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Azory Gwanda top in list of threats to press



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World leaders tasked to prioritise youth



Eid el Fitr messages unanimous about peace, harmony and unity

It is important to ensure unity and peace as we prepare for elections... We must avoid engaging in corruption. Instead, we must work hard to improve our welfare and boost the country's economy

By Guardian Reporter

MESSAGES of unity, love and peace dominated this year's Eid el-Fitr celebrations, which mark the end of the fasting Muslim month of Ramadhan.

At the national level, this year's Eid Council (Baraza) was held in the north-eastern coastal city of Tanga, attended by various leaders including Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa.

Others were the Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union Affairs and Environment) January Makamba, Water Deputy Minister Juma Awesso, and Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) Director General Diwani Athumani, among others.

Addressing the Baraza, the premier called upon Muslims to uphold the good deeds recorded during the Holy Month of Ramadhan in order to safeguard and enhance peace and harmony.

He urged religious leaders to support the government in various campaigns meant to promote co-existence.

"The major challenge remains the maintenance of the country's peace. During Ramadhan we learnt

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Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa addresses Eid el Fitr Council, which met at national level in Tanga yesterday. Photo: PMO



Alert as Ebola persists in neighbouring DRC

By Guardian Reporter & Agencies

CASES of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have risen steadily in the last 10 months, reaching 2,000 by early this week.

The Ministry of Health in the central African nation announced yesterday that two thirds of the cases have been fatal, meaning more than 1,300 people have since died of the disease in the DRC in the latest outbreak.

This comes amid warnings by the UN agencies of a possible spread in neighbouring countries.

The outbreak in the east of DRC is the second biggest ever, with a spike in new cases noted in recent weeks. But health workers' attempts to contain the outbreak have been hindered by mistrust and violence.

Currently it is contained within two provinces, but it is becoming harder to monitor the spread of the virus due to endemic violence in the country's eastern region.

Between January and May, there were more than 40 attacks on health facilities.

The World Health Organisation has said the risk of a global spread is low, but it was very likely cases would spread into neighbouring countries.

Last month, the United Nations warned that the risk of Ebola spreading from the DRC to neighbouring countries was very high.

"Amidst a surge in new cases, the epidemic has claimed more than 1,200 lives and threatens to spread to other provinces in the east, as well as neighbouring countries. A third of those infected have been children, a

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Shein urges tolerance, peace in Eid message

By Guardian Reporter

Zanzibar President Dr Ali Mohammed Shein has called on residents of the islands to abide by the law and tolerate people of other faiths and cultures so as to speed up development.

In his speech at the Eid Baraza held at the Idriss Abdulwakil Hall in Kikwajuni in Zanzibar city yesterday, Dr Shein said Zanzibaris have a major role to play in the Isles' development, including demonstrating to foreigners living there and visitors that they are a law-abiding and



Tolerance is the reason we have not experienced civil tensions in our country. We must uphold it and be thankful for this virtue

peaceful people.

And since humans have a tendency to adapt to a new environment, even foreigners visiting or living in the Isles are likely to take the same manners, being peaceful, law-abiding and tolerant, Dr Shein asserted.

He said citizens of countries that follow principles of good governance like Tanzania must have the courage to accept others of different religions and cultures.

Dr Shein said Zanzibaris in particular and

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Hadza culture protection project earns UNDP prize

By Guardian Reporter

A CONSERVATION project that protects a 10,000-year-old culture of the hunter-gatherer Hadzabe community is among winners of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Equator Prize 2019.

Yaeda Valley Project is among programmes that stood out for recognizing 22 local and indigenous communities from across the world. The winning organizations, which showcased innovative, nature-based solutions for tackling climate change, environment and

poverty challenges, will be honoured at a celebratory gala on 24 September in New York, the UNDP said in a statement.

"In the Yaeda Valley of Tanzania, the Hadzabe, a 10,000-year-old hunter-gatherer tribe has safeguarded over 20,000 hectares of territory through a historic land tenure campaign coupled with an innovative carbon offset scheme, community monitoring, and inclusive governance," reads the statement about the project.

In the East African region, another project that won is Kenya's Solar Freeze. In rural Kenya, this initiative is pioneering

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Eid el Fitr messages unanimous about peace, harmony and unity

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many good things and how to distance ourselves from bad things which is the call of Islam. Therefore, maintaining them will enable us to uphold the country's peace and security," he said.

Religious leaders can play a bigger role in promoting the government's campaigns such as the war on HIV/Aids, cholera, dengue and corruption, he said.

Majaliwa said there are various campaigns that are being carried by the government and that if they are drummed up by religious leaders, greater success would be assured.

He also revealed that he was the men's ambassador on HIV/Aids testing urging Tanzanians not to rely on their wives for check-ups.

"We are implementing a 90, 90, 90 campaign on HIV which is aimed at ensuring that by the year 2020 90-percent of men know their status while 90-percent of those found positive have access to retroviral drugs and 90-percent of the remaining one are protected."

He urged the religious leaders to take time to sensitize their followers on the importance of promoting peace as well as need to promote hygiene and cleanliness in their localities.

Majaliwa asked Muslims to keep doing good things and to remember to lend a helping hand to the needy, while appealing to Muslims in various communities to continue living in harmony with people of other religious persuasions.

Earlier at the Anwar Mosque in Dar city suburb of Msasani, the premier urged parents and guardians to raise their children in accordance with religious guidelines for them to be good citizens in future. Muslims must remember to assist vulnerable people like orphans and widows.

"As we celebrate to end the fast, we must cement our relationship with Tanzanians from other religions. You should continue with all the good things you did during Ramadhan as it has been regularly insisted by clerics.

Unity and tolerance should always be our core values," the premier emphasized.

Mufti Abubakar Zuberi bin Ali, who led thousands of Muslims at prayers held at the Main Friday Mosque in Tanga, called upon women to dress decently as required in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

Secretary of Nunge Mosque in Dodoma, Abdul Kondo also underscored the need for Tanzanians to strengthen unity and ensure peace as the country prepares for general elections in October next year. He insisted that it is through unity that the country will have free and fair elections.

Speaking at the Jamhuri grounds here, Kondo said that during Ramadhan Muslims were taught how to live peacefully and embrace brotherhood.

"It is important to ensure unity and peace as we prepare for elections...We must avoid engaging in corruption. Instead, we must work hard to improve our welfare and boost the country's economy," he stressed.

At the Al Masjid Farouk Mosque in Swaswa-mnarani in Dodoma, Sheikh Ibrahim Issa advised Tanzanians to support government efforts in preserving the country's peace. He insisted that peace was useful for the country to prosper as without it people can hardly engage in social and economic activities.

"We must be proud of our peace since there are countries where people cannot gather to worship as the countries experience wars all through," he said, warning Muslims to live in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

Sheikh Yassin Said urged Muslims to peacefully celebrate the Eid el Fitr festival and continue praying as they did during the month of fasting.

Tamimu Saidi from Ijumaa Mosque in Muheza District, Tanga region insisted that Muslims embrace peace and unity during and after the celebrations. They must shun away from immoral acts, he added.



Muslim faithful take part in Eid el Fitr prayers at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Shein urges tolerance, peace in Eid message

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Tanzanians in general are reputed all over the world for being peaceful and tolerant—the key assets that must be held dearly and protected.

"Tolerance is the reason we have not experienced civil tensions in our

country. We must uphold it and be thankful for this virtue," Dr Shein said, promising to protect peace and security by all available means.

Zanzibar can only realize her various development aspirations such as the Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and

Reduction of Poverty (Mkuza III), the Zanzibar Vision 2020 and other local and global targets if there is peace and tolerance, the president noted.

The isles' economy was on the right trajectory with growth of 7.1 per cent in 2017/2018 from 7.0 per cent in the

preceding year while inflation fell from 5.6 per cent in 2017 to 3.9 per cent in 2018, he told the gathering.

The event was also attended by Zanzibar Second Vice President Seif Ali Idd and consular officials stationed in the Isles, among other dignitaries.



With the government having imposed a near total ban on plastic 'shopping bags' with effect from the beginning of this month, vendors across Tanzania have had roaring business selling all manner of non-plastic-based alternatives - as found along Congo Street in Dar es Salaam's sprawling Kariakoo market zone yesterday. However, many customers have been complaining over what they see as unnecessarily high prices for the items. Photo: John Badi

Hadza culture protection project earns UNDP prize

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the production of portable solar cold rooms that reduce post-harvest losses by 90 percent, increase household incomes and reduce greenhouse gases from grain loss, it said.

The Environmental Management and Development Trust which supports a network of women promoting cocoa agro-forestry and the production of the so-called miracle fruit as a plastic alternative for local markets in south-

western Nigeria also won.

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner stated that every day, thousands of local communities and indigenous peoples around the world are quietly implementing innovative nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. "The Equator Prize is both recognition of their exceptional ideas and a way to showcase the power of people and grassroots communities to bring about real change," he said.

The winners were selected from a

pool of 847 nominations across 127 countries by an independent Technical Advisory Committee of internationally renowned experts. The four-stage selection process emphasized community-based approaches that provide a blueprint for replication and scaling solutions to address our climate crisis.

Equator Prize winners will each receive USD10,000 and the opportunity for two community representatives to join a week-long

summit in New York during the 74th United Nations General Assembly. They will be celebrated at the Equator Prize Award Ceremony on 24th September at the Town Hall theatre in Midtown Manhattan, featuring celebrities, government and UN officials, civil society and the media.

The winners will join a network of 223 communities from 78 countries that have received the Equator Prize since its inception in 2002, the statement added.

Alert as Ebola persists in neighbouring DRC

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higher proportion than during previous outbreaks," the UN underlined.

UN figures show that up to the middle of May the number of cases stood at 1,847 (1,759 confirmed and 88 probable). In total, there have been 1,223 deaths (1,135 confirmed and 88 probable) and 487 people have

survived the deadly virus.

Most Ebola outbreaks are contained quickly and affect small clusters of population. Only once before has an outbreak been still growing more than eight months after it began - that was the epidemic in West Africa between 2013 and 2016, which killed 11,310 people.

Africa faces tough challenges in HIV/AIDS pandemic - envoy

UNITED NATIONS

AFRICA still faces many challenges in HIV prevention and treatment, the Kenyan Ambassador to the United Nations, Lazarus Amayo, said on Monday for the Africa Caucus of the UN General Assembly.

Knowledge about HIV prevention among young people has remained stagnant over the past 20 years, he said, noting that high rates of HIV infection continue among adolescent girls and young women, many of whom become mothers.

Speaking at a UN General Assembly meeting on HIV and AIDS on Monday he said that in West and Central Africa, insufficient domestic funding, weak health systems, formal and informal user fees for health care impede prompt reaction to diagnose and treat new cases of infection.

Humanitarian crises along with high levels of stigma and discrimination have undermined efforts to scale up HIV testing and treatment. Among people living with HIV in the region in 2017, less than half knew their HIV status, 40 percent were accessing antiretroviral therapy and less than one-third had suppressed viral loads, compared with the UN targets of 90 percent for diagnosis, treatment and viral suppression by 2020, the envoy noted.

In all regions, combinations of primary HIV prevention services

tailored to meet the needs of people at highest risk of infection are rarely provided on an adequate scale and with sufficient intensity. Treatment coverage in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa apart from and West and Central Africa are alarmingly low, he stated.

He appealed to UN member states to work on eliminate stigma and discrimination on HIV and AIDS, including the need to lift HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence in international visa issuance regulations.

Migration can place people in situations that increase their risk of acquiring HIV. This vulnerability can be exacerbated in countries with travel restrictions on people living with HIV as such restrictions discourage migrants from accessing HIV testing and treatment care services. Refugees and migrants may also be subjected to mandatory HIV testing and restrictions on freedom of movement or other rights violations for those testing positive, the diplomat intoned.

People living with HIV who are forced to flee their homes are also in extreme danger of treatment disruption and hence risk AIDS-related morbidity and mortality. Food insecurity during emergencies can also affect treatment adherence and result in HIV-related risk behavior such as prostitution, he further noted.



Natural Resources and Tourism minister Dr Hamisi Kigwangalla speaks at the launch of the board of directors of the Tanzania Tourist Board in Dodoma earlier this week. To his left is the board's chairman, Judge (retired) Thomas Mihayo. Photo courtesy of Natural Resources ministry

TTB must invest in modern communications - minister

By Guardian Reporter

MINISTER for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Hamisi Kigwangalla has called on the Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) to invest more on modern communications strategies in promoting the country's tourists destinations.

Minister Kigwangalla made the remarks in Dodoma during the official launching of the board which has been added three more years by President John Magufuli.

Dr Kigwangalla asked the board to continue map out new strategies that will bring positive changes

in the promotion of Destination Tanzania.

"TTB should work to find new sources of tourist visitations by using new technologies of promoting the destination which are cheaper and affordable," he said.

The minister hailed the board for a job well done, saying one remarkable achievement is branding Tanzania in the international market by the slogan "Tanzania Unforgettable."

He called upon the board to strategize on sourcing new tourism markets including the United States, Russia, Spain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Gulf Zone as

a whole.

For his remarks, Judge (rt) Thomas Mihayo said the board will continue to carry out its duties professionally at the same time establishing new tourism markets.

There was a misunderstanding in January this year when Minister Kigwangalla announced the decision to dissolve the board a move that was objected by its Chairman judge (rt) Mihayo.

Kigwangalla announced the dissolution of the Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) board of directors, on grounds that it has failed to market Tanzania's tourist attractions

globally.

Judge Mihayo said in his argument that the announcement by the minister was null and void since by law, only the President has powers to dissolve the tourism marketing board.

Judge Mihayo said as per the Tanzania Tourist Board Act no 25 of 1962, the minister can only remove individual members from the board but he cannot send the entire board packing.

Some months later, President Magufuli added three years to the board to continue performing its duties.

Canada to extend support for health of women, girls

By Correspondent Kenneth Simbaya, Vancouver

CANADA is set to raise \$1.4 billion annually to support women and girls' health in developing countries and the world at large.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau revealed this yesterday when speaking here at the ongoing Women Deliver 2019 Conference.

"Advocates like those at Women Deliver are leaders in the fight for gender equality and women's rights - and as a government, we have to stand with you as a partner and an ally. Today, our government is committing \$1.4 billion annually to support women and girls' health around the world.

"All women, no matter where they live, should have access to the safe, quality health care they need. By investing in sexual and reproductive health rights, and maternal, newborn, and child health, we can build a more just, equal, and prosperous world," said Trudeau.

"Advancing gender equality is key to strengthening the middle class, growing the economy, and building a better world, he said, adding: "Canada is a champion for gender equality at home and abroad. Investing in women and girls' health, and protecting their sexual and reproductive health rights, is a critical part of that."

According to Trudeau, this historic ten years investment beginning 2023, will support sexual and reproductive health rights and maternal, newborn, and child health with \$700 million of the annual investment dedicated to sexual and reproductive health rights.

He said this investment will advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), promote sexual and reproductive health rights, and build on Canada's leadership on global gender equality.

The funding, according to the Prime Minister, will help make sure women and

girls around the world have access to the quality health services they need, including safe and legal abortion, and support women's right to make their own decisions about their bodies.

"From providing comprehensive sexual education, to supporting maternal and neonatal care, the investment will advance the rights and health of women and girls around the world," Trudeau said. "This is an historic investment in girls and women, which will pay dividends for years to come. Not only will this investment save and better lives, but it will create a ripple effect that will lift up individuals, communities, countries, and whole economies. I applaud Prime Minister Trudeau and Canada for this bold step and the commitment to a more gender equal world," said Katja Iversen, President and CEO of Women Deliver.

During the conference, the Prime Minister met with the President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, and the President of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde. He also met with local feminist advocates and organisations.

Women Deliver is the world's largest gathering on the health, rights, and well-being of women and girls. As this year's host, Canada is continuing to take action on gender equality, and bringing together advocates from around the world. At the conference, the Prime Minister took part in the opening plenary and a panel discussion. The Prime Minister honoured the work and leadership of gender equality activists and advocates. He stressed the importance of governments stepping up to support feminist advocates on the frontlines, both in Canada and around the world.

Held every three years, Women Deliver. This year's theme is "Power, Progress, Change. This year's conference brought together more than 8,000 world leaders, advocates, academics, and journalists from more than 160 countries. An additional 100,000 people participated virtually.

By Guardian Reporter

MISSING Tanzanian journalist Azory Gwanda has topped the latest list of threats to press freedom released yesterday by One Free Press Coalition - an organisation with global media houses as members.

Gwanda who was a freelancer for Mwananchi Communications Limited - publishers of Mwananchi and The Citizen newspapers from Kibiti, Coast Region, went missing since November 2017 and his whereabouts is yet to be established.

"Nick Turner of Bloomberg News reported on June 3, 2019 that the monthly '10 Most Urgent' list also includes the ongoing case of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed in October at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul. The murder hasn't received an independent United Nations criminal investigation," the group said.

According to the coalition, Bloomberg News was one of more than a dozen news outlets, including BuzzFeed and the Washington Post that

Azory Gwanda tops list of threats to press worldwide

joined the One Free Press Coalition last month. The Associated Press, Reuters and the Financial Times were already part of the coalition, which aims to raise awareness about threats to press freedom worldwide.

The coalition noted that Media stakeholders in the country led by the Coalition on the Right to Information (CoRI) chaired by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) have launched a petition seeking signatures to press the government to take initiatives to search for Gwanda and report their findings to the public.

The coalition's full list is as follows: Azory Gwanda; Jamal Khashoggi, murdered at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul; Aasif Sultan, a reporter for Kashmir Narrator arrested on 'anti-state' charges in August 2018; Claudia Duque, a journalist in Colombia subjected to decades of persecution

and Miguel Mora and Lucia Pineda of Nicaragua's 100 per cent Noticias have been held for more than five months on charges of 'inciting hate and violence'.

Others are Truong Duy Nhat, a Radio Free Asia blogger who went missing in January in Bangkok; Sevinc Osmanqizi, harassed by the pro-government Azerbaijani news channel Real TV; Abderrahmane Weddady and Cheikh Ould Jiddou, in jail since March in Mauritania on accusations of spreading fake news; Seyoum Tsehaye, arrested after the Eritrean government banned privately owned press in 2001 and Mina Karamitrou, a police reporter for CNN's Greek edition targeted by a car bomb in May.

The coalition says that to accomplish its mission, it uses the collective audiences of member organisations to stand up for journalists under attack for pursuing the truth worldwide.



Help comes the way of the driver behind the steering wheel of this government vehicle after it got stuck in mud in Kyela District, Mbeya Region, earlier this week following heavy rain. Photo: Correspondent Nerbart Msokwa

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

Dar, Dodoma, Kigoma, Muheza, Zanzibar mark Eid el-Fitr



Zanzibar President Dr Ali Mohammed Shein and Second Vice President Seif Ali Iddi exchange greetings shortly after Eid el-Fitr prayers in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa joins other Muslim faithful in Eid el-Fitr prayers at Dar es Salaam's Anwar Mosque yesterday. Photo: PMO



Zanzibar President Dr Shein acknowledges Tanzania Police Field Force Unit guard of honour salute at Eid el-Fitr Council event in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House



Sheikh Mohamed Thabit (R) blesses Ismail Dawood shortly after Eid el-Fitr prayers in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Muslim faithful take part in Eid el-Fitr prayers in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Residents of Muheza Town in Tanga Region sort out second-hand cassocks after Eid el-Fitr prayers yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



Muheza Town resident 'Mama' Habiba (R) prepares food for Eid el-Fitr sale yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



Kigoma regional Sheikh Hasani Kiburwa speaks during Eid el-Fitr prayers in Kigoma/Ujiji municipality yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jactan Ngelyi



Road cleaners deployed by the Dar es Salaam City Council take a short break while on the duty on a street in Jangwani Valley area yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Arusha police hold primary school teacher over AK-47 possession, poaching claims

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

POLICE in Arusha have arrested a primary school teacher after he was allegedly found in possession of an AK-47 rifle loaded with five bullets wrapped up in a magazine.

Solomon Letato Kipuker (30), of Naan Primary school at Engerosambu Ward in Loliondo was apprehended by police on June 2 following a joint operation with the northern zone anti-crime unit.

Addressing journalists the Regional Police Commander for Arusha Jonathan Shanna said the suspect is among the notorious poachers and arm traffickers in the country.

"During preliminary interrogation, he agreed to own the rifle in collaboration with others, the suspect has also been lending it to other criminals leading to kidnapping of tourists and robbery incidents," he said.

At the same time the police have managed to seize an AK47 with one bullet abandoned at Mbukeni village offices in Loliondo following a tip by the police on the availability of the arm.

Police has also arrested various suspected poachers with various govern-

ment trophies at Maji ya Chai suburb in Arumeru District in the region.

According to the RPC, the suspects have been interrogated and admitted to involving themselves in poaching activities.

He added that all the suspects will be taken to Court when investigations are complete and urged Wananchi to inform the police whenever they get information on the presence of crime suspects.

There has been an increase in the cases as police in collaboration with wildlife rangers in Iringa said on Sunday that they have arrested two suspects, Geoffrey Kiswaga (35) and Nelson Kuduru (31) residents of Kidamili village with three elephant teeth weighing 8 kilogrammes.

"During preliminary interrogation, he agreed to own the rifle in collaboration with others, the suspect has also been lending it to other criminals leading to kidnapping of tourists and robbery incidents"

By Guardian Correspondent, Bunda

Investor builds waste-to-charcoal brick factory

A new factory to produce alternative charcoal baguettes has been built in Bunda district, Mara region as part of efforts to conserve the environment and reduce tree cutting.

Eliphas Mollel, the factory investor says the Bunda Store facility will use various types of wastes to manufacture charcoal alternatives for domestic use.

Mollel said Bunda is among the districts with high levels of

environmental destruction including rampant tree felling. The factory will produce alternative charcoal baguettes meant to alleviate the problem.

The factory manager, Mabeo Ngoelo said envisaged wastes for charcoal making includes rice husks, weeds and maize stalks. Construction of the factory started two months ago and has so far claimed 66m/-. he stated.

