprecedented step to postpone the Hong Kong and Singapore legs of the 2019/2020 HSBC World Sevens Series due to the threat of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Those two tournaments, which are rounds seven and eight on the 10-stop global showpiece, were due to take place in April 2020 and have been rescheduled for later in the year. Singapore has been pencilled in for 11 and 12 October 2020 and Hong Kong will follow a week later.

That means that the current World Series will not be completed before the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, where sevens is one of the sports on the roster.

The Chinese Formula One Grand Prix has also been postponed among numerous other global events, which includes Japanese J-League Football matches and the LPGA Blue Bay tournament scheduled for 5-8 March 2020 in Hainan, China.

Agencies

Climate-smart agriculture means more spare time for Eswatini women farmers

NGWEMPISI, Eswatini

In the southern African nation of Eswatini women, who already have too many household chores, have had to spend many hours for days on end in the fields, tilling and weeding the soil. But thanks to the gradual introduction of Climate-Smart Agriculture, some are beginning to harvest the gains of more time for their families.

Aside from the seven hours Mantfombi Msibi (63) would spend daily during the Eswatini farming season planting, applying herbicides and weeding her 1.2-hectare maize field, she would also spend E1 750 (\$125) on tractor services. It was a huge cost of both time and money. But this season, Msibi will be benefiting from climate-smart farming technology that has opened up a new world of farming to her, saving her time in the process.

"Not only was this activity laborious for my ageing husband and I, but one of our grandchildren would be forced to abscond from school for several days just to help out with the work," Msibi told IPS.

Besides cultivating the field, the family also has livestock; cattle, pigs and chickens, which also have to be taken care of. That excludes other household chores such as cooking and looking after her three

younger grandchildren all whose parents passed away.

This season, Msibi was introduced to climate-smart agriculture techniques, which has significantly improved her life and that of her family. Compared to the amount of work that she used to do for many hours a day over several weeks, with the new climate-smart techniques of direct seeding and boom spraying, she only spends about five hours cultivating her field.

- Direct seeding refers to farming systems that fertilise and plant directly into undisturbed soil in one field operation or two separate operations of fertilising and planting. Much of the residue from the previous crop is retained on the soil surface.

- While boom spraying is used to apply liquid fertilisers, pesticides, or other liquids to crops during their vegetative cycle.

These are promoted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) as part of the Climate-Smart Agriculture technique.

- This is defined by the FAO as an approach towards developing agriculture strategies that will ensure sustainable food security in times of climate change.

Now Msibi has no need to till the soil anymore



Mantfombi Msibi (left) and Bheki Ginindza, the Climate-Smart Market Oriented Agriculture project manager (right) talks in her field while her grandchildren look on. Thanks to Climate-Smart Agriculture, the 63-year-old Msibi no longer has to spend days on end weeding her fields. File photo

because climate-smart technology destroys weeds, thereby saving her from the laborious weeding process.

- According to FAO, 50 to 75 percent of farm labour time is spent on weeding by hand, with 90 percent this being done by women.

"I now have enough time to look after other family responsibilities. Most importantly, I get time to

rest and none of the children is forced to abscond from school because of farming," said Msibi.

Msibi is one of the beneficiary farmers under the Ministry of Agriculture's conservation agriculture programme, whose aim is to improve the uptake of Climate-Smart Agriculture.

According to Jabu Dlamini, the conservation agriculture chairperson for the Manzini

Region, this technology applies herbicide that destroys weed without any residual effect to the soil.

"It's a very environmentally friendly technology and that's why the government is promoting it as a CSA technique," Dlamini told IPS.

Besides the benefits to the environment, Dlamini said it reduces the number of time farmers have to spend in the field.

"When using the conventional way, a farmer would pay for seven to eight hours on a 1.2ha field for tractor services and would still have to do other things such as applying herbicides and weeding which is laborious," said Dlamini.

Introduced as a pilot in two Regional Administrative Areas; Ngwempisi and Ntfontjeni, this programme is relatively new although it is

gaining momentum among farmers.

"We're working on the data for now on how many farmers are benefitting but those who have tried it don't want to look back to conventional farming," said Dlamini.

This technology follows research by the Climate-Smart Market Oriented Agriculture Project (CSMA) where it was discovered that women have too many household chores yet they still have to spend many hours for days on end in the fields.

This does not only limit the quality of their production but it also puts a strain on their health.

According to Bheki Ginindza, the CSMA project manager, the idea is to increase the uptake of the use of this technology by up to 30 percent because of its ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 70 percent.

"This technology increases soil organic matter in that after harvesting the maize stalks are left to rot in the field which improves the soil health," said Ginindza, adding: "The soil is a very important carbon sink."

What is also a benefit about the direct seeder is that it uses much less fuel compared to its conventional counterpart in that it works for a much shorter time and its fuel

consumption is less.

While this promises to be a good technology for farmers, it is relatively new in the country so there are fewer suppliers who are importing these types of tractors.

"What is a benefit though is that now the direct seeder can be modified in the country," Ginindza told IPS. "Some of the direct seeders come with a chisel that is designed for softer soil and they need to be modified to work on harder soil."

The CSMA is also promoting agro-forestry, which is a CSA technique where crops and trees are grown alongside the same field to improve soil health and food and nutrition security for the whole family.

"But the challenge is that farmers don't like trees in their fields because they need to be maintained so that they don't create shade for the crops," said Ginindza. "The trees also attract thieves who want the fruits."

The CSMA aims to support farmers to be climate-resilient, generate sustainable income, incorporate gender balance and reduce poverty in Eswatini. It is funded by the European Union (EU) through the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Agencies

EALA endorses \$4.9 million additional budget to meet FY 2019/20 expenditure

By Guardian Reporter

THE East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) has approved the East African Community's Supplementary Budget of US\$ 4,977,475 for the financial year ending June 30th 2020 to fund its additional expenditure on unfunded priority projects and programmes.

Chair of the EAC Council of Ministers, Olivier Nduhugirehe tabled the EAC Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2020, that was enacted, sailing through the House after debate and without amendment(s).

In his submissions, the Chair of the General-Purpose Committee, Abdikadir Aden, said the projects and activities to be supplemented during the financial year include an additional expenditure for the EAC Secretariat pegged at \$3,477,545.

Aden stated that the supplementary budget



Abdikadir Aden presents a report on the EAC Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2020.

was subjected on the anticipation that Partner States will honour their financial obligations.

He urged the Secretariat

and the Council of Ministers to further engage with the Partner States to honour their statutory obligations to the EAC Budget for the

2019/2020 financial year.

Contributing during the debate, Thomas Dut, Francoise Umuwukiza and Paul Musamali supported

the Bill.

Susan Nakawuki, opposed the Bill stating that majority of the issues stated for additional expenditure

were not warranted.

"I also need the assurance that we are not handling a post-mortem, where the money is already expended", the legislator stated.

The Member also said there were a number of studies undertaken on sustainable funding mechanism and there was no need to disburse additional resources on the matter.

The Chair of Council of Ministers in response said reforms of the structures as concerns staffing and the completion of the sustainable funding mechanism would be speeded up.

He further stated the council was concerned by low remittances which stand at 61 percent of the total amount with few months remaining to the end of the financial year.

The Minister commended Uganda for availing additional resources to support the drafting of the Political Confederation

Constitution.

The passed budget is to support a number of activities that include a study for Sustainable Funding Mechanism (\$ 120,000), facilitation of delegates from Republics of South Sudan and Burundi, not funded by Development Partners (\$ 17,000), repair-works at EAC headquarters (\$ 305,000), drafting of an EAC Political Confederation Constitution (\$ 150,000) and improving collaborative conservation and management of Trans Boundary Natural Resources in the EAC (\$ 344,770).

Other activities for support are geared towards the development of a Regional Policy on Wildlife Conservation and Management, (\$155,420), detailed Architectural and Engineering Design of the Mugina/Manyovu One-Stop-Border-Post, (\$ 480,000) and for the validation of the draft 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/2022 to 2025/2026)-

\$ 41,400. A bulk of the amount (\$ 1,863,955) is to be used for Financial Sector Development and Regionalization Project.

The East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) is requesting for \$ 69,566 to aid two key projects-development of the EAC-Regional Policy for Science, Technology and Innovation (\$ 27,808) and the development of the Online Observatory Platform on Bio economy Resource Sharing (\$ 41,758).

LVBC is requesting for additional appropriation of \$ 1,125,984 to aid the construction of its Headquarter (\$ 942,144) and for the project on Planning for Resilience in East Africa through Policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED) pegged at \$ 183,840.

At the EAC Competitions Authority, an extra amount of \$ 59,470 is to be expended towards instituting amendments to the EAC Competition Regulations 2010 and EAC Competition Act 2006.

The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) seeks \$ 178,710 for the 2nd phase of the Headquarters construction.



Desert locusts have invaded Uganda from Kenya, causing panic among farming families. File photo

Uganda's 'locust commander' leads ferocious battle against new enemy

By Sally Hayden

SITTING at a plastic table in the garden of Timisha hotel in Soroti, eastern Uganda, Major General Samuel Kavuma takes a drag of his cigarette and looks down at his phone, which has barely stopped ringing for the past hour.

A military figure for nearly 40 years, Kavuma fought the Lord's Resistance Army insurgent group. Now, he's become the "locust commander", the man leading the fight against the country's worst locust outbreak in decades.

Swarms of locusts - billions in total - have spread to eight countries in east Africa, after they crossed the Red Sea from Yemen at the end of last year. The insects can travel roughly 90 miles a day and eat their own body weight in crops. The UN has warned the locust swarms could increase 500 times by June, posing a major threat to the region.

In response, Uganda has deployed its army.

Kavuma, 59, doesn't know why he was put in charge, but he sees the locusts as a formidable enemy.

"When we started two weeks ago we did not know much about these creatures," Kavuma says. "Now I am a professor. I know how they behave, the pattern of their movements."

Locusts are highly mobile, he notes, but after 6.30pm or 7pm they don't move, they don't fly at night.

That gives him time to focus operations. Between 7pm and 9pm Kavuma verifies information from civilians who have spotted locusts in their neighbourhoods, and deploys troops. Dozens of soldiers travel through the night, so they can begin spraying pesticide before sunrise.

"This work is done in two phases. Phase number one is to kill these mature locusts. They don't eat a lot but they lay eggs," Kavuma explains. "Phase two is mapping the areas they land and sleep [in]. After this

then we shall embark on locating and identifying the places where they lay eggs. Then we destroy eggs."

Kavuma sleeps less than three hours each day, going to bed around 1am and waking again between 3-4am, often flying to the location of that morning's operation.

He won't confirm how many soldiers are working on the response, although local media put the figure at 2,000. In early February, Uganda said it had set aside 15 billion Ugandan shillings (around £3.16m) to combat the locusts.

"I have enough soldiers to do the work. I may not give you the number, but the operation has been successful. We have killed and killed millions of these locusts," says Kavuma, who describes some of the operations as "massacres".

One operation starts long before dawn on Sunday morning, in Biloyoro village, in Kitgum district, more than 200km (124 miles) from Kavuma's base. Around 100 soldiers and wildlife rangers

stumble bleary-eyed from military trucks, putting on protective gear - plastic trousers, jackets, gloves, boots and face masks.

"They're there, they're there," shouts an officer as soldiers use UN-branded buckets to mix water and bottles of a pesticide containing chlorpyrifos.

There has been some concern around the long term impacts of chlorpyrifos. In 2015, the Obama administration announced the pesticide would be banned because of evidence it affects the development of children's brains. This decision was reversed by Trump.

"It's very powerful," says one soldier. Kavuma says the insecticide is "harmless".

The soldiers fan out across the land, spraying the ground, crops and aiming for the trees, locusts flying through the air around them. The motorised sprayers are unable to reach the higher tree branches.

"The soldiers are working but these things, they need airplanes," says Omony

Charles, a 24-year-old motorbike driver who lives nearby, watching the operation unfold. "The machines are not reaching the top."

"They are dormant, they are confused, they are very drunk," a soldier replies, arguing that it takes time for the locusts to die. "But there's not enough manpower. And when we can't spray high enough, they get away."

Other soldiers complain that their masks don't work, that the protective gear is ripped, and that they are exhausted. "Transport is a problem," one says, describing the cramped trucks they are moved around in, too packed to sleep. Some of their backpacks leak, dripping pesticide down the legs of soldiers as they spray.

Charles Kama, a 54-year-old civil servant in Kitgum, drives out a water tank to help with the operation. "I think the war has started," he says. "The locusts will be defeated because I've seen the effort [the military is]

making."

"This is a crazy situation but thank God we shall fight it slowly," says Abitegeka Gerald, a commander in the Ugandan Wildlife Authority, sitting in the front of a military truck as it ploughs through crops to a new position, yellow locusts smashing against the windscreen.

Later, he stands in the middle of soldiers shouting orders, holding a plastic bag of live locusts he says he will present to his seniors to show the job has been done.

Gerald calls it a "successful" morning, though as he talk's clouds of locusts continue to fly in circles behind him. "By coming here very early we made sure that we did a massive job of killing ... We are making sure that we deter them before they spread all over the country."

Still, he says, they need assistance. "We are thin on the ground in fighting these locusts. You saw the big swarms, you saw our gadgets and equipment, and we definitely need help."

Dodoma MP supplies 700 tablets to ten government, private schools

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

DODOMA Urban Member of Parliament Anthony Mavunde has provided 700 tablets to ten public and private schools in the country's capital.

Mavunde who is the Deputy Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliamentary, Employment, Youth and the Disabled) said the move is geared to boost pupil's learning hence increased academic performance.

The tablets have been donated by the legislator in collaboration with private institutions - Don Bosco Net and Profuturo Foundation.

Representing retired Prime Minister, Mizengo Pinda, Dodoma District Commissioner, Patrobas Katambi commended the legislator's support in improving the district's education sector. He urged benefitted schools to use the tablets to improve the school's academic performance.

"Dodoma should be different from other cities, we are grateful for the support to our schools", said the District Commissioner applauding the two stakeholders for merging efforts with the MP towards improving the education sector.

