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Blue Economy: Govt promotes Indian Ocean rim cooperation

By Guardian Reporter



Chief Secretary Ambassador John Kijazi (R) who is also the Chancellor of the University of Dodoma (UDOM) presents a special certificate to Anna Mkapa, the widow of third phase president Benjamin Mkapa, in honouring the memory of her husband who presided over UDOM as its first chancellor. The certificate was presented as UDOM conferred a posthumous honorary doctorate (Honoris Causa) at the 11th graduation ceremony in the capital yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

THE government intends to further reinforce cooperation with over 20 countries forming the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to successfully implement strategies towards promoting the blue economy.

The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, William ole Nasha made this observation at the 20th Council of Ministers meeting of IORA member states at virtually gathering on Thursday.

The Commonwealth explains the blue economy or ocean-based economy as an emerging concept which encourages better stewardship of ocean or 'blue' resources, highlighting close linkages between the ocean, climate change and the wellbeing of islands and ocean rim settlements as per the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 advocating for sustenance of 'life below the water surface.'

He said the government has been implementing a number of strategies to boost the fishing sub-sector through improvement of cruise tourism, oil and gas exploration, establishment of fishing ports and improving the

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Nairobi Governor seat: Speaker Benson Mutura fails to take oath

NAIROBI

THE planned swearing in of Nairobi County Assembly Speaker Benson Mutura (pictured) as acting Nairobi County Governor has been postponed.

This is after the judge assigned to preside over the taking of oath of office arrived late for the ceremony.

According to the law, such an event should be performed between 10am and 2pm. However, the judge arrived a minute past 2pm resulting in the cancellation of the event.

Despite spirited attempts to convince

the judge to administer the oath, he declined saying his action thereof could be challenged in court as he would be going against the provisions of the law.

A new date for Mutura to take oath of office will be announced later.

The former Makadara MP was to be sworn in as acting governor after Senate Speaker Ken Lusaka gazetted the impeachment of Governor Mike Sonko on Thursday.

This was after senators voted to have him removed from office upholding the resolution by Nairobi MCAs to oust him.

Sonko was facing charges including on abuse of office, gross violation of the Constitution and any other law, gross misconduct and crimes under national law, grounds which will eventually see him impeached.

This paved the way for the swearing in of Mutura as acting governor with Nairobi County having no deputy governor since the resignation of Polycarp Igathe in January, 2018.

Article 182 (4) of the Constitution states that if a vacancy occurs in the office of

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'Ensuring pupils join secondary school is leaders' responsibility'

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has directed regional and district authorities to enhance efforts to make sure all classroom construction projects are completed by February 28, next year to accommodate Form One pupils who missed allocation in the first selection.

Inspecting the classroom construction project at Buhongwa secondary school for Mwanza city council, the premier impressed on the leaders to fast track completion of the classrooms to facilitate start of classes by that deadline.

With thousands of children in various regions missing chances to join Form One next month due to shortage of classrooms, public officials must ensure that they work hard to fulfill their

responsibilities. Every Tanzanian child has the right to quality education, he declared.

He also assured families with children who have missed out on the first selection that the government was working hard to make sure that construction of classrooms is completed on time for them to join secondary education in the February intake.

"My emphasis to parents, guardians, teachers and authorities is to ensure that all these children are kept in school and supervise their progress for them to complete well their studies," he told the gathering.

Earlier, Mwanza City Council executive director Kiomoni Kibamba said that the council has supervised construction

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To facilitate ongoing construction of classrooms, the city authorities have delivered 6,000 bricks to every school and 200 bags of cement

Dr Mwinyi awakes CCM, Pemba on clean up drive

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Mwinyi has called upon Zanzibaris to support the eighth phase government's endeavours in fighting corruption, indiscipline and misuse of public resources.

Dr Mwinyi (pictured) asserted that in the few weeks that he has been in the top public office, he has come across a number of public service challenges which require bold decisions and



stringent measures to rectify.

"I am going to be tough. We are going to conduct a crackdown on corruption, as laughing at corrupt, embezzling and negligent public officials would drag the country's development efforts," he said, noting that implementing government programs requires togetherness and diligence.

He was addressing CCM officials and activists in Chakechake, Pemba Island, urging party members to forge solid ranks as he will be tougher and rough against corruption.

"Give me time. Let me make some difficult decisions but I want to assure you that after those difficult decisions I will ensure that every public cent is properly

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Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa inspects the utility pole at Kigongo - Busisi in Mwanza yesterday. Photo: PMO

Blue Economy: Govt promotes Indian Ocean rim cooperation

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cultivation of seaweeds.

IORA member states discussed proposals to enhance cooperation and dialogue within the IORA framework, focusing on joint action in line with best practices to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Delegates also discussed implementation of the 2017-2021 IORA strategic plan and preparations of the 2022-2026 strategic plan and its joint development programs. These include protection of marine resources plus curbing human trafficking and piracy, officials said.

Ole Nasha used the conference to invite potential investors to grab available investment opportunities in the marine sector in Zanzibar and on the Mainland coastline.

Government plans focus on fully utilizing available resources in the country's exclusive economic zone via a favourable business and investment environment, with the government making efforts to strengthen cooperation with the private sector, he told the meeting.

IORA was established in 1997 with the aim of promoting regional cooperation, prosperity and growth in the Indian Ocean region through joint action on the basis of thematic issues like maritime security and safety, facilitation trade and investment as well as managing fisheries and disaster risks.

Other thematic areas are tourism and cultural exchange, academic, scientific and technological cooperation, economic empowerment of women and enhancing the blue economy.

Back in October during the poll campaigns, Presidents John Magufuli announced plans to procure eight new vessels as part of the government's efforts

to promote an ocean-based economy.

The government is currently engaged in talks with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to bring in the vessels anytime next year, he said, noting that the vessels will help to transform lives among the fishing communities.

The blue economy is increasingly being proposed by scholars and policy makers as a blueprint for promoting economic development aimed at GDP growth, poverty reduction (income and employment) and a concept for conserving the world's oceans and inherent resources.

The concept of the blue economy was first highlighted at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in Rio de Janeiro in 2012.

UNCTAD saw the blue economy in terms of economic and trade activities that focus on the ocean-based marine environment, associated biodiversity, ecosystems, species and genetic resources whilst ensuring conservation.

In Africa, prospects of enhancing the blue economy to influence economic growth was first highlighted in the AU Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) for the period up to 2050. It was advanced with the adoption of the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development (or the Lomé Charter) by the African Union Assembly in 2016.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 describes the Blue Economy as essential to the continent's future as its benefits extend beyond the shores of coastal states, creating opportunities for adjacent landlocked communities and countries, citing South Africa, Seychelles and Mauritius as success stories in Africa's quest for Blue Economy.

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of 67 classrooms and 53 more are in progress, for completion by January 11, 2021 and likely to accommodate all pupils selected for Form One.

"In the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) results for 2020, Mwanza city emerged third at the national level and Butimba B Training School came first for government schools with a score of 98.1 percent," he pointed out.

To facilitate ongoing construction of classrooms, the city authorities have delivered 6,000 bricks to every school and 200 bags of cement, he stated.

On Thursday, Minister of State in the President's Office

'Ensuring pupils join secondary school is leaders' responsibility'

(Regional Administration and Local Governments), Selemani Jafo admitted that 74,166 pupils who passed their Standard Seven national examinations this year will not be joining secondary education in January, owing to shortage of classrooms.

Addressing journalists in Dodoma, Jafo directed regional and district commissioners whose areas face classrooms shortage to work with education stakeholders and complete building new

facilities by the end of February.

Dar es Salaam region topped the list with 14,926 pupils that will be in the waitlist followed by Geita (9,572), Mara (7,809), Dodoma (7,145), Coast (6,888), Mbeya (5,549) and Kigoma (5,498).

Others are Morogoro (4,686), Kilimanjaro (3,015), Arusha (2,768), Simiyu (1,837), Tanga (1,537), Iringa (907), Singida (674), Rukwa (564), Manyara (557) and Shinyanga (234).

However, selected pupils in

Kagera, Katavi, Lindi, Mtwara, Mwanza, Njombe, Ruvuma, Songwe and Tabora will all join secondary schools as scheduled.

Pupils who have been selected to report for classes should do so without restrictions, the minister emphasized, instructing parents and guardians to collaborate with regional and district administrative secretaries to ensure all students are enrolled for studies early next month and on time."

Dr Mwinyi awakes CCM, Pemba on clean up drive

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utilized. I will not tolerate seeing public funds being embezzled," he declared.

"My plan is to bring quick development to the Isles. There is no need to fear my toughness for those without corruption records."

The government has implemented several strategic projects in health, water, education and in other areas which have in-turn stimulated economic growth, he stated, promising to continue supervising other development projects and ensure that there is proper use of funds.

He commended party leaders for the job well done in the general election as they were well supervised to achieve the landmark victory.

"The seventh phase government has done a good job.

It completed the implementation of some development projects leaving others in progress. I will work hard to ensure that we achieve all the intended goals," the president emphasized.

He also commended religious leaders for always preaching peace and unity amongst Zanzibaris. Current development progress recorded in both Pemba and Unguja islands was possible due to the prevailing peace, he stated.

Abdallah Juma Mabodi, the CCM deputy secretary general for Zanzibar commended the party's cadres for the sleepless nights they spent to ensure that CCM comes out with a landmark win in the recent general election.

During the polls, CCM won all wards in the Pemba South region and parliamentary seats in seven constituencies in the island, he added.



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi addresses government officials and Defence and Security Committee members in Pemba yesterday. Photo: State House

Nairobi Governor seat: Speaker Benson Mutura fails to take office oath

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county governor and that of deputy county governor, or if the deputy county governor is unable to act, the Speaker of the county assembly shall act as county governor with an election to the office of county governor being held within sixty days after the speaker assumes the office of county governor.

When eventually sworn in, Mutura will hold the position for 60 days before Nairobi City's 2,250,853 registered voters spread

across 3,378 polling stations go to the polls in mid-February to elect a substantive governor.

"Pursuant to Article 181 of the Constitution, section 33 of the County Governments Act, 2012 and standing order 75 of the Senate Standing Orders, on Thursday December 17, 2020, the Senate resolved to remove Mike Sonko, the Governor of Nairobi County, from office by impeachment," read the gazette notice by Speaker Lusaka.

AGENCIES

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Chinese embassy in Tanzania has donated 90 sets of lecture desks and chairs to the National College of Tourism (NCT) to upgrade its facilities.

Wang Ke, Chinese ambassador to Tanzania, and Dr. Shogo Mlozi Sedoyeka, CEO of the college signed the handover certificate for donation at the Chinese embassy on Tuesday. The two also held talks on cooperation.

"Tanzania is rich in tourism resources and we're happy to see the rapid development in Tanzania's tourism industry. China attaches great importance to tourism cooperation between

Chinese Embassy donates teaching equipment to NCT

the two countries. In recent years, tourism cooperation between the two sides has been continuously strengthened," said the Chinese ambassador.

She said the number of Chinese tourists visiting Tanzania in 2019 exceeded 35,000 and it's convinced that it has great potential for growth in the post COVID-19 pandemic.

Ambassador Wang added: "The

embassy is willing to facilitate the establishment of cooperative relations between NCT and the tourism colleges in China, and promote exchanges and training of tourism talents between the two sides."

Dr Sedoyeka, thanked the Chinese embassy for the support.

She said: "We're facing difficulties such as insufficiency of teaching equipment. The donated

lecture desks and chairs will be put into use at our new campus in Mwanza to benefit the teachers and students there."

She added, "I spent four years studying in China and obtained my doctorate degree. I love China and the Chinese people and look forward to closer bilateral exchanges and fruitful tourist cooperation that will deepen the two peoples' friendship."



Deputy minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation William Ole Nasha (L) participates at the 20th Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) ministerial meeting held through video conference

PURA unveils plans to invest in research and marketing to attract more potential investors

By Getrude Mbago

THE Petroleum Upstream Regulatory Authority (PURA) has unveiled its plans to invest heavily in research and marketing so as to attract more potential investors to invest in the country's oil and gas sector.

Eng Charles Sangweni, acting director general of PURA made the remarks in Dar es Salaam on Thursday during the one-day training provided to journalists from various media houses.

According to him, only 30 per cent of the country's potential sedimentary basins of oil and gas have been explored leaving the 70 per cent of the area without being surveyed and explored, a situation which calls for more coordinated efforts to attract investors in the basins.

He said that the government has a petroleum activity map where areas are divided into blocks/

areas with high probability of having hydrocarbon potential.

"We are working to strengthen efforts and systems, improve bidding so as to attract more multinational companies with interest in the upstream oil and gas sector, we still have a good number of sedimentary basins that are yet to be fully explored," he said.

"Activities in the upstream sector in Tanzania started since 1952, where the first wells were drilled at Mtwara which resulted in no discovery. In 1974 the first natural gas was discovered at Songo Songo, followed by Mnazibay in 1982. In those years this sector was governed by Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act 1980. Currently we are under Petroleum Act 2015 (PA 2015), whereby opportunities to invest in upstream especially in exploration is through tendering

process," he said.

Faustin Matiku, a geologist at PURA said that over 50 per cent of the country's total area (534,000km²) has been blessed with potential sedimentary basins which if well explored could transform the oil and gas sector in the country.

"We have 114,000km² in the Inland Rift Basins, these are found in the rift valley block; In the coastal and continental shelf basins (onshore and offshore including the islands of Zanzibar and Mafia there is 280,000km² and in the deep sea basins (140,000km² basins)," he said.

Charles Nyangi, also from PURA said in a bid to ensure that locals benefit well in the upstream oil and gas projects, PURA has been also supervising to ensure that the investors also engage local experts in the projects.

He said that local content is an aspect of paramount importance

for our country's economy and prosperity.

"This is due to the fact that employing locals and buying local goods and services create employment, technology transfer, skills/knowledge acquisition and value addition in the country. It also brings collaboration among investors and local communities; in particular it makes the locals feel the ownership of their natural resources through their participation in providing goods and services, which they sell as well as labor they offer," he said.

Nyangi said to ensure the optimum participation of locals in Petroleum value chain, the Petroleum Act, 2015 section 219 and 220 are provisions which narrates on consideration of goods and services supplied by Tanzanian entrepreneurs as well as training and employment of Tanzanians.

PM gives seven days ultimatum to civil servants to submit reports on luxury official cars

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has given seven days ultimatum to Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and officials in the office of Mwanza city director and Chato District responsible for the purchase of vehicles to submit reports on why they have bought expensive cars, violating the set standards for the public procurement systems.

Majaliwa made the statement on Thursday when addressing public servants, Members of Parliament and councilors from Ilemela and Nyamagana municipal councils in Mwanza Region. He said the expensive cars are a burden to the citizens, adding there are no reasons for municipal or district leaders to use such expensive vehicles.

He reminded the officers in charge of vehicle purchasing to adhere to the set standards for the public procurement systems to save monies which could be directed on other development activities. He warned that the government will take stringent measures against public servants violating the procurement guidelines. Procurement rules are set by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA).

The PM challenged district directors and councilors to make sure decisions made to purchase various equipment including vehicles should consider value for money and that such procurement should be done using internally collected revenues.

He urged them to come up with strategies to enhance revenue collections as well as broadening their tax base to collect more funds for implementation of development projects.

PM Majaliwa directed the leaders to make regular visits to the villagers instead of staying in offices. He was concerned that being a leader means to work

for the people and addressing solutions to their problems.

He however reiterated his recent call to district and regional administrative secretaries to remain in office during this festive season. He said the officials must ensure completion of pending classroom construction projects in their respective areas so that all selected students join Form One studies on time.

He said all the pending construction projects should be completed by February 28th 2020.

"We need an extra 3,000 classrooms to accommodate all the selected Form One students for the 2021 academic year. Construction projects must be completed by end of February," he stated.

Selemani Jafo, Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments said on Thursday that thousands students likely to miss the January Form One intake due to shortage of classrooms.

The number of pupils who will not join secondary schools in the January intake had increased considerably from 58,699 pupils or 773 per cent of those who passed the Standard Seven exams in 2019 to 8.9 per cent this year.

In a report issued yesterday, Dar es Salaam Region tops the list of those missing secondary school placing with 14,926 pupils, followed by Geita (9,572), Mara (7,809), Dodoma (7,145) and Coast (6,888) selected pupils.

Mbeya has 5,549 unallocated pupils, Kigoma (5,498), Morogoro (4,686), Kilimanjaro (3,015), Arusha (2,768), Simiyu (1,837), Tanga (1,537), Iringa (907), Singida (674), Rukwa (564), Manyara (557) and Shinyanga (234).

Pupils from Kagera, Katavi, Lindi, Mtwara, Mwanza, Njombe, Ruvuma, Songwe and Tabora selected to join secondary education will all join secondary education in January.

How the digital revolution can help level the playing field for African women in agriculture

By Sabdiyo Dido Bashuna

The race to limit the spread of Covid-19 has, through necessity, accelerated many other transformations that were already under way, including the digital revolution in African agriculture.

What had previously been a growing but limited shift towards the use of digital tools and technologies for food production and business has become a lifeline in the face of market restrictions, food insecurity and lockdowns. And among the biggest winners have been women.

Long since excluded from equal resources, from land rights to training, almost 90 per cent of African women with small and medium agricultural enterprises have taken up digital solutions during the pandemic, according to a recent survey. Figures from before the coronavirus outbreak indicated women previously accounted for just a quarter of registered users of digital solutions.

The challenge - and opportunity - now is to build on these gains, and translate participation in the digital marketplace into prosperity in the real marketplace.

Through leveraging the potential of digitalisation to level the playing field, African countries can unleash the potential of women in agriculture, who already represent 50 per cent of the workforce and own a third of the small and medium enterprises that produce, process and trade food.

The first benefit provided by digitalisation is more equal access to markets, which has been the greatest limiting factor of the pandemic for almost three-quarters of women. Even before the emergence of Covid-19, women tended to be limited to labour intensive, low value agricultural production activities rather than high-value activities but with market closures and restrictions related to COVID 19, many women have found themselves cut off from their normal business channels.



Nyanza Construction company grader levelling the ground at Vingunguti-Barakuda road in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Govt launches nationwide multi-sectoral nutrition information system

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has launched a nationwide multi-sectoral nutrition information system targeting to strengthen capacities to analyse existing data but also provide decision-makers with evidence-based drivers of malnutrition in the country.

Speaking shortly after the launch here, the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office Dr Dorothy Mwaluko, Permanent Secretary in the Office said nutrition information and data is of a significant benefit to the nation's social and economic growth and that must not be

underestimated.

"The government wants actual data which reflect the performance and trends of the country," she said, warning that incorrect data is misleading and does not help in decision making.

The PS said authorities responsible must be open to all data regardless of positive or negative that can be used in decision making. In that regards, she said the national nutrition centre must ensure the platform involves all key stakeholders.

According to details issued at the launching ceremony the platform had included nine ministries, but the PS says more

stakeholders had been left out of the platform. "I urge you to explore off the exiting stakeholders. Some of them are very key in helping reach the knowledge to the wider community," she said.

She believed that the data which will be published in the platform will help the government and other interested parties plan ahead and set strategies for the benefit of the entire nation.

She suggested, however, the platform be available for the public to access emphasizing that if their restrictions in accessing the data "the platform will lose its merits."

