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Agro-exports: JPM lauds China outlets



President John Magufuli pictured at Chato State House in Geita Region yesterday witnessing the signing of an agreement on the construction of a 341-km segment of the Standard Gauge Railway - from Mwanza to Isaka in Shinyanga Region. The signatories are Tanzania Railways Corporation director general Masanja Kadogosa (R) and China Railway Construction Corporation Limited CEO Zhang Junle, also representing China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation. Photo: State House

By Henry Mwangonde

President John Magufuli yesterday unveiled a new trade strategy with focus on China as key market for Tanzania's cash crops—thanks to the Asian giant's population and existing cordial bilateral ties.

Speaking in Chato District, Geita Region yesterday following a meeting with visiting State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Wang Yi, the president said even if China buys only a fraction of crops or products manufactured in Tanzania, the country is likely to make strides in its development endeavors.

"We need to start working on how our crops will reach the Chinese market because it is a big market which can accommodate all the cashewnuts, coffee and cassava that we grow," the president affirmed.

He said the idea of focusing on trade with China was viable because by doing business with Tanzania, China will be at the same time trade with other member states of the

“ We need to start working on how our crops will reach the Chinese market because it is a big market which can accommodate all the cashewnuts, coffee and cassava that we grow

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) blocs.

Tanzanian coffee production averages between 30-40,000 metric tons each year of which approximately 70-percent is Arabica and 30percent is Robusta.

It is one of the country's largest export crops, contributing about \$115 million in export earnings. About 95 percent of coffee is produced by nearly 400,000 smallholders with holdings of one to two hectares.

President Magufuli said relations with China are based on common history around the theme of liberation, and thus China has been a true friend to Tanzania.

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Govt: Deadline on plastic wrappers now March 31

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

MANUFACTURERS and retailers have three months to phase out all unqualified wrappings, the government declared yesterday.

Ummu Mwalimu, the Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and Environment), said here yesterday that the decision to extend the deadline for phasing out all plastic wrappings was in favour of small-scale entrepreneurs might have large cargo in their stores.

"The government will not issue another statement after the grace period," she asserted, elaborating that at that point a nationwide crackdown will be commissioned.

The decision by the gov-



ernment is part of a regional plan to phase out plastic bags. Countries such as Kenya and Rwanda in the East African Community are also implementing the plan to phase out all non-biodegradable plastics, the ministry affirms.

Dr Samuel Gwamaka, the Director General of the National Environment Management Council (NEMC), says that the

2019 legislation on which the directive is based imposes a two-year prison sentence or a fine of up to \$400,000 for manufacturing or stocking, while an individual found carrying a bag can be fined 30,000/- on the spot.

The earlier deadline elapsed on December 31for the production, sale and use of plastic wrappers, with retailers and manufacturers increasingly producing a different facet of plastic bags enabling edible products to be viewed or inspected transparently from the outside.

The minister said that once the deadline elapses, manufacturers, traders and customers will have to stop using the wrappers, plus single and double-use-plastic bags prohibited

nearly two years ago.

The June 2019 legislation criminalises the production, sale and use of plastic bags as part of efforts to tackle plastic menace in the hydrological cycle (impact of plastics in product use, disposal and conditions of the oceans and living creatures depending on the polluted sea environment).

Plastic wrappers for products like sugar, bread, biscuits etc do not meet National Bureau of Standards (TBS) standards, which regrets that such bags are almost everywhere across the country, pushing back efforts of protecting the environment, on the basis of the minister's remarks.

Bags earlier approved by authorities include a single-use plastic bag with a 30 microns layer and 60 microns layer for double-use plastic bags. The bags must also contain a seal and details of the producing company, with TBS certification.

WHO fruit, vegetables daily intake key advisory set to boost horticulture

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

TANZANIANS engaged in fruits and vegetables cultivation have an opportunity to become reach wider markets thanks to new United Nations guidelines advising increased consumption of vegetables to help prevent various non-communicable diseases. Dr Gabriel Rugalema, the regional director of the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) covering east

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Capital city markets facelift to cost 15bn/-

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

THE next stage of facelift lined up in Dodoma to make it a modern capital city is upgrading its eight main markets which is set to gobble up 15bn/-.

Implemented under the World Bank's Tanzania Cities Transforming Infrastructure and Competitiveness (TACTIC) project, the project involves construction of modern stalls

“ The project is still at a preliminary stage with basic surveys completed and the markets master plan is being developed

and shades along with bus stops outside the markets to ease access for the public.

TACTIC project coordinator at the city council, Emmanuel Manyanga said the International Development Association (IDA- the soft loan window of the World Bank) has already committed this amount and project implementation starts towards the middle of the year.

The beneficiary markets are struggling to

serve an abruptly increased population after the capital shifted to Dodoma with thousands of civil servants. They are Sabasaba market, Majengo, Ilazo, Nzuguni, Mkonze, Bonanza, Kizota and Mshikamano.

The project which is slated for fiscal 2021/22 focuses on having the markets

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Capital city markets' facelift to cost 15bn/-

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constructed on part with accepted sub-regional standards, he said.

"The project is still at a preliminary stage with basic surveys completed and the markets master plan is being developed," he said, noting that trading spaces will be fitted with relevant infrastructures and auxiliary facilities including appropriate sanitation plus security systems.

The project design has it that construction of the markets go in tandem with installation of improved commuter bus terminals to ease transportation, he said, pointing out that the markets are mostly situated a bit far from commuter bus accessibility, in which case bus stops were added to the designs.

The vibrant project follows successive phases of the Tanzania Strategic Cities Project (TSCP) which has since 2011 involved Dodoma city.

The main part of the financing was drawn from the World Bank (IDA Credit) and a grant was extended by Denmark, for up to 147bn/-, he said.

Satisfied with earlier project

implementation under TSCP, IDA decided to release more funds, he stated.

Manyanga said the phased-out project, supervised by the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments) succeeded in scaling up infrastructures and other social services in the region.

Key projects implemented include the construction of city's main bus terminal and the Job Ndagai market, the Chinangali garden recreational complex and an improved sanitary landfill, he stated.

"Through the project, we also managed to construct 7kms of tarmac road installed with solar street lights along with 13km of drainage ditches," he further noted.

Other works included upgrading and rehabilitation of a number of artery urban roads, drainage ditches, culverts/bridges, footpaths and equipment for solid waste collection, transportation and disposal.

TSCP covered key urban centres of Tanga, Arusha, Mwanza, Kigoma, Dodoma, Illemela, Mbeya and Mtwara.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa inspects 7.58-km Matemwe-Muyuni road in Zanzibar yesterday shortly before inaugurating its construction by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation - with African Development Bank funding. Story on Page 3. Photo: PMO

Agro-exports: JPM lauds China outlets

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During the meeting, a contract was signed between the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) and the China Civil Engineering Construction (CCEC) and China Railway Construction Company (CRCC) to construct the fifth lot of the Standard Gauge Railway from Mwanza to Isaka covering a distance of 341 kilometers.

The Chinese foreign minister was on a two-day visit to Tanzania aimed at strengthening political and economic bilateral relations, part of his five-day African tour.

The fifth lot SGR construction is slated to cost 3.00617 trn/- and

will be implemented by the two Chinese companies.

Tanzania and China have close links in infrastructure, science, technology, innovation and ICT. Through its ICT flagship, Huawei, China has been supporting various initiatives to uplift skills among Tanzanian youth in the sector.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa recently presented awards to winners of a global ICT competition organized by Huawei where students from the University of Dar es Salaam emerged second-placed winners from a number of participating countries in Africa and beyond.

Trump to skip Biden inauguration after presidency implodes

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump announced yesterday he will skip Joe Biden's inauguration in a final, unrepentant act of division as his presidency imploded amid demands that he step aside for the last 12 days in office.

"To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," the US leader said on Twitter.

The statement, while not a surprise from the most divisive president in decades, drew a line through any idea that Trump might seek to spend his remaining moments in the White House helping his Democratic successor calm tensions.

Not since 1869 has an outgoing US president missed the inauguration of the incoming leader, a ceremony symbolizing the peaceful transfer of power.

Two days after Trump incited followers to storm Congress, his presidency is in freefall, with allies walking away and opponents calling for his removal.

Democrats in the House of Representatives, who already impeached Trump in a traumatic, partisan vote in 2019, said an unprecedented second impeachment of the Republican could be

ready for a vote next week.

"We can act very quickly when we want to," Representative Katherine Clark told CNN.

Whether Republican leaders of the Senate would then agree to hold a lightning fast impeachment trial before the January 20 transition is another matter.

However, with calls also swirling for cabinet members to invoke the 25th Amendment and declare Trump unfit for office, it's clear that the billionaire real estate tycoon is out of friends.

Senator Ben Sasse, one Republican who says he will "definitely consider" impeachment, recommended that Trump at minimum step back and let his vice president run the show in the dying days.

"I think the less the president does over the next 12 days the better," he told NPR radio.

Trump, whose incitement of crowds assaulting Congress on Wednesday capped relentless efforts to overturn Biden's November 3 election win, finally conceded defeat on Thursday and appealed for calm.

"A new administration will be inaugurated on January 20. My focus now turns to ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power," Trump said

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ern and southern Africa said here yesterday that following the new UN advisory, demand for fruits and vegetables is expected to rise all over the world.

This will expand markets for farmers in Tanzania especially those in northern regions of Arusha and Kilimanjaro plus the southern highlands zone which are making progress in horticulture.

A recent WHO/FAO report recommends a minimum of 400g

of fruit and vegetables per day (excluding potatoes and other starchy tubers) for the prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity, along with alleviating some micronutrient deficiencies.

"The new guidelines will see an increase in the number of people cultivating fruits, vegetables and spices," he said, noting that Tanzania currently ranks 20th in horticultural exports and it can do more to benefit from the potentially expanding market.

The WHO and FAO guidelines under its global strategy on diet, physical activity and health, underline that fruit and vegetables are important components of a healthy diet, and sufficient daily intake helps prevent cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers. "About 16m life years are lost and 1.7m deaths (2.8 per cent) occur worldwide annually, attributable to low fruit and vegetable consumption," the report indicates. Lost life years is a measure of potential life lost due to premature

mortality and the years of productive life lost due to disability.

"Moreover, insufficient intake of fruit and vegetables is estimated to cause around 14 per cent of gastrointestinal cancer deaths, about 11 per cent of ischaemic heart disease deaths and about nine per cent of stroke deaths globally." The Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA) says that last year, horticultural produce exports were valued at more than \$780m, contrasted with the \$1.2bn potential.



Zanzibar Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdalla (R) hosts talks in his office yesterday with members of nine opposition political parties who stood as candidates for the Zanzibar Presidency in the October 2020 General Election. Photo: ZSVPO

in a short video.

However, the evidently reluctant concession, in which Trump failed to congratulate Biden or directly admit defeat, was too little, too late to calm outrage over his role in the Capitol invasion.

Five people died in the mayhem, including one woman who was shot dead and a Capitol Police officer who was pronounced dead from his injuries on Thursday. Flags over the Capitol were lowered to half-mast on Friday.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos became the second cabinet member to quit the government, telling Trump in a letter on Thursday that such "behavior was unconscionable for our country."

Earlier, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, one of Trump's longest serving cabinet members, announced she was departing over the "entirely avoidable" violence. A

string of lower level officials have also left.

According to US media reports, the only reason the trickle hasn't turned into a flood is the decision by senior figures to try and maintain stability during the transition to Biden.

Trump, however, appears to have lost the grip he once exercised on both the Republican party and his own staff as he rampaged through four years of one of the most turbulent presidencies in US history.

Speaking to CNN, retired Marine Corps general John Kelly, who served as Trump's chief of staff for 18 months, said the cabinet should consider the 25th Amendment but believed the president had already been put into a box.

"He can give all the orders he wants but no one is going to break the law," Kelly said.

Trump has even lost Rupert Mur-

doch's Wall Street Journal, which published an editorial telling him "to take personal responsibility and resign."

"It is best for everyone, himself included, if he goes away quietly."

"Leave town," advised former secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, suggesting Trump exile himself to his Florida golf club.

"Get on Air Force One, go to Mar-a-Lago and stay there for the indefinite future," Johnson said on NPR.

Biden, who won seven million votes more than Trump, as well as a decisive majority in the vital state-by-state Electoral College, will be sworn in on the Capitol Steps under huge security.

Between drastic Covid-19 crowd restrictions, the absence of Trump, and a new "unscalable" fence thrown up around the congressional complex, there will be little of the ordinary inauguration vibe.

And Biden will immediately face extraordinary challenges, starting with his core campaign promise that he can "heal" the nation.

So far, the Democratic leader has carefully avoided weighing in on demands for Trump's removal.

Impeachment of the president could present the incoming Democrat with an even more polarized landscape, further complicating the task of reunifying the country.

At the same time, the crisis has sparked such revulsion in Congress on both sides of the aisle that Biden may come into office with an unexpectedly bipartisan tailwind.

On Thursday, he accused Trump of mounting an "all-out assault on the institutions of our democracy" and called the assault on Congress "one of the darkest days in the history of our nation."



Raphael Laizer (gesturing) of Dodoma's irrigation commission explains to Agriculture deputy minister Hussein Bashe (2nd-R, foreground, in white shirt) at Chabuma Amcos yesterday how to rehabilitate drop irrigation infrastructure. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

RC orders arrest of 13 Mlele workers

By Guardian Correspondent, Katavi

KATAVI Regional Commissioner Juma Homera has directed security organs to arrest 13 workers of Mlele District who misused a total of 81,000 bricks produced specifically for the construction of the district's hospital.

He issued the directive here after visiting and inspecting the progress of the construction of seven buildings of the hospital and found that some of the bricks had been sold to the employees.

The RC named the employees as James Chawe, Ramadhani Masudi, Martine Maswago, James Kapongo, Adam Mabiha, Peter Nyamafu, Lengay Longoy, Dr Mketo, Ignatus Kamande, Aidan Ngwando and Philemon Mahombo as well as citizens who are Abdallah Soud and Fortunata Kabeja.

Homera said that selling the bricks which are said to be substandard shows that it was a trick to sell them to the civil servants themselves.

"I have been told that the sold bricks were below standards that why they were sold, we will not allow this behaviour, so I directed all these employees to immediately be arrested and be in remand until they have paid the monies," he said.

In May 2019, Mlele District Council hired a contractor to make the bricks but majority of them were below standard.

The regional commissioner formed a special committee to investigate the matter which later reported that all the bricks were not suitable for construction work.

But some employees decided to buy them on credit, but it has been two years since they bought them and they haven't paid the money.

Meanwhile, RC Homera directed the arrest of all parents and guardians who will be found hiding children with disabilities at home to prevent them not to attend school this January.

He made the directive after inspecting the preparations to receive Standard One pupils and Form One students in the Mlele District.

"We have received reports that there were some parents who are hiding children with disabilities baring them to attend school, this is against the country's laws and human rights," he added.

He instructed security organs to ensure that all 11,000 children who completed primary education in 2020 go to the selected secondary schools and others to join various technical colleges in the region.

PM Majaliwa launches Matemwe-Muyuni road

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Mjaliwa on Thursday inaugurated construction of the 7.58 kilometers Matemwe-Muyuni road in Unguja being under taken by a Chinese firm, China Civil Engineering Construction Cooperation (CCECC) at the cost of 5.48bn/-.

The funds have been disbursed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) on loan basis.

"The road is not only important for residents of Unguja North Region, but also for other eastern areas of the Island since it connected to other roads from Chwaka, Uroa, Pongwe, Kiwengwa, Pwani Mchangani, Matemwe and Muyuni," said the Prime Minister who is in official visit in North Unguja Region.

The PM's visit in the Island includes inspecting a number of activities as part of celebrations to mark

the 57th anniversary of the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution which is celebrated on January 12th every year.

The construction of the Matemwe-Muyuni road is clear sign of the government's determination to improve both rural and urban road infrastructure, said Majaliwa.

He said improved roads infrastructure simplify provision of social services for the citizens.

"Completion of the roads would also stimulate

economic growth and boost the tourism sector. Farmers engaging in agricultural and fishing activities depend on good roads to ensure their products reach consumers at every part of the country," said Majaliwa adding the roads will see improved per capita incomes of the residents in North Unguja Region.

He said the road construction will be a solution to the existing transport challenges facing residents of Matemwe,

Mbuyu Tende and Muyuni in the region.

Prime Minister Majaliwa reminded the residents that such developments are partly contributed because of the prevailing peace and unity among Zanzibaris, insisting on the need to continue embracing unity for the development of both Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar.

"The government will make sure that Zanzibar residents have access to quality social economic

services as well as improved rural and urban road networks," said the Premier. and business structures within the road reserves to avoid inconveniences when the government decides to embark on other development projects.

The Premier applauded President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi for good leadership. He said that for a short period since he was sworn-in as the President of Zanzibar, Dr Mwinyi has taken several measures

that gear to bring about development changes in the Isles.

Earlier, Infrastructure, Communication and Transport Minister, Rahma Kassim Ali said that completion of the road will boost economic development in Unguja North and nearby regions.

The minister assured the residents that the government is determined to ensure improved road networks in Pemba and Unguja.

Food prices increase annual inflation rate to 3.4 per cent

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE annual headline inflation rate for the month of December, 2020 has increased to 3.4 per cent from at 3.0 per cent as it was recorded in November, 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said yesterday.

Releasing the statistics yesterday, the Acting Director of Population Census and Social Statistics, Ruth Davison said, "The increase of the headline inflation was due to high prices for commodities for the year ended December, 2020 compared for the year ended November, 2020."

She noted that on average inflation rate for the period between January and December 2020 has however fell to 3.3 per cent up from 3.4 per cent recorded between January and December 2019.

Average inflation rate for food products had increased to 5.0 per cent in 2020 from 4.3 per cent in 2019. On the other hand, inflation rate for non-food products had declined to 2.3 per cent in 2020 from 3.0 per cent recorded in 2019.

"The increased inflation rate for the year ended December 2020 was due to high price of foods and non-food products in the period ending December 2020 compared to the period ending December 2019," she added.

She named some of the food products whose prices increased in the month of December, 2020 as meat by 3.1 per cent, fish (15.6), eggs (3), sardines (13.2), cooking oil (9), fruits (16.9), beans (6.2), cowpeas (12), Irish potatoes (2) and cooking gas (12.3).

At the same time, inflation rate on-food products and soft drinks increased to 3.0 per cent in December, 2020 compared to 2.8 per cent recorded in the year ended November 2020.

In comparison with other East African countries of Kenya and Uganda, she said the annual inflation rate in Kenya for the year ended December, 2020 had increased to 5.62 per cent from 5.33 percent for the year ended November, 2020.

In Uganda the annual headline inflation rate for the year ended December, 2020 has decreased to 3.6 per cent from 3.7 per cent recorded for the year ended November, 2020.



Construction of classrooms at a school meant for special needs students gets under way at Patandi in Arumeru District, Arusha Region, as found yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

Deputy minister orders PCCB to investigate farmers' cooperative leaders in Chamwino

By Guardian Reporter

Addressing grape farmers at Buigili village, Bashe said that the leaders should be accountable for what they have done.

In the meeting, farmers appealed to the minister to intervene and support them to get back the lost money.

The farmers told the minister that the cooperative received the money from ARCO Vintage Company in 2020 which had to be used to improve infrastructure in one of the farmers' grape farms located in Mwegamile village but the leaders didn't use the funds for the farmers' activi-

ties and instead used them for other matters.

The deputy minister also wanted more efforts to be taken to ensure that the grape farming is improved and increase production.

He instructed the director general of the Irrigation Commission to immediately send engineers to work with their fellow engineers at the Chamwino Council to assess the cost of irrigation infrastructure at the farm and then submit the report to him.

Bashe also wanted the engineers to also assess whether

the same project can use solar energy (solar system) in operating water pumping machines used to irrigate the farm.

He also wanted every farmer to clear his/her piece of land in the farm within a month.

The deputy minister also instructed the Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI) to assess the total number of seedlings that will be needed in the farm after a large number of seedlings had died.

"TARI should also establish a special plot to grow grape seedlings which will later be distributed to the farmers for

free. TANESCO also should restore electricity services in the farm by putting a new transformer and thus make operations at the farm much easier," he added.

CHABUMA AMCOS is cooperative with 961 farmers. The cooperative established a grape farm in 2010 totaling 296 acres where they also got a 1.5bn/- loan to improve the farm's irrigation infrastructure at the farm.

The cooperative has a role to organise the grapevine while searching for grapevine markets.

BMUs important for development of fisheries sub-sector - Dr Mlalila

By Guardian Correspondent

THE government has called upon district councils should learn beach management units (BMUs) in their specific areas and use them to enhance revenue collections from fishing activities.

The coordinator of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth (SWIOFish) project under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Dr Nichrous Mlalila, has said the BMUs are important for development of the fishing sub-sector.

He made the statement on Thursday when briefing the Livestock and Fisheries Deputy Minister, Pauline Gekul who was inspecting construction progress of BMU office at Dunda ward in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region with support from the SWIOFish project under the World Bank.

Dr Mlalila was concerned that collected revenues are currently spent by the district councils instead of being returned to the BMUs which are responsible of managing the beach areas as well as ensuring sustainable fishing activities.

He however noted that there are some legal

challenges which prohibit BMUs from collecting revenues from marine resources.

"We encourage district councils to allow BMUs to collect revenues and use them to develop their fishing activities. These revenues will be directly spent to improve the fishing sector," Dr Mlalila noted.

He added that in district where the BMUs have been allowed to collect revenues, collections have increased tremendously.

He gave an example of Pangani District in Tanga Region where collections increased from 36m/- to 256m/- per year.

Under World Bank funded project, fifty BMU groups were established in Pangani, Bagamoyo, Mkinga, Tanga Urban, and Lindi Rural districts and before venturing into the new task of collecting revenues, members of fishery units were trained on how better to do the job.

The task was part of empowering members with financial muscles.

Through the six-year project, construction of BMU offices are in different stages of construction including Mkinga District at Zingibari, Pangani (Kipumbwi), Lindi Rural (Sudi), Bagamoyo (Dun-

da), and Chalinze (Saadani).

The deputy minister urged other BUMs to learn from the Pangani BMU to enhance their revenue collections.

Gekul highlighted the need for district authorities to closely monitor officers' in-charge of collecting levies from fishing activities because some of the funds end up in individual pockets.

"BMUs should be tasked to collect revenues, but this should be done on legal agreements. We will consult the President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government for guidelines," said Gekul.

SWIOFish is the World Bank funded 'South-west Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project' for the Africa region with the aim to improve the management effectiveness of selected priority fisheries at the regional, national and community level.

In Tanzania, the programme is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries (Zanzibar) and the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA) focuses on six priority fish species.



Upendo Lugongo (C), the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency manager for Tanga Region, has a word with water technicians in Mkinga District yesterday during an inspection tour of water projects. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon

Morogoro sees 25 per cent decline in road accidents

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THE number of road accidents has gone down by 25 per cent in Morogoro Region while the number of deaths from crashes had decreased to 57 from 90 per year.

Morogoro Regional Police Commander, Faustine Musilimu said the region has recorded less road accidents and deaths in 2020 compared to 2019 whereas in 2019 there were 75 road accidents compared to 54 accidents recorded last year.

Commander Muslim linked the decrease in road crashes and deaths with the enhanced provi-

sion of road safety education to road users including drivers and passengers. He said that traffic police conducted road safety education to 3,600 passengers and 2,000 motorbike drivers each month.

He said a total of 4,000 students were reached with education programme every month. He said most of the road crashes were caused by driver's negligence, calling upon road users to adhere to traffic regulations to avoid accidents.

The RPC underscored the need for continued road safety awareness and education to reduce road accidents in the country.

"We will continue to provide education to road users; we also insist drivers to respect traffic regulations," said the Commander adding they are conducting an operation to identify drunk drivers.

He said the exercise is conducted during traffic stops, bus stands and at weighing bridges.

Head of Traffic Police in Morogoro Region, Michael Stephen called upon the residents to continue working closely with the force to reduce road crashes. He reminded passengers to make sure they fasten their seat belt whenever boarding a car.

Stringent punitive measures

will be taken against reckless drivers as well as those violating traffic rules, he said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that by 2030, road accidents could be the fifth leading cause of deaths with the highest number of deaths occurring in Africa.

Every day, almost 3,700 people are killed globally in crashes involving cars, buses, motorbikes, bicycles, trucks and pedestrians. More than half of those killed are pedestrians, motorcyclists and youth, who are the most victims of road traffic accidents being the first cause of mortality among 15 and 29 year-olds.