Meanwhile, Mavunde commended Don Bosco and Profuturo Foundation for their contribution to the education sector. He said such efforts would make Dodoma among the cities with highest use of information and communication technology.

The deputy minister informed that they have been distributing the tablets in phases whereas in the first phase a total of 5000 tablets were given to ten primary schools within Dodoma municipality. He said with the tablets teachers are likely to implement e-learning.

"My dreams are to see Dodoma making progress in the education sector as well as empowering the schools with modern teaching equipment. We want the city to lead in provision of better and quality education", said Mavunde insisting improved learning environment would also boost pupils pass rate at national examinations.

He said plans are to continue distributing the tablets to other schools to enable children to start learning information and communication technology (ICT) at lower classes.

Father Peter Mutechura from Don Bosco Net said the donated tablets have been bought at a cost of 700m/-. He said they have provided the support to enhance pupil's ICT learning.

"We will continue collaborating with the legislator in improving learning environment in Dodoma Urban constituency", said Father Mutechura.

Until policy meets action, hunger and malnutrition will stalk the land

By Peter Jacobs and Admire Nyamwanza

The outcomes of food and nutrition security (FNS) interventions in South Africa have often fallen short of policy objectives due to weak or missing co-ordination mechanisms. Solving these policy co-ordination failures is not easy.

If the nature, extent and causes of co-ordination problems are not accurately identified, then proffered solutions are unlikely to be effective and lasting. Co-ordinating food and nutrition policy shares a lot in common with policy cycles that are characterised by multiple actors, conflictual institutions, socioeconomic change and fragmentation.

There are three areas that need exploring to address the problem of food and nutrition security.

Co-ordination in modern food and nutrition policy domains

Finding integrated and holistic solutions to poor dietary intake and nutrition-related illnesses are the overriding preoccupations of modern food and nutrition policy. This stands in sharp contrast to the traditional focus on maximising the production of staple crops and animal-sourced foods.

Modern and traditional agro-food systems pose different policy co-ordination problems. In the traditional model, household farming dominates, with farmers producing mainly to feed the household. It entrusts the co-ordination of food policy to agricultural ministries, operating through hierarchies of national and sub-national structures as is currently the case in South Africa.

While this model to co-ordinate food policy might have been useful in the past, it is out of sync with farming, agro-food processing and retail networks that span nationwide or global scales and that are well beyond the reach and capacity of agricultural ministries. Policy co-

ordination in modern agro-food value chains is far more complicated because the movement of food from farm to fork involves competing actors and diverse markets. Furthermore, this food system is not just about dietary quality for nutritional health and a better quality of life, but also to produce, distribute and consume nutritious food in ecologically sustainable ways.

Co-ordination of policy development

A look at South Africa's food and nutrition policy landscape since 1994 shows that its co-ordination has been inseparable from political contestation.

The conception and design of food and nutrition policy, especially at the national level, took the lead from macro-development imperatives and strategic political decisions. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), grounded in the idea of satisfying everyone's basic needs, was a leading impetus behind the first wave of post-1994 food and nutrition policies.

It inspired, for instance, the right-to-food clause in the 1996 Constitution and the adoption of the 2002 Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS), the first overarching and consolidated framework for food policy. Even though the IFSS marked a significant achievement, it reinforced a food availability and rural bias in policy and was weak or silent on how to counter the growing malnutrition or "hidden hunger" crisis.

Another shortcoming was its almost complete isolation from piecemeal measures such as zero VAT on staples in the food baskets of poor consumers. Interventions like regular food price monitoring, nutritional healthcare assistance and nutritious meals for school children were never integrated into the strategy.

The IFSS did not actually facilitate the development of an integrated and holistic policy reference point. Stud-

ies questioning the participatory nature of conceptualising and designing the IFSS have critiqued its top-down development, bypassing many civil society organisations.

In 2012, government unveiled its new macro-development agenda, the National Development Plan (NDP), which confirmed FNS as a policy priority. Moreover, this prioritisation also boosted prospects for overcoming the shortcomings of the IFSS.

Large sections of the NDP chapter with proposals to restructure and grow the agricultural sector also put forth implications of this restructuring for food policy reforms. Together with discussions of dietary quality and nutritional health elsewhere in the NDP, it shifted the conception of food and nutrition policy towards a multifaceted perspective.

In terms of process, the NDP assembled the latest insights from diverse fields of science to back its developmental vision and advocacy for urgent action. However, this process stopped at a discredited model of consulting civil society voices instead of intensive and structured participation of communities in policy development. Among the policy revisions that the NDP stimulated, two stand out.

First, it promoted tighter cooperation across government departments around the strategic priorities of the state. Towards this end, it aided the construction of a framework, known as signed outcome delivery agreements, through which the president holds a minister accountable for executing a strategic priority in government's programme of action. Outcome Seven deals with agriculture and rural development, and also concentrates on food security, outlining indicators for most dimensions and responsibilities per department.

Second, the NDP bolstered the rationale and urgency for the National Policy on

Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS), eventually replacing the defunct IFSS. Thinking embedded in the NDP, particularly the multi-faceted nature of FNS, manifested in the 2014 NPFNS, with diverse state and non-state actors helping to refine the new policy. It has been translated into five-year action plans that provide for national and subnational co-ordination structures.

Co-ordination of policy implementation

There are currently no functional overarching FNS institutional arrangements in South Africa, especially at the national level, that are responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of FNS policy and activities. This absence of proper functioning arrangements to co-ordinate policy implementation has exacerbated the confusing mandates among different FNS stakeholders while duplications and overlaps in different aspects of FNS initiatives proliferate. While on paper the government has over the years sought to approach FNS in a co-ordinated, interdepartmental way, structures responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of FNS policy and activities remain largely dysfunctional.

The 2017 National Food and Nutrition Security (Implementation) Plan (NFNSP), for example, recommended the establishment of (a) an intersectoral National Food and Nutrition Security Council (NFNSC) chaired by the deputy president; (b) Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Councils (PFNSCs) chaired by premiers; (c) district sub-councils on Food and Nutrition Security chaired by mayors; and (d) consultative forums at all levels which are supposed to meet at regular intervals.

There has, however, been very little movement towards the setting up of these structures. There has only been the establishment of a National Food and Nutrition Security co-ordinating Com-

mittee chaired by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) mainly to steer the implementation of the six strategic objectives of the NFNSP. Setting up functional national and subnational Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs) with international donor support also struggled to gain traction with a limited number of directorates in the department of agriculture occasionally attending irregular South Africa Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC) gatherings.

In provinces of acute hunger, ad hoc and unco-ordinated responses dominate, with SAVAC unable to mobilise resources across all departments for integrated and proactive assistance to vulnerable people. Co-ordinating the implementation of food security efforts has been and continues to be the mandate of the Department of Agriculture, yet the department lacks both the convening powers and the resources required to ensure interdepartmental accountability. Consequently, most FNS-related institutions continue to work in silos.

Co-ordination of metrics, monitoring and evaluation

South Africa does not currently have an official measure of food and nutrition security, or a coherent FNS information system, either at national or sub-national levels.

While the 2017 NFNSP includes a list of possible FNS indicators, these have not been officially adopted as the standard FNS indicators across various government departments and agencies as well as civil society actors. The lack of cooperation and convergence among different state and non-state actors vis-à-vis FNS information collection, analysis, management and dissemination has compromised action across the policy cycle. This has resulted, for example, in the lack of standardisation of FNS information being collected in different areas,



resulting, in most cases, in a large number of poorly targeted and poorly streamlined indicators; as well as different frequencies in the collection and dissemination of similar types of FNS information.

The Food Price Monitor, a flagship initiative led by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), was originally conceived as an early warning tool to trigger targeted and well-co-ordinated interventions against the negative effects of food price inflation on hampering access to nutritious food and worsening malnutrition.

How this resource-intensive information tool on food pricing, heavily reliant on data inputs from Statistics South Africa and hand-picked academics, is utilised across the food and nutrition policy cycle is unclear. Food price monitoring has been restricted to a mechanical data collection and reporting routine that caters for narrow agricultural interests rather than proactive action against worsening malnutrition crises driven by food price inflation.

A systematic programme to monitor and evaluate food and nutrition support programmes is non-existent. This gap is particularly evident for the social grant system as most cash transfers have not been spent on nutritious food since the onus of deciding what to spend the money on lies with the

individual. A vital food utilisation and food quality initiative targeting children from poor families, the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), is being implemented without a reliable monitoring and evaluation system.

Despite the sizeable scale and cost of the NSNP, its objectives and priority outcomes have been vague, further complicating how to monitor and evaluate it. It is unclear what the NSNP is trying to achieve beyond simply delivering meals to school children, what difference the programme is making in children's nutrition and scholastic performance, and what planning and organisation is needed to make it work better.

What needs to be done? Realising the socioeconomic and political imperatives of adequate nutrition for all demands seamless and dynamic integration of policy actions across all aspects of policy processes. To this end, this article proposes the following urgent actions:

- Translate the constitutional commitment to food rights into an overarching food and nutrition security law based on the latest advances in social, and natural sciences, beginning with an immediate update of the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security to clearly reflect the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Promote nutri-

tional knowledge, healthy food preparation and dietary decisions, with enforceable rules around the marketing, and advertisement of food, food labelling and physical activity in a bid to specifically reduce the prevalence of obesity, especially among children;

- Actualise long-standing proposals on setting up multi-level and multi-sectoral FNS structures responsible for implementing the co-ordination of FNS policy and initiatives, drawing on the relative successes of efforts such as Operation Sukuma Sakhe in KwaZulu-Natal;

- Directly involve non-state actors in co-ordination across all stages of policy cycles on the basis of the principles and best-practice evidence of transformative participation;

- Establish national and sub-national forums that unite diverse, but complementary expertise in metrics, monitoring and evaluation to optimise benefits for people affected by inadequate food access, poor dietary intake and malnutrition crises; and
- Invest in data collection tools, particularly a dedicated longitudinal national survey on FNS, which are representative at district level for better-targeted interventions and allow for compatibility with relevant national household surveys with supplementary data.

Agencies

Cattle rustling: From cultural practice to deadly organised crime

By Duncan E Omondi Gumba

Cattle rustling or raiding is no longer a cultural practice, but a form of organised crime committed by international criminal networks. It is facilitated by an increasing proliferation of weapons, according to a study by ENACT transnational organised crime researchers at the Institute for Security Studies.

Traditionally, small-scale stock theft was a way of balancing community wealth and power, but crime and capitalism have commercialised this practice, making it a significant economic threat, the researchers say. The practice has caused many deaths among rural communities and security forces in Kenya and South Sudan.

Cattle raiding in 2017 and 2018 was characterised by high-intensity conflicts that left dozens killed or maimed, and negatively affected human security and development in the region. In Kenya's West Pokot and Elgeyo-Marakwet counties, 30 people were killed during the first five months of 2019. This followed what the authorities called conflict - but what was in fact cattle rus-

ting carried out as a criminal enterprise.

In Uganda, authorities recovered 400 head of cattle stolen by Turkana rustlers from Kenya responsible for increased cattle rustling at the end of 2019, the death of several people and the theft of thousands of head of cattle.

Responses to the cattle raiding problem by East African countries have so far been ineffective

In South Sudan, 42 people were killed and 78 wounded in Bieh State after armed Murle tribesmen attacked cattle keepers, stealing more than 100 head of cattle at the beginning of 2019. In December, gunmen stole 400 cattle and killed 11 herders and wounded seven others in Jonglei State.

Spurred by the proliferation of small weapons, criminals target small-scale pastoralists who are the backbone of the regional beef industry. Their livelihoods are threatened by criminals who supply stolen beef to growing urban meat markets worth about US\$500 million in Kenya alone.

Cattle are an agricultural and cultural mainstay for millions of nomadic African



East African governments must protect their pastoralists by ratifying the protocol on cattle raiding. File photo

pastoralists. The impact of livestock theft on marginalised communities is severe. It deprives people of their livelihoods and increases poverty. It's often breadwinners who are injured or killed in raids, fuelling communal grievances and revenge attacks.

Cross-border criminal networks use advanced logistics and market information to

continue their illicit activities. Cattle rustling as a form of organised crime is embedded in the wider cattle trade business enabled by government corruption, with state officials turning a blind eye or collaborating with criminals.

Cattle raiding in 2017 and 2018 was characterised by high-intensity conflicts that left dozens killed or maimed

The ENACT study reveals that some politicians use bribery to induce rural communities to get involved in cattle rustling networks. The motive is two-fold: to raise money to fund increasingly expensive election campaigns, and to attack, disempower and disenfranchise voters favourable to their rivals.

Cattle rustlers also exploit

weak cross-border coordination between governments in the region. Cattle lords recruit and arm rural warriors to steal cattle for sale to abattoirs in towns or cross into neighbouring countries where they sell the cattle. Stolen cattle are easy to traffic as they can be disguised as a legal commodity.

Responses to the problem by East African countries

have so far been ineffective. States in the region have for years responded to cattle rustling through inaction, indiscriminate force or ineffective disarmament initiatives. A key step that has not been delivered on its potential is the signing of the 2008 Protocol on the Prevention, Combating and Eradication of Cattle Rustling in Eastern Africa.

The protocol seeks to address cattle rustling by, among other steps, enhancing regional cooperation, harmonising legislation and adopting livestock identification systems and records. However this hasn't been implemented because Uganda is the only one of 13 member states of the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (EAPCCO) that has ratified the protocol.

Criminals target small-scale pastoralists who are the backbone of the regional beef industry

This protocol could give the region a common policy or legal framework to deal with the crisis. Its lack of support from East African states is just one of the signs that governments in the region don't seem to consider cattle rustling a serious crime.

In many East African coun-

tries there is no specific law that requires that the source of cattle at slaughter houses be identified. The absence of anti-stock theft police units in some of the countries makes communities vulnerable to armed rustlers. Their vulnerability is heightened because the areas most affected by cattle rustling are characterised by underdevelopment, under-resourced security structures and a limited government presence.

Governments need to commit to ending the senseless killings and destitution of already marginalised pastoralists. This will involve ratifying the EAPCCO protocol and providing the legal basis for the regulation of livestock registration trade. Together with technological innovation and better controls, the protocol's legal basis for regulating livestock trade would be strengthened.