Director of Preventive Services

in the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children Dr Leonard Subi speaking on behalf of the Ministry's Permanent Secretary Prof Mabula Mchembe said the ministry will continue supporting the production of scientific data that have been collected from across the country.

He said the ministry will support the production of timely data especially that targets key populations including infants, expectant mothers and children.

"The ministry is currently working on the new health policy that's in-line with the ministry's

strategic plan. This platform will help establish sustainable and comprehensive information needed," he said.

According to the Director the system will also help the ministry in its periodic review of performances in tackling malnutrition to both children and adults. "Adults are increasing facing non-communicable diseases which are adding up to the health burden," he said.

Although Tanzania has made some good progress in addressing the problem of under nutrition in children, the pace of improvement, especially for stunting has been slow, with data

showing that the prevalence of stunting reduced from about 50 per cent in 1992 to about 34 per cent in 2015/16 financial year.

This current level of stunting is categorized as "severe" in terms of its public health significance and is above the 30 per cent average observed for Africa. Moreover, a double burden of malnutrition has emerged where under nutrition exists together with a rapidly increasing problem of diet-related non-communicable diseases, especially overweight, obesity, hypertension and type 2 diabetes that have doubled in adults during the last decade.



Tanzania Gender Networking Programme Project Officer Anna Sangai stresses a point at the Gender and Development seminar held in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika



Relatives of Muheza district ward councillors attending the swearing in ceremony for the councillors recently. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



A temporary bridge to haul building materials for the Kigongo-Busisi bridge project that was inspected by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa yesterday. Photo: PMO



A section of dignitaries who attended the 11th graduation ceremony at the University of Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Students attending the 11th graduation ceremony for the University of Dodoma follow the proceedings yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Dar es Salaam resident carry bananas sold at Manzese market yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika



Makumbusho secondary school headmaster Boaz Mwita, gives a school bag to one his students, donated by ASA Microfinance (Tanzania) Ltd at a city ceremony yesterday. Looking on is the lending institution's chief executive officer Muhammad Newaj (2nd L) Photo: Correspondent Christina Mwakangale



Special Seats MP for Lindi region, Maimuna Pasani, addressing a meeting of the Union of Women of Tanzania (UWT), the ruling party women's wing, Nachingwea district while on a tour to meet members of its councils in all districts of the region. PHOTO: Guardian Correspondent

Deputy minister unhappy with Mwanza land office work pace

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development Dr Angeline Mabula has instructed all firms which took money from the people to formalize land settlements and obtain title deeds to get the work done in coming few weeks.

Dr Mabula issued the instructions yesterday in Mwanza during her impromptu visit at the Mwanza Regional Lands Commissioner to inspect operations by private firms engaged in formalisation of land ownership, follow up on government's efforts on land rent collection and issuance of title deeds to the people.

She said there have been many complaints from the people for not being satisfied with formalization of settlements contracted to private survey firms, saying they took people's money while their work pace is slow.

She said the people have also complained on how the exercise of issuing title deeds take so long, quite different to what was agreed upon, and gave one month to Biswalo Makwasa, the Mwanza Assistant Lands Commissioner to ensure he deals with the matter.

In regard to the issue of land rent collection, Dr expressed her dissatisfaction with the collection pace saying the Ministry's target for FY 2020/21 was to collect 200bn/- but up to November this year only 50bn/- had been collected.

Makwasa explained that the Deputy Minister's visit will be

taken as a motivation by his office to work hard to realise the government's targets.

Ivan Amurike, Mwanza Region's Assistant Deeds Registrar said one of the challenges contributing to the slow pace in issuing of title deeds and land rent collection was the 'no show' attitude by landowners in collecting their documents when they become ready.

Last year, the Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development, William Lukuvi announced to cut down expenses of surveying and formalisation of land from the current 250,000/- to 150,000/-.

According to him, the move came following a number of complaints from people claiming that the charges were too high thus making most of them leave their land informal for years.

He was also concerned that over 70 percent of land owners in the country are not recognized by the government, the thing that denied the state a lot of incomes.

Lukuvi called on all land owners who their lands were yet to be formalized to utilize the opportunity so as to live a comfortable life.

Last year, the Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development, William Lukuvi announced to cut down expenses of surveying and formalisation of land from the current 250,000/- to 150,000/-



Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute director general Dr Geoffrey Mkamilo briefs Agriculture Permanent Secretary Gerald Kusaya (L) on palm oil seeds in the nursery in Kigoma Region yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Correspondent Michael Sikapundwa, Kilosa

FORTY-SIX girl students at the Mikumi-based Vocational Educational and Training Authority (VETA) have benefited from one-day training on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) organised by the Campaign for Female Education (Camfed) Tanzania.

Held recently in Mikumi township, Kilosa District, Morogoro Region, the training was meant to equip girls with skills on SRH—an important aspect to human development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

One of the participants, Sia

VETA girl students polished on sexual, reproductive health

Msemakweli described the training as important in her development, saying: "This has changed my perception of SRH. I have learned a number of issues, which I wasn't aware of. I am now a good ambassador to my colleagues."

Sia noted that most of the girls got pregnant at a tender age because they're not well informed on how to go with sexual and reproductive health issues.

She said lack of sexual reproductive health has seen most of the girls ending up with

unwanted pregnancies the thing that ruins their future education dreams.

Sia vowed to share ideas learned from the training with other young girls, to enable them avoid teenage pregnancies as well as protect them from HIV/Aids and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

An official from CAMFED in Mvomero District, Dr Daniel Moshia said the programme was structured to help reach out to girls from poor families and equip them with various life skills.

"This training is part of our

efforts to empower youth with SRH and life skills so that they become responsible mothers and citizens," he said.

CAMFED was launched in Tanzania in 2005, it works with the government to boost secondary school enrolment. It started working in Iringa region before spreading to eight other regions across the country. It works with 819 partner schools in 32 districts.

It has also supported more than 3.3 million children to go to school in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana and Malawi.



Unity for Disaster and Development Assistance director in Shinyanga Region Jasson Kyaruzi (R) hands over 15 bags of cement to Town secondary school head teacher Jasson Rwegasira for the construction of classrooms. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu.

KCMUCo students called upon to abide by professional ethics

By Correspondent James Kandoya

STUDENTS at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre College (KCMUCo) have been urged to ensure that they always observe professional code of ethics when executing their field works so as to produce ideal results.

This includes adhering to all procedures during collecting, storing and dispatching of samples to the Government Chemistry and Laboratory Agency (GCLA) needed for forensic and Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) diagnosis.

David Elias, director for Forensic Science and DNA Services at GCLA made the call in Dar es Salaam yesterday at the training of the college's fifth year medical doctors which aimed to capacitate them with skills on how to take and store the samples related to DNA and Toxicology.

Organised by GCLA, the training focused on the legal aspects of collecting, parking, storing and transporting samples needed for forensic and DNA diagnosis so that the laboratory can be practiced effectively.

Elias said the doctors are a very important link to the laboratory investigation made by the GCLA in all matters related to forensic.

"The aim of the training is to remind and equip them with additional skills to collect samples purposely for forensic investigation, treatment and DNA adding that young doctors are important stakeholders to remind when they are in work places to reconsider the procedures in order to get samples that meet all criteria," he said.

For his part, Simon Matajiri, student representative thanked the GCLA for the training adding that it had enabled them to get broader knowledge and will help in their daily duties.

"We promise to work on the training and skills we have received to improve our work performance by following work procedures regarding sample collecting, storing and transporting," he said.

GCLA is a national centre for laboratory analysis of samples/exhibits related to Forensic Sciences in order to facilitate forensic investigations and hence assurance of justice and rule of law, samples related to agricultural and industrial produce to ascertain safety and quality, samples related to paternity or sex identification in order to address society concerns and samples related to environmental and occupational health for the protection of health and the environment.

NGO stresses need for regulations review to further protect rights of internet users

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

A Non-governmental organisation—Haki Maendeleo has called for a review of the Cybercrime Act, 2015 and the Tanzanian Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2020 to enhance and protect the rights of internet users.

Wilfred Warioba, Executive Director at Haki Maendeleo said this during a working session here yesterday that bringing human rights stakeholders and

the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance to deliberate how best to protect the rights of people using the internet.

"We have the laws in place but due to change in technology, people are also increasingly becoming the victim of the internet," he said.

He noted that the government must consider reviewing the existing legislations to match-up with ongoing transformations brought by technology advancement. Citing mobile

phone, for instance, Warioba said people in the remote areas used phones to make calls and today they can receive vital information including weather and agro-inputs related data.

"We want the internet to be used for development and not abused. This is why we are campaigning for authorities to understand that the internet is also part of human rights," he said. He went on noting that the organisation has been working with CHRAGG in creating awareness on human rights.

However, he said areas such as data protection and the financial transaction must be given a priority by the laws.

Nabo Asay, Director of Legal Service Department CHRGG told reporters in Dodoma that male chauvinistic was still dominant in the country thus affecting the promotion of human rights. The director noted with the advances in technology people must fully utilise the internet and especially social media networks to tackle gender based violence.

"We are witnessing a growing trend of abuses in internet-supported platforms, it's high time people stop such abuses," he said. Social media, according to Asay have become powerful in the people and the government and thus needs a special attention to ensure it does not turn another area of hideout for abuses.

Asay admitted an existing challenge in handling the internets but urged both stakeholders to come together and work towards a collective solution.

A participant and member of the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (Tawla) Adv Penina Robert said the new discussion is vital especially after the 16 days of activism. Robert said abuse and gender-based violence was still rampant on the internet despite efforts by both state and non-state actors.

"There is high level of insults, humiliation and other forms of human rights violence on the web all this can stop if there will be proper application of internets," she said.

Kondoa, Chemba agriculture stakeholders commends modern technology being implemented in the districts

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

AGRICULTURE stakeholders in Kondoa and Chemba districts have commended the modern farming technology being implemented in the districts, saying it is likely to boost agriculture production in the semi-arid area.

Speaking during a conference that brought together farmers, local government authority leaders from the two districts, held in Kondoa, they argue that modern farming practices are the way to.

The meeting was organised by a local non-governmental organisation (NGO), Inades Formation Tanzania which is implementing a three year's project on adaptation to climate change for improved livelihoods initiatives.

It was aimed to discuss the implementation of the project, results and the way forward as well as some challenges experienced so far. Inades Formation is implementing the project in three villages in Chemba district and another three villages in Kondoa district.

Through the project, the villagers have been trained on soil and water conservation technology that can be easily replicated in their individual farms and the significance of timelines in the farm.

They have also been trained on community microfinance, bee keeping, among other measures to help improve livelihood.

Speaking while officiating at the opening of the meeting, acting Kondoa District Commission, Ramadhan Mbena noted that adoption of new modern farming technologies can help improve agricultural produce and increased income for the residents.

He thanked Inades Formation for training farmers on improved farming aimed at improving livelihood as well as mitigating effects of climate change.

Mbena noted that agriculture contributes immensely to the national economy but both Chemba and Kondoa districts are highly affected by drought and other effects of climate change.

"Climate change is a global problem and we thank Inades Formation for giving farmers opportunity to learn how to fight

and cope with its effects," he said.

According to the acting DC, farmers in the two districts no longer know when is the right time to plant due to change in farming calendar but it is good that through the project, farmers have learnt how to detect the sufficient rainfall for farming.

Inades Formation has trained farmers on traditional ways of measuring rainfall whereby farmers have locally made rain gauge to help read the amount of rainfall. "We are grateful for such partners who help alleviate poverty among rural population," he added.

Kondoa District Agriculture, Irrigation and Cooperatives Officer, Jovenille Anthony noted that the new farming methods introduced by the organization in Chemba are highly useful in both food and cash crop production.

He noted that there are 84 villages in the district but the project is implemented in only three villages, requesting that it should be rolled out in other villages to help increase agricultural productivity.

"What Inades is doing on the other hand helps in capacity building among extension officers and the good result can be seen," he said.

Chemba District Community Development Officer, Madlina Kalinganita said Inades has worked closely with district authorities and it is through such cooperation that several groups of farmers have been registered.

"Several groups have been registered and others have also submitted application for the same after getting education from Inades," she said.

Mohamed Semdoe, Environment Officer at the district also noted that the new farming technology introduced in the district by Inades Formation is helping a lot on environment conservation.

He said "We are glad to have such a project that is very environment friendly and aimed at improving agricultural productivity".

Inades Formation Tanzania's Executive Director, Herman Hishamu in briefing to the DC said the organisation started a three years' project from July 2019 in the district with aim to fight effects of climate change in the district.



Arusha District Commissioner Kenani Kihongosi (L) hands over 5.4m/- to Sinoni secondary school headteacher Nteles Lorna (R) as compensation for chairs allegedly stolen by students and sold to him. The event took place yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

Put in place friendly environment for PWDs to vote, activists appeal

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

ARUSHA-based human rights activists have suggested the need for the government to put in place a friendly environment that will make people with disabilities actively take part in elections.

They were speaking at the meeting organized by the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA), which was meant to reflect on what transpired in the October 28 General Election. The meeting was part of the TAWLA Project titled "Increased Democratic and Inclusive Election in Tanzania in 2020 (IDIET 2020)", which is being implemented in Mwanza, Tanga, and Arusha regions with the support from the European Union (EU). It is being implemented in collaboration with an NGO called Tanzania

Youth Coalition (TYC).

The participants were from constituencies of Longido, Monduli, Karatu, Arumeru East, and West in Arusha Region.

One of the participants, Biliuda Kisaka said that on the polling day, people with disabilities were facing a number of challenges, including the inability to get into the polling rooms due to unfriendly infrastructure.

"Unfriendly environment for people with disabilities is a challenge that needs to be addressed if we're to make this group comfortable in the forthcoming elections. These people deserve to accomplish their constitutional rights of electing and being elected and this will only be possible if there are better environments for them to do so," she suggested.

The challenge was more serious

for people with visual impairment as some were being accompanied by aides to help them vote, but they were not convinced if they were helping them choose who they wanted.

"To me, I see this was a serious challenge that needs to be sorted out," she said.

Biliuda said that the situation was more serious for people in peripherals, "That's why we're appealing to the government to come up with a better environment for this group to enjoy their democratic rights."

Firimini Miku, a moderator at the meeting also suggested the need for the government and development partners to chip in and scale up voters' education for people living in remote areas.

According to him, in the case of political parties, they are still encouraged to do justice and

provide opportunities for young people and women to run for leadership positions, to increase their numbers at various levels of decision-making.

Commenting on the IDIET project, an official from TAWLA, Clara Chuwa, said the project aims to monitor the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in the entire electoral process.

She said the project is being executed in collaboration with different players—government and political parties.

Liana Sikawa from Arumeru East Constituency described the project as an eye-opener as it encouraged women and youth to contest in different posts during the general election, commending TAWLA for taking the leading role, urging other organizations to emulate the spirits.

More Tanzanian products to be exported to Qatar

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

FOLLOWING a great demand for coffee beans, cashews, spices, honey, meats, vegetables, avocados, mangoes, and other fruits from Tanzania, plans are underway to upsurge the country's food exports to Qatar.

Tanzanian Ambassador to Qatar, Fatma Mohamed Rajab said: "We would like to take this opportunity to introduce more Tanzanian products in the Qatar market, which were well-received here, so the embassy has distributed different samples through KON Group, which is our strategic partner in Qatar."

During a recent forum, Rajab also spoke about the opportunities that Qatar investors are interested in Tanzania, which include gold and mining, real estate projects, pharmaceuticals, construction, Islamic banking, and hunting, among others.

"It is now high time to capture the Middle East market as majority of Tanzania's products is in high demand. In collaboration with KON Group as our strategic partner, the embassy welcomes Qatar's business community to explore various opportunities available in Tanzania," Rajab pointed out during the forum.

The Middle East is now Tanzania's "main focus" in avocado production, TanTrade stated. Tanzania is among the top three African coffee-producing countries. Coffee accounts for 5% of Tanzania's GDP, generating \$100mn per annum. Tanzania honey also has a large market, especially in Germany, the UK, Belgium, France, and Italy, TanTrade



A lorry with registration number T 922 CDH crashes into a ditch after the driver lost control along Mandela Express Highway in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Maulid Mmbaga

Financing cost impedes agribusinesses in Africa

By Special Correspondent

ACCESS to finance has emerged as the greatest priority for agribusinesses in Africa and cost of finance is cited as the biggest impediment, a new survey has revealed.

This is not surprising, given that across the continent less than five per cent of commercial bank lending goes to agribusinesses.

The inaugural 'Africa Agribusiness Outlook' has noted that the issue is not just about access to finance, it is about the cost of finance and availability of financial instruments that are adapted for the agricultural sector.

"It is also about making agriculture attractive, viable and profitable rather than being looked at as a risky endeavour. Given the importance of the agricultural sector to many African economies, we believe this is an area that needs to be given urgent attention," the survey stated.

The survey, which is titled 'Agribusiness in unprecedented times: Challenges and opportunities for Chief Executives Officers in Africa', is an initiative by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and KPMG East Africa, in collaboration with the Partnership for Inclusive Agriculture Transformation in Africa (PIATA).

Although a lot of businesses are struggling, they are also determined to survive COVID-19 and emerge stronger.

The survey, therefore, sought to understand the priorities,

opportunities and constraints for businesses operating within the agricultural ecosystem in Africa, and to give voice not only to the private sector in Africa, but to outline potential pathways for actions that would result in a thriving agribusiness sector in Africa.

According to the report, value chains in most African contexts are not complete since smallholder farmers, for instance, do not have a guaranteed market which makes it difficult for banks to lend.

Financial solutions available to some are small scale and some use digital platforms. Funding provided may not help them grow their agribusinesses as most of them use the funding for consumption purposes.

Financial institutions find it easier to lend to medium and large-scale farmers because they have collaterals.

They are also in closed value chains so banks are more comfortable with them as they are assured the payments will come in.

It emerged that available types of finance differ by providers, requirements, returns required and period of investment.

Grants are limited but were noted to be very valuable for innovation and start-ups, and investment funds, including private equity and venture capital funds which have high rates of return required by investors, and they only invest in high growth businesses.

TFS commissioner stress need for the establishment of new forest farms

By Guardian Reporter

CONSERVATION Commissioner of the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) Prof Dos Santos Silayo has directed the agency's top management to come up with strategies for establishment of new forest farms and production of quality tree seedlings.

He urged them to also prepare a special budget for implementation of the strategies which will boost conservations and increase revenue sources.

Prof Silayo made the directives in Dodoma yesterday when speaking at the opening of TFS budgetary meeting.

The Conservation Commissioner noted that the agency's top management should also strive to improve bee keeping activities in the country as well as establishment of new honey processing factories.

He said the new forest farms to be established must include special farms for traditional medicines.

"Improved bee keeping activities would boost farmer's income and the nation at large. Proper conservation of forests will attract more tourists," he noted.

Prof Silayo said that the agency has been preparing its budget for the 2021/2022 financial year in accordance with government priorities. He said every Tanzanian must benefit with available forest resources, hence the need to protect them.

He said TFS's responsibility is to ensure establishment of new

forest farms across the country and availability of quality tree seedlings.