Trunk boxes, commonly used by students in the place of suitcases, for sale at Dar es Salaam's popular 'Tazara Veterinari' mixed-goods market - as found on Thursday. Most schools across Tanzania open on Monday for the new academic year. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Headmaster of Singida Region secondary school suspended over alleged misuse of funds

By Guardian Reporter

David Silinde, Minister of state in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, yesterday presented to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) the headmaster of Ikhanoda Secondary School in Singida Region over alleged misuse of funds for the construction of a dining hall.

The move came after a visit by the deputy minister who was told that about 50m/- meant for implementation of the project had not been accounted for with the building still on its foundation stage and equipment being bought at very highest prices.

"You cannot buy iron sheets for 70m/- and a single bricks at 5,000/- what kind of brick is this? Questioned the deputy minister as he directs the police commander to arrest the headmaster and the entire building committee.

Silinde said they should go

and explain what they have done with the public monies.

In another development, the deputy minister dissolved the building committee and stripped off the powers of the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) for failing to administer the construction of the school.

The WEO is said to have been directly involved in the misuse of the funds where the deputy minister directed PCCB and the police to investigate the matter.

Singida District Commissioner, Pascas Muragili said the security and defense committee was sent to investigate the matter and found that there was gross misuse of funds and decided to suspend the head teacher.

Earlier, the head teacher, Omary Selestine informed the deputy minister that so far they have spent 57.6m/- out of 100m/- earmarked for the project. He said that plans were to complete the construction work by the end of this month.

Investigate surveying companies before signing contracts - minister

By Guardian Correspondent

Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development deputy minister Angeline Mabula has directed district councils in the country to ensure they investigate and get satisfied before signing contracts with land surveying and formalisation companies so as to make the work more successful.

Mabula said after having identified that some of the lands surveying companies were not effective and thus

fail to produce quality works after being employed by the government.

In a meeting with leaders of Kilimanjaro Region at the region's hall yesterday, Mabula was shocked with a report that the region entered into agreements with eight land surveying companies which at the end of the day didn't produce any outcome.

The meeting brought together District Executive Directors (DEDs), land sector officials, leaders of land surveying and formalisation

companies and other top leaders in the region.

"It is shocking to hear that over eight companies which you hired to conducting land surveying and formalisation in the region haven't done anything, this shows how unserious you are, you didn't even do any investigations to dig deeper about the companies, this is the results now, the companies haven't accomplished their jobs," she said.

The deputy minister said that councils' leaders should

supervise to ensure that the companies do not go against the plans set by the councils but should work to fulfill what is in the contracts to bring positive results.

She wanted the councils to ensure that they sign contracts with land surveying colonies which are economically healthy and believe that they will implement their duties on time and not otherwise.

"The eight companies are currently being investigated by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption

Bureau (PCCB), but why do we wait until these companies reached this stage, we should be serious with our jobs, hiring companies that cannot deliver is waste of time and money," she said.

She said that the government decided to engage the private sector in land planning and surveying services because the demand for the services had increased significantly over the years but investigating their delivery capacity is essential.

"What the government

wants is that for every company which gets the contract has capital capacity of at least 50 percent, we should not hire those who depend to get money from the citizens so as to implement the projects," she added.

Alphose Mwashinga, executive director of the KILI Surveys Ltd told the deputy minister that his company is very serious in its job as it had surveyed at least 2,795 plots where they have received 283.4m/- in payments and were still claiming 247.6m/-.

"We expect to accomplish the surveying later this month, this year, we are well prepared to serve the community and produce quality jobs from the projects," he said.

Some of the contracted companies to provide land surveying and formalisation services in Kilimanjaro Region included the Kili Surveys Ltd, Makazi Solution, EM& Construction Ltd, Land Surveys and Consultancy Services and EM Land Consultants.



Dr John Jingu, Permanent Secretary for the Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children ministry, addresses assistant registrars for Arusha Region yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Govt commends construction of Chamkoroma Bridge in Kongwa

By Guardian Reporter, Kongwa

THE government has commenced construction of the Chamkoroma Bridge which is connecting Mpwapwa and Kongwa Districts in Dodoma Region thus bringing hope to thousands of residents who depend on the bridge to conduct their daily social and economic activities.

The bridge was recently destroyed and washed away by floods. It is within the Pandambili-Mlali -Mpwapwa to Ngh'ambi-Road which was constructed at a tune of 1.1bn/-.

Speaking during his tour to inspect various areas destroyed by rains in Kongwa District, Dodoma Regional Commissioner Dr Binilith Mahenge gave the contractor two days to construct an alternative road which will be used by citizens while the construction goes on.

"This bridge is very important in stimulating economic growth; its destruction has halted and affected various social and economic activities here, so we should supervise to ensure that it is completed on time," he said.

Dr Mahenge instructed the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) to supervise the contractor and make sure that the bridge is constructed and completed on time and at required standards.

"Put a structure which will be received by experts, whenever you build something at poor quality it goes to affect the country's economy because it cannot last for long thus spending much money to renovate or reconstruct, so make sure that you supervise and ensure everything goes well," he said.

According to him, once the construction of quality bridge will contribute to improving social services as well as pushing forward economic development in the district and region at large.

RC Mahenge advised the leaders in the areas to ensure that

whenever they commence any project, they engage locals so as to get the history of the area so as to produce quality projects.

"Experts should think outside the box now, be innovative and make sure that before commencing projects, you take a deep instigation of the area. For example the bridges projects need information from locals who I think knows better than you, during the designing process, make sure you consult the locals to establish various challenges facing the area of the project," he lamented.

Kongwa District Commissioner Dr Suleiman Serera urged residents to plant more trees so as to prevent water that destroys infrastructures in the area.

"We should invest in efforts to conserve nature by planting more trees, this will also protect our infrastructures from being washed away by water during rain seasons, I recently held a meeting here and insisted on the issue of environmental protection," Serera said.

In his remarks, acting manager of TANROADS, Eng Saome Kabunda said what they were doing now is to ensure that they prevent water from damaging the infrastructures while the construction goes on.

"We have hired a local constructor to construct this bridge and have promised to complete the job within a month. We will supervise to ensure that the job is done effectively and remarkably," she said.

Earlier, the Chamkoroma ward councillor Saimon Binde said that massive environmental destruction implemented by citizens including deforestation is one of the challenges facing the area.

"There are some people who have taken land in the mountain, they are practicing agriculture and cutting trees thus affecting nature. The area has remained bare and dry," he said.

WFP providing food assistance to victims of conflict in Mozambique

MAPUTO

THOUSANDS are at risk from serious hunger and malnutrition in Cabo Delgado as humanitarian operations face shortages of \$108 million and the number of people forced to leave their homes has risen to 565,000.

WFP is currently assisting up to 400,000 people in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces with an in-kind monthly family food basket of 50 kg of cereals, 5 liters of oil and 10 kg of dried beans and lentils.

WFP Country Representative in Mozambique, Antonella D'Aprile said: "Internally displaced persons are especially vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 because they are crowded together in camps, host families' backyards and outdoors with no or inadequate shelter, health services and access to clean water and sanitation."

D'Aprile said that thousands of children and adolescents who lost their parents and close family need our protection and care.

"It is incredibly timely to join efforts now and protect the food and nutrition security and livelihood of Mozambicans - men, women, adolescents, and children - impacted by armed attacks, Cyclone Kenneth and the COVID-19 pandemic", D'Aprile.

WFP also provides cash-based assistance where local markets are functioning, allowing families to choose which basic needs to meet (food items and hygiene

kits) through redeeming value vouchers of 3600 MZN (equivalent to about 50 US \$) per month.

This food basket ensures least 81 percent of the daily kilocalorie needs of displaced families, and contributes to preventing already traumatized and vulnerable families from falling victim to exploitation or employing negative coping mechanisms for survival.

WFP resources are stretched and may be forced to reduce or halt vital food assistance to conflict-affected people in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa over the next three months.

This not only raises concerns around food security and health risks resulting from malnutrition but also could create tensions within host communities.

WFP currently requires \$10.5 million per month to provide food assistance to 750,000 people (500,000 IDPs and 250,000 from host communities) affected by the conflict in northern Mozambique.

To ensure humanitarian food assistance for the next 12 months, WFP needs \$132.4 million, of which only \$24.4 million have been secured as of late December 2020. Without sufficient funding, the food supply will be compromised.

If resources are available and access is granted, WFP is able to move cargo and its humanitarian workforce, by road, sea and air, to provide humanitarian life-saving assistance assist to at least 750,000 IDPs and host community members per month.

Marijuana, illicit brew destroying youth in Rombo District - DC

By Guardian Correspondent, Rombo

THE government in Rombo District, Kilimanjaro Region has said rampant use of marijuana by a huge number of the youth in the district was now a new threat which weakens the nation's human workforce.

Rombo District Commissioner Athumani Kihamia recently said marijuana smoking and drinking of the illicit brew for youth in 30 to 32-

year age group was rampant.

He said some of the youth in the district were being ruled by luxurious living even failing to cross the road for some of them.

"This is not acceptable at all and I will not close my eyes to it. Use of the intoxicants have caused an increase to gender based violence, mugging, sodomy and child abuse and other criminal acts including robbery.

"Me and my security and defence

committee will ensure we look for the marijuana. There are people who have plants to make illicit brew at Useri and in Rongai Forest. So in order to rescue the group of youth from perishing, we are conducting a crackdown from house to house, street to street," he said.

In 2017 Rombo District was reported by various local and foreign media of its widespread excessive drinking that affected the health of the

males that also caused some women to hire men from neighbouring country to satisfy their sexual needs due to excessive drinking habits by their spouses.

As for now marijuana smoking it is a big problem, after waking up in the morning, the youth develop the urge to smoke marijuana and qat (mirungi) that give them the impetus of looking for money.



Kiteto legislator Edward ole Lekaita (squatting) joins residents of Sorongine village in the constituency's Chapakazi ward on Thursday in making bricks for the construction of a health centre. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Zanzibar president underlines need to form committee on GVB

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has underscored the need to form a special committee that will be dealing with gender based violence (GBV) issues following the increase of such incidents in the country.

He was speaking on Thursday at a meeting which brought together stakeholders to discuss various issues related to GVB.

Dr Mwinyi noted that following the increase on gender violence incidents in the country, there should be a committee which will deal with the matter. He said members of the committee will come from almost all the sectors.

He said the committee will be responsible for making follow up on

GBV related cases filed at various courts to ensure justice to both the victims and culprits. He said efforts are ongoing to further strengthen the police gender desks at police stations as well as provision of education to the residents on the impacts of GBV.

According to him, most of the GBV cases have been taking long time, calling upon police officers to fast track investigations so that the culprits are punished in accordance with the law. He said it is high time the government reviews its curricular to ensure GBV issues are taught at primary and secondary schools.

Zanzibar High Court Registrar, Mohamed Ali Mohamed said that most GBV cases are being dropped over lack of evidence as some witnesses do not show up during the court ses-

sion.

He however cited weaknesses in the Zanzibar Children's Act 2011, which he said it does not provide a jail punishment for convicted children. He added that some children have been repeatedly engaging on GBV issues because they are sure of not being jailed.

Zanzibar Police Commissioner, Mohamed Hassan insisted on the need to further train police officers especially those in the investigations department and the residents on the adverse impacts of GBV to children and women.

The government introduced the National Plan of Action to end Violence against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC) 2017/2018-2021/2022 which aims to cut violence against

women and children in half by 2022.

The NPA-VAWC is part of implementation of The Women and Gender Development Policy (2000), The National Strategy for Gender Development 2005, Child Development Policy of 2008 and Law of the Child Act of 2009. The policies aim to ensure that gender perspective is mainstreamed into all policies, programmes and strategies.

A total of 420 police gender desks have been established at various police stations across the country. The desks have so far served 58,059 victims of various forms of GBV.

The 2015/2016 Demographic Health Survey shows that four in every ten women and girls aged between 15 and 49 years have experienced physical violence in their lifetime.

Minister gives MUWASA one month to make sure Shirati town is supplied with clean, safe water

By Guardian Correspondent, Rorya

WATER Minister, Jumaa Aweso has given 30 days to the Musoma Water and Sanitation Authority (MUWASA) to make sure residents of Shirati town get clean and safe water supply services.

He issued the instructions on Wednesday this week during his visit to Rorya district to inspect the water project in company of Rorya Member of Parliament Jafari Chege and District Commissioner Simon Odunga.

It was explained that the project stopped supplying water since 2016 after the main pump broke down and nothing done to it so far.

However, Aweso said he had already issued directives to MUWASA to make evaluation of the cost for the project to start operating.

He phoned MUWASA Managing Director Joyce Msiru to get evaluation feedback and told 247m/- was needed to enable the project start operating.

Thereafter Aweso wanted to know how much money was in the account of Rorya Water and Sanitation Authority (RUWASA) for the implementation of water projects in the district.

Responding, RUWASA Manager for Rorya District Eng. Evaristo Mgaya said they received 1.3bn/- and that up to now there was 290m/- in the RUWASA account.

The response surprised and bothered the Minister and instructed that instead of the money staying idle in the bank account, it should be used to refurbish the Shirati water project and pledged to send more funds.

"It is quite surprising, you have money in the account and your children go without food, that is not right at all, the residents in this area are being inconvenienced, they have no water, while the money is in the bank," said Aweso.

He further told Mgaya: "This area is under you, people here are in dire need of water but you stay with the money that is not being used for the intended purpose, meaning you have failed in your responsibilities."

Aweso thereupon rang the Water Ministry Permanent Secretary, Eng Anthony Sanga and directed him to allow funds in RUWASA bank account be used in the Shirati water project.

The Minister stressed for MUWASA to complete the project within the time agreed upon and added that he would not entertain any further excuse.

He also directed that the MUWASA Manager be assigned other responsibilities and another expert take his position to solve water challenges facing the Rorya District.



Mohamed Nandule (R) sets in motion the checking of applications for cashewnut purchase tender bids at Mlingoti East Amcos in Tunduru District, Ruwama Region, yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Stevie Chindiye

PCCB investigates ghost debts submitted to NHIF from private pharmacies

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Kagera Region has embarked on investigations to identify all those involved in the demand of ghost debts totaling 304.6m/- submitted to the National Health Insurance Fund by two private pharmacies in Bukoba municipalities.

Submitting the Bureau's performance report for the period October - December last year, PCCB Head for Kagera Region John Joseph said their follow up discovered that the debts were fictitious because NHIF forms submitted were written by one person named Frida Samuel, who is not a doctor at the Kagera Region Referral Hospital as

the documents show.

He said after discovering that the documents were forgeries aimed to defraud the Fund, they have succeeded to recover more than 10m/- that had already been paid to the said pharmacies, and cancelled the 294.2m/- debt that had not been paid.

"Our follow up begun after receiving reports from NHIF on the demand for fictitious debts submitted by the two pharmacies to the Fund showing that between May and November 2016 they were in respect of medicines sold to patients," he said.

He said due to the non-existent of the said doctor at Kagera Referral Hospital, the Bureau found that the documents were forgeries intended

to defraud NHIF.

"We are continuing with our investigations, aiming to identify other people who we believe were also involved," he said.

He said the PCCB wants to know how the doctor came into possession of the NHIF forms and whether they were genuine for payment, adding "if it will be found they were authorized by the Hospital it means there are also suspects at the Hospital and if not, then there are suspects at the NHIF."

The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children said in October last year that it is working on a plan to facilitate registration of every citizen with health insurance schemes.

The move is mainly targeted to enable at least 26 percent of Tanzanians living below the poverty line to be enrolled with the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF).

So far only 4.4 million people equivalent to 8 percent of the country's population are enrolled with NHIF. Of the number, 60 percent are civil servants who are required to register with the fund in accordance with the law.

The government has taken a number of initiatives to improve provision of health services which includes construction of health centres, availability of drugs as well as increasing the budget for the health ministry.



Jenista Mhagama (foreground), Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament Coordination, Labour, Youth and People with Disabilities), views a ginger processing machine bought by the Public Service Social Security Fund. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

RAS issues seven-day ultimatum to dishonest Simiyu health workers

By Guardian Correspondent, Simiyu

THE Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) for Simiyu, Miriam Mbagha, has issued a seven day ultimatum to the Regional Medical Officer to hand her names of health workers who are said to have misused funds in their respective duty stations.

Mbagha issued the directive when she spoke to health workers from the regions at Bariadi township during a special working meeting.

"I can not tolerate embezzlement of funds, in seven days, RMO bring names of those medical officers or they should return the money within the same period," he said.

The intervention came after receiving information from the

acting RMO that there has been misuse of funds in places of health service provision.

The RMO told the RAS that collections from health centres have not been sent to banks and when asked those responsible are saying they have sent it.

"There are some health centres we have visited and there are collections but there is nothing in the account when asked they said they have sent them to personal accounts," RMO Dr Hamis Kulemba told the RAS.

Dr Kulemba added that there are challenges within the region including the distribution of drugs in health centers.

The RMO said there are some centres in the region where there is a bad use of the system a move that makes some regions miss the essential commodity.

TALIRI plans to install Centre for Dairy Excellence in Tanga Region

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THE Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI) is set to install Center for Dairy Excellence (CDE) in Tanga Region to help improve performance of the crucial socio-economic sector in the country, especially milk production.

The robust project, set to start with a seed capital of at least 1.424bn/- is projected to serve as a unique demonstration center for dairy farmers to embrace best dairy animal technologies and practices.

Acting General Director for TALIRI, Dr Jonas Kizima, yesterday told the publication that the Institute was in talks with the government of Ireland for availability of the

needed seed capital amount, saying however the talks were at impressive stages, added that other funds for the timely initiatives was expected to be sourced from the government of Tanzania.

"However, doors are open for stakeholders from within and outside the country to chip-in and invest in order to allow the project to be furnished with the best-ever technological facilities and services," Dr Kizima expressed.

He stated, the core focus is to enable the dairy farmers in the eastern zone region of Tanga, Dar es Salaam and Coastal to heighten their milk production levels by adopting cattle with good dairy animal genetics, but also, embracing key other practices.

The TALIRI's chief boss itemized

some of the key dairy technologies the envisaged center will have in offering as best animal health services, animal compounded and feeds, animal husbandry infrastructure, milk handling, grazing systems and good dairy animal genetics, among others.

"We aspire to develop the center in a professional manner to be a major Demonstration Dairy Farm Center (DDFC) for all dairy farmers within the country. Moreover, the center will also be used to offer dairy tourism to different foreigners that will be touring in the country," he insisted.

Besides, he unveiled that among others, the state-owned institution has decided to install the crucial dairy facility in the region with an eye to help the Tanga Fresh Ltd

industry to process milk at its full capacity.

According to him, the famous factory's daily milk processing capacity was at least 120,000 liters, but due to poor supply of milk from dairy farmers the facility was only processing between 50,000 and 80,000 liters.

"The other reason is that Tanga stands tall among regions within the country with many dairy cooperatives and smallholder dairy farmers hence placing the facility there will assist them improving their daily executions, the move which will automatically manage the factory (Tanga Fresh Ltd) to start receiving needed fresh milk for processing," he added.

As the government is working tirelessly to industrialise the

country's economy by 2025, he said the institute in its side will run a diverse professional initiative to help improve performance of milk factories, possibly through increasing home milk production, the move which will also curtail milk importation.

Statistics from the Tanzania Dairy Board (TDB) depicts that during 2019/20, the country produced 3.01 billion liters of milk, out of which, 2.1 billion liters was produced from domestic dairy cows and 0.1 billion liters was from hybrid dairy cows.

However, Assistant Registrar of TDB, Noel Byamungu, said the milk produced in the country is still not reflecting the country's actual demand, hence propelling the country to import milk from other countries.

For instance, he said during 2017/18, Tanzania imported 20,920,537.58 LMEs Kg, valued at 30,290,485,222/- and during 2018/19 the importation rate stood at 617,448,655Kg.

However, due to advancement of the UHT technology in Tanzania, the country's Liquid Milk Equivalent (LME) Importation has kept on declining.

However, record proves that Tanzania has successfully managed to increase the number of crossbred dairy cattle at the national level 3.8 times from 783,000 in 2017/18 to 1,294,882 in 2018/19, the development which witnessed the country's milk production expanding from 2.4 to 2.7 billion liters.

LATRA records success on use of electronic ticketing system

By Correspondent Theresia Victor

THE Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) has recorded a success on the use of electronic ticketing system, which started effectively on Thursday.

LATRA Manager for Roads, Licensing and Monitoring, Leo Ngowi said on Thursday that the use of electronic travel ticket is the success according to the number of data collected monitored and evaluated on the particular day.

By Thursday evening, a total of 67 upcountry buses were inspected whereas 54 buses among them had already started using the e-ticketing system, Ngowi said.

"More than 80 percent of the passenger buses are using the e-ticketing system. Bus owners have well responded to our directives," he added.

He further noted that passengers don't need much than to download an application on their cellphones and be able to process an electronic ticket at their own convenience.

The reasons behind the success, according to him, are education given to service providers and customers (passengers), as well as readiness to use the system.

On Monday, LATRA announced that effectively January 7th 2021, all upcountry buses will have to ensure that they issue electronic travel tickets to their passengers.

LATRA director general Gilliard Ngewe reminded owners of upcountry passenger buses to comply with their licencing conditions.

He named the relevant routes as covering buses plying from Dar-es-Salaam to Tanga, as well as to Arusha, Lindi, Mtwara, Iringa, Njombe, Songea and Mbeya.

Also included are those moving from Dar-es-Salaam to Tunduma, Rukwa, Morogoro, Kilombero, Ifakara, Malinyi and Mahenge.

Electronic ticketing is in accordance with the guidelines as announced in the Government Gazette on February 2, 2020.



Marine Police Commander Evance Mwijage (L) shows Home Affairs minister George Simbachawene (in glasses) in Dar es Salaam yesterday some of the spots in the Indian Ocean waters where police patrols are conducted. Photo: Home Affairs ministry

TARURA to build, revamp 6.2km of feeder roads in Mwanza city

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda, Mwanza

THE Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) is in the next fiscal year, planning to construct and renovate feeder roads totaling 6.2km in Mwanza city.

Speaking to reporters yesterday here, manager of TARURA in Mwanza City, Eng Mohamed Muanda said that the roads will be constructed at double surface dressing level and the construction is expected to commence in July, this year.

He said that the construction is part of the government's zeal to ensure that areas located on the outskirts of the city are connected to tarmac roads in a bid to ease transport.

Muanda mentioned the roads that will be constructed as Mwananchi-Mahinakati, Bismark, Mkolani-Buhongwa, Nyahingi-Malimbe, Ibanda-Buhongwa, Buhongwa-Bulale-Mwasonge, and Luchehele.

He said that the length of each road will be established after completing design works that are still ongoing under a team

of TARURA engineers in the city. "In this, TARURA will use money from Road Fund to construct roads totaling 5.15km length while the Mwanza City Council will also release funds to build a 1km road," he said.

Eng Muanda said the agency has minimized costs in doing road maintenance a move that has enabled it to save money that will be used to build more roads so as to stimulate development.

He pointed out upon completion, the roads will help to open up the city and make

it more passable a thing that can significantly boost socio-economic development among the people.

Mussa Ally, a resident of Mwanza city praised the plan, saying that will help much to push forward development as people will be moving from one place to another easily when executing their daily economic activities.

He also appealed to government executives to stick to their professionalism when implementing the projects so as enable them to register

tangible results for the city's development.

(TARURA was officially launched by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa on July, 2017 tasked to address the poor management of construction contracts between contractors and the authority in road projects and emphasize transparency in all public works contracts.

TARURA is also responsible for facilitating improvements to the network of rural and urban roads, enabling people to transport crops and other items from villages to urban areas.



Ernest Kimaya (C), chairman of the Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organisations, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday. He took exception to what he referred to as violence against street beggars and people with disabilities. He is with Tanzania Albinism Society chairman Godson Mollé (R) and TFDP board chairman Felician Mkunde. Photo: Correspondent Christina Mwakangale

DED appeal to JPM to revoke Ilaimutiak farm title deed in Simanjiro District

By Guardian Correspondent, Simanjiro

SIMANJIRO District Executive Director in Manyara Region, Baraka Laizer has appealed to President John Magufuli to revoke the title deed of the 12,000 hectare Ilaimutiak Farm as its allocation did not follow legal procedures.

He said the farm was owned by 27 people who are village and street chairmen who had finished their tenures.

Speaking with this paper on Wednesday, Laizer said the farm was divided up among themselves without following legal procedures claiming that it is owned by a foreign investor.