Market controls would also ensure only honest pastoralists profit from their cattle rather than unscrupulous organised criminals. If East Africa fails to adapt to the threat, cattle rustling may expand into new geographic areas and create new organised crime cartels.

Agencies

BUSINESS



Thusi plays a spy in the series.

CONCERN

First African original scripted Netflix series 'Queen Sono' likely to be visually stunning

JOHANNESBURG

As Netflix's first original scripted series from Africa, there was a huge amount of anticipation surrounding Queen Sono. Not only due to its setting, though. The fact its titular spy is female also suggested that it might subvert the genre and propel it into a modern era in a variety of unique and thought-provoking ways.

That's why it's such a relief that Pearl Thusi shines in the leading role. The actress immediately exudes an intellect and all-round magnetism as the titular character, who, over the course of six episodes, works alongside her highly skilled team to tackle a variety of dangerous missions across Africa. She also tries to contend with numerous changes in her personal life, in particular, new revelations regarding the mysterious assassination of her activist mother 25 years earlier.

Unfortunately, the mesmeric Thusi is about the only impressive aspect of the first two episodes of Queen Sono's debut season, as the show is repeatedly hampered by an atrocious script that is so uneven it repeatedly falls short of being captivating. The writing is so bad that even at its best it still feels dated, while at its worst, it's unbearable to watch.

This is all the more disappointing because Queen Sono actually starts off rather well. In the opening scene of its very first episode, entitled I Am Queen Sono, we see Thusi strolling along the luxurious harbour of Zanzibar City, then diving into the chaos and charm of one of the capital's thriving markets, all while working undercover to catch criminals.

Bringing such seldom-seen locations and characters to the worldwide audience Netflix has at its disposal is exactly why there was so much excitement surrounding Queen

Sono. And it is authentically African, too. Not only was Queen Sono fully produced and shot in 37 locations on the continent, including Johannesburg, Soweto, Lagos, Kenya and Zanzibar, but it also has an all-African cast and crew. While the script is mostly in English, a variety of different languages, including Xhosa, Afrikaans, Zulu, French and Sepitori, are also spoken.

Though the first scene impresses, it doesn't take long for Queen Sono to go off the rails. We're immediately overburdened with too much backstory on Sono, none of which really lands, as it's delivered in such clunky fashion. By the end of the first episode, viewers will be lost and disinterested because of its haphazard and hackneyed approach.

Sadly, the second episode doesn't offer many improvements. In fact, things get worse, as the script adversely impacts the opening action scene, while even the manner in which the main villain of the series is revealed is done so tamely that you'll feel the urge to return to the main Netflix menu to find other entertainment.

But while first-time show-runner Kagiso Lediga, who previously wrote, produced, directed and starred in the romantic Netflix drama Catching Feelings - which also happened to star Thusi - might fail to get the full potential out of Queen Sono, certain aspects of the show still manage to appeal.

Some elements feel so fresh and vibrant it could have laid the foundations for Netflix's follow-ups from Africa to prosper. Even Queen Sono's brief glimpse at contemporary African stories and issues is fascinating, but they aren't explored in a compelling enough fashion - though it's undeniable that pretty much every aspect of its visuals, from costumes to production design to cinematography, glisten with beauty.

OUTSTANDING

WorldRemit's year 2020 Top Ten list of most influential migrants include Flaviana Matata

By Guardian Reporter

WorldRemit, a leading fintech company, has launched the inaugural Top Ten Most Influential Africans in the Diaspora list which includes our own local fashion model, Flaviana Matata.

In a statement, the international money transfer services, said the list honours and recognizes the contributions Africans have made in America as part of celebrations of Black History Month.

WorldRemit said the criteria used to come up with the inaugural Top Ten Most Influential Africans in the Diaspora list includes the following: first-generation immigrant from an African country; must have a track record of making significant contributions in their respective field; has made a significant social impact within the U.S. African immigrant community or their communities back home and has broken barriers by positively challenging the status quo and/or creating opportunities for others.

Other 2020 WorldRemit Top Ten Most Influential Africans in the Diaspora are: Kenyan born Somali fashion model, Halima Aden; Liberia, social entrepreneur and clean water advocate, Saran Kaba; Amini Kajunju - Democratic Republic of Congo, non-profit CEO, Amini Kajunju; Ghanaian non-profit founder and CEO, Nana Eyeson-Akiwowo; Nigerian non-profit founder & CEO, Afam Onyema; Nigerian physician, forensic pathologist and neuropathologist, Bennet Omalu; South Sudan, actor and goodwill ambassador of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ger Duany; Nigerian pioneering portrait painter, Kehinde Wiley; and Nigerian physician, interventional cardiologist, interventional nephrologist and cardio-nephrologist, Olurotimi John Badero.

"As an African immigrant, I am fully aware of the hard work, sacrifices, and resilience needed to become suc-



US-based Tanzanian fashion model and equal education advocate, Flaviana Matata. File photo.

cessful in the West. I am immensely proud of all Africans who take the opportunity to achieve great things and contribute to their communities in an impactful way," said founder and Chairman of WorldRemit, Ismail Ahmed.

"To be able to honour Africans in the Diaspora is enor-

mously special to us here at WorldRemit," Ahmed added.

WorldRemit, a leading fintech company and provider of international money transfer services, has launched the inaugural Top Ten Most Influential Africans in the Diaspora list. WorldRemit launched this list to honour

and recognize the contributions Africans have made in America

WorldRemit spent the month of February exploring the incredible contributions Africans have made to America. This has culminated in a top ten list that honors and acknowledges

the contributions of Africans living and working in the Diaspora. Many of the honorees originate from several countries across the continent and have achieved groundbreaking success in a vast spectrum of professions including the arts, medicine, fashion, entertainment, and philanthropy.

African immigrants are the fastest-growing ethnic group of migrants in the U.S. with the U.S. African born populations reaching 49.6 percent in 2018, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

According to a report published by the New American Economy, African immigrants have higher levels of educational attainment than the U.S. population as a whole. The report also revealed that they are more likely to have earned their degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math or STEM subject. They also make meaningful contributions to several vital sectors of the economy - including healthcare - where employers have persistent challenges finding qualified workers.

"Data continues to show that black Africans in the Diaspora are contributing significantly to the U.S. economy and society as a whole, while in many cases still supporting their communities back home. At WorldRemit, we believe that it is important for us to acknowledge and highlight these positive contributions, and Black History Month seemed like the ideal time to do so," said Daniel Canning Managing Director, Americas for WorldRemit.



Bottles of Corona beer displayed at a supermarket in San Rafael, California.

COINCIDENCE

Corona beer maker AB InBev's Q1 profits hit by coronavirus

BRUSSELS

The world's largest brewer Anheuser-Busch InBev forecast a 10% decline in first-quarter profit on Thursday after the coronavirus outbreak hit beer sales during the Chinese New Year, sending its shares skidding.

The maker of Budweiser, Corona and Stella Artois said the virus had led to a significant decline in demand in China - both at bars and drinking at home, notably during the Chinese New Year.

The outbreak, along with an expected

weaker Brazilian market, could lead to a 10% drop in first-quarter core profit (EBITDA) on-year, AB InBev said, adding that it expected 2020 core profit growth of between 2% and 5%, with most expansion occurring in the second half.

The Belgium-based company, which sells more Budweiser in China than in the lager's key US market, said the disease shaved up to \$285 million off its revenue in China in the first two months of this year, 2.3% of its first-quarter group revenue last year.

It is the latest drinks company to warn that the outbreak is taking a toll on business, following Diageo's alert on Wednesday that the fast-spreading virus in greater China and the Asia Pacific region could knock up to \$260 million off its profit in 2020.

Nightlife ground to a halt in China in the third quarter last year, with many bars and restaurants shutting down due to the COVID-19 virus, AB InBev CEO Carlos Brito said, echoing comments from the world's third largest brewer

Carlsberg.

"Our business is all about going to restaurants, to nightlife, going out with friends, it's really about to go back to normal, we're preparing for the surge when things return to normal," Brito told reporters on a call.

Shares in AB InBev were down 7.5% to 57.25 euros in morning trade, the second weakest performer in the FTSEurofirst index of leading European stocks. Jefferies analysts said in a note that growth "is challenged with no more

synergies and weak pricing."

More than half of the company's 33 Chinese breweries have reopened with the exception of the one in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, Brito said. The virus that can lead to pneumonia is believed to have originated in a market in Wuhan late last year.

The company's fourth-quarter core profit declined 5.5% to \$5.34 billion, worse than market expectations of a 1.9% drop. "Our performance in 2019 was below our expectations, and we are

not satisfied with the results," Brito said.

Profit from both key markets - the United States and Brazil - dropped after AB InBev had oversupplied wholesales to the former earlier in the year, while higher costs for commodities and a weaker Brazilian real dented sales in the Latin American country. AB InBev said results in Brazil in the first quarter would not match the very strong figures of the first months of 2019, when an exceptionally late Carnival led to revenue growth of 16.7%.



RFH CEO Dr Otieno Maxwell.

DIGITIZATION

Youth-linked hospital gets Level 5 status as 35 facilities are elevated

NAIROBI

When the Ministry of Health recently gazetted 35 hospitals that had been upgraded to Level Five category, the RFH Specialist Hospital in Nairobi was among the few private health facilities that made the cut, joining long-established institutions like The Aga Khan University Hospital, Coptic Hospital, Gertrudes Garden Children's Hospital, MP Shah Hospital, The Karen Hospital, Mater Hospital and Nairobi Hospital.

Unlike RFH, the other hospitals enjoy the financial backing of their parent companies and are

established institutions. RFH is affiliated to Ruai Family Hospital, which was started by Dr Maxwell Okoth, now 31, only a few years ago.

Dr Okoth told the Business Daily that he started the hospital with a seed capital of Sh300,000, which he had borrowed from his mother and wife. In a few years, he expanded the business to five branches, including the 50-bed facility in Ruai and a 10-bed maternity hospital in Tala.

The latest categorisation by the Ministry of Health means that the medical graduate, who started with little more than a vision, joins established institutions in offering healthcare to Kenyans, especially in poor and middle

class neighbourhoods, as the country seeks to roll out the Universal Health Care (UHC) programme.

RFH Specialist Hospital is a 100-bed hospital that Dr Okoth, a serial social health entrepreneur and founder of RFH Healthcare helped to found. For his effort, Dr Okoth was last year recognised by the Business Daily among the Top40 Under40 men.

The gazettement of RFH Specialist Hospital located in Ruai, and 35 others to level 5 county referral hospitals, on February 4 means that it joins the exclusive group that can offer a range of services, including specialised operations like kidney transplants. "We have waited for this categorisation since we

opened the facility last year. This means that we have to have at least three well-equipped theatres and certain level of doctors and personnel," said Dr Okoth yesterday. "It means we can offer more services as a hospital and carry out certain specialised procedures like transplants. It underlines our dream of making health affordable and accessible to people because we have the capacity as a country."

Outside Nairobi, the other hospitals that were elevated were Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital, Tenewek and Garissa County Referral Hospital. These are national and county government-backed institutions.

Besides RFH, Dr Okoth runs four hospitals, including a 24-hour outpatient facility in Embakasi, now gazetted as a Level Two hospital and an outpatient facility in Jacaranda Gardens. The chain currently attends to about 500 patients a day and has plans of expanding across the country in the future.

Dr Okoth graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) from the University of Nairobi and has been admitted at IESE School of Business for the Global CEO Programme. The elevation of his two health facilities was announced before Mutahi Kagwe was this week cleared to succeed Cecily Kariuki as the Cabinet Secretary for Health.

Malawi passes legislation on the 'qualified' use of cannabis

LILONGWE

Malawi on Thursday became the latest African country to legalise the growing of cannabis, a crop that could supplement the tobacco industry, which has been the country's economic mainstay.

Lawmakers unanimously passed the new law legalising the farming, importing and exporting of cannabis for medicinal and industrial use, according to documents seen by AFP. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and has long relied on tobacco which brings in around 60 percent of foreign exchange earnings.

Several countries have decriminalised the growing and use of medicinal cannabis. The new law establishes a regulatory authority which will be tasked with issuing licences to cultivate, process, store, sell, export and distribute cannabis.

The law also requires that cannabis will be grown under strict practices, including prohibiting children in the sector. Malawi was last December forced to confront child labour practices after the US restricted tobacco imports from the impoverished nation over allegations workers including children were being exploited.

Cannabis has for many years been illegally grown in remote parts of Malawi and smuggled out of the country. The grade is popularly known as "Malawi gold." Financial crimes expert Jai Banda lauded parliament's decision as government has for years lost out on valuable tax revenue.

"Cannabis is mainly cultivated in remote areas, mainly for export to surrounding countries such as South Africa, Kenya and the overseas market. Trade is organised by professional traffickers," Banda told AFP. "It has been a long journey but here we are. I guess we will be able to export and thereby earn the much needed forex. This is a path in the right direction."

RESTITUTION

India requests Britain's Ashmolean Museum to return 'stolen' Tamil saint's bronze statue

LONDON

The Indian government has requested that a British museum return a bronze sculpture that it claims was stolen from a temple in the 1960s.

The 15th-century figurine of Saint Tirumankai Alvar was bought from Sotheby's auction house by the University of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum in 1967. The almost-60-centimetre sculpture depicts the Tamil poet, who was believed to have lived in the 8th or 9th century and is credited with having created a number of works, such as Periya Thirumozhi, holding a sword and shield.

A formal request for restitution of the idol was made by the Indian high commission in London on Friday, February 14. The statue is believed to have been stolen from the temple of Sri Soundarrajaperumal, in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, in the 1960s.

A police report from the state show "unambiguously shows that the original idol has been stolen and replaced with a fake one, and that the stolen idol is the same one that is presently with the Ashmolean," a spokesperson for the Indian high commission told The Art Newspaper.

The request for restitution comes after the Ashmolean Museum advised Indian authorities that it had concerns about the origins of the statue, following the uncovering of new evidence. According to The Guardian, a picture taken in the temple in 1957 by an independent scholar shows the statue in situ.