He said the global demand for various trees including those used to produce medicines is increasing annually, calling for efforts to create good environment to attract investors in the sector. He said with the many forest resources, Tanzania is likely to attract a good number of investors and boost its coffers.

The Conservation Commissioner gave an example of Ghana where the government collects more than 2bn/- annually from forest resources and conservation activities.

He said that Chinese business moguls have already showed interest to invest in the country's forest sector.

He urged TFS staff responsible for issuance of forest product's transportation permits to adhere to the set rules and regulations.

Assistant Conservation Commissioner (Planning and Marketing), Mohamed Kilongo promised to immediately start working on the directives.

Ruvu North Tree Farm Manager, Fortunate Senya said: "I am ready to provide any kind of assistance to the agency since I have been in the industry for many years."

TFS is a government agency established to develop and manage forest and bee resources sustainably in collaboration with stakeholders in order to deliver sufficient and quality goods and services to meet local and international socio-economic and environmental needs.



Shinyanga Regional Police Commander Debora Magiligimba displays firearms and ammunition impounded by police in a recent operation. Photo: Correspondent Neema Sawaka

'I will not entertain corruption'

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has emphasised that in the issue of human development he will not tolerate even his close acquaintances as the practice has adversely been affecting Zanzibar.

Dr Mwinyi gave the remarks in his speech yesterday in Chake Chake in Pemba South Region when giving his thanks to CCM leaders and elders.

He called on CCM leaders and

all the people of Zanzibar to bear with him so that he takes difficult steps so that public funds are respected.

He said so far in his one and half month leadership he discovered corruption in a large scale, the issue which he said he would tirelessly work upon.

He said in his leadership, he would not allow embezzlement of any money he would source for the government.

He said he will be forced to

make difficult decisions but had no plans to victimize anyone.

He told CCM leaders that all the promises he made during election campaigns will be implemented because this time the party had conducted a scientific campaign that resulted in a landslide.

He congratulated all CCM leaders in the Island for the landslide victory due to great work they did.

He also praised leaders from all religious denominations for

preaching peace all the time that saw peaceful elections.

He said in any country no development can be attained without the prevalence of peace and added that after the election the government of national unity has been established, and development also calls for unity.

He said what remained now was to implement the party's 2020-25 Election Manifesto as well as all pledges given during the election campaign.



Graduates of Tanzania Institute of Accounts in jovial mood at the 18th graduation ceremony in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

DR Congo ratifies protocol establishing African court of human, peoples rights

By Jessica Lusamba

THE Democratic Republic of Congo has deposited its instrument of ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, which established the African Court on Human and People's Rights.

The instrument was deposited at the African Union headquarters

in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Friday. It ratifies the establishment of the African Court on Human and People's Rights, a court dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights, freedoms and duties in Africa.

The Protocol, which established the African court, has now been ratified by 31 out of 55 member nations of the African Union.

However, only six of those 31 nations have also deposited a declaration, as required by article 34 of the Protocol, recognizing the court's competence to receive cases directly from individuals and NGOs. The Congo has yet to submit its declaration.

"The DRC has moved a step to safeguard human rights. I strongly encourage the Central African

country to take one more bold step by making the declaration to allow NGOs and individuals to access the Court directly," said Sylvain Ore, the President of the African Court.

The Court officially started its operations in 2006 in Addis Ababa before moving its permanent seat in Arusha, Tanzania, a year later.

WHO launches baseline report on healthy ageing

By Guardian Reporter

IT is estimated that 14 percent of all people aged 60 years and above—more than 142 million—are currently unable to meet all their basic daily needs.

The baseline report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing, released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Thursday states that only one-quarter of countries around the world are compiling comparable data which can be used to monitor global progress towards healthy ageing.

The report was intended for people working in government, academia, civil society and the private sector who make decisions that impact people's ability to live well in older age.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General said: "Humans now live longer than at any time in history. The Baseline Report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing has the potential to transform the way policy-makers and multiple service-providers engage with older adults. We have to work together, to foster the abilities and well-being of our older generations, who continue to give us so much."

The report also discusses what is needed to promote collaboration and better measure progress towards healthy ageing.

Dr Anshu Banerjee, Director of the Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing at WHO said: "Evidence and case studies from around the world give practical examples of what can be done in countries and communities with older people."

Dr Ritu Sadana, the lead author of the report and Head of WHO's Ageing and Health Unit said the report will serve as a useful reference against which countries can promote learning across

countries and measure progress towards healthy ageing during the next decade.

Sadana added: "We will continue working with governments, other UN organisations, civil society and world experts, to improve evidence and information on all aspects of healthy ageing and support impact in countries. More comparable data will enable us to determine clearly the level of progress being made and identify areas where additional attention is needed."

The Baseline report notes improvements in all 10 indicators between 2018 and 2020, whereas the most progress had been made in establishing national policies relating to healthy ageing, and the least, in introducing and enforcing legislation against age-based discrimination.

The Baseline report brings together data available for measuring healthy ageing, defined by WHO as "the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age."

The report is the commitment of WHO and the wider UN system to implement efforts to improve the lives of older people through the newly designated UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, 2021-2030.



Evidence and case studies from around the world give practical examples of what can be done in countries and communities with older people

The Guardian

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SATURDAY 19 DECEMBER 2020

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

Yes, indeed let us all fight improper use of antibiotics

THE government has introduced new regulations to curb rampant use of antibiotics without prescription, leading to drug resistance in the body. Those who will be found selling antibiotics without doctor's instruction, shall have stern measures taken against them.

Antibiotics are a type of antimicrobial substance active against bacteria. It is the most important type of antibacterial agent for fighting bacterial infections, and antibiotic medications are widely used in the treatment and prevention of such infections.

They may either kill or inhibit the growth of bacteria. A limited number of antibiotics also possess antiprotozoal activity. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses such as the common cold or influenza; drugs which inhibit viruses are termed antiviral drugs or antivirals rather than antibiotics.

Antibiotics have been used since ancient times. Many civilisations used topical application of mouldy bread, with many references to its beneficial effects arising from ancient Egypt, Nubia, China, Serbia, Greece, and Rome. The first person to directly document the use of molds to treat infections was John Parkinson (1567-1650).

Antibiotics revolutionised medicine in the 20th century. Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) discovered modern day penicillin in 1928, the widespread use of which proved significantly beneficial during wartime. However, the effectiveness and easy access to antibiotics have also led to their overuse and some bacteria have

evolved resistance to them. The World Health Organisation has classified antimicrobial resistance as a widespread "serious threat [that] is no longer a prediction for the future, it is happening right now in every region of the world and has the potential to affect anyone, of any age, in any country".

The Chief Medical Officer, Prof Abel Makubi made the remarks in Dar es Salaam recently during the launch of the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week.

Antimicrobial or drug resistance has continued to grow in the country and it is becoming a major threat to health care systems, with informal antibiotics use among the public as a major factor in antimicrobial resistance.

"We have developed new regulations to fight the vice. We hope that the problem will diminish once its implementation begins," he said, elaborating that the operation commences soon as the regulations have been already drawn up and approved. According to him the regulations will restrain pharmacies and suppliers from selling the drugs to consumers without prescription.

A good number of antibiotics and other antimicrobials are failing to cure infectious diseases that were previously managed successfully due to the fact that the pathogens (microbes) have developed resistance to the antimicrobials, compelling patients and care givers to raise doses or opt for other medications.

Reports show that up to 700,000 people die each year worldwide from drug-resistant diseases, including 230,000 deaths due to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.

We must take action to encourage initiatives for poverty eradication

THE International Human Solidarity Day (IHSD), observed on December 20, is an international annual unity day of the United Nations and its member states introduced by the general assembly during the 2005 World Summit. It was established on December 22, 2005. Its main goal is to recognise the universal values of poor by making the associated countries aware of reducing poverty and to formulate its countermeasures as signed by the independent states. IHSD is a part of World Solidarity Fund and United Nations Development Programme focused on to achieve goals set for worldwide poverty eradication.

The International Human Solidarity Day was established under the influence of the U.N. Millennium Declaration that determines the civil and political rights of an individual in the modern era by establishing the foreign relations between the member states and the U.N. The General Assembly recognised solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values and proclaimed the International Human Solidarity Day.

IHSD is held every year to promote the importance of sharing and the culture of solidarity to combat poverty and to encourage governments, NGOs, and almost every individual to organise programmes and debates either on a national or international level so that poverty can be reduced by spreading the awareness. An individual can participate or celebrate the day either by contributing to education or help the poor.

This day is also celebrated by helping socially or mentally challenged people. However, governments are much expected to respond the poverty and other barriers in society through Sustainable Development Goals, designed to facilitate good future for all.

According to the United Nations, the International Human Solidarity Day is a day to celebrate our unity in diversity; a day to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements; a day to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity; a day to encourage debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals including poverty eradication; a day of action to encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication

The Sustainable Development Agenda is centred on people and planet, underpinned by human rights and supported by a global partnership determined to lift people out of poverty, hunger and disease. It will, thus, be built on a foundation of global cooperation and solidarity.

Therefore, the UN General Assembly, convinced that the promotion of the culture of solidarity and the spirit of sharing is important for combating poverty, proclaimed 20 of December as International Human Solidarity Day.

Through initiatives such as the establishment of the World Solidarity Fund to eradicate poverty and the proclamation of International Human Solidarity Day, the concept of solidarity was promoted as crucial in the fight against poverty and in the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

The concept of solidarity has defined the work of the United Nations since the birth of the Organisation. The creation of the United Nations drew the peoples and nations of the world together to promote peace, human rights and social and economic development. The Organisation was founded on the basic premise of unity and harmony among its members, expressed in the concept of collective security that relies on the solidarity of its members to unite to maintain international peace and security.

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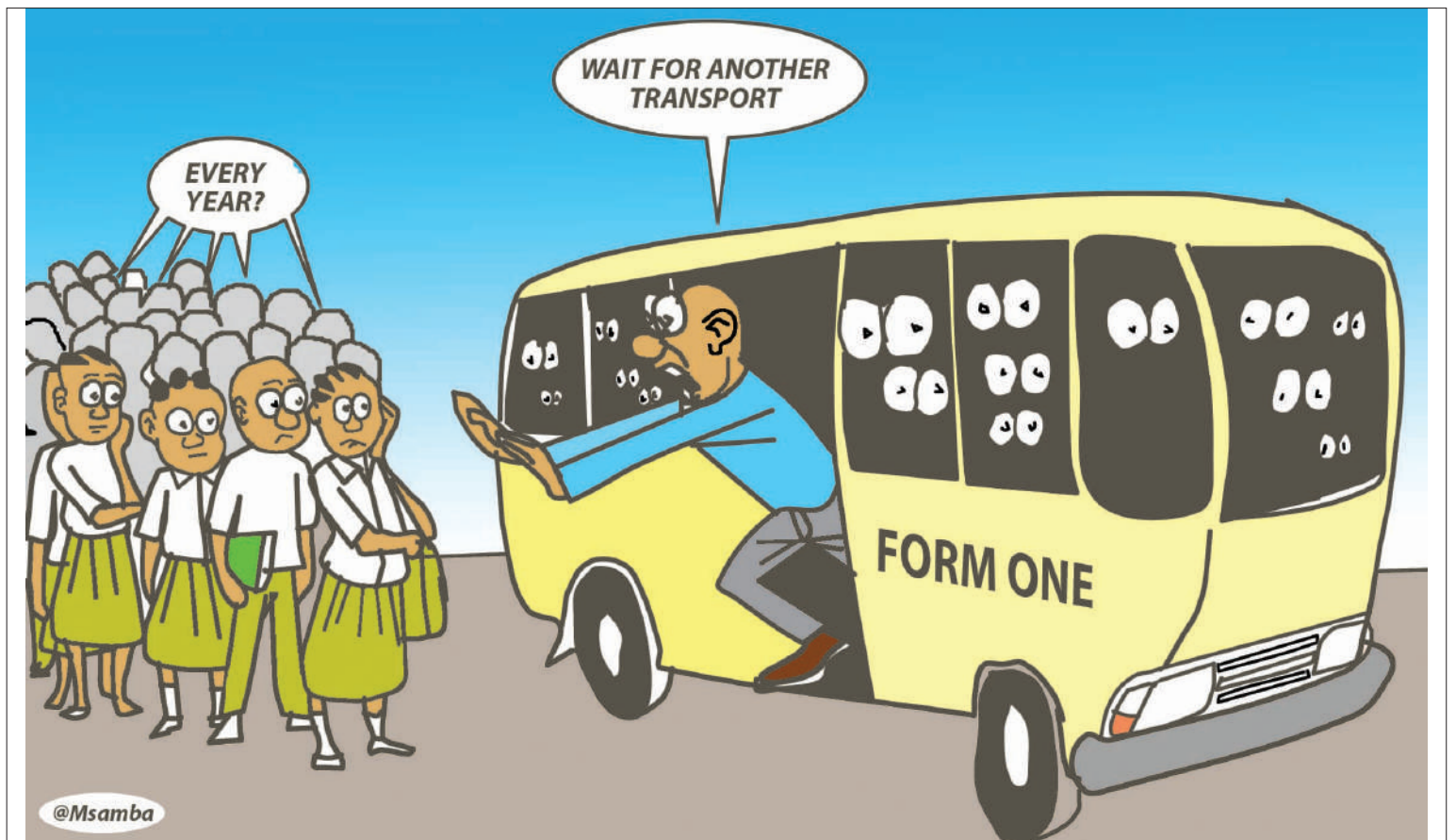
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The emperor has no clothes: Matric exam leaks and rewrites are a sad reflection of our education system

By Sara Black

THE emperor has no clothes: This expression is used to describe a situation in which people are afraid to criticise something or someone because the perceived wisdom of the masses is that the thing or person is good or important.

It comes from a short story by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen which was first published in Copenhagen in April 1837 in Anderson's third and final installment of Fairy Tales Told for Children.

The unfortunate truth is that the National Senior Certificate maths curriculum relies heavily on rote learning and past papers are all a mild variation on the same theme. If a pupil got hold of a paper four hours before writing and memorised every question, one almost feels this deserves some kind of applause.

Much has been made in the media of the (un)fairness of rewriting matric maths and physical science paper 2, as announced by the Department of Basic Education in response to both papers being leaked. Teacher unions declared that a rewrite is unfair to pupils, citing the psychological toll in an already extremely stressful year and the small proportion of pupils who were likely to have seen the leaked papers.

The department has defended the decision, saying the integrity of the examination process must be defended "at all costs". The issue came to a head in the North Gauteng High Court on Friday, 11 December 2020, with the judiciary siding with the unions. But what neither the defence nor the applicants mentioned in their arguments is how exam leaks were predictable in a year wracked by Covid-19, as was the double-down response from the department with a rewrite: both events point to fundamental flaws in the system.

Anyone who has run a casino will tell you: if you combine high stakes with a slim chance of success, you encourage creative grift. What could be higher stakes than the piece of paper that will define the shape of one's future opportunities?

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) is already, frankly, more of a lotto than a merit-reflecting process, measuring as it does relative linguistic, economic, spatial and cultural privilege (who you were born to, not how hard you have worked). That it is (somewhat) perceived as



A class writing matric exams

meritocratic is part of the myth we weave to avoid asking the hard questions. And any threat to that myth - whether through altering the exams in an extraordinary year, or explicit progressing of students to the next grade without mastery of all the previous year's curriculum... or accepting a slight anomaly among a minority of students' results, is to be denied. At all costs.

In any given year, the pageant of matric results is more a process of everyone commenting on how beautiful the emperor's new clothes are than reflecting on the strengths and challenges of our education system. Covid-19 has been the little child in the crowd who said, to the incredulity of every adult: "But he's naked!" Fewer than half of the pupils who enrolled in Grade 12, 12 years ago, are writing Grade 12 in 2020. Of those who are writing, many have had their chances truncated, narrowed and whittled until they were choosing subjects that offer them very little opportunity, as schools finesse their interpretation of the National Policy pertaining to Programme and Promotion Requirements towards subject offerings that "maximise pass rates".

Every year pupils are pushed through; the difference with 2020 is that it would be done explicitly. And it is this explicit condoning of the practice of progression that threatens the legitimacy of the myth that things are working okay.

For those throwing themselves on the pyre of maths and science, the pressure is enormous, and the failure rate telling. These subjects are the gatekeepers and their prestige transfers to the schools who can produce satisfactory pass rates, often by counselling out "weak" students whose genuine ability goes undeveloped and undetected for lack of chances to meaningfully learn.

(Point of clarification: the intrinsic value of less prestigious subjects is not being questioned here, nor the intelligence of

students who do not take maths and physical science. Rather, we should question how our education system is constructed to valorise certain types of knowing and the use of certain subjects as gatekeepers of opportunity in a zero-sum game that defines "success" based on others' "failure", to the point that those subjects are not about their content, but about competition. No one would take seriously the results of a class who all scored As for maths even if it was deserved, precisely because these grades are meant to play a selecting role, separating the "deserving" from the "undeserving". As a former high school maths teacher, my classroom was constantly stuffed with pupils who hated maths, but realised it was their gateway to opportunities. Such pressure did both my subject and my pupils an enormous disservice.)

It is telling that the leaked business studies paper was not a candidate for a rewrite - testimony to which subjects "matter" and which do not. The circumstances of the leaks (a few hours earlier) and the disproportionate response ("everyone rewrite") is also indicative. Frankly, if a pupil got hold of a paper four hours before writing and memorised every question well enough to recall it under exam conditions later, one almost feels such an effort deserves some kind of applause. The unfortunate truth is: the NSC maths curriculum relies quite heavily on rote learning anyway (much to the ire of first-year maths lecturers in universities), and past papers are all a mild variation on the same theme. How "memorising" 2020's paper in four hours is hugely different from poring over a dozen past papers for weeks on end is not entirely obvious. But it's not as if 40,000 students sneaked the memo into the exam hall in their masks.

The Herculean effort on the part of the department to sustain the myth of meritocracy is not

singular. Another example of this same disavowal of the truth came earlier in 2020 when alternatives were being considered for grades 1 to 11. Several education experts suggested that pupils be progressed to the next grade regardless, with curriculum catch-up plans devised for lost learning and knowledge gaps in 2021.

Such suggestions were flat-out rejected, but the reasons are not entirely clear... because this happens every year anyway. The majority of our pupils accumulate learning backlogs from the early primary years and are progressed through to the next grade - either by moderation fiat when officials declare a school's marks "not politically acceptable", or by finesse through strategic design of the school-based assessment. If pupils were forced to repeat based on their learning, the system would grind to a halt.

Every year pupils are pushed through; the difference with 2020 is that it would be done explicitly. And it is this explicit condoning of the practice of progression that threatens the legitimacy of the myth that things are working okay.

They're not. It is precisely this myth that falls apart when fewer than half of our pupils get to Grade 12 in the first place. It is the same myth that has given cause to pressure for the General Education and Training (GET) Certificate at the end of Grade 9, since the finessing of school-based assessment to keep the conveyor belt moving produces such unreliable and varied results at the end of the GET phase that TVET colleges cannot make hide nor hair of a student's Grade 9 assessment report and its validity.

The same myth has given rise to the increased use of National Benchmark Tests for entrance to university. It is this myth that keeps pupils invested in schooling despite the very apparent objective odds that what they will get at school will not serve them well (what Lauren Berlant calls cruel optimism).