"The farm's records mention a foreigner as the own-

er of the area, but there are reports that the person is deceased, hence we want to know who is the true living owner," said Laizer.

However, he said the appeal to revoke the farm's title deed has been given because it has not been developed, its big area was still bushland.

He further said they were asking President Magufuli and the Lands Minister, William Lukuvi to revoke the farm's title deed and restore it to the people as the residents of the area were facing acute shortage of land for farming and livestock keeping.

"As for now we still do not know the true owner, and the residents say they will not allow any farming activities in the area until they identify him/her," he added.

AfDB to unlock \$5 billion for African women entrepreneurs

NAIROBI

AFRICAN Development Bank's board of directors has approved a five-year strategy promising to bolster women's economic growth through a \$5 billion credit access.

The three-pillar gender strategy for 2021-2025 coined "Investing in Africa's women to accelerate inclusive growth," puts the bank's focus in unlocking \$5 billion to credit women-owned small

and medium enterprises over the period.

"This is a significant milestone for the bank as it will guide our interventions in the next five years as we continue to increase our efforts to achieve outcomes and maximum impact on building gender equality on the ground for women to thrive," said Vanessa Mounzar, Bank Director for Gender, Women and Civil Society in a January 7 statement on its

website.

Apart from financial support, the bank commits to offering women technical assistance in order to convert their ventures into productive and competitive enterprises, as provided in the first pillar.

It will also strive to create opportunities for women in the non-financial sectors during the five-year period.

Guided by the plan, the bank aims at leveraging technology to ensure an

increased number of women access skills and information in areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This is to accelerate their employability as well as opportunities for creating self-employment.

The bank, which believes in gender equality as a driving force to transform Africa, would as a lender push for gender responsive infrastructural projects to benefit women as

stakeholders, workers and end-users, promises the strategy.

In the statement, the bank says "Gender inequality in the labour market costs sub-Saharan Africa \$95 million each year."

It further states that the "The current Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the need for immediate attention to support vulnerable women and girls in fragile areas."

In reaffirming the need for supporting women post-Covid-19, the bank refers to a study it jointly conducted last year with UN Women and Impact Her, which found that 80 per cent of women-owned small and medium enterprises in 30 African countries had to temporarily or permanently shut down their businesses due to pandemic restrictions.

A 2017 Graça Machel Trust study questioned 398 female entrepreneurs in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda

on gender composition of their human resource and found out that 55 of the female entrepreneurs have more than half of their staff as females.

"Therefore, empowering women-owned or -led businesses can drive more diversity in the workforce," states the Survey to Explore Growth Barriers Faced by Female Entrepreneurs in East Africa.

SATURDAY 9 JANUARY 2021

**Taking A New Look
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Female entrepreneurship key ingredient for Africa's growth

O Africa leads the world in terms of numbers of women business owners. In fact, women in Africa are more likely than men to be entrepreneurs. Women make up 58 per cent the continent's self-employed population. However, a recent World Bank report, 'Profiting from Parity', shows that women entrepreneurs across sub-Saharan Africa continue to earn lower profits than men on average.

Female entrepreneurs are women who organise and manage an enterprise, especially a business. Female entrepreneurship has steadily increased during the 20th and 21st century, with female owned businesses increasing. The number of self-employed women has steadily increased over the past three decades, putting them at an approximate thirty-three per cent increase. Many female-owned businesses continue to be home-based operations.

A recent international study found that women from low to middle income countries are more likely to enter early stage entrepreneurship when compared to those of higher income countries. Even though female entrepreneurship and the formation of female-owned business networks is steadily rising, there are a number of challenges and obstacles that female entrepreneurs face. One major challenge for female entrepreneurs face traditional gender-roles that are structurally internalized by society.

Entrepreneurship is still considered as a male-dominated field, and it may be difficult to surpass these conventional views. Other than dealing with the dominant stereotype, female entrepreneurs

are facing several obstacles related to their businesses.

One of the arguments the study of gender discrimination in venture capital funding is that the demand for skilled women entrepreneurs is greater than the supply. Other research has shown that women entrepreneurs are already launching ambitious businesses in the high-technology industry, expanding their social networks, and making their pitches more relatable to the male-dominated VC industry, despite many industry people believing that women are not doing that.

Some studies, though, have looked at the social networks of women entrepreneurs, showing that their networks are different from that of their male counterparts and aren't overlapping as much with financial networks. Some studies have shown that women were less likely to have the necessary experience in executive or technical management, since they tended to be more present in the retail, finance, service and real estate sectors. This has led other researchers to study female entrepreneurs with extensive human capital, to identify whether they still face discrimination in their funding search.

Women with strong human capital were still less likely to pursue their high-growth business ideas full-time. Education, especially in the STEM fields, is another barrier that women face in achieving the necessary human capital. STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines - science, technology, engineering and mathematics - in an interdisciplinary and applied approach.

Mob action is an affront to humanity, and must be condemned vehemently

Mob justice, popularly referred to as instant justice, is when ordinary citizens take the law into their own hands to punish alleged criminals. This is an unlawful process of punishing suspects, and a violation of their fundamental human rights and dignity. From time immemorial, mob justice or 'instant justice' has been a common practice of punishing crime suspects in many African countries. In spite of concerted efforts aimed at promoting human rights worldwide, this inhumane act is still prevalent also in most developing countries.

Admittedly, the spate of mob action leaves much to be desired as far as our democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are concerned. The modus operandi of 'street' justice can take the form of flogging or hacking suspects to death, slashing, lynching, and stoning. Sometimes female suspects are stripped publicly, pounding victims with bricks, setting people ablaze, and many more. Instant justice has gained grounds in societies as a result of lack of confidence in the police and the judiciary. It is unimaginable that majority of the citizenry including well-informed persons encourage such disheartening act. Actually, there have been several instances where innocent people lost their lives as a result of mistaken identity. During such circumstances, suspects are not given any chance to speak or explain themselves.

Another factor that accounts for mob justice is the excessive delay in justice delivery and the purported corruption among the elements of the criminal

administrative system. After all 'Justice delayed is justice denied'. Inasmuch as the perpetrators of mob justice go unpunished, this gruesome practice is not likely to cease in our communities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also admonishes the right to a fair trial, and the right to stand innocent of a crime until proven guilty. Regrettably, the rights and freedoms of alleged criminals have, for too long, been trampled upon with impunity in many African countries. The enthusiasm to opt for instant justice is widely practiced across the Continent.

Mob action is an affront to humanity, and must be condemned vehemently. This deadly practice is inhumane and intolerable in a democratic country like Ghana. The fundamental human right of every Ghanaian must be respected. The escalating cases of mob justice in many developing are alarming. This is a sign of moral decadence which exposes some weaknesses in the rule of law and the criminal justice system. Mob action affects the laid down process of punishment for criminal offences, since the rule of law is not strictly adhered to and sometimes compromised.

The Code of Criminal Procedure spells out specific punishment for every offence, but this is sometimes compromised by corrupt officers. Street justice is a criminal method of punishing suspects. It is a fact that the practice of mob justice has not reduced crime rate in any way. This has rather toughened most criminals who operate with the 'do-and-die' mentality; raping and killing their victims without any provocation.

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Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO, 0716 500500	General Line: 0745 700710 News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON 0757154767 E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz	Mob 0782253676 E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz Website: www.ippmedia.com, epaper.ippmedia.com



A guide to picking Liberia's next president

By Ansu Dualu

Do not take a single part of this selection guide and judge a person by it. You must weigh candidates entirely against measures listed herein; it is important that you hear from potential presidential candidates and ask a lot of questions to gauge their true positions and capabilities. Never vote for anybody who does not tell you his plans and how he will achieve them.

The role of a president is tenfold. It requires you to be a legal scholar, a philosopher, a social and developmental economist, a diplomat, an environmentalist; in essence, you must be a well-read, well-rounded individual who is tested and comfortable with making executive decisions. The president fears nothing but the wrath of the people. The best person for the office is the one who has prepared all his life to occupy this position - exposure matters.

The presidency is not a place for a flunky, especially in the 21st Century! S/he must fully understand the functioning of every government agency and the capabilities of those he appoints to lead and execute his vision, the rules and regulations governing these bodies and especially the Constitution of the Republic. He is the head, the commander-in-chief, on whose directives everything succeeds or fails. S/he must have an actionable, national vision. It is a position like none other; not just anybody should be given such awesome responsibility especially when it is noticeably clear that s/he does not grasp the full weight and responsibilities of the office. The presidency is not a joking matter; this is not where you put your friends or those you "love" or the celebrities you have come to admire - people lives are dependent on the decisions s/he makes. This office is entirely reserved for the best and brightest among us, the very people with the aptitude, intellect, preparedness, and eagerness to actualize our national vision - people who can hold their own in the company of world leaders with confidence and the proper readiness to execute. S/he is our face, with an in-depth knowledge of our problems and our national aspirations; whoever we put in this seat will determine how far we go as a nation.

Moreover, the president's responsibility increases daily - the extent to which that responsibility grows will depend on how well he plans to lead. Gauge the person's,



Supporters of Alexander Cummings, presidential candidate of the Alternative National Congress (ANC), arrive for a meeting during their party's presidential campaign rally at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Monrovia, Liberia

time-tested preparedness skills. Is this individual willing to set aside his personal ambitions to entirely devote his efforts to the affairs of the state? Is he willing to put the interests of the state far above partisanship and relationships?

Secondly, the team that is chosen to implement the president's plans must be equally prepared with equal commitment to seeing the plans come to fruition. Is this person a good judge of character? Watch the company he keeps and the caliber of people s/he surrounds himself with. What are his decision-making capabilities? The president must be farsighted enough to understand the consequences of his decisions and the burdens they bring to the country. How developed are his organizational skills? Does he understand the essence of leadership? S/he must plan better than most; look for this in the previous decisions s/he has made. Simple things like being married to the same person and having all your kids by one person can tell you a lot about a person's character - can they withstand adversities in a small unit such as the family? Is s/he a responsible father/mother? Have they developed their family unit and societal skills enough to be able to lead a unit as big as the nation? Examine his life choices and the decisions he has made up to date. Do not take anything lighted - this person can make or break a nation.

Consequently, avoid anybody who had a negative affiliation with our just ended civil war even in the smallest capacity; none of those people should be considered for any elected post or any public position for that matter. Passover individuals

with tainted characters, criminals, political prostitutes, bootlickers, people who are just in it to make a living, and especially former corrupt officials. This privileged position is about solidifying a legacy - it has nothing to do with earning an income.

Remember, the issue of equitable governance requires commitment to a higher ideal, consistency, and tactfulness; you cannot find these traits in vagrants! Political prostitutes have no vision; no self-control, they move with the tides in whichever direction it flows. Close all doors in front of these parasites. The presidency is not a post for the indigent; this does not mean you have to be rich to occupy the position. This is a role for the dignified, people who have achieved a high level of socio-economic standing with unblemished character, the educated - not just formally but holistically as well. This person must show he has the discipline to excel at an extremely high level of leadership. Furthermore, this leader must exude confidence in himself and his abilities, and the role he occupies. He must be a top predator with zero self-doubt but at the same time clothed with the humility required of a selfless commander.

Our captain must believe in the possibilities of Liberia more than anybody else, be able to convincingly articulate and present plausible solutions to Liberia's pressing issues with reliable understanding. His presentation must be his own - his vision and not somebody else's. He must be able to clearly present a step-by-step guide on how he will get us to total national revitalization and economic vibrancy. There

must be a proven track record that said individual has successfully performed at exceedingly high levels of leadership in the past, not necessarily in government but in the private sector as well. This individual must be a result-producing, well-seasoned leader before coming to the presidency. Secondly, he must subscribe to higher virtuous principles than most with total reverence for the people whom he serves.

His vision must adequately address: The economy and how to grow the national budget beyond \$1.5B in 10 years, and grow our GDP to over \$6B in 15 years. The issues of security and full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report. Reduce unemployment below 25 per cent in 5 years and how we can build local industries for national economic growth. Social, political, and judicial (inequalities) issues facing most of our people - How do we give dignity back to our people? How do we rebuild the family unit?

How can we leverage the financial might of Diaspora Liberians to enhance national economic growth? Education (grades 1-12, plus trade schools being the focus) to lower the high illiteracy rate in the country. National infrastructure and building public institutions - shifting the focus from individualized projects to national projects; electricity, roads, etc. The issue of institutional governance. Foreign and global understanding, diplomacy; someone with the proper pedigree to mingle on an equal footing with foreign counterparts at a high level. Can he convincingly present Liberia's case?

If Covid-19 is primarily a 'first world' virus, why is the global South in lockdown?

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

The currently available Covid-19 vaccines have been authorized for 'emergency use' in Europe and North America. This is due to an apparent spike in Covid-19 flu cases in the northern hemisphere as winter advances. Highly advertised vaccines are being produced and rolled out at 'warped speed' by powerful pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies headquartered in Euro-America although their efficacy including how long their immunity lasts is not clear.

Global media and news channels like Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN and India's NDTV have been marketing vaccines to the world with images of Prime Ministers, Vice President elects, and a Crown Prince in the Middle East taking the job live on television - seemingly to encourage vaccine skeptics. Vaccine nationalism is growing with its intense competition among Pharmaceutical Corporations and countries that manufacture vaccines and their local partners.

However, the country-specific quantitative and qualitative data now available for many hot and humid tropical South East Asian and African countries for the year 2020, indicate that there is NO Covid-19 emergency in a vast majority of countries in the Global South, and hence little need to rush to buy vaccines.

In Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Tanzania there is a very low incidence of Covid-19 mortality when compared to average annual rates of influenza related deaths. In Cambodia and Laos there was not a single Covid-19 death in 2020, while Vietnam had 34 deaths and Thailand a country of 70 million there were 26 deaths due to the virus in the year 2020 according to the Johns Hopkins University official Covid-19 Data base.

Nor have doctors, nurses, PHIs, frontline health workers in quarantine centers lost lives in these Southeast Asian countries, indicating low severity of the disease when compared to Euro-America where lockdowns and curfews did not limit high mortality rates. Nor have industrial, manufacturing or agriculture sector workers died in numbers due to Covid-19 in Southeast Asian countries. Nor were hospitals and intensive care units (ICU), overwhelmed in these countries, where there have been fewer patients in hospitals in 2020 than previous years.

While the Covid-19 virus has spread to all parts of the Global South, it clearly has far less traction in tropical countries than in the so-called 'first world' (Euro-America): In Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million there were 204 Covid-19 comorbidities deaths recorded with 35,300 Covid-19 positive tests, although in a normal year between 4,000 and 6000 people die of influenza co-morbidities.

The luxury 14 floor Asiri Central Hospital in the capital Colombo was closed for weeks during the first Covid-19 lockdown. In India according to WHO data published in 2018, Influenza and Pneumonia Deaths reached 616,531 or 6.99% of total deaths, while lung Disease Deaths were 819,570 or 9.30% of total deaths in 2018, but there were fewer than 150,000 Covid-19 deaths in India in 2020.

Given significant differences in health infrastructure between tropical countries in Global South and Euro-America, the 2020 qualitative and quantitative data clearly shows that Covid-19 is mild in the Global South, since the 'metric that matters' to determine the severity of an illness and make effective, targeted policy, national policy is the infection fatality rate (IFC).

However, economically, socially and politically devastating curfews, lockdowns and isolation policies were introduced in these tropical countries on the 'advice' of the WHO, resulting in fear, isolation, stigmatization of patients living in crowded and poor neighborhoods, and increasing poverty and inequality.

Many low income and poor countries fell into bigger debt traps and Governments were urged to sell off strategic assets while giving 'tax relief' to various international corporations, investors and airlines.

Low Severity of virus but a deadly policy response

The relatively low severity of Covid-19 flu in tropical Asian and African countries compared to Euro-America where the disease is severe is arguably due to several interrelated, region and country-specific contextual factors such as year round



A lockdown closer home. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres walking the empty corridors of the UN Secretariat building in New York last year. Credit: United Nations

hot and humid tropical weather (above 20 degrees Celsius), that degrades the virus and its transmission; more or less universal BCG vaccination that confers innate and trained immunity against respiratory illnesses in tropical countries; national health infrastructure including BCG monitoring; and local diet and food habits.

In the temperate regions of the industrialized world, larger volumes of processed food are consumed and non-communicable diseases that constitute the co-morbidities profile for Covid-19 are more widespread than in tropical countries, especially those where rice is a staple food.

The WHO appears to have used questionable epidemiology models, metrics and as several scientists have showed flawed PCR tests that inflate the numbers and create fear psychosis while recommending lockdown in countries in the Global South rather than use country-specific data and the tried and tested Infection Fatality Rate (IFR). The WHO's Covid-19 global pandemic narrative has been crafted on the Case Fatality Rate (CFR), rather than the IFR which is much less by orders of magnitude as the authors of the Great Barrington Declaration note.

Treat Covid 19 like a health issue and not a disaster, wrote Jay Bhattacharya and Sanjiv Agarwal, in July 2020. 3 Many international scientists have exposed the fact that high numbers of false positive PCR tests account for high rates of supposedly asymptomatic cases and question the Covid-19 data presented by the WHO and the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) data base.

In India highly flawed PCR tests gave up to 80 per cent false positives and a community survey was abandoned 4 Sri Lanka and many other impoverished countries in the South have been locked down and economically devastated based on false positive tests and a global media narrative that exaggerated the number of Covid-19 cases. This is in a nutshell is the Covid-19 scam.

'Test, test and trace' using flawed tests has been the mantra for a global policy of economically, socially and politically devastating lockdowns and isolation, implemented by government and military in many countries. However, these policies were not based on country specific, quantitative and qualitative Covid-19 data analysis and were counter-productive to the mental and physical health and well-being of the population.

In many countries in Southeast Asia, constantly shifting announcements of Covid-19 cases without context or comparison with new lockdowns keeps up the fear psychosis, confuses workers who worry about their and their family's safety if they return to work. Constant uncertainty and unavailability of public transport has devastated economies, social and political activity, while distracting from analysis of the relevant data.

Hunger Virus: The deadly policy response in the Global South

It is not Covid-19 virus, but the

Covid-19 infodemic, as well as, WHO-led international policy that has triggered a deep economic, social and political crisis in the Global South at this time. The call for lockdowns, curfews and stoppage of public transport systems, often implemented by militaries based on the "Global pandemic" narrative and infodemic of Covid-19 infection figures form the John's Hopkins University data base with contradictory messages resulted in creation of Covid-19 fear psychosis and anxiety in many tropical countries where the Corona virus is mild. As a result, millions have not been able to go to work and have lost jobs and livelihoods in countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand.

As OXFAM's 'Hunger Virus' Report noted: COVID-19 is deepening the hunger crisis in the world's hunger hotspots and creating new epicentres of hunger across the globe. By the end of the year 12,000 people per day could die from hunger linked to COVID-19, potentially more than will die from the disease itself.

The pandemic is the final straw for millions of people already struggling with the impacts of conflict, climate change, inequality and a broken food system that has impoverished millions of food producers and workers.

The Covid-19 narrative and WHO led global policy response has increased poverty and inequality across the world and widened disparities between the Global South and north, while eroding democratic space and practices, and militarizing public life and health systems: In Sri Lanka a punishing military curfew with just 4-hours prior notice was imposed in March 2020, after which the WHO head, Tederos, called the President of Sri Lanka to congratulate him. This same policy was implemented in India a few weeks later in India, where millions of migrant workers lost jobs and many died walking hundreds of miles to get home.

Meanwhile, as OXFAM noted "those at the top are continuing to make profits: eight of the biggest food and drink companies paid out over \$18 billion to shareholders since January even as the pandemic was spreading across the globe - ten times more than has been requested in the UN COVID-19 appeal to stop people going hungry." 56 new billionaires were created in 2020.

Covid-19 reveals a deep crisis in the International Aid and Governance System. Economically, socially and politically devastating lockdowns in 2020 have wiped out development and poverty reduction gains in some of the poorest countries in the world where Covid-19 is demonstrably milder than seasonal flu. Meanwhile, all the plastic and sanitary sprays and disposable masks further contribute to the global plastic garbage and toxicity environmental crisis.

Fundamental questions arise about the integrity of data, analysis and policy "advice" provided by WHO, the John's Hopkins University Covid-19 Global Data base and other UN agencies. It is increasingly apparent that many of the WHO's recommendations and policy response on Covid-19 has marginalized

data, perspectives and voices from the Global South.

As Debapriya Bhattacharya and Sara Khan noted in a recent paper: "the narrative on the post-COVID world seems to be once again characterised by the usual dearth of inputs from the global South. "Even though it has been accepted time and again that actors from the Global South will be critical in shaping the emerging international development landscape, gatekeepers are yet to come out of their comfort zones and make credible space for more Southern perspectives and initiatives. The current discourse continues to have a top-down view of issues that demand more local level contextualisation and substantiation...". 5

The international development policy response to Covid-19 in the global south has exposed a deep crisis in the UN led international Development Aid system dominated by OECD DAC countries and continuing structures of colonial domination in the UN system. The deliberately hyped "global pandemic" media narrative coupled with the WHO's and JHU's daily 'infodemic' of Covid-19 numbers of infections, has distracted from the metrics that matter to determine the severity of a disease in a particular country.

Science has been turned on its head, as Scientific Principles like regional Context and Comparison, and country-specific data analysis are important for evidence-based policy making, seem to have been dis-regarded amidst the JHU infodemic, enabling hi-jacking of national and local level policy processes in countries in the Global South, by so-called international development agencies and related Corporate actors and interest.

The quarantining of healthy people in counties where data shows that there is no Covid-19 health emergency is counter to science and common sense!

Low Covid-19 rates and vaccine Colonialism: BCG versus mRNA

The WHO has promised to provide 20 percent of vaccines free to the Government of Sri Lanka, but questions are now being raised as to why national health authorities in many Southeast Asian and African countries where there is NO Covid-19 health emergency, are being urged by the WHO and UNICEF, with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB), providing loans to buy vaccines at this time, especially when it is claimed that there may not be sufficient doses for populations in North America and Europe where there appears to be a Covid-19 emergency?

As these vaccines have not gone through an adequate trials process and their long term impacts on populations in the Global South (where the health and nutrition statuses of people are different than in the northern hemisphere), are unknown, would it not be prudent for governments in countries where the 2020 data shows that there is no Covid-19 health emergency to await non-emergency authorization of use of these vaccines? Moreover, would not the WB and ADB loans be better spent to build back livelihoods lost due to Covid-19 curfews and lockdown policy?

On average, it takes over 5 to 10 years to systematically trial vaccines. The ultra-costly Pfizer and Biontech and Moderna mRNA vaccines, that use brand new, never before used technology, were the first to be authorized in the UK and US. The WHO's subsequent first authorization of the Pfizer vaccine for use throughout the world has conferred 'first mover advantage' or strong brand recognition and product loyalty on the US Govt. allied Pfizer Pharmaceutical company before other cheaper vaccine come to the market.

However, there are questions about these mRNA vaccines and suggestions that the anti-bodies they trigger may last less than 10 months, while a US nurse tested Covid-19 positive after receiving a vaccine, and another nurse in Portugal died a week after taking the vaccine.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 epidemic in Euro-America in March 2020, the WHO, contrary to many scientific studies denied outright the hypothesis that the 100-year-old BCG vaccine may be protecting populations in tropical countries with universal BCG vaccination where there were low rates of Covid-19 infections and death.

This despite the fact that numerous studies had shown that the COST-EFFECTIVE tried and tested Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG), may be useful against Covid-19 as a bridging vaccine as it protects against a broad range of respiratory tract illness in many parts of the Global South. Early BCG trials for Covid-19 adaptation seem to have disappeared from radar screens to be trumped by mRNA vaccines, as WHO contrary to many scientists had affirmed that there was 'no evidence' the BCG could fight Covid-19?

Are we not seeing what Naomi Klein termed "Disaster Capitalism" in her book titled "The Shock Doctrine" unfolding in Real Time? Klein uses the terms to describe the "brutal tactic of using the public's fear and disorientation following a collective shock, be it, bio-terrorism, war, coups, market crashes or natural disasters to push through radical pro-corporate measures often called "shock therapy". Thus, by accident or design, a disaster occurs and then the "humanitarian" business solution or cure is provided, as a total solution and complete business and profit cycle.

The WHO's Covid-19 vaccine authorization process may reveal its cozy relationship with some big Pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer that are also backed by vaccine czar, Microsoft's Bill Gates. Gates Foundation is now WHO's second largest funder, after China, since Donald Trump withdrew US funding from WHO. Gates is also promoting a shift to the digital economy and surveillance that enable gaming data analytics the world over - in competition with China's Huawei.