The high commission spokesperson thanked the museum "for taking proactive steps in this matter and hopes that other museums would follow the example in dealing with suspected stolen pieces of our cultural heritage."

A spokesperson from the Ashmolean told The Guardian the statue was sold to the museum from the collection of a "Dr JR Belmont," according to the Sotheby's catalogue. "We currently have no indication of how the bronze entered his collection and we are continuing to investigate with the support of the Indian high commission."



The 15th-century figurine of Saint Tirumankai Alvar.

Unusual approach pays off for job seeker in SA

CAPE TOWN/J'BURG

A British graduate who adopted a somewhat unusual approach to find a job might have become an internet sensation, but he wasn't the first man to adopt the unconventional strategy.

A photo of Ndimiso Sikhakhane, who has a building diploma, circulated on social media when he decided to hold up a placard with his personal information at a busy intersection in Sandton in northern Johan-

nesburg in early August.

Speaking to Eyewitness News, the 26-year-old said his contract at his previous job came to an end in May. Sikhakhane said his friends thought he was crazy when he told them about his plan. "I decided to act on my faith," he said. "I didn't want to go to the internet café and look for a job because everyone was doing that."

After two days of standing with his board on the street, he was offered a job in Durban. "I'm enjoying my new

job but most importantly, I'm loving the sea here." Sikhakhane said he was overwhelmed by the support he received from South Africans of all races.

As for 22-year-old Alfred Ajani, who stood quietly at the Waterloo Station during rush hour, he received interest from companies as far away as New York. Dressed in a suit and tie, he held up a page reading, "Marketing graduate, BA Hons 2.1, Coventry University. Ask me for CV."

Paris cheers as Naomi Campbell walks for Nigeria's Kenneth Ize

PARIS

Nigerian fashion designer Kenneth Ize makes a storming Paris Fashion Week debut with his "fairy godmother," supermodel Naomi Campbell, closing the show.

Fashion designer Kenneth, expressed that "[Naomi's] been there since day one. She's really pushed it. She's pushed it to this level that [we're] now here, in Paris." "And I'm going to stay here and I'm going to keep

showing that," he said.

Kenneth has made a name for himself reinterpreting traditional West African fabrics. He was inspired by his memories of going to a catholic church in Lagos with everyone in their Sunday best outfits.

"It's the youth. My parents lived in a colonised era. I don't [consider] myself to be colonised, and now it's time to just move everything around and be free," Kenneth said after his Paris show.



Ndimiso Sikhakhane, who stood with a board at a busy intersection in Sandton, has landed a new job.

GREEN ENERGY

Keeping up with the Thunbergs: How to reduce your carbon footprint as a family

DUBAI

These days we are constantly bombarded with ways to live more sustainably. We're told to ditch plastic bags, car-pool and even go vegan, but as busy mums and dads, it's tough to manage it all. So where should we be focusing most of our attention in order to best minimise our impact on this planet without sacrificing too much family time and money?

You could start with travel. In the UAE, many residents jet off on an average of four to six times per year, yet experts say flying is a major contributor to a family's carbon footprint. "To meet the Paris climate goals, we simply can't fly anymore," says Alexander Ritschel, head of technology at Masdar Clean Energy.

This is easier said than done in a country with more than 80 per cent foreign residents, but each person is responsible for 18 tonnes of carbon emissions over a year, according to Dubai Carbon, which is more than 10 times the Paris goals of two tonnes per person annually, and four times the levels seen in European countries (Italy is five) and more than 10 times that of India (1.6). One business class flight to Bali racks up six tonnes per person, while in economy that goes down to four. Offset projects, such as tree planting initiatives, though positive, are "only a last resort and don't help too much in the long run," says Ritschel.

Many studies point to the production of meat, particularly beef, as a huge contributor to CO2 emissions, due to factors such as the huge amounts of land used in animal agriculture and methane emitted from cows. Statistics show that UAE residents consume about 80 kilograms per year, says Ritschel.

That's the equivalent of half a tonne of CO2 or one return flight in economy class to Egypt, yet he adds that while a vegetarian diet is more sustainable, this cannot compare to the damage being caused by flights. "If you reduced just one flight, you can convert that meat. The footprint from flights is much, much more than anything related to food and by far the biggest factor of the carbon footprint in the UAE."

Ivano Iannelli, chief ex-

ecutive of Dubai Carbon, agrees. "The largest culprit in the UAE is travel," he says, adding that it covers about 35 per cent of all carbon emissions, followed by utilities consumption (30 per cent), vehicle usage (20 per cent) and waste (15 per cent).

Then there is on-the-ground transportation to think about: with limited means of public transportation in the country, cars are still king, and drivers clock up an average 27,000 kilometres a year as opposed to the 5,000km a year in the EU, Iannelli explains. Ritschel says workers must be incentivised to live closer to work to cut out commutes, or car-pooling must be encouraged as an alternative if public transport is not available.

For example, in some areas of the US, certain lanes are now reserved for car-pooling, making it quicker and easier to travel this way. "Governments can always further promote public transport systems," Ritschel adds. "For example, a train between Abu Dhabi and Al Ain would make a big impact." He says incentives for electric or hybrid cars are also much needed. In Canada, rebates and cash incentives have been used, while in the UK, a "plug-in grant" has been introduced - to name a couple of examples.

Kyle Weber is heading All The Way Green, which focuses on the import, sale and maintenance of second-hand electric vehicles from abroad, where on average they are about 20 per cent cheaper than in the UAE. "At the time when we started, EVs were not well-known in the region; some people knew about Tesla, but few had experienced a Renault Zoe, Chevy Bolt or BMW i3. So, we set out to change public perception and get more people behind the wheel," he explains. An electric vehicle is about three times more energy efficient than a conventional vehicle, but the barrier so far has been cost.

Yet a simple switch from petrol to electric is not a long-term solution, either, he adds. "What we need to do to be sustainable is move towards more shared mobility systems." This includes not just buses and trains, but more community car-sharing programmes, such as like those in Masdar or Sustainable City. "We need to start taking cars off the

road."

Another major contributor to a UAE household's carbon footprint is air-conditioning. With temperatures soaring during summer, A/Cs account for 70 per cent of electricity use here, according to Powerwise in Abu Dhabi. Laurent Longuet, chief executive of renewable energy firm SirajPower, says it poses one of the biggest challenges to sustainable living in the region.

"If the AC utilisation rate is reduced, there will be a significant drop in the country's electricity consumption," Ritschel says that in addition to reducing the thermostat, apartment living is more sustainable, as each home is also cooled by the units around it as well as the corridors outside. "Villas versus apartments have a disproportionately higher carbon footprint," he explains.

Ruchir Punjabi, co-founder of Distributed Energy, an aggregation platform that connects renewable projects with funders, suggests that the simplest solution in the UAE is to switch off your AC when not home, as well as ensure temperatures are neither too high nor too low. "Using LED lights and solar panels on your rooftop can also be both carbon efficient and good for your savings in the long term," he says, adding that cold-water showers, as well as cold cycles in the washing machine, can also be beneficial to both efficiency and bills.

Head to the kitchen and you'll find myriad ways to reduce emissions, too. With a dependency on bottled water, H2O consumption also has a lot to answer for. The average person in the UAE uses up to 450 plastic bottles a year, and only a small fraction of this is recycled, says Rukhsana Kausar, founder of Liquid of Life water filters.

She says switching to filtered drinking water can help reduce the carbon footprint that is associated with the production and transportation of plastic bottles, as well as save you money. "The impact can be significant for families and businesses," she says, explaining that a family of four on average uses three five gallon bottles of water a week, meaning an annual use of 624 bottles and a cost of around Dh1,248 per year.

A filter installation costs less than Dh1,000 with zero waste and then the Dh600 filter must be



Travelling by plane is one of the biggest culprits of carbon emissions.

replaced annually. "Whilst reducing plastic waste and providing everyone with access to healthier drinking water, it also reduces the family's exposure to dioxins, phthalates, BPA and also

microplastics." In your fridge, it's not just beef that has an impact. The average UAE resident produces 2.7 kilograms of waste per day, according to Dubai Carbon, in both

food and packaging. It is estimated about Dh13 billion worth of food is wasted by businesses and consumers in the country. Here, there is much families can do to reduce, including cooking

at home, buying locally produced food and using reusable shopping bags.

Also consider the footprint of what you're consuming: all processes considered, from production

to transportation, two cups of coffee a day contributes 310kg to annual greenhouse gas emissions, while three to five 75g servings of lamb will see a person accumulate a whopping 904kg, the equivalent of driving a regular petrol car 3,712km.

The challenges may seem huge, but change is afoot and many UAE start-ups are now making it easier with eco-friendly alternatives for the home - from chemical-free cleaning products to plastic-free toiletries. It will take a massive collective effort, but even small changes can make a difference, particularly when it comes to travel, says Ritschel. So next time you're booking your holiday, why not choose economy over business, take direct flights (as take-off is the most fuel-consuming process) and pick a closer-to-home destination, such as Sri Lanka over Bali? We're in the right place for it, after all.

Agencies



ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY
STARTING 7:30 PM

ITV	CAPITAL			
<p>SATURDAY 29 Feb 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt 10:45 Usafiri wako rpt 11:15 Shamba lulu rpt 11:45 Mapishi rpt 12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:40 Igizo rpt: Dhuruba 15:15 Igizo: Mkaguzi 16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe 16:20 Igizo: Mtego 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 19:00 Igizo: Dhuruba 19:25 Jungu Kuu 20:00 Habari 21:00 Shangweka 21:30 Kesho leo rpt 22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja 22:15 Hawavumi lakini wamo 23:00 Isidingo rpt 01:30 DWTV</p> <p>SUNDAY 01 March 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Isidingo 11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 12:30 Bongo Movie rpt 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:00 Mwangaza 16:00 The Great queen Seondok 16:45 Igizo rpt: Mkaguzi 17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matukio ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Mtego 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko 21:10 Mizengwe 21:30 Mjue Zaidi 22:15 Bongo Movie: 00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost</p> <p>MONDAY 02 March 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 08:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Soap: Isidingo the need 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Jagina rpt 11:30 Igizo rpt: Mtego 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Jungu kuu rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Mjue Zaidi 13:45 Art and Lifestyle rpt 13:55 Habari za saa</p>	<p>14:00 Art and Lifestyle rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Aibu yako rpt 18:15 Mapishi 18:45 Kesho leo 19:00 Afya ya Jamii 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Dakika 45 22:00 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 02:00 DWTV</p> <p>TUESDAY 03 March 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 08:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Shamsam za pwani 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Shamsam za pwani 11:20 Shangweka rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:55 Afya ya jamii rpt 13:00 Habari za saa 13:30 Kipindi maalum: KTMDA 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Yu wapi 18:15 Mapishi rpt 18:30 Uchumi na biashara 19:00 Jarida la wanawake 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Tanzania yetu 21:35 Chetu ni chetu 22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 04 March 5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Korean drama: The great Queen Seondok 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Korean drama: The great Queen Seondok 11:20 Uchumi na biashara rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Dakika 45 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 18:30 Igizo rpt: Dhuruba 19:00 Ijue Sheria 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Aibu Yako! 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Where is Elisa? 17:15 Tanzania Yetu rpt 17:45 Bundesliga kick off 18:15 Capchat rpt 19:15 Mizengwe 19:30 The Decor 20:00 Korean Drama: Ilijimae 21:00 Out n' About 21:30 Movie: Back to business 23:00 The other side rpt 01:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Sun 01 Mar 08:00 CNN International 09:00 In good shape 10:00 Capchat rpt 11:00 Sports Gazette rpt 11:30 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae 12:00 Jagina rpt 12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt 13:00 In good shape rpt 13:30 Special pgm rpt: Sauti za Busara 15:15 Aibu yako 15:30 Drive it rpt 16:00 Dakika 45 rpt 16:45 Mizengwe rpt 17:00 The Decor rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt 19:30 Cookery pgm: Culinary Delights 20:00 Korean Drama: Ilijimae 21:00 Shift 21:15 Capchat live 22:15 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Mon 02 March 06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Special pgm rpt: Sauti za Busara 16:30 Tanzania Yetu rpt 17:00 EcoAfrica rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 The Decor rpt 19:30 Shamba lulu 20:00 Series: The Secret 20:45 The Monday Agenda 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Kipima Joto 00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Tues 03 March 06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)</p>

INCENTIVE

China's provincial city offers residents 10,000 yuan if they report coronavirus symptoms

BEIJING

A city in China's Hubei province, the epicentre of the novel coronavirus outbreak, is awarding residents 10,000 yuan if they report any symptoms, and later test positive.

The Coronavirus Epidemic Prevention and Control Headquarters of Qianjiang city announced the new incentive on Thursday, and said the reward is valid until March 2. If authorities aren't totally sure the person reporting their symptoms is free of the virus, they will be given 1,000 yuan and allowed to go home, the statement said.

If the person is "suspected" of having the virus, they will be awarded 2,000 yuan. Qianjiang city has one million residents and is around 140km from Wuhan. It currently has 197 cases, Reuters reported. It has also reported deaths, but the exact number is not known.

This is one of many financial incentives authorities across Hubei have been giving out in an attempt to stem the outbreak,

Reuters reported. The district of Hanyang, in Wuhan, and the city of Huangguang, also in Hubei, are offering 500 yuan to those who hand themselves for testing.

Local authorities across central China, where Hubei is located, have exhausted a number of options to try and control the virus. They have used facial-recognition software to catch people breaking their quarantines, flown drones over towns to make sure people are wearing masks, and are checking temperatures at every possible opportunity.

Last week Hubei province also issued a notice telling pharmacies and medical centers to report the name, address, and other personal details of people who had purchased fever and cough medicines. As of Thursday, the coronavirus death toll has surpassed 2,800, with more than 82,000 infected. More than 40 countries have also reported cases.

WORLD

UN chief says women's inequality 'stupid' and a global shame

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called women's inequality "stupid" and a cause for global shame on Thursday, as he pledged to press governments to end discriminatory laws in the face of a "strong and relentless push-back" against women's rights.