And it is this myth that we need to pierce before we can have honest conversations about the realities of our schooling system and what needs to be changed. We cannot do this while we are so blindly invested in propping up legitimacy through exam rewrites or progression disavowals, where there's little to be had. Perhaps the high court decision on Friday could start a broader conversation about the stories we tell ourselves and who they serve.

The emperor is naked. It's time we finally clothed him.

Potential allies lose patience with Mozambique's indecisiveness in fighting Islamic State-linked terrorist insurgency

By Peter Fabricius

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) the European Union, France, the US, Portugal and possibly others have all offered Maputo support to combat the Ansar al-Sunna Wa Jamo (ASWJ) insurgents who swear allegiance to IS and are also known as Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP).

On Monday this week presidents Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe and Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, together with Tanzanian Deputy President Samia Suluhu visited Maputo for an urgent meeting with Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi to try to establish just what he wants.

Official sources said the three leaders - who constitute the troika of SADC's security organ - made the trip to Maputo to consult Nyusi because he had failed to show up at a summit of the troika in Gaborone late last month, to discuss the regional response to the insurgency. Regional governments were dismayed by Nyusi's no-show as well as what they regarded as an inadequate presentation by his Defence Minister, Jaime Neto, on Mozambique's plan to deal with the insurgency.

One official told Daily Maverick at the time that Neto had presented not a plan or strategy but merely a "shopping list" of arms, equipment and ammunition that Maputo would like from SADC and others.

Regional governments and other potential partners in the fight are sceptical about the ability of Mozambique's security forces to take the fight to the insurgents and their capacity to effectively operate any equipment which might be provided to them. So far, security forces have performed poorly in the fight against the insurgents. The South African-based private military company Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) has been helping by attacking the insurgents with very light helicopter gunships since March. But DAG has reportedly complained that what it lacks are good ground forces to follow up on its air attacks.

Because Monday's meeting of the four leaders in Maputo was very closed, it is not clear what they agreed upon, apart from postponing any official decision on how to respond to the insurgency until a full SADC summit is held in January.

South African officials and analysts believe Maputo's indecision



Passengers and cargo board a boat from a fishermen's beach that has become one of the main arrival points for displaced persons fleeing from armed violence raging in the province of Cabo Delgado, in the Paquitevete district of Pemba, northern Mozambique. File photo

stems from a number of factors, including fear of losing control to outside forces, denialism, inherent secretiveness, internal political divisions within the ruling party, Frelimo, as well as tensions between the security forces about how to handle the insurgency, in part because of the incompetence of the military in particular.

DAG is reportedly contracted to the police and internal security forces, which have been in the vanguard, while the South African arms company Paramount, which recently started providing equipment such as armoured vehicles and light helicopters to fight the insurgents, is contracted to the military, according to reports by security analysts.

Cabo Ligado, the conflict observatory monitoring the insurgency, reported this week that having the two private military companies being contracted to different security agencies seemed counterproductive and provided further proof of friction between agencies.

And while Mozambique and its potential partners dither about what to do about the insurgency, South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority is looking into a possible prosecution against DAG for violating South Africa's anti-mercenary law by providing military assistance to a foreign power without Pretoria's official permission, according to the bulletin Africa Intelli-

gence. However, a senior official at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Dirco) told Daily Maverick: "Enforcing that law is hardly a priority now when we are trying to contain a regional terrorist threat."

It seems more likely that Pretoria is turning a blind eye to DAG's activities, in the absence of any other support to Mozambique in fighting the insurgency. However, Jasmine Opperman, an insurgency analyst at ACLED, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, which produces the Cabo Ligado bulletin, suggested that Pretoria's reported moves to act against DAG might be a clue that the South African government was preparing to intervene militarily itself instead.

Delivering the State of the Nation Address in Mozambique's Parliament on Wednesday, Nyusi seemed to rule out any foreign troop intervention and defended his secrecy about his plans. He said that Mozambique was stepping up international cooperation to combat terrorism, but stressed that national sovereignty was paramount.

"This is fundamental," Nyusi declared. "We Mozambicans need to develop our own skills. We will be on the front line of defending the country. Nobody will do it for us."

"We are not going to talk publicly about the strategies the country should adopt," he said - but he confirmed that many countries

from across the globe, including Mozambique's partners in SADC, had promised assistance.

"We need to know how to manage this support, otherwise we risk creating a salad of interventions in Mozambique," he warned.

Last week Mozambique's government spokesperson, Filimao Suaze, who is also deputy justice minister, was categorical, when he spoke to local reporters, that Mozambique wanted no foreign troops in the country.

SADC and some of its members, including South Africa and Zimbabwe, have indicated they are ready to provide support as soon as Mozambique makes clear exactly what it wants. This week Mnangagwa's spokesperson, George Charamba, told Zimbabwean TV that security in the region must remain the exclusive concern of SADC which had its standby brigade "to deal with any threat which might affect us".

Charamba's remarks prompted reports that SADC was ready to deploy the SADC force in Mozambique. However, Charamba had added that SADC's support might not necessarily be military. The kind of support would depend on Mozambique's capacity to contain the threat. And so, at Monday's meeting with Nyusi; Mnangagwa and the other regional leaders present had tried to establish what sort of support Mozambique needed, he said.

Meanwhile, in Pretoria, South Africa's Minister of

International Relations and Cooperation, Naledi Pandor, said at a press briefing on Monday: "We should fight with our security forces any attempt to introduce terrorism in the region and our country."

South Africa "would... provide support to a sovereign state as might be asked for by them because we cannot impose ourselves".

South African officials said that France had offered to patrol the sea off Cabo Delgado with navy ships from its Indian Ocean fleet based on the island of Reunion. France has large economic interests at stake because French energy firm Total holds the rights to the largest gas reserves in Cabo Delgado.

Earlier this month the US Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Nathan Sales, visited Maputo for discussions with the government and told journalists afterwards that Washington was also ready to help Mozambique fight the Islamic State insurgency, largely through improving its law enforcement and border security capabilities. Maputo sources said the government would probably accept this offer.

Portugal, the former colonial power in Mozambique, has also offered support. Defence Minister Gomes Cravinho was in Maputo this month to meet his counterpart, Neto. They discussed increased training for the Mozambican forces, according to Mozambican officials, who said the government also wanted logistics and equipment support from other countries as well as broader development support to address root causes of the violence.

The European Union has also offered support, similar to that offered by the US, officials said.

But this week EU Foreign Minister Josep Borrell Fontelles complained in the European Parliament that: "We are waiting for the green light from Mozambique to send out a security experts' mission who have been appointed since November and who are ready to leave. We are just waiting for authorisation."

He added that the EU had a problem as its representatives could not travel to Cabo Delgado to assess the situation. Borrell announced that Portuguese Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva had gone to Mozambique as his special representative to try to resolve this problem.

Borrell also sharply criticised the Mozambique government when he said the insurgency was not simply an extension of the global Islamic terrorist movement but was also triggered by poverty, inequality, corruption and by "the population of the area losing respect for a state which could not provide it with what it needed".

Opperman was also critical of Mozambique, for "lacking a coherent, integrated strategy" to deal with the insurgency.

"I don't think Frelimo has the political will to deal with this problem with the urgency it deserves due to its obsessive fear that foreign involvement might work against its own interests," she said.

And regional governments were not applying enough pressure on Mozambique to deal with what was potentially a regional threat, because of the solidarity among the former liberation movements which govern Mozambique and most other countries in the region.

While the presidents and diplomats confer and consult, on the ground in Cabo Delgado the insurgents have occupied the port town of Mocimboa da Praia for more than four months and continue to use it for forays into other parts of the province.

Cabo Ligado reported that insurgents struck close to the liquefied natural gas projects in Palma district on 7 December, burning homes in the village of Mute, 25km south of Palma town, and then moving north to burn homes in the village of Nqueo. DAG helicopters had retaliated with air attacks on the insurgents, who had used mortars and rocket-propelled grenades during the fighting.

Cabo Ligado has calculated that since the insurgency began in October 2017, 2,441 people have been killed, 1,237 of them civilians deliberately targeted

AGENCIES

America has a chequered past in international environmental diplomacy

THE HAGUE

When it comes to international environmental diplomacy, America has a chequered past. It stood at the forefront of the international battle to fix the ozone hole and has shaped many key international agreements.

Sadly, US positions are not always built on solid political ground at home. Twice, in the climate change process, this has led to the United States forging an agreement, only to then walk away. This happened with the 1997 Kyoto Protocol which then Vice-President Gore flew to Japan to sign in the full knowledge that a Republican dominated Senate would never ratify the deal. It happened again five years ago, with former President Obama closing that landmark deal (and John Kerry signing at the UN), only for President Trump to tear it up a few weeks later.

With such a background the international community is a little nervous when a new Democrat administration takes the helm laden with robust statements and bold promises, as President-elect Biden is doing now. But, as is so often the case, the prodigal son will get the benefit of the doubt (again) and for good reason!

Let's look at what those reasons are.

No-one would argue the fact



that the United States are a political powerhouse and an economic superpower. This makes having the US in the climate action tent critically important. But why? Is this about political posturing, or is there something more?

When the Biden administration chooses to take an ambitious lead on climate action, the world is wise to take heed. Clear signals from politicians on where the new administration plans to go, have an enormous power in the market. An example. Wind and solar energy made it to where they are today in a

hostile economic environment where the playing field was everything but level.

Environmental cost is not internalised and fossil fuels are still subsidised to a huge degree. What helped to push wind and solar to the current competitive strength is the hope that, in the long term, things will change and new (climate) challenges be recognised, thus creating a viable market for these technologies.

If you are building things (powerplants, factories or refinery's) with a technical lifetime of 40 years, you

do well to think about how friendly or hostile the operating environment is likely to be over that time period. So a political statement sends strong market signals. Especially if it comes from a superpower and even more so when others are pointing in the same direction.

How the market responds to political signals has ramifications around the globe. Our economy is now truly global. This means that when key market players take a course, set an standard or make demands on their suppliers, this resonates around the world. The EU agreeing auto standards with European manufacturers immediately sets a trend that Japan and Korea must follow because the European market is so big. American companies like Wall Mart have hundreds of thousands of suppliers around the world. So a direction taken at a corporate HQ is delivered-on in pretty much every country on our planet. The standards the US and other major players set become imperatives, or things you choose to ignore at your own peril.

Another important point is that climate action has increasingly become a race to the top that is driven by innovation. Innovators smell a climate market and they are rushing to seize the opportunities. Opportunities around electric vehicles, energy efficiency, clean technologies, low-asset business models, you name it. America has long stood at the forefront of discovery and innovation. Many of the key technologies we apply today have at least part of their roots in America. So the signals politicians send and how the corporate community responds, creates an innovation catalyst that will transform business opportunities both in the US and around the world.

A final point to mention here is America's proud history in working together with other nations, providing them with the finance, technology and capacity support they need in order to climate proof their energy systems, industry and infrastructure. Reducing emissions in the economic powerhouses of today is obviously critical. But with much of future economic growth and population increase of the future set to happen in Africa and South East Asia, we need to fix the future, not only the past.

Five years after the Paris Climate Accord was reached,

the international process is now in full implementation mode. The purpose of the negotiations will be to ensure that countries individually are delivering what they have promised and that the collective impact of their efforts is enough to keep global temperature increase below the agreed level.

The United States returning to the international process at this time is critical to ensuring that especially the major players show leadership, both at home and abroad. At the end of the day, ensuring this happens is in the US's own interest for a number of reasons. First because the US has in recent years always considered action by others, especially China, as a precondition for its own engagement. Second because bold global action will ensure all nations pull their weight toward a common goal. Third because that global action will create the opportunities for the innovation economy of the future President-elect Biden is seeking to deliver, as opposed to the manufacturing economy of the past.

The model outgoing President Trump held up is what should make America great again.

The author is President of the Gold Standard Foundation and former Secretary of the UN Climate Convention.

Terror attacks in Mozambique need African solutions

By ISS Pretoria

On 14 December, Mozambican president Filipe Nyusi convened a meeting of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security to discuss the situation in Cabo Delgado.

The meeting, attended by the presidents of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe as well as Tanzania's deputy president, didn't agree on a specific role for SADC. Instead, the main decision was to hold an extraordinary SADC summit in January 2021 to discuss the issue further.

The lack of a concrete plan is symptomatic of Mozambique's resistance to any kind of external support that may lead to multilateral foreign intervention in the country. But the January meeting is a sign that Mozambique may, at last, be willing to discuss regional support.

SADC is faced with a conundrum. On the one hand, it must respond to the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Mozambique, which it condemns as terrorism. On the other, it seeks to protect Mozambique's sovereignty and won't intervene unless asked to by the government. Up to now, Mozambique has only requested SADC to provide military supplies.

The southern African region has never experienced terrorism of this scale in its post-colonial history. The intensity of the attacks shows the violent extremists' determination to carve out part of the country for themselves to establish a caliphate, or safe haven, from which to plan and execute further attacks in Mozambique and the region.

This is not a crisis that one country can solve alone. Nyusi has announced his intention to eradicate the violent extremists but his government has been unable to do so for the past three years. Each passing day strengthens extremist resilience and complicates the liberation of Cabo Delgado and the millions of Mozambicans at risk. SADC must lead a regional re-



Attacks by presumed Islamic State-affiliated militants on Cabo Delgado indicate the extremists' determination to carve out part of the country for themselves to establish a caliphate from which to plan and execute further attacks in Mozambique and southern Africa. File photo

sponse.

Any intervention must draw lessons from other African regions such as the Sahel, West Africa, North Africa and East Africa, where terrorism threatens lives daily. Some of the major problems encountered by Mali and Nigeria include the lack of comprehensive national and regional strategies, limited resources and a focus on military action at the expense of human rights and developmental solutions.

Mozambique and SADC seem to be going down a similar road. The Mozambican government at first characterised the attacks as ordinary violent crimes rather than acts of international terrorism, which one state cannot deal with alone. It also contracted Russian and South African mercenaries to help fight the insurgency, rather than negotiate collective support from neighbouring countries.

Mozambique has also prioritised military operations over humanitarian, political and developmental responses which should all go hand in hand. The focus on security has led to the exclusion of community initiatives, particu-

larly the use of local safety groups who have proved very helpful in stopping Boko Haram in some parts of northern Nigeria.

How SADC and Mozambique deal with the crisis will determine the future of terrorism in the region. A weak and indecisive response could consolidate an Islamic State caliphate in southern Africa, making external intervention essential.

Whether SADC has the capacity to intervene is also a key question. Military expert Helmoed-Römer Heitman believes SADC can indeed change the dynamics on the ground: "SADC's response can help protect borders and civilians and ensure that the Islamists do not expand beyond Cabo Delgado," he told ISS Today.

No single SADC member state, however, has the military strength or financial capacity to launch a successful intervention. Heitman believes the region's current resources can sustain only a short-term intervention and that SADC must address issues of force level and coherence, airlift capabilities, communication, and equipment for aerial

reconnaissance. The region will need the international community's help, particularly the African Union (AU), European Union, United Nations and other development partners.

A potential SADC intervention could draw from various models such as that used by the G5 Sahel countries, the AU Mission in Somalia, the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, the AU-led Regional Task Force Against the Lord's Resistance Army, and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali.

Dialogue efforts through community organisations and faith-based institutions, which can help deconstruct the extremist ideology, should be an integral part of SADC's response. A regional strategy also needs a maritime component to protect maritime resources and the safety of maritime navigation and trade along Africa's east coast.

A comprehensive SADC plan must deal with the humanitarian, security, political and economic challenges. It should negotiate access for international organisations providing aid to internally displaced people.

Towns in northern Mozambique under the control of the armed violent extremists need to be liberated. This is especially the case for the port of Mocimboa da Praia which currently enables the extremists to control coastal territories, access maritime resources and run their supply and communication lines.

A SADC strategy would need to secure Mozambique's borders especially with Tanzania and Malawi, and request other neighbours to strengthen security and control of their borders with Mozambique.

Medium-term goals should include mobilising international support to rebuild Mocimboa da Praia and other heavily affected districts in Cabo Delgado. Livelihoods, land redistribution and corruption in the area must be addressed, and reconciliation between communities and government needs to be facilitated.

Mozambique finally appears willing to accept SADC's involvement in the crisis. The regional body must carefully calibrate its response, as long-term security in Southern Africa depends on the success of collective action.

AGENCIES

URBANA, Illinois / ABUJA

Food insecurity across the U.S. continues to be on the rise because of the effects of COVID-19. According to Feeding America, over 50 million Americans will experience food insecurity, including 17 million children.

We both grew up in countries referred to as "developing countries," Ifeanyi in Nigeria and Esther in Kenya. At the time, we never imagined that we would witness food insecurity being an issue in developed countries such as the U.S. like we are now. As thought leaders in global health and food security, we are compelled to amplify this inequity in the world's richest country.

The last few months, clearly, have changed our perception of food insecurity and the narrative around it is changing.

COVID-19 is very well linked with food insecurity and failing to have a food security expert working alongside the other advisory council members would undermine the ability of the country to effectively tackle these tightly linked issues.

Moreover, even as we celebrate the arrival of the vaccine, COVID-19 continues to claim the lives of many Americans, while bringing the possibilities of new lockdowns, hence, we can certainly expect food insecurity to continue to be a problem.

Impressively, measures that were in existence before the pandemic in the U.S. such as foodbanks and other Federal benefits such as SNAP and WIC that Americans have access to in order to assist with food insecurity have helped to make a difference.

Through the pandemic months, we have also witnessed a rise in resources available to citizens who at one point or another need help with finding food. From the U.S. Department of Agriculture hotline that can connect citizens to available pantries, interactive maps

Aren't we missing food security experts in the incoming Biden-Kamala Harris administration?



We never imagined that we would witness food insecurity being an issue in developed countries such as the U.S. File photo

that reveal where help and your local food bank is, to databases of pantries and non-profit subsidized grocery to food finder apps. But the truth is these resources were designed to be supplemental.

Much more needs to be done. Here's where to start.

First, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris should include a food security expert in the COVID-19 Advisory Council. The responsibility of the expert should be to provide advice on ways to address the current COVID-19 food insecurity in the U.S.

COVID-19 is very well linked with food insecurity and failing to have a food security expert working alongside the other advisory council members would

undermine the ability of the country to effectively tackle these tightly linked issues. Moreover, this person should preferably be a person of color, the population that has been impacted most by food insecurity.

Second, develop a multi-stakeholder comprehensive food security plan as part of epidemic preparedness plans for the next pandemic.

This is imperative because no one knows when the next pandemic could occur. A major lesson from COVID-19 and the city lockdowns which followed is that during pandemics there would be life losses, job losses, schools will be closed, and some families would need food support.

The major idea is to use lessons from

COVID-19 to estimate those who may be in need of food support and group them based on ethnicities, postcodes, states etc. This plan should involve government agencies, food banks, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, university institutions and other community groups.

Third, food banks should improve their process to enable long-term storage of nutritious foods such as green vegetables, fruits, proteins, milk etc. According to Feeding America, these classes of nutritious foods are the most requested at food banks. However, due to challenges with storage, those in need hardly have these requirements met.

Fourth, prioritize the needs of under-five children and women of child-bearing

age. Worryingly, science and available evidence from a comprehensive review of 120 studies done by the UN FAO suggests a correlation between food insecurity and malnutrition.