The WHO-led Covid-19 policy response reveals a deep crisis in the UN and International "Aid" system that is increasingly captive to Corporate interests and great power rivalry. This issue is not new as a Transparency International's British Branch Report has noted some years ago: "Within the health sector, pharmaceuticals stands out as sub-sector that is particularly prone to corruption."

"There are abundant examples globally that display how corruption in the pharmaceutical sector endangers positive health outcomes. Whether it is a pharmaceutical company bribing a doctor for prescribing its medicines irrespective of a health need or a government employee facilitating the infiltration of substandard medicines into the distribution system, public resources can be wasted and patient health put at risk."

Finally, it is highly likely that in many Tropical Asian countries may have achieved a degree of 'herd immunity' as the flu season at the end of 2019 had all the signs of Covid-19, also given high levels of travel and tourism to and from China in the region, but since there is no systematic anti-body testing, we do not know if this is the case.

Rather than buying vaccines it would be appropriate to conduct anti-body tests to assess how many in the population have immunities and if herd immunity has been achieved as the country-level data and statistics seem to indicate. Those who would like a vaccine may take a BCG booster.

Shifting conversations in multifaceted policymaking

BANGKOK, Thailand

As the people of Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga gear up as the first nations to welcome 2021, communities around the Asia-Pacific region and beyond look forward to bidding farewell to the most tumultuous year in recent decades.

2020 brought unparalleled human suffering that continued to devastatingly impact on the daily lives of people across all corners of the region. With the emergency authorization and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, people are hoping for a 'new normal' recovery from the summer of 2021 onwards.

Yet, over the past year, the health crisis has produced a synchronized economic downturn that resulted in technical recession episodes in the majority of countries, along with heightened vulnerability of the most marginalized groups.

Commentators and experts are making every effort to better diagnose the underlying symptoms and root causes of fault lines in our societies, which are leading to widespread discrimination, distress and destitution. Simply put, economic growth paradigms and development models, strategic policymaking guidelines and prioritization of implementation roadmaps are all at a variety of inflection points.

Faced with multiple challenges and uncertainties, policymakers are consulting and learning from past policy experiences that could provide practical guidance to the art of policymaking, especially in times of multifaceted crises. Not surprisingly, policymaking continues to re-

main the crucial tool in building resilience in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enlarging people's choices Since the early days of the Keynesian revolution in the 1930s, decision-making has emphasized the importance of the equilibrium values of output and employment through well-coordinated and sequenced policies. However, the differential outcomes in GDP growth and other development yardsticks, including health and education have led to the concept of going beyond GDP, with a broader and deeper focus on socio-economic well-being, quality of life, and standard of living dimensions.

In the post-second world war rebuilding era, the inadequacy of a trickle-down approach shifted the focus on poverty alleviation, along with non-economic factors such as governance, decentralization, and trans-boundary cooperation, when economic globalization flourished. In fact, through the development decades of the 1960s to the 1990s, policymaking focused on enlarging people's choices and capabilities, not only on the expansion of income and wealth.

Rediscovering development vision

In the 2000 autumn gathering at the UN Headquarters in New York, world leaders established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of clear time-bound objectives to achieve eight goals, and commit to substantial reductions in income poverty and other human development benchmarks through sustained economic growth by 2015.



People walk in a public space with medical masks on to protect themselves from coronavirus infection. File photo

From 2000 to 2015, the Asia-Pacific region made remarkable progress to reduce extreme poverty and other development gaps through calibrated policies to bolster trade openness and regional value chains; industry and technology-led structural transformation; policy coordination on regional public goods, and institution-driven subregional partnerships. Although communities were significantly impacted by the Great Recession of 2007/2008 and the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/1998. Additionally, in this period of

great convergence, policymaking focused on translating productive investment into building skills development in developing and least developed countries, pushing the envelope of 'policy space' in the broader context of trade and finance-technology interlinkages with human development. The shifting of the development paradigm underscored the importance of a robust and conducive international development framework, including expanding opportunities for South-South cooperation. Yet, the MDGs needed another push

towards more sustainable development for all.

Integrating sustainability

In a landmark gathering of world leaders in September 2015 at the UN, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offered a new lease of life to an integrated approach to development thinking - synergizing the social, economic and environmental pillars of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for transforming our world.

This formulation of ideas helped drive development practice and en-

couraged forward-looking policymaking to address new and emerging challenges and opportunities across beliefs, ideologies and institutional foundations.

Though at the regional level—a variety of development outcomes stimulated public discourse on diversity, trust and governance—progress towards the SDGs has remained largely uneven. It is, however, not hard to argue that the 2030 Agenda has inspired inclusive development to intersect with structural transformation, and accelerated energy transition and technology-driven industrialization to offer lasting solutions to the growing climate emergencies.

Building back better

Today, over 4.6 billion people of the Asia-Pacific region are confronting hardship and hindrance due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are good reasons to believe that the weak health care systems, lack of social protection mechanisms, growing number of informal sector workers, limited diversification, and increased threats of climate change are opening up possibilities of a multi-speed recovery outlook in 2021 and beyond.

As communities gather steam to building back better, governments are recognizing the vital role of re-imagining public policymaking to fit within the principle of value-based cooperation and multilateralism. Raising the ambitions of SDGs-centred policymaking is poised to define success in the next Decade of Action for all.

AGENCIES

Storming of Capitol Hill reminiscent of Banana Republic

UNITED NATIONS

The storming of Capitol Hill in Washington DC by an unruly mob is reminiscent of an insurrection in a "banana republic" - as hilariously portrayed in the 1971 Woody Allen comedy "Bananas" spoofing a revolt in a fictional Latin American country.

But judged by the disastrous four-year administration of President Trump such a description is an insult to all banana republics.

Trump's presidency has been characterized by misgovernment, corruption, lies, xenophobia, nepotism, arrogance, and ultimately, contempt for the country's democratic electoral process.

For long, America has been the world's self-appointed cop ousting dictatorships and overthrowing authoritarian regimes (read: Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan), upholding human rights and preaching peace - even while selling millions of dollars in weapons to conflict-ridden countries.

As the New York Times pointed out what unfolded in Washington DC, however, was "one of the most severe intrusions of the Capitol" since the British invasion during the war of 1812 when it was burnt down.

Senator Mitt Romney, a Republican who was a longtime critic of Trump inside the bowels of his own political party, expressed his denunciation in a single sentence: "What happened here today was an insurrection incited by the President of the United States."

As Cable News Network (CNN) pointed out, a growing number of Republican leaders and Cabinet officials believe Trump should be removed from office before President-elect Joe Biden's January 20 inauguration, even if it means invoking the 25th Amendment or disqualifying Trump from ever holding office again.

The 25th Amendment to the US constitution provides procedures for replacing a president or vice president in the event of death, removal, resignation or incapacitation.



US President Donald Trump at a meeting of the Security Council. Photo: United Nations

Stephen Zunes, Professor of Politics at the University of San Francisco, told IPS the shocking spectacle from the mob attack on the seat of American government with the apparent encouragement of the president, along with efforts by some Republican members of Congress to block the certification of the Electoral College, demonstrates that a significant faction of the conservative movement in the United States has become explicitly anti-democratic.

"While Wednesday's events will likely backfire politically, it serves a warning that there are real authoritarian tendencies in this country led by people who are willing to use violence to seize power."

Despite clear signs that there would be a serious attempt to storm the Capitol, security was minimal and the Capitol Police were quickly overrun, he added.

This contrasts with the massive and intimidating troop presence around the Capitol and other government buildings during the largely nonviolent protests for racial justice this past spring despite the absence of any such realistic threats.

This raises serious issues regarding racism and ideological biases in policy and related se-

curity measures in Washington, said Zunes.

He pointed out that the shock and dismay around Trump's support for a de facto coup and his overall authoritarian tendencies are well-founded.

"At the same time, it must be acknowledged that presidential administrations and Congressional leaders of both parties have long supported autocratic regimes and occupation armies elsewhere through arms transfers and other security assistance. Indeed, the United States is the world's number one backer of such anti-democratic governments."

Support for democracy, he argued, must not stop at the water's edge. "If Americans are serious about defending democratic institutions, we must apply such principles to our foreign policy as well."

The demonstrators on Capitol Hill have been described mostly as right-wing extremists and white supremacists who are ardent supporters of Trump. At least four died in the melee.

Meanwhile, some of the US allies in Europe, including France, Germany and UK have expressed shock and revulsion at the insurrection in one of the world's "model democracies".

Dr. Alon Ben-Meir, professor of international relations at the Center for Global Affairs at New York University (NYU), told IPS that Wednesday, January 6, is a day that will live on in infamy; a day in which the president of the United States incited a mob to storm the nation's capital, in which Trump perpetuated lies and falsehoods about the election to justify his betrayal of the country, the Constitution, his office, and the very foundations of this democratic republic.

He said the world watched in horror as the far-right mob managed to breach security and enter the Capitol building successfully. Clearly, the violent protesters were not repelled with adequate force or they would never have made their way in.

"Had the mob consisted of left-wing agitators instead, of black and brown bodies rather than white bodies, the news would be quite different - indeed, it is more than likely that had that been the case, the protesters would never have made it inside at all, let alone allowed to remain there for over four hours."

What is perhaps most disgraceful, over and above Trump's cynical and self-serving incitement, is his silence while the mob roamed through the Capitol,

while senators and representatives hid themselves away until it was safe to return to complete the business of the day, said Ben-Meir.

"When he finally did make a statement, it was anything but a full-throated condemnation of the chaos and violence that had consumed the nation's temple of democracy. Rather he told the rioters to return home, and added 'We love you' - after reiterating his false claim that the election was stolen."

In a word, said Ben-Meir, Trump sought to justify the insurrectionists, and the reason for that is plain: he wants to sow as much violence and discord as he possibly can between now and the inauguration.

That way he can point to the civil unrest and say "see, that is what happens when you steal an election." Never mind that it has only been Trump and his fringe followers who have sought to steal an election, and to the credit of this still great nation, failed completely and utterly, he declared.

UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the Secretary-General "is saddened by the events at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday."

In such circumstances, he

said, "it is important that political leaders impress on their followers the need to refrain from violence, as well as to respect democratic processes and the rule of law."

In a statement from Geneva, UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet said: "We are deeply troubled by Wednesday's attack on the US Capitol, which demonstrated clearly the destructive impact of sustained, deliberate distortion of facts, and incitement to violence and hatred by political leaders".

She said allegations of electoral fraud have been invoked to try to undermine the right to political participation. We are encouraged to see that the process has continued in spite of serious attempts to disrupt it.

"We call on leaders from across the political spectrum, including the President of the United States, to disavow false and dangerous narratives, and encourage their supporters to do so as well," she added.

"We note with dismay the serious threats and destruction of property faced by media professionals yesterday. We support calls from many quarters for a thorough investigation into Wednesday's events," declared Bachelet.

In a summing up, Ben-Meir said Trump used the power of his office to dismantle everything that President Obama has achieved, and he stopped short of nothing to delegitimize President-elect Biden's victory.

"All I can say is eat your heart out, Mr. Trump. Obama left the presidency after serving two terms with honor and dignity and with the Nobel Peace Prize under his belt. And Trump will leave his office as an impeached one-term president who will live in infamy."

The Democratic leadership, with the few Republicans who stood for the rule of law and did not submit to Trump's whims, should immediately push for either impeachment or the invocation of the 25th Amendment to oust Trump from his office and bar him from ever holding a formal position again, he declared.

AGENCIES

Single passport for Africa set to become reality this year

By Lorne Philpot

THE rollout of a single passport for all nations on the African continent is expected to occur this year.

While in other parts of the world countries are pulling out of alliances, Africa is strengthening ties and forging ahead with alliances. The African Union (AU) passport was expected to be rolled out in most countries in 2020 already, but few things have stayed on schedule in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

The single passport will

be a crucial element for the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, which allows for the free movement of people and goods across the African continent.

The AU is an association of 55 countries on the African continent. The countries agreed to forming a single bloc where they can all benefit from the unrestricted movement of people and goods.

The idea for a single passport for countries in the AU was floated in 2016. The African Continental Free Trade Area



(AfCFTA) officially came into effect in July 2019, but the launch of a single passport for the continent was delayed.

To date, only political figures and AU officials have been using AU passports.

Freedom of movement is one of the key tenets of the AfCFTA agreement. Analyst Justice Malala said a single passport for the entire continent was essential for the success of the AfCFTA accord.

The mass roll-out of the single AU passport was expected to occur in July 2020. The COVID-19

pandemic put a spanner in the works, delaying the process.

"So far, only government leaders, diplomats and AU officials have been issued with the passport," Malala was quoted in Business Tech.

AfCFTA will unite the continent's 1.3-billion people in a single economic bloc valued at \$3.4-trillion (R51.8-trillion). The initiative will create a single market for goods and services, as well as a customs union that facilitates the movement of people, money and goods across the continent.

The single common-area initiative carries numerous benefits for countries on the continent, including: enhanced intra-Africa trade, commerce and tourism, facilitating labour mobility, improved transfer of knowledge and skills on the continent, promotion of African identity and social integration, improvement of cross-border infrastructure and shared development, generating a comprehensive approach to border management and promoting the rule of law, human rights and public health.



'Vaccine deployment, investment key for post-pandemic recovery'

By Guardian Reporter

A NEW World Bank report shows that the global economy is expected to expand by 4 per cent in 2021, calling for authorities to facilitate a re-investment cycle aimed at sustainable growth that is less dependent on government debt.

To ensure recovery, policy makers should move decisively to tame the pandemic and implement investment-enhancing reforms, the WB says in its January 2021 Global Economic Prospects.

"While the global economy appears to have entered a subdued recovery, policymakers face formidable challenges in public health, debt management, budget policies, central banking and structural reforms as they try to ensure that this still fragile global recovery gains traction and sets a foundation for robust growth," said World Bank Group President David Malpass.

He added: "To overcome the impacts of the pandemic and counter the investment headwind, there needs to be a major push to improve business environments, increase labor and product market flexibility, and strengthen transparency and governance."

Vice President and World Bank Group Chief Economist Carmen Reinhart said: "Financial fragilities in many of these countries, as the growth shock impacts vulnerable household and business balance sheets, will also need to be addressed."

World Bank Acting Vice President for Equitable Growth and Financial Institutions Ayhan Kose said the pandemic has greatly exacerbated debt risks in emerging market and developing economies.

He said weak growth prospects will likely further increase debt burdens and erode borrowers' ability to service debt.

"The global community needs to act rapidly and forcefully to make sure the recent debt accumulation does not end with a string of debt crises. The developing world cannot afford another lost decade," said Kose.

Although the global economy is growing again after a 4.3 percent contraction in 2020, the pandemic has caused a heavy toll of deaths and illness, plunged millions into poverty, and may depress economic activity and incomes for a prolonged period.

The collapse in global economic activity in 2020 is estimated to have been slightly less severe than previously projected, mainly due to shallower contractions in advanced economies and a more robust recovery in China.

In contrast, disruptions to activity in the majority of other emerging market and developing economies were more acute than expected.

According to the report, a downside scenario in which infections con-

tinue to rise and the rollout of a vaccine is delayed could limit the global expansion to 1.6 percent in 2021.

Meanwhile, in an upside scenario with successful pandemic control and a faster vaccination process, global growth could accelerate to nearly 5 percent.

Policymakers need to continue to sustain the recovery, gradually shifting from income support to growth-enhancing policies.

In the longer run, in emerging market and developing economies, policies to improve health and education services, digital infrastructure, climate resilience, and business and governance practices will help mitigate the economic damage caused by the pandemic, reduce poverty and advance shared prosperity.

In the context of weak fiscal positions and elevated debt, institutional reforms are required to spur organic growth are particularly important. In the past, the growth dividends from

reform efforts were recognized by investors in upgrades to their long-term growth expectations and increased investment flows.

The WB is taking broad, fast action to help developing countries strengthen their pandemic response. It is supporting public health interventions, working to ensure the flow of critical supplies and equipment, and helping the private sector continue to operate and sustain jobs.

The Bank Group is making available up to \$160 billion over a 15-month period ending June 2021 to help more than 100 countries protect the poor and vulnerable, support businesses, and bolster economic recovery.

This includes \$50 billion of new IDA resources through grants and highly concessional loans and \$12 billion for developing countries to finance the purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

ICT now the solution for the youth in agriculture

By Special Correspondent

AGRICULTURE has been categorised as the largest economic sector in most African countries, offering opportunities for poverty alleviation for youth, yet there is still a low percentage of youth involvement in the sector.

This has been attributed to several factors. One major reason for poor youth participation in agriculture, according to research carried out in Tanzania, is low returns linked to a lack of access to agricultural market information.

An IFAD-sponsored study explores how policy makers can promote information and communication technology (ICT) to make agricultural market information accessible to youth in rural Tanzania as producers need to locate potential buyers and identify where people are willing to pay higher prices for their produce.

According to research conducted by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) - implemented under the CARE project, revealed that access to agricultural market information through mobile phones-ICT can raise returns and make agriculture attractive to more youth in rural Tanzania.

According to Sassi Akinyi areasecher under the IITA, the adoption of ICT by the youth in the agriculture sector will help reduce unemployment and promote rural development. The study, which is part of several others carried out by young researchers under the CARE project in 10 countries across Africa, has revealed factors that negatively affect women's intention to use ICT, especially to access market information.

Sassi states that using mobile phones to post harvests offers of farm produce for sale and accessing bid prices in different markets can help farmers in rural Tanzania make more profitable and sales.

The study also showed that cultural stereotypes negatively affect mobile phone use among women, an area that policy makers can consider when promoting ICT among young farmers.

While many governments in Africa are working on various agriculture interventions for youth, the study has recommended the need to prioritize gender issues and other determinants of intention to promote the use of ICT in agriculture.

While the CARE study has revealed that using mobile phones for finding agriculture market information was higher among female farmers than males in rural Tanzania, several factors influenced the adoption, such as an increased access to valuable market information and ease of use.

The mobile phone affords rural farmers access to a large amount of agricultural information to improve their farming activities and, eventually, their livelihoods. It also provides the possibility of linking other parts of the country or the world to resources to help their farming practices.

According to Sassi, for widespread adoption of mobile phones to occur among young Tanzanian farmers, policy makers need to create enabling conditions, which include network service access as well as orientation on the economic benefits of adopting it.

S. Africa to deploy military to assist in enforcing COVID-19 regulations

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa says it will deploy its National Defence Force (SANDF) in the Western Cape to assist police with enforcing lockdown regulations.

One of their main focus areas will be the beaches along the garden route, which people are still vis-

iting.

Dr Keith Cloete, head of the provincial health department, said on Thursday that the details of the military deployment are still being hashed out.

A video tweeted by South Africa's police ministry spokeswoman on Wednesday showed police arresting a kite surfer for breaking lockdown

regulations.

Beaches in most provinces are now closed to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

A new variant of the coronavirus is driving a powerful second wave of infections in the country.

According to Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize, South Africa hit a 'grim milestone' on

Wednesday (6 January) after it recorded more than 20,000 new Covid-19 cases in a single day.

The country is also expected to receive one million vaccines in January from the Serum Institute of India, according to the health ministry.

An additional 500,000 doses will be delivered in February.

The health ministry said it was working with the regulator, South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), to ensure the roll-out of the AstraZeneca vaccine is not delayed.

Health Minister Dr Mkhize said the government was handling negotiations and payments.

Scientists said the new

variant could make some vaccines less effective.

"At this moment, we think that a vaccine could be a little less effective," Professor Tulio de Oliveira, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, who is leading South Africa's scientific effort to understand the 501Y.V2 strain, told the Financial Times.

"But, between all the va-

rieties of vaccines that are coming to the market, we still have strong belief that some of them will be very effective."

Dr Mkhize announced that 844 deaths and 21,832 new cases were recorded, with the most casualties in the Eastern Cape province.

South Africa is the country hardest-hit by

coronavirus on the continent and has reported over one million cases with more than 31,000 deaths since the outbreak in March.

The country imposed stricter measures in December such as a ban on alcohol sales, mandatory mask-wearing and the closures of some beaches.

Ten compelling reasons to stay away from nuclear power

By Chris Butters

The South African government recently released an invitation for comments on its proposal to instal 2.5 gigawatts of new nuclear power. There are at least 10 compelling reasons not to – a few of which you may not have thought of before. Described briefly below, they are arranged in what I consider to be a rough order of importance.

The cost

Quite simply, nuclear energy is not the most economical option. Nuclear is now more expensive than renewable energies such as wind and, in many cases, solar. It is also far more expensive than many options for saving energy, which would necessitate fewer power stations, such as more efficient cars, industries, insulated buildings, etc. And renewables are becoming cheaper every year.

The risks: Accidents and corruption

All risk analysis considers two factors: the likelihood of possible accidents, and the consequences of such accidents. If a coal-fired power plant has a major accident, there are likely to be a few deaths of staff, a huge fire and local pollution around the power plant. The likelihood of risks at a nuclear plant may be less, due to triple safety systems, but the possible consequences are colossal.

If a nuclear power station – such as Koeberg – blows up, we might have to abandon the City of Cape Town for 200 years. Nuclear plants can't be too far from urban centres due to the high cost of transmitting power over long distances. So, even if better sited, there is low risk, maybe, but unimaginable consequences, as well as long-term and, in the case of radiation, invisible ones.

At least equally important, however, is the risk of mismanagement and corruption. Nuclear is simply out of the question as a safe option in a state characterised by any degree of dodgy tendering and pro-



urement, corrupt construction, or incompetent leadership and operation. We have seen enough issues within Eskom to say that this is a major and real concern – incompetent design checks, cheating on materials, and so on. Even just faulty welding in constructing a coal-fired power station – which we have heard about recently – is simply not an option in the case of a nuclear reactor. Cost is basic common sense, but the current South African governance context is perhaps the strongest single argument against the nuclear option.

Jobs

Constructing a nuclear power station creates a lot of jobs, but only for a few years. It has long been established that renewables, as well as energy efficiency measures, create far more jobs on a long-term or permanent basis. They also create jobs which are spread out regionally, as opposed to a huge project at just one location. One example: making homes and buildings more energy efficient requires thousands of jobs, spread all over the country and, in addition, these are conventional jobs for building trades, including for unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Nuclear waste

Nuclear energy results in hundreds of tons of incredibly hazardous waste, which our descendants will have to police for thousands of

years after our time. This is simply irresponsible to the human race (and to the environment). After more than 50 years, almost no “permanent” safe storage facilities for nuclear waste have ever been created. We don't need to talk about “nuclear fear”; it's just a disgusting thing to leave to our children.

Big business – democracy

The interests behind nuclear include huge multinationals – and powers such as the SA and the Chinese state. In my view, this huge scale represents a concentration of power, financial leverage, control and political influence which, in essence, tends to be anti-democratic.

Nuclear proliferation

The risk of nuclear material getting into the hands of violent states or terror organisations is considerable. We have already seen dissidents being poisoned with polonium, probably with the backing of the Russian state. And North Korea making noises about nuclear bombs? How great is this threat? Even in light of strict international controls, this is still a powerful threat.

Time

A nuclear power station takes many years – often more than 10 – to plan, approve and then build. Wind and solar facilities are already on the market and can be installed far more quickly. We also know from bitter experience

that such megaprojects often experience additional years of delay (and staggering cost overruns). Our energy situation needs quicker solutions.

Hence, it would take decades – time we don't have – for nuclear to become the major world energy source. Even longer in the poor countries, which are in most need. And that delay will also enable the “dirty energy” guys, the oil, coal and gas multinationals, to carry on wrecking the planet and making billions for a few more decades.

The resource

Nuclear energy is based on uranium. But uranium, like coal, gas and oil, is a limited resource; there's only enough for a few decades, perhaps for 100 years. So why not go straight to the renewables, which are here forever?

Let us add that various newer forms of biomass energy can also become a major source of energy. There is a huge emerging industry of plant-based materials, including bioplastics, already used for many motor vehicle parts, textiles and consumer goods; as well as for renewable bioenergy. In many countries, very productive plants can be grown as “energy crops” – without competing with agriculture, as the US ethanol industry unfortunately did. One might also recall that South African John Fry was a world pioneer of biogas in the 1950s. Much of Brazil's “petrol” is produced from waste from the sugar plantations. Bioenergy is thus also a new potential source of income for farmers and rural areas.

“Renewables aren't reliable enough”

This is a common false argument in favour of nuclear power. For sure, the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow. But that has long been recognised as a minor problem. If the energy system as a whole contains both wind, solar, hydropower, biomass and some other option such as gas (or even, for some more years, a little coal) – then the energy system as a whole is diverse and robust all year round.