While Guterres did not name and shame, US President Donald Trump's administration has led a push at the UN against the promotion of sexual and reproductive health services for women because the administration sees that as code for abortion.

Speaking ahead of the annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York next month, Guterres warned that the state of women's rights was dire and said he would seek to end "default male thinking" across the United Nations.

"Just as slavery and colonialism were a stain on previous centuries, women's inequality should shame us all in the

21st. Because it is not only unacceptable; it is stupid," Guterres said in a speech to The New School in New York.

He said legal protections against rape and domestic violence were being diluted or rolled back and that in 34 countries rape within marriage was still legal. "There is a strong and relentless push-back against women's rights," Guterres said. "Women's sexual and reproductive rights are under threat from different sides."

Language promoting women's sexual and reproductive health is long-agreed internationally, including in resolutions adopted by the Security Council in 2009 and 2013 and several resolutions adopted annually by the 193-member General Assembly.

However, the United States under Trump has pushed to remove such language from new UN resolutions. The Trump administration also cut funding in 2017 for the UN Population Fund be-



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addresses his statement during the opening of the High-Level Segment of the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council, at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Feb 24, 2020. (AP)

cause it believed it was linked to an abortion program, but the UN said that was an inaccurate perception.

The US Supreme Court ruled in 1973 that women have the right to choose whether or not to have an abortion but the issue is still divisive in the United States.

"The UN should not put itself in a position of promoting or suggesting a right to abortion, whether it is humanitarian or development work," US Ambassador to the United Nations, Kelly Craft, said in October.

The United States has received support for its stance from countries including Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Brazil, Guatemala, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Sudan, Uganda, Poland and Hungary.

Last year Washington threatened to veto a Security Council resolution if a reference was not cut citing the need for UN bodies and donors to give timely "sexual and reproductive health" assistance to survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

Guterres said on Thursday he would urge governments to achieve gender parity in senior leadership. He said he achieved gender parity among his senior leadership team - on Jan 1, 90 women and 90 men were in the ranks of full-time senior leadership, two years ahead of the target date he set.

"Women have equaled and outperformed men in almost every sphere," he said. "It is time to stop trying to change women, and start changing the systems that prevent them from achieving their potential."

Agencies

Johnson gives EU 4 months to make a Brexit deal - or he walks

BRUSSELS

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the European Union he'll walk away from the negotiating table in June if it's not clear he's going to get a Canada-style free trade agreement for the UK. The pound fell.

The UK's negotiating mandate for the next stage of Brexit, published Thursday, was in many areas close to what the EU published on Tuesday. The main differences were around how closely the UK has to stick to EU regulations - the so-called level playing field, how the deal will be structured and governed, and fishing rights in UK waters.

"It is a vision of a relationship based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals," the government said. "With both parties respecting one another's legal autonomy. The government will not negotiate any arrangement in which the UK does not have control over its own laws and political life."

The UK is setting a tough timetable for the negotiations, saying it wants the broad outline of an agreement by June, so the deal can be finalized by September. Britain will assess in June whether the talks are on course to succeed,



and then decide whether to continue or to "focus solely" on preparing to leave the EU's regulatory orbit without a deal on Dec 31.

The pound fell after the document was released, erasing gains against the dollar and extending losses against the euro.

"We want the best possible trading relationship with the EU, but in the pursuit of the deal, we will not trade away our sovereignty," Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove told the House of Commons on Thursday.

Competing Aims

Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier on Thursday noted Britain's negotiating mandate published earlier but, making clear sharp divergences ahead of talks starting next week, said the bloc would stick to the political declaration agreed last year.

"We take note of the UK's mandate published today and will discuss our respective positions on Monday," Barnier said in a tweet. "We will stick to all our prior commitments in the Political Declaration. We want an ambitious & fair partnership with the UK in the

future."

In October last year the UK and EU agreed on the declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and Britain.

The declaration addresses the security partnership and the economic partnership, with the latter referring to a level playing field of standards and regulations to ensure fair competition in trade. The UK has since rejected this.

The competing UK and EU documents show where the arguments will be after talks start on Monday.

The EU argues Britain's size and proximity means simply replicating the agreement with Canada is unreasonable. The UK argues that size and proximity aren't necessarily a factor in trade talks.

"Geography is no reason to undermine democracy," Cabinet Minister Michael Gove told Parliament. "To be clear, we will not be seeking to dynamically align with EU laws, on EU terms governed by EU laws and EU institutions."

While the EU sees June as a stock-taking opportunity, it has said it will keep trying to get a deal until the last possible moment.

In another potential sticking point, the UK said it won't agree to EU institutions, including the bloc's Court of Justice, having jurisdiction in the UK.

To the EU, that marks a shift from the commitments Britain made in the Political Declaration, the non-binding part of its Withdrawal Agreement with the bloc. The UK wants the right to have its own policy on subsidies and tax and to refuse any European Court of Justice jurisdiction. This would make it impossible, under European law, for the EU to enforce any deal in which the UK pledged to follow the bloc's state aid rules after Brexit.

Agencies

President Xi cites great progress in virus fight

By An Baijie

CHINA is making great progress in controlling the novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak, and it has full confidence and the capacity to win the battle against the disease, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

Xi made the remark while meeting with Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Battulga's visit took place the day after the end of Mongolia's traditional White Moon festival holiday.

Noting that Battulga is the first foreign head of state to have visited China since the outbreak of the disease, Xi said that his visit demonstrates the great importance that the Mongolian president attaches to bilateral relations and his deep friendship toward the Chinese people.

The Chinese government and the Chinese people are making full efforts to fight the disease, Xi said, adding that China has received support and help from the Mongolian government and people.

China and Mongolia are close neighbors that help each other and stand together in difficult times, Xi said.

Xi stressed that the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have paid great attention and taken the strictest and utmost measures to prevent and control the disease since its outbreak.

China is making great efforts to coordinate prevention and control of the disease with economic and social development, and it is trying its best to limit the impact of the disease as much as possible, Xi said.

China is resuming its economic production in an orderly manner in line with the different situations across the nation, paying attention to spring agricultural production, and is making efforts to ensure people's livelihoods, Xi said.

Xi pointed out that China has great potential in domestic consumption and strong industrial foundations, and the country will strive to achieve its economic goals for this year, especially the major tasks of securing the decisive victory of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and reducing poverty.

Based on the principle of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China is responsible for the Chinese people's safety and health and has a duty to safeguard global public health, Xi said.

China's open, transparent and responsible manner and its positive efforts to strengthen international cooperation on fighting the disease have won recognition from the World Health Organization and the international community, Xi said.

China will continue to enhance cooperation with all nations, including Mongolia, in handling the outbreak effectively and maintaining regional and global public health, Xi said.

China would like to consolidate mutual political trust with Mongolia, enhance Belt and Road cooperation, and jointly promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, Xi added.

Battulga announced that Mongolia will donate 30,000 sheep to China, in addition to the funds it has already given to China. He presented a certificate to Xi about the donation of the sheep after their talks.

On behalf of the Mongolian government and people, Battulga expressed sincere sympathy for the Chinese people's suffering resulting from the outbreak.

Mongolia highly admires and appreciates China's timely response to the disease and the progress made in fighting the disease, he said.

Calling China a comprehensive strategic partner, Battulga said the Mongolian people would like to join hands with the Chinese people in fighting the disease, he said, adding that the Mongolian people have enthusiastically supported their government's decision to donate to China's battle against the disease.

He said that the Chinese people, led by Xi, will definitely win the battle against the disease and achieve the nation's goals for economic and social growth, he said.



President Xi Jinping holds talks with Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China on Thursday. (XINHUA)

China's research in major international infectious diseases benefits

AS China ranks among the world's first-tier countries in treating health emergency, its efforts in prevention and control of major international infectious diseases have increasingly become globally visible.

China has contributed five WHO-certified emergency medical teams (EMT) for a total of 25 international teams from 15 countries.

Amid the outbreak of Avian influenza A (H7N9) in 2013, China identified the new-typed H7N9 pathogen within only five days. China immediately released the whole gene sequence to the world and, through the WHO, extended the test method to Cambodia, Thailand and other countries within seven days.

Many international institutes including the CDC and the WHO praised China for earning time and making a

significant contribution to the global effort in the fight against the emerging epidemic.

China's success is partly due to its rapid detection of viruses, as well as a sound online direct reporting system. It is capable of rapidly detecting more than 300 pathogens in 72 hours, remarkably contributing to its successful control of Avian influenza A (H7N9) and other seasonal influenza.

After SARS in 2003, China has set up the world's largest online direct reporting system for infectious disease outbreaks and public health emergencies, mandating reports of primary medical institutions be directly heard of by the national Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) within just four hours.

China's experience in dealing with

H7N9 and SARS has greatly improved its scientific and technological innovation capacity in monitoring, diagnosis and treatment of seasonal influenza and other emergencies.

Such achievements were also exported and shared in the prevention and control of Ebola in Africa.

In December 2016, a Chinese research team developed the rAd5-based Ebola vaccine and it has successfully gone through test in clinical trials in Sierra Leone, the African country severely affected by Ebola.

This is the first time for a Chinese vaccine go through clinical trials abroad. The research team from the Academy of Military Medical Sciences of the People's Liberation Army then quickly shared their findings with the whole world by publishing scientific

papers in the Lancet, the world's leading general medical journal.

Chinese vaccines for world

After years of exploration, China not only has achieved self-support in terms of vaccine development and manufacturing, but also helped people of other countries get good and affordable vaccines.

Jiao Hong, head of the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA), said that China has 45 vaccine manufacturers that can produce more than 60 vaccines and prevent 34 diseases. Every year these enterprises produce more than 1 billion doses of vaccines.

"China is one of the few countries that is self-dependent to produce all the planned immunization vaccines," Jiao said in a press conference held by

the NMPA in June 29.

"So far, some of China's vaccine products have been exported to countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, making contributions to guarding people's health in other parts of the world," Jiao said.

On December 3, 2015, the world's first inactivated EV71 whole-virus vaccine developed by the Institute of Medical Biology, Chinese Academy of Medical Science (CAMS) was approved by the China Food and Drug Administration.

The world's only vaccine against Hepatitis E infection was developed by the team led by Professor Xia Ningshao of Xiamen University. It was approved for testing in the US on January 12, making it the first Chinese vaccine product to be approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for clinical test-

ing. An official of the China National Biotech Group surnamed Jia told the Global Times that the company has exported a total of 84 million doses of vaccines and other medical products and has donated more than 7 million doses of vaccines to other developing countries.

The Encephalitis B vaccine developed by the enterprise passed the WHO prequalification in 2013, becoming the first attenuated encephalitis B vaccine to pass the WHO prequalification. The vaccine has been enlisted in such country's immunization plans as Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, South Korea and Thailand and supported in Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia via government-assistance programs, said Jia.

Global Times

US mulls using sweeping powers to ramp up virus gear production

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump's administration is considering invoking special powers through a law called the Defense Production Act to rapidly expand domestic manufacturing of protective masks and clothing to combat the coronavirus in the United States, two US officials told Reuters.

The use of the law, passed by Congress in 1950 at the outset of the Korean War, would mark an escalation of the administration's response to the outbreak. The virus first surfaced in China and has since spread to other countries including the United States.

US health officials have told Americans to begin preparing for the spread of the virus in the United States.

The law grants the president the power to expand industrial production of key materials or products for national security and other reasons. The biggest producers of face masks in the United States include 3M Corp and Honeywell International Inc.

Trump, a Republican seeking re-election on Nov 3, has faced criticism from Democrats over his administration's response to the outbreak.

US Vice-President Mike Pence said Thursday the threat from coronavirus to the American public "remains low", and the White House has begun discussions with leaders of the US Congress on a supplemental spending bill to fighting the spread of COVID-19.

"In the days ahead we're going to make sure that the full resources of the federal government continue to be brought to bear in confronting the coronavirus here at home," Pence said.

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar told lawmakers this week that the United States needs a stockpile of about 300 million N95 face masks - respiratory protective devices

- for medical workers to combat the spread of the virus. The United States currently has a stockpile of around 12 million of the N95 masks that are in line with certifications from the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Azar testified. In addition to those masks, the US government has a stockpile of 30 million "gauze type" surgical masks.

During an interagency call on Wednesday, officials from HHS and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) discussed the possibility of invoking the Defense Production Act for the manufacture of "personal protective equipment" that can be worn to prevent infection, according to a DHS official.

Such equipment can include masks, gloves and body suits.

A White House official confirmed that the administration was exploring the use of the law to spur manufacturing of protective gear. Both the DHS and White House officials requested anonymity to discuss the issue.

On Wednesday, Trump said that the coronavirus risk to the United States remained "very low," but that federal health officials were prepared to take action and that Vice-President Mike Pence would take control of the US response.

Invoking the Defense Production Act is one of a number of options under consideration by the administration to combat the virus, the officials said, and no final decision has been made. Trump invoked the law in 2017 to address technological shortfalls in a vaccine production capability and other items such as microelectronics.

US spy agencies monitoring virus spread

US intelligence agencies are monitoring the global spread of coronavirus and the ability of governments to respond, sources familiar with the matter said on



Thursday.

Another source said US agencies were also concerned about the weak ability of governments in some developing countries to respond to an outbreak.

"The Committee has received a briefing from the IC (intelligence community) on coronavirus, and continues to receive updates on the outbreak on a daily basis," an official of the US House of Representatives Intelligence Committee told Reuters.

The role of US intelligence agencies in responding to the coronavirus epidemic at this point principally involves monitoring the spread of the illness around the world and assessing the responses of governments.

California monitoring 8,400 people for possible coronavirus

California is monitoring more than 8,400 people who arrived on commercial flights for coronavirus symptoms from "points of concern," but the state lacks test kits and has been held back by federal testing rules, Governor Gavin Newsom said on Thursday.

California has only 200 test kits, but has appealed for testing protocols to

be expanded to include Americans who may catch the virus as it spreads through US communities, Newsom told a news briefing in Sacramento, the state capital.

California on Wednesday reported a coronavirus case of unknown origin, making it potentially the first incident of the virus spreading within US communities.