"Productions is expected to start in December. Our products will be sold at affordable prices since we aim at protecting the environment. We also want to change the mindset of villagers from using usual charcoal stoves and adopt fuel-efficient stoves to cut charcoal use and reduces indoor air pollution," said Ngoelo, noting that the factor will employ 30 youths.

Laying the foundation stone for construction of the factory early this year, Uhuru Torch race leader Mkongea Ali commended the local investors for their environmental conservation initiatives. He said their efforts are in-line with the government's industrialization drive.

Launching the World Bank country environmental analysis last month,

Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan emphasized on the need for the public to wisely manage natural resources. The country's economy depends heavily on natural resources and more than half of the population lives in rural areas depending on natural resources for food and fuel, she pointed out.

The report in which the government collaborated with the World Bank

indicated that resources such as forests, freshwater, fisheries, land and wildlife were under threat.

Agriculture, forestry and fisheries represent around 30 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, it was noted.

Rapid population growth, higher rates of economic growth, increasing urbanization and climate change are factors posing risks towards the conservation of habitats and natural resources, it added

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World leaders tasked to prioritise youth in their decision making

By Correspondent Kenneth Simbaya, Vancouver

WORLD leaders have been challenged to walk their talk, and ensure that young people are part of decision making process on issues that affecting them, as opposed to just making them beneficiaries.

Women Deliver young leader, Natasha Chibesa Wang made the call here on Monday at the ongoing Women Deliver 2019 Conference—the world's largest conference on gender equality and the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women.

The conference involved over 8,000 world leaders, influencers, advocates, academics and activists and 1,400 youth delegates from 165 countries.

Participants gathered here to discuss on how to improve gender equality in the world under theme "Power, Progress, Change".

Natasha said that nothing should be done for young people without them, as that amounts to be against them (young people). "Key messages that I have for every leaders who is here today, is that do not do anything for us, without us, because we need young people in key positions of power, because there is no way you can be making decisions about young people's health, about young people's education and them what you do is just let them be beneficiaries," Natasha said.

According to Natasha, it is high time that decision makers started prioritizing issues that affect young people, including women empowerment.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said that development in any real sense will only come, if women and girls are accorded equal rights with men and boys, and are given the opportunity to exercise their rights to bring change for themselves, their families and their communities.

He said it would be self-defeating, if countries left half of their population behind, when it comes to advancing their country's development, insisting on women and girls' empowerment by among other things removes obstacles

to women and girls empowerment.

For his part, Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, said his country has strongly mobilised community to advance the conversation on gender equality. "We are investing politically and financially in the lives of girls and women and unite diverse voices to spark commitment to gender equality. We know many grassroots leaders and advocates have dedicated their lives to defending and advancing women's rights and cannot take our foot off the pedal, not even for a moment Canada's leadership on gender equality is not going anywhere, and that we are not just speaking up, but stepping up too," Trudeau said.

Katja Iversen, Women Deliver Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and President, hailed the progress that has been made by governments and women's rights organizations in various countries, however she cautioned that there is a push back on women's rights struggle across the world.

"We are not going relent," she told the participants challenging delegates to push the pushback herder to avoid progress made so far backsliding.

Dr Lilian Mwakoyi, AVAC fellow 2018, also said that women and girls need men's support, as well as capacity building to be on equal footing with men and boys.

She said in most cases it is men who deny women their rights.

Dr Mwakoyi said that gender parity in decision making bodies is the most important thing, when women are excluded from decision making bodies they are denied their rights to make decisions on issues that affect them. AVAC is an international NGO doing global advocacy on biomedical HIV prevention and cure research.

Dr Jesca Temu, from the Arusha-based NGO called 'Her Legitimate Future' said here that gender inequality exists in both developed and developing countries, but the situation is worse in developing countries.

"It is a matter of simple logic, women number roughly half of Tanzania population, so they should also number half of say Members of Parliament, yet as we all know the state of the affair is very different," she said.



Simon Shayo (2nd-R), Geita Gold Mine's vice president overseeing sustainability, presents a dummy cheque for 150m/- to Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children deputy minister Dr Faustine Ndugulile (3rd-R) and Tanzanian Commission for Aids (TACAIDS) executive director Dr Leonard Maboko (3rd-L) as contribution to the fight against HIV/Aids in the country. It was at the recent launch of this year's edition of Kilimanjaro Challenge. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

SOS Children's Village donates furniture to police gender desks

By Correspondent Friday Simbaya, Iringa

SOS Children's Village in Iringa has donated furniture to police gender desks in the region to facilitate justice to victims of gender-based violence and child abuse.

The furniture worth 2.7m/- which were handed over to law enforcers here yesterday are three cabinets, 15 chairs and three tables. They will be used in three wards namely Nyang'oro, Malengamali and Ulanda.

Police applauded the NGO's Iringa branch for the donation and their efforts in the fight against gender-based violence and child abuse.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Iringa Regional Police Commander ACP Juma Makanya said SOS is a role model in the fight against child abuse region.

"We promise to keep this furniture properly so that they can be used for the intended purposes and that they can be sustainable," added Makanya.

He said that for the first three months from January to now this year, the police have achieved numerous successes including defilement and rape cases.

ACP Makanya added that they have won court cases relating to gender-based violence, and child abuse where the accused were sentenced according to the law.

He said that in the past three months they have won cases of rape and child abuse by convicting accused to life imprisonment. "We have acknowledged that defilement, rapes and other child abuses have begun to decline in the community due to various stakeholders like SOSCV who are helping to provide education with violence and rape in the community and in conjunction with the police force to help various facilities to strengthen police desks," he said.

He said that during the same period they had won six (06) cases in court including rape and child abuse in

various courts in Iringa.

However, ACP Makanya has also requested various organizations to borrow a leaf from SOS's organization to provide a range of support for the fight against the wave of gender-based violence and in addition to the existence of SOS has helped to reduce acts of violence from education they provide to the community.

For his part, SOS Acting Project Coordinator for Iringa District Francis Mwakitiga said that SOS is a non-governmental organization that works with vulnerable children who have lost parental care.

He said that SOS through the project improving education quality in the district, they have provided to the police force the cabinets, chairs and tables for enhancing gender desks and child protection at ward level.

Mwakitiga added that by providing such equipment to the police force it is an attempt to support the government in combating gender-based violence

and child protection.

He said that after identifying various challenges they decided to support the furniture for the police's ward level desk to help provide services closer to the community. "People can now report their child abuses and gender based violence to police ward gender desks and there is no need to travel from villages to town to reports such cases to police," he emphasized.

Mwakitiga explained that the project has three main objectives; improve learning environments, ensuring that vulnerable children get better education and also mobilize communities on children's rights, education and protection.

He said that this project is being implemented in Iringa district being in number primary schools of Nyang'oro, Malengamali and Ulanda wards.

Mwakitiga said SOS supports the government in the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children by 50% by 2022.



Mwanza mayor Kiwona Kibamba (in specs) receives cleaning equipment from Harriet Bujiku, manager of the city's Akiba Commercial Bank branch, in support of World Environmental Day activities carried out at the Central market yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Elizabeth Faustine

NEW YORK

Supporting local energy access projects across east Africa

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly said that it is time to end the fallacy that subsidizing fossil fuels is a way to improve people's lives, and has called for the private sector to support the climate agenda.

As an example of how business can support the UN's climate agenda, Portugal-based utility company EDP (Energias de Portugal) has partnered with the UN-backed Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) initiative to fund sustainable and clean energy projects

in east Africa, notably in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi.

UN News looks at how clean energy has the potential to play a significant role in kick-starting sustainable development in the world's emerging economies.

SEforALL delivery partner and multinational utility EDP is exemplifying the role the private sector can have in supporting Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) - affordable

and clean energy for all by 2030.

EDP's first edition of the Access to Energy Fund was launched in 2018, with 450,000 Euros earmarked for promoting access to energy in remote areas without access to the electricity grid.

Now, EDP has announced that this money will be allocated to six sustainable and clean energy projects across East Africa, notably in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi.

According to the 2018 Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report, 600 million people across Africa do not have any electricity, with millions more having only intermittent access to power. The consequences of these access gaps are far-reaching, limiting opportunities for quality education and health care.

"Access to energy has the potential to play a revolutionary role in emerging countries, being an essential tool for

a serious threat of poverty and starvation.

"The gullies are also a direct safety threat - there have been cases of people and cattle being washed away after falling into them during the rainy season.

"While previous work explored physical processes behind soil erosion, most of it has not engaged with the social and psychological side of the issue.

"At the same time, offering solutions without understanding social dynamics within pastoralist communities can be counterproductive.

"We are addressing this issue by exploring communities' views of the problem, identifying barriers and opportunities for sustainable change, and co-developing solutions.

"In doing this, we rely both on socio-psychological evidence we collected and on local knowledge."

Scientists from Exeter and Plymouth Universities and Schumacher College travelled to Tanzania to collect data in order to better understand the social dynamics behind pastoralists' land management choices.

They then delivered workshops to share the knowledge and co-develop solutions.

As a result, communities started a number of initiatives to prevent further

soil erosion, such as planting schemes and development of land management plans.

Researchers have been working with some villages for more than two years, and a growing number of villages are taking part.

"Our work is about supporting behaviour change, such as adoption of sustainable land management practice," said Dr Rabinovich.

"Many Maasai pastoralists recognise the need for change. They are already making changes, such as reducing cattle numbers, using rotational grazing systems and making by-laws to protect their land.

"Our role is to support and spread the positive change by harnessing community dynamics, social norms and cultural values.

"The approach we are using to encourage behaviour change can be used for other social dilemmas - situations where people need to find motivation to protect a shared resource.

"In this case communities are working to protect the land, but there are many other natural resources that require protection."

The project has been funded by the British Academy and the Global Challenges Research Fund impact accelerator programme.

innovative solutions that close energy access gaps.

EDP's Access to Energy Fund places the company's financial support behind a series of initiatives that will impact upwards of 55,000 people, of whom ten thousand will be impacted directly. Co-operative Bank Foundation, SAVICA Africa, UN-Habitat, Girl MOVE, Energía Sin Fronteras Foundation and Sustainable Investments and Development Initiatives were selected from a list of 108 entities who applied for the first edition of the fund.

Delegates seek to restore the fragile landscape of Kilimanjaro Mountain

By Guardian Reporter

MAASAI leaders and representatives of local authorities, wildlife, tourism and conservation organizations came together recently at the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya for deep discussions about the degraded landscape, the climate crisis, increasing droughts and their common future.

The 120 participants of the White Mountain Future Search Conference, designed and facilitated by the Dutch foundation Embassy of the Earth, jointly produced a strong shared vision and set strategies for the regeneration of the Maasai habitat around Mt. Kilimanjaro by 2029. The Maasai name for the majestic mountain is Oldonya Oibor, meaning White Mountain.

While the wind was blowing the dust through the tents set up for the meeting in the dry landscape, the participants set the stage and agenda for unprecedented collaboration for the next 10 years. In the light of the evening campfire, we learned from an elder and traditional Maasai leader from Tanzania how the Maasai can read the weather through stars and cloud patterns.

These activities resulted in a shared vision of the future including four interrelated themes: vibrant and cohesive Maasai cultural communities with a healthy economy, health care and education; balance and coexistence between the Maasai, their cattle and the wildlife; collective land ownership supported by transparent and responsible leadership and Maasai control over the White Mountain initiative; and the regeneration of vegetation in the landscape, such as grass and trees.

All of these themes have been elaborated in strategies in which there is an important role for local Maasai leaders to achieve unity and for elders

to transfer the traditional knowledge to young people. Other strategies include improving the quality of livestock, beekeeping, clean water and sanitation, growing traditional natural herbs, formal and informal education, the creation of rotational grazing zones to allow vegetation to recover, creating awareness about the importance of restoring vegetation, applying permaculture, planting trees, practice agroforestry and monitor the effects of better management on the recovery of the landscape.

Upon departure, the participants were full of energy: 'We put it on the ground and nothing can stop it', said one of the Elders. Coordinating Councils have been elected for the states of Narok and Kajiado, which have already met and begun to plan and coordinate the necessary actions at both village and landscape level.

The White Mountain vision statement and strategic directives include and build on already existing initiatives, such as the The Nashulai Maasai Conservancy, the Maasai Center for Regenerative Pastoralism, the Community Based Organization Tepesua, Friends of the Maasai, and the Nkoilaile Community Development Organisation, which works with the Olosinko concept developed in close cooperation with Dutch NGO Osotua. The White Mountain also seeks collaborations with other, related initiatives, such as from WWF, Commonland, Justdiggit, the East African Wild Life Society and others.

A small Maasai delegation from Tanzania is already working to plan a Future Search Conference on the Maasai habitat on their side of Mt. Kilimanjaro later this year. They see a historic opportunity to unite all Maasai behind this critical mission and epic journey to regenerate the White Mountain landscape.



Participants in group photo, with Mount Kilimanjaro (in the background) covered in clouds.

By Guardian Reporter

CAMBRIDGE solar power company Azuri Technologies has raised US\$26million (59.8bn/-) in a funding round to expand green energy technology across Africa.

Azuri, which has provided solar home systems to off-grid users in sub-Saharan Africa since 2012, has sold over 150,000 systems to people who have no access to electricity in the region.

The company already offers mobile technology to provide pay-as-you-go energy products in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, and plans to

Cambridge solar pioneer Azuri Technologies raise over 59 billion/- for expansion in Africa

expand to East and West Africa with the investment.

Japanese industrial conglomerate Marubeni led the funding round alongside existing shareholders such as the IP Group.

The Fortune 500 company has become Azuri Technologies' largest shareholder as part of the deal.

The Japanese giant has ramped up its investments in renewable energy companies in the US and Africa.

Earlier this year, Marubeni bought a minority stake in US AI-powered clean energy project GridMarket for an undisclosed amount, and last year bought a 21pc stake in Tanzanian power business WASSHA.

This latest deal marks a trend for big energy companies racing to invest in off-grid energy driven by digital technology, which is in high demand in Africa, and pressure from investors who want to divest from the fossil fuel

industry.

In total, around 600 million homes in Africa still do not have access to reliable electricity.

French energy giants EDF and Engie have invested in Africa's booming solar market with investments in home solar provider BBOX and Fenix International, respectively; while Royal Dutch Shell has investments in SolarNow, SteamaCo and Husk Power Systems.



Cattle are brought to the paddock for milking and watering in Isingiro District, Uganda

Programme meant to support livestock systems resilient to climate launched in Uganda

KAMPALA

UGANDA'S agricultural sector contributes significantly to both incomes and direct availability of food in the country. It is also a major contributor to economic growth through provision of raw materials for agro-industries, job opportunities and foreign exchange. Agriculture contributes to about 21% of Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Livestock production is an important subsector of agriculture and contributes about 20% of the agricultural GDP. Within the livestock subsector, the dairy industry is the most important currently contributing to the livelihoods of more than one million dairy farming households through generation of income, employment and food.

Like in most parts of the world, the agricultural sector in Uganda is vulnerable to changes in climate. To address this challenge, agricultural experts are developing interventions to make the sector in general, and livestock production specifically, more resilient to climate change and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector is the largest source of GHG emissions, a large proportion of which comes from livestock production. Recognizing this fact, Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) details mitigation actions to deal with GHG emissions. The country is the first in Africa to sign the NDC Partnership Plan as part of its commitment to the Paris Agreement.

The plan, which details the strategies that will be employed to advance the Paris Agreement, will direct resources towards both reducing GHG emissions and adapting farming to climate change. Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) has been lauded by experts in the development community as a major avenue of contributing to food security and environmental sustainability through three key pillars; increasing agricultural productivity, adapting agricultural systems to future climate change and mitigating GHG emissions.

A new program for climate-smart livestock systems (PCSL), which is led by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), will support interventions to increase the contribution of livestock production to the three key pillars of CSA across diverse systems and species in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.

The four-year (2018-2022) program is developing and supporting country-specific interventions to increase the contribution of livestock production to these three key pillars. Also, it will support countries to realize their development goals while also fulfilling their commitments to the Paris Agreement.

The PCSL program was launched in Uganda on 30 April 2019 in Kampala in an event that drew representatives from government, research, development, the United Nations and the private sector. Stakeholders at the launch shared insights that will inform the implementation of the project. For example, it emerged that there are already several initiatives in the country that are geared towards lowering GHG emissions, but the absence of a national GHG measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system is hindering progress.

As part of the project, ILRI will build capacity of stakeholders and develop MRV tools for climate mitigation and adaptation tracking to support countries' reporting on progress towards meeting their NDC targets. These tools will be developed in line with modalities, procedures and guidelines of the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.

Feedback from participants also indicated that the project needs to support specific climate-smart interventions including promoting climate-resilient livestock breeds and the use of cowsheds to control high temperatures (high temperatures can lead to heat stress, which reduces the productivity of dairy cattle). Farmer education and training were also cited as one of the critical areas where support is needed, to complement the government extension system.

World Bank, Kenya launch entrepreneurship project

NAIROBI

WORLD Bank has launched an initiative aimed at providing a platform for Kenyan youths to use their talents in developing innovative solutions to drive manufacturing.

Betty Maina, principal secretary for industrialization at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives said that Kenya Industry and Entrepreneurship Project (KIEP) will strengthen innovation ecosystem as part of implementation of the Kenya industrial transformation program.

"The project marks an important

milestone towards the ongoing digitizing and transformation initiatives for Kenya's global competitiveness that is expected to create additional jobs for the youths," Maina said.

Maina revealed that the five billion shillings (about 50 million U.S. dollar) project that is co-funded by the World Bank will also create industry platform to link startups, traditional industries and international networks in select private sector firms for the next six years.

She added that the project will also aid small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in improving their managerial

and technical capabilities in order to better compete at both local and international markets.

The official said that KIEP will help enhance intra-Africa trade through increased productivity and competitiveness of Kenyan firms.

"The development of private sector is the key to growth, job creation and youth empowerment in the developing countries," Felipe Jaramillo, World Bank country director for Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda said.

Jaramillo said that SMEs are a pillar for the development of national economies and requires necessary

support.

He urged the government to adopt digital economy as a blueprint for supporting ecosystem to elevate the project to the next level. "With proper application of innovation, productivity and digital solutions, Kenya can be the leader in Africa in trade related matters," Jaramillo noted.

KIEP is based on the Kenya Vision 2030 that seeks to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized, high middle-income nation. The project will benefit 33,050 individuals and 2,393 firms, including students, SMEs, and local startups.

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Whichever way the wind blows, efficient service provision is key

IN one of our editorial comments just over six years ago, we put ourselves in the shoes of those who had known Dar es Salaam Port well enough in its heyday, proposing that many would have been wondering aloud as to who or what had killed one of the nation's cash cows.

We argued that, at a certain point in time, the port was indeed one of Tanzania's most important income-generation 'projects'. As we put it then, it was one of the few key revenue earners that the country could count on, what with the concerted efforts made to ensure that its operations ran to satisfaction.

Alongside handling the country's exports and imports, the port was easily the most accessible - if not the only - gateway for landlocked Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Zambia and later Uganda and Malawi.

While things ran smoothly, though, a number of challenges were seen stalking and threatening to suffocate the facility. There were reports of the situation degenerating all the more in the late 1980s.

In part, this manifested itself in stubborn congestions as well as cases of endemic pilferage and a decline in efficiency that made some loyal clients keep away in preference for other options. Many did so reluctantly, of course, in that relocating meant abandoning familiar ground and starting afresh in uncharted territory.

Seeing one of its key revenue sources going under before its own eyes, Tanzania went scrambling for solutions, one of which was to lease out the port's container service to a private operator. But even after this measure a lot more had to be done.

In one of its economic updates, the World Bank reported that inefficiency at the Dar es Salaam Port was costing the country the equivalent to an estimated 2.9 trillion/- a year.

"The port of Dar es Salaam is characterised by a long dwell time, taking ten days on average to unload merchandise, clearing and transporting it from the port," it noted.

"The excessive dwell time is mainly

due to slow processes, including customs clearance processing and excessive storage periods," it added.

It was decisive at that juncture to support efforts by the government, the Transport ministry in particular, meant to end the problems facing the port. Fortunately, measures designed and implemented by the ministry towards that end showed positive results right from the initial stage.

It was crucial for the health of our social and economic development to maintain and even step up the momentum of reforming the all-important port, at least if we were to fully exploit its potential.

The Tanzania Ports Authority was meanwhile understood to be working on the modernisation of seven berths at the facility, the plan including the strengthening and deepening of berths, installation of conveyor belts for bulk cargo handling, the development of a bulk liquid custody transfer tank farm in Dar es Salaam's Mjimwema suburb, and the procurement of a floating dock.

The measures sought to boost efficiency at the port for more handsome revenue collections in subsequent years but with biggest challenge in the short term relating to ensure that the port's image was restored - including by flushing out from the facility's payroll all those confirmed to have engaged in corrupt activities or anything leading to the reported decline in efficiency and revenue.

There was also the challenge of heeding recommendations and demands stakeholders kept making that the port become more inclusive, preferably through the incorporation of small and medium enterprises in its plans.

Too bad, we have not been kept adequately posted on the headway made in implementing all these plans and recommendations. All the same, we stand convinced that it is still of fundamental importance that Tanzanians see stepped-up efficiency at our ports, airports and all other service centres and facilities - and the sooner this prevails, the better for the nation.

Raising of public awareness on human rights must be sustained

WHATEVER progress advocacy and other agencies have made over the decades in addressing the citizenry's pervasive ignorance as relates to basic human rights and the complications resulting from that lack of crucial knowledge is laudable.

It is regrettable, though, that however noticeable or appreciable the rise in public awareness has been has not translated enough into many enough people actually pursuing their rights to what one might call the logical conclusion.

As witnessed and reported time and again, some of the lectures, case studies on real-life experiences and subsequent views from the floor punctuating some of the advocacy and sensitization seminars and workshops have often left the audience in shock and disbelief.

Cases in point include harrowing narrations about how the rich and powerful use their might and influence with virtual impunity to oppress and dehumanise the poor and weak.

To their credit, public institutions like the Commission for Good Governance and Human Rights have had occasion to address situations of this nature by exposing such transgressions and demanding concrete remedial action from the relevant state agencies.