We might remember that the wind blows mainly in winter, when we need the power most, and that we enjoy far more sunshine hours than many other countries that are “going solar”. The key point is that any energy system needs a certain amount of “base-load” power for times when there is neither wind nor sun, and if the dams are nearly empty too. This is where fossil fuels like coal, gas and oil are so useful because we can burn them when needed to produce power. And quickly, if there is a sudden surge in demand. But nuclear, on

the other hand, is not very flexible; it takes 10 to 14 days to close down a nuclear reactor or fire it up to maximum output.

Other arguments against renewables

Even after all these years, the nuclear lobby continues to spread fake arguments. For example:

That renewables take up much more land. Yes, they do, but South Africa has enormous areas of unproductive land. And, as in Spain, wind turbines can be installed on farming land, giving an extra income to farmers but with farming going on all around them;

That wind turbines kill birds. Yes, they do – but far fewer than high-voltage power lines. In-depth conservation studies, for example at the large wind farm at Smøla, Norway, show that with the study of bird movements and careful placing, most bird collisions can be avoided; and

That the payback times for wind and solar are too long. Many studies of lifetime costs, net energy analysis and life cycle assessments have refuted those claims.

As for “clean fossil fuels”, it's fiction: coal is never clean, carbon capture and storage, as well as oil sands and fracking, are very expensive and environmentally damaging.

Climate emissions

The low climate emissions from nuclear power are often cited as a reason in its favour. Yes, the emissions of climate gases such as carbon dioxide are low. But so are those of the renewables. Even cleaner are energy-efficiency measures. So why make a nuclear pact with the devil in order to reduce the carbon emissions?

Reducing consumption

A final point that must be made, is that the way out of the energy crisis is not, and can never be, endless continued growth in energy supply, or in resource use generally. All state-of-the-art research and policies are now turning towards the challenge of reducing our consumption; of meat, petrol, electrical gadgets, air miles and consumer goods. We know that with today's solutions we can have exactly the same standard of living, the same life quality, with just a quarter of the energy. That means no need for more power stations – and certainly not nuclear.

Hence, energy authorities are starting to turn their focus far more towards ways of reducing our consumption of energy. And this path, by the way, is in many cases free.

DM

The reality of the AU's response to crises

BY SHEWIT WOLDEMICAHEL

The African Union Peace and Security Council's (PSC) response to emerging crises in 2020 was marginal. This is primarily because the AU's ability to intervene in crises is restricted by its principles of national sovereignty (non-interference) and subsidiarity. This despite the principle of non-indifference set out in Article (4h) of the Constitutive Act.

At their February 2021 annual summit, AU heads of state will review the progress made in implementing its peace and security priorities for 2020. By December 2020 the PSC had discussed nine of the 14 country-specific situations highlighted in the February 2020 AU Assembly decision. The PSC's planned field visits to the Lake Chad and Sahel regions were cancelled due to COVID-19.

The problems posed by national sovereignty and subsidiarity were expressed by AU Commission (AUC) chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat. He was replying to former South African president Thabo Mbeki, who asked the AU to intervene in what he called the unconstitutional candidature of Côte d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara. Ouattara ran for a third presidential term in October 2020.

Mahamat acknowledged the lack of consistent implementation of the AU's legal and policy provisions. He highlighted the inter-governmental nature of the AU, and that member states head all decision-making organs. He also highlighted the limitations put



National sovereignty and subsidiarity limit the African Union's intervention in the continent's conflicts. File photo

on the AU by the principle of subsidiarity. This principle recognises the primacy of regional organisations in leading interventions in member states, limiting the AU's interventions in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

The PSC's track record in responding to emerging crises in 2020 was marginal

If the AU is to overcome these problems and implement its mandate, member states must agree to limit the provisions of these principles, which is unlikely. So as the continent continues to grapple with peace and security challenges, the AU's own principles continue to diminish its ability to prevent and respond to conflicts in 2021 and beyond.

In 2020, the PSC, tasked with overall coordination and oversight in implementing peace and security-related Assembly decisions, discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, The Gambia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Libya. The AU is directly engaged in supporting these countries via different missions and representatives.

It also discussed the situations in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, but recognised the leading role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in finding a solution to their political and institutional crises.

Mali was twice on the PSC's agenda before a military coup

in August 2020 removed president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita from power. The PSC suspended Mali and held monthly situation updates until a civilian-led transitional government took over power in October, after which Mali was reinstated.

Political situations discussed by the AU Assembly in 2020 but that weren't tabled for discussion by the PSC included those in Burundi, Cameroon, Mozambique and Comoros. The first three countries are all PSC members, which significantly diminishes any chance of being included on its agenda. The council nonetheless congratulated the four countries on organising peaceful elections when it met in July 2020.

The PSC didn't discuss any crisis situation it had not already flagged in previous years

Regarding Burundi, the AU Assembly expressed concern over the problems facing the Inter-Burundian Dialogue and preparations for elections in May 2020. Mahamat also called for dialogue between political actors following the announcement of election results. However the PSC didn't table Burundi for discussion to follow up on these matters.

Mozambique is another PSC member the AU Assembly discussed in February 2020. The PSC is yet to deliberate on the threat the country is facing from terrorism and violent extremism, despite previous decisions and declarations

highlighting the urgency of responding to terrorism in Africa.

The council is also yet to discuss the situation in Cameroon. In February the AU Assembly commended Cameroon for organising a national dialogue and asked the AUC chairperson to help find a lasting solution to the crisis. The PSC is yet to request a briefing from Mahamat in this regard.

The PSC didn't discuss any crisis situation it hadn't already flagged in previous years. It's therefore difficult to say that it fulfilled its critical role in conflict prevention and early response, as per its mandate. The AU chairperson and AUC chairperson played a more pronounced role in drawing attention to potential crises in 2020.

AU chairperson, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, was instrumental in convening an extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the AU to facilitate negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The AU's involvement has helped to de-escalate tensions that ran high following a failed mediation attempt by the United States.

In most instances early warning by the AU Commission is overlooked by AU policy organs

Ramaphosa also appointed three former presidents – Joaquim Chissano, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Kgalema Motlanthe – as Special Envoys of the AU to Ethiopia. Acting on a statement by Mahamat in November that expressed concern over the escalating military confrontation between the Ethiopian govern-

ment and the regional administration of Tigray, Ramaphosa tasked the three with helping to mediate between the parties.

The Ethiopian government has invoked the principle of non-intervention, but it is nonetheless an exceptional response by the AU to a potential crisis.

While in this instance the statement by the AUC chairperson managed to draw attention to a potential crisis and led to a high-level engagement by the AU chairperson, in most instances early warning by the AUC is overlooked by AU policy organs, including the PSC.

The AU in general and the PSC in particular have the mandate to prevent potential conflicts and respond to crises. While this means the PSC may put any issue on its agenda, it doesn't necessarily translate into an AU intervention.

The AU's and, in particular, the PSC's ability to intervene in a crisis is restricted by the principles of national sovereignty/non-intervention and subsidiarity (both upwards with the United Nations and downwards with regional economic communities).

So while different AU organs might try to discharge their duties as per their mandate, the AU is not at liberty to intervene in crises as it deems necessary, despite the provisions of Article 4(h). The principles of subsidiarity and national sovereignty/non-intervention continue to dictate the AU's role in conflict prevention and response in Africa.

AGENCIES

BUSINESS

CONCERN

You're losing access to WhatsApp after 8 Feb, unless you do agree to Facebook data sharing

NEW YORK

WhatsApp, the encrypted messaging app that sells itself as a privacy-focused service, will start forcing users to share personal data with Facebook, its parent company.

In an announcement sent out to users on Wednesday, WhatsApp said users will have to agree to let Facebook and its subsidiaries collect WhatsApp data, including user phone numbers, contacts' phone numbers, location, and more. If users do not agree by 8 February, they will lose access, WhatsApp has confirmed, though its documentation

The move prompted calls for users to delete their WhatsApp accounts and switch to smaller encrypted messaging apps such as Signal and Telegram. "Signal and Telegram are now better alternatives if you are concerned about your privacy," tweeted TechCrunch editor Mike Butcher, who shared a side-by-side comparison of the data WhatsApp collects versus Signal and Telegram.

Tesla billionaire Elon Musk was among those who recommended users

switch services, simply tweeting: "use Signal." Nine hours earlier, Musk also seemingly criticised Facebook as bearing responsibility for the rioters who attacked the US Capitol on Wednesday, via a sardonic meme.

Facebook bought WhatsApp in 2014, and in 2016 gave users the one-time chance to opt out of having app data shared with Facebook. WhatsApp was not immediately available to comment on why it had decided to override this. A WhatsApp spokeswoman told Ars Technica the change was to allow businesses to store WhatsApp chats using Facebook's broader infrastructure.

WhatsApp's founders Brian Acton and Jan Koum left the company in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Acton has spoken publicly about his departure, which followed the decision to introduce ads to WhatsApp, and has called for people to "delete Facebook." Koum's departure was also surrounded by reports that he had clashed with management over the company's approach to user privacy on WhatsApp.



A WhatsApp icon is displayed on a smartphone.

BREAKTHROUGH

Early study suggesting Pfizer vaccine may work against key Covid-19 mutation in SA

JOHANNESBURG

The Covid-19 vaccine from pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and BioNTech looks to be effective against 16 different mutations of the coronavirus, according to a study that has not yet undergone peer review.

Pfizer Inc and BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine appeared to work against a key mutation in the highly transmissible new variants of the coronavirus discovered in the UK and South Africa, according to a laboratory study conducted by the US drugmaker.

As Reuters reported, the study, by researchers at Pfizer and the University of Texas Medical Branch, suggests the vaccine will not need to be tweaked in order to work against a seemingly more contagious variant of the coronavirus that arose in the UK.

However, according to Simon Clarke, an associate professor in cellular mi-

crobiology at the University of Reading, while both variants had some new features in common, the one found in South Africa "has a number of additional mutations" that included more extensive alterations to the spike protein. The British variant, known as B117, was recently detected in the United States among people who had not travelled to the UK, indicating community spread.

Viral mutations are a typical occurrence and there is no indication that any to date have made Covid-19 more dangerous than it already is. And while vaccines can be tweaked to address new variations, there is no sign that is necessary yet. "So we've now tested 16 different mutations, and none of them have really had any significant impact. That's the good news," Phil Dormitzer, a scientist at Pfizer, said Thursday. "That doesn't mean that the 17th won't."

MILESTONE

Trees for the Future plants 200 million trees globally

KAMPALA

Sustainable agriculture non-profit Trees for the Future (TREES) has planted more than 200 million trees around the world. Tens of thousands of farmers planted the trees on their own land over the last three decades in conjunction with agroforestry training provided by TREES.

"We are ecstatic to reach this milestone, it's a memorable step in our mission to create a more sustainable food system while planting trees," says Executive Director John Leary. "We could not have done this without the hardwork and determination of the farmers we serve, the talent and dedication of our global staff, and the unending generosity of our partners and supporters."

The 200 million trees are planted in more than 50 countries and they're all part of thoughtful agroforestry systems. More than 76million of the trees are part of what TREES calls Forest Gardens, strategically planted and diverse farms consisting of thousands of trees and dozens of plant and food species.

"The important and unique thing about these 200 million trees is that they're here to stay because they were planted with the climate and landowner in mind. We see many tree planting efforts fail because trees are planted en masse without proper planning or consideration for the land," Leary says. "These trees will continue providing food or resources to these farmers for years to come and, at the same time, they're restoring our environment by bringing back biodiversity, channelling water



Trees for the Future executive director John Leary.

into the ground, improving soil fertility, and continually storing carbon."

Today, Trees for the Future has programs and staff in Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. They work in a number of other sub-Saharan Africa countries through collaborative partnerships. Staff train rural farmers living in poverty over a four-year period. In that time, that farmer learns how to protect and diversify their land without harmful and expensive chemical

inputs. On average, each farmer plants between 2,500 and 4,000 trees per acre in their Forest Garden. By the end of the program, the farming family is making a reliable income and eating regular nutritional meals.

"TREES, through its Forest Garden approach, has added new varieties of trees, vegetables, food and nutrition base to my family," says Tanzanian farmer Salma Mussa. "This program is good and will keep sustaining my family forever."

"The vegetables in my garden have really helped my family, they are feeding us and I am selling some of them at the market," says Ugandan farmer Nangira Mary. "I thank Trees for the Future in Busia for the support they are giving us. The project has really helped us ... as a community, it is our project." TREES will celebrate its 32nd anniversary this year and is expanding into more countries in the coming months.

PESSIMISM

Extended alcohol ban pushes small brewers owners to brink of closure

JOHANNESBURG

The Beer Association of South Africa (Basa) has issued an urgent call to President Cyril Ramaphosa to lift the blanket ban on alcohol from the 16th of January.

"This is imperative to ensure the survival of small business owners of craft breweries, who now find themselves on the brink of closure due to the third alcohol ban, as announced by the Presidency on 28 December 2020," the association said.

It continued, "Basa remains aware of the severity of the crisis we face as a nation as we battle Covid-19, and understands the great difficulties faced by both government and citizens as the virus spreads. And while we support all efforts to curb the infection rate, we need to work together to ensure that we are able to save both lives and livelihoods in this fight." Basa comprises the Craft Brewers Association of South Africa (CBASA), Heineken South Africa and South African Breweries.

Struggling small businesses Wendy Pienaar, CEO of CBASA, says that the third ban on alcohol sales has had a devastating impact on the craft brewing industry. CBASA has been inundated with calls from members who have been left depleted of their savings and reserves, and are now in desperate need of financial relief if they are to survive.

"The third ban is devastating to craft brewers, who are small businesses owners who work within small margins, always putting the welfare of their staff before their own. It is now no longer a question of keeping businesses open - it has become a question of whether business owners, their employees and families will have any food to eat this month," Pienaar said.

"To make things worse, these craft brewers are the very same people who stepped up during the hard lockdown last year by producing soup and stew in their brew-houses from donated vegetables to



Wendy Pienaar, CEO of CBASA.

feed over 2 million hungry people, while also manufacturing sanitiser to help fight Covid-19. It is heartbreaking to receive calls from brewers who are now in danger of losing everything. We have to stand together to find alternative solutions to the outright ban on the sale of alcohol," says Pienaar.

SAB supports measured alcohol restrictions, but will approach the courts on the constitutionality of the 3rd alcohol ban, which came into effect when South Africa moved to an adjusted Level 3 lockdown...

One example is Lethu Tshabangu, owner of Ukamba Beerworx, who opened a new taproom at Makers Landing at the V&A Waterfront in 2020.

However, due to the alcohol ban, he now finds himself R300 000 in debt and has rental fees which he cannot pay as he is unable to sell any stock. He is concerned for the education of his children - without any sales, there has been no income, and he does not know how he will pay for his daughter to start her first year of high school in 2021.

"We need to fight Covid-19 without starting other fires - you don't bring a snake into your home because you have a problem with rats. The President is protecting us from Covid-19, only to kill us with hunger because we are not allowed to work - the government has condemned my livelihood, and those of my employees, whose

jobs meant a great deal to them - they also have families and children to feed," said Tshabangu.

South Africa's first black female brewery owner, Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela of Brewsters Craft, stated that she has no idea how they will make it through this third ban. "I am hoping we can reopen in order to make a few sales so that we can at least pay our employees something. But I have had to make them aware to not expect much at month end - that is our reality."

The situation faced by small business owners and craft brewers is dire - the last two alcohol bans had a devastating impact on the beer industry, with an estimated 7,400 jobs lost, R14.2bn in lost sales revenue and more than a R74bn loss in taxes and excise duties. Liquor traders from the tavern sector are appealing to the government to allow off-premise alcohol sales to resume on 16 January, to help protect the 250,000 jobs in the sector and safeguard livelihoods.

Basa has called on President Ramaphosa to consider the plight of craft brewers by not extending the blanket ban on alcohol beyond 15 January 2021. Basa proposes this be done through safe alternatives, such as the use of click-and-collect platforms to assist in ensuring the safety of consumers.

Basa maintained that the current curfew (21:00pm - 06:00am) should remain in effect, along with the 20:00 pm closing time for businesses. "This, together with a ban on gatherings, increased policing and enforcement will ensure that we protect both lives and livelihoods while we fight the spread of the virus," the association said.

It added, "Basa remains committed to working with government to ensure the safe and responsible trading and consumption of liquor and we have proposed a number of measures to save lives without sacrificing livelihoods. It is critical that government and the industry work together to come up with solutions to tackle alcohol abuse in communities, prevent the spread of Covid-19 while ensuring we safeguard businesses and livelihoods across the value chain."

ENTERPRISING

Youth group turns raw milk into tidy, sweet yoghurt cash

NAIROBI

What started as a chama (business club), has turned out to be a thriving enterprise for a youth group that buys and does value addition on milk, making various products.

Umoja Youth Group, which was initially comprised 13 members, has its operations in Kilifi County. The group has been doing well despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. "The group started as a chama, which later grew, and was absorbed by Equity Bank to support savings and provide loans to the group and individual members too," says Umoja Youth Group chairman Splinter Buluku.

According to him, the group used to sell raw milk, supplied using bicycles, until Kenya Dairy Board (KDB) termed the practice a health hazard and against the law. Mr Buluku says they wrote to Pwani University where they were absorbed into the incubation centre. At the centre, they could process their collected milk and do value-addition.

He says the group, which was formed in 2012, has 13 members, out of whom, eight are active. The 24-year-old Buluku, who is a degree holder, says that their main aim was to create employment for the youth.

"We source milk from co-operatives and farmers. We do not keep cows," he says, adding that they started with a capital of Sh10,000. Initially, they used to process more than 200 litres a day. However, due to the negative impact of Covid-19, he says the output dropped to 100 litres.



Umoja Youth Group chairman Splinter Buluku (left) and members serve customers in Kilifi.

The youth group processes various dairy products that include yoghurt, sour milk and pasteurised milk. "We have six machines," adds Mr Buluku. He says they purchase milk at prices ranging from Sh30 to Sh55 per litre, depending on the source.

Mr Buluku says they are in the process of acquiring Kenya Bureau of Standards (Kebs) approvals, albeit he laments that the red tape is an uphill task. "Our main challenge is access to highly skilled dairy technicians, long process of acquiring certification, and

a lack of enough funds to establish powerful distribution channels," he laments. Mr Buluku reveals that most of their products are sold to Pwani University students and staff, and at their shop in Kilifi town.

They make the products under the brands Zowerani and Nanas. They sell the products at various prices, depending on the sizes of the packets or the containers which are used in packaging them. They sell a 500ml sour milk (mala) at Sh70, while a 500ml yoghurt sells at Sh80.

The group also sells a 250ml yoghurt at Sh40, a 150ml yoghurt at Sh30, whereas fresh pasteurised milk is sold by the group at Sh70 per litre. They have since acquired a milk dispenser, which will enable them to sell milk for as low as Sh10. "We source our packaging materials from Nairobi and they cost up to Sh9 each," says Mr Buluku. He adds that the group would like to engage farmers and bring them on board, for them to be able to supply the group with quality milk for processing.

"We aim to make sure that

all milk in Kilifi undergoes processing before use. "Our main objective is to provide growth platforms and employment for the youth, through sustainable agriculture and value addition," he says, adding that eight group members are in direct employment in their premises.

Mr Buluku urges the youth to utilise whatever is within their reach, to create a better version of themselves. The chairperson reveals that at the moment, during the Covid-19 pandemic, their profit per month stands at Sh30,000.

COVID-19

Health workers demand vaccine rollout

CAPE TOWN

"We call on the Department of Health to act urgently, transparently and decisively now to obtain vaccines and to implement vaccination, so as to reduce death and illness, and bring the pandemic under control." So reads a letter started by Professor Heather Zar, a leading public sector paediatrician at Cape Town's Red Cross Children's Hospital.

Over 2,500 people had signed the petition by the time of publication of this article. Many are well-known doctors, nurses and researchers, including Professor Francois Venter, former head of the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society, Professor Ntobeko Ntusi, Head of the Department of Medicine at Groote Schuur Hospital, Professor Lucille Blumberg of the National Institute of Communicable Diseases and Professor Helen McShane of Oxford University.

The letter states: "There are several effective Covid-19 vaccines being produced and many countries have begun or are about to begin vaccinating, including some low- and middle-income ones. South Africa has a strong primary healthcare system. The success of the antiretroviral program shows what the health system is capable of. We are well-placed to implement vaccination."

The petition calls on the health department to start by vaccinating frontline health workers, followed by those most at risk including elderly people and people with comorbidities. "I'm a health worker and want to know that I am not putting my clients and family at further risk," wrote Laila Dalwai who signed the petition. Shabir Madhi, professor of vaccinology at Wits University, criticised the health department's vaccine procurement strategy. He said the department had put all its eggs in one basket by only relying on Covax and leaving bilateral negotiations with pharmaceutical companies too late.

In an interview on ENCA, Professor Barry Schoub, head of South Africa's Ministerial Advisory Committee on coronavirus vaccine development, said that South Africa could not afford to buy vaccines in advance like many rich countries have done because it would have meant purchasing vaccines on risk. In other words the government would have had to pay for vaccines that were still being tested even if they failed to work.

But Madhi said this was "nonsense." He said that making an "advance market commitment" to vaccine producers would mean only paying if the vaccine was successfully brought to market. This is why countries like Canada have enough vaccines committed to it to vaccinate their entire population. A petition by civil society organisations, known as the C-19 Coalition, has also been started.



Cape Town Red Cross Children's Hospital paediatrician Professor Heather Zar.

DIGITIZATION

Photographers and videographers get new platform to access market

KIGALI

Rwandan Photographers and videographers are set to benefit from a new local platform that will help them market and sell their images across the world.

Dubbed ViFoStock, the platform was created by 28-year-old Jean Pierre Mazimpaka, a photojournalist and videographer. Mazimpaka explained the platform is also one of winners of the creative industry recovery fund amidst the COVID-19 pandemic effects. Recently 23 outstanding projects were selected out of 30 potential candidates.

Each of the winners including VIFO Ltd received Rwf10 million in seed funding under the Rwf300 million 'Cultural and Creative Industry (CCI) recovery plan', an initiative organized by ArtRwanda -Ubuhanzi project, Imbutu Foundation, the



Dubbed ViFoStock, the platform was created by 28-year-old Jean Pierre Mazimpaka (pictured), a photojournalist and videographer who is the owner of VIFO Ltd.

Ministry of Youth and Culture, and others. "Photographers and videographers will be using the platform to store and sell their photo, video and audio products from Rwanda," Mazimpaka explained. The platform takes after the model of other platforms such as Shutterstock, SmugMug

among others known for providing storage and selling photos and videos.

"One can take photos and videos, edit them and upload them on the platform and then be paid depending on a number of those who used them across the world," he noted. The art enterprise has started with an opportunity for the photographers and videographers to open at least 20 accounts on the platform for free.

"Those who open accounts will be paid for the first 20 products they will put on the platform. The opened account is considered as a 'stand in a market place where vendors display their

goods' and therefore photographers will have 'stands' to exhibit and trade their work. Those to benefit must have been in the industry for at least three years," he explained. Mazimpaka said that the platform will add value to photographers and videographers so that they generate money from their work.

"We need transformation from the platform in Rwanda. Every person from every corner across the world in need seeking images can get them on the platform. This aims to add value to work by Rwandans," he noted.

After the initial free accounts, the next step

is for others who want to be part of the initiative to open their accounts on the platform. "Those who need accounts will be paying a little fee to be able to use the platform. The other alternative is that they can be charged a fee whenever their photos are bought via the platform," he said.

We thank the government for helping us in the recovery fund so as to promote locally produced photos and videos, he added. Pictures and videos from Rwanda have not had an ideal opportunity to access the international market hence not as popular globally, he said.

CREATIVITY

In Egypt, pandemic inspires passion for oud

CAIRO

While he waits for his lesson at an Egyptian music school, Maissara Mohammed plays his oud, its soothing tones dissolving the stress of daily life during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I play four instruments, but the oud is certainly my favourite," the 27-year-old Sudanese engineer says,

hunched over the pear-shaped body of his instrument. The oud, a stringed instrument popular in the Middle East whose origins date back thousands of years, is a key element of classical Arabic music.

It's tuning and practice is based on a complex system of Oriental melodic modes known as maqamat. Long an instrument of

accompaniment, it has slowly come out of the shadows since the end of the 19th century. Mohammed arrived from Khartoum in September to learn the oud at the Kipa music school in Giza, west of the Egyptian capital.