Nigeria, Lithuania, Netherlands, Belarus each report 1st case

An Italian man who arrived in Nigeria three days ago has become the African country's first case of coronavirus, the health minister said on Friday.

Health Minister Osagie Ehanire, in a statement, said the case involves an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos Feb 25. Nigeria's Health Ministry said the infection was confirmed on Thursday.

Separately, Lithuania also reported its first infection on Friday, in a woman who returned this week from a visit to Italy's northern city of Verona, the government said.

In a statement, the Lithuanian government said the stricken woman had

been isolated in hospital in the northern town of Siauliai, following her return on Monday.

The woman, aged 39, was attending a conference with colleagues in Italy before flying to the southern city of Kaunas, Health Minister Aurelijus Veryga said at a late night news conference, in video images posted on Lithuanian news websites.

Meanwhile, Belarus registered the first case of infection in the country, Russian news agency TASS reported on Friday, citing the Belarusian Ministry of Healthcare.

"We would like to inform you that February 27 tests conducted at the Republican Scientific and Practical Center of epidemiology and microbiology showed the presence of coronavirus 2019-nCoV in one of the students from Iran," TASS quoted the minister.

In the Netherlands, Dutch health authorities on Thursday confirmed the country's first confirmed case.

The Dutch National Institute for Public Health said in a statement the patient in the southern Dutch city of Tilburg had recently traveled in northern Italy and is now being treated in isolation.

Scores cleared to leave Tenerife hotel. Some 130 guests were cleared on Thursday to leave a Tenerife hotel placed on lockdown after four cases of the coronavirus were detected there, but there were no signs that would happen soon while authorities scrambled to address the situation.

A spokesman for the regional government said none of the remaining guests at the H10 Costa Adeje Palace Hotel presented any symptoms and they might be cleared before the end of a 14-day isolation period imposed on Wednesday.

"A decision has been made that frees the hotel from the presence of 130 people," he said in televised comments.

Agencies

New Zealand's PM: Australia's deportation policy 'corrosive'

SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA'S deportation policy is so "corrosive" that it has soured its bilateral relationship with New Zealand, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday, a rare bust-up between the two historic allies.

Australia's conservative government has in recent months moved to deport thousands of foreigners convicted of crimes as part of an immigration crackdown that can also strip dual-nationals of their Australian citizenship.

The move has seen hundreds of people deported to New Zealand, a country that some left when just children and have few ties to.

"We have countless who have no home in New Zealand, they have no network, they have grown up in Australia. That is their home. And that is where they should stay," Ardern told reporters in Sydney during a media conference alongside Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

"Do not deport your people and your problems."

The two countries have fought in numerous conflicts alongside each other, and squabbles between the two rarely break-out beyond playful, light-hearted banter over sport and culture.

Roughly 650,000 New Zealand citizens - more than a tenth of the smaller country's population - live in Australia.

Morrison, however, was unapologetic and promised no change in Australian policy.

"If you have committed a crime and you're not a citizen of Australia, then you have no right to stay," Morrison told the same media conference.

Agencies

Proportion of severe cases of novel coronavirus falls significantly

THE proportion of severe and critical cases of novel coronavirus pneumonia among all confirmed cases in China has decreased significantly, said the State Council's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism at a press conference on Feb. 16.

By Feb. 15, proportion of severe and critical cases of novel coronavirus pneumonia in epicenter Wuhan had dropped from a peak of 32.4 percent on Jan. 28 to 21.6 percent on Feb. 15, while the figure in other parts of Hubei province had dropped from a peak of 18.4 percent on Jan. 27 to 11.1 percent on Feb. 15, officials said at the conference.

The proportion in other Chinese provinces also fell significantly, from a peak of 15.9 percent on Jan. 27 to 7.2 percent on Feb. 15.

"These changes have proven the current epidemic prevention and control measures are effective," said Mi Feng, a spokesperson with the National Health Commission (NHC).

Thanks to the intensified targeted medical assistance for Hubei from across the country, the strict prevention and control measures implemented by Hubei province according to its conditions, as well as the categorizing and central management



of patients, a large number of patients with mild symptoms have received timely treatment and reduced the possibility of turning worse. These efforts have laid a solid foundation for improving the recovery rate and reducing the fatality rate, Mi

said.

Since the beginning of the epidemic prevention and control, nearly 4 million workers from China's primary-level medical and health institutions, including 1.44 million from village clinics, have played an important

and unique role in the fight against the coronavirus," said Zhu Hongming, an official with the NHC.

Medical workers at the primary level have engaged in timely detections of fever patients and suspected cases to ensure the implementation of isolation and patient transfer, while they also need to carry out daily diagnosis and treatment for common diseases and the management of chronic diseases, Zhu said.

The medical workers have also conducted carpet screening alongside community workers to support epidemiological survey and analysis, and helped cut off virus transmission routes on the streets and at the gates of residential complexes, the official introduced.

Besides, the number of newly confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection outside Hubei has been dropping for 13 consecutive days from Feb. 3 to 15, according to NHC statistics.

On Feb. 3, 890 new confirmed cases were reported outside Hubei, and the figure fell to 166 on Feb. 15. Meanwhile, the number of discharged patients outside the province also witnessed consecutive growth.

People's Daily

Canada to stop providing security for Harry and Meghan



Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex visit Canada House in London, Britain January 7, 2020. File photo

TORONTO

CANADA will no longer provide security for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Canadian government said on Thursday, once the couple are no longer working members of the British royal family in the coming weeks.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have been assisting London's Metropolitan Police with security for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex "intermittently" since November, when the couple began a six-week holiday in

Canada, according to a statement from the federal Office of the Minister of Public Safety.

But once Harry and Meghan are no longer considered senior members of the British royal family, they will no longer receive the publicly-funded security that is estimated to cost into the millions of dollars.

The couple stunned the royal family in early January with a surprise announcement that they would be stepping down from their roles as senior royals, in order to gain freedom from the intense media scrutiny that

has followed them for several years.

They announced their intention to spend more time in Canada, which could put part of the responsibility of their security onto the Canadian government.

"As the Duke and Duchess are currently recognized as Internationally Protected Persons, Canada has an obligation to provide security assistance on an as-needed basis," the government statement said.

"The assistance will cease in the coming weeks, in keeping with their change in status."

So-called freedom never an excuse for loss of humanity

SPANISH writer Lola Becaria who has been living in Shanghai for three years recently published an article on Spanish newspaper El Pais to show support for China's efforts to combat the novel coronavirus epidemic.

She said that the Chinese are humorous, lively and friendly, and they remain unchanged in the epidemic. The Spanish writer saw the persistence of cities, as well as the conviction, equanimity and orderliness of the people. Everything the Chinese do is to defeat the epidemic, she wrote.

However, what's in stark contrast to this is the arrogance and prejudice of some western

media which totally ignored the appeal of the World Health Organization (WHO), national leaders and other voices of justice in the international society to oppose stigma and discrimination. Such practice exactly exposed their unwisdom and viciousness, and will never be supported by the public.

Those who go against justice and morality will only receive condemnation. An article recently published by the Wall Street Journal that fans racial discrimination was refuted and opposed by its subscribers. Over 100,000 people have signed on the petitioning system of the White House to request apologies to the Chinese communities and a retitling or

removal of the report.

German weekly news magazine Der Spiegel also triggered anger of the masses for the headline splashed across the magazine's current cover that associates the novel coronavirus with "made in China." Such practice was described as shameful by German internet users.

French newspaper Courrier Picard used "yellow peril" to report the epidemic, and was refuted by the French daily Le Figaro who said the practice was blatant racial discrimination against Asians in disguise of humor.

After Denmark's Jyllands-Posten printed a cartoon insulting the Chinese national

flag, a city councilor of Odense, Denmark pointed out that the media outlet should apologize as it is not a question of free speech, but humanity.

The New York Times jumped to a conclusion that the epidemic might develop to a pandemic. However, the WHO immediately refuted it with authoritative news that the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak is not a pandemic.

Media is an important tool to disseminate social information in the modern society, and a major channel for the public to learn the truths of news events. An article of the Time magazine recently compared the news coverage of the novel coronavirus in 2020 to that of

Ebola in 2018, and found that the coverage of the 2019-nCoV had been unusually heavy.

"It seems to me that the coronavirus is being covered in more sensationalistic terms than Ebola in 2018," said Steven Miller, a professor at the Rutgers School of Journalism and Media Studies.

What people should stay alert to is the "common practices" of certain western media to exaggerate fear and fan up social discrimination. The reason for such phenomenon is their inability to keep pace with time, as well as the "civilization privileges" and "zero-sum games" that crammed their brains.

Ignoring the efforts and

achievements made by the Chinese people in combating the epidemic, stigmatizing China with racism, and impeding the efforts of the international society by creating panic, these media outlets have lost their sense for basic moral and social responsibility.

Besides, humanity is also absent in their indifferent and ugly reports which turn a totally blind eye to the death of the unfortunate and the forces of justice that are still fighting the virus to protect lives.

The notorious Wall Street Journal article kept saying that "the 21st century has been an age of black swans", but it failed to understand the true intention of Nassim Nicholas

Taleb who invented the term. In Taleb's book Hidden Asymmetries in Daily Life, he called on the world to share responsibilities in a bid to cope with uncertainties in reality, which is exactly a practical warning for the current time.

It's important that media shall never chase for the so-called "freedom" and lose their humanity when human beings are impacted by uncertainties such as virus attacks. What is the meaning for the existence of media if it arbitrarily escapes responsibility and morality? That is something that some western media should think.

People's Daily

Bach tries to boost Olympic morale in Japan, speaks to media

TOKYO

HOPING to boost morale in Japan by assuring people that the Tokyo Olympics will be held as scheduled, IOC President Thomas Bach held a conference call limited to three of Japan's main media outlets – newspapers Asahi and Yomiuri, and the Kyodo news agency.

Bach was responding to comments made earlier in the week by IOC member Dick Pound in an interview with The Associated Press. Pound said a decision on the Tokyo Olympics – facing a fast-spreading virus from China – would need to be made by the end of May.

Australian member John Coates, who heads the IOC inspection team for Tokyo, suggested a similar time frame. Both Pound and Coates are former IOC vice presidents.

The Olympics open on July 24, followed by the Paralympics on Aug. 25.

The International Olympic Committee provided the AP with a transcript of Thursday's call. The questions have been shortened for length and clarity. The answers are in full.

Bach's opening statement: "The preparations for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 are continuing with a view to having successful Olympic Games this summer in Tokyo and to reassure the athletes and to encourage them to go ahead full steam with regard to their training and their preparations for what we expect to be very successful Olympic Games Tokyo 2020."

Q: There are so many reports in the Japanese media, especially on the internet, citing Mr. Dick Pound's interview. He set a date and time limit for deciding whether to cancel the games. The word "cancellation" is everywhere now, even in parliament. He also compared the spread of the virus to a wartime situation. Your response, president?

Bach: "I think the facts speak for themselves, and we should also not forget that Dick Pound also said that the IOC is fully committed to have the opening ceremony there on July 24th in Tokyo. And this is in fact what we are working for, and we see great unity and solidarity of the Olympic Movement with regard to that, to the preparations for the games and in particular to the qualification. This is something I must say I'm pretty proud of: to see how so many National Olympic Committees, countries, federations are working together to address this challenge of the virus. Then because you're mentioning these comparisons with a war. I think any comparison with a world war is out of all proportion."

Q: In theory, how long could you wait to make a final decision to deliver the games? Is there any option for cancellation or maybe postponement until next year?

Bach: "You gave the answer yourself. You said 'theoretically,' and you will understand that I'm not ready to add fuel to the flames of speculation there in any way. It is about now, not about speculation. What it is now it is to ensure the qualification procedure and protecting the safety of the athletes at the same time. This is what we are doing in cooperation with the Japanese authorities. In cooperation with the World Health Organization, also in cooperation with the Chinese Olympic Committee and the authorities and with many NOCs. Let me give you some examples. Now, the Chinese wrestling team is training in Serbia and traveling from there to the different qualification tournaments. The table tennis team of China is in Qatar. The Chinese women's basketball team is in Croatia. We have managed to move qualification competitions and tournaments within weeks from



Thomas Bach

China to other countries where the safety of the athletes could be ensured. So based on this, we can really say we are looking forward to successful Olympic Games in Tokyo."

Q: I just want to confirm the IOC stance. Is there now an option for an alternative plan or having multiple locations. Also, is a one-year delay a realistic option?

Bach: "You can ask me in many more ways around; I will not add fuel to the flames of speculation. The IOC, in cooperation with all the authorities and the NOCs, is fully committed to a successful Olympic Games in Tokyo starting on the 24 July."

Q: What are the things you think are important for the Japanese to do for safe conditions that satisfy the IOC for staging the games?

Bach: "We have seen the Japanese authorities taking very important measures, just also today. We appreciate the close cooperation with the organizing committee, which is doing everything to ensure the safety of the athletes and all the visitors to Japan. We also see in this respect, again, the great solidarity of the world to contribute to the safety of the games and contribute to successful games. I gave you some examples already. There are many more. We see for instance the Chinese Olympic Committee already planning to get almost all – if not the entire Olympic team – out of the country as soon as possible. And then afterward to get the finally qualified athletes as soon as possible to Japan in order to comply with any medical regulations there may be in place. This determination by Japan, and this great solidarity by the sports movement, and beyond the sports movement, puts us in a position again to say we are continuing our preparations so these are successful games as planned."

Q: A lot of speculation has created big confusion in Japan. So what are your messages to the Japanese people and people around the world who are looking forward to these Olympics?

Bach: "The IOC is fully committed to the success of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020."

Q: Mr. John Coates is a coordination leader for the Tokyo Games. He said to a local Australian newspaper that, as Mr. Dick Pound said, we need to make a decision in three months. But it seems that this is not the official stance of the IOC at the moment. I just want to confirm that.

Bach: "The official position of the IOC is that we are fully committed to the success of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and that we are already now doing everything to ensure not only the success of the games, but also to ensure the qualification and the preparations of the athletes of the world. Because the safety of every participant at the Olympic Games, be it athlete, official, spectator, is the top priority for the IOC and also for the organizing committee of Tokyo 2020."