But if truth be said, follow-up action

has seldom quenched the public's - as people commonly expect more concrete intervention in terms of ensuring justice for all through the safeguarding and promotion of the rule of law.

And why not, when some of the very people supposed and expected to dispense justice blatantly deny the hapless poor even the very basic rights just because corruption and insensitivity to oppression and misery have grown such deep roots that offenders can be sure to go unpunished?

There have been relentless appeals to the government and other stakeholders to do their utmost to come to the immediate rescue people whose rights are violated without even the victims knowing that they have been denied rights legally guaranteed internationally and by Tanzania's own Constitution and other laws.

Admittedly, the calls have had some impact - but not much, particularly for residents of rural areas seldom reached by human rights crusaders.

It's therefore only fair to underscore the need for the government and all other relevant authorities and agencies to ensure that our people fully appreciate the importance of fighting for their rights regardless of how rich, powerful or influence the violators are. The law should, indeed, ensure justice for all.



Saudi photojournalist Tasneem Alsultan busy challenging traditional narratives

By Taylor Mulcahey

WOMEN in Saudi Arabia have experienced major changes to their freedoms over the past two years. Thanks to two landmark rulings in late 2017, they are now allowed into sports stadiums and can legally drive for the first time.

Along the way, Saudi photojournalist Tasneem Alsultan has managed to capture these historic moments in all their power and joy.

Alongside American photojournalist Mary Calvert, Alsultan has been recognized by the International Women's Media Foundation as one of two honourable mentions for the 2019 Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award. Eloisa Lopez, a Filipino photojournalist who focuses her work on women and religion, was awarded the top honour.

"I am really excited because this year I think all three of us are from our countries and we are based in our home countries," says Alsultan, adding: "Eloisa is young and she's new to the industry. It's a huge change and shift in what we are used to seeing."

Raised in Saudi Arabia, Alsultan began her work in photography documenting weddings. "I have always been interested in social norms that no one had access to before," she said.

Today, Alsultan is a well-respected documentarian, focusing on social issues, human rights and gender for publications such as National Geographic and The New York Times. She considers her ability to access spaces that men cannot as well as her desire to tell Saudi stories that add nuance to dominant narratives about the country as assets that set her work apart.

"Being from here, I feel very strong about the stories I cover, and I try to keep different people interested in the stories that come from Saudi Arabia and the neighbouring countries," she said.

IJNet spoke to Alsultan recently to better understand what motivates her work, the stories that interest her, and what it's like to be a photojournalist in Saudi Arabia.

IJNet: What does it mean for you to be a woman covering these historical events, like women driving for the first time or going to stadiums?

Alsultan: It's great. I think it's really important. I always feel like you have to have some emotional intrigue and interest to tell that story because if there is nothing in common between you and your subjects, then you just don't care. Whether they are from my country or from another, if there's something



Photo taken by Tasneem Alsultan during the first female basketball tournament in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, after a decision allowing women to enter stadiums.

common or something shared, then you feel this protectiveness over them. You feel like this is a very strong and important story.

Those stories are really important. Those people are offering me everything to share to the rest of the world, so I have to honour them.

I was looking through your Instagram, and I noticed that you have a lot of photos of weddings. Can you tell me a little about that?

Yes. It's an ongoing project, "Saudi Tales of Love." It sparked off initially from my wedding work because I was divorced at the time when this project came to mind. As a divorced, successful wedding photographer, what else can I shed light on? We all fall in love the same way across the world. That's not just specific to Saudi.

As soon as I shared on Instagram, I got people saying: "Oh my God, this is like our story" or "I wish I could meet a man like this." It's beautiful that I can connect people from all across the world, even though the story is so different from theirs because they are from Saudi.

Then I thought, "What about people who have never gotten married?" "What about people who are widows?" "What about people who are divorced?" "What if she's divorced and remarried?" All those different, other stories - I felt that much as they are universal, they are very specific to Saudi women. We have a lot of obstacles that no other women can experience, so I need to be active in pursuing that and sharing how important it is.

Could you tell me a bit about Rawiya, the female photography collective you are a member of?

Rawiya started with only female

photographers. Last year, we did a project called "We do not Choose our Dictators". It was exhibited in Malaysia and in the US, in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Middle East is commonly known for a lot of upheaval - conflict - and everything is very negative. But, at the same time, none of us decides who governs us - whereas, in the US, it was Trump and he was voted in by the people. He went on to carry out a lot of different rulings that no one now accepts, but they kind of do because he's their president. We wanted to shed light on the fact that in the Middle East we do not choose our dictators and we do not choose our rulers but you in America had a chance and opportunity to fix it - and didn't. Then, what is the problem and how do we fix that?

We also use this collective to kind of say: "Hey, women actually have more access than male photographers." We can find narratives that a man cannot work on in the same way. We can have much more intimate access, and up until recently when there are women photographer databases, people didn't know how to reach female photographers - especially in the MENA region.

Society usually expects that a man has to have a real job, as an engineer, a business job or something where he has a fixed salary. Women don't, so we actually have the freedom to be freelancers because we don't have to have an office job like men do.

Were you trained in photojournalism or as a photographer?

No, and that is why I'm always saying that anyone can be something that they never thought they had a chance to work in. I was told by people that I would never be a good photographer,

and that I should just quit when I started, and I just kept doing it.

I'm just someone who's very passionate about what they do. I don't stop photographing. I always think I'm in a rush to document and collect as many images of my country as possible. There's not enough. We are just 22 million in this country, and we've never actually had a database to share all our stories. We have only been photographed by either men or outsiders, like foreign females.

Maybe in 20 years, I will get to say: "Hey, the LGBT community, for instance, existed in Saudi in the year 2018," or "Did you know that women actually existed who were driving trucks even in the days before they had removed the ban on female drivers?" I have those images. I can say it existed. Without that, it's nothing. There is no proof that they ever came here.

What kind of stories can you tell with a camera that you can't necessarily tell through words?

When I photograph, I'm sharing with someone who could be illiterate, who does not speak the same language that I am writing in captions, and they can still feel an emotion that I'm trying to send across. They can feel happiness or sadness. They can start thinking: "Why are they all happy?" It's because they attended their first-ever basketball game or it was the first time they held a steering wheel they sat behind to drive.

All those emotions don't need a caption sometimes. It doesn't need a story - it can just be shared with anyone across the world. It has a huge audience that writing just doesn't always have.

• An IJNet feature.

We will never achieve gender equality until we address lack of water, sanitation and hygiene

LILONGWE

GIVING birth is a life changing moment for women. It can be - when women have a safe and caring environment, positive and empowering - a moment to find a previously untapped inner strength.

But for too many women around the world, a lack of basic facilities mean that their lives and those of their babies are put at risk, risking death when they are bringing life into the world.

My fellow Malawian Rhoda, from Kasungu used her own lifechanging birth experience to help fight for the lives of future mothers and babies.

She was one of the women who bravely stood up and delivered an emotional speech at a community gathering attended by local politicians about her experience of giving birth on a roadside during the 25 kilometre walk to her nearest health centre.

Through co-ordinated advocacy, Rhoda and women like her succeeded in making their voices heard and convinced their elected representatives to dedicate resources to open a local hospital in their area.

She is one of a growing number of women who together are claiming their right to health and commit to challenging the status quo. With this growing momentum, things can really change for the better.

Rhoda said: "My experience giving birth on the way to the hospital was the last straw that made us demand this health centre. It was a frightening experience. We told the Member of Parliament that we were tired of empty promises. It was time to deliver."

Rhoda's experience could have so



Rhoda, 23, speaking on behalf of her community, at the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting in Kasungu, Malawi. This work was made possible with UK aid from the British people. File photo

easily seen her join the heartbreaking maternal death statistics of Malawi where, 634 women die during or after birth for every 100 000 babies born alive. This is nearly three times the global average of 216 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births.

Fortunately, both survived the traumatic, dangerous and undignified experience but many others who also have to give birth in unhygienic conditions are not so lucky. Even those who manage to reach a midwife and a

healthcare facility often face appalling infection risks.

Recent UNICEF-WHO data showed that 45% of healthcare facilities in least-developed countries (LDCs) do not have a source of clean water on site. Without clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, it's impossible for medical staff to deliver quality care. A lack of these necessities results in the lives of patients be-

ing put in danger and contributes not only to the spread of diseases but also the rise of drug-resistant infections as more antibiotics are needed to battle illnesses that good hygiene might have prevented.

Life is changing for many communities here in Malawi as more and more raise their voices, share their experiences of hardship and discrimination with those in power

and demand provision of basic needs such as accessible health centres with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

Shockingly, one in nine people around the world still don't have access to clean water close to home and one in three don't have a decent toilet of their own. It is no secret that in areas where water is scarce it's nearly always women and girls who face the hardship of

walking long distances to collect what little water they can find.

A situation that makes them miss out on education and economic opportunities, and sometimes leaves them at risk of sexual assault and harassment. I know it's possible for these shocking statistics to be turned around.

We need to hear women's voices calling for water and sanitation in part because not having these basic rights disproportionately impacts women and girls

Without toilets, women's freedom and dignity is compromised. Many spend their days worrying about where they will be able to find a toilet, often resorting to the bush or waste ground.

That is why, this week, WaterAid is joining with over 8,000 others at the Women Deliver conference in Vancouver. We want governments, the corporate sector and civil society to know that the voices and lives of women and girls matter.

We can't and won't achieve gender equality without addressing the lack of access to the basic human right that is water, sanitation and hygiene which millions of women and girls face worldwide.

Women like Rhoda are shining examples. And it is my hope that we will see more and more women standing in their power and advocating for their rights, despite unspeakable difficulty. Because when women and girls are given an active role in decision-making, transformation happens.

IPS

Xi and Putin -- at helm of China-Russia relations

BEIJING

“FOR a big ship, a big voyage,” Xi Jinping said, quoting a Russian proverb during his first visit to Russia as president of China in 2013.

Xi was calling for concerted efforts by China and Russia to build their relationship into a vessel big and strong enough to cleave its way through the changeable sea of international situation. He practices what he advocates.

Over the past six years, Xi has met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin nearly 30 times in an unusually vigorous streak of head-of-state diplomacy, and the two leaders have turned the China-Russia relationship into a big ship featuring the highest degree of mutual trust, the highest level of coordination and the highest strategic value.

"I have had closer interactions with President Putin than with any other foreign colleagues. He is my best and bosom friend. I cherish dearly our deep friendship," Xi said in an interview with Russian media on Tuesday ahead of his eighth presidential trip to Russia.

As the two countries celebrate the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic relations this year, Xi traveled to Russia on Wednesday for yet another state visit to China's northern neighbor, where he will also attend the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum for the first time.

Xi said he looks forward to charting the course of the China-Russia relationship together with Putin and to seeing that their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination will stride into a new era.

The friendship between the two presidents set sail in the early spring of 2013 when Xi arrived in the Russian capital of Moscow for his maiden overseas visit as Chinese head of state.

Besides attending more than 20 activities and meeting with Russian people from various walks of life, Xi became the first foreign head of state to tour the combat command center of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Putin, who spent eight hours with Xi during the latter's one-and-a-half-day stay, said the visit was of historical sig-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Chinese President Xi Jinping exchange documents at the signing ceremony in the Kremlin in Moscow on May 8, 2015. (File photo)

nificance. In one of the most memorable moments of this visit, Xi unveiled at the Kremlin a portrait of Putin embroidered with silk threads in 70 colors.

"It's so legendary, so beautiful and so incredible," Putin marveled. "I was wearing the same tie," Putin joked, pointing to the scarlet tie he was wearing that day.

Long before the historic visit, the two presidents had developed a fondness for each other's country. Xi, born in the 1950s, was influenced by Russian literature as much as others of his generation in China. He mentioned Russian writers from poet Alexander Pushkin to novelist Anton Chekhov when delivering a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

"I found the charm of Russian literature," Xi said. Sports-loving Putin is a fan of Chinese martial arts. During a state visit to China in 2006, he visited the Shaolin Temple, the cradle of Chi-

nese kung fu, at the west foot of Songshan Mountain in central Henan Province.

After watching a martial arts show, the Russian president walked into the performers, tossed an eight-year-old monk into the sky and caught him steadily on his shoulder.

In September 2016, China's eastern city of Hangzhou was still baking in sweltering heat. Putin, in the city for the G20 summit, gifted Xi with the perfect refreshment -- a box of Russian ice cream.

Thereafter, a craving for the Russian specialty took off in China, benefiting a lot of ice cream makers. An ice cream company based in Russia's Far East city of Khabarovsk, according to its manager, received nearly 100 Chinese importers in three months after the summit.

This was a prime example of how interactions between Xi and Putin have stimulated cooperation between their countries. "Both President Putin and I have attached great importance to and been actively promoting the cooperation between China and Russia on trade and economy," Xi said during a state visit to Russia in 2015.

When China decided to host an international forum in 2017 on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a proposal aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road trade routes, Putin was one of the first leaders to accept the invitation. He attended the second forum, too.

Spearheaded by the two presidents, outstanding achievements

have been made in synergizing the BRI and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union.

The alignment has not only promoted regional prosperity, but also signaled to the outside world China and Russia's commitment to an open world economy.

It is in the same spirit of mutual support that Xi attended the Eastern Economic Forum held in Russia's Vladivostok and will take the podium at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

What is of more far-reaching significance is that the two leaders have also influenced how the Chinese and Russian people see and relate to each other.

In 2015, when Xi was awarding commemorative medals to Russian veterans who fought on the battlefield in China during the Chinese war of resistance against Japanese aggression, he saw a 90-year-old having difficulty walking.

"Let me come to you," Xi said to the old soldier. The touching scene aroused in both the Chinese and Russian people vivid memories of the old and deeply rooted friendship between the two nations forged with lives and blood during the wartime. Based on this very foundation, the two peoples have carried forward their bond from generation to generation.

In 2017, Putin awarded Xi the highest honor of Russia, the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle the First-Called. Putin said to Xi: "Though you are the leader of a great country, you did not talk much about your own contributions."

"You are very humble." "Many of the key issues between Russia and China either were solved or made progress thanks to your personal efforts," he said.

"The order is a proof of your outstanding contributions to the construction of Russia-China relations." A year later, Xi awarded Putin the first-ever Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China.

The two presidents' hands-on leadership in promoting China-

Russia relations stems from their common perspective on the importance of bilateral ties and on international issues. "We share similar views on the international landscape and approaches to national governance," Xi said in the interview with Russian media. "...

Most importantly, we share a high degree of consensus on the strategic significance of the China-Russia relationship and therefore the same resolve and desire to deepen and sustain its growth."

Putin has stressed on several occasions that it is a priority of Russia's foreign policy to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with China.

Xi, as early as during his first state visit to Russia six years ago, said China and Russia enjoy one of the world's most important bilateral relationships and the best of major-country relations.

In his eyes, high-level and strong China-Russia relations not only serve the interests of both sides, but also play an important part in safeguarding the international strategic balance and world peace and stability.

This line of thinking has guided China-Russia interaction within both bilateral and multilateral frameworks.

"For many years, both countries have made efforts to improve the global governance system in order to make it more equitable and inclusive," said Yana Leksytina, a professor with St. Petersburg State University. Dmitry Novikov, first deputy chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian State Duma, said in a recent interview with Xinhua that the unprecedentedly high-level interaction between China and Russia has become an advanced model of interstate relations in today's world. "It would not be an exaggeration to say that ordinary people of the planet look at us with hope and faith, awaiting the creation of a fairer world order," he said.

Xinhua

FEATURES

BY LORI-ANNE THÉROUX-BÉNONI
AND NADIA ADAM

Hard counter-terrorism lessons from the Sahel for West Africa's coastal states

VIOLENT extremist groups are no longer confined to the Sahelian states of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad. Their threat is spilling over into the northern regions of West African coastal states – particularly Benin, Ghana and Togo (see maps below). This was confirmed on 1 May when two French tourists and their Beninese guide were abducted in Benin's Pendjari National Park.

The 2016 Grand-Bassam attack in Côte d'Ivoire had already shown how violent extremist groups could strike a West African coastal city beyond their known areas of operation in the Sahel. This attack, claimed by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), was planned in Mali, and the perpetrators travelled from there.

Extremist elements were also reported in north Benin, Togo and Ghana following the March 2019 launch of the Otapuanu military operation in south-eastern Burkina Faso. The operation reportedly led to the arrest of militant leader Oumarou Diallo, who said he had plans to place a jihadist cell in eastern Burkina Faso with ramifications for neighbouring coastal countries.

There was a surge in unclaimed attacks in Burkina's east in 2018. This was apparently linked to the infiltration and recruitment by elements allegedly associated with the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) in the border area spanning Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo and Ghana.

Since the 2013 French Serval and Chadian operations to uproot 'jihadists' from northern Mali, the number of violent extremist groups in the Sahel has risen, and new coalitions have been formed. Attacks against increasingly ambitious targets have grown in number, scope and complexity. New insurgents, both mid-level commanders and foot soldiers, are recruited from the communities where extremists settle. Communities are infiltrated through co-opting, coercing or killing local leaders. Extremists take advantage of existing intra- or inter-community conflicts



in order to recruit.

Several interrelated dynamics have enabled expansion inside states and across borders (see maps above). Military pressure by national armies, the French Operation Barkhane and to a lesser extent the yet-to-be fully operational G5 Sahel Joint Force has pushed extremists beyond their initial operational areas.

Expanding enables extremists to escape areas where they can be tracked, and overstretches national and regional security and military arrangements. The Complexe W-Arly-Pendjari park straddling Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin offers dense forest cover which makes aerial surveillance challenging and provides food through poaching. Groups affiliated to Islamic State or al-Qaeda, despite collaborating when they face a common enemy, are also

The expansion of extremism shows the flaws in current strategies and the need to rethink regional responses. File photo

in competition and need new communities in which to embed themselves.

Violent extremist groups often infiltrate spaces where the social contract between the state and citizens is weak or non-existent. They cooperate with other criminal groups such as illegal gold miners, poachers or traffickers, who also have an interest in maintaining state absence or weakening state presence.

Lastly, from a strategic perspective, the current leader of the ISGS, Adnan Abou Walid al-Sahraoui, was the spokesperson of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa at the time when the movement controlled the city of Gao in northern Mali. The reference to West Africa in the group's

name highlights its regional ambition. This was also reflected in the diverse West African origins of its recruits.

The relationship between ISGS and the Islamic State West Africa Province branch of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin remains unclear. But it points to a potentially larger expansion strategy of Islamic State through local affiliates.

These trends demonstrate violent extremist groups' resilience and their capacity to adapt. They also show the limitations of current responses to the threat. So how should strategies be designed, implemented, sequenced and coordinated at national and regional levels?

This is where coastal countries

and multilateral organisations can draw important lessons from the Sahel. First, affected countries need to work together, including through intelligence sharing and joint operations. But such efforts must respect human rights and shouldn't stigmatise specific communities – this would only push more recruits into the arms of extremists.

Second, security and military solutions are sometimes needed to weaken violent extremist groups. However these tactics will be insufficient unless political, economic and security governance deficits are dealt with and service delivery is enhanced.

Third, while external technical help, financial support and

experience sharing are needed, countries shouldn't over-rely on outside support. They must retain their political leadership and ownership of initiatives to prevent and counter extremism. The Sahelian example has proven that external funding comes with delays, constraints and agendas not always attuned to local, national and regional contexts and priorities.

Another lesson is that dialogue with some insurgents shouldn't be ruled out. Violent extremist groups are segmented. Foot soldiers, middle managers and leaders don't necessarily pursue the same interests. This opens avenues for discussions at several levels. Whether such negotiations should be open is a complicated question, but the process should be led by national actors who decide on the timing, interlocutors, format and preferred outcomes.

The expansion of militant groups beyond the Group of Five Sahel countries calls for a reassessment of how states respond as a region. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) also need to be more involved. The deteriorating regional security situation paradoxically provides an opportunity to improve cooperation in a region that has witnessed devastating institutional rivalry between the United Nations, AU, ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel.

To stem the spreading threat, national and multilateral actors need to integrate these lessons with ongoing responses in affected areas.

The highly contested elections are over, but IEC party disputes continue to rage

By Jonah Dylan

THE Freedom Front Plus objected to the registration of the Black First Land First as a political party in mid-May and is now awaiting the IEC's decision, FF Plus MP Wouter Wessels told Daily Maverick.

The objection is the latest in a lengthy legal battle between the two parties dating back to when the BLF first registered as a party with the IEC in 2015. According to IEC protocol, new party registrations are to be sent out in a gazette for potential objections right after the registration occurs. In this case, the BLF's registration was never sent out in a gazette, so no party could object.

Shortly before the election on 8 May, the FF Plus took the IEC to court to ask them to publish the gazette. The FF Plus won. The IEC then published the BLF's registration in a gazette on 4 May, and the FF Plus officially objected after the election. It's unclear how long the process will take to play out.

BLF leader Andile Mngxitama told Daily Maverick that the FF Plus is "terrified" of his party as the 2021 elections approach.

"Black nationalism is a nationalism of the future, and it threatens white interests, and in particular, this Afrikaner white nationalism," he said. "So they understand this. BLF is the central enemy of white interests. And so they have to use any means necessary to stop us from existing and in particular being legitimised by the formal political system." In the 2019 elections, the BLF – contesting an election for the first time – earned 0.11% of the vote, while the FF Plus had surprising growth and earned 2.38%. The BLF is thus not represented in Parliament, and the FF Plus grew from four MPs to 10.

Wessels said the FF Plus objects to the BLF's registration on four issues: the party was not registered by the IEC chief electoral officer, the party's registration was not published in the gazette, the party restricts membership based on race, and the party's constitution "incites violence".

"We cannot allow the electoral commission to not adhere to legislation," he said. "This is one aspect that we will



take forth and we won't stop in this regard because it's about adherence to legislation and we can't allow the electoral commission of the country to just disregard legislation."

Mngxitama said the party does not recognise the South African Constitution.