While he could have studied elsewhere, he said he chose Egypt because it was renowned

for oud players like Mohammed al-Qasabgi, who composed and performed some of Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum's greatest hits. The oud "is an instrument that has its own sentiments and is capable of translating everything inside you," he said. Coronavirus lockdown measures in Sudan helped him focus on practising, he added.

Kipa opened earlier this year, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, and has attracted music lovers from all walks of life, according to founder Romani Aramis. Students can learn instruments including the guitar, the violin and percussion, he said, but the oud has been the most popular, with 25 enrolments.

Though the oud has long been

dominated by men, teacher Hagar About Kassem said her students included several young women. Lessons are also held online, and group classes at the school are limited to two students per room, Aramis said. "Playing music has helped students channel their worries to overcome" this difficult period, he said.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Indian designers melding modernity with Mughal motifs

NEW DELHI

India is the land of colour: of ruby reds, emerald greens, sapphire blues and the countless hues of diamonds, from vivid yellow to the rare, softly luminous white that emerged from the legendary Golconda mines. The country is as famous for the vivid cast of its jewellery as it is for its spectacular architecture and exquisitely embroidered textiles.

The jewellery that sparkles in the vitrines of India's family jewellers today owes its stylistic roots to the Mughal emperors who ruled India for 300 years until 1858. They maintained a court renowned for its wealth, high culture and love of precious objects, in particular jewellery.

Akbar I, who ruled until 1605, and his son Jahangir, were obsessed with jewellery, while Jahangir's son Shah Jahan was a connoisseur of gemstones and carvings. The emperors had first pick of all the gems that came out of their mines and after Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb captured Golconda, the Mughals controlled the only known diamond mine in the world at that time.

The Mughal era was the zenith of Indian jewellery design: craftsmen developed the gem-setting technique known as kundan, in which pure 24K gold foil is fused at room temperature around uncut diamonds and gemstones, resulting in unparalleled freedom for the jewellery artists to realise their designs.

The Mughal style was an amalgamation of Islamic and Hindu elements, featuring stylised forms of nature and symbolic motifs, while the different gemstones were (and still are) charged with talismanic properties. Jewellery is still part of Indian culture, as central to everyday life as it is to adornment and beauty, and passed from generation to generation through dowries, rituals and inheritance. Yet no one could outdo India's erstwhile maharajas for the sheer quantity and opulence of their jewels, which were worn to reflect the majesty of their owner.

To European travellers of the time, the sheer quantity of jewels worn by these royals was a constant source of astonishment. The Victorian artist Valentine Cameron Prinsep was overwhelmed to see that dressing Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar II of Indore took no less than six men, four of whom would "stand around with trays, on which are displayed jewels worth I do not know how many lakhs." Another observer, Yvonne Fitzroy, wrote in the 1920s how the Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was so richly jewelled that "his brocaded coat was entirely concealed by diamonds."

It is not surprising that the great jewellery houses of Europe beat a path to these palace gates, eagerly securing commissions to revamp royal treasures. The maharajas appreciated the aesthetic of contemporary European jewellery and were enthusiastic about resetting their treasures in the latest western styles. Houses such as Cartier and Boucheron were entrusted with the task of reworking the jewellery in platinum (a stronger material than 24-karat gold), while also learning to blend the best of Mughal design, gem cuts and colours with western design experience, from which emerged the Art Deco style.

Ironically, Indian jewellery today remains largely rooted in ornate Mughal design and the kundan technique, and has not really evolved with the speed witnessed in other parts of the world. Bina Goenka, one of India's three leading contemporary high jewellery designers, says: "When you look back to the Mughals and maharajas, they went to jewellers who were ahead of their time. They did not embody what was already available in India, they went to people who could take their jewels and do something

spectacular." She believes that many of the leading family jewellery businesses in India today should follow this lead and learn to be more adventurous, rather than sticking with established design traditions.

One jeweller who is definitely not resting on his family heritage, but instead moving high jewellery into new territory, is Krishna Choudhary of Santi Jewels (named after his father), who combines historic gemstones with contemporary design and materials such as titanium and platinum.

A pair of earrings features paisley-cut diamonds (reshaped from pears) on Mughal-inspired chevron-patterned gold discs, while four 17th-century carved emeralds form the petals around a portrait-cut diamond set on a ring. "It is a responsibility to do justice to historic gemstones like these," he says.

The chevron design of the earrings is a favourite. "I learnt these patterns and motifs from my studies of Islamic and Indian art," he says. "I think it is the Islamic flavour of my designs, the stones, the colours and the volume that appeal to my clients in the Middle East. They love the deep colour of emeralds; it's a lucky colour, and they love sapphires, although sapphires are not popular in India."

Reflecting the way Parisian jewellers and maharajas would collaborate, there is a cross-pollination of ideas and techniques in Choudhary's work. He is sourcing old gemstones that were mined 150 years ago and setting them at workshops in Paris and Milan, in designs that celebrate India's heritage in a contemporary way. Choudhary splits his time between London and Jaipur, which is the capital of coloured gemstone cutting and dealing. The Pink City, founded in 1727, is the prime place to find specialists in the art of enamelling, gem carving, bead manufacture and jewellery production, while Mumbai is India's powerhouse for cutting and polishing diamonds.

Choudhary's ancestors were one of the first families to move to Jaipur and became the palace bankers responsible for minting coins. The family amassed a spectacular and rare collection of art treasures and eventually moved into jewellery-making.

Choudhary is the 11th generation and heir apparent to the discrete family business. His father runs Royal Gems & Art from the family's historic haveli in the city. Choudhary grew up handling important and rare emeralds, natural pearls, spinels and Golconda diamonds, and these resources find their way into Santi Jewels. "You would find these pieces behind glass in a museum, but I have got the opportunity to find and do something with them," he says.

Choudhary doesn't interfere with historic stones by recutting them. Instead, he works with them, creating, for example, a pair of old mine cushion-cut diamonds floating on undulating waves of titanium, shaped into Mughal cartouche earrings.

Choudhary is a newcomer to the contemporary high jewellery world, launching Santi Jewels only last year, joining India's two other highly respected names, Viren Bhagat and Bina Goenka. Bhagat, who lives in Mumbai, remains virtually unknown outside a tiny circle of connoisseurs and clients, but his work is spoken about with the same hushed awe as that of JAR, the New York-born Joel Arthur Rosenthal, the jewellery world's superstar. The publicity-shy Bhagat's pieces sell for small fortunes, but that does not seem to hold back his mostly western clientele. His designs are inspired by textiles, architecture and miniature paintings in a style that melds Mughal motifs and Art Deco sensibilities.

While Bhagat and Choudhary come from jewellery dynasties,



A 19th or 20th century diamond necklace from Hyderabad.

Goenka is an outsider, completely self-taught, who began her journey into high jewellery as a young mother in the 1990s looking for something creative to do while caring for small children at home. She sees that as an advantage. "I started with a fresh mind and fresh concept and give my craftsmen their dues," she says.

The price of her jewellery is dictated by its design and craftsmanship, and the settings are almost invisible - whereas in India, the price traditionally depends on the weight of gold incorporated in the jewellery. Goenka's pieces are contemporary, much lighter and easier to wear.

The former lawyer, who lives in Mumbai, is passionate about Indian craftsmanship and after frustrating early attempts at getting jewellery made to her exact specifications, she did some research into running a workshop and set up her own facility, with only one craftsman. She would buy the gems herself. "I spent days drinking cups and cups of tea in the bazaar, buying blue topazes, citrines and amethysts, and began to realise my strengths lay in design and mixing unbelievable colours," she says. "Colour and craftsmanship became my forte."



ITV

SUNDAY 20 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:00	Habari
8:00	Al Jazeera
09:00	Watoto Wetu
10:00	S/Prog: Karate Championship Live
16:30	ITV Top 10
17:30	Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:15	Mapishi
18:30	Matukio ya wiki
19:30	Igizo: Mtego
20:00	Habari
21:00	Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:05	Mizengwe
21:30	Mjue Zaidi
22:14	Bongo Movie: Kizaizai
00:05	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin

MONDAY 21 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI
8:00	Kumekucha Michezo
9:00	Kumekucha Kishindo
9:30	Isidingo
10:00	Watoto wetu
11:00	ITV Top 10 rpt
12:00	Al Jazeera News
12:30	Mtego rpt
13:00	Mjue Zaidi
13:45	Art and Lifestyle rpt
14:10	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin

15:00	Meza huru
16:30	Watoto Wetu
17:00	The Base
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:10	Aibu yako rpt
18:15	Mapishi
18:45	Kesho leo
19:00	Afya ya Jamii
19:30	Isidingo
20:00	Habari
21:05	Dakika 45
22:00	Kipindi Maalum: TADB
22:15	Telenovela: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
23:00	The Base
00:00	Al Jazeera
02:00	DWTV

TUESDAY 22 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:00	HABARI
7:30	Kumekucha Michezo
9:00	Kumekucha Kishindo
9:30	Isidingo
10:00	Watoto wetu rpt
10:30	Jungu kuu rpt
11:00	The Base rpt
12:00	Al Jazeera
12:30	Afya ya jamii
13:00	Kipindi Maalum: Ripoti Maalum rpt
13:45	Shika Bamba rpt
14:15	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
15:00	Meza huru
16:30	Watoto wetu
17:00	The Base

18:00

18:10	Jiji Letu
18:15	Yu wapi
18:30	Uchumi na biashara
19:00	Jarida la wanawake
19:30	Isidingo
20:00	Habari
21:00	Tanzania yetu
21:30	Chetu ni chetu
22:15	Telenovela: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
23:00	The Base
00:00	DWTV

WEDNESDAY 23 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI
8:00	Kumekucha Michezo
9:00	Kumekucha Kishindo
9:30	Isidingo
10:00	Watoto Wetu rpt
10:30	Uchumi na biashara rpt
11:00	The Base rpt
12:00	Al Jazeera
12:30	Jarida la wanawake rpt
13:00	Dakika 45 rpt
13:50	Kipindi Maalum: TADB
14:15	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin

15:00	Meza huru
16:30	Watoto Wetu
17:00	The Base
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:15	Korean drama rpt: Hwarang
19:00	Igizo: Sheria
19:30	Isidingo
20:00	Habari
21:00	Kipindi Maalum: Tanesco
21:30	Kipindi Maalum: Ripoti Maalum rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
22:15	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
23:00	The Base
00:00	Al Jazeera
2:00	DWTV

THURSDAY 24 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:30	HABARI
8:00	Kumekucha Michezo
9:00	Kumekucha Kishindo
9:30	Isidingo
10:00	Watoto
10:30	Shamba lulu rpt
11:00	The Base rpt
12:00	Al Jazeera
12:30	Igizo: Sheria rpt
13:00	Ripoti Maalum rpt
13:30	Tanzania yetu
14:15	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
15:00	Meza huru
16:30	Watoto Wetu
17:00	The Base
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:15	Mapishi rpt
18:30	Jagina
19:00	Usafiri wako
20:00	Habari
21:00	Malumbano ya hoja
23:00	The Base
00:30	DWTV

FRIDAY 25 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI

6:40

7:30	Kumekucha
8:00	HABARI
8:00	Al Jazeera
09:00	DWTV News
09:30	Isidingo
10:00	Watoto wetu
10:30	Usafiri wako
11:00	The Base
12:00	Al Jazeera
12:30	Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco
13:00	Jagina rpt
13:30	Chetu ni chetu rpt
14:15	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
15:00	Movie:
16:30	Watoto Wetu
17:00	Kipindi Maalum: Kikristu na Krismasi
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:15	Mizengwe rpt
18:30	Ibada ya kislamu
19:00	Shamba lulu
19:30	Isidingo
20:00	Habari
21:05	Kipima Joto
23:00	The Base
00:00	DWTV

SATURDAY 26 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:00	Habari
8:00	Al Jazeera
9:00	Watoto wetu
10:00	Shika Bamba 5
10:30	Mjue Zaidi rpt
11:15	Chetu ni chetu rpt
12:15	Korean drama rpt: Hwarang
13:45	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin
16:00	Igizo rpt: Mizengwe
16:20	Igizo: Mtego
17:00	Shamsham za Pwani
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:15	Korean drama: Hwarang
19:00	Jungu Kuu
19:30	Shika Bamba
20:00	Habari
21:00	Art and lifestyle
21:30	ITV TOP 10
22:10	Isidingo rpt
00:30	DWTV

SUNDAY 27 Dec

5:30	Uwanja wa Mazoezi
6:00	HABARI
6:40	Kumekucha
7:00	Habari
8:00	Al Jazeera
09:00	Watoto Wetu
10:00	Isidingo
11:40	Igizo: Mizengwe rpt
12:00	Movie rpt: Kizaizai
14:00	Tamasha la Michezo
16:30	Mwanga
17:30	ITV Top 10
17:30	Kipindi cha kikristo
18:00	Jiji Letu
18:15	Mapishi
18:30	Matukio ya wiki
19:00	Igizo: Mtego
20:00	Habari
21:00	Kipindi maalum: Biko
21:05	Mizengwe
21:30	Mjue Zaidi
22:14	Bongo Movie: Hiari Yangu
00:05	Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin

CAPITAL

Mon 21 Dec

06:00	Al Jazeera
07:00	Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
09:00	Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
13:00	Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death
14:00	Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
16:00	Series rpt: Ithoan
16:30	Tanzania Yetu rpt
17:00	Eco@Africa rpt
17:30	Meza huru
19:00	The Décor rpt
19:30	Shamba lulu
20:00	Series: Ithoan
20:45	The Monday Agenda
21:30	Capital Prime News
22:00	Kipima Joto
00:00	Al Jazeera

Tues 22 Dec

06:00	Al Jazeera
07:00	Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
09:00	Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
13:00	Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death
14:00	Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
16:00	Series rpt: Ithoan
16:30	Capchat rpt
17:30	Meza huru
19:00	Innovation
19:30	Jagina rpt
20:00	Series: Ithoan
20:45	Telenovela: Lover her to death
21:30	Capital Prime
22:00	Turning the spotlight rpt
22:30	Eco@Africa
23:00	Al Jazeera

Wed 23 Dec

06:00	Al Jazeera
07:00	Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
09:00	Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
13:00	Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death
14:00	Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
16:00	Series rpt: Ithoan
16:30	Culinary delight rpt
17:00	Innovation rpt
17:30	Meza huru
19:00	Sports Gazette
19:30	Chetu ni chetu
20:00	Series: Ithoan
20:45	Telenovela: Lover her to death
21:30	Capital Prime News
22:00	Dakika 45:
22:45	The Décor
23:15	Al Jazeera

Thurs 24 Dec

06:00	Al Jazeera
07:00	Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
09:00	Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
13:00	Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death
14:00	Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
16:00	Series rpt: Ithoan
16:30	Business edition rpt
17:00	In good shape
17:30	Meza huru
19:00	Turning the spotlight
19:30	Tanzania yetu
20:00	Series: Ithoan
20:45	Telenovela: Lover her to death
21:30	Capital Prime News

Frid 25 Dec

06:00	Al Jazeera
09:00	Movie: I think I love My Wife
10:30	Movie: Forget About It
12:00	Shamba lulu rpt
12:30	Eco@Africa rpt
13:00	Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death
14:00	Movie: Marines
15:30	Out&About rpt
16:00	Series rpt: Ithoan
16:30	The Monday Agenda rpt
17:30	Movie: Behind Enemy Life
19:00	Rev
19:30	Eco@Africa
20:00	Aibu Yako
20:15	Local Pgm: Business Edition
20:45	Telenovela: Lover her to death
21:30	Capital Prime News
22:00	Malumbano ya hoja rpt
00:00	Al Jazeera

Sat 26 Dec

08:00	Al Jazeera
09:00	Rev rpt
09:30	Turning the Spotlight rpt
10:00	Culinary delight rpt
10:30	Innovation rpt
11:00	Out n'about rpt
11:30	Sports Gazette rpt
12:00	Usafiri wako rpt
12:30	Eco@Africa rpt
13:00	Business edition rpt
13:30	Korean Drama rpt: The Slave hunter
14:30	Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death
17:15	Tanzania Yetu rpt
17:45	Bundesliga kick off
18:15	Capchat rpt
19:15	Mizengwe
19:30	The Décor
20:00	Korean Drama: The Slave hunter
21:00	Out n' About
21:30	Movie: Deadly Plea
23:00	Series rpt: Ithoan
01:00	Al Jazeera

Sun 27 Dec

08:00	Al Jazeera
09:00	In good shape
10:00	Capchat rpt
11:00	Sports Gazette rpt
11:30	Korean Drama rpt: The Slave hunter
12:00	Jagina rpt
12:30	Bundesliga Kick Off rpt
13:00	In good shape rpt
13:30	Series rpt: Ithoan
15:15	Aibu yako
15:30	Rev rpt
16:00	Dakika 45 rpt
16:45	Mizengwe rpt
17:00	The Décor rpt
17:30	Meza huru
19:00	Turning the Spotlight rpt
19:30	

WORLD

Trump faces threat of 2nd impeachment after Capitol chaos

WASHINGTON

CONGRESSIONAL Democrats were moving closer to a historic step yesterday as they weighed impeaching President Donald Trump for a second time, two days after his false claims of election fraud helped encourage a mob that breached the US Capitol.

Top Democratic leaders, including House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, called for immediate impeachment proceedings if Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's Cabinet refused to take steps to remove Trump from power.

"The president's dangerous and seditious acts necessitate his immediate removal from office," they said in a statement on Thursday evening, accusing Trump of inciting an "insurrection."

As calls for his ouster mounted on Thursday, Trump released a video in which he denounced the violence that has left five people dead.

The Republican president came the closest yet to conceding his loss in the Nov. 3 presidential election, promising to ensure a smooth transition to a "new administration." President-elect Joe Biden, a Democrat, is set to be sworn in on Jan. 20.

Trump's words were in stark contrast to his speech on Wednesday, when he exhorted a crowd of thousands to descend

upon the Capitol as Congress met to certify Biden's election victory.

Rioters stormed the building, overwhelming police and forcing authorities to transport lawmakers to secure locations for their own safety.

A Capitol police officer died from injuries sustained in the assault, the force said late on Thursday. A woman protester was fatally shot by the authorities, and three people died from medical emergencies.

With less than two weeks left in Trump's term, it was not clear whether enough time remained to complete the impeachment process. Pelosi has not announced a decision, though she made clear at a news conference that rank-and-file Democrats in her caucus were clamoring for action in the wake of Wednesday.

If impeached in the House, Trump would theoretically face trial in the Republican-controlled Senate, which is scheduled to be in recess until Jan. 19. Aides to Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, have not said what he would do if the House approves articles of impeachment.

The Democratic-led House impeached Trump in December 2019 for pressuring the president of Ukraine to investigate Biden, but the Republican-held Senate acquitted him in February 2020. Only two other presidents in history have been impeached, and none has ever been impeached twice.



President Donald Trump

Democrats will control the Senate after sweeping two runoff elections in Georgia on Tuesday, but the new senators, Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, will not be sworn in until the state certifies the results. The state deadline to do so is Jan. 22, though it could come sooner.

In Thursday's video, a flat-toned Trump struck a conciliatory note seldom seen from the mercurial president, calling for "healing." As recently as Thursday morning, however, Trump was still claiming the election had been stolen, and he stopped short of acknowledging his loss.

Since November, Trump has baselessly railed against the election results as "rigged" due to widespread fraud.

The Trump campaign and its allies filed dozens of lawsuits challenging the vote counts but were almost universally rebuffed in state and federal courts. Election officials have said there is no evidence to back Trump's claims.

Pelosi and Schumer called on Pence and Trump's Cabinet to invoke the US Constitution's 25th Amendment, which allows them to strip the president of his powers if he cannot discharge the duties of his office. But Pence opposes the idea, according to an adviser.

At least two Republicans, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and US Representative Adam Kinzinger, said Trump must go. The Wall Street Journal editorial page, seen as a leading voice of the Republican establishment, on Thursday evening called on Trump to resign.

At a news conference to introduce his pick for attorney general, Biden blamed Trump for instigating the attack but did not comment on his possible removal.

Congress certified Biden's election victory early on Thursday, after authorities cleared the Capitol. More than half of House Republicans and eight Republican senators voted to challenge some states' election results, backing Trump.

The president has isolated himself among a small circle of die-hard advisers and lashed out at those he perceives as disloyal, including Pence - whom Trump wanted to try to block Congress from certifying Biden's win - according to sources.

Agencies

Russia wishes the US to live through dramatic historic period with dignity, Zakharova said

MOSCOW

MOSCOW regards the events in Washington DC on January 6 as a domestic affair of the United States and wishes the American people to live through this dramatic period of their history with dignity, official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova told TASS on Thursday.

"This is an internal affair of the United States," she said. "At the same time, we draw attention to the fact that the electoral system in the United States is archaic, it does not meet modern democratic standards, creating opportunities for numerous violations, and the American media have become an instrument of political struggle. was the reason for the split in society that is now observed in the United States."

"We wish the American people to experience this dramatic moment in their own history with dignity," Zakharova added.

Democrat Joseph Biden won the US Presidential election, according to the final official figures. The Senate and House of Representatives of the US Congress began on January 6 a joint meeting to approve the election results, but it was interrupted for several hours after supporters of the incumbent broke into the Capitol building.

Lawmakers managed to get together again after law enforcement officers cleared the Capitol of protesters. Biden was eventually confirmed as the winner of the election.

According to police, during the protests, four people were killed, at over 50 law enforcement officers were injured, and over 70 people detained.

Agencies

US transport, education secretaries quit in staff exodus

WASHINGTON

US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos resigned on Thursday, joining a growing list of aides leaving President Donald Trump's administration in protest at the storming of the US Capitol by his supporters.

Chao, the wife of Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, said in an email to staff that the mob attack "has deeply troubled me in a way that I simply cannot set aside." She said her resignation will take effect on Monday.

In a letter to Trump, DeVos said the attack on the Capitol was unconscionable. "There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me," she wrote, adding her resignation would be effective yesterday.

With less than two weeks left of Trump's presidency, many aides were already heading for the door, making some of their resignations symbolic gestures.

But the sudden exodus suggested revulsion among some over Trump's encouragement of supporters who brought violent chaos to the Capitol on Wednesday in an ultimately futile bid to prevent formal certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

The growing departures of key US national security staffers could also deprive Trump of critical advice in the event of an international crisis in his final days in office.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the latest resignations.

Deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger, a leading aide on Trump's China policy, quit abruptly on Wednesday, said a senior administration official.

He was followed on Thursday by at least five senior directors at the White House National Security Council responsible for advising Trump on Russia, the Middle East, Africa, defense policy and weapons of mass destruction, according to a senior administration official and a person familiar with the matter.

Tyler Goodspeed, acting chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, also stepped down, a source familiar with the situation said.

Trump's pledge on Thursday of an "orderly transition" on Jan 20 was partly intended to head off further resignations, but one senior official told Reuters: "It's not going to stop it."

Agencies

By Zhang Yunbi

China, DRC to enhance bilateral ties

THE Democratic Republic of Congo became the 45th African country to sign a co-operative document on co-building the Belt and Road with China, marking the initiative's growing circle of friends and its ability to survive the economic headwinds amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The document was signed in the wake of talks between China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and DRC Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs Marie Tumba Nzeza in the Central African country's capital Kinshasa on Wednesday.

Wang said the BRI is an important international co-operation initiative and is committed to promoting economic complementarity among countries, synergizing development strategies, forming joint development efforts, and realizing common development and prosperity.

In the first three quarters of last year, China's non-financial direct investment in countries involved in the BRI worldwide grew 30 percent year-on-year.

Up to December, China had signed 202 cooperation documents with 138 countries and 31 international organizations on BRI cooperation, according to Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

Last month, China and the African Union signed a cooperation plan on jointly advancing the Belt and Road, the first of its kind signed between China and a regional organization of international significance.

Zhu Jing, Chinese ambassador to the DRC, noted that economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has soared despite the pandemic, showing great vitality and resilience.

In the first 10 months of 2020, bilateral trade increased by 34.4 percent year-on-year,



State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo Marie Tumba Nzeza attend a signing ceremony in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Wednesday. (XINHUA)

and a number of new investment projects were launched, Zhu told local media on Monday.

The trade momentum reflects great potential and complementarity between the two countries, and the Wednesday signing of the China-DRC Belt and Road document will send a positive signal to the world that both countries are com-

mitted to common development and prosperity, Wang said.

The signing will lead the economic circles of the two countries to further strengthen cooperation, inject stronger dynamism into win-win bilateral cooperation and introduce a broader prospect to two-way relations, Wang added.