Q: So what do you think is the final criteria for making sure the Olympics are on schedule?

Bach: "They are on schedule. The preparation and qualification procedures are going on with great effort, again being made by everybody. By the organizing committee, by Japan, by China, by the IOC, by a big number of NOCs. And all this again with a view to have them after – yes, a challenging but nevertheless successful qualification period – then looking forward to celebrate with the Japanese people together, a successful Olympic Games Tokyo 2020."

Exclusive: Tokyo has no 'Plan B' for Games despite coronavirus

TOKYO

TOKYO has no Plan B for this year's Summer Olympics despite alarm over the spread of the coronavirus in Japan and elsewhere with under five months before the event, a senior official said on Friday.

"There will not be one bit of change in holding the Games as planned," Katsura Enyo, deputy director general of the Tokyo 2020 Preparation Bureau at the city government, told Reuters.

Having prepared for years and invested some \$12 billion, Japan is eager to quell fears the Games might be called off, postponed or moved to a different location due to the virus.

Though on the decline in China where it originated, the flu-like disease is moving fast around the world, including more than 200 cases and five deaths in Japan.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president and former fencing champion Thomas Bach bolstered Tokyo's stance on Thursday, saying his organization was "fully committed" to holding the Olympics on schedule.

In a telephone interview, Enyo said organisers were "facing up to" the coronavirus - but it would not derail the July 24-Aug. 9 event. "We are not even thinking of when or in what contingency we might decide things. There is no thought of change at all in my mind," she said.

POSTPONEMENT?

Some Japanese media have reported organizers were considering postponing the Games for six months to a year, but Enyo denied



A woman wearing a protective face mask, following an outbreak of the coronavirus, walks past banners of the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games outside the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building in Tokyo, Japan, February 28, 2020. REUTERS

that. "No such debate is going on," she said, adding that preparations were on track.

Japan is, however, considering scaling back the Olympic torch relay due to the coronavirus threat.

And despite its optimism over the Olympics, Japan has cancelled numerous sporting events.

Tokyo's Yomiuri Giants will play two pre-season baseball games in an empty stadium, while the Tokyo Marathon will take place on Sunday with elite runners only.

The country has also had more than 700 coronavirus cases and four other deaths on a cruise liner quarantined off Yokohama. Japan has built a raft of new fa-

ilities for the Games, including a 156.9 billion yen (\$1.42 billion) National Stadium, and hoped for a huge boost in tourism, which Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made a cornerstone of his economic plan.

FILE PHOTO: A man wearing a protective face mask, following an outbreak of the coronavirus, walks past an advertising billboard of Tokyo Olympics 2020, near the Shinjuku station in Tokyo, Japan, February 27, 2020. REUTERS/Athit Perawongmetha/

But markets have begun pricing in the risk of a cancelled Olympics, with the Dentsu Group ad agency's share price hammered as investors fret about its high exposure.

The quadrennial sporting showpiece was last called off due to World War Two but doubts about Tokyo have grown since Organising Committee chief executive Toshiro Muto said he was "seriously concerned" the virus would pour "cold water" on their momentum.

However, a London mayoral candidate's suggestion that the British capital - which hosted the 2012 Summer Olympics - could take them again if needed drew sharp responses from Japan.

And in its latest statement on the issue, the IOC said preparations for Tokyo 2020 "continue as planned" and it had "full confidence" in authorities to take all necessary measures.

REUTERS

Davis leads way in Lakers' seventh straight win, James out

SAN FRANCISCO

WITH LeBron James sidelined, Anthony Davis knew he had to do a little more – everybody had to do a little more to pick up the slack.

Davis had 23 points and six rebounds in three quarters and the Los Angeles Lakers won their seventh straight game and NBA-record 18th in a row on the road against the Western Conference, beating the injury-plagued Golden State Warriors 116-86 on Thursday night without King James.

It meant taking better care of the ball in the second half and bringing energy on both ends.

"LeBron, when he's out, it's taking away a lot of things that we do, so it's on all of us to make sure we kind of fill those voids, and I think we did that tonight," Davis said.

Rajon Rondo started in place of James and contributed 12 points and six assists as Los Angeles turned it into a rout with a 40-17 third quarter. James sat out because of recurring soreness in his troublesome left groin.

Davis shot 6 for 13, made 10 of 12 free throws and also had a pair of blocked shots and steals for the Lakers, whose 12 first-half turnovers allowed the Warriors to keep it close. Kyle Kuzma added 18 points off the bench.

Rookie Eric Paschall scored 23 points off the bench for his 11th 20-point game and Jordan Poole had 16 in the Warriors' eighth straight loss both overall and at home in new Chase Center. Poole limped off with 5:44 remaining in the third after rolling his right ankle then later returned after getting it re-taped – but it briefly left Golden State with eight available players, two of those on 10-day deals.

Golden State guard Ky Bowman went down with I-II to play and was helped off.

Golden State forward Draymond Green's return from a two-game absence with a bruise in his right pelvic area was a short one: He was ejected 5:45 before halftime on his second technical just 11 seconds after his first at 5:56.

Golden State also missed Andrew Wiggins, a late scratch with spasms in his upper back. The Warriors hung tough early but couldn't stay with the Lakers as they did in Los Angeles' 125-120 win here Feb. 8.

And if it couldn't get worse for the



New York Knicks' Elfrid Payton, right, goes up for a shot against Philadelphia 76ers' Al Horford during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, in Philadelphia. Philadelphia 76ers won 115-106 (AP Photo)

home team, beloved Lakers super-sub Alex Caruso drew late MVP chants as the arena quickly emptied.

This losing streak is wearing on the Warriors.

"We need to win a game," coach Steve Kerr said. "We need to win a game once in a while to feel better about things. Right now we're in a bad stretch. It's tough."

JAMES UPDATE

James had already been ruled out on Wednesday and coach Frank Vogel said post-game a decision on James' status would come Saturday morning ahead of a game at Memphis that night.

"Just dealing with some soreness. We're still two days away," Vogel said.

James, who missed 27 games last season nursing the tender groin he hurt Christmas Day 2018 at Golden State, scored a season-high 40 points in Tuesday's home victory against Zion Williamson and the Pelicans.

Kerr can look at James as an example of a superstar taking it up to a new level after a full offseason given the Lakers star

had played in eight straight NBA Finals before last year.

Golden State has reached five Finals in a row, but not this season – so players such as Stephen Curry, Green and Klay Thompson may benefit from extended rest.

"Watching LeBron, he looks refreshed, he looks recharged. The idea of eight straight Finals in insane when you think about five here and what it's done and how our players have felt this past year and the injuries that have hit," Kerr said. "I do believe that when all is said and done, by next year's training camp our guys should feel recharged and refreshed and ready to go. Hopefully that's the case. LeBron's also LeBron. He's built differently than most people."

Meanwhile, in Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma City Thunder continue to thrive in seemingly uncomfortable situations.

Danilo Gallinari scored 24 points and the Thunder rallied from 19 points down in the third quarter to beat the Sacramento Kings 112-108 on Thursday night.

It was the 15th time this season that the Thunder have won after trailing heading into the fourth quarter – by far, the most in the league.

"We've just been in this situation a lot and we know what to do," Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander said. "I think I can speak for all five guys that are in the game (late) most of the time. We're confident and work hard and trust it."

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 20 points and Chris Paul added 17 for the Thunder, who have won five straight and 14 of 17.

Harrison Barnes scored 21 points and Harry Giles added a season-high 19 for the Kings, who had won three in a row. De'Aaron Fox, the Kings' No. 2 scorer, sat out with lower abdominal muscle tightness.

Sacramento led 61-50 at halftime. Giles scored 15 points and Buddy Hield scored 12 on 4-for-4 shooting from 3-point range.

"We got to a point there, if they made a shot, we were hanging our heads trying to figure out whose fault it was instead of playing with the right pace," Paul said. AP

Aubameyang on Arsenal heartbreaker: 'Very, very hard'

LONDON

ARSENAL forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was at a loss for words after his missed opportunity against Olympiakos in Europa League round-of-32 action on Thursday.

The Gabon striker scuffed on a close-range shot in the last seconds of added extra time in Arsenal's 2-1 second-leg loss to the Greek club at the Emirates, eliminating the hosts due to away goals.

What was even more heartbreaking for Aubameyang was that he had scored a spectacular aerobic goal minutes before that seemingly saw the English side through into the last 16.

"Very, very disappointing. What can I say? It is very, very hard. It was a tough game again," the club captain told BT Sport after the match.

"I don't even know [how I missed that chance late on]. I feel very, very bad. It can happen but I do not know how I missed this chance. I was tired, I had some cramps but it is not an excuse."

Arsenal had beaten Olympiakos 1-0 in the first leg and appeared to have done enough to squeeze through when Aubameyang struck in the 113th minute to cancel out Pape Cisse's 53rd-minute header.

But the visitors had the last laugh as Youssef El Arabi struck seven minutes later to delight the noisy contingent of away fans, with Aubameyang then missing a gilt-edged chance to force another twist with the last kick of the game.

As Olympiakos celebrated the win, Aubameyang was visibly emotional and shaken as he walked

dazed on the pitch.

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta offered his disappointment after the match but noted the loss couldn't be pinned to Aubameyang's late miss.

"It hurts, big time. We had a lot of hope in this competition. It was a great way for us to be able to go to Europe and it is a very beautiful competition to try to win," Arteta said. "I think we did a lot of positive things in the game."

"I think we created enough chances to win the game, but if you concede two set-pieces again in a tie like this, then you put yourself in big trouble."

"This is football and sometimes it is very cruel when the emotions are [high], then in another moment they're [low]. You have to be able to handle that if you want to be in this industry so now it's up to us and up to me to bring this place back in and move forward."

With Arsenal ousted from the Europa League, the team must now beat Portsmouth on Monday in FA Cup fifth-round play for any hopes of silverware this season. They have an outside shot of qualifying for Champions League next season, sitting at 37 points in the Premier League standings.

"I just want to concentrate now on lifting those players and getting back the belief, and convince them that there is still a lot to play for, and move on," Arteta said. "It's part of this sport that a big disappointment can happen and it happened tonight. We have to learn and react as a team and as a club."

(Agencies)

Ramos' 26th red card not even close to record held by 'The Beast'

MADRID

REAL Madrid captain Sergio Ramos picked up his 26th career red card in the Champions League loss to Manchester City, but he's still a long way off the world record ...

Having just completed an entire calendar year without being sent off, Real Madrid's red-card master-in-chief Ramos was sent off once again on Wednesday as Los Blancos lost 2-1 at home to Manchester City in the thrilling first leg of their Champions League round-of-16 tie.

As Real's resolve crumbled in the latter stages, Ramos compounded his team's woes by receiving his marching orders for bringing down Gabriel Jesus as the City forward ran through on goal.

The dismissal was No. 26 of Ramos' career, and his fourth in the Champions League -- equalling the record co-held by Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Edgar Davids in Europe's top club competition.

It also means that Real will be missing their vastly experienced captain when they travel to the Etihad for the second leg on March 17 and attempt to salvage the situation.

However, while Ramos' infamous disciplinary record may be heaving with dismissals, it's not a patch on the very worst.

That dubious honour belongs to Colombian enforcer Gerardo

Bedoya, whose formidable haul of 46 red cards during his 20-year career is recognised as the most ever by the folks at Guinness World Records.

Between 1995 and 2015 across more than a dozen clubs in his homeland, Argentina and Mexico, the man they fittingly called "The Beast" managed nearly a half-century of reds for club and country.

Video "highlights" are scarce, but a clip of Bedoya kicking a grounded opponent in the head during the Bogota derby should serve as a good indicator of his general approach to the game.

Bedoya was also sent off on his coaching debut, lasting just 21 minutes of his first game in charge of Independiente Santa Fe before being sent off for constantly haranguing the match officials.

Indeed, the fact that Ramos -- already 18 years into his senior career -- still needs 21 red cards to surpass Bedoya should tell you all you need to know about him.

Still, at least Ramos has managed to stay focused, tweeting on Thursday: "After a very difficult night, there are two options: We can think about yesterday's defeat or work on tomorrow's win. I choose the latter. Head and heart already on El Clasico."

Our heads and hearts are already on No. 27, Sergio ...

(Agencies)

Serie A's biggest match will be played in empty stadium

MILAN

INTER Milan coach Antonio Conte won't have to sit through a torrent of boos when he returns to Turin for the first time to face former club Juventus.

That's because there won't be any fans there to see it.

The Derby d'Italia, one of the season's biggest matches, will be played in an empty stadium on Sunday because of the virus outbreak in northern Italy. The epicenter of the outbreak is in the Lombardy region, and Milan is its capital.

Serie A's governing body released a statement on Thursday night announcing that the match and four others would be played without any fans allowed in.

Four Serie A matches scheduled for last weekend were postponed, including Inter's match against Sampdoria. Italy has the most cases of the virus in Europe.

Serie A president Paolo Dal Pinto sent a letter to the government on Monday asking that games no longer be postponed in the affected areas but played without fans in attendance, something which Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora said they were in agreement with.

Italy has reported a total of 650 cases of the new coronavirus, up from 400 on Wednesday evening and three a week ago. Three more people with the virus died in 24 hours, bringing Italy's toll to 15.

AP

Liverpool eye record-breaking win as top-four battle heats up

LONDON

LIVERPOOL can make Premier League history at Watford on Saturday as the runaway leaders aim to move within three wins of clinching the title.

While Jurgen Klopp's side are racing towards the title, the battle to qualify for the Champions League and the struggle to avoid relegation look set to go down to the wire.

Chelsea, Manchester United, Tottenham and Wolves can all bolster their European hopes this weekend, with West Ham, Norwich, Bournemouth and Watford among those scrapping for survival.

Liverpool's history boys Liverpool's historic charge towards a first English title since 1990 will reach another landmark moment if they beat Watford.

The Reds equalled Manchester City's English top-flight record of 18 consecutive league wins, set between August and December 2017, when they fought back from 2-1 down to beat West Ham 3-2 on Monday.

Klopp's men, who need four victories from their final 11 games to guarantee the title, can break City's record with win number 19 at Vicarage Road.