DA vs De Lille battle rages on
Former Cape Town mayor Patricia de Lille and the DA – her former party – are waiting for judgment from the electoral court on whether or not the DA will be forced to apologise to De Lille.

In the lead up to the elections, the DA allegedly told voters that De Lille was fired as Cape Town mayor. De Lille says

IEC officials hold a press briefing on vote counting progress on Friday 10 May 2019 at the National Results Operation Center (ROC) in Pretoria. File photo

she resigned, and after a challenge with the IEC, the electoral commission ordered the DA on 16 April to publicly apologise to De Lille.

However, the DA said it would not comply with the IEC order and instead challenged the ruling in the electoral court. At the time, then-DA IEC liaison Mike Moriarty said the DA felt it was within its rights based on a 2014 ruling by the electoral court that found a controversial SMS sent to potential voters fell within "fair comment".

De Lille told Daily Maverick that the case will set legal precedents

regarding the IEC's powers. She also said she expects the process could take a long time to play out, especially if the court rules against the DA.

"If the ruling was against them, they will probably also go to an appeal," she said. "So I don't see the end of this in a long time to come, because they are so arrogant."

Daily Maverick reported on 16 April that the ruling found the DA had dropped corruption charges against De Lille in exchange for her resignation. However, the commission did not rule on whether the corruption charges

could be proven false, and De Lille said she has already won three court cases against the DA on this issue. "This finding is based on the agreement concluded between the parties on 4 August 2018 and the resignation letter of Ms De Lille, dated 3 August 2018," the ruling states. "Furthermore, the DA, in its own submissions, dated 20 March 2019, admitted that 'Ms De Lille resigned as mayor in exchange for the DA dropping the disciplinary charges against her'."

It's unclear how long the process will take to play out, and DA spokesperson Solly Malatsi said he

didn't want to speculate. "We are giving the court process the chance to play its course as it should, because we believe in the judiciary to deal with this matter fairly and accurately," he said.

The legal battle is the latest in the messy split between De Lille and the DA. After leaving the party in October 2018, De Lille founded a new political party, GOOD. The party won two seats in Parliament in the 2019 elections, and De Lille was appointed as Minister for Public Works and Infrastructure last week.

From philanthropy to profit: How clean energy is kickstarting sustainable development in East Africa

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations human settlements programme, UN-Habitat, and Portuguese energy company EDP, are constructing a solar energy system to supply 12 classrooms - which have been built to withstand 180 km per hour winds - with clean, renewable energy.

This will have a huge impact on the community because, as well as enabling some 1,300 students to study at night, people living in the area will, for a small fee, be able to charge their mobile phones, and access the internet.

They will also stand a better chance of surviving, when the next cyclones and floods hit the country: Mozambique has developed an early-warning system, with SMS alerts sent out by the government, but this only works in communities with access to energy.

"As long as you can provide this service at a school, people will at least have access to communication with the outside world, which is the main handi-

cap when an emergency strikes, recounts Juan Hurtado Martinez, UN-Habitat architect and manager of the project. "So, it ensures that, in an emergency, they can receive the alarms quickly."

Scaling up across east Africa Although the impetus for the project comes from EDP's philanthropic arm, the company sees it as a sensible investment in Africa, in line with the UN's call for companies to play their part in the move to a "green economy," that is not reliant on fossil fuels such as coal and gas.

"The African continent is surely the continent with more natural resources - such as the sun, wind, water, biomass and others - that allow the use of renewable energies," says Guilherme Collares Pereira, Director of International Relations at EDP. "Therefore, it makes total sense to intervene in the market that has resources and that has the needs."

Some 600 million people in Africa are without access to electricity, Pereira points out, and it is "more than proven that renewable energies can enable,

in a cheaper, faster and more efficient way, universal energy access to be achieved."

The project in the district of Namacurra is one of six, in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi, that will be receiving support from EDP. At the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, which hosts more than 186,000 people, a mini-grid will supply pay-as-you-go electricity to refugees according to their consumption needs. "It is a very interesting approach that can be replicated throughout the camp," says Pereira, "but it can also be replicated in other refugee camps, not only in the Horn of Africa but all over the world."

Sustainability as a business opportunity For EDP, the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity, says Pereira. "Ten years ago, when we began involvement with these projects, we were guided more by our corporate responsibility policy, but nowadays it is more about business."

In 2018 the company decided to invest €12 million in companies that are already working



Solar panels similar to those being installed by EDP and UN-Habitat in East Africa

with renewable energy in East Africa. "At the moment, they are not as profitable as traditional EDP businesses," he notes, "but this is a journey, and we are

discovering how the process develops. So, in the next couple of years, when we are ready, we can invest in more companies and grow them in preparation

for entry into other markets." "The potential is enormous: renewable energy technology is getting better, more efficient and more resilient. There is also an

abundance of mechanisms and even financing from countries and the international community to support these projects. Everything is in place for its

Climate crisis: How your support is helping women farmers across Tanzania

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

NAFIKA Rajabu Omary aged 50, is a farmer in Mgwase village, Tanzania. She says that over recent years there has been a significant reduction in rainfall, and that her crop yield reduces by as much as nine-tenths during times of drought. This has had a huge impact on her family's livelihood and health.

She says: "When the drought wasn't so bad, we could have three meals per day, but when there's drought we can only afford one or two meals a day, and we only eat ugali [made from cassava]. I wish my children could eat a variety of food, including more nutritious food like banana and beans."

Afidha Said aged 40, is another farmer in Mgwase village who struggles to provide for her four children, especially now that her husband has passed away.

She says she has noticed periods of drought intensifying over recent years, and it has not returned to normal for many years.

"It's continued, and when the rain does come, the water runs off and the river cannot hold water for a long time - which has made tomato farming a problem. In previous years, I could get five or six buckets of tomatoes a week, but now it's just two."

The hard times Afidha's family has fallen on has impacted their diet and they can now only eat ugali made from cassava flour twice a day. To ease the burden, Afidha sent her 18-year-old daughter to work as a house-girl for another family that lives a long way away, but she worries her daughter is being exploited.

She says: "She is 800 km away, and cannot afford the fare to come home. I don't know when I'll see her again."

Afidha says the drought has affected the whole village: "We are all struggling. Some women go to the forest to collect firewood to sell in the market. Others go to the market to do petty business. Others are cracking stones and helping construction workers."

To make extra income for her family, Afidha works as a labourer on other people's farms twice a week; and she spends 12 hours twice a week cleaning toilets in the market in local towns, Same and Hedaru. "I don't like it," she says.

Nafika has also been forced to look for extra cash elsewhere, working as a labourer on other people's farms and cracking rocks into small pieces to sell to construction workers. Pointing to a mountain a few kilometres down the dirt road, she says: "There is a big group of us who crack stones together, in a clearing below the mountain. We do it from 6am until midday, and sell the pieces to men with trucks who are doing construction work."

How UK aid will Help Her Live, Learn and Earn

Nafika and Afidha are just two of the 2,460 small-scale farmers who will be taking part in a new CARE project funded through UK aid match (where the UK government matched donations made by CARE supporters to our Help Her Live, Learn and Earn campaign).

Nafika, Afidha and the other farmers (most of them women) will receive training and



support to improve their farming and increase their resilience to the climate emergency. This will directly impact on the livelihoods and food security of more than 13,000 people in the six project villages, with thousands more benefiting from the sharing of new approaches to farming and marketing that the farmers will learn during the project.

Nafika is looking forward to taking part in the Farmers Field Business School training. She says: "I am expecting to learn how to preserve rainwater on the farm so that we can increase productivity and income."

She has also already started receiving weather forecasts from the government, another feature of the Help Her Live, Learn and Earn project which aims to help farmers plan ahead. She says: "Before

we got these forecasts, we would only farm during the long rains, but now I know there will be short rains next week, I can prepare and plant seeds."

"I am so happy and excited to learn from this project. Hopefully the education we receive will help us move forward. I hope I won't have to go cracking stones or labouring on other people's farms anymore."

Afidha is also excited about the prospects ahead. She says: "It will give us direction, and motivate and teach us how to farm so that we can increase our yield during drought."

"We're going to learn how to use water effectively and how to take care of the farm. I expect we'll learn techniques like terracing our land. And then my yield will increase! The project will teach us how to store water so we'll grow more. And then we'll get more

in the market." Nafika and Afidha are also joining the CARE-run Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). Nafika says she hopes this will help her with some financial skills like buying shares and saving, while Afidha says she will be able to borrow money for school fees for her three other children. In Tanzania, education at government schools is free, but there are other fees to be paid, to buy things like uniform, stationary supplies and lunch.

Afidha hopes that her daughter can come home, and that she will no longer have to clean the market toilets. She also hopes that in the future, her children can be educated and get professional jobs. She says: "I am a farmer and the drought has messed with my life. Educated people have wider understanding. I want my children to do different things."

'Greening' the white gold in Tanzania supporting low emissions dairy development for livestock producers

By Esther Kihoro

'MAZIWA ni dhahabu nyeupe' (milk is white gold). This is a common phrase among livestock keepers in Tanzania. I've heard it numerous times in the last two years as I've worked with milk producers in the country.

The term is being used to sensitize farmers on the importance of milk as a source of income.

Recently, however, the phrase is being used to not only signify milk as a source of income, but also to raise farmers' awareness of the need to reduce the carbon footprint or 'hoofprint' of cows.

But do cows really contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions? This

is a question I have been asked frequently over the last two years.

The answer is yes. When they belch, cows produce both methane and carbon dioxide and their manure also produces nitrous oxide. These emissions contribute to the warming of our planet.

Other questions I have come across are around the significance of GHG emissions from the livestock sector.

Going by the current data from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Tanzania, 26% of total GHG emissions in the country come from the agriculture sector, 70% of which come from cattle, either from enteric

fermentation (digestive processes that decompose and ferment food) at 41%, or manure left on pasture land at 29%.

But these figures are based on estimates made from production systems in European countries, which are also known as Tier 1 countries.

There has, as a result, been a need to know the actual GHG emissions of livestock production systems in East Africa.

An ongoing project in Tanzania, known as the Greening Livestock Project is aiming to fill this gap.

The project started in 2017 and is being implemented by the Mazingira Centre at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in collaboration

with the Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR).

The project is assessing baseline GHG emissions from livestock in four districts and analyzing the barriers preventing farmers there from adopting low-emission dairy practices.

Low-emission dairy practices can intensify milk production by increasing productivity per cow, which would both improve the livelihoods of dairy farming households and lower the GHG emissions intensity per litre of milk produced.

This would be a win-win outcome for farmers, which has led to the use of the term 'greening the white gold'.

The project assessments have been two-fold—the biophysical research to come up with a baseline of the GHG emission factors and socio-economic research of dairy production.

The socio-economic research covered 1,200 households in Mufindi, Mvomero, Njombe and Rungwe districts.

Data from these households was collected to analyse farmers' barriers and incentives, milk marketing and their future aspirations in dairy production.

Other value chain players were also interviewed including farmer groups, processors, development organizations and government actors.

Burundi's application to join SADC thrown out over political instability

By Ajifowo Gbenga

BURUNDI'S request to join the Southern African Development Council (SADC) has been rejected over concerns of internal political instability in the country, coupled with its unsettled relationship with Rwanda.

The application which was filed in 2017 had been put on hold by the bloc's Council of Ministers after an initial assessment by the Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee showed Burundi was politically unstable.

The bloc's chairperson, Namibian President Hage Geingob, in a statement last week said Burundi did not meet the admission requirements after the latest assessment that was carried out from May 18 to 25. "The SADC assessment mission was in Burundi but recommended that it is not yet beneficial for Burundi to be admitted into SADC," Geingob said.

The major reason for rejecting the application as stated by the chair is the unresolved democratic process in Burundi. This is believed to have been triggered by President Pierre Nkurunziza when he contested a con-

troversial third term in office four years ago. The situation in Burundi is in non-compliance with the new criteria for admission to SADC approved by member states after the 2003 Summit.

The new requirements included observance of the principles of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law in line with the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

There are also concerns over the counter-accusations between the nation and Kigali about interference in each other's internal affairs.

The relationship between both neighbours has been unpleasant since the attempted Bujumbura coup in 2015. The political crisis that followed saw the killing of almost 1,000 people, with thousands displaced.

Burundi is already a member of the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Its intention of joining SADC was considered an alternative to the other regional bodies where it continues to face challenges.

Speaking up against sexual violence and domestic abuse in Ethiopia

Ababa

TWIN sisters Dagim and Yeabsera were young children when their uncle first sexually assaulted them.

The abuse continued for years, as their father was absent - he left when they were born, and their mother worked as a domestic helper in a Middle Eastern country.

"Our uncle used to take turns to rape us, especially at middle of the night, when he was usually either drunk or high from taking drugs," said Yeabsera.

They had been living with their uncle and maternal grandmother, who they say also physically abused them and failed to acknowledge her son's devastating actions.

When the uncle was imprisoned for two years for shoplifting, his friends took turns abusing the children.

Dagim developed a heart problem, caused by stress. A school teacher referred her to a hospital for treatment where, finally, the twins' trauma was revealed.

They are now 15 and, for the past two months, have been living in a refuge in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, run by the Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (Awsad), the only local NGO offering shelter and rehabilitation to women and girls.

"We used to think we had no mother and father," said Yeabsera, "but the care given by Awsad staff has got us feeling we have a real family."

In socially conservative Ethiopia, the sexual assault of children, who make up around half of the population, is largely a taboo subject.

Chaltu, 15, worked as a domestic helper and was abused by her employer.

"Me and my sister used to get taunted in school by classmates because of our poverty, so I dropped out and got employed as a domestic maid in a stranger's home," she said.

The abuse started more than two

years ago, with the home owner scaring her into silence by threatening to kill her family if she talked about it.

"The sexual abuse I endured was only revealed after my closest classmate persuaded me about two months ago to tell my teacher about the rape," she said.

Awsad also provides shelter to survivors of domestic violence.

Meseret Wosenyeleh needed a safe space after her abusive husband's family blamed her for his suicide.

Pregnant with her third child, the mother of eight-month-old twins said: "My husband's family are threatening me with violence, accusing me of having a hand in his own suicide."

Lensi Kassahun, who works at Awsad, said "victim blaming" is prevalent and harmful in society.

"Most of the abuse victims we treat at the centre were hurt by people close to them, especially family members," she said. "Ethiopian society tends to cover up the abuse, with victims often blamed for having 'loose morals' or for somewhat triggering the abuser."

"Victim-blaming [and the] fact that many of the abusers are sole breadwinners in households adds another layer of trauma to the psychological and physical scars victims endure."

But there is a positive shift. Lensi noted that domestic abuse is being increasingly reported by survivors and witnesses.

Awsad trains law enforcement officials on how to handle abuse cases and offers workshops in raising awareness and battling stigma in community centres, religious institutes and at schools.

"The most difficult case I have dealt with was of a girl that was raped daily by her father from elementary school," said Lensi, who added that the child suffered a serious injury. This kind of abuse can be "reduced substantially" by improved laws and campaigns, she said.

Awsad is planning more advocacy work, thanks to new civil society leg-



Meseret Wosenyeleh is recovering from a brutal physical attack by her husband at Awsad. File photo

islation Ethiopia adopted earlier this year. But Maraki Tesfaye, founder of Jegnit (the Amharic word for heroine), a women's movement, said structural problems must be tackled.

"Do victims know of a government centre they can go to file a complaint? Do they know abuse reporting methods and do health facilities have enough rape kits?" she said.

Acknowledging the progress made so far, she added: "My mother gave birth to me at 15 years old, after being married off at such a young age. For her, issues of rape and consent were unfamiliar things.

"My generation, however, is

fighting for women's rights and I have seen domestic abuse victims increasingly standing against their abusers and against a society that wants to coax them into silence."

Adinew Abera, spokesperson at the Ministry of Women, Children and Youths Affairs (MoW-CYA), said the government has added street children and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the list of groups that are vulnerable to domestic abuse.

"We've identified street children and internally displaced people as particularly prone to domestic abuse," said Adinew. "Our ministry is working on education, sensitisation activities

on domestic violence, as well as toughening laws on perpetrators of domestic violence."

The Ethiopian government has recently amended its legislation by excluding rape crimes from pardon and amnesty laws as it lengthened jail terms for sex offenders.

"We consider domestic abuse, be it physical or sexual, as primarily an issue of moral failure," said Adinew. "Ultimately, the society needs to be the guardian of vulnerable people among us. The Ethiopian society needs to play a proactive role in protecting the vulnerable sections of the society."

The ministry is currently con-

ducting a survey to determine the extent of domestic abuse in Ethiopia.

A UN Women report in 2016 estimated that 28 percent of women endure physical and sexual violence and around 65 percent of Ethiopian women and girls have experienced female genital mutilation.

Back at the shelter, Dagim and Yeabsera - the twin sisters, and Chaltu, discuss their future.

All three want to work in jobs that support survivors like themselves.

"We want to work in counselling services to help future rape survivors as well as help our families economically," said Chaltu.

Is the monetary policy genie out of the bottle?

By Sasha Planting

A STATEMENT released by the ANC secretary-general Ace Magashule sets out the government's "five-year programme to translate the ANC's contract with the people of South Africa into action" and signals a sharp jump to the left. However, hours after its release, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni denied there was an agreement to alter the mandate of the Reserve Bank.

The National Executive Committee of the ANC met in its annual Lekgotla over the weekend of 1-3 June 2019 to chart the way forward for South Africa and its people.

It would not have been a relaxed meeting. The ANC is under pressure to act. First quarter GDP figures released on 4 June reflected the biggest quarterly drop in GDP growth since 2009 (-3.2%) and the lowest yearly growth rate since the beginning of 2016, when the full follow-on impact of Nenegate was felt.

Unemployment is at its worst level yet. Parastatal debt at Eskom, SAA and others is nearing R700-billion, and debt repayments are becoming due. Even the ANC, known for kicking the economic can down the road, cannot play the delay game anymore.

Yet while the ANC has committed to reducing unemployment from 27.6% to 14% in the next five years, it appears it cannot agree on how to achieve this.

Job creation, youth upskilling, economic and infrastructure development are priorities, yet the five-year plan reads like a wish-list. Unemployment will be reduced while the government focuses on a skilling and reskilling programme for 3.5 million young South Africans. Massive job creation will happen on the back of a re-imagined industrial strategy, job summit initiatives, Operation Phakisa and the public-private growth initiative, the statement says.

Key to this growth is monetary policy and the much-discussed and debated mandate of the South African Reserve Bank (SARB).

According to the plan, the ANC NEC Lekgotla also agreed to expand the SARB mandate beyond price stability to include growth and employment.

It also directed the ANC government to explore "quantity" (sic) easing measures to address inter-governmental debts to make funds available for developmental purposes.

"These measures should consider inflationary impact on the currency and the poor and all must be done to cushion them. This is consistent practice by developed countries to save their economies. This will go a long way in dealing decisively with the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality," the statement read.

"Modern monetary theory", or "unconventional monetary policy" as a fix-all solution to the country's woes is not a new idea in ANC. It has been discussed for years, and a flexible monetary policy regime was adopted as policy at its national conference in 2017.

The idea has gained traction since central banks across the developed world adopted the policy to stabilise the global financial system and prop up banks that were "too big to fail" after the global financial crisis of 2008.

Better known as quantitative easing, this sees a central bank, such as the US Federal Reserve, buying government bonds or other assets from the market, using newly created bank reserves (printing more money), in order to lower interest rates and increase the money supply.

"The ANC NEC Lekgotla today surprised with specific references to changing the SARB's monetary policy mandate, to exploring nationalisation and even adding that consideration should be given to quantitative easing to fund the developmental state," says Intellidex analyst Peter Attard Montalto.

"All of these factors will be blocked by the current SARB and National Treasury leadership as well as viewed sceptically by the president, in our view."

However, he said, while nothing may happen in the short to medium run in terms of actual change, severe damage can be done as these issues are pushed forward.

Indeed, it was just a few hours after the statement's release that Finance Minister Tito Mboweni reacted.

"I am now reaching a point of total exasperation with this continued attack and obsession with the South African Reserve Bank," he said in a statement. "I have explained on many occasions the purposes and functions of the South African Reserve Bank. What is the issue? What is the problem you want to solve? You blame the Reserve Bank for everything. Water, unemployment, electricity, growth... No people, No."

Yet despite a spirited defence of the independ-



Supporters of the South African National Congress (ANC) party celebrate outside the party headquarters at the Luthuli House in Johannesburg, South Africa, 12 May 2019. File photo

ence of the SARB and current monetary policy by the likes of Mboweni and SARB governor Lesetja Kganyago, the idea refuses to die.

What is enticing about quantitative easing is that it served its purpose in the US and Europe where the economies are strong and the currencies in which goods are paid for are reserve currencies such as dollars, euros and pounds, which ensures that inflation remains low, says economist Mike Schüssler.

However quantitative easing did little to ease inequality - in fact, it exacerbated it. And in countries such as Argentina, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, which have structural problems in their economies,

as South Africa does, increasing money supply will drive up inflation exponentially, Schüssler says.

In Venezuela, the government is printing money to pay its bills, with the result that inflation reached 1.30 million percent in April 2019, according to Trading Economics. Zimbabweans know that story only too well. Zimbabwe ran large fiscal deficits financed by printing money and experienced the second-most severe case of hyperinflation in history. On November 14, 2008, the annual inflation rate peaked at 897 sextillion percent every day, making Zimbabwe's 100-trillion dollar notes worthless.

"I really don't understand who

brought quantitative easing into this debate," noted associate professor in finance at UCT Co-Pierre Georg on Twitter. "Quantitative easing is a tool for central banks battling stubbornly low inflation. It's a tool of last resort and has never been used to finance intra-governmental funding shortfalls."

"This (announcement by Magashule) is not really a surprise," Lumkile Mondli, a senior lecturer at the Wits School of Economics and Business Science observed drily. "It's what the 57% voted for."

The ANC has observed the lessons of Venezuela and Zimbabwe, but perhaps it believes it can execute a similar policy



Thursday 6 June 2019

Foreign currency sales down by 17.2 percent last year

By Francis Kajubi

The crackdown by the Bank of Tanzania on bureaux de change shops since last year has reduced foreign exchange sales by 17.2 percent last year compared to 2017.