In their talks, Nzeza told Wang that the DRC welcomes further investment from China and it anticipates greater cooperation in areas such as agriculture and education.

Wang arrived in the country ahead of the DRC taking the rotating chairmanship of the African Union later this year.

DRC President Felix Tshisekedi said the two sides will strengthen coordination and cooperation and expand Africa's voice in international affairs.

Wang said China supports the DRC in fulfilling its duties as the AU chair country as China and Africa are a community with a shared future.

He said China is ready to step up communication and cooperation with the DRC, as seen in areas such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which has played an important role in promoting China-Africa relations and the development of African countries.

Security situation in Ethiopia's conflict-hit Tigray region 'remains volatile' - UNOCHA

ADDIS ABABA

THE security situation in Ethiopia's conflict-hit Tigray regional state "remains volatile," the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said on Thursday.

"The security situation in

Tigray remains volatile with a gradual improvement in some areas in the Eastern and Western Zones, although insecurity and bureaucratic constraints remain," the UNOCHA said in its situation report published on Thursday. "As the security situation in some areas of Tigray region

is slightly improving, humanitarian workers have been able to access areas that were so far inaccessible, particularly in cities," said the report. However, "localized fighting and insecurity continue, with fighting reported in rural areas and in the peripheries of Mekelle, Shiraro and Shire,

among other locations, as of last week," it added.

Noting that access to most parts of North Western, Eastern and Central Tigray remains constrained due to the ongoing insecurity and bureaucratic hurdles, the UNOCHA stressed that Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps are

still not accessible. The latest situation update came after the two joint assessment missions that were deployed on Dec. 20 are completed. "Both missions have witnessed a dire humanitarian situation with poor access to services and limited livelihoods," the report read.

Xinhua



US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao (L) and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos

BRI, RCEP best solution for South Asia and Southeast Asia recovery

SOUTH Asia is a developing region struggling with economic and human development issues and strategies. One way to help pull them out of cycles of poverty is regional cooperation.

Unfortunately, such partnerships are complicated by disputes between India and Pakistan with roots from British rule and their partition. In addition, India is reluctant to embrace the influence of China in South Asia as it gradually expands.

From Indian viewpoints, South Asia is undoubtedly its sphere of influence, which encourages New Delhi to build India-led multilateral development mechanisms.

Speaking of regional cooperation of South Asia, there are currently different multilateral cooperation mechanisms, including South Asia

Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

The SAARC, which has been put on hold for a long time, seems to have been activated under COVID-19. For example, a SAARC coronavirus fund has been proposed. However, the prospects of regional cooperation in the region remain less optimistic due to structural constraints.

These entail strained India-Pakistan relations, China-India border spats and India's troublesome ties with smaller countries around the subcontinent.

In one word, it will be very difficult to achieve better outcomes if South Asian countries rely

solely on themselves and existing mechanisms.

Although the impact of COVID-19 has been dramatic, the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has brought a lot of hope to regional cooperation and given fresh impetus for further economic development in Southeast Asia.

People in the region have regained their confidence in multilateral cooperation against the background of US retreat from multiple international agreements.

RCEP is a triumph of ASEAN's middle-power diplomacy. Certain small and medium-sized countries have overcome differences with a consensus that cooperation will do more good for the region. An East Asian trade agreement has long been recognized as something that

would add major value to the region. However, China and Japan, the region's two largest economies, were not considered "politically acceptable" as architects for the project. This stalemate was resolved in 2012 by an ASEAN-brokered deal that included India, Australia and New Zealand as members.

Without ASEAN taking up the helm for negotiations, RCEP might never have been launched. China's economic takeoff has benefited from foreign direct investment from East and Southeast Asia for many years.

However, India cannot expect similar economic injections from its South Asian neighbors. This is also one of the considerations behind India's "Look East" and "Act East" policies. According to a statement issued by RCEP mem-

ber states, India is still warmly welcome to join this agreement in the future, despite backing out this time.

Given that all South Asian countries are actively responding to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) except India, the "Act East" policy of South Asia may be a future option for this region.

From China's perspective, the BRI and RCEP do not exclude each other. Since the signing of RCEP, there have been heated discussions around dual "circulation" development patterns in China. Moreover, China has been actively exploring synergy between BRI and RCEP. China's domestic response to the BRI entails the rapid establishment of free trade zones (FTZs). In this year, the number of Chinese FTZs has reached 21.

Global Times

Indonesia releases radical cleric linked to Bali bombings

JAKARTA

INDONESIA released from prison yesterday Islamic cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, as authorities said the suspected mastermind of the 2002 Bali bombings would enter a deradicalisation programme amid concerns over his continued influence in extremist circles.

Authorities said Bashir, 82, who was never convicted of a direct role in the bombings, would enter a deradicalisation programme amid concerns over his continued influence in extremist circles.

Photographs showed him dressed in white and wearing a mask as he left the prison in Bogor, south of the capital Jakarta, before being driven to his home at an Islamic boarding school near the city of Solo in Central Java.

"Abu Bakar Bashir was released from Gunung Sindur prison at 5.30 a.m.," Rika Aprianti, a spokeswoman for the corrections department, told reporters.

Bashir, 82, who is regarded as the

spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiah (JI), a jihadist network with ties to al Qaeda, was imprisoned in 2011 for 15 years for his links to a militant training camp in Aceh province.

After periodic cuts in his jail term, he served 10 years.

Although Indonesian police and intelligence agencies say Bashir was linked to the 2002 Bali attacks and a 2003 attack on the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta, he was never convicted of direct involvement and denied any ties.

A conviction for being part of a conspiracy to carry out the Bali bombings was later overturned.

The Bali bombings killed 88 Australians, and the country has pressed Indonesia to ensure Bashir does not incite more violence.

Yesterday, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Bashir's release was "very distressing to the friends and families of the Australians, the 88 Australians, who were killed in the Bali bombings".



Thiolina Marpaung, an Indonesian wounded in the 2002 attacks, said she wanted authorities to keep supervising Bashir.

"We don't know what he was doing in prison," she said by telephone. "The government has to still assert control over terrorism actors in Indonesia who have been out of jail."

Bashir pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in 2014 while in jail.

A spokesman for the Coogee

Dolphins rugby club in Sydney, which lost its president and five members in the Bali attacks, said Bashir's release would be difficult. "Some will never forgive, there will be others who will be just angry today," said Albert Talarico.

"Others will stay silent because they don't wish to have the old wounds opened again."

DERADICALISATION PROGRAMME

Some Indonesians defended the release of the cleric, saying he had served his time and was a practising Muslim.

"There are many people who discredit Muslims, thinking that we are related to terrorism, but...we are not," said Asqar Kustiwa, 63, a resident of Depok, near Jakarta.

Bashir will undergo a deradicalisation programme, Eddy Hartono of Indonesia's anti-terrorism agency said in a statement, adding that he hoped the cleric, after his release, "can give peaceful, soothing preachings".

In the wake of the Bali attacks, Indonesia set up an elite anti-terrorist unit that weakened JI and resulted in scores of suspected militants being arrested or killed.

But other extremist groups have since formed and conducted attacks in the world's biggest Muslim majority country while only last month police arrested 23 militants.

Agencies

West does not see Russia as equal partner: this is fracture point in relations - Peskov

MOSCOW

THE fracture point in Russia-West relations emerged after Moscow refused to accept the "colonial" conditions on which Western companies might use Russia's natural resources, Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told TV host Vladimir Solovyov in an interview, uploaded to his YouTube channel on Tuesday.

"They do not wish to see us as equal partners," the Kremlin spokesman said about the reasons for the worsening of Russia's relations with the West.

Peskov recalled the practice of production sharing agreements, which allowed international companies to use natural resources for a meager two-percent share of the profits left to the host country. The Russian presidential spokesman described this arrangement as "classical British colonialism," adding that the percentage received in exchange for letting outsiders use the resources looked like "beads for the savages."

Peskov recalled that such agreements were concluded in the 1990s, but then the country began to gain strength and "president Vladimir Putin helped it come to its senses and shrug off this dependence."

"He stopped internal wars, made the economy work and called to order power-thirsty oligarchs," Peskov stressed. "Then the question arose: you, guys, should know that we don't need beads. Colonial relations will not work anymore."

He stressed that in the mid-2000 the disputes over such agreements were "resolved constructively and cooperation is continuing."

Agencies

S.Korean court orders Japan to pay damages to WWII sex slavery victims

SEOUL

A SOUTH Korean court yesterday ordered Japan's government to pay damages to the South Korean victims who were forced into sex slavery for the Imperial Japan's military brothels during World War II.

The Seoul Central District Court ruled that Japan should pay reparations of 100 million won (91,200 U.S.

dollars) to each of 12 plaintiffs, who filed a petition for dispute settlement with the court in August 2013.

It marked the first time that a court here handed down a verdict to order Japan's reparation payment to the victims, euphemistically called "the comfort women."

The damages claim suit was only referred to the Seoul court in January 2016, and the first hearing was

held in April last year as the Japanese government declined to officially receive the civil case petition.

The court said in the ruling that the plaintiffs suffered from extreme, unimaginable mental and physical pain and were not even compensated for their suffering, noting that illegal acts by the accused can be acknowledged through evidence, relevant materials and testimonies.

The verdict noted that it would be reasonable to value the damages amount at over 100 million won.

Japan maintained that the case should be dropped given the sovereign immunity that allows a state to be immune from civil suit in foreign courts, but the South Korean court said it cannot be applied to the case as the illegal acts were crimes against humanity committed

deliberately, systematically and widely by the Imperial Japan.

Historians say hundreds of thousands of Asian women, mostly from the Korean Peninsula, were kidnapped, coerced or duped into sexual servitude for Japanese troops before and during the Pacific War.

The court noted that the damages suit cannot also be applied to the Seoul-Tokyo

deals in 1965 and 2015. Japan claimed that the 1965 treaty, which normalized diplomatic ties between Seoul and Tokyo, resolved all colonial-era issues, including the wartime sex enslavement and forced labor, but South Korea said the individual right to damages had yet to be resolved.

The Korean Peninsula was colonized by Japan from 1910 to 1945.

Xinhua

'World's factory of violin' trains farmers into craftsmen, lifts region out of poverty

WANG Jintang is the Antonio Stradivari of Zhugou village.

The violins and cellos Wang made have been played by musicians around China and the world.

Zhugou village is a community in Queshan county, Central China's Henan Province, and it is known as the world's "factory of violins." For every 10 hand-made violins sold around the world, nine are made in Queshan.

In the 1980s, Wang spent three years acquiring the skill of making violins when he was a migrant worker in Beijing. At that time, many people in his hometown Queshan suffered from poverty. He returned to Queshan along with his new craft.

After three decades of development, Queshan now has 122 violin companies with 2,000 employees. The annual output of various violins is about 400,000, and the annual output value is about 450 million yuan (\$68 million).

With Queshan's violins being sold to countries such as the US, Germany, Italy and South Korea, the county's violin industry has lifted more than 100 households out of poverty.

"Queshan violin industry has a bright future in cross-border e-commerce," a local violin manufacturer said.



A woman checks hand-made violins at a factory in Queshan, Central China's Henan Province. File Photo

Despite the global reach of the COVID-19 pandemic, online orders have connected Queshan's manufacturers with overseas clients. Queshan is also actively exploring China's domestic market.

Queshan County Violin Industrial Park has become a professional industrial park for Queshan-born violin makers in Beijing to return to their hometown to start business and help with local poverty alleviation.

"Currently there are more than 180 violin makers in the factory. Most of them were local villagers trained to become professional violin craftsmen. After training, a maker can earn about 5,000 yuan a month, which is high compared with other jobs in the local area," said Guo Xinshe, general manager of Henan Haoyun Musical Instrument Company.

The company has provided 200,000 yuan to help more than 70 poor households, with an average of about 3,000 yuan per household. In addition, the company has employed seven workers from poor families, and five disabled workers, who earned more than 3,500 yuan a month.

Guo Yongqing, a villager in the nearby Mazhuang community, is a disabled worker in the factory. His family is listed by the local government as low-income. "I can now earn more than 3,000 yuan a month in the factory, which is almost six times the salary of my previous job as a cleaner in the village," said Guo.

The violins not only brought financial wealth, but expanded opportunities for the next generations in Queshan. "Parents make violins and children

are playing them" is a very common scene in the county where people could barely name the Western instrument 30 years ago.

"We have made the world know Queshan violins, and our children have the duty to continue spreading the notes to every corner of the world," said Jiang Baolin, chief of the Queshan hand-made violin association, in the documentary *The Last Battle Against Poverty* by Henan TV.

Thanks to the popularity of the internet and mobile phones and policy support, e-commerce has been developing rapidly in China. Even the most remote villages in China have Wi-Fi and access to the 4G network, and in some cases, 5G. As a result poverty reduction initiatives across China have gone global, much like Queshan's violin industry.

For instance, a special species of pomegranates with soft seeds arrived at the Russian market from Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Southwest China's Sichuan Province, one of China's least-developed regions that just shook off poverty in November. As early as 2018, pollution-free tomatoes and peppers of Liangshan have been exported to Russia and Kazakhstan.

Global Times

UK imposes mandatory virus tests on all incoming travelers

LONDON

ALL passengers arriving in the United Kingdom will be required to prove they do not have coronavirus, showing a negative test result taken within 72 hours of the start of their journey.

Under new rules announced by the British government, anyone failing to produce the evidence of a negative test will be hit with an immediate fine of 500 pounds (US\$678). Travelers arriving from countries that are not on the government's open travel corridor list will be required to isolate at home for 10 days, regardless of their test results.

The measures, set out by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, will come into force next week for passengers arriving in Britain by plane, boat or train.

The plan is aimed at stopping new strains of COVID-19 coming into the UK, such as one identified in South Africa, as the government accelerates the roll-out of vaccines, Shapps said.

Entry to England will also be banned to those who have traveled from or through any southern African country in the previ-

ous 10 days, the government said, including Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

The UK reported 1,162 coronavirus-related deaths Thursday, the highest daily toll since April 21, official figures showed. That brought the overall toll to 78,508.

A field hospital in London will be used if necessary to relieve pressure on other hospitals in the city, British Health Minister Matt Hancock said Thursday after leaked official documents suggested London risked running out of beds within two weeks.

Projections leaked to the Health Service Journal showed that even if the number of COVID-19 patients increased at the lowest rate considered likely, London hospitals would be short of nearly 2,000 acute and intensive beds by Jan 19.

Asked about the projections, Hancock said he was concerned about the pressures on the National Health Service (NHS) and the government was putting extra resources into the parts of the country under the most significant strain.

There has been a 24 percent increase in people testing positive for the coronavirus in the week to Dec 30, England's test and trace scheme said, reflecting a spike in cases that has prompted a new national lockdown.



World expects China, US to shoulder responsibilities for world amid profound changes

THE world is going through profound changes unseen in a century, and the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating such changes, leading to increasing instability and uncertainty of the international situation.

The disease, which is considered the worst pandemic in 100 years, has plunged the global economy into a severe contraction and impacted people's livelihood. At the same time, the international order is also facing unprecedented threat from unilateralism, protectionism and hegemonic bullying since the end of World War II.

Some said the world has entered its darkest hours. Neither can it go back to the past nor see the future.

Every coin has two sides. The pandemic further reminded the world of the importance of a com-

munity with a shared future for mankind, as the interests of countries are closely connected, and the world is an inseparable community.

No country shall be isolated in this global crisis. To defeat the crisis, the international society must work in solidarity and collaboration. The global governance is also in dire need of improvement for better preparation of future crises.

With great power there must also come great responsibility. China and the U.S. are the world's largest developing and developed countries, as well as the

largest two economies that contribute 40 percent of the global economy. They are both permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, having a big influence over world peace, security and development.

The two countries have gained rich experiences of cooperation over the past years to cope with challenges.

They carried out counter terrorism cooperation in 2001, and worked together to deal with the global financial crisis in 2008. In 2014, they joined hands to fight the Ebola virus, and jointly promoted the reach-

ing of the Paris Agreement two years later. Practices prove that China and the U.S. are able to make many accomplishments that benefit both themselves and the world.

However, as countries grapple with the pandemic and try to save the economy and people, some U.S. politicians are blaming China, fanning the so-called "decoupling" with the later and trying to establish an "anti-China Crusade."

Such practice not only failed to solve the problem of the U.S., but also impeded the country's efforts to fight COVID-19 and slowed the world's anti-pandemic

progress. Instead of containing China's development, it in turn triggered panic and dislike from the international society.

Some state leaders called on the U.S. to stop establishing the so-called "anti-China alliance" which runs against the will of countries. Insightful U.S. observers also said they are not willing to see two parallel worlds.

When the new U.S. administration takes office, China-U.S. relations will stand at a new starting point. It is expected by the international society that the new administration will turn around its

policies toward China and work with the country to solve the tricky problems faced by the world today. Many suggest that the two countries expand cooperation on global issues, which will both contribute their wisdom and strength to the world and promote the development of their bilateral relations.

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden believes that the U.S. is currently going through historic crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession and climate change, so pandemic control, economic recovery and measures to cope with climate change shall be pri-

orities.

These problems are indeed an epitome of today's global challenges which cannot be solved by the U.S. alone. To address these problems calls for the cooperation of the international society, including China.

Another major issue faced by China and the U.S. is how the human society will develop in the post-pandemic era. Many people compare today's crisis to the Great Depression, but no one wants the stories of 1930s and 1940s to happen again.

The choices and actions made by the two countries today are of vital importance for the world peace, stability and prosperity in the future.

People's Daily

SPORT

KMC FC now suspends forward for indiscipline

BY CORRESPONDENT ISMAIL TANO

VODACOM Premier League (VPL)'s Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC's management has announced the suspension of the side's forward, Reliants Lusajo, for what has been termed as indiscipline.

The towering forward was signed by the Dar es Salaam-based team earlier this season from VPL side, Lindi's Namungo FC.

A statement issued by KMC FC's information officer, Christina Mwagala, stated that Lusajo had been suspended by the club for misconduct.

The statement revealed: "We would like to inform soccer followers and KMC FC's fans that Reliants Lusajo has been suspended for misconduct."

"The decision has been reached only after the management had been satisfied that any player who commits misconduct will be liable to a fine including suspension."

Christina said the decision was reached after the management was satisfied that the player had shown misconduct, so he had to be punished in accordance with KMC FC's regulations.

She stated any KMC FC player who commits a misdemeanor, should be punished, including being issued suspension.

With the mini transfer period still in progress, KMC FC has recently parted ways with two of the club's players, striker Salim Ayee and defender David Mwasa.

According to KMC FC's information officer, Christina, Mwasa has been sold to Mbeya City FC, Ayee was offloaded by the Dar es Salaam squad on a mutual agreement to terminate his contract.

Ayee had joined KMC FC on a two-year contract from Mwadui FC. He served KMC FC for one year

and six months, his contract was expected to expire in June 2021.

Mwasa joined KMC FC on a two-year contract from Lipuli FC, he in this case served KMC FC for a period of six months, with his contract expected to expire in June 2022.

The KMC FC, Christina noted, would like to thank the players for great contribution they have made in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The side, she said, is confident that the duo will continue to perform well in their new teams.

She stated: "Meanwhile, KMC FC management has also given a 10-day break to the side's players and that they will have to return to camp on January 15 this year for preparations for the Premier League matches."

The KMC FC will, in the squad's next league match, confront Prisons.

The KMC FC's leadership moreover stated that it is out to see to it the team win this season's Azam Sports Federation Cup (ASFC) tournament and earn opportunity to play in the next season's CAF Confederation Cup.

The Dar es Salaam side progressed to the fourth round of this year's ASFC, edging First Division League squad, Lipuli FC, 1-0 in the third round tie, which took place at Uhuru Stadium in the city early this month.

The KMC FC's winner was scored by midfielder Cliff Buyoya and the tem hung on to the lone-goal right up to the final whistle.

Christina stated that KMC FC is out to snatch the ASFC trophy from the current holders, Simba. She noted: "We have prepared ourselves after making it to the fourth round. We are going to do well in the next match and we need to win the ASFC top honour."



Netballers making some of squads which are playing in this season's national netball championship 'Taifa Cup', put their skills to show in one of the games in Manyara.

Urban West team sail through to 2021 Taifa Cup netball tournament final

BY CORRESPONDENT ISMAIL TANO

ZANZIBAR'S Urban West netball squad has stepped up its pursuit of the 2021 Taifa Cup netball tournament's silverware, sailing through to the final thanks to 40-37 victory over Mbeya in the semi-final, which took place in Babati, Manyara early this week.

Tanzania Netball Association (Chaneta)'s assistant secretary, Hilda Mwakatobe, said Urban West team were set to lock horns with Arusha in the final at Kwaraa Stadium in Babati on Thursday.

Eleven regions have participated in the premier netball competition, which aims at, among oth-

ers, promoting the game.

Urban West team's assistant skipper, Justina John, said they hope to clinch the top honour as they went to Manyara to make their presence felt in the showpiece.

Meanwhile, former Chaneta's Chairperson, Anna Bayi, who passed away in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday, will be laid to rest at her home, Kibaha Mkuza in Coast Region.

Anna will be remembered by the netball fraternity and the rest of sports enthusiasts in the country for her dedication to effective promotion of the sport at the domestic level.

She was at the helm of the na-

tional netball governing body when the national team, Taifa Queens, progressed to the 2011 All African Games and the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations.

The deceased's son, Sanka Bayi, said the funeral service will be held at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) at Mkuza, starting at 11am before the funeral takes place.

"The body will on Friday be taken from the hospital and sent home, we will tomorrow take the body to church for funeral service, then the body will be taken back home for burial," he said.

Anna passed away on Wednesday while undergoing treatment at Hindu Mandal Hospital in Dar

es Salaam.

Describing Anna's few days before her death, Filbert Bayi, the country's athletics legend and the former's spouse, said she was suffering from pneumonia.

He disclosed: "She was on her way to Same, Kilimanjaro, she suffered pneumonia along the way and she was taken to Sally's Hospital where she was treated and was allowed to return home."

"Her condition was not good, we have an ambulance here at our health center, I told the center's staff to take her to Hindu Mandal Hospital where she was taken to the ICU until she passed on."

Bayi said bitterly.



Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC's forward, Reliants Lusajo.

Prioritise athletes for vaccine so Tokyo Games can go ahead - IOC member

TOKYO

ATHLETES should be prioritised for the novel coronavirus vaccine so the beleaguered Tokyo Games can go ahead later this year, according to senior Olympics official Dick Pound.

Canadian Pound, the longest-serving member of the International Olympics Committee (IOC), told Sky News in the UK that the Games could still go ahead with mass athlete participation, but only if they were vaccinated.

"In Canada where we might have 300 or 400 athletes - to take 300 or 400 vaccines out of several million in order to have Canada represented at an international event of this stature, character and level - I don't think there would be any kind of a public outcry about that," Pound told Sky News.

"It's a decision for each country to make and there will be people saying they are jumping the queue but I think that is the most realistic way of it going ahead."

During his visit to Tokyo in November, IOC President Thomas Bach said athletes would be

encouraged to get the vaccine but it would not be mandatory for their participation in the Games.

Separately, Pound told the BBC the ever-changing nature of the coronavirus pandemic meant nobody could be sure whether the Games would go ahead in less than 200 days.

"I can't be certain because the ongoing elephant in the room would be the surges in the virus," Pound said, according to the BBC.

Over 15,000 athletes from almost every country in the world are expected to descend on Tokyo for the Olympics, which start on July 23, and the subsequent Paralympics.

Fears over whether the Games can be held in Tokyo have increased in the last few weeks as COVID-19 cases surge in Japan and around the world.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga reiterated on Thursday his intention to hold the Games, even as he declared a state of emergency in the capital and surrounding prefectures.

REUTERS

JKA/WF-Tanzania set to spread wings to upcountry



Dar es Salaam's karate players demonstrate the game's skills at a recent event which took place in the city.

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

AFTER years of enjoying success in karate in East and Central Africa, the Japan Karate Association (JKA/WF-Tanzania) is now expanding to upcountry in Tanzania.

Already the JKA/WF-Tanzania has branches in several regions and Zanzibar. They are, among others, Morogoro, Ruvuma, Lindi, Mwanza and Rukwa.

The association further has helped to launch several other clubs scattered in different districts which include Kilwa and Masasi.

According to JKA/WF-Tanzania's official, sensei Mikidadi Kilindo, the focus is largely on Dodoma, as far as the game's pro-

motion is concerned.