With second-placed Manchester City on League Cup final duty against Aston Villa on Sunday, a victory against the struggling Hornets would put Liverpool 25 points clear at the top.

If they do win their next four games, they will lock up the title with seven matches to spare, beating the Premier League record of five, which is currently shared by Manchester City in 2017-18 and Manchester United in 2000-01.

Undefeated in their past 44 league matches, Liverpool are also five games away from equalling Arsenal's record of 49 unbeaten across 2003 and 2004.



Liverpool)

It would be a huge upset if second-bottom Watford stop Liverpool. They have lost the past four meetings, conceding 15 times and failing to score a single goal.

Asked for the secret of Liverpool's success, Reds defender Virgil van Dijk said: "Not being nervous, that is the main thing."

"Keep playing and keep pressing. There will be moments when the opponent is going to have problems if we keep doing the same thing."

Top-four turbulence With only seven points separating troubled Chelsea in fourth place and resurgent Arsenal in ninth, reaching next season's Champions League will be a tight squeeze for the six clubs in contention.

Leicester, in third place,

appear well set despite a recent wobble.

Fifth spot could be enough to ensure qualification depending on the outcome of second-placed Manchester City's appeal against their two-year ban from European competition.

Chelsea could be in danger after Tuesday's chastening 3-0 home defeat against Bayern Munich in the Champions League last-16 first leg.

Blues midfielder Jorginho said Frank Lampard's side cannot afford to feel sorry for themselves at Bournemouth on Saturday.

"It is really tough for the changing room, but we just have to believe in ourselves, and not put our heads down," Jorginho said.

"We need to keep work-

ing, keep pushing, because we are a good team."

If Chelsea lose on the south coast, Manchester United would move above them on goal difference, provided they win at Everton.

Successive wins over Chelsea and Watford have revitalised United, with the January addition of Portugal midfielder Bruno Fernandes sparking Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's previously moribund team.

Tottenham, in sixth, host Wolves, with their eighth-placed visitors just one point behind them.

Hamstrung by injuries to Harry Kane and Son Heung-min, Jose Mourinho's side were beaten by Chelsea in their last league game, prompting their manager to hint he does not expect a successful end to the sea-

son.

"I would love to be at July 1," said Mourinho. "I would love to be in pre-season, working with Harry and Sonny. That's not possible. It's going to be very difficult, especially when we go into an accumulation of matches."

Arsenal, who are unbeaten in seven league games, are not in action this weekend.

Fixtures (1500 GMT unless stated)

Today Brighton v Crystal Palace (1230), Bournemouth v Chelsea, Newcastle v Burnley, West Ham v Southampton, Watford v Liverpool (1730)

Tomorrow Everton v Manchester United (1400), Tottenham v Wolves (1400)

AFP

Barca and Madrid seek boost in crisis Clasico between giants in decline

MADRID

LA Liga's most important Clasico for years might also be the most mediocre on Sunday as Barcelona and Real Madrid each fight to lift the gloom by deepening the other's sense of crisis.

Two points separate the league's leading pair, making this weekend's meeting at the Santiago Bernabeu a potentially significant checkpoint in a back-and-forth title race, particularly if Barcelona win and extend their advantage to five.

It will be more significant than last season, when Barca kicked off the calendar's second Clasico nine points clear of Madrid, or the season before, when they were already 15 in front.

But while a tussle at the top of the table is welcome in terms of intrigue, there is an unmistakable sense of decline hanging over what has become the world's most famous club fixture.

"It's a race of two lame ducks, both of them are bad right now, that's the reality," former Real Madrid forward Jorge Valdano told Onda Cero on Wednesday night.

"Barca's recovery is more down to Real Madrid than Barca themselves."

For both teams, the build-up has been bumpy, with Madrid particularly wounded after a 2-1 defeat at home to Manchester City which has left them on the brink of exiting the Champions League in the last 16 for a second year in a row.

It might have been less concerning had it not come on the back of one win in four and had City not appeared so superior.

"Things really do look bleak," wrote Marca on Thursday. "The only takeaway can be that this Madrid side simply aren't up to it."

They might be about to feel the kind of frustration that has haunted Barcelona during a run of four con-



secutive years without making it past the semis.

Barca's own problems recently have largely been to do with their president and board, but the emergency signing of striker Martin Braithwaite from Leganes exposed muddled thinking that has affected the squad too.

"We don't have a deep squad because, unfortunately, that's how it was planned," said Sergio Busquets on Tuesday.

Barcelona and Real Madrid's combined 108 points taken at this stage is their second lowest since 2007, beaten only by last year's even lower total of 105.

Barca have been more reliant than ever on Lionel Messi to paper over the cracks in their defence while Madrid's defence has covered their lack of

firepower up front, where they remain without an elite scorer, despite the impressive early-season form of Karim Benzema.

- End of golden age? - Cristiano Ronaldo's shadow still lingers, in part because Messi's brilliance deserves a rival, in the league, but particularly the Clasico, where Ronaldo's presence is undeniably missed.

He is not the only one. Neymar was sold while Xavi Hernandez and Andres Iniesta retired. Gareth Bale's star has dimmed so much that his place in Zinedine Zidane's squad is no longer secure, let alone his starting line-up.

There are some mitigating circumstances like injuries to Eden Hazard, who has the potential to light up any game, and Luis Su-

arez, who has seven goals in his last seven outings in this fixture.

Yet the sense is of a golden era disappearing or gone, which is having implications for the national team too.

Eleven Spaniards started the last Clasico before Spain won the 2010 World Cup while in the goalless draw at Camp Nou in December there were six, including Gerard Pique, who has retired from international football.

There is a financial element that stretches back further. Where once Barcelona and Real Madrid could strong-arm the transfer market, both have been increasingly squeezed by Financial Fair Play and out-muscled by richer upstarts like Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain.

Last summer, Eden Hazard was the first player Madrid had signed for more than 60 million euros since James Rodriguez in 2014. Barcelona's chief executive Oscar Grau said they needed to reduce their wage bill this season by 18 million euros.

Mediocrity is not likely to last long, particularly if Kylian Mbappe and Neymar can be lured next summer.

With Messi now fit and firing, Barca might even exceed expectations in the Champions League and Madrid could yet pull off an escape against City.

But Sunday's game is a duel of two teams no longer at full pelt, stumbling through transition, pitted and hoping past glories will soon return.

AFP

SPORT

How coronavirus is affecting soccer in Italy

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TONIGHT @ 9:30

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Copa Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kuraso
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 SPORTS LIVE
22:30 Bongo Hits

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

Kili Marathon organizers announce roads closure



Athletes participate in a recent Kilimanjaro Marathon, which took place in Moshi.

Guardian Reporter

THE 2020 Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon organizers have announced roads that will be closed within Moshi tomorrow ahead of the big event to enable the safe operation of the race.

A statement issued by the Local Race Director, John Bayo, said Moshi residents have to plan their travel accordingly to avoid any inconveniences.

He said from Arusha, vehicles will be stopped between the Arusha roundabout and YMCA for short period to allow runners to cross the road.

He disclosed that there will be runners crossing on the road from Arusha roundabout at Boma Road and all runners should be off these roads by 9am.

"From Dar/Marangu/Himo, if passing from YMCA to Arusha roundabout from Machame-down Sokoine Road, the road will be closed at Shanty Town road at 0600 onto Lema Road and from Rau to Moshi," he said.

He pointed out that the road will be closed for the 5km Fun

Run from 0730-0800. He noted that mini buses / taxis can drop passengers at either designated parking areas or on the road sides.

He pointed out that there will be no access to Moshi Cooperative University (MoCu) from Sokoine Road from 0600, so those coming from that side will have to drop at the corner at Sokoine and Kilimanjaro Road.

"All runners should be at their starting points on time, the 42km race starting point is in the

MoCu venue at 6.45am, the 21km race starting point is outside the MoCu main gate at 7am and the 5km Fun Run starts at 7.30am near Keys Hotel main gate," he said.

He said the number collection exercise will continue today from 9am-6pm at the Keys Hotel and after that the exercise will be closed ready for the event on Sunday.

Official sponsors for this year's event include Kilimanjaro Premium Lager, TIGO, Grand Malt,

Kilimanjaro Water, TPC Limited, Simba Cement, Unilever, and Barclays Bank (now Absa Bank Tanzania Limited).

The Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon official suppliers are Kibo Palace Hotel, Keys Hotel, GardaWorld Security, Precision Air, and CMC Automobiles.

The race will be held at the Moshi Cooperatives University venue tomorrow and will play host to a IAAF route measured 42km race, 21km race and 5km Fun Run.

Women chess championship set for next month

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

IN an effort to encourage many women to compete in chess, Tanzania Chess Association (TCA) has organized a Women Open Chess Championship slated for next month in Dar es Salaam.

Geoffrey Mwanyika, TCA chairman, said the championship will be held at the Russia Cultural Center from March 8, March 14 and 15.

He said his association will use participating players' results and performance to form the national women team, made up of five players, which will represent the country at the coming 44th Chess Olympiad in Russia.

The women championship will be played separately from the National Championships, which involves male players, which is also slated for next month.

"We want more women to compete at the coming Women Open Chess Championship, this event will, on top of serving as a platform for selecting five ladies that will represent the country at the August Chess Olympiad in Russia, target to promote the sport among women," he disclosed.

"We, for that matter, urge women to come in big number for this championship," he said.

At the Russia Olympiad, Tanzania will be represented by 10 players (five men and as many women).

Meanwhile, TCA has named FIDE Arbiter (FA) Mustafa Ebrahim as chief arbiter and director of the coming National Championships which is slated for next month in the city.

Mwanyika said they have selected Ebrahim as the tournament director and chief arbiter due to his vast experience and knowledge of the game.

He said TCA expects Ebrahim to carry his duties professionally for the betterment of the sport in the country.

Mwanyika said there will be two rounds each day and they expect many people to register for the championships which will take place at the Russia Cultural Center.

He also disclosed that the championships is open to Tanzanians only as it will be used to select players set to represent the country at the 44th Chess Olympiad which will be held in Moscow in August.

"The National Chess Championships has been scheduled for March 7, 8, 14 and 15 at Russian Cultural Center, in Dar es Salaam, it will be a four-day event with a total eight rounds," he disclosed.

"So each day two rounds will be played. We are expecting players from such regions like Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, Morogoro and other parts of the country for the event."

"The competition will only involve Tanzania citizens and the top five players will be selected to make an open team for the 44th Chess Olympiad which will be held in Moscow in August this year."

He further urged domestic chess players to compete at the National Championships.

Candidate Master (CM) Yusuf Mdoe is the current winner of the National Championships.

By Guardian Reporter

DAR ES SALAAM cricket giants, Aga Khan SC, have lifted this year's Regional 50 overs tournament trophy, edging Caravans Club in the Super Over of an entertaining final which was held in the city recently.

The Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC)-organized competition brought together teams based in the city as part of the association's bid to step up promotion of the sport domestically.

The game had ended in a tie, with either side having recorded 253 runs in their respective 50 overs, and it thus had to be settled by Super Over.

The Super Over had Aga Khan SC cruising to victory and laying their hands on the silverware.

Caravans Club had won the toss and elected to bat in the clash, which took place at the University of Dar es Salaam venue. They scored 253 runs and lost eight wickets in 50 overs.

They experienced a wobble in the early stages of the innings, given the top three batsmen were sent back to the pavilion in the first 10 overs.

Opener Ivan Ismail somehow withstood Aga Khan SC's pressure for a couple of overs, notching 28 runs that consisted of three fours and two sixes.

Gokul Das and Kassim Nassoro thereafter had a good 100-run partnership, which helped to stabilize the Caravans innings.

Nassoro notched a quick-fire 72 that included six fours and Das nailed 38 runs that included two fours.

Das was dismissed in the 30th over and Nassoro followed his fellow batsman to the pavilion in the 36th over, having been caught by the opponents' fielder, Arshaan, from John delivery.

A good knock of 39 off 51 balls was followed by experienced all rounder, Hamisi Abdallah, as he played down Caravans'



Aga Khan SC players pictured with a trophy after the final of the Regional 50 Overs tournament against Caravans Club held in Dar es Salaam recently. Aga Khan SC cruised to victory over Caravans Club in the Super Over. PHOTO: COURTESY OF AGA KHAN SC

Aga Khan SC lifts regional cricket tourney silverware

innings with the tail to sum a total of 253 runs in 50 overs for the outfit.

Sreejith Kumar and Manoj Kumar chipped in with 18 runs, which included two fours and a six, and 12 runs respectively for the outfit.

Aga Khan SC bowlers maintained a good economy and gave away extremely few extras.

Yash Des had an impressive bowling spell for Aga Khan SC, ending with two wickets and

leaking 27 runs in seven overs.

Much as Aga Khan SC had experienced an early blow in their innings after the dismissal of opener Arslaan Premji, with the batsman managing nine runs to his name, the squad was in better position in the chase.

They had so far lost only one wicket in the first 15 overs of the game with a score of 64 runs.

A good partnership of 95 runs between Arshaan

Jessani and Riziki Kiseto was a major plus in the chase with the former ultimately going back to the pavilion with 43 runs off 90 balls.

Kiseto was eventually the player of the match, scoring 86 runs off 68 balls which was instrumental in his side's victory.

The experienced all rounder, who is as well a dependable member of senior national team, nailed eight fours and two sixes in his batting spell for

his club.

Efforts by Caravans to frustrate Aga Khan's chase were in view later as the former's bowlers dismissed the latter's Harsheed Chouhan, Aahil Jessani and skipper Ayzaz Jessani with none of the three batsman managing to get to double digit figures and build meaningful partnership.

Aga Khan were then in control of the innings, as John Zablon scored 19 runs off 18 balls, which included three fours, to set up a

thrilling finale.

However, requiring just nine runs to win in 15 balls and three wickets in hand, Caravans came back to life as they took two wickets in two balls to set up a thriller of a finish.

With Caravans needing just one wicket to win, Aga Khan batsmen, Yash Desai and Malik Alani, put solid knocks to steer their team to the victory.

Caravans' Jitin Singh and Kumar had two wickets apiece in the 10-over spells.