In its latest Consolidated Zonal Economic Performance report, Bank of Tanzania said that foreign exchange sales declined from US\$ 108.7m during the fourth quarter of 2017 compared to US\$90 m made last year.

Dar es Salaam and Northern regions dominated the foreign currency trading because of presence of business transactions and tourism related activities with sales of US\$64.1m and US\$24.5m respectively. Southern Highlands and Central regions performed fairly with US\$0.8m and US\$0.3m respectively.

"Following failure to comply with applicable regulations, the bank closed all bureau de change shops in Arusha in November 2018," the report stated while unveiling that foreign exchange purchases increased by 6.8 percent to US\$167.5m from US\$156.9m during the period under review.

The report further noted that reduced foreign currency trading also



Bank of Tanzania governor Prof Florens Luoga. File photo

affected cross border trade volumes which decreased by 25.5 percent to a surplus of 1.95trn/- against a surplus of 2.61trn/- during the same period of time.

The report however stated that decrease

in surplus was largely explained by 21.9 percent decline in total exports which happened in South Eastern and Lake Zones, which recorded a decline of 99.9 percent and 38.3 percent respectively.

"The performance of exports in the South Eastern zone was mainly affected by the decrease in exports of cashew-nuts while in the Lake Zone the decline was explained by the decrease in export of unre-

fined gold, rough diamond, cotton yarn and foodstuff," the BoT report added.

Last February, BoT conducted normal inspection of bureau de change shops in Dar es Salaam and established that many of the shops operated without following the law, regulations governing their businesses hence closing over 80 while leaving behind only five.

In a statement, the central bank said following its inspections which found out the irregularities, an exercise to deregister all culprit shops was implemented while warning that the exercise will continue for the foreseeable future. It further noted that during its December 2018 similar inspection exercise countrywide, it was established that many were operating clandestinely.

"We officially wrote the culprit shops asking owners to give reasons why their shops should not be deregistered because of failure to abide by regulations," the BoT statement stated while urging the public to trade their currencies at licensed commercial banks and Tanzania Posts Corporation forex shops.

Mozambique: GDP to grow 3.7% in 2019; low inflation to allow rate cuts

MAPUTO

THE economic environment in Mozambique will be favourable this year, with the economy growing 3.7% and the central bank lowering its benchmark interest rate to 12% from 15% now, said UK-based IHS Markit Consultants in a note sent on Thursday.

"IHS Markit assumes a favourable macroeconomic environment during this year, based on the principle elections this year go off peacefully," the firm's analysts wrote in response to Lusa on the prospects for the country's economy this

year. "Mozambique's GDP [growth] is expected to stay at 3.7% and low inflation should allow for the continued normalisation of monetary policy by the central bank, whose interest rate may fall to 12% at the end of this year."

According to the IHS Markit analysts, Mozambique's currency, the metical, should depreciate slightly against the dollar, thanks to support from higher price for the raw materials it produces "and the strong investment flow."

On the country's relations with the International Monetary Fund following the recent announcement of an outline agreement on

restructuring public debt securities, on which it has been in default since early last year, IHS Markit states: "Relations between the IMF and the Government should continue, but we do not expect any financial support from the Fund until the debt issues are resolved."

At issue is not only the formal resolution on the agreement relative to \$727.5 million in public debt securities, but also "regarding the other hidden loans, in the amount of 1.2 billion dollars, which are also in financial default, and on which there has been no formal announcement."



Moussa Faki, the de facto head of the African Union.

'Africa's new free trade deal will transform the continent'

ADDIS ABABA

WITHOUT much fanfare, Africa ushered in the world's largest free trade deal last week. It is a vital step in awakening the economic might of this vast, youthful continent.

The African Continental Free Trade Area agreement was the result of years of negotiation and was finally signed by 52 of the 55 African Union countries, including all of the North African Arab countries. Only three countries did not sign: the relatively small economy of Benin, the closed economy of Eritrea - and, unfortunately, Nigeria, the continent's largest economy.

The agreement creates a single market for goods and services across the whole of the continent, meaning that in theory, it should be as easy for an Egyptian to buy products from neighbouring Sudan as from Namibia, on the other side of the continent.

After so many years of divisions, and with a long, dark history of foreign exploitation, this free trade deal is a chance for Africa to put aside the barriers and borders - often created by outsiders, but upheld by Africans themselves - that have scarred the continent. African countries have been focused on trading with the outside world for many years. Now there is a chance to rediscover and trade directly with their neighbours.

Africa matters. With 60 per cent of its citizens under the age of 25, it is the world's youngest continent and in just a few years, by 2025, according to the UN, Africans will make up the largest share of the world's population collectively, more than China.

Billed as the largest free trade area in the world because it covers more countries than any other, the agreement covers a market of more than 1.3 billion people, with a combined GDP of more than \$3.4 trillion.

Yet trade between African countries is low, accounting for just 16 per cent of overall trade for the continent. By comparison, intra-European amounts to 70 per cent of the continent's total trade and in Asia, it is 60 per cent, meaning both continents overwhelmingly do trade within their own boundaries.

In Africa, the reverse is true. In some places, like in East Africa, a lot of trade is done with geographically close areas such as the Arabian Peninsula. But in most places, it is easier to export to Europe, North America or Asia than to sell to the country next door.

A legacy of colonialism has much to do with it. Maps of major infrastructure on the continent, such as roads and railway lines, show more routes lead from the interior of countries to the ports than from one country to the next. Too often, the pathways of the continent have been laid down to take resources out of Africa.

That remains true even today, with the majority of Africa's exports being raw materials - cotton, minerals, oil and food - that are then sent to other countries to be developed into products. It is deficits such as these that the free trade agreement is meant to address.

Ideally, the deal should allow companies to expand easily across borders, selling their products in new African countries and sourcing products from new suppliers.



NMB Kambage Branch staff members dine with orphans of Rahma Islamic Orphanage in Dodoma yesterday as part of celebrations to mark Eid El Fitr. Photo: courtesy of NMB.

Investors stampede into gold as top ETF jumps most since 2016

NEW YORK

THE biggest bullion-backed exchange-traded fund is suddenly getting a lot of love. Holdings in SPDR Gold Shares surged by the most in almost three years as the US-China trade war, signs of a slowdown, and speculation the Federal Reserve will cut rates combined to fan demand.

Assets in the SPDR ETF jumped 16.44 metric tons, or 2.2%, on Monday to post the biggest gain since

July 2016, while a tally of holdings in all ETFs saw the biggest increase this year. The swing toward the traditional haven came as gold prices surged above \$1 300 an ounce to hit the highest since February.

Gold's had a lacklustre year so far even as trade war concerns flared, with Fed policy makers signalling rates were on hold and the dollar gaining ground in the four months to May. Still on Monday, St Louis Fed President James Bullard weighed in,

saying a cut may be warranted soon, and markets are now discounting at least two quarter-point reductions by year-end. Bullion, which doesn't bear yields, tends to benefit from a low-rate environment.

"Gold is once again trying to reclaim its role as a safe haven amid growing trade tensions and consequent risks to growth," Joni Teves, a strategist at UBS Group AG, said in a note on Monday. The price "looks like it is getting comfortable above

\$1 300, with aspirations of testing this year's highs."

On Tuesday, there were more signs of macro weakness from across Asia as revised data showed South Korea's economy shrank 0.4% in the first quarter, the worst performance since the financial crisis, while the purchasing managers index in trade-dependent Singapore dropped below 50. Spot gold was steady at \$1 326.21 an ounce at 7:49 a.m. in London.

Climate Forum, Hivos in pact to push govt investment into sources of green energy

By Francis Kajubi

STATE investment in renewable energy sources will increasingly come under scrutiny as Forum on Climate Change (FCC) team up with international not for profit organization, Hivos International to lobby for such projects.

For the next 20 months, FCC and Hivos will implement a project dubbed 'Educating and pushing for renewable and alternative energy sources' which targets to research on what measures have been taken by the government in supporting use of renewable energy sources from household to national level.

FCC Project Coordinator, Euphrasia Shayo said during celebrations to mark 'World Environmental Day' held in Dar es Salaam earlier this week that her organization and Hivos have signed an agreement last month to undertake the project.

"The project seeks to establish what budget the

government allocates for implementation of renewable energy sector growth in the country and advise accordingly," said Shayo who further pointed out that government's action is important in investing in renewable energy sources.

She said under the project, over five million people will be sensitized on the importance of investing in renewable energy sources. "We are going to hold seminars and workshops on this matter with the public at various levels including higher learning institutions, the private sector, researchers, policy and decision makers but also the media," Shayo noted.

According to her, the project starts effectively early next month in Dar es Salaam, followed by the central zone regions

before being rolled out countrywide. "As I speak Tanzania has neither law nor policy that encourages investment in renewable energy sources and consumption. We are going to push for enactment of the law and policy," the FCC Project Coordinator added.

Hivos and FCC plus their other partners want to demonstrate that renewable energy is not a dream, but feasible and simply the best choice to adopt by the country because its readily available, affordable and healthy food to all, in particular low-income earners.

A joint Energy Progress Report for 2019 by the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World

Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), said sustained efforts are needed to push governments fully embark on renewable energy consumption by 2030.

"Almost three billion people remain without access to clean cooking energy in 2017 residing mainly in Sub Sahara Africa. Under current and planned policies, the number of people without access would be 2.2 billion in 2030, with significant impact on health, environment, and gender equality," stated the report.

It notes that there has been a modest increase in global total renewable energy consumption from 17.5 percent in 2016 against 16.6 percent in 2010. "Efforts are needed to put the world on track to meet the SDG7 targets," she underlined.



Tabu Shaibu, Head of Public Relations at Ilala Municipal Council, goes through a Mobisol's renewable energy products brochure at an exhibition held in Dar es Salaam earlier this week to mark World Environment Day. Left is FCC Executive Director, Rebecca Muna and right is George Naivasha, a Mobisol Sales Officer. Photo: Francis Kajubi.

Emirates NBD ties up with Amazon Web Services to build 'a bank of the future'

DUBAI

EMIRATES NBD, Dubai's largest lender by assets, has joined forces with Amazon Web Services to offer a more personalised banking experience to users by leveraging the latest technologies.

The bank will use AWS' artificial intelligence, data analytics, Internet of Things, image recognition and machine learning capabilities to simplify its customer services. "We look forward to use AWS' technologies and innovation practices to make banking more easy and in-

tuitive for our customers," said Suvo Sarkar, senior executive vice president and group head - retail banking and wealth management - at Emirates NBD.

Lenders in the Arabian Gulf, especially in the UAE, are focused on harnessing technology to gain an edge in a fiercely competitive banking market.

UAE financial institutions such as Emirates NBD and Mashreq Bank are investing in digitising their operations to reduce their physical footprint. While Mashreq Bank will spend at least Dh500 mil-

lion over the next five years on digitisation as it looks to close half of its branches in the UAE this year, Emirates NBD is spending more than Dh1 billion on new technology.

Seattle-based AWS said in 2017 it will open at least three data centres in Bahrain to serve customers across the Middle East region. This will help organisations speed up their digital transformation initiatives and innovate more rapidly for the citizens of the region, the company said. To focus more on the Middle East market, last month AWS added Ara-

bic language support to Amazon Polly - a service that turns simple text into lifelike-sounding speech. Emirates NBD is using Amazon Polly in its automated call centre to improve customer interactions by delivering natural voice banking experiences.

"Companies are using machine learning in their businesses and AWS offers the broadest portfolio of machine learning services to help them solve some of their biggest challenges," said Andy Isherwood, managing director of AWS at Europe, Middle East and Africa.



AWS will open at least three data centres in Bahrain to serve customers across the Middle East.



IMF managing director, Christine Lagarde.

Lagarde approves IMF economic programme to support Zimbabwe

HARARE

IMF managing director, Christine Lagarde has approved a Staff Monitored Programme to support Zimbabwe's new currency and other economic reforms, although the institution said the country's currency reform measures have added "significant uncertainty" to the country's inflationary and interest rate outlook.

The Staff Monitored Programme (SMP) runs from May 15, 2019 to March 15, 2020, the IMF said on Friday. The institution highlighted that "economic policies under the SMP emphasise the restoration of macroeconomic and financial sector stability."

The program underpins Zimbabwe's bid for a "large fiscal adjustment" programme, the elimination of central bank financing of the fiscal deficit as well as the "adoption of reforms to allow the effective functioning of market-based foreign exchange and debt markets".

Among the reforms include privatising state-owned enterprises which have been a drain on the fiscus, enhancing governance - especially in the areas of procurement and revenue administration. There will also be reforms to improve the business environment.

"The SMP also includes important safeguards to protect the country's most vulnerable people," the IMF said. This comes following mounting pressure and opposition to the government's austerity measures which have

brought on more taxes and a drop of subsidies, among other things.

Permanent secretary at the finance ministry, George Guvamatanga, has said the government will institute measures to protect the poor and vulnerable. This includes subsidising public transport in light of fuel price hikes following the liberalisation of petroleum import financing.

The IMF however notes that Zimbabwe remains in debt distress, with external arrears of \$5.7bn (about R83bn) at the end of 2017. This was preventing access to "new financing from the IFIs (international financing institutions) and limiting access to external financing to non-traditional official and commercial creditors".

One of the major worries for the IMF regarding Zimbabwe is the fact that the country's currency reforms have added significant uncertainty to the outlook for inflation and interest rates, as well as the level of GDP at the new domestic currency.

"These large uncertainties make it particularly difficult to assess the public debt outlook at present, but the expectation is that an updated debt sustainability analysis will be conducted at the first review of the SMP," the IMF said.

The IMF noted the administration of President Emmerson Mnangagwa is committed to addressing the macroeconomic imbalances dogging the economy as well as removing structural distortions to facilitate a resumption in growth.

Rwandan state-owned forests to be privatised

KIGALI

THE government has embarked on a campaign to privatise all the state-owned forests in a move it believes will boost proper management, use and productivity of the forests.

In an exclusive interview with The New Times on Monday, Prime Ngabonziza, the Director General of Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority (RWFA), said the move seeks to ensure that state-owned forests are given to private companies to manage, exploit and replant trees.

"We started privatising state-owned forests, our assessment revealed that forests can be well-managed and maintained if they are privatised," he said.

"We sign an agreement with private companies to manage and exploit them for use in their respective activities, but they also have a responsibility to replant trees to avoid deforestation," he added.

The biggest companies the Government had involved so far include tea factories, companies interested in wood and timber products such as New Forest Company that ventures into pylons production and other furniture, according to Ngabonziza.

Another company, Sawmill East Africa from Lithuania, is investing in the production of high-quality wood for carpenters and construction companies. He added that they were also dealing with other investors who have expressed interest in paper production, among others.

He said the programme to consolidate forests started in the districts of Rwamagana, Gakenke, Rulindo and Gicumbi. "We want to ensure that the forests benefit owners than cutting them before they are mature, we hope that this can be possible if forest owners are in cooperatives," he added.

He said that about 30 per cent is covered by forests and there is need to keep planting more trees in the country based on the areas such as in pastures, around the rivers and along the roads as well as agroforestry.

In the recent interview The New Times, Agnis Magelinskas, the Managing Director of Sawmill East Africa, said that they have already established nurseries and planned to plant millions of trees. "We believe that planting is very important for the new Rwandan generation to be able to enjoy plentiful and healthy forests, as well for the future wood industry, and we are determined to give our full attention to it," he said.

He noted that as the first international firm in wood production in Rwanda, they are investing in innovative technologies such as wood drying kiln machines, natural chemicals for preservations among other things.

He added that they had already ordered for very modern machines designed and adapted specifically to Rwanda's industrial needs and this region's wood type, having invested into the main focal point-speed and quality. "In the future, we are planning to continue investments into machinery, people training and modern technologies," he said.

Only KCB takeover can save NBK, says governor

NAIROBI

THE National Bank of Kenya (NBK) faces imminent collapse if it is not taken over by KCB Group in the proposed merger of the two lenders, Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) Governor Patrick Njoroge has warned.

Dr Njoroge, while appearing before Parliament Tuesday, said failure to rescue the struggling bank would be disastrous to its 650,000 customers as well as the shareholders of the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE)-listed firm.

KCB Group, Kenya's biggest bank, has offered to take over the ailing institution through a share swap deal. "NBK isn't a small institution and letting it collapse will be disastrous to its over 650,000 customers and the financial sector at large," Dr Njoroge told the Finance and National Planning Committee of the National Assembly.

NBK's core-capital position has deteriorated from Sh10 billion in 2016 to Sh2 billion as at March this year, reflecting an 80 percent drop. Dr Njoroge linked the poor performance to mismanagement, political interference and a poor business model.

NBK, which operates 82 branches countrywide, requires an injection of at least Sh13 billion to stay afloat and to be in compliance with statutory re-

quirements. "The resuscitation of NBK is urgent and if there is a mis-step it will have a significant implication in the financial sector," Dr Njoroge told the House committee chaired by Kipkelion East MP Joseph Limo.

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and the government, through the National Treasury, are the principal shareholders of NBK with 48 percent and 23 percent stakes respectively. Dr Njoroge said he is in support of the takeover bid by the KCB Group since it is the most viable option to move the troubled bank to safety.

"This option is best for shareholders because it strengthens the capital position right away. The next step will be strengthening the business model so it becomes a solid bank," he said. NBK's full-year earnings in 2018 stood at Sh7 million from the Sh410.78 million posted in 2017. Net earnings in the first quarter of 2019 jumped to Sh106.33 million from a loss of Sh278.54 million over the same period last year.

Loans and advances to customers dropped by Sh5.22 billion or 10 percent to Sh45 billion in the first quarter compared to last year's Sh51.14 billion. NBK has non-performing loans to the tune of Sh30 billion.

In 2007, the government pumped in about Sh20 billion into the bank, but the capital injection did not realise much. This was followed by a bungled



Central Bank governor Dr Patrick Njoroge.

rights issue in 2013 in which it had intended to raise Sh13.2 billion, worsening the lender's financial standing.

Reforms
Defending KCB's acquisition of the bank, Dr Njoroge said no investor was willing to work with NBK and that its problems are the reason why its shareholders have refused to pump in more money.

"Nobody wants to work with a weak bank and having seen the management at NBK, strengthening is unlikely. Leadership is

key and the bank needs a team that can turn around this institution. For this to happen, you do not need an economist to run the bank, but a banker and less of political appointments," he said.

The CBK boss noted that the reforms at NBK started in 2016 after the problems were discovered, forcing an audit of its financials, which revealed that its IT system had been messed up and that the numbers it claimed to have were not accurate.

The lender's core capital is sig-

nificantly in breach of regulatory capital ratios and therefore constrained in its ability to lend. Although its liquidity ratio is above the minimum requirement of 20 percent, its total capital to total risk-weighted assets stood at a deficiency of or negative 10.7 percent as at the end of the first three months of the year.

NBK's core capital to total deposit liabilities stood at a negative or deficiency of 5.8 percent while core capital to total risk weighted assets stands at negative 8.1 percent. This could be

having a bearing on the bank's huge decline in its financial performance and lack of interest from its customers to invest more money in it.

National Treasury support
"It should not be forgotten that the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) - the capital markets regulator - penalised some of the bank's senior managers involved in illicit financial dealings," Dr Njoroge said. The NSSF and the National Treasury are supporting KCB Group's takeover bid.

Last week, KCB shareholders also backed the bank's plan to buy NBK. And on Monday, the NBK board recommended that shareholders agree to the deal. The bank will hold its AGM on June 14. In a circular to shareholders, NBK said the proposed transaction currently values each of its shares at either Sh3.78, Sh4 and Sh4.49 based on various scenarios.

It is expected that NBK will end up with shares equivalent to a 4.59 percent stake in KCB. Meanwhile, two people yesterday moved to court seeking to stop the proposed acquisition. Evans Aseto and John Kiptoo argue that the acquisition is being conducted in an opaque manner to avoid public scrutiny in a direct contravention of the Constitution.

They have named CBK and the Competition Authority as interested parties in the case. They argue that the intended acquisition might lead to massive loss of jobs.

Standard Bank closing even more branches than previously planned

JOHANNESBURG

STANDARD Bank has announced the full list of branches that have been or will be closed, as part of the realignment of "its retail and business banking delivery model". It will shut 104 branches, 13 more than the 91 it originally announced in March.

The bulk of those being shut - 49 - are in Gauteng, with a further 11 and 10 in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, respectively. Nearly one in every five Standard Bank branches is being closed down.

Once the branches are closed (likely affecting more than the 1 200 employees first announced, given the larger number of closures), the bank will have around 525 branches in South Africa (down from 629 at the end of 2018). The ATMs at most (probably all) of these branches will disappear. For those branches in malls, single ATMs are likely already located elsewhere in the centre, while the bank will surely install ATMs at the locations of shuttered branches which are not near other ATMs.

The author argued in April that the cuts were long overdue, more so given the fact that Standard Bank and Absa were behind the curve. Nedbank has been shrinking the floor space of its branch network since 2014 (versus simply shutting branches), while FNB has been catching up quickly. Following these cuts, Standard Bank will have the smallest number of branches of the five large retail banks.

The cuts by Standard Bank weren't random. It knows precisely how many (primary bank) customers each of these branches was serving.



Standard Bank CEO Sim Shabalala

Layer this together with the cost of occupancy - primarily rental - and the staff overhead, and it would've been easy for the bank to calculate which branches simply weren't economically viable.

With some older branches, the cost of refurbishment would've been factored in too. Obviously, the location of the next-nearest branch was also an influence.

Some closures are obvious. The Standard Bank branch at Old Mutual's Mutual Park campus in Cape Town, which despite the managed separation still has a cooperation agreement with Nedbank, surely never really made much sense. (Besides, the Pinelands branch is just over 1km away!) So too the branch

in MTN's head office (considering their financial services joint venture quietly died over half a decade ago).

In April, Moneyweb questioned some "obvious examples of overlap. In northern Johannesburg, Standard Bank has a branch at Bryanston Shopping Centre and another at Nicolway, three kilometres up the road. There's a similar situation at Melrose Arch and Rosebank Mall, or at Dainfern Square and Fourways Crossing (each less than 4km from each other)".