Furthermore, according to World Health Organization, and available scientific data evidence, mostly obtained from studies done in developing countries, childhood malnutrition is considered a major public health concern with long lasting impacts including impaired cognitive development, enhanced risks of acquiring other diseases, and suboptimal economic productivity.

With the risk of irreversible stunting in children and its consequences on school performance, future earning capacity and contributions to the economy, children must receive the right nutrition at the right time.

Likewise, women of child-bearing age require to be well nourished to ensure they have adequate blood, healthy milk and not anemic. Anemia in women who plan to get pregnant has adverse consequences such as intrauterine growth retardation of the fetus, low birth of their babies and more likelihood of going into shock from bleeding after birth or even death.

Lastly, encourage families to form groups and run all seasons sustainable community gardens. There is a need to have community greenhouses that can be used to grow food past summer months. This would enable them grow fresh vegetables, poultry (for proteins) and cows (for milk).

At this time, many US States are going through the winter season, and food gardens that millions of Americans relied upon during summer have no sustainability during cold seasons.

A recent UNICEF report on the persistence of child poverty above pre-COVID levels in high income countries highlights why all year around community gardens should be an alternative source of fresh foods as the country recovers from this pandemic.

COVID-related food insecurity is widening health and social inequities in the U.S. The in-coming Biden-Harris administration should make this a priority. It is an ethical thing to do.

AGENCIES

UN agency seeks extra \$204 m for Zimbabwe as hunger bites

HARARE

THE United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has appealed for an additional \$204 million to support 4 million of the most food-insecure Zimbabweans for the next six months.

Drought in 2019 and this year has left millions facing hunger. That includes about one-third of the rural population, who are expected to face "crisis" or "emergency" levels of hunger, and 2.3 million hungry urban dwellers, WFP said.

An economic recession during the past two years has compounded the problem for the country of 15 million people.

"We are deeply concerned that if WFP does not receive enough funding to reach the 4 million people it intends to, families will be further pushed to the limit," Francesca Erdelmann, WFP Zimbabwe's representative said.

The additional funding would allow WFP to provide the minimum amount of emergency food assistance to the most vulnerable 3.5 million rural and 550,000 urban citizens.



While COVID-19 had aggravated food insecurity in both rural and urban areas of the country, WFP said many of its traditional donors were also struggling in the wake of the impact of the pandemic on

their own economies.

Zimbabwe spent \$458 million importing food, mostly grain during the first nine months of this year compared with \$140.5 million during the same period in 2019, ac-

ording to treasury data.

At least 7.6 million people have fallen into poverty this year, a million more than in 2019, according to a latest report compiled by the government and donors.

Africa steps up fight against HIV with trial of new combination vaccines

JOHANNESBURG

The first trial in Africa to test two new vaccines to protect against HIV got under way in Uganda this week, raising hopes of an end to the epidemic that affects millions of people across the continent.

The African-led study is expected to involve 1,600 people over next three years in Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda and South Africa.

The African-led PrEPVacc study will test two experimental combination vaccines to see if they can provide any protection against HIV in people most at risk of infection.

At the same time, a new form of daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) will be offered to participants, which scientists say will give the vaccines the best possible chance of working.

The two vaccines have been tested for safety in previous clinical trials in Africa, Europe and the US.

More than 1,600 people between the ages of 18 and 40 are expected to participate in clinical trials over the next three years in Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa.

The study is being funded by the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership, supported by the EU.

"PrEPVacc provides two great opportunities: first, for Africans to be able to participate and lead in the first HIV prevention trial to test two ways to prevent HIV, a scourge that has ravaged the continent," said Prof Pontiano Kaleebu, the PrEPVacc chief investigator.

"Second, an opportunity to grow the capacity of African sites to do future trials themselves and to foster our own future leaders," he said.

Prof Jonathan Weber, dean of the faculty of medicine at



Nkosiya Mncube, then 23, the first participant in an earlier vaccine trial in South Africa in 2016.

Imperial College London, which is sponsoring the PrEPVacc trial, said: "The first PrEPVacc trial participants in Masaka [Uganda] are helping their communities and the world by answering important questions about how we can best prevent HIV in future."

"I have been working at Imperial College London on ways to prevent HIV since the virus was first discovered and I am immensely proud that we now have this African-led, European-supported trial beginning in Uganda."

Weber said the importance of the study was that it "will either rule out or encourage further development of two different combination vaccine regimens for preventing HIV".

More than 35 scientists, clinicians, social scientists, community liaison officers and support staff at the Uganda Virus Research Institute and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine are involved in the trial in Uganda.

An estimated 20.7 million

people are living with HIV in east and southern Africa. In 2019, the region saw 730,000 new infections and 300,000 Aids-related deaths, according to UNAids data. At least 15 million people are receiving treatment.

In case the vaccine prevents HIV infection, we shall be excited. But even if it doesn't protect, we still learn. There is no trial which is a failure. The science we learn from the study allows us to improve and to have better vaccines," said Kaleebu.

Prof Sheena McCormack, PrEPVacc project lead, based at the Medical Research Council clinical trials unit at University College London, said the trial would also address questions raised about PrEP. "Its results will be valuable for informing future implementation and uptake strategies by local stakeholders and champions across east and southern Africa where PrEP uptake is currently low."

Milly Katana, HIV prevention campaigner and member of the

project's steering committee, said the trial was timely. "The implementation of the PrEPVacc trial is coming at a time when the world is more appreciative of vaccines in managing global pandemics like HIV and Covid-19 ... The world, especially women, need more interventions that can protect individuals from contracting HIV."

However, Asia Russell, executive director of the Health Global Access Project, questioned why Uganda was undertaking a vaccine trial when many people still can't access antiretroviral drugs.

"Ugandans are constantly asked to volunteer their bodies for science," she said.

According to the Uganda Aids Commission, the HIV epidemic remains a major public health threat in Uganda. About 1.5 million people are living with the virus, up from 1.2 million in 2010. Annually the country registers 53,000 new infections and 21,000 Aids-related deaths.

SADC and EU working on the increasing intra-regional trade

By Guardian Reporter

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) and European Union (EU) are working on several elements identified by stakeholders as crucial for developing an improved international market access and for increasing intra-regional trade between member states.

SADC and the EU signed the Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) which among other things was aimed at finding solution to the Non-Tariff-Barriers (NTBs).

The programme has to date seen trade flows within the SADC region and with the outside world increasing along the North-South Corridor.

The TFP programme, which will run from 2019 to 2025, is funded to the tune of Euro 15 million by the EU under the 11th Economic Development Fund.

The TFP addresses non-tariff barriers to trade and facilitates harmonization of technical, sanitary and phytosanitary standards and provides cross-border management tools to speed up processes and reduce the costs of exports within the SADC countries and with the EU.

Sanitary and phytosanitary measures set out the basic rules for food safety and animal and plant health standards.

The implementation of EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will be facilitated for the six SADC Member States that have signed the agreement and these are Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa.

The TFP was officially launched during the 39th SADC Summit in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 2019 and it focuses mainly on regional coordination as well as on capacity building, awareness raising and monitoring. The TFP seeks to increase intra-regional trade flows by supporting trade facilitation.

Speaking at the 40th SADC Summit hosted in virtual format by Mozambique in August, SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, said the low intra-SADC trade pointed to the urgent need for Member States to improve competitiveness by addressing the supply-side constraints, including strengthening cooperation in cross-border infrastructure, and dealing with non-tariff barriers that remain a hindrance to the smooth flow of goods.

The SADC Secretariat has reviewed the status of industrialisation and market integration in the SADC region over the past year. The review has pointed to the importance of ratifying and implementing the SADC Protocol on Industry, as an important instrument for the promotion of an industrialised and globally competitive regional economy.

Dr Tax said findings by the Secretariat showed that while SADC integration had progressed, there is still work to be done if the region is to effectively promote intra-regional trade, industrialisation, and improve economic growth in the region.

Assessment shows that the structures of SADC economies remain undiversified with a growing dependency on natural resources and export of unprocessed commodities characterised by a stagnant industrial sector.

Natural resource-based sectors, including agriculture and mining, still account for an average 25 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Low intra-SADC trade means the region has to do more to address the factors that cause Member States to trade more with the outside world than within the region. Studies have shown that the SADC countries are failing to trade among themselves due to an ineffective manufacturing industry, among other factors.

SADC in 2014 adopted the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 in order to increase intra-SADC regional and international trade to help in expanding GDP, create more employment opportunities and reduce poverty in Member States. The region took a decision that industrialisation is a top priority and will feature each year in the theme of the annual SADC Summit.

Mass measles vaccination campaign starts in Burundi

BUJUMBURA

THE Burundian government on Tuesday started a measles vaccination campaign for children, the health minister announced.

Thaddee Ndikumana officially launched a four-day campaign in Cankuzo province, 300 kilometers (186 miles) from the capital Bujumbura near the Tanzanian border.

"At least 570,466 children between six and 59 months will be vaccinated as part of the campaign," Ndikumana said.

The campaign will start from Dec. 15 to Dec. 18 in 14 health districts across the country. The vaccination campaign is coupled with a wide distribution of nutritional

supplements (vitamin A) to children aged between one and 14 years.

"Vaccination is free, so we want every child to be vaccinated because measles is a fatal disease that spreads quickly," he said.

Burundi has been facing a spike in measles cases since November 2019.

According to the World Health Organization, at least 857 confirmed measles cases were reported last April in four districts: Cibitoke (624 cases) in the west, Butezi (221 cases) and Cankuzo (6 cases) in the east as well as Bujumbura Sud (6 cases).

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Cybersecurity is the biggest trend, and threat, in new world of remote working

By Toby Shapshak

The unexpected Covid-19 lockdowns around the world have greatly reduced the variables for the “future casting” that tech columnists are asked to do each year by editors.

WFH is now a bona fide acronym (for work from home) – at least in the tech industry, where I see it used with as much regularity as well-known acronyms like SMS or OTP. It's the new work movement.

But, like much else that exploded into the mainstream this year, it's been a long time coming. I first wrote about “telecommuting”, as it was then called, in the late 1990s; before it evolved through several iterations of distributed workforce to plain old WFH.

The lockdown and resultant germaphobia might have knocked the nascent office-sharing firms like WeWork, but it might also ultimately boost this kind of shared office environment. We closed our Stuff magazine offices during the depths of the winter lockdown, as did many companies that leased large office spaces. Instead, many have opted for shared-space arrangements, saving money while getting greater flexibility in how far-flung staff work by using the branch closest to them.

Either working from home, or at a shared space, or actually going into the office, most people are going to be using a laptop instead of a desktop – if that wasn't already the case. Large swathes of us already use them – lawyers, bankers, coders and anyone in IT, journalists and



anyone who runs their own business.

And changing where we called “work” was often a matter of upgrading home spaces. This cued a boom on extra monitors and keyboards (I chose

Samsung and Logitech, respectively), and noise-cancelling Bluetooth headphones (Sennheiser). Many people set up lights (I recommend Manfrotto) and an extra webcam (Logitech) for video

calls. I recommend a good Bluetooth speaker kit, like Sennheiser's SP30T or Jabra's 710, if you're on endless conference calls.

Not much will change in 2021, I suspect because nothing entirely different will happen in terms of WFH trends. The major change will be how frequently people start working from offices again – and how many marriages recover as a result.

Meanwhile, as 5G networks and handsets become more prevalent, this lovely and fast new technology will move from hype to reality. We may be years off self-driving cars – which will require such speedy networks with low latency – but the other benefits will be immediately felt, with faster speeds and a rejuvenated mobile experience.

I have upgraded my Vodacom package to include more data as I ordered my iPhone 12 Pro, conscious of that need. As a consumer, I am pleased my previous package with unlimited calling has been upgraded with more data but at a decently reduced monthly saving.

Expect to see more of that in 2021 too. Competition always brings greater consumer choice. For the cellular network, there's feisty competition from the upstart, data-only operator Rain, which counts celebrity banker Michael Jordaan among its founders and offers amazingly good value-for-money uncapped packages.

One fascinating trend to watch will be how the arrival of electronic SIM cards, or eSIMs, change the status quo. These are not physical SIM cards you stick in the phone, but a clever linking via software. I've been using a great service for years called KnowRoaming from Telna for all my international data roaming, for \$5 a day of uncapped data.

I also use an eSIM from Vodacom in my Apple Watch, which can function as a Dick Tracy-esque wristwatch phone with downloaded podcasts and my Spotify playlists using Bluetooth earpods (Jabra still have the best sound quality).

MTN announced their offering this year, while all eyes are on disruptor Rain. If it offers an uncapped eSIM, what's to stop all high-end smartphone users (the only devices with eSIMs in at the moment) from all using Rain's R300 a month uncapped package for a single smartphone?

The best quote I saw all year was a GP in London telling the New York Times how rapidly “telemedicine” had developed. “We're basically witnessing 10 years of change in one week,” said Dr Sam Wessely way back in April. Similar happened across all industries.

Personal tech skills, by necessity, had to be upgraded. And people overcame their fear, phobia and resistance to learn how to do more with their tech. Never before have so many grandparents mastered a new technology platform than the Zoom Class of 2020. Well, not since Facebook at least.

But the biggest problem will continue to be security. As people left the confines of their corporate offices, and very strict corporate cybersecurity setups, they exposed themselves to more cyberattacks. Security firm Kaspersky reported a 220% increase in attacks on remote desktop protocols (RDP) in South Africa over the previous year, reaching 22.8 million attacks.

They were not alone. The US Treasury and the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration have been the most recent high-profile hacking targets, the attacks reportedly coming from Russia.

This unfortunate aspect of our digital world – cybercriminality – is only going to get worse in 2021.

AGENCIES

By Nicholas Taitz

The news of a potential vaccine for the Covid-19 virus is welcomed. A question which arises is whether, in legal systems around the world, such a vaccine can be made compulsory for all persons, that is, whether people can be compelled to take the vaccine regardless of their consent or objection.

The purpose here is not to examine the scientific merits of any objection to the vaccine, but rather to examine the legal issue as to whether a compulsory vaccination programme is lawful or not, focusing on the South African legal position under our Constitution. It would be interesting to ask the same legal question with respect to other countries' legal systems, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

There are a number of grounds on which certain groups of persons might object to compulsory vaccination. These range from libertarian objections, to ones founded on concern over the safety of the vaccine. The circumstances of its need and development once again raise the classical debate between individual rights and those of society as a collective.

Everyone is aware of the urgent need for this vaccine. The very urgency which has motivated the swift development of the vaccine raises important health questions as to its safety: the usual testing period for a vaccine involves at least five years in order to monitor the long-term effects and its safety.

So, we have a classic dilemma here where the exigencies of the matter pull in opposite directions. On the one hand, the need for a vaccine is patent and urgent. The urgency, in this case, is of a particular nature: the longer we wait, the worse the situation becomes in terms of the pandemic. On the other hand, the very urgency in question drives the state to seek to utilise a vaccine without the usual testing period for its safety and to administer it on a compulsory basis.

This creates a perfect set of conditions for a debate on individual versus collective rights, and of the limits of the power of the state. Certain individuals may object to tak-

South Africa: Compulsory Corona virus vaccinations could pose a legal conundrum



ing the vaccine on the basis that it has not been comprehensively tested and therefore constitutes a risk to their health and safety. These persons would assert individual rights which in South African law in terms of our Constitution would conceivably involve a range of constitutional rights such as those to life, health and safety and security of the person.

On the other hand, any government seeking to impose a requirement that all citizens should be forced to take the vaccine will advance an argument based on the collective interests of the society as a whole. This argument is that it has been necessary to curtail the safety testing period in this case given the urgent spreading of the virus and the need to combat it as quickly as possible. The argument would be that to take further time to test the safety of the vaccine, up to the usual five-year testing period, would undermine the purpose of the vaccine altogether and would also cause (or at least allow) many more people to die.

In the simplest terms, to force someone to take a medication when they refuse to do so is an inroad into their individual rights,

regardless of the reason for their objection. For example, certain religious fundamentalists believe that the taking of any medication is religiously prohibited. Regardless of anyone's reason for objecting, if such person is compelled to take the vaccine against their will, this is clearly a limitation of a number of their constitutional rights.

The South African Constitution was drafted in circumstances where rights of the individual and the rights of the collective as a whole as represented by the state, and their specific interaction in cases where they conflict, was a fundamental issue at the heart of the constitutional negotiations. Section 36 of the South African Constitution represents a relatively modern formulation of the agreed compromise between individual and collective rights and the limits of state power, providing that individual rights may be limited by a law of general application that is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on dignity, freedom and equality.

The conflict between individual and collective rights is, as I have

mentioned above, a classical issue both in legal theory and also, most fundamentally, in ethics or moral philosophy. A well-known thought-example postulates a group of persons who are trapped in a cave, with the water level inside the cave steadily rising such that within a certain period, say next two hours, everyone in the cave will drown. There is an exit to the cave, which everyone could use, and thereby save themselves, save for one drawback: the exit is being fully blocked by one individual, who is stuck in the entrance. A further postulate of this example is that there is no way to remove this person from the entrance other than to blow them up with explosives (which are conveniently on hand).

The above counter-example might seem fanciful, but it represents the stark conflict between individual and collective rights. Those who are against having the vaccine forced upon them by law may well believe, supported by expert evidence, that the vaccine poses a risk to their health and indeed their lives. On the other hand, there may also be cogent expert opinion that, if the vaccine

is not administered, millions of additional people will die just as those in the cave will drown if the person blocking the cave is not sacrificed.

A court in South Africa must have regard to section 36 of the Constitution, which provides as follows:

Limitation of rights:

The rights in the Bill of Rights may be limited only in terms of law of general application to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom, taking into account all relevant factors, including:

The nature of the right;

The importance of the purpose of the limitation;

The nature and extent of the limitation and its purpose; and

Less restrictive means to achieve the purpose.

The question will become, in a South African law context, whether it is acceptable in an open and fair society based on human dignity and freedom to compel all persons regardless of their con-

sent to take the vaccine. This is the formulation required by section 36, but it does not give a clear answer to the issue at hand. Does an open and fair society, based on these values, compel such persons or not?

These are very difficult questions to answer. Ultimately, a great deal will depend, in my opinion, on how dangerous the vaccine may be shown to be by those who object to taking it. In practical terms, a South African court will likely only be inclined to restrain the state seeking to administer a vaccine where there can be shown to be a real danger in its administration. If the one man blocking the cave can be removed only by taking a vaccine against his consent, and it will not kill him, this seems to deprive the philosophical example of much of its force.

I would be surprised if a court went against a state effort to vaccinate the entire population only on the basis of, say, a religious objection to taking medication, as opposed to the showing of potential physical harm. This modification really cuts off one of the dilemma's horns, and it would seem to be justifiable in these circumstances to compel vaccination without consent.

However, where those who object present expert views indicating serious potential health risks posed by a vaccine, the outcome of the section 36 analysis is less clear. The various considerations which we are enjoined by section 36 to consider do not clearly give us the answer: does human dignity require the rights of the collective to be upheld over the rights of a minority who object? Both sides would assert that they seek to protect the rights of citizens but in different ways.