Nestory Fedeliko, who is one of JKA/WF-Tanzania's top officials, said that Kilindo will run a dojo at Dodoma's city centre.

"He will soon go to Dodoma and return to make other arrangements before officially residing there," Fedeliko stated.

Fedeliko, alias 'Ganchan', who is one of fifth-danned trainers assisting the JKA/WF-Tanzania's other top official, sensei Jerome Mhagama, revealed to a publication that all travel arrangements are in place to uplift the sport's players' spirit in Dodoma.

He disclosed: "We have a training centre 'dojo' on the outskirts of Dodoma city, but it had for years not been strong enough to encourage more people to join the sport."

"The Dar es Salaam's head-

quarters have therefore assigned me to do the job in Dodoma to make things work out," he stated.

He disclosed karate is like any other sporting events that improves a human being's mental and physical states, it also equips one with self defence skills.

"Karate does not promote hooliganism like other people wrongly think of that, it is one of the smartest sporting events and most importantly, good for mental, health, self defence and promotes self-discipline, respect for others and opting out of disturbing other people," he said.

The JKA/WF-Tanzania, he stated, has had a series of local tournaments last year, despite being hit by Coronavirus crisis.

Among highly profiled events was the Gashuku seminar and competition, which took place in

Songea, whereby karate players from different regions took part in competition at different ranks, seminars and grading.

Tanzania also hosted the same Gashuku for East, Central and Southern African countries and was attended by several male and female karate players from several countries, which include Kenya, Uganda and South Africa.

Karate will for the first time be among competitive sporting events at next year's Tokyo Olympic Games. The summer games were to be held mid last year, but were rescheduled to next year because of Coronavirus pandemic. Sensei Jerome says that Tanzania is ready to send representatives to the games, but he called on well-wishers to back karate players set to earn selection for the national team.

Pochettino looking for lift-off with PSG

FRIDAY

MAURICIO Pochettino described getting the job as Paris Saint-Germain coach as a gift from Father Christmas, but his first game in charge, with Neymar absent, indicated that not everything will be straightforward for the Argentine.

Pochettino's first home game as coach comes on Saturday when PSG take on Brest following their 1-1 draw with Saint-Etienne in midweek, a result which left the reigning champions three points behind leaders Lyon at the top of Ligue 1.

Absent since being stretchered off in the defeat against Lyon in December, Neymar could return this weekend, although PSG have other injury problems to contend with and currently look some way short of being genuine contenders to win the Champions League.

As well as the world's most expensive player, PSG were without the likes of Presnel Kimpembe, Juan Bernat, Alessandro Florenzi, Leandro Paredes, Danilo Pereira and Mauro Icardi in midweek.

By the time PSG play Barcelona in the Champions League last 16, first leg on February 16, Pochettino will hope to have the majority of his other crocked players available again, and he will hope to have stamped his mark on his new side.

"A point is not enough, but in the circumstances we have to settle for it," said the former Tottenham Hotspur coach at the end of his first game after more than a year out of football.

"There are a lot of aspects we need to work on if we want to achieve great things in Paris.

"I am not worried. We don't have much time, but there is lots of quality in the team."

During his time out of the game, Pochettino had been linked in the English media with a possible move to one of the Premier League's giants were a job to become available, such as at Manchester United.

But his past as a player at PSG, coupled with a reputation that has remained sky-high during his time out of the limelight, made it no great surprise to see him end up at the Parc des Princes.

"I am happy after 14 months without anything," he said after making his return to a dugout, albeit in these stark times of football without fans due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"It is also a bizarre feeling without supporters. It was strange. I had never experienced that before. There is much less warmth."

Player to watch: Memphis Depay
There is still a chance that Depay will leave Lyon before the January transfer window closes. A move to Barcelona fell through in October and he is out of contract at the end of the season, but Lyon fans will be hoping he stays until then to continue leading their title bid.

With the captain's armband on, the Dutchman scored twice in Wednesday's 3-2 win over Lens which left OL three points clear of PSG at the top of the table. He has scored 10 times this season, and afterwards he said: "Let's just make the most of my presence here, maybe until the end of the season. We have a great team. That's all I have to say."

AFP

Arsenal agree £120m COVID-19 bank loan

LONDON

ARSENAL have borrowed £120 million from the Bank of England to help the club's cash-flow through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The loan is repayable by the end of May and is principally designed to help offset the ongoing absence of matchday revenue for the season.

Significantly, the money cannot be used for transfers as it comes from the Bank of England's COVID Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF), which is the same scheme through which Tottenham and the Football Association received financial support last year.

Few clubs or organisations are eligible for the CCFF because of strict qualification criteria which include a strong investment grade rating and a determination that a company makes a "material contribution to the British economy."

It is unclear what interest Arsenal will have to pay on the loan but Spurs borrowed their £175m sum at a rate of 0.5%.

"As we continue to work through the implications of the global pandemic on our finances, we can confirm today that the club has met the criteria set by the Bank of England for the COVID Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF)," an Arsenal statement said.

"As a result, we are taking a short-term £120m loan through this facility to partially assist in managing the impacts of the revenue losses attributable to the pandemic. This is a similar approach to that taken by a wide variety of major organisations across many industries including sport and is repayable in May 2021."

The move highlights the difficulties clubs are facing in coping with a huge drop in revenue resulting from the pandemic, particularly at Arsenal where matchday income accounted for a quarter of their revenue in

2018-19.

Arsenal have already made 55 non-playing staff redundant in addition to drastically reducing the size of their scouting network and parting company with several senior staff members including former head of football Raul Sanllehi and contract negotiator Huss Fahmy.

The absence of a preseason tour prior to the 2020-21 season represents just one blow to commercial revenue streams and it was estimated by the Arsenal Supporters' Trust early on in the pandemic that a full year without supporters could mean the club loses as much as £144m.

The club moved last year to refinance the debt on Emirates Stadium -- estimated at the time to be around £160m -- with owner Kroenke Sports Enterprises redeeming outstanding bonds and moving the remaining sum to another lender.

"The CCFF is in addition to the loan provided by our owners Kroenke, Sports & Entertainment that enabled us to refinance the debt on Emirates Stadium in August last year," Arsenal added.

It remains to be seen whether this short-term move will enable the club to rid themselves of other financial burdens, not least a bloated wage bill.

Sead Kolasinac and William Saliba have already departed on loan while Mesut Ozil could leave with the club keen to remove his £350,000-a-week salary.

Arsenal spent £45m on Thomas Partey in the summer but that money was only released after a specific request to Stan Kroenke from senior figures at the club including technical director Edu and manager Mikel Arteta.

The club are hopeful of doing business in January but the need for a short-term loan underlines the constraints they are working in.

(Agencies)

No room for complacency as Atletico's rivals find their rhythm

MADRID

REAL Madrid have hit their stride and Barcelona are gaining momentum but Atletico Madrid have stayed strong at the top of La Liga, ahead of what could prove a crucial month in the title race.

A surprise loss to third division side Cornella in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday came in stark contrast to Atletico's form in the league, where only defeat to their capital city rivals last month blots an otherwise perfect run of results that stretches back to mid-October.

Two narrow victories over Getafe and Alaves last week made it four league victories on the bounce since Atletico's setback at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium, where a hesitant, passive performance offered Madrid reassurance.

Atletico had caved when it mattered most and many thought that spelled danger for their prospects longer-term.

But while Zinedine Zidane's Madrid have used the derby victory to string together an unbeaten run of eight games, seven of them wins and five with clean sheets, Atletico have also responded.

Luis Suarez scored consecutive winners against Getafe and Alaves, his tap-in at Mendizorroza on Sunday prompting the kind of celebrations to suggest his team genuinely believes they can go the distance.

"We have to keep going down this path," said coach Diego Simeone. "The league is complex, there are lots of traps and you have to be constantly prepared, you can't let yourselves relax."

When Madrid last put together a run like this, it was to secure last season's title, as Barcelona wilted with the trophy in sight.

Yet Atletico have marched on, even if



La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid play at home to Athletic Bilbao on Saturday. (Agencies)

the last-gasp nature of their win against Alaves, coupled with Wednesday's defeat by Cornella, means there can be no room for complacency this weekend.

"Everyone wants to win and in the second half of the season there is no longer the same calmness," Simeone said. "It will be tougher, with teams fighting to save themselves, to qualify for Europe. You have to stay alert."

- 'Always a chance' -
Atletico face Athletic Bilbao on Saturday and then Sevilla on Tuesday, two tough games that will again test their mettle, especially as Bilbao will be eager to secure a first win under new coach Marcelino Garcia Toral.

Madrid, in contrast, have what appears to be a kind period in front of them. Their next six matches are all against teams currently in the bottom seven of the table, starting at Osasuna

on Saturday.

When they lost away at Shakhtar Donetsk at the start of December, Zidane was back in the firing line but the Frenchman has reverted to his most trusted players and his side have quickly recovered.

Barcelona look rejuvenated too, their 3-2 win over Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday coming after a scintillating performance from Lionel Messi.

He scored twice and could have had a hat-trick while the likes of Ousmane Dembele, Pedri, Antoine Griezmann and Frenkie de Jong all contributed to a slick attacking display.

It was also enough to rekindle their hope, even if a seven-point deficit behind Atletico, who have two games in hand on both the Catalans and Madrid, still looks a large gap to close.

"There is always a chance," said Koe-

man. "The season is very long. You can have ups and downs in a season and it may be that a team that is doing very well will suddenly find it difficult."

If Barca can win away at Granada on Saturday, belief will grow. Madrid travel to Osasuna later on Saturday night. Earlier in the day, Sevilla, in sixth, face Real Sociedad in fourth.

Fixtures (times GMT)

Today
Sevilla v Real Sociedad (1300), Atletico Madrid v Athletic Bilbao (1515), Granada v Barcelona (1730), Osasuna v Real Madrid (2000)

Tomorrow
Levante v Eibar (1300), Cadiz v Alaves (1515), Elche v Getafe (1730), Real Valladolid v Valencia (2000)

Monday
Huesca v Real Betis (2000)

AFP

Coronavirus, Brexit tame Premier League spending

LONDON

PREMIER League clubs shrugged off the coronavirus crisis to splash out £1.2 billion (\$1.6 billion) in the summer transfer window but reality is expected to bite in a depressed market this month.

Since the last window closed in early October, hopes for a large-scale return of fans have been dashed by soaring infection rates across England, which have led to another national lockdown.

Football is feeling the strain. Forty positive Covid-19 cases were discovered over two rounds of Premier League testing in late December and early January, with three matches postponed.

This led to fears that another season could be interrupted by the pandemic, with clubs taking a fresh financial hit, even if Premier League bosses insist the season will continue.

"It's not the best situation for the whole planet, so why should it be for a football club," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said on Thursday.

Other potential revenue streams have also dried up. A plan to televise matches on pay-per-view to mitigate the loss of matchday income was quickly dropped after a supporter backlash.

- Buyer's market -
Clubs on the continent were far more cautious in the summer window, with La Liga and Bundesliga clubs even running at a transfer surplus.

Premier League clubs found they were unable to offload players for the fees they had hoped for. The net spend of around £800 million was the second-highest on record in a single window and could have consequences for the market over the next month.

January tends to be a seller's market, with buyers panicked into improving their squads after a disappointing start to the season.

However, this time around a number of the biggest Premier League clubs, including Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester United and Tottenham, are desperate to offload players to trim bloated squads and cut wage bills.

United and Spurs have already posted major losses from the 2018/19 season, when stadiums were open for two-thirds of the season.

Tottenham expect to lose £150 million in revenue for the 2020/21 season alone due to the impact of the pandemic on matchday income and the cancellation of events such as NFL games and



Manchester United could face a full season without fans at Old Trafford due to coronavirus restrictions. (Agencies)

concerts.

Chelsea's £32.5 million profit for last season came in a campaign when they were serving a transfer ban and they benefited from £150 million of sales, with the departures of Eden Hazard and Alvaro Morata.

The £220 million the Blues spent in the summer is not reflected in those figures and sales are the priority over signings at Stamford Bridge despite a run of one win in six league games.

- Brexit effect -
The impact of Covid-19 is not the only factor limiting clubs' options this month, with new Brexit rules on work permits for European Union nationals coming into force on January 1.

West Brom boss Sam Allardyce was the first top-flight manager to express his frustration at the new rules, with three of his transfer targets ruled out

because they would not pass the new points-based system.

Points will be awarded for senior and youth international appearances, club appearances and the pedigree of the selling club.

Major signings should not have any trouble fulfilling the criteria but the new system will have a radical impact on clubs' ability to recruit young players from Europe.

Britain no longer benefits from an exception to FIFA's rules that allows youth players to sign for clubs in another EU state, under which Cesc Fabregas and Paul Pogba first came to England.

- Liverpool to make a move? -
Just 10 points separate leaders Liverpool from Leeds in 12th in the most wide open title race for many years.

Manchester United and Manchester City would overtake the champions at

the top if they win their games in hand.

Klopp admitted in normal circumstances he would definitely be in the market for a centre-back this month after losing Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez for the rest of the season and with Joel Matip also currently sidelined.

However, the economic impact of empty stadiums may force him to make do with a defence patched up by midfielders Fabinho and Jordan Henderson playing out of position.

"You have three senior centre-halves all injured - is that a situation where usually we would do something? Yes, definitely, but we are not in that situation so I don't know if something will happen or not," Klopp added.

"We have to deal with the situation like we did it so far and we have to get through this."

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

No room for complacency as Atletico's rivals find their rhythm

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Azam FC forward set to get back to action January 17

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

VODACOM Premier League (VPL)'s Azam FC management has made it clear that the club's forward, Prince Dube, will officially return to the field from January 17, this year.

Dube, who was signed by Azam FC from the Zimbabwe's Highlanders, has already been out of action for six weeks after breaking his arm in a 1-0 home defeat to Yanga in a VPL match, which took place at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam on November 25, 2020.

Prior to the injury, Dube was involved in Azam FC's 10 goals, scoring six goals and assisting four times.

It was reported Dube is expected to miss out on this season's Mapinduzi Cup,

which began in Zanzibar on January 5.

Azam FC's information officer, Thabit Zakaria, said: "Our squad is ready for the Mapinduzi Cup, we have made adequate preparations for this tournament and we hope we will do well in it."

"Head coach George Lwandamina has planned to use this tournament to get our second team's players gain experience as some of first team's stars who did not have much time to play due to various reasons."

"As for Prince Dube, his chances of playing in this tournament are slim as his doctors have allowed him to start training from January 17," Zakaria noted.

"It is clear he will not play in the Mapinduzi Cup, he can travel with the squad as part of learning," he disclosed.

Anna Bayi laid to rest in Coast Region today

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA sports fraternity is mourning the sudden demise of Anna Bayi, the country's inspirational netball legend who has immensely contributed to the development of the game, athletics and basketball for over four decades.

Anna, who served the Tanzania Netball Association (Chaneta) as Chairperson, passed away at a hospital in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday night.

Reports had it that Anna, the wife and inspirational figure of the athletics legend, Filbert Bayi, died of an illness at Hindu Mandal Hospital on Wednesday where she was undergoing treatment, but no further details were issued out by her family until Thursday.

Describing the last days of Anna, Filbert Bayi, a former prominent athlete and the current Tanzania Olympic Committee (TOC) secretary general, who is the former's spouse, said she began suffering from pneumonia.

He said: "She was on her way back home from Same, Kilimanjaro, she suffered from pneumonia, oxygen began to drop, before she was taken to Sally's Hospital here in Kibaha, where she was treated and allowed to return home."

"Her condition was not good, we have an ambulance here at our health center, I told them to take her to Hindu Mandal Hospital where she was taken to the ICU until she passed away," Bayi narrated bitterly.

Anna's body will be buried on Saturday (today), at her home, Kibaha Mkuza, Coast Region.

During her life, she served as Chaneta's Chairperson from 2009 to 2013

before she handed over the torch to Anna Kibira constitutionally, the latter passed away in September last year.

Anna Bayi will be remembered for her immense contribution in netball development in the country.

She also strengthened the cooperation between Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

She also worked hard to seek funding for the development of the sport, especially at grassroots level.

During her tenure, Tanzania hosted a number of international netball competitions that improved the country's ranking in International Federation of Netball Associations (IFNA).

Anna's death is a big blow to sports fraternity, her husband Bayi, their four children, other members of the family, relatives and friends.

She was also Filbert Bayi Schools' Director and she used her resources (Filbert Bayi Multi-Sports Complex) at Mkuza to host various sports competitions and courses attended by sports officials and players from different sporting events.

The late Anna Bayi hails from Pare District in Kilimanjaro, where she also tied the knot with Filbert Bayi in the 1970's.

Filbert Bayi is Tanzania's 1500m legend, who made international publications' headlines in 1974 when he triumphed in the Commonwealth Games' 1500m race in the world record time to be considered as one of the greatest runners.

He beat New Zealand's John Walker and Ben Jipcho of Kenya to win the event's gold medal.

Namungo FC set to face Angolan side in 2020/21 CAF Confederation Cup play-off

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TANZANIA'S Namungo FC will face off against Angolan side Primeiro de Agosto in the 2020/21 CAF Confederation Cup's play-offs after the showpiece's draw took place on Friday afternoon in Cairo, Egypt.

The Tanzania representatives qualified for the final round of the CAF Confederation Cup tournament after notching a 5-3 aggregate victory over Sudan's Al Hilal Obeid in the first round.

Namungo FC cruised to 2-0 victory over Al Hilal Obeid in the first leg, which took place in Dar es Salaam, the former thereafter forced a 3-3 draw with the latter in the second leg, which took place at Al-Hilal Stadium in Khartoum on Tuesday.

The draw for the play offs of the CAF Confederation Cup pitted aggregate winners from the second-tier competition's first round against losing teams from the CAF Champions League's first round. The first leg matches have been fixed for February 14 and the return leg will take place on February 21, with the aggregate winners progressing to the group stage.

Namungo FC will therefore travel to Angola for the first leg against Primeiro de Agosto before hosting the return leg in



Namungo FC

Dar es Salaam.

A win for Namungo FC in the two-legged tie will earn them a place in the lucrative group stage of the competition together with 15 other clubs who will be drawn into four groups.

Morocco's side RS Berkane, the CAF Confederation Cup's reigning champions and highest-ranked team in the competition, were the only team ex-

empted from the draw.

The only first round tie yet to be decided was Bloemfontein Celtic of South Africa versus Rivers United of Nigeria. The clash's winners will face Enyimba of Nigeria.

Here is the CAF Confederation Cup's fixtures in full:

Enyimba (Nigeria) vs Bloemfontein Celtic (South Africa) or Rivers

United (Nigeria), Primeiro de Agosto (Angola) vs Namungo FC (Tanzania), FC Platinum (Zimbabwe) vs ASC Jaraaf (Senegal), SC Sfaxien (Tunisia) vs AS Kigali (Rwanda), Raja Casablanca (Morocco) vs US Monastir (Tunisia), Nkana FC (Zambia) vs TAS Casablanca (Morocco).

Gor Mahia (Kenya) vs Napsa Stars (Zambia), AS Bouenguendi (Gabon) vs Salitas (Burkina Faso),

Asante Kotoko (Ghana) vs ES Setif (Algeria), Young Buffaloes (eSwatini) vs Etoile du Sahel (Tunisia), SONIDEP (Niger) vs Cotton Sport (Cameroon), Al Ahli (Libya) vs DC Motema Pembe (DR Congo), Stade Malien (Mali) vs JS Kabylie (Algeria), RC Abidjan (Ivory Coast) vs Pyramids FC (Egypt), Jwaneng Galaxy (Botswana) vs Orlando Pirates (South Africa).

Aga Khan SC demolishes Strikers in 2021 DC Gymkhana Cup tourney

By Guardian Reporter

DAR ES SALAAM cricket giants, Aga Khan SC, have opened their campaign in the 2021 Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Gymkhana Cup competition impressively, walloping Strikers by 67 runs in a clash held in the city early this week.

The duel's eventual winners were overly dominant, racing to 107 runs for the loss of nine wickets in 20 overs after they had got the chance to bat first.

Opener Sadiki Iddi was the club's batsman with most runs, ending with 25 which included a boundary.

He successfully made up for below par performance by fellow opener, Dhrumit Mehta, given the latter was dismissed for duck.

Experienced player, John Zablon, and Akbar Khan saw to it the outfit's plan to amass an imposing score is still on, chipping in with 17 runs apiece.

Strikers sought to weaken Aga Khan SC's batting unit, as the latter's skilful batsman, Alhaj Sadick, had a brief stint, exiting the crease with three runs.

Veteran player, Ayzaz Jasani, the outfit's skipper, attempted to restore confidence with his 13 runs that somehow helped to push the score.

There was not much to write



The K&P Constructions cricket team pose for a photo shortly after confronting Alaf Aces Club in the 2021 Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Gymkhana Cup competition's clash, which took place in the city recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TCA

home about for the remainder of the squad's batsmen, as they failed to offer meaningful contribution.

Strikers' Vaibhav Bhatia was the player with most wickets, ending with three and giving away 18 runs in four overs.

Mukul Kumar ended his bowling spell with two wickets and gave away 13 runs in three overs.

Strikers lost steam in the chase, given they managed to score 40 runs all out in 17.2 overs.

They were dealt a blow early on with early dismissal of opening

batsmen, Lazaro Festo and Vaibhav.

Miraj Dewani was, in the end, a performer with meaningful contribution in what was, in essence, a woeful batting performance, posting 14 runs. They later on kept on dropping wickets at regular intervals, their chase, in the end, fizzled out with 16 balls remaining.

Aga Khan SC's Alhaj Sadick and Prem Bajaria had a field day with the ball, recording three wickets apiece.

Sadick Iddi compounded Strik-

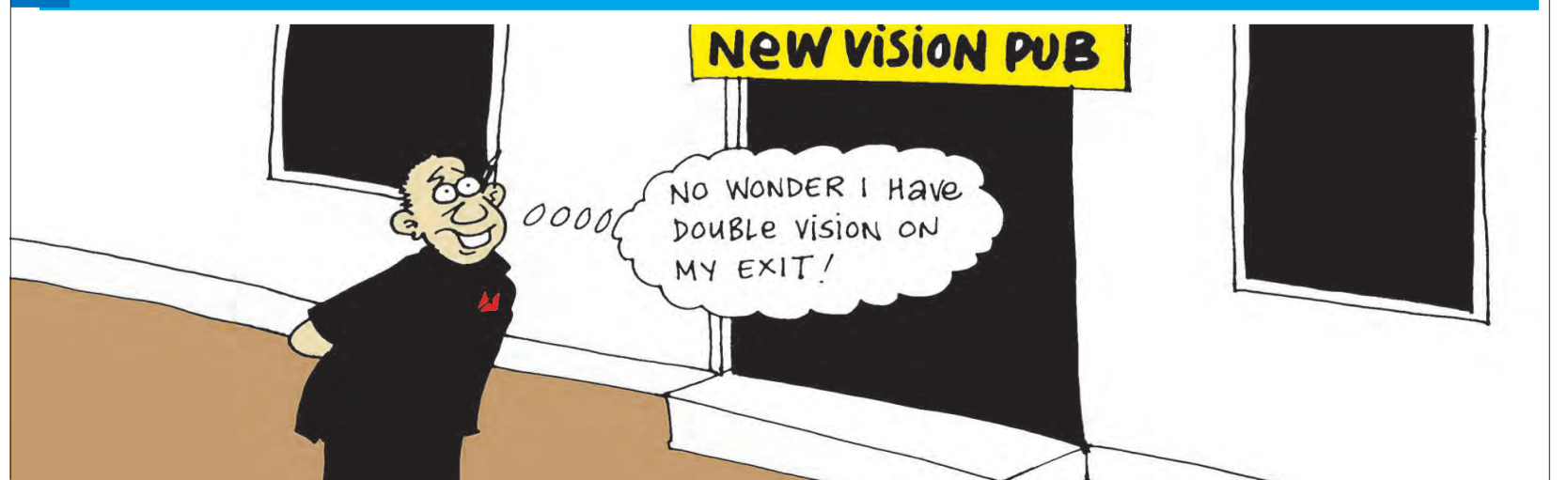
ers' woes, ending his spell with two wickets in two overs.

There was also victory for K&P Constructions side, which registered a 42-run victory over Alaf Aces Club.

The impressive K&P Constructions squad notched 133 runs for six wickets in 20 overs after they had landed the chance to start batting.

Alaf Aces squad's efforts to get down to successful chase hit snag, they were skittled 91 runs in 16.3 overs.

Flexibles by David Chikoko



Anna Bayi