All three of these branches - Bryanston, Melrose Arch and Dainfern Square - are among the 104 closures that have been announced. Opening branches at Dainfern Square and Melrose Arch (both under five years old) were examples of spectacularly bad planning. Add to this the branches at Forest Hill, Menlyn Maine and Newtown Junction (all recent openings) which are closing.

Arguably, the hardest hit province is the Northern Cape, considering the vast distances between the affected small towns. Outlying areas in the Free State and Eastern Cape are similarly hit.

Debt and aggressive credit card selling among top UAE consumer complaints, says Central Bank

ABU DHABI

THE five top consumer complaints raised by banking customers in the Emirates relate to debt, delays, aggressive credit card selling, as well as bank account and remittance issues, according to the Central Bank of the UAE's 2018 annual report.

The regulator said its review of the "thousands of visits and calls" processed by its Customer Contact Centre, found top concerns last year involved debt management, a refusal or delay by banks in issuing necessary documentation, aggressive sales tactics for credit cards and issues related to the opening and closing of accounts and remittances.

"The Consumer Protection Department (CPD) is addressing these issues with the financial institutions and where necessary will take enforcement measures," the central bank said. "In addition to providing information to consumers, the centre works with the banks and their customers in an effort to encourage resolution of customer complaints."

The UAE has ramped up its efforts to curb irresponsible lending and banking practices in recent years, rolling out a number of new regulations to strengthen consumer confidence in the sector. Al Etihad Credit Bureau, which opened in November 2014, also brought more transparency to the lending industry by assembling a credit record of the nation's financially active residents.

In its latest report, the central bank said its CPD department, created in 2017, has helped contribute to the "stability of a highly competitive financial market". The department's mandate has gone on to include consumer education and awareness and strengthen regulatory oversight.

To move its agenda forward in 2018, the central bank added three new initiatives to strengthen its consumer protection framework. The first measure, a new regulation to manage dormant accounts, was rolled out on April 24.

It set out a new framework for the control and protection of such accounts with rules for deposit accounts, unclaimed bankers' drafts or cheques, unpaid dividends paid to shareholders and unclaimed deposits in safety deposit boxes. Previously, banks were only obligated to report the number of dormant accounts they held.

BANKING & FINANCE

Now Chinese students at elite universities are on Trump's trade war hit list

NEW YORK

First trade, then technology - now talent. The Trump administration has started taking aim at China's best and brightest in the US, scrutinising researchers with ties to Beijing and restricting student visas.

Several Chinese graduate students and academics told Bloomberg in recent weeks that they found the US academic and job environment increasingly unfriendly. Emory University dismissed two Chinese-American professors on May 16, and China's Education Ministry issued a warning on Monday on the risks of studying in the US as student visa

rejections soar.

"I'm nervous, worried, even saddened by the unnecessary conflict," said Liu Yuanli, founding director of the Harvard School of Public Health's China Initiative and now serves as dean of Peking Union Medical College's School of Public Health in Beijing. "The restrictions on Chinese scholars and students are irrational and go against the very core value that makes US a great nation."

Mr Liu is a participant in China's controversial "Thousand Talents" recruitment programme, which began in 2008 as a way for Beijing to encourage its brightest citizens

abroad to help develop the economy back home. More recently, China has sought to play down the programme as US concerns about its activities grow.

Increasing suspicion
The developments underscore how the trade conflict is fundamentally changing the relationship between the world's two largest economies, from one of greater reliance to increasing suspicion. President Donald Trump's expanding curbs on Chinese goods and China's move to set up a sweeping blacklist of "unreliable" foreign entities since their trade talks broke down have

helped fuel new Wall Street warnings about a possible global recession.

Education has for decades been a strong point of cooperation between the nations, with a surge of Chinese students filling American university coffers while giving the country access to some of the world's best research hubs. The US hosted more than 360,000 students from China last year, according to a report by the Institute of International Education, more than any other country.

Still, growth has slowed amid the trade tensions, with the number of students rising 3.6 per cent last year - or roughly half the pace of the

previous year. The share of Chinese government-sponsored students refused visas increased to 13.5 per cent in the first three months of this year, compared with 3.2 per cent in the same period of 2018, according to new Chinese government data.

Slower renewals
Annual student visa renewals, which previously took about three weeks, are now

dragging on for months, according to several Chinese doctorate candidates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who asked not to be named over concerns their career prospects could be affected. One of the students said they were leaning toward returning home after graduation, worried that the scrutiny of Chinese scholars could continue for years.

WORLD

World Bank lowers 2019 global growth forecast amid rising trade tensions

WASHINGTON

THE World Bank on Tuesday lowered its global growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6 percent, citing growing trade tensions, among other factors, according to the newly released semi-annual Global Economic Prospects report.

"Heightened policy uncertainty, including a recent re-escalation of trade tensions between major economies, has been accompanied by a deceleration in global investment and a decline in confidence," the report said.

Global gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2019 was downgraded to a "weaker-than-expected" 2.6

percent, 0.3 percentage point below a previous estimate in January, the report said.

Global growth is projected to inch up to 2.7 percent in 2020. World Bank President David Malpass told reporters in a teleconference that global growth has weakened since the January issue of the report, and "momentum remains fragile."

"The global economic outlook, in both the near- and long-term, is confronting substantial challenges," Malpass said, noting that downside risks to growth include rising trade barriers, a buildup of government debt, and deepening slowdowns in major economies.



Ayhan Kose, director of the prospects group at the World Bank

Global trade growth in 2019, in particular, was revised down a full percentage point, to 2.6 percent, the weakest since the global financial crisis, the report said.

Ayhan Kose, director of the prospects group at the World Bank, said in the teleconference that if trade tensions escalate and much higher tariffs are put on "a very large segment" of global trade, "it is very likely that we will see a deeper slowdown."

"The slowdown will take place in major economies, will have a significant spillover through trade channels, through confidence channels, through commodity markets," Kose said, noting that the current 2.7 percent forecast for global growth in 2020 could be cut by a full percentage point to 1.7 percent if trade tensions worsen.

If there is "an improvement" in the trade disputes, it will help boost confidence, reduce uncertainty and "put a floor" on the slowdown, Kose said.

"This is a path that policymakers can take and can lead to a much better prospect for global economic growth." In the report, growth among emerging market and developing economies is projected to fall to a four-year low of 4 percent in 2019, as a number of economies are coping with the impact of financial stress and political uncertainty. Growth is forecast to recover to 4.6 percent in 2020.

The World Bank maintained its growth projection for China this year at 6.2 percent, citing "a deceleration in global trade, stable commodity prices, supportive global financial conditions, and the ability of authorities to calibrate supportive monetary and fiscal policies to address external challenges and other headwinds."

Growth among advanced economies, meanwhile, is anticipated to slow to 1.7 percent in 2019, with the euro area growth projected at 1.2 percent, the report said.

The U.S. growth is forecast to ease to 2.5 percent this year, and decelerate to 1.7 percent in 2020. "Governments also need to make debt management and transparency a high priority so that new debt adds to growth and investment," Malpass said.

Ceyla Pazarbasioglu, World Bank vice president for equitable growth, finance and Institutions, said in a press release that "while almost every economy faces headwinds, the poorest countries face the most daunting challenges because of fragility, geographic isolation, and entrenched poverty." "Unless they can get onto a faster growth trajectory, the goal of lowering extreme poverty under 3 percent by 2030 will remain unreachable," Pazarbasioglu said.

Agencies

Zelensky's stance very significant in Donbass negotiation process, says Kremlin

MOSCOW



LEONID Kuchma, former Ukrainian president appointed to represent Kiev in the Contact Group for the settlement in Eastern Ukraine, is an influential and experienced politician; however, the stance of current Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky is of key significance during the Donbass negotiations, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday.

"Kuchma is an influential figure, an experienced figure who knows a lot about this issue. However, the conceptual stance of the head of [the Ukrainian] state is of key importance here," he said.

On June 3, Ukraine's President Vladimir Zelensky appointed Kuchma as Kiev's envoy to the Contact Group. Kuchma previously served as envoy to the Minsk talks in 2014-2018.

The next round of Minsk talks on Donbass settlement was scheduled for yesterday.

Agencies

ROK: DPRK ignores calls for joint African swine efforts

SEOUL

The Republic of Korea (ROK) said yesterday the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has so far ignored its calls for joint efforts to stem the spread of highly contagious African swine fever following an outbreak near DPRK's border with China.

ROK's agricultural ministry said that blood tests of pigs from some 340 farms near the inter-Korean border conducted through Tuesday came back negative.

Hundreds of fences and traps have been installed around the farms to prevent pigs from being infected by wild boars that roam in and out of DPRK.

But the lack of bilateral cooperation renders ROK helpless in preventing the disease from reaching DPRK farms near the border. There's concern that an outbreak in ROK would deal a significant blow to a massive industry that involves 6,300 farms raising more than 11 million pigs.

ROK's Unification Ministry, which deals with inter-Korean affairs, said the DPRK hasn't responded to proposals for joint quarantine efforts since it reported an outbreak near its border with China to the World Organization for Animal Health, or the OIE, last week.

The DPRK said 77 of the 99 pigs at the cooperative farm in Jagang province died of the disease and the remaining 22 pigs were culled.

The outbreak comes as the DPRK has significantly slowed its engagement with ROK following the collapse of a February summit between DPRK leader Kim Jong-un and President Donald Trump over disagreements for sanctions relief in exchange for DPRK's nuclear disarmament.

Lee Sang-min, the Unification Ministry's spokesman, said the DPRK has not separately communicated with the ROK over the outbreak although the Koreans last year agreed to share information when contagious diseases break out.

"It seems we will have to wait longer for the North's response," he said.

The DPRK is also referred to as North Korea.

African swine fever, which has decimated pig herds in China and other Asian countries, is harmless to humans but for pigs is fatal and highly contagious. There is no known cure or vaccine.

DPRK state media in recent weeks have published several articles detailing the spread of African swine fever across Asia, but none of them so far has specifically mentioned that the disease has reached the DPRK.

"To prevent African swine fever from spreading, it's crucial to detect and slaughter the pigs infected with the virus at the right time," DPRK scientist Jon Sung-chil said in an interview published yesterday on Pyongyang's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper, which called for an all-out effort by the DPRK's farming industry and homes to prevent the spread of the disease.

The ROK government believes the DPRK raises about 2.6 million pigs in 14 government-run or cooperative farms. Oh Beom-seok, an official from ROK's agriculture ministry, said the ROK is prepared to provide diagnosis kits, disinfectants and other equipment should the DPRK ask for help.

"We are trying to gain as much information possible from the OIE or North Korean officials there ... but so far, there has been no additional report of an outbreak (in North Korea)," Oh said.

The ministry said government workers have caught more than 1,000 wild boars in ROK for blood tests, which have so far come back negative.

While workers plan to test 2,000 more wild boars, the ministry said none of the animals so far was caught in border areas, where a ban on hunting rifles make the animals harder to control.

ROK's Defense Ministry, which is monitoring the movement of wild boars through heat sensors installed along the border, said it would be difficult for wild boars to cross over barbed wire fences in the mine-scattered border zone. But government officials say there's still a possibility that the animals could swim across rivers.

Agencies

China's white paper helps send message, experts say

BEIJING

CHINA'S newly released white paper on trade talks with the United States doesn't represent an escalation in the dispute, but sends a message that Beijing doesn't want to be "pushed around" on any terms of the deal, according to experts and government officials.

To reach a deal that is "both sustainable and enforceable" requires the US to negotiate in good faith and not engage in yet another round of backtracking, they said.

"I wouldn't call the white paper an escalation, but it does seem like China was sending a message that it will not be pushed around," said Simon Lester, the associate director of the Cato Institute's Herbert A. Stiefel Center for Trade Policy Studies.

"China's Position on the China-US Economic and Trade Consultations", a white paper report released on Sunday by the State Council Information Office, followed an earlier white paper in September. It reiterated that Beijing does not want a trade war, but is not afraid of one, that it won't back down on "major issues of

principle", and that its only intention is to reach a mutually acceptable deal.

The US has "persisted with exorbitant demands, maintained the additional tariffs imposed since the friction began and insisted on including mandatory requirements concerning China's sovereign affairs" in the trade deal with China, according to the white paper.

The US Trade Representative and the US Department of Treasury released on Monday a statement in response to the white paper.

An unnamed spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on Tuesday that it is groundless to accuse China of engaging in unfair trade with the US as the latter "has benefited tremendously" from the two-way trade, despite the trade deficit.

The US government has disregarded international obligations and duties, pressured companies from other countries and disrupted the global production and value chains, the spokesperson said, adding that it could not be more easy to see who is disrespecting international rules and resorting to "unfair" approaches.



The State Council Information Office issued a white paper to provide a comprehensive picture of the China-US economic and trade consultations. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

The spokesperson said that the US government frequently made changes concerning relevant demands and pursuits during the past rounds of bilateral trade negotiations, but Washington still accused Beijing of backtracking during the talks.

That is actually shifting blame, and is unacceptable to China, the spokesperson added.

"The statement made by the US is totally calling black white and singing the same old tune, which does not make sense," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a daily news conference on

Tuesday. Dialogue and consultation are the right ways to resolve trade friction, he said, adding that slapping tariffs on others will not make the US great again, but only damage it.

Zhang Yansheng, chief research fellow at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said the US statement's accusations of "China backpedaling on important elements of what the parties had agreed to" is groundless.

"When consultations are in progress, and as long as China hasn't

signed an agreement, there is nothing to criticize if China proposes adjustments to the agreement," he said.

On the contrary, China's white paper, which clearly discloses the history and current situation of the ongoing Sino-US economic and trade consultations, including how the US administration backtracked on its promises, sent a clear message to the international community of China's strong willingness to work together with the US to reach a mutually beneficial and win-win agreement, Zhang said.

Lester has said in an earlier article that US President Donald Trump's administration's approach to the trade dispute is tough, but is unlikely to be effective. He suggested that in negotiations with China, the US and its allies "have to be willing" to give something.

"I don't think the tariffs will help achieve a deal, and my guess is that neither side will hit the brakes unless the economy starts to decline," Lester said, adding that there is still the possibility of a deal if both sides want one.

Xinhua

41-year-old woman may become youngest ever Danish PM

By Bloomberg

DENMARK could soon have its youngest ever prime minister, as voters look set to pick a left-leaning government led by a woman promising more welfare, higher taxes and tougher rules for banks.

Most polls point to a victory for the Social Democrats, which are poised to oust the center-right government of Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen in yesterday's election.

The Social Democrats, a party with strong backing in the trade union movement, have led 20 of Denmark's 34 post-war cabinets.

Their 41-year-old leader, Mette Frederiksen, has restored the party's fortunes by combining a traditional palette of left-wing pledges with a more restrictive approach to immigration. That's proved key in helping her draw voters away from the populist Danish People's Party on which Rasmussen has relied.

The 55-year-old Rasmussen has recently made clear he wants to break away from his traditional allies. He says that could include forming a government with the Social Democrats, though Frederiksen was quick to dismiss such an alliance.

But Wednesday's election might



be a rare case in which Denmark is left with an inconclusive result as traditional political groupings

are abandoned, opening the door to new coalitions that may require protracted talks to forge.

Here's what you need to know about the election

Rasmussen, whose Venstre party means "Left" in Danish and which is referred to as the Liberal Party in the English-speaking world, has pledged 69 billion kroner (US\$10.4 billion) in extra spending for the welfare state. His efforts to form a German-style "grand coalition" with the Social Democrats have met with opposition from his own party.

The most likely post-election scenario sees Frederiksen's party governing on its own and seeking

parliamentary support from conservatives on topics like immigration and on other left-wing parties for everything else, according to Kasper M Hansen, a politics professor at the University of Copenhagen.

There are a total of 13 parties running in the election, including two new nationalist movements – the anti-Muslim Hard Line of Rasmus Paludan and the free-market New Right of Pernille Vermund – which are seen splintering the anti-immigration vote and weakening Rasmussen's ally, the Danish People's Party.

Agencies

China's peaceful development a rising tide that lifts all boats

BEIJING

FLYING the flag of "America First," the United States, the largest beneficiary of economic globalization, seems bent on sailing against the trend of the times toward its imagined destination of "making America great again."

As it stirs up trade disputes, withdraws from international organizations and treaties, and rebuffs interdependence, the sole superpower in the world has become a lone wolf with unilateralism and protectionism as its

credo.

That has put the global village on edge, particularly as the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century with raging conflicts, unbalanced growth, climate threats, trust shortages and governance deficits.

Against such a challenging backdrop, more and more people around the world are looking to the East for answers, and many have found inspiration and hope in the impressive peaceful development of the world's largest developing country.

China's transformation over recent decades is born of not only the hard work of its people, but also its devotion to openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation.

With consistent adherence to the opening-up policy and active integration into the global economy, China has grown into the biggest exporter and second biggest importer in the world.

U.S. legendary investor Warren Buffett said he wishes for a follow-on investment in China as he felt sure the

country will "grow a lot over time."

China has boomed, and it wishes the best to others too. It understands the interdependence and interactivity within the global village, and always stands ready to share opportunities and achieve common development with others.

China International Import Expo held last year drew over 400,000 participants from across the world. The number of new foreign-invested companies in China increased by nearly 70 percent in 2018 year-on-year. China

also passed the Foreign Investment Law in March to further improve the protection of foreign investors.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), proposed by Beijing to improve regional cooperation and trans-continental interconnectivity, has boosted infrastructure construction and green development as well as cultural exchanges along and beyond the ancient Silk Road trade routes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the BRI meets the interests of the majority. Takehiko Nakao, president

of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), said his institution prefers more engagement in the BRI, which is in line with the ADB's principles.

Also in its blood is China's commitment to improving global governance. Safeguarding multilateralism, helping solve regional conflicts through dialogue, and taking the lead in addressing global issues like climate change, China has played a responsible and constructive role in international affairs.

Xinhua

Xi's visit to open up prospects for China-Russia ties

BEIJING

CHINA-Russia relations are set to embrace yet another "highlight moment" as Chinese President Xi Jinping traveled to Russia yesterday for a new state visit and the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

During the trip, Xi and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, are expected to draw a blueprint for the future development of bilateral ties, and lift the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination to a new stage.

A VISIT SIGNIFICANT TO RELATIONS

Expectations are running high for the three-day tour, which comes as China-Russia relations are now standing at a new starting point 70 years after the two countries established diplomatic ties.

Xi and Putin will review the achievements and experience in the development of the bilateral relationship over the past seven decades, chart the course for its future development, and further elevate the China-Russia partnership, said Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Hanhui at a press briefing.

The two leaders, according to Zhang, will also sign or witness the signing of important cooperation documents, and attend a gathering celebrating the 70 anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties.

Thanks to the strategic guidance by the two heads of state and joint efforts of both sides, recent decades have seen the China-Russia partnership upgraded multiple times.

Xi's visit, said Zhang, will "consolidate the political foundation of Sino-Russian relations, reaffirm their mutual support to each other on issues involving respective core and major concerns, and ensure the ties will not be affected by any change in the in-

ternational situation."

The visit will "be of milestone significance in the development of bilateral relations," and "surely promote greater development ... under the new situation," Zhang added.

COOPERATION YIELDS FRUITS

As bilateral relations grow closer, practical cooperation between the two neighboring large countries has also been advancing on the fast track.

Bilateral trade hit a record high of over US\$100 billion in 2018, up 27.1 percent year-on-year, the highest pace among the top 10 trading partners of China.

Cooperation has been deepening in energy, nuclear power and aerospace sectors. The first ship carrying liquefied natural gas from Russia's Yamal Peninsula in the Arctic traversed the sea to China last summer, and millions of tons more will be supplied every year.

A second line of the China-Russia oil pipeline began commercial operation in 2018, and the east-route natural gas pipeline is expected to supply gas to China by the end of this year.

The two countries have also inked a package of deals to expand nuclear cooperation, and their joint development of a wide-body long-haul passenger jet is making steady progress.

New domains of cooperation keep emerging, including digital economy, small- and medium-sized enterprises, high technology, Far East development and Arctic exploration.

In addition, people-to-people exchanges are booming. The friendship between the two peoples has been cemented through a rich variety of programs at national and local levels in such areas as culture, language, tourism, media and youth.

The Russia-China friendship absolutely serves the long-term interests of both countries and their peoples,



Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) meets with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Nov 30, 2018. (File photo)

said Dmitry Novikov, first deputy chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Russian State Duma.

Bilateral cooperation, which is at "the highest level in history," provides "an advanced cooperation model" for today's world, he added.

The strategic partnership not only benefits the two countries, but plays a key role on the global stage for promoting win-win cooperation, illustrated by the joint efforts made to establish the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the trilateral cooperation among China, Mongolia and Russia, and their coordination within the frameworks of BRICS, Group of 20 and others.

FOR A FAIR, SAFER WORLD

During the visit, Xi will attend SPIEF for the first time, where he

will address a plenary session and expound China's stance on sustainable development.

Xi's attendance has been lauded by Russian media as conferring a special status to the forum.

As trade protectionism and unilateralism are mounting, the Chinese president is also expected to reaffirm Beijing's readiness to work with all parties to promote multilateralism and improve global governance for the common development and prosperity of the global village.

The annual high-profile international business gathering has provided a platform for Russia, which has been suffering harsh economic and financial sanctions from the West, to advocate fair competition and oppose protectionism.

China has been sending high-level

delegations to the forum for consecutive years and voiced unwavering support for an open world economy and a multilateral trading system.

In the last few years, synergizing the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has become a trending subject on the SPIEF agenda.

Yaroslav Lissovliok, chief economist of the Eurasian Development Bank, noted that dovetailing the EAEU with the BRI will promote economic growth and integration of Russia and other Eurasian nations, adding that the BRI plays a key role in the global integration process and boosts the development of transport and logistics in developing countries.

On the world stage, China-Russia coordination has become an indispensable and irreplaceable force in helping solve major global and regional hot-button issues, against the backdrop of a world that has been undergoing complicated and profound changes.