In such a case, where the executive proposes a rational course of action to deal with a pandemic, there should be a degree of judicial deference exercised by the court. As I have said previously, these are matters where it is arguably the proper role of the executive to make policy decisions, and the court should exercise deference to the executive in this regard.

It might well be argued that since the concept of being “justifiable in a democratic society” features prominently in the section 36 analysis, it follows that the democratically elected persons in charge of the state are those to decide what must be done in a pandemic, or at least that there should be an appropriate degree of deference shown in this context.

However, this can never be without its limits, and the application of section 36 in this context remains fraught with difficulty. Ultimately, a court will be justifiably reluctant to stand in the way of the state's legitimate attempts to deal with the pandemic.

AGENCIES

BUSINESS

SUPPORT

African entrepreneurs called to enter sustainable fashion competition

ABIDJAN

The African Development Bank's Fashionomics Africa initiative has launched a competition to support designers of sustainable and circular fashion.

The contest invites African fashion brands pursuing environmentally friendly measures, sustainability and circular economy actions to participate. Fashionomics Africa is an initiative of the African Development Bank to increase Africa's participation in the global textile and fashion industry value chains. The Fashionomics Africa online competition aims to celebrate African fashion brands that will change how we produce, buy, use and recycle fashion and that encourage a more sustainable change in consumer behaviour.

It's open to entrepreneurs from Africa, aged 18 years or older, who have launched fashion businesses (with a maximum of 50 employees), and whose sustainable designs have been produced within the last five years. Applicants will need to submit pictures of their products, detail their sustainable business model and explain how their startup is environmentally friendly and innovative.

A four-person judging panel representing the African Development Bank and the other competition collaborators - the United Nations Environment Programme, Parsons School of Design and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation - will choose three finalists by 22 January 2021. The public will select the winner via an online vote on the Fashionomics Africa digital marketplace and mobile application between 25 January and 8 February 2021, 23:59 GMT.

The 'best sustainable design will win a \$2,000 cash prize. In addition, the winning fashion entrepreneur will receive

a certificate and the opportunity to showcase their creation by taking part in online events and sharing insights on key sustainability challenges facing the industry. The winner will have access to a network of media insiders and industry experts, and receive mentoring and networking opportunities from competition collaborators.

The textile and fashion industry accounts for nearly 10% of global carbon emissions, ranking as the world's second-largest industrial polluter, after the oil sector, according to the United Nations Environment Programme. However, the industry provides high levels of employment, foreign exchange revenue and products essential to human welfare.

Around the world, a 'take-make-dispose' model of consumption of items made from finite resources is giving way to a more circular and inclusive fashion value chain, which according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, designs out waste and pollution, keeps products and materials in use, as well as regenerates natural systems.

Competition organisers said that examples of sustainability and circularity elements might include materials used, the design process, and greener production processes - including shipping methods or ways to reduce carbon footprint.

"Sustainability is at the heart of our work with Fashionomics Africa. The first edition of the Fashionomics Africa competition is an excellent opportunity for the bank to showcase the immense talent and creativity of African fashion designers striving for a more circular fashion industry and economy, while remaining true to their heritage," said Vanessa Moungar, the bank's director for Gender, Women and Civil Society.



AfDB's director for Gender, Women and Civil Society, Vanessa Moungar.

VEGETATIVE

Chilli peppers may help you live longer



Chilli peppers.

CLEVELAND

Uber Eats has released its annual cravings report and the most requested addition to any order is extra chilli sauce.

Chilli peppers contain a special chemical compound called capsaicin, which gives them their distinct spicy flavour. Previous studies have found that capsaicin possesses anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-cancer and blood regulating

qualities.

How can chillies be good for our health?

In a more recent study, preliminary research by the American Heart Association suggests that the consumption of chilli peppers significantly reduces the risk of dying from heart disease or cancer. The researchers set out to analyse the effects of chilli peppers on cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality. In order to assess this effect, researchers screened

a total of 4 729 previous studies from five global health databases, namely Ovid, Cochrane, Medline, Embase and Scopus.

The number was then reduced to four large studies that included data on the health outcomes for participants relative to the consumption of chillies. The data of 570 000 individuals from China, the USA, Italy and Iran were included to compare the outcomes of those who consumed chillies and contrast their results with

those who rarely or never did so.

When comparing the outcomes of the two groups, researchers found that people who eat chillies had "a 26% relative reduction in cardiovascular mortality; a 23% relative reduction in cancer mortality; and a 25% relative reduction in all-cause mortality."

"We were surprised to find that in these previously published studies, regular consumption of chilli peppers was associated with an overall risk-reduction of all-cause, CVD and cancer mortality. It highlights that dietary factors may play an important role in overall health," said Dr Bo Xu. Dr Xu is the senior author of the study and a cardiologist at the Cleveland Clinic's Heart, Vascular and Thoracic Institute.

Don't go overboard

Xu said that the exact mechanisms of how these results are achieved are still unknown, adding that it doesn't mean that everyone should start massively increasing their intake of chillies. The researchers aim to continue their research to ascertain which types of chillies have the biggest health benefits and how much thereof and how often they should be consumed.

FESTIVITY

Preparing for Christmas in a pandemic

NAIROBI

At a luxury hotel in Nairobi last year, there was no expense spared in giving diners memorable Christmas and New Year parties. An interior designer had imported Christmas decorations from Dubai to create a whimsical sense of being in a jungle, fancy cocktail creations were in plenty and so were meats aged for months.

But in Covid-19 times, where disposable income is limited, the curfew is at 10 pm, and hotels are wobbling after months of closure, they have cut out the excesses. The Christmas menus and decor are not as elaborate and the diners are fewer. Clearly, 2020 holiday parties will look nothing like they used to. But good cheer in a pandemic is not impossible.

Richard Barrow, Food and Beverage General Manager, Trademark and Tribe Hotel says they expect people to celebrate this Christmas as they have previously. "But this may not be possible because of the 10 pm curfew. So we are offering families and friends a way where they can all stay at the hotel and celebrate without the restrictions," he says.

Some hotels have opted to rent out the entire space to those seeking privacy, others are selling New Year's eve dinner with a night at the hotel, others have pushed Christmas lunches to start in the morning to maximise the number of diners by cur-



Richard Barrow, Food and Beverage General Manager, Trademark and Tribe Hotel.

few time while some are expanding dining areas to ensure social distancing. The go-to solution for many is staycations, following a decline in international tourists and guests.

"Now that we don't have as many international guests, we are more focused on offering residents staycation packages as well as deals on meals at our restaurants, Harvest and Heroes," Mr Barrow says, adding that has sparked an increase in Kenyans eating at the two

restaurants.

"Every year, from mid-December we normally start seeing things slowing down. People travel for holidays out of town and abroad but this year we are seeing more numbers as most people won't be travelling upcountry or abroad for the holidays," he added. Home deliveries have also become an economic lifeline for restaurants and bars. Christmas meals will be whipped up by top chefs and delivered at customers' dinner tables.

"We started this with Thanksgiving where we cater for those who prefer not to be in public places. People invite family and friends to their homes and then we deliver ready meals such as roasted turkey, beef wellington, and the entire Christmas spread," says Mr Barrow.

Sankara Hotel in Nairobi has had to stretch their dining area outdoors to ensure social-distancing measures are adhered to. "Normally, we would host the Christmas and New Year's brunch on the first floor but that won't work due to the safety guidelines, so we decided to host diners outside in the garden," says Krishna Unni, General Manager, Sankara Nairobi. The garden previously held up to 800 people for events and parties but it will now host 180 during this season.

"We plan to have a barbecue set-up with live cooking food stations at the garden instead of indoors. With the reduced capacity at the restaurant, we also decided to convert some of the guest rooms into private dining rooms with a restroom and server," he says.

Mr Unni anticipates that the hotel will have good numbers on Christmas day compared to New Year's. "The 10 pm curfew is what has got us in a tight spot because it's difficult

to close by 9 pm on New Year's eve. The traditional New Year's eve capacity would be up to 300 people but this time we are maxing out at 100 for Sarabi Bar," he says.

Targeting families

This year, the Christmas buffet will also work slightly differently. Hotel staff will serve food to guests at the various food stations. Some hotels have reduced prices, while others have not. "We wouldn't want to compromise on quality, so we decided it is better if we reduce the number of people (not price) so that those who come still have a worthwhile experience," he says.

At Movenpick Hotel & Residences, Executive Chef Aris Athanasiou says Covid-19 safety has dictated hotel's festive plans this year, from pricing to dining. "We will do the live cooking food stations but this time around, guests will not come into close contact with the action like before," he says, adding that they will host fewer than last year.

Baluba, the all-day dining restaurant will host 80 diners this season compared to 160 previously. "We are targeting families with kiddie menus, turkey carving to live grilling, extensive cuisine where we will have Italian, Greek..." says Chef Aris.

ADVICE

What you need to know about your lifestyle choices, health of your prostate

JOHANNESBURG

According to the World Cancer Research Fund, prostate cancer is the second most common cancer diagnosed in men. The 2016 National Cancer Registry stated that the lifetime risk for men to be diagnosed with prostate cancer in South Africa is 1 in 17.

This is in accordance with global statistics showing a significant increase in occurrence. The prostate is a small gland found in the male reproductive system, just below the bladder. The prostate's most important function is to produce a fluid that plays a part in the formation of semen.

Some of the risk factors for prostate cancer include age, ethnicity, a family history of prostate cancer, obesity, being overweight, and an overall unhealthy lifestyle. It is, therefore, important to start screening sooner rather than later.

Symptoms and screening

What is concerning about prostate cancer is that, in the early stages of this disease, men usually do not experience any symptoms. Only at a later stage, some symptoms can appear such as frequent or painful urination, difficulty to start or stop urination, painful ejaculation, and blood appearing in the urine or semen. A more advanced cancer

can cause pain in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs. It is, therefore, especially important to get screened annually to detect any problems as soon as possible.

This is done by a doctor doing a digital rectum exam and getting a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test. PSA is a protein that is produced by both cancerous and non-cancerous prostate tissue and high levels are associated with prostate cancer. However, there can be other reasons for PSA levels to appear high such as inflammation of the prostate and non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate.

Despite this, it is still considered to provide a good starting point to the

early detection of prostate cancer so that you can get all the help you need as soon as possible. A PSA test can be done by most CANSA care centres. A biopsy of the prostate gland remains the only conclusive diagnosis, as it can detect cancerous cells, but will only be performed if cancer is suspected.

The role of lifestyle

Smoking, overconsumption of alcohol and a sedentary lifestyle are all factors contributing to an increased risk of developing prostate cancer. Obesity is also a big risk factor for both the development and progression of this disease.

The good news, however, is that

studies have found that vigorous activity, like jogging, biking, swimming, or any other activity that gets your heart pumping, is associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer. According to the WHO, you should do about 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week.

Nutritional do's and don'ts

Nutrition plays a crucial role in the prevention and treatment of prostate cancer. A typical western diet characterised by a high consumption of red and processed meat, fried foods, fast foods, full cream dairy products, refined starchy foods and sugars and a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables, plant

oils, fish, nuts seeds, legumes and whole grains can increase your risk significantly.

Lycopene is the pigment that gives foods like tomatoes, guava, papaya, ruby grapefruit, and watermelon their red colour. This red pigment act as a powerful antioxidant that inhibits the growth of certain cancer cells and is, therefore, one of the most studied nutrients in prostate cancer research.

Tomatoes are especially high in lycopene and were found to be better absorbed when heated and consumed with oil, making tomato paste, tomato sauces and other tomato products a great source of this nutrient.

ENTERPRISING

One woman's vision to tackle teen pregnancy with gaming app

KIGALI

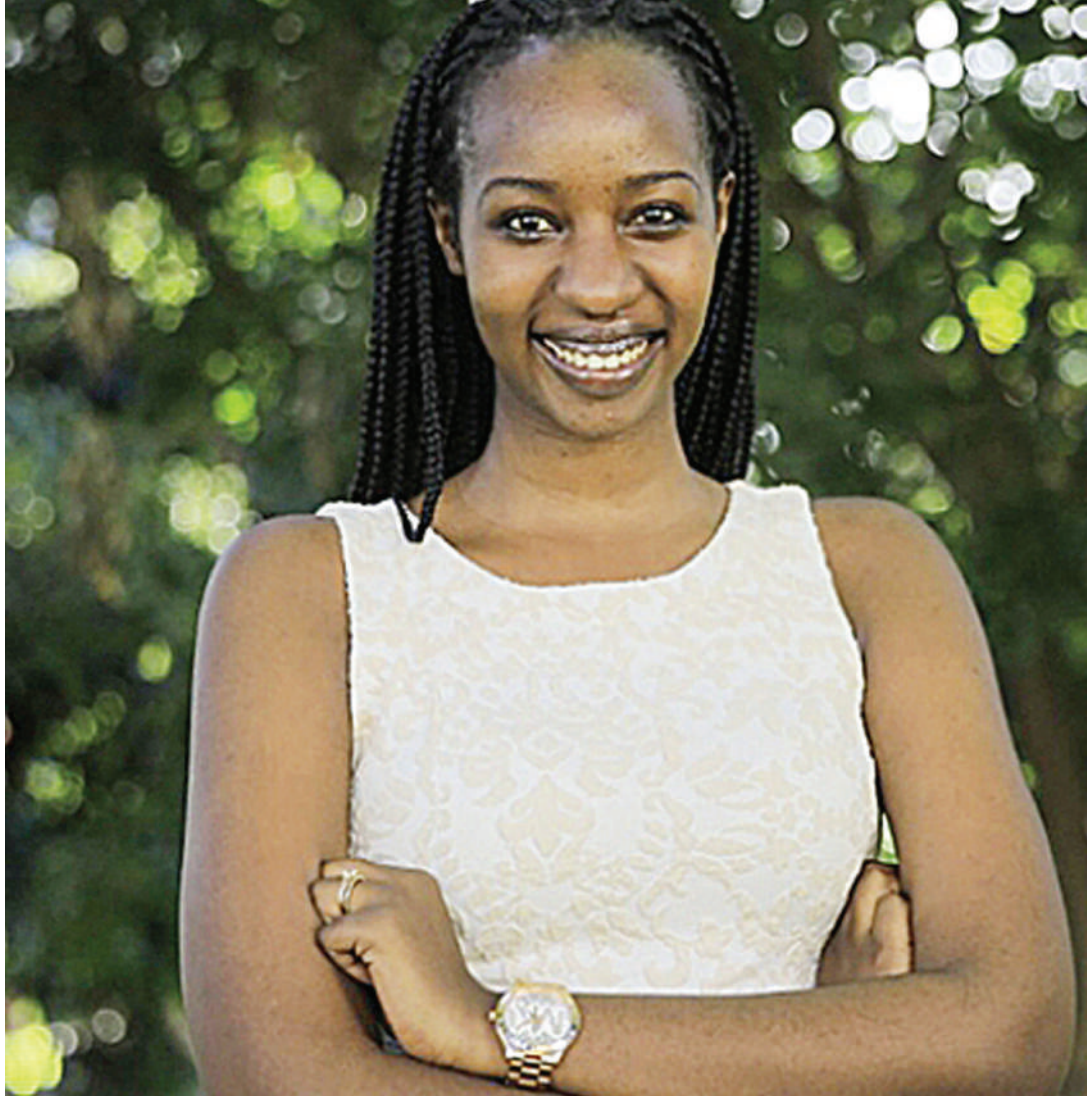
Sexual reproductive health has been top priority for 25-year-old Gaelle Igisubizo. Right from high school, her decision to be part of reproductive health advocacy and sensitisation has been intentional with a conviction that, the prevention of unintended pregnancies among adolescents and young adults is a priority that needs ardent measures.

This is why when she graduated from university last year, she decided to go full time, creating platforms that would help boys and girls access information about sexual reproduction and health. She, hence, created Keza 3D Game, a gamification platform that educates its users about sexual reproductive health in a fun way.

Players are educated by this game through access to information, such as the causes of sex before marriage and its consequences. The one who plays this game first and foremost has fun yet at the same time, accesses information on sexual reproductive health.

She explains that the game has three parts; one is the AI Chatbot (an automated robot) where one can ask any questions about sexual reproductive health. There is also 'Keza Quiz' that tests the player's knowledge about SRH while also educating them and it rewards with points for the fun part of the game.

"The quiz is the part where anyone using the app has to fill, you can't play the game before answering the quiz, if the person on the quiz fails to answer the questions they can ask Chatbot for help, and after getting the required marks, they can go ahead and play the game," she explains. The third part is the game play, where Keza runs at



25-year-old Gaelle Igisubizo.

different levels—these levels indicate the different obstacles girls face in life, for example 'sugar daddies' and peer pressure, among others.

"With this, you can be asked if you want to meet with a sugar daddy. You say yes or no, and they show you different consequences you meet such as pregnancy, dropping out of school or even death, depending on the choices you make," she explains. Igisubizo notes that through this game, the youth get to understand that their lives are in

their hands, and that what they choose to make of it depends on them entirely.

"They know that they have the liberty to choose, and also understand that these choices have consequences. It is in this sense that the one playing the game realises that they are the ones who determine if they will be a better version of themselves or not," she says.

When she was creating this app, Igisubizo says she put focus on boys believing that if we are to win the fight against teen

pregnancies, men and boys need to be engaged and well informed too.

"Boys were our biggest target because they are the ones who like playing video games. I believe a boy who is well versed with sexual reproductive health helps a girl to be safe. The other thing, a girl can only get pregnant once a year but a boy can impregnate as many times as possible. So if we want to fight teen pregnancies, male engagement is really needed." She observes that most cases of teen

pregnancies happen due to lack of enough information among young people, especially those in rural areas.

"Most of the cases are in rural areas where young people don't have enough information. Some who are in urban areas know that if they had unprotected sex, they can go and take a morning after pill, which isn't the case with most girls in villages," she observes.

The other thing is poverty, she says, adding that many girls have fallen into temptation because of this. "But what's needed is empowerment for girls such that they make wise decisions and stand firm in the choices they make." The government is working tooth and nail to combat this issue, however, Igisubizo calls on to parents to play their part in educating their children too.

"This is still a challenge, some parents don't talk about these things with their children. It's still a taboo to talk about sex, but at the end of the day, kids are having sex, so we need to talk to them so that they don't get the wrong information from others. Also, some teachers are not well equipped to teach about sexual reproductive health, hence, need to be skilled in that," she adds.

Last year, Keza 3D App won phase two of the Innovation Accelerator (iAccelerator), a mentorship driven acceleration programme, supporting young entrepreneurs with seed funding, training and skills development, to generate innovative solutions in response to challenges related to sexual and reproductive health, sexuality education, family planning, maternal health and other population development issues.

PLEA

Drugmakers should cut Covid-19 vaccine prices for Africa - Africa CDC

ADDIS ABABA

Pharmaceutical companies should sell Covid-19 vaccines to African countries at discounted rates and allow them to be produced locally to potentially cut costs, the head of the continent's disease control body said on Thursday.

Africa is aiming to vaccinate up to 60% of its 1.3 billion people in the next two years, but may need several years of inoculations, John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) told reporters. How frequently people will need vaccinations against Covid-19 remains uncertain, he said. "Because of this, local manufacturing becomes imperative so that we can meet our goals," he said.

Many African states are relying on COVAX, a global Covid-19 vaccine allocation plan co-led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is working to lower prices for poor and middle income countries. But the Africa CDC expects to receive only 20% of its vaccine needs through COVAX, and also needs money to distribute the vaccine.

"The COVAX facility does not take care of delivery, it takes care of the buying of the vaccines. But the greatest challenge for any vaccination programme is how do you deliver it to the needy in a timely fashion," Nkengasong said. He added the continent was working with Afrimbank and the World Bank to see how to raise funds to buy and deliver vaccines.

In November, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is also the chairperson of the African Union, said \$12 billion was needed for the vaccination programme. On Thursday, GAVI, a vaccines alliance that co-leads COVAX with the WHO, said COVAX was on track with its goal to secure 2 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses by the end of 2021.

"COVAX has met its initial fundraising target and is making excellent progress in negotiating deals with manufacturers," said Thabani Maphosa, a managing director at GAVI. The Africa CDC said on Thursday a survey it conducted with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine showed nearly 80% of Africans would take a Covid-19 vaccine.

GENEROSITY

LifeBank founder Temie Giwa-Tubosun wins 2020 Global Citizen Prize



Giwa-Tubosun is recognized for LifeBank's COVID-19 efforts, including launching testing centers.

LAGOS

Temie Giwa-Tubosun, founder of LifeBank, has won the 2020 Global Citizen Prize for Business Leader.

LifeBank is a healthcare technology and logistics startup based in Lagos, Nigeria. This startup facilitates the transmission of blood from labs across the country to patients and doctors in hospitals. The Global Citizen Prize for Business Leader honors an individual in the business community who has combined business goals with positive human impact.

Temie Giwa-Tubosun is celebrated for her work

as a health advocate in addressing blood shortages in Nigeria, as well as her innovative use of technology. She is also recognized for LifeBank's COVID-19 response – including launching testing centers, and free delivery of medical oxygen to COVID-19 patients in isolation centers.

According to Giwa-Tubosun in 2017 said, "I started LifeBank because I wanted a world where women no longer died from preventable causes like postpartum hemorrhage." Blood shortages in Nigeria contribute to the deaths of 152,000 anemic children and 37,000 pregnant women each year, and

are responsible for innumerable complications for women immediately after childbirth.

In June this year, Giwa-Tubosun was selected as the 2020 Sub-Saharan Africa recipient of Cartier's Women's Initiative. Last year, She won the 1st prize of \$250,000 in Jack Ma's Africa Netpreneur Prize. In 2018, LifeBank emerged as a winner at the 2018 MIT Solve Global Challenge. The startup won under the "Frontlines of Health" Challenges category which is targeted at how communities invest in frontline health workers and services to improve their access to effective and affordable care.



John Nkengasong, director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

WARNING

Owning a dog with diabetes may increase your risk of type 2 diabetes

STOCKHOLM

A recent study has revealed that owning a dog with diabetes increased the owners risk of developing type two diabetes by 38%. Previous studies have found an association between obesity in dog owners and their pets. This is likely because two may share similar health and lifestyle behaviours, such as physical activity levels.

Diabetes in dogs and cats
Owners of a dog with diabetes

are more likely to develop type two diabetes themselves, according to a new study conducted by researchers at Uppsala University, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Karolinska Institutet and the University of Liverpool.

The study, which was recently published in The BMJ, gathered a sample of 208 980 owner-dog pairs and 89 944 cat owners by combining the largest veterinary insurance database in Sweden with the nation's official health and population registers.

Over a period of six years, the researchers investigated the prevalence of diabetes in dog owners and subsequent diabetes in dogs and cats, according to the study. The researchers found that owners of dogs with diabetes were associated with a 38% increased risk of developing type two diabetes, compared to owners with dogs who did not have diabetes.

Reasons for the association

Dietary habits of dog owners may influence those of their pets,

the researchers state. This is due to portion control, the frequency of eating and whether owners give scraps to their pets in addition to dog food, the study concluded. The researchers also explained an association between the weight of a dog owner and energy intake of their pet.

"The use and timing of dog treats have been associated with the weight of owners, suggesting an interplay between the weight of a dog owner and the energy intake in the pet," the researchers said. It

is also plausible that dog owners and their pets share exercise habits which could be an important factor in the research findings, the study states.

Cats are different

Although the feline diabetes phenotype resembles that of humans with type two diabetes, the study states that there was no detected association between diabetes in cat owners and their pets.

Studies on the prevalence

of diabetes in cat owners and their pets are limited, according to the researchers. However, some risk factors for feline diabetes include being confined indoors, being overweight and eating predominantly dry foods. The researchers state that one explanation for the lower prevalence of diabetes in cat owners and their pets is because owner-cat pairs share fewer health and lifestyle habits compared to dog owners.

ANGELIC

Dubai businesswoman offers rent-free homes to families hit by the pandemic



Saeeda Riaz helped needy families to stay at properties rent-free during the pandemic.

DUBAI

A businesswoman in Dubai helped several needy families by providing rent-free homes after residents lost their jobs because of the pandemic. Saeeda Riaz, 40, from Pakistan, who runs a property management services company, found temporary homes for 15 families who could not fly back to their home countries because of travel restrictions at the time.

Families contacted her through the Helping Hands UAE Facebook group managed by Ms Riaz and her husband. She used her business contacts to find temporary homes for the families. "I was able to use some of my own properties to help them while I asked landlords if they were able to offer any aid," she said.

"We provided temporary accommodation for 15 families who had been hit by the impact of the pandemic. They all stayed rent-free and people donated groceries and diapers to help them out."

Ms Riaz said she was flooded with pleas for help. She gave priority to those who were the

most in need. "We had to ask people to show their documents to prove they had been let go by their employers as well as flight tickets to make sure they were genuine cases," she said.

"No money ever changed hands. It was always about helping people." She said the idea to start her Facebook page came to her late last year before the pandemic struck. "I saw a Facebook post from a Filipino who couldn't get a hotel room as they wouldn't take his papers," she said.

"I thought, why not step in and help when I was in a position to do so. It started from there and we've been able to help many families as people and businesses offered donations."

Filipino Eric Francisco, 33, a tour guide, was one of the many helped by Ms Riaz. His situation was dire when he was out of work but had to provide for his wife and infant son. "I lost my job and we were unable to return home because the borders closed," he said. "I got in touch with Saeeda who was able to provide us with accommodation in Dubai Marina."

"I had to just show her my letter of

termination from my employer." Mr Francisco stayed at the property for two and a half months before the borders reopened and the family finally returned to their home country.

"I don't know what we would have done but thankfully we were able to get the help we needed," he said. "We were also given groceries and medicine." There were close to 50,000 Filipinos who were repatriated from the UAE to the Philippines since the end of March.

Saad Siddiqui, a real estate broker from Pakistan, was also helped by the Helping Hands project. Mr Siddiqui's aunt Parveem and her two children were in Dubai on a visit when the borders closed. They could not afford a lengthy stay in a hotel.

"She couldn't get back to Karachi because nobody was able to get out of the country and they couldn't stay with me because I live in a one-bedroom apartment with two others," said Mr Siddiqui, 25. "It was a very difficult time for us but thankfully we were able to get help and she had somewhere to stay for a week before she flew home."

FORECAST

What to expect from first online event focused on Muslim women

MADRID

For those familiar with fashion lingo, MFW started out life as an acronym for Milan Fashion Week, followed by one for Modest Fashion Week, shows of which have taken place in Dubai, Jakarta, Istanbul, London and Miami.

But there's a different MFW launching next week: Modest Fitness Week, which will take place online from Monday to Friday, December 14 to 18. Modest Fitness Week is the brainchild of Abdiya Iman Meddings, founder of Moowda, a social network for modest fashion launching in 2021.

"We're focusing on a part of society that is often overlooked [in the fitness arena], and tailoring an event for them, by them," Meddings, who lives in Spain, says. "We're a community of Muslim women, a community of modest women, and we're creating a platform to advance others on their health journeys."

Online workouts with female Muslim instructors

Upon registering and paying a fee of \$18 on modestfitnessweek.com, women can book digital sessions and workshops hosted by female Muslim fitness instructors from across the globe, in yoga, Pilates, HIIT, flexibility, core strengthening, meditation and more. Live sessions will be held in all time zones, and if users miss one, they can replay the video later through the website, says Meddings.

Amina Naush Ansari, a personal trainer and nutrition coach in Toronto who specialises in circuit training, strength training and calisthenics, will host body weight workouts during Modest Fitness Week. She explains that such an event can help motivate Muslim women who may have previously been on the fence about working out, especially publicly, because of modesty concerns. Ladies-only gyms, after all, are few and far between.

"I strongly feel that there is a need to create a safe space for

exercise," she says.

"In the conservative world, women are sometimes intimidated and don't know how to start their fitness journey or what path to take," adds holistic fitness trainer Seyma Saricimen from Bahrain, who will offer Pilates, and pre and postnatal fitness sessions during MFW, as well as host a panel discussion about women's health.

"This gives all women inclusivity, and the platform and the space to feel comfortable wherever they are and whatever they're wearing. It allows modest women to explore what works for them, whether they are starting out or have been active for years."

Modest fitness clothing

Another impediment for Muslim women is that mainstream workout clothing hasn't quite catered to the needs of modesty-seeking consumers. "Until recently, there has been a real lack of modest activewear. As a result, women were resorting to layering up, which restricts movement, and can make you feel out of place and self-conscious," says Aneesa Zaman, co-founder of modest swimwear brand Sei Sorelle, which will be showcasing its designs digitally at Modest Fitness Week on Thursday, December 17. UK label Lyra Swim and Toronto label Floral Swimwear are the other modest swimwear brands presenting, along with activewear brands such as Montreal's Dignitti and Belgium's Mumine.

Modest swimwear and activewear have proven popular among some non-Muslim women, too, particularly for the sun protection and comfort they provide. While Modest Fitness Week is geared towards the Islamic community, Meddings emphasises that the event is open to non-Muslims too. "All women can join, and many have already registered. It is great to see them supporting Muslim [instructors] in the fitness industry," she says.

Promoting physical and mental health

Meddings adds she is most looking forward to the discussion on intermittent fasting, and the sessions on fertility and pelvic health, which promise to tackle some culturally taboo topics. "Things are evolving; there is an increasing number of Muslim women ambassadors on the international stage and personal trainers on platforms such as Instagram," says Zaman.



hijab-wearing women, especially beginners, who get intimidated going to co-ed gyms and feel overwhelmed at the very thought of



ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM

ITV	WEDNESDAY 16 Dec	THURSDAY 17 Dec	FRIDAY 18 Dec	Wild Skin	CAPITAL	ITV				
<p>MONDAY 14 Dec</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Isidingo</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 ITV Top 10 rpt</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera News</p> <p>12:30 Mtego rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Mjue Zaidi</p> <p>13:45 Art and Lifestyle rpt</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:10 Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje)</p> <p>Wild Skin</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:10 Aibu yako rpt</p> <p>18:15 Mapishi</p> <p>18:45 Kesho leo</p> <p>19:00 Afya ya Jamii</p> <p>19:30 Isidingo</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Dakika 45</p> <p>22:15 Telenovela: (Piel Salvaje) Wild Skin</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>02:00 DWTV</p>	<p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 DWTV</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Isidingo</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto Wetu rpt</p> <p>10:30 Uchumi na biashara rpt</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 The Base rpt</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje)</p> <p>Wild Skin</p> <p>14:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Korean drama rpt: Hwarang</p> <p>19:00 Ijue Sheria</p> <p>19:30 Isidingo</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:00 Kipindi Maalum: Tanesco</p> <p>21:30 Kipindi Maalum: Ripoti Maalum</p> <p>22:15 Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje)</p> <p>Wild Skin</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 Al Jazeera</p> <p>2:00 DWTV</p>	<p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>8:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Isidingo</p> <p>9:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>10:00 Watoto</p> <p>10:30 Shamba lulu rpt</p> <p>10:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>11:00 The Base rpt</p> <p>11:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Ijue sheria rpt</p> <p>12:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>13:00 Ripoti Maalum rpt</p> <p>13:30 Tanzania yetu</p> <p>13:55 Habari za saa</p> <p>14:00 Kipindi Maalum rpt:</p> <p>14:15 Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje)</p> <p>Wild Skin</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Mapishi</p> <p>18:30 Jagina</p> <p>19:00 Usafiri wako</p> <p>19:30 Isidingo</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:00 Malumbano ya hoja</p> <p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 DWTV</p>	<p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p> <p>FRIDAY 18 Dec</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi</p>	<p>6:00 HABARI</p> <p>6:40 Kumekucha</p> <p>7:30 HABARI</p> <p>8:00 Kumekucha Michezo</p> <p>9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo</p> <p>9:30 Isidingo</p> <p>10:00 Watoto wetu</p> <p>10:30 Usafiri wako rpt</p> <p>11:00 The Base</p> <p>12:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco</p> <p>13:00 Jagina rpt</p> <p>13:30 Rock City marathon rpt</p> <p>14:15 Telenovela rpt: (Piel Salvaje)</p> <p>Wild Skin</p> <p>15:00 Meza huru</p> <p>16:30 Watoto Wetu</p> <p>17:00 The Base</p> <p>17:30 Ibadat ya kiislamu</p> <p>18:00 Jiji Letu</p> <p>18:15 Mjue Zaidi rpt</p> <p>19:00 Shamba lulu</p> <p>19:30 Isidingo</p> <p>20:00 Habari</p> <p>21:05 Kipima Joto</p> <p>23:00 Habari</p> <p>23:30 The Base</p> <p>00:30 DWTV</p>	<p>06:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>13:00 Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death</p> <p>14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)</p> <p>16:00 Series rpt: Itohan</p> <p>16:30 Tanzania Yetu rpt</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 The Décor rpt</p> <p>19:30 Shamba lulu</p> <p>20:00 Series: Itohan</p> <p>20:45 The Monday Agenda</p> <p>21:30 Capital Prime News</p> <p>22:00 Kipima Joto</p> <p>00:00 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>Mon 14 Dec</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>13:00 Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death</p> <p>14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)</p> <p>16:00 Series rpt: Itohan</p> <p>16:30 Tanzania Yetu rpt</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 The Décor rpt</p> <p>19:30 Shamba lulu</p> <p>20:00 Series: Itohan</p> <p>20:45 The Monday Agenda</p> <p>21:30 Capital Prime News</p> <p>22:00 Kipima Joto</p> <p>00:00 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>Tues 15 Dec</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>13:00 Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death</p> <p>14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)</p> <p>16:00 Series rpt: Itohan</p> <p>16:30 Shamba lulu</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 Innovation</p> <p>19:30 Jagina rpt</p> <p>20:00 Series: Itohan</p> <p>20:45 Telenovela: Lover her to death</p> <p>21:30 Capital Prime</p> <p>22:00 Turning the spotlight rpt</p> <p>22:30 Eco@Africa</p> <p>23:00 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>Wed 16 Dec</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>13:00 Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death</p> <p>14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)</p> <p>16:00 Series rpt: Itohan</p> <p>16:30 Culinary delight rpt</p> <p>17:00 Innovation rpt</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 Sports Gazette</p> <p>19:30 Chetu ni chetu</p> <p>20:00 Series: Itohan</p> <p>20:45 Telenovela: Lover her to death</p> <p>21:30 Capital Prime News</p> <p>22:00 Dakika 45:</p> <p>22:45 The Décor</p> <p>23:15 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>Thurs 17 Dec</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)</p> <p>13:00 Telenovela rpt: Lover her to death</p> <p>14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)</p> <p>16:00 Series rpt: Itohan</p> <p>16:30 Culinary delight rpt</p> <p>17:00 Innovation rpt</p> <p>17:30 Meza huru</p> <p>19:00 Sports Gazette</p> <p>19:30 Chetu ni chetu</p> <p>20:00 Series: Itohan</p> <p>20:45 Telenovela: Lover her to death</p> <p>21:30 Capital Prime News</p> <p>22:00 Dakika 45:</p> <p>22:45 The Décor</p> <p>23:15 Al Jazeera</p>	<p>Sun 20 Dec</p> <p>08:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>09:00 In good shape</p> <p>10:00 Capchat rpt</p> <p>11:00 Sports Gazette rpt</p> <p>11:30 Korean Drama: The Slave hunter</p> <p>12:00 Out n' About</p> <p>21:00 Movie: Cry from the mountain</p> <p>23:00 Series rpt: Godwin</p> <p>01:00 Al Jazeera</p>

WORLD

US FDA advisory panel sets stage for Moderna vaccine authorisation

WASHINGTON

THE U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will "rapidly" work towards granting emergency approval of Moderna Inc's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said on Thursday.

A panel of outside advisers to the FDA overwhelmingly endorsed the emergency use of Moderna's coronavirus vaccine on Thursday, virtually assuring a second option for protecting against COVID-19 for a pandemic ravaged nation.

The committee voted 20-0 with one abstention that the benefits of the vaccine outweighed its risks in people aged 18 and older.

A week ago, the same panel backed a vaccine from Pfizer Inc and German partner BioNTech SE, leading to an FDA emergency use authorization (EUA) a day later.

Following Hahn's comments, the Financial Times reported that the FDA had decided to approve Moderna's vaccine candidate on an emergency basis. It cited people close to the process and added that the emergency approval will be granted in coming days.

The FDA and Moderna did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the Financial Times report.

The FDA is expected to grant EUA late on Thursday or Friday.

It would provide more hope to a nation that has lost more than 300,000 lives to COVID-19 - including a one-day high of 3,580 deaths on Wednesday - while record numbers of patients threaten to overwhelm U.S. hospitals and healthcare workers.

"To go from having a (genetic) sequence of a virus in January to having two vac-

cines available in December is a remarkable achievement," said Dr. James Hildreth, chief executive of Meharry Medical College, who voted to recommend the vaccine for emergency use.

The one abstention came from Dr. Michael Kurilla, who works at the National Institutes of Health and felt blanket authorization for those 18 and older was too broad.

"I'm not convinced that for all of those age groups the benefits do actually outweigh the risk. And I would prefer to see it more targeted towards people at high risk of serious and life threatening COVID disease," he said.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told CNBC on Thursday that 5.9 million doses of the Moderna vaccine have been allotted for states and large cities and were ready to ship nationwide.

The vaccines are not a panacea, however, as they will take months to roll out to a nation where the virus is running rampant and public health measures such as social distancing and mask wearing are being rejected by large parts of the population.

EASIER TO TRANSPORT AND STORE

Moderna's vaccine does not require specialized ultra-cold freezers or vast quantities of dry ice, unlike Pfizer's vaccine which needs to be shipped and stored at -70 Celsius (-94 F), making it easier to supply rural and remote areas.

Moderna said on Thursday it had expanded the vaccine's handling guidance to allow it to be moved locally in a liquid state at standard refrigerated temperatures. In some cases, Moderna said, this could be the only practical way to move it to clinics or



A small shopping basket filled with vials labeled "COVID-19 - Coronavirus Vaccine" and a medical syringe are placed on a Moderna logo in this illustration taken November 29, 2020. REUTERS

remote locations.

U.S. officials have said they expect to have 40 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines by the end of the year - enough to inoculate 20 million people. Both vaccines were about 95% effective at preventing illness in pivotal clinical trials with no serious safety issues.