As an exemplar of win-win cooperation, good neighborliness and harmonious coexistence between major countries, China and Russia are staunch supporters of multilateralism dedicated to safeguarding international law and the basic norms in international relations, preserving global strategic stability, and helping make the world order more just and reasonable.

Looking into the future, Sergei Luzanyin, director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said Russia and China will continue to deepen their strategic partnership and jointly safeguard world peace and security.

As Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi once said, when China and Russia stand together, the world will be a safer and more peaceful and stable place. **Xinhua**

UN likely could run out of cash in August, says Guterres

UNITED NATIONS

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on the international community to support the organization, and address its deteriorating financial situation.

"Despite numerous efforts to contain expenditures this year, we are likely to run out of cash in August and, therefore, borrow from the Working Capital Fund," said Guterres, in his remarks at a formal meeting of the Fifth Committee. UN has more assets than liabilities but not enough liquid assets, the UN chief said.

According to Guterres, a major cause of the deteriorating financial health of the organization in the past few years is the increase in arrears from member states in both the regular and peace-keeping budgets.

The UN chief said the level of arrears at the end of 2018 was 529 million U.S. dollars, equivalent to more than 20 percent of the year's assessments. Five months into this year, arrears are still at 492 million U.S. dollars.

However, non- and late payment of contributions is not the only cause of liquidity problems, said Guterres, adding that the structural weaknesses in the budget methodology create a situation in which the expenditures outpace the approved budget level and the collection of contributions.

"It is caused by the effects of currency exchanges, inflation, salary cost standards and the actual vacancy rates that are approved at the end of one year and assessed only in the next, and unfortunately not always fully compensated, as we had last year," he added.

Xinhua

Nigerian UN ambassador Tijjani Muhammad-Bande elected UNGA president

UNITED NATIONS

THE United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Tuesday picked Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, permanent representative of Nigeria to the UN, to be its next president.

The 193-member General Assembly, one of UN's highest policy-making bodies, will have Muhammad-Bande presiding over its 74th session, which is scheduled to kick off in September. Muhammad-Bande will be the second Nigerian UNGA president after Joseph Nanven Garba, who held the position between 1989 and 1990.

"The implementation of the existing mandates and the 2030 Agenda with particular focus on peace and security, poverty and education, zero hunger, quality education, climate action, and inclusion will constitute the major priorities of my presidency," Muhammad-Bande said after he was elected by acclamation to the top UNGA post.

"I am committed to promoting partnerships that are needed from all stakeholders to achieve our objectives and ultimately ensure that we do our best to ensure peace and prosperity, particularly for the most vulnerable," he added.

"We must continue to invest in sustaining peace and conflict prevention, given that our organization strives to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," said the UNGA president-elect.

Speaking at an informal press conference about multilateralism after the election, Muhammad-Bande said that "a lot of



Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, permanent representative of Nigeria to the UN, speaks after he was elected as the president of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York on Tuesday. (Xinhua)

problems cannot be solved through national effort alone," adding that "it is important to solve our problems collectively."

Noting that the UN has provided a platform for countries to negotiate, he said that "we just occasionally need to remind ourselves why the organization was created in the first place." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres extended his warm congratulations to Muhammad-Bande on his election, noting that the new UNGA leader brings "many important and admirable qualifications to the job."

"As a Nigerian and an African, you have invaluable insights into the continent's challenges, such as the Sahel and Lake Chad basin, and more broadly into the challenges our world faces across the three pillars of our work, peace, sustainable development and human rights," said Guterres.

The secretary-general recalled that September will see "a crucially important series of

meetings," including the Climate Action Summit and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, and the high-level meetings on universal health coverage, small island developing states and financing for sustainable development, adding that he is looking forward to working with the president-elect in the coming year.

Noting that the president-elect "will be in office as we gear up to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations," the secretary-general said that it is "an occasion that I hope we can use to reaffirm the value of international cooperation and the vision of the (UN) Charter." The office of the UNGA changes every year between the five geographic groups: African, Asian, Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean, and Western European.

In full respect of the established principle of geographical rotation and General Assembly resolution 33/138 of Dec. 19, 1978, the president of the 74th

session of the UNGA was to be elected from the African states.

In line with the new process, the president of the 73rd session of the UNGA convened an informal interactive dialogue with the candidate nominated by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 13.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Sunday dispatched a delegation to New York to drum up support for the country's candidate in the election.

Muhammad-Bande is a Nigerian political scientist, administrator and career diplomat. He served as vice-president of the General Assembly during its 71st session which began in September 2016.

Muhammad-Bande was born on Dec. 7, 1957 in Zagga town which is in present Kebbi State in northwestern Nigeria. He received a B.Sc of political science from Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria in 1979, an MA of political science from Boston University, the United States in 1981, and a Ph.D of political science from University of Toronto, Canada in 1987.

Muhammad-Bande taught at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria, as a graduate assistant in 1980s and rose to the rank of professor in 1998 in the same institution.

Between 2004 and 2009, he served as vice-chancellor of the university before being appointed director-general of Nigeria's premier policy institution National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, a position he held from 2010 to 2016.

Xinhua

Zimbabwe, EU launch formal political dialogue to improve icy relations

HARARE

ZIMBABWE and the European Union (EU) yesterday launched a formal political dialogue under the African-Caribbean-Pacific regions (ACP)-EU Partnership Agreement, which is also known as the Cotonou Agreement.

Yesterday's session for the dialogue was organized by Zimbabwe's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

EU head of delegation to Zimbabwe Timo Olkkonen (pictured) said he hoped that formal political dialogue would from now on become an integral part of the relations between the two partners.

"This should provide a useful platform to exchange views on topics that are of common interest and identify areas where we can deepen our relationship," he said.

"It also provides a forum to a frank exchange of views on issues we might not agree upon and foster mutual understanding. Our commitment is to a relationship that we are building together, as partners," he said.

He acknowledged that the Zimbabwean government had been clear that significant political and economic reforms were necessary for the benefit of its people and pledged the EU's support to the country as it forged ahead with its reform agenda.

Zimbabwe-EU relations started in 1982, two years after the country gain independence



from Britain.

However, the relations soured starting in 2000, resulting in the Council of the European Union in 2002 imposing restrictive measures against individuals and companies that were considered responsible for alleged serious violations of human rights and of the freedom of opinion, of association and of peaceful assembly.

The measures, which included a travel ban, an asset freeze and an arms embargo, have been gradually removed over recent years and only

two individuals and one company - former president Robert Mugabe, his wife Grace and the Zimbabwe Defense Industries - remain on the list. An arms embargo also continues to be in place.

The EU also maintained "appropriate measures" between 2002 and 2014 which consisted of the suspension of all direct development cooperation with the government but redirected its support through international agencies or civil society organizations.

Xinhua

Sudan military chief offers talks as violence death toll hits 60

KHARTOUM

SUDAN'S military ruler offered to resume talks with opposition groups without conditions yesterday, in an apparent olive branch two days after security forces mounted a deadly raid on a protest camp in central Khartoum.

Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's offer marked a step-back from the army's decision to cancel all deals with the

opposition after the raid - and came as international criticism of the violence mounted.

At least 60 people died in the operation and subsequent unrest, medics linked to the opposition said yesterday - the worst outbreak of violence since the army ousted president Omar al-Bashir in April following months of mass protests against his rule.

There was no immediate reaction to the military statement

from Sudan's opposition and protest groups, who have kept up their demonstrations since Bashir's overthrow, pressing the army to hand over power to a civilian government.

The raid marked a pivotal moment in the development of post-Bashir Sudan - a rift between the powerful military leaders and the opposition groups who had been haggling for weeks over who should lead the transition to

democracy.

Several streets in other parts of the capital were blocked by demonstrators yesterday. Gunfire rang out in the distance, but there were no immediate reports on new clashes.

Most shops were shuttered on what would usually have been a bustling Muslim Eid al-Fitr holiday, with minor protests erupting outside mosques after Eid prayers. "We in the military council,

extend our hands to negotiations without shackles except the interests of the homeland," al-Burhan, the head of Sudan's ruling military council, said on state TV.

He praised the uprising's achievements and reiterated that he was ready to hand over to an elected government.

The military has denied it was trying to clear the sit-in protest outside the defense ministry on Monday. Its spokesman said forces

moved in to deal with disruptive groups nearby and the violence spread from there.

Sudan has been rocked by unrest since December, when anger over rising bread prices and cash shortages broke into sustained protests that culminated in the armed forces removing Bashir after three decades in office.

In the build-up to the raid, talks had ground to a halt between the Transitional Military Council

and the main opposition alliance - the Declaration of Freedom and Change Forces (DFCF) - amid deep differences over who would lead a transition to democracy.

Omar al-Degair, a prominent DFCF leader, said on Tuesday the two sides had been close to reaching a final deal on a plan that would have involved a 50-50 military-civilian split on a council to prepare the transition, and a rotating presidency. **Agencies**



Madonna - Tupac Shakur

Madonna loses appeal over auction of Tupac Shakur breakup letter, other items

NEW YORK

MADONNA lost a court battle to keep a trove of intimate belongings including a pair of satin panties, a brush containing her hair and a breakup letter from a former boyfriend, the late rapper Tupac Shakur, from heading to the auction block.

A New York state appeals court in Manhattan on Tuesday cleared the way for an auction, saying Madonna could not pursue claims against Darlene Lutz, her former friend and art consultant, or the GottaHaveRockandRoll.com online auction website, to which Lutz consigned the items for sale.

The Appellate Division said Madonna's claims were barred by a "very broad" release in her 2004 settlement agreement with Lutz, who was "free to do with the property as she wished" as its rightful owner.

Madonna, 60, had said she did not know until learning about the auction that Lutz, who worked for the singer from 1981 to 2003, possessed the more than 20 disputed items.

Lawyers for Madonna did not immediately respond to requests for comment. It is unclear whether she will appeal.

"The court came to the absolute right

decision," Hartley Bernstein, a lawyer for the defendants, said in an interview. "The property is Ms. Lutz's to do with as she wishes."

Tuesday's 5-0 decision upheld an April 2018 ruling by Justice Gerald Lebovits of the state supreme court in Manhattan.

Lebovits said he dismissed the case because the statute of limitations had passed, and because Madonna's settlement with Lutz contained a broad waiver covering the claims.

The handwritten letter from Shakur was dated Jan. 15, 1995, while he was in prison for sexual assault.

It said he was ending his relationship with Madonna because he thought dating a white woman could jeopardize his career.

"I felt due to my 'image' I would be letting down half of the people who made me what I thought I was," Shakur wrote. "I never meant to hurt you."

GottaHaveRockandRoll.com said the letter could fetch \$400,000 at auction, court papers show. Shakur was killed at age 25 in a September 1996 drive-by shooting in Las Vegas.

REUTERS

IAAF to seek swift reversion of Swiss court's Semenya ruling

LONDON

THE International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) said it will seek a swift reversion of Monday's Swiss court ruling in favour of double Olympic champion Caster Semenya.

Semenya has appealed a Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) decision that supported the IAAF's rule that XY chromosome athletes with differences in sexual development (DSDs), like Semenya, can only race in distances from 400m to a mile if they take medication to lower their testosterone levels.

The Swiss Federal Tribunal (SFT) ruled Semenya will be able to run in her favoured 800 metres event without taking medication until her appeal has been ruled on.

In response to that decision the IAAF said in a statement that it would seek a "swift reversion of the superprovisional order... to avoid serious confusion amongst athletes and event organisers and to protect the integrity of the sport."

It added that the suspension of regulations applied only to Semenya and will be in effect until June 25. "The SFT's decision was 'ex parte', meaning that it was requested and issued without the IAAF's knowledge," athletics governing body said.

REUTERS

Abraham Hannibal: Russia's Greatest Poet's African ancestor

By Guardian Correspondent

CURLY black hair, kinky whiskers, swarthy complexion - that is how Alexander Pushkin is usually depicted on numerous portraits painted by his contemporaries.

Such is the magnificent statue of the poet that has already been standing in the center of Moscow for almost a century and a half.

Great grandfather Abraham Hannibal's genes are responsible for the looks of his offspring.

Abraham was the native of Africa whose entire life was inseparably linked to Russia.

Pushkin had never been to the land of his direct ancestor but he was proud of the African blood flowing in his veins.

He unequivocally referred to "my Africa" in his monumental masterpiece "Eugene Onegin":

"Tis time to wander from
This boring shore
The elements whereof
Will pain me no more.

Amongst the quirky sands
In distant noontide lands -
My Africa, may oft I sigh
Beneath thy lofty sky
For dusky Russia in mind,
Despite my fate unkind,
Where my sorrow and love were
married,

Where my heart is permanently
buried.

The life of Pushkin's forefather was full of twists and turns, in its dramatic adventurism it is second to no first rate thriller.

It's only natural that the celebrated descendant, having gathered the scanty available information, ventured to write a fascinating (albeit unfinished and published posthumously) novel called "Peter the Great's Arap", for all Africans were branded "araps" or "moors" in the country where non-whites were an exceptional sight.

Abraham's early years are immersed in obscurity, not much is known about that period. He was born at the end of the XVII century.

There is lots of controversy concerning his origin. A number of unsubstantiated claims as to his place of birth comes from various regions, be it Northern Ethiopia, Cameroon or Ghana.

One of the theories suggests that in his childhood he was sold into slavery to Turks from one of the sultanates on the Swahili coast of Eastern Africa, maybe from such spices, ivory and slave trade hubs as Kilwa, Sofala or Zanzibar.

He was taken to Constantinople and made a servant at the Sultan's seraglio (the harem).

In that capacity he stayed there till approximately 1704 when he was found by Russian envoy Raguzinsky.

The latter had the instruction of Peter the Great to bring several black urchins to the Tsar's court which was the fashion in those days with affluent European monarchs.

The envoy bribed the Turks and bought out Abraham who was about eight years old then. The boy

Heavyweights are suddenly fun once again



Andy Ruiz celebrates after stopping Anthony Joshua during the seventh round of a heavyweight championship boxing match Saturday, June 1, 2019, in New York. (AP Photo)

By TIM DAHLBERG

JUST when things were starting to make sense in boxing and the heavyweight division was shaping up nicely, a fat guy with blazingly quick hands wiped away most of the preconceived notions of where it would all eventually lead.

Andy Ruiz Jr. didn't just upend heavyweight boxing. He threw it a body punch that left the division gasping for air.

Whether that is good news or bad for boxing depends on where you live and how it plays out. If nothing else, though, Ruiz scored one for the ordinary guy when he shocked Anthony Joshua and the rest of boxing with the fight of his life Saturday night at Madison Square Garden.

He not only beat the man most considered the best heavyweight in the world, but he gave him a beating in the process. When it finally ended after a flurry of punches in the seventh round that had Joshua unable - or simply unwilling - to go on, there was a new world order among the big men in boxing.

Now the task is sorting it all out again.

On one side of the pond is a new heavyweight champion, with belts big enough to fit his portly frame. Ruiz is an American from the California border town of Imperial who claims Mexican heritage, and as the first Mexican heavyweight champion he can pretty much write his own ticket to fame and fortune.

Down in Alabama is Deontay Wilder, who holds one of the big belts himself. Wilder is coming off a first-round knockout of Dominic Breazeale last month and has not been shy about setting his own schedule no matter what competing promoters might want him to do.

There's Joshua, of course, who hadn't lost before being upset by Ruiz and is a national hero of sorts in England. Joshua

has a tremendous following, and the odds are he will get a chance to regain his title at home in a November rematch with Ruiz.

And then there's Tyson Fury, who claims to be the lineal heavyweight champion and might be the most interesting of them all. The 6-foot-9 Brit suffered an emotional breakdown after beating Wladimir Klitschko in 2015 and seemed to be out of boxing before fighting to a disputed draw last December with Wilder.

In a perfect world, both the Joshua-Ruiz and Wilder-Fury rematches would take place, with the winners fighting for the undisputed heavyweight title. But this is boxing, and nothing is ever that simple.

It's a story as old as the sport, with competing promoters and broadcast outlets all battling it out for the millions of dollars the heavyweights generate. It's why Joshua was facing the unknown Ruiz instead of finding a way to fight Wilder in the bout boxing fans really wanted to see - a fight that now has lost some of its allure after Joshua's defeat.

In a division where one punch can change everything, one punch did. Ruiz landed a punch to the top of Joshua's head after getting knocked down himself in the third round, and from then on it was simply a matter of when the fight would end.

"It's boxing," Fury told me last week. "You can't go swimming without getting wet."

No sooner had Ruiz's hand been raised in

victory than some in boxing began comparing the magnitude of the win to Buster Douglas beating Mike Tyson in Japan in 1990 as a 42-1 underdog. But Joshua was no Tyson, and Ruiz was talented enough to make some boxing experts wonder why Joshua's promoter picked him as a late replacement for Jarrell "Big Baby" Miller, who tested positive for steroids.

And while Douglas ate himself out of boxing after his big win, Ruiz already packs 268 not-so-well-placed pounds on his frame and hasn't seemed worse for the wear because of it.

Joshua had a rematch clause in his contract with Ruiz, and promoter Eddie Hearn said Tuesday on Twitter that the rematch would take place in November or December. It likely will be in Britain, though it's also possible it could be a pay-per-view event in the U.S.

In the meantime, Fury fights Germany's Tom Schwarz next week in Las Vegas and Wilder has announced a rematch with Luis Ortiz for September.

No, it's not one mega fight for all the marbles, as it was shaping up to be. The greed of promoters and broadcasting outlets kept that from happening, as it often does in boxing.

But all the heavyweights want to be active, and all have a case they want to make. They can all talk a bit, too, which should make it even more fun.



A portrait of Abraham Hannibal by an unknown painter.

was duly forwarded to Moscow to become one of the freaks on a par with many court jesters.

After some time, though, an unusual piece of good luck befell him. The Tsar took a liking of the smart youngster, had him baptized and adopted as his godson. That was the beginning of a brilliant career. In the succeeding years Abraham was elevated to a high status at the imperial court.

He was very close to Peter, slept in his private quarters, escorted

him in military campaigns and at a more mature age served as his aide-de-camp.

The witty fellow made good on the opportunities he was privileged to have. He took pains to get an education and by 1716, when he was sent abroad to further his knowledge and skills, he had already been versed in several foreign languages as well as in history, geography and mathematics.

Abraham settled in Paris where for more than a year he studied at the Engineering School. Then he enlisted into the French army and fought in the war against Spain as a commissioned officer.

Seriously wounded in one of the battles and taken prisoner, he was only able to return to France in 1722.

The following year Peter the Great summoned his godson back to Russia. Abraham, who by that time had assumed the name of Hannibal in honour of the ancient Carthaginian general, was

at liberty to stay in France but he chose to heed to his benefactor's request.

In Saint-Petersburg he began serving in the military as an engineer specializing in fortification works. Everything was going well for him until Peter's demise in 1725.

Then his fortunes ran foul. The former Emperor's ambitious protégé fell out with Prince Menshikov, the all-powerful magnate of the post-Peter period, and as a result was exiled to Siberia. He spent there a few years building fortresses and improving construction facilities and had a chance to return to the capital not until after the downfall of his mighty adversary. Then he gradually restored his former standing.

Hannibal's prominence at the court rose to new heights with the ascension to the imperial throne of Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter, in 1741. The new Empress, who remembered

Abraham as her father's favourite, sent him to govern Reval (now Tallinn, Estonia) in the North-West and later bestowed the rank of general upon him and appointed chief-engineer of the Russian army.

For his service he was endowed with lands and serfs. He retired to his vast Mikhailovskoye estate to the west of Moscow in 1762 to die there 20 years later at a very advanced age in the reign of Catherine II.

A rich and distinguished man at the time of his death, Abraham Hannibal bequeathed a large fortune to his descendants.

He was married twice and had 11 children, four of whom died early. One of his sons - Ossip - was the father of daughter Nadezhda, Alexander Pushkin's mother.

Some people say that but for African temperament and emotions passed down by Abraham to the lively character of his outstanding grandson, Russian literature would not have had its celebrated genius.

FIFA and AFD to promote women's soccer in Africa, says Infantino

PARIS

FIFA and the French Development Agency (AFD) have pledged ahead of the June 7-10 World Cup in France to promote women's soccer in Africa on a long-term basis, the governing body's president Gianni Infantino said on Tuesday.

"I am happy that today, another strategic alliance has been forged to help use football as a platform for positive change in society," Infantino said after signing the cooperation agreement with AFD Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Remy Rioux.

"This landmark agreement between FIFA and the AFD aims to make a lasting difference to communities around the world.

"It is also to ensure that football continues to play an even more important role in sustainable development, educating and empowering the next generation to help build a fairer, more peaceful society."

Rioux said: "What better way to build a world in common than by leveraging the unifying power of football?"

"I am extremely proud that the AFD and FIFA are today launching a unique partnership to promote gen-

der equality and foster education in Africa through football.

"As the Women's World Cup is about to kick off in France, I am confident that the AFD-FIFA alliance will help to showcase women's sport as a strategic development objective in Africa."

The ceremony was attended by France president Emmanuel Macron, former international football greats Marcel Desailly, Didier Drogba, Samuel Eto'o and Bernard Lama as well as former French female player Candice Prevost.

Macron underscored that equality between women and men was the great national objective of his five-year term in office as president, adding that "school is where we build the society we need and want to see"

The 24-nation Women's World Cup kicks off on Friday with hosts France taking on South Korea in Group A at the Parc Des Princes stadium in Paris.

Holders United States open their Group F campaign against Thailand in Reims on June 11. Africa's three nations taking part in the event are Nigeria, South Africa and Cameroon.

REUTERS

Germany, England against Super League, says Rauball

PARIS

The top leagues in Germany and England are against the European Club Association's (ECA) plans to form a 'super league' in 2024, German Football League (DFL) president Reinhard Rauball has said.

The ECA is working with European soccer governing body UEFA on a proposal to redesign the Champions League and replace it with a competition featuring promotion and relegation that could be largely closed off to outsiders.

La Liga president Javier Tebas has already registered his opposition to the idea and Rauball told reporters in Paris on Tuesday that England and Germany were also against the proposal.

"I'm the president of the German league and president of Borussia Dortmund," he said ahead of Wednesday's FIFA congress in the French capital. "Our league, the Bundesliga, decided 100% that we don't go this way with the ECA."

"(English FA representative) David Gill thinks in the same way. The German and British leagues are opposing it and I don't think it is possible we'll find a solution without Germany and without England."

The ECA has said so far that talks are at an early stage and denied that the proposal will create a closed league.

Reuters reported last month that the ECA proposed to create a

European league with three divisions, with promotion and relegation between each.

The top division will be the equivalent of the current Champions League and have 32 teams, of which 24 will qualify automatically for the following year's competition with four more promoted from the second tier, currently the Europa League.

If the proposal is implemented, only four top division places will be open to the champions of Europe's 54 domestic leagues, breaking with the longstanding tradition of teams qualifying for European competition via their domestic leagues.

Rauball described the plan as an American-style 'closed shop' that should be resisted.

"This is a typical American kind of competition, a kind of closed shop," he said. "In Europe we have a traditional football pyramid."

"In Germany we have the league with the highest attendances (in Europe), more than 42,000 on average, and that has been developed step-by-step. So we don't want to destroy it with one decision."

"We are traditionalists... We have to make clear that the national league is most important. If you make a pyramid like the ECA (has proposed), we would destroy all clubs and that's dangerous."

REUTERS

Man Utd loss 'biggest joke in football' - Meunier

PARIS

PARIS Saint-Germain's Thomas Meunier has said the Champions League round-of-16 exit to Manchester United earlier this year was the "biggest joke in the history of football."

PSG won 2-0 at Old Trafford in the first leg but fell to 3-1 home defeat in the return to crash out. The clinching goal was scored from a late penalty awarded by the video assistant referee for a handball by defender Presnel Kimpembe.

And Meunier said this loss was worse than when they threw away a 4-0 first leg lead with a 6-1 defeat at Barcelona in 2017.

"It was the biggest joke in the history of football," the 27-year-old told Le Parisien. "I would have bet €1 million that we would not lose."

"They did not even have chances and they still scored three goals. It was even more shocking than Barcelona."

Meunier said PSG's open focus on European glory has started to create problems because of heightened expectations at the club.

"The Champions League is still the major problem," the Belgium international said. "Winning this competition and being part of the big ones like Real Madrid and Barca, which is what a lot of international communication has focused on, will take a long time. PSG is a club that is growing."

Sources have told ESPN FC that Arsenal and Manchester United are interested in signing Meunier this summer, with PSG open to a deal for around €30m.

Meunier is entering the final 12 months of his contract amid a strained relationship with the club's fans and a lack of playing time.

"I am neither hot nor cold about it [social media criticism from PSG fans]," he said. "Sometimes I have fun with it."

"I have values. When I talk about something, I try to do so as sincerely as possible. It is my world; I am my own person and I will stay this way. The majority of fans support me."

Meunier is with the Belgium national team for the Euro 2020 qualifiers against Kazakhstan and Scotland.

(AGENCIES)

Was Emery's first season at Arsenal better than Wenger's last?

By Nick Hornby, special to ESPN.com

SO: Was Unai Emery's first season at Arsenal better than Arsene Wenger's last?

It should be an easy question to answer because sport usually provides clarity, but at Arsenal such is the pace of change that we tend to read runes, over many decades, rather than arrive at snap judgements. Arsenal fans are more like climate change scientists or evolutionary biologists than football fans; you are forced to compare almost microscopic shifts in pattern, temperature and genes in order to come up with tentative theories that may eventually be disproved in 10 seasons' time.

Is fifth better than sixth? Yes, but only in the way that 15th is better than 16th. Is losing 4-1 in the Europa League final better than losing 3-0 in the league cup, as we did last year? I would argue that it is -- we scored a goal, and it was 0-0 at half-time in the Europa League. I would, however, respect the view of anyone who argued that letting in four goals in 20-odd minutes is worse than letting in three over 90.

Is our calamitous defence any better? Statistics should be able to clear that up. We conceded 51 goals this season, compared to ... oh. We conceded 51 last season, too. Attack? 74 goals scored last season, 73 this. So the attack is worse, except ... not really.

Last autumn, after the predictable defeats at home to Man City and away at Chelsea were out of the way, things felt very different indeed.

I sit behind the Arsenal manager's technical area, but Wenger didn't use it that much, especially in the past few years. Every now and again he would jump off the bench and stomp over to remonstrate with the fourth official, but if technical area action was your thing, then mostly you had to content yourself with watching the tumbleweed.

So: Was Unai Emery's first season at Arsenal better than Arsene Wenger's last?

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Unai Emery - Arsene Wenger

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Last autumn, after the predictable defeats at home to Man City and away at Chelsea were out of the way, things felt very different indeed. I sit behind the Arsenal manager's technical area, but Wenger didn't use it that much, especially in the past few years. Every now and again he would jump off the bench and stomp over to remonstrate with the fourth official, but if technical area action was your thing, then mostly you had to content yourself with watching the tumbleweed.

Emery, however, is a blur of motion, his hands constantly guiding the ball and the players.

This felt reassuring in itself, but when it became clear that his number two, Juan Carlos Carcedo, was responsible for free-kicks and corners at both ends of the pitch -- he comes out and Emery drops back, as if the pair are connected mechanically -- Arsenal fans in my area of the ground could convince themselves that Emery was a combination of Jurgen Klopp and Pep Guardiola, and we were being coached by a team of crack modern technicians. So much was happening between our seats and the touchline that we hardly had time to watch the game.

Before long, the atmosphere in the ground began to change. Wenger's teams were flat-track bullies that tended to curl up and die against better, stronger opponents, and the crowd responded appropriately, with purring appreciation or despairing silence.

But in those opening months of the Emery era, Arsenal, often inspired by the warrior-like Lucas Torreira, got stuck in. We came from behind to beat Tottenham and to draw with Liverpool, and the sleepy, stupefied Emirates roared its appreciation.

If you had asked any Arsenal fan on the night of April 1, after a 2-0 home win against Newcastle that lifted us to third in

the league, whether Emery's first season had been a success, they would all have answered in the affirmative.

"We're competitive again," we said that night. "We have a very good chance of finishing in the top four and there may be a Cup to come, too. That's all we wanted. To be in the running in April."

As it turned out, we wanted more than that and we'd been kidding ourselves. What we specifically didn't want was to collapse, in a wearily familiar fashion, when it mattered. Emery lost 10 games this year, three fewer defeats than in the season before, but four of the 10 came in April.

If just one of them -- and I'm looking at you, Arsenal 2, Crystal Palace 3 -- had been converted into a win, we would have finished third. If the woeful 1-1 draw at home to Brighton had finished 2-1, we'd have come fourth.

Fine margins, yes, but a Champions League place was presented to Emery on a plate and his team turned up its collective nose. Manchester United and Chelsea might not be so obliging next year, although both teams look to have at least as many problems as Arsenal as things stand.

In the end, it felt like the club suffers from some kind of hereditary disease, passed on from generation to generation. We used to blame Wenger and the kinds of players he liked, the technically gifted, physically unimposing attacking midfielders who seemed to occupy every position on the pitch.

Torreira, Granit Xhaka and Sokratis Papastathopoulos are of a different build and complexion entirely, but it doesn't make any difference, apparently. The post-Invincibles Arsenal team will always flake out on you when it matters, no matter who's playing or coaching.

Some of the more excitable members of the Arsenal community -- perhaps those with no interest in evolutionary biology -- want Emery out already. That seems premature to me.

Only two of the starting 11 in the Europa final in May were Emery buys, although a third, goalkeeper Bernd Leno, was on the bench, ap-

parently as a sentimental gesture to Petr Cech, and a fourth, Stephan Lichtsteiner, should, I respectfully suggest, never have been signed in the first place.

This summer, however, is critical. My sources inside the club tell me that the decision to release Aaron Ramsey was down to Emery and Emery alone, and that the player was ready to sign a new deal. Emery took one look at him and decided, clearly, that he wasn't worth the money being offered.

Even this seemed exciting at the time, reminiscent of Wenger deciding that Paul Merson wasn't good enough for Arsenal and shipping him out.

"Paul Merson! We love Paul Merson! And he's not good enough? Bring it on!" And Wenger did. Unfortunately, Emery took a second look at Ramsey and apparently decided that he was, after all, an important part of his plans and indeed, the business-end of the collapse began with Ramsey's season-ending injury in Naples.

Unless Ramsey's replacement is at least as good, fans will quickly resent the loss of someone who could be frustrating, but whose two Cup Final-winning goals, and a decade-long commitment to the club, have earned him Official Club Legend status.

And then there is the perennial Mesut Ozil problem. Ozil is, of course, a genius. That goal he scores when he bounces the ball into the ground and deceives the keeper ... who does that?

Who can even think about doing that? But he is also absurdly, ruinously absent on big occasions -- compare and contrast with Eden Hazard's performance for Chelsea in the Europa League final -- and you must reluctantly conclude that no team with ambition can afford Ozil, financially or in any other sense. Yet a couple of times this season Emery attempted to play without either Ramsey or Ozil, as next season he surely must permanently, and it wasn't a pretty sight.

Arsenal fans are used to pretty sights, and if the choice is between fifth place and no Champions League football, and sixth place with the occasional breath-taking moment of beauty, the Emirates crowd may decide that the grass was not, after all, greener.

Two of the best goals I have ever seen were scored this season, under Emery, within 10 days of each other. One was by Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, against Leicester, an incredible team goal that involved a flick from Ozil, a dummy by Ozil and an extraordinary sliced pass by Ozil.

The other was also an incredible team goal, away at Fulham. It involved a pass from Ramsey, a flick from Ramsey, a headed pass from Ramsey and a back-heel into the net from Ramsey.

I hope that this is the football that Emery wants to play. I hope, too, that he knows the players he wants to play it. Perhaps some of the youngsters -- Emile Smith Rowe, say, or Bukayo Saka, or Reiss Nelson -- may provide the missing Wenger-esque pieces of the Emery puzzle ... in which case, we are back to the old club promise of jam tomorrow, and more reading of the runes.

As ever in London N5, the jury is out.

Zimbabwe aim to be the Ajax-like surprise at Afcon

HARARE

STRIKER Knowledge Musona says Zimbabwe aim to be the Ajax Amsterdam of the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt this month, hoping to surprise with a run deep into the competition.

Zimbabwe have been drawn in Group A along with the hosts, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda, and are aiming to get out of the pool stages for the first time in their history after taking just one point from three matches in Gabon two years ago.

Musona, who is contracted to Belgian side Anderlecht but played part of last season on loan at Lokeren, says Zimbabwe is confident of progression despite being "underdogs" after topping a qualification pool that also included DR Congo.

"We have the hosts and they are always going to be favourites. DR Congo have a strong team and they will know what to expect from us. Uganda are a very good team also," he told Reuters at a team camp in South Africa.

"Zimbabwe are the only underdog in the group, but that in itself should give us motivation to say we are the Ajax Amsterdam of the Nations Cup."

"We are going there to fight and give disappointment to other teams," he said, alluding to the Dutch club's surprise run to the UEFA Champions League semi-finals this season.

"We have a good team with good quality, and we are working hard to correct the mistakes from the last tournament."

"We have enough experience and our initial target is to pass out from the group stages for the first time."



Gwiji by David Chikoko

Boys to men

Musona feels that one of the keys to their achievement in qualifying for successive Afcon tournaments has been the fact that many of the players have been together since featuring for the Zimbabwe Under-17 side.

"I have played with almost everyone from Under-17 through to the Under-23s and into the senior team, so we know each other very well," he said.

"(Striker) Khama Billiat and (goalkeeper) George Chigova come from the same academy as me, so we understand each other."

"This keeps us going and every time

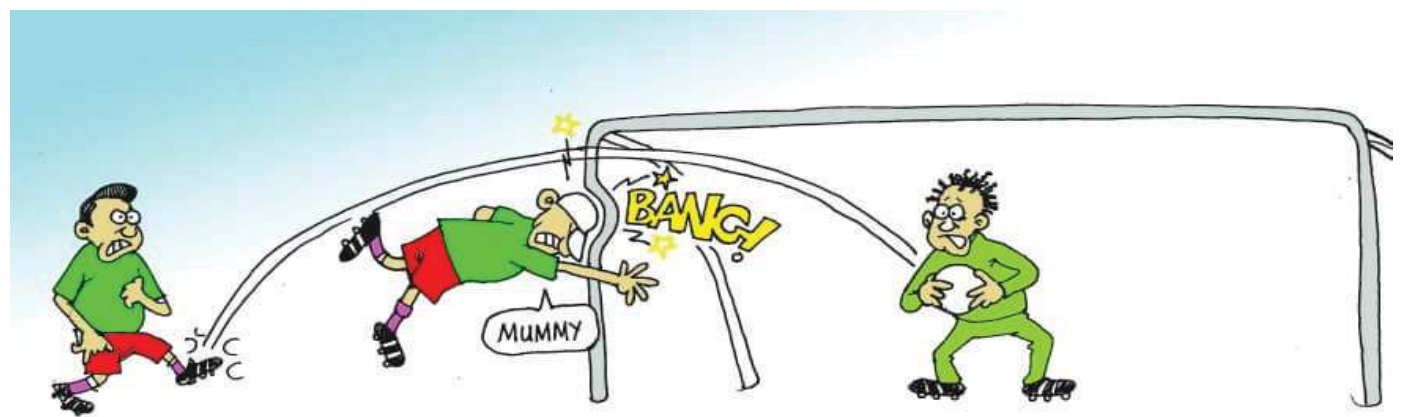
we tell ourselves to fight for each other on the pitch, we play as a team and not as individuals."

Zimbabwe will face Nigeria in a friendly in Lagos on Saturday, a chance for the squad to assess their readiness for the June 21-July 19 continental finals.

"It will be a big test before the Nations Cup. Nigeria are one of the strongest teams in Africa and we are looking forward to it."

"It will be good for us to see if we are ready for the tournament," the former Kaizer Chiefs man added.

(AGENCIES)



SPORT

Was Emery's first season at Arsenal better than Wenger's last?

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Dar team win Mazingira Cup soccer tournament

By Guardian Reporter

A soccer team owned by a sanitary company, Abby Environment and Agriculture Company Limited, emerged as winners of the Forum on Climate Change (FCC) Mazingira Cup tournament that climaxed in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

The competition geared towards commemorating the World Environment Day.

Abby team cruised to a 2-1 win over Kajenjele Company Limited team in the final that was played at the Jakaya Kikwete Youth Park.

Mazingira Cup tournament started earlier last month and involved eight teams that were made up of the sanitary companies' workers.

Abby team shall serve as an environmental ambassador for one year following the victory.

Rebecca Muna, FCC Executive Director, said that the tournament was organized to influence the community to switch to renewable energy sources consumption.

She disclosed: "FCC believes that renewable energy sources can guarantee safety from environment pollution."

"We encourage the government, environment stakeholders, academicians and policy makers to spread the word on the importance of renewable energy sources that could preserve the world's beauty" she added.

World Environment Day 2019 is hosted by China with a theme of 'Air pollution, we can't stop breathing but we can do something about the quality of air that we breathe'.

According to the United Nations Environment Agency, approximately seven million people worldwide die prematurely each year from air pollution.

About four million of these deaths are occurring in Asia-Pacific.

World Environment Day 2019 will urge governments, industry, communities, and individuals to come together to explore renewable energy and green technologies, and improve air quality in cities and regions across the world.



Gerald Phiri of Malawi (L) is challenged by Fasoifa Fassoifa of Comoros during the 2019 COSAFA Cup match at Princess Magogo Stadium in Durban, South Africa on Tuesday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SAMUEL SHIVAMBU

South Africa set to play Malawi in COSAFA Cup Plate final

DURBAN

SOUTH Africa and Malawi will contest the Plate final at the 2019 COSAFA Cup after both won their semi-final matches at the Princess Magogo Stadium on Tuesday night.

Both came through tense Last 4 matches but can now look forward to a chance at lifting the trophy during Friday's decider at the Moses Mabhida Stadium.

South Africa sealed their berth with a come-from-behind 1-1 draw with Uganda, before they triumphed 4-2 on post-match penalties.

The home side had exited in the Cup quarterfinals via spot-kicks on Sunday, but this time lady luck was in their favour as they held their nerve to claim the win.

After a goalless first half, Uganda hit the front thanks to a fine strike from Dan Serunkuma seconds after the break.

Uganda might have added a second goal but for two excellent saves from South Africa goalkeeper Mondlo Mpotso.

But from then on it was all pressure from the home side as Jamie Webber went close with a headed chance before Luther Singh beat the offside trap and crashed the ball into the back of the net.

Debutant Kgaogelo Sekgota had a superb chance to win it for the South Africans right at the death, but could not beat Uganda keeper Charles Lukwago in a one-on-one situation.

The match went to penalties and after Mustafa Kizza missed from the spot for the second time in the tournament, and Muzamiru Mutyaba followed suit, the game was up for the East Africans.

Malawi scored late on to seal their final place in what was another excellent contest in front of exuberant fans.

Gerald Phiri Jr came close to giving Malawi the lead midway through the first half when his free-kick from 35-yards thundered back off the post and was cleared to safety by a scrambling Comoros defense.

Malawi did take the lead just before the half-hour mark as Richard Mbulu's looping header floated into the back of the net from John Banda's cross.

Ali Nissam equalised just past the hour-mark for Comoros and the game looked to be heading for penalties before Chikoti Chirwa popped up late to fire The Flames into the final.

There will be two massive Cup semi-final matches on Wednesday as the action shifts to the magnificent Moses Mabhida Stadium.

The first sees Lesotho take on Botswana at 17h00 (15h00 GMT) with both sides feeling they will be in with a great chance of making the final.

Lesotho have not reached the COSAFA Cup decider since 2000, when they lost to Zimbabwe, but did finish third last year and are a side on the up.

Botswana's one and only final appearance was in 2016 when they narrowly lost 3-2 to South Africa in Windhoek.

The two previous meetings between the sides in the competition were both spectacular, though for different reasons.

The teams first played to a 0-0 draw in Maseru in 2004, which ended up going to penalties. Botswana eventually triumphed 11-10 in an epic shoot-out.

Their second encounter six years ago finished in a thrilling 3-3 draw, a game in which Botswana forward Jerome Ramathlakwane scored a hat-trick.

Botswana led 2-0, but were pegged back to 2-2, before leading again. However, Thapelo Tale netted a Lesotho equaliser deep into injury-time at the end of the game.

The second semi-final sees Zimbabwe take on Zambia (19h30 local; 17h30 GMT) in a repeat of the last two COSAFA Cup deciders, both of which were won by the Warriors.

It promises to be an epic encounter with no love lost between these old foes and is the ninth time these two nations have clashed in the COSAFA Cup, with their previous four meetings in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2018 all coming in the final.

There have been 16 goals scored in the last four encounters along, which comes after a period where there were



Aces Club's Jumanne Mohamed bats against Caravans during the recent Dar es Salaam Regional Cricket Committee (DRCC) competition match. PHOTO: COURTESY OF NIKHIL PUJARA

Aces batsman closes in on DRCC T20 tourney best batsman honour

By Guardian Reporter

ACES Cricket Club's batsman, Jumanne Mohamed, has a chance to improve his pursuit of the best batsman honour in the Division A of this year's Dar es Salaam Regional Cricket Committee (DRCC) T20 competition, given his outfit will lock horns with Shree Kutch Leva in the semi-final duel at the weekend.

The DRCC has organized the competition, which has brought together cricket teams from across Dar es Salaam, with a view to raising the standard of the game at the domestic level.

General Petroleum team will confront Saint Gobain the second duel of the stage. The last four stage encounters will take place at the Leaders Club venue.

The last four stage of the competition was expected to be played early last month but it was put on hold because of down-pour.

A good number of the participating teams' player, as disclosed by DRCC, were

also observing the Holy Month of Ramadan. Mohamed tops the list of the competition's top run getters, as he has recorded a total of 154 runs in three innings.

The talented batsman has an average of 51.33 and a strike rate of 143.93, blasting eight fours and 11 sixes.

General Petroleum squad's Nisar Ahmad is hot on Mohamed's heels, having scored 132 runs after playing three innings.

Ahmad has an average of 66.00 and notched eight sixes and 15 fours. In the batsman's most impressive innings he recorded 92 runs.

Ahmad's teammate, Zafar Khan, Jatin Darji and Kishen Kamania of Saint Gobain have been placed third, fourth and fifth respectively in the list.

Khan has notched 115 runs in three innings, as well as having one unbeaten spell at the crease, Darji has posted 102 runs in three innings, Kamania has recorded 97 runs in three innings.

Shree Kutchi Leva's Nilesh Varsani and Abhik Patwa of Gymkhana have been posi-

tioned sixth and seventh in the list with 80 runs and 73 runs respectively.

Varsani scored the 80 runs in two innings and has notched four fours. In his best batting showing, he recorded 60 runs.

Patwa amassed his double digit figure in three innings, has an average of 24.33. He has recorded four sixes and three fours in his total.

Experienced all-rounder Bhavesh Govind of Aces and Caravans' duo of Kassim Nassor and Ivan Ismail complete the top 10 of the list of the competition's top run scorers.

Govind is in the eighth position, having notched 69 runs in two innings. The muscular performer boasts of an average of 69.00 and has nailed six sixes and three fours.

Nassor and Ismail are in the ninth and 10th positions, given they have scored 69 runs and 66 runs respectively.

The duo's hopes of winning the honour, though, has all but ended given Caravans missed out on a place in the semi-finals.

Flexibles by David Chikoko



EATV TODAY @ 18:00

THURSDAY

11:00 DADAZ (live)
12:00 Mpya
13:00 FUNGUKA
14:00 Bonga Hits
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 S5ELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:30 MJADALA
21:00 Bonga Hits

eNewz is your one stop show for everything entertainment. It covers celebrity interviews, gossip, what's hot, what's not, trending online and offline and what happened in history.

eastafrika RADIO

05:00 EA Breakfast
09:00 Supamix
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bonga
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM
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