The first wave of doses are expected to be earmarked for healthcare workers who treat COVID-19 patients and vulnerable residents and staff of nursing homes. The Moderna vaccine, based on new synthetic messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, is administered in two shots about 28 days apart. The Pfizer/BioNTech shot is also an mRNA vaccine.

Documents prepared by FDA scientists and released ahead of the meeting, said a two-dose regimen of the Moderna vaccine was highly effective in preventing COVID-19 and did not raise any specific safety issues.

There were no cases of severe COVID-19 among those who got the vaccine in the trial versus 30 such cases in the placebo group, which could be significant as hospital intensive care units fill up with infected patients.

The United States in August entered a \$1.5 billion pact with Moderna to acquire 100 million doses of its vaccine.

About 20 million doses are expected to be delivered this month, with the rest of the initial purchase coming in the first quarter of next year. Last week, Moderna agreed to deliver an additional 100 million doses in the second quarter.

In the global race to produce highly effective vaccines against the coronavirus, the Massachusetts-based biotech company is reaching the finish line ahead of some much larger rivals such as AstraZeneca Plc and Johnson & Johnson.

An emergency meeting of a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory panel is expected to follow the FDA's authorization of Moderna's vaccine with its official recommendation of its use for the U.S. public.

Following that, state and local public health authorities will begin administering the first doses.

Agencies

European leaders in self-quarantine after Macron tests positive for COVID-19

BRUSSELS

A HOST of European leaders are self-isolating after contact with French President Emmanuel Macron, who tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday.

Macron (pictured) "will isolate himself for seven days" but "will continue to work and carry out his activities remotely," the French presidency said in a statement.

The 42-year-old French president attended a European Union summit in Brussels last week and an event organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD) in Paris on Monday. Following his diagnosis, several other European leaders also rushed into isolation.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who met Macron on Monday during the OECD event, will be under self-quarantine until Dec. 24, the Prime Minister's Office said in a communique on Thursday.

"He will suspend all of his activities scheduled for the coming days in accordance with sanitary protocols," read the communique, adding that the prime minister would also "undertake a diagnostic test to know his sit-



uation and then depending on the results, to decide his agenda for the coming days."

European Council President Charles Michel, who had lunch with Macron on Monday, also

went into self-quarantine on Thursday, Barend Leyts, the spokesperson for Michel, tweeted. Michel's self-quarantine is a precautionary measure as he is not considered to have come into close contact with Macron, and he tested negative on Tuesday during a routine test, Leyts added.

OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said on Thursday that he was also quarantining. "My thoughts are with President Emmanuel Macron for a speedy recovery," Gurría said on Twitter.

"In light of his involvement

in the OECD's 60th anniversary on Monday and following medical protocols, I am quarantining and testing. All relevant steps are being taken to safeguard the wellbeing of guests and staff," he added.

Meanwhile, Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa has been in self-quarantine following close contact with Macron. Costa tested negative on Thursday.

He will remain in "preventive prophylactic isolation" and do another test in the next few days, according to a statement from his office. **Xinhua**

UK PM says post-Brexit trade talks with EU in 'serious situation'

LONDON

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson has underlined the post-Brexit trade negotiations between Britain and the European Union (EU) were now "in a serious situation," a Downing Street spokesperson said Thursday.

"The Prime Minister underlined that the negotiations were now in a serious situation. Time was very short and it now looked very likely that an agreement would not be reached unless the EU position changed substantially," said the spokesperson in a statement issued af-

ter a phone call between Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen Thursday evening.

Britain was "making every effort to accommodate reasonable EU requests on the level playing field, but even though the gap had narrowed some fundamental areas remained difficult," said the statement. "On fisheries he (Johnson) stressed that the UK could not accept a situation where it was the only sovereign country in the world not to be able to control access to its own waters for an extended period and to be faced with fisheries quotas



which hugely disadvantaged its own industry," said the statement. "The EU's position in this area was simply not reasonable and if there was to be an agreement it needed to shift significantly," it added.

The prime minister repeated that little time was left and "if no agreement could be reached, the UK and the EU would part

as friends, with the UK trading with the EU on Australian-style terms," said the statement. Australia trades with the EU largely on the World Trade Organization (WTO) terms. "The leaders agreed to remain in close contact, said the statement. For her part, von der Leyen said on Twitter that the EU "welcomed substantial progress on many issues. However, big differences remain to be bridged, in particular on fisheries. Bridging them will be very challenging." "Negotiations will continue tomorrow," she said.

Earlier Thursday, British Cabinet Office Minister Michael

Gove said the British government "will be doing everything" to secure a good post-Brexit trade deal with the EU. However, Gove reaffirmed that Britain would walk away if a trade deal was not "in the best interests of our country."

Also on Thursday, EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier noted that "good progress" has been made in the trade negotiations. "Good progress, but last stumbling blocks remain. We will only sign a deal protecting EU interests and principles," he tweeted after updating European Parliament leaders on the negotiations. **Xinhua**

Nigerian security forces rescue more than 300 kidnapped schoolboys

KATSINA

SECURITY forces on Thursday rescued nearly 350 schoolboys who had been kidnapped in northwestern Nigeria and taken into a vast forest, the governor of Katsina state said, bringing relief to many families.

It was not immediately clear whether all the missing boys had been recovered.

"I think we have recovered most of the boys," Governor Aminu Bello Masari said in a televised interview with state channel NTA.

Hours earlier a video started circulating online purportedly showing Islamist militants from Boko Haram with some of the boys. Reuters was unable to immediately verify the authenticity of the footage, the boys, or who released it.

The abduction gripped a country already incensed by widespread insecurity, and evoked memories of Boko Haram's 2014 kidnapping of more than 270 schoolgirls in the northeastern town of Chibok.

Last Friday night, gunmen raided the Government Science Secondary School in Katsina on motorbikes and marched the boys into Rugu forest, in the biggest such incident in the lawless region in recent years.

Masari said a total of 344 boys held in the forest had been freed in neighboring Zamfara state. He did not say how many had been missing or how they were freed.

He said security forces had cordoned off the area where the boys were being held and were given instructions not to shoot.

"We thank God that they took our advice and not a single shot was fired," he said.

The boys were on their way back to Katsina and would be medically examined and reunited with their families yesterday, Masari said.

Retired health worker Shuaibu Kankara, whose 13-year-old son Annas Shuaibu was among the kidnapped boys, could not contain his joy at their release.

The governor of Katsina state said a total of 344 boys held in the forest had been freed in neighboring Zamfara state. He did not say how many had been missing or how they were freed.

"I am so happy," he said. "We are so grateful to the governor of Katsina and all those who worked hard to secure their release."

His only concern now was reuniting with his son, he said. President Muhammadu Buhari welcomed the students' release and asked for patience while his administration dealt with security issues.

"We have a lot of work to do," he said in a statement but added, "We will deal with all that."

The abduction was awkward for Buhari, who comes from Katsina and has repeatedly said that Boko Haram has been "technically defeated".

Harrowing video

Boko Haram had claimed responsibility for the kidnapping in an unverified audio recording.

The video, which featured Boko Haram's emblem, showed a group of boys in a wood pleading, "Help us, help us." The father of one of the missing boys, who gave only his first name Umar, said his son, Shamsu Ibrahim, was one of the boys who is heard speaking in the video.

"All the armies that have come here to help us, please send them back. They can do nothing to help," the boy says.

Boko Haram has a history of turning captives into jihadist fighters. If its claims are true, its involvement in northwestern Nigeria marks a geographical expansion in its activities. But it could have purchased the boys from local criminal gangs with which it has been building ties.

Earlier on Thursday, protesters marched in the state capital, also called Katsina, under a banner reading #BringBackOurBoys as pressure mounted on the government to improve security.

"Northern Nigeria has been abandoned at the mercy of vicious insurgents, bandits, kidnappers, armed robbers, rapists and an assortment of hardened criminals," said Balarabe Ruffin of the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG), which focuses on the welfare of northern Nigerians. **Agencies**



Usama Aminu, 17 year-old, a kidnapped student of the Government Science Secondary School who escaped from bandits is seen during an interview in Kankara, Nigeria, on Wednesday. (PHOTO / AP)

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that he hopes to overcome problems in relations with the United States with the advent of the Biden administration.

"We expect all problems which emerged, or at least some of them, will be ironed out under the new administration," Putin said during his annual news conference in Moscow.

The Russian president, who didn't congratulate President-elect Joe Biden until Tuesday, when Biden received Electoral College confirmation, spoke of his expectations for relations with the US under the new administration.

"We presume that the newly elected US president will understand what is going on. He is a person who has experience in both domestic and foreign policy," he said.

Putin hopes for improved relations with Washington

Amid the restrictions due to the pandemic, Putin's customary year-end news conference, in which he also fielded questions on the economy and the pandemic, was held online this year.

Putin answered questions from his residence in the Moscow suburb of Novo-Ogaryovo, and journalists from state, foreign and regional media posed their queries by video link from one of six centers across the country. Putin also answered a number of questions from ordinary Russian citizens.

The Russian president, who didn't congratulate President-elect Joe Biden until Tuesday, when Biden received Electoral College confirmation, spoke of his expectations for relations with the US under the new administration.

The unemployment rate in Russia has risen

to 6.3 percent, Putin said, adding that the nation's GDP had contracted by 3.6 percent, which was "less than in all leading European countries and the US".

Meanwhile, Russia's industrial production slipped by 3 percent, mainly due to the agreement in April between the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and 10 non-OPEC members, including Russia, to reduce crude oil production in response to rapidly increasing global oil inventories in the first quarter of 2020.

"Due to the OPEC+ deal, we have cut production, which affected Russia's total results," Putin explained. In the meantime, real incomes in Russia would fall by about 3 percent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, Putin said.

He said that no healthcare system in the

world was prepared for the pandemic, but Russia had fared adequately.

On Thursday, Russia reported 28,214 new cases of coronavirus infection, bringing its total to over 2.76 million. According to the president, Russia managed to win some time in order to fight the infection thanks to a swift reaction at the very beginning of the pandemic.

"We reacted at once at the border and won time in order to begin active preparations for the moment when it came to us in a large amount and scale." He said the year 2020 could not be called "bad". "It's like weather. Is there good or bad weather? It's just weather. And it's the same with the year. There are pros and cons, like in life." Putin hailed the effectiveness of Russia's coronavirus vaccine Sputnik V, claiming

that it has a success rate of 96 to 97 percent.

When Putin, 68, was asked if he's been vaccinated with Sputnik V, he said he hasn't because it's not recommended for people over 60 but added that he will "definitely get vaccinated as soon as it becomes possible".

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China creates poverty-alleviation miracle in human history

By Gu Zhongyang, Chang Qin

“WITH my income increasing and burden relieved, my life now is just great!”

That was said by Guo Yufa, a farmer from Xinghe county, China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region. According to him, most of his wife's medical expenses are reimbursed, and his children are enjoying free education and financial aid. Besides, the family also gets poverty-alleviation subsidies, which enable it to develop poultry raising, a business that earned them nearly 50,000 yuan (\$7,362) last year.

Zhang Xianhua, an impoverished resident from Qijiafang village, Kangbao county, north China's Hebei province told People's Daily that her life in the mountains before were tortuous, but after moving to the relocation communities in the township, she believes her future is prosperous. Zhang is now a sanitation worker in the community, and her husband a warehouse manager. Living in the community, they don't even have to go out for grocery shopping and medical services.

The stories of Guo and Zhang are taking place across China, constituting a perfect “answer sheet” of China's poverty-alleviation. During the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), China



The house of Lu Yulan, a resident from Houwu village, Moganshan township, east China's Zhejiang province is being renovated, July 13. (Photo by Yao Haixiang/People's Daily Online)

has steadfastly implemented targeted poverty-alleviation policies with more investment. From 2015 to 2019, the registered poor population in the country shrank from 55.75 million to 5.51 million, and the number of impoverished counties was also decreasing. The incidence of poverty dropped from 5.7 percent to 0.6 percent. Recently, China has removed all its 832 impoverished counties nationwide from the poverty list. All rural residents falling below China's current poverty line have been lifted out of poverty. Absolute poverty, which has haunted the Chinese nation for thousands of years, will soon

become a thing of the past. This will be a great miracle in human history. He Poyi, a villager from Ekeliu village, Fugong county, southwest China's Yunnan province who had moved out of the mountains and started a new life, told People's Daily that it was the frequent conversations launched between him and poverty-alleviation working teams that put away his worries. “Now I can work near home and live a good life,” he said.

To relocate all impoverished residents, batches of officials trekked over mountains and stationed in mountainous villages. “Thanks to the strong support of targeted poverty-alleviation poli-

cies, we will complete a historic transition from suffering extreme regional poverty to shaking off poverty for all the residents.” During the past five years, officials went to the village in droves to complete the “last kilometer” of targeted poverty alleviation. The average annual growth of poverty relief fund dispensed by the central government has been kept above 20 percent, and a series of unusual policies were implemented to solve deep-rooted problems. From 2015 to 2019, over 11 million poor people were lifted out of poverty each year.

In the past five years, the income of impoverished residents witnessed a large increase, and



A villager harvests peaches in Dongjiuzhai village, Dongjiuzhai township, Zunhua, north China's Hebei province, Sept. 24. (Photo by Liu Mancang/People's Daily Online)

problems related to people's access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing have been generally solved. According to statistics, more than 90 percent of the country's registered poor residents benefited from industry-driven poverty alleviation and pro-employment policies. Over two thirds of them shook off poverty by working out-of-town and developing industries. From 2015 to 2019, the growth of per capita disposable income of farmers in impoverished regions outran the national average, and the average annual growth of net income of registered impoverished residents

hit 30.2 percent.

“The village medical center now has most of the common medicines. We don't have to go out to see the doctors for trivial health problems, and we only have to shoulder 10 percent of the total expense,” said Wang Baolian, an impoverished resident from Shutai village, Bazhong, southwest China's Sichuan province.

Between 2016 and 2020, impoverished regions saw prominent improvement in basic public services, and basic health services, compulsory education and housing have been guaranteed for impoverished residents.

All villages established their

own health centers; teaching conditions of 108,000 compulsory education schools have been improved; and all relocation communities have been constructed, bettering living environment for over 9.6 million impoverished people.



China establishes monitoring and assistance mechanism to prevent reoccurrence of poverty

By Wang Hao, Shi Ziqiang

“THANKS to the policy of the government, I feel more secure about getting rid of poverty,” said Fu Huaiqin, a resident in Heshunhui village, Weixian county, north China's Hebei province.

The man was diagnosed with a bladder tumor last year. Although medical insurance was able to cover a part of his expenses, he still needed to pay a high cost of over 10,000 yuan (about \$1,491) himself. His family, which had just shaken off poverty, was faced with the risk of getting into debt.

Fu's predicament triggered a warning of the big data system of Weixian county preventing the reoccurrence of poverty.

Staff members with the local healthcare department verified his situation, provided a relief worth of 7,000 yuan for him, and advanced a series of measures concerning healthcare and employment, preventing Fu's family from falling into poverty again.

Preventing the reoccurrence of poverty is an important part of China's poverty alleviation. Preliminary statistics suggest that nearly 2 million people who have been lifted out of poverty are at risk of returning to poverty, and nearly 3 million of the population living barely above the poverty line could possibly be impoverished.

Local governments in China have actively explored and put into place a mechanism to effectively prevent people from falling back to poverty, and rolled out targeted measures to consolidate the results of poverty alleviation and ensure that the poverty alleviation goals will be achieved with high quality.

Both poverty-stricken households and those barely living above the poverty line are the main focus of attention in poverty reduction. Therefore, to prevent the reoccurrence of poverty calls for extra efforts for these groups.

The State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development has specified that family is the basic unit of the mechanism to prevent reoccurrence of poverty.



Photo taken on October 13 shows farmers pick up mushrooms in a greenhouse of a family farm in Bozhou, east China's Anhui province. (Photo by Liu Qinli/People's Daily Online)

The mechanism monitors registered poverty-stricken households that have shaken off poverty and yet are still faced with risks of returning to poverty, as well as marginal households with an income slightly higher than that of registered poverty-stricken households.

East China's Anhui Province has identified 61,279 marginal households and formulated 206,600 measures to provide assistance. Through well-targeted support, the province has already eliminated the risk of falling into poverty again for 18,029 of them.

By collecting data on the targets through the monitoring mechanism and receiving warning of possible risks, China is trying to help those in need as soon as possible so that they won't return to poverty.

The poverty alleviation data platform of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region has col-

lected the dynamic information about more than 160,000 poverty-stricken residents, over 2.92 million people who have been lifted out of poverty and 370,000 marginal population facing risks of falling into poverty. Their income levels are shown in four colors, red, orange, yellow and green, which indicate their corresponding risks of slipping back into poverty.

Weixian county, Guantao county and other areas in Hebei province have established a unified network concerning medical insurance, civil affairs, and emergency management, allowing the local government to accurately identify residents that have spent a large amount of money because of diseases or disasters and thus provide timely capital assistance.

To prevent residents from falling into or returning to poverty, it is crucial to improve the self-development capacity of the poor people, help them



Workers make uppers at a poverty alleviation workshop in Nujiang Lisu autonomous prefecture, southwest China's Yunnan province, October 14. (Photo by Liang Zhiqiang/People's Daily Online)

secure jobs and ensure sustained and stable income growth for them.

“I now earn over 2,000 yuan per month, plus a subsidy of 300 yuan. The job is easy and the income is basically the same as those villagers working out-of-town,” said Wang Zhaoxia, a resident in Tai'an village, Lu'an, Anhui province.

She once tried to secure a job in the cities, but failed as she lacked professional skills. Last year, she participated in training sessions provided by the village and found a job in a poverty alleviation workshop near her home.

She now processes wire harness for washing machines and becomes more confident about her future.

By adopting various measures such as vocational training, poverty alleviation collaboration and workshops, Anhui provinces has helped over 1.6 million poor residents secure a job and prevented them from returning to

poverty. China has also woven a strong security net to prevent residents from falling into poverty due to illness, disasters or education.

Provinces in the country have taken a series of measures to ensure that those who are incapable of working are provided with aid and guarantees and that families which fall into or return to poverty because of illnesses, disability, disasters and other accidents could receive timely assistance.

By developing industries, China has ensured long-term and effective results in poverty alleviation.

The country has implemented more than 980,000 industrial projects in poverty-stricken areas, covering 92 percent of the households in poverty.

As of the end of August, the national poverty alleviation projects, leading enterprises in poverty alleviation and workshops for poverty reduction had fully resumed work.

'Cliff village' in SW China's Sichuan shakes off poverty

By Cheng Shijie

A fleet of tandem trucks carrying wind turbine blades moved slowly along a winding mountain road from Xichang, capital of Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture of southwest China's Sichuan province, to Zhaojue county of the prefecture.

With one ends of the blades being fixed to hydraulic mechanism on the trucks and the other ends pointing to the sky, these blades, which were more than 40 meters long, rotated as the trucks inched forward and created quite a spectacle as they deftly avoided obstacles and trees along the road.

Abu, a driver of the Yi ethnic group, has long been familiar with such scenes.

In recent years, Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture, which has been known for its high mountains and precipitous mountain paths, has gradually got access to tap water, electricity, roads, and the Internet.

Impressive spectacles of engineering are easily seen in the prefecture

as many facilities that used to be unimaginable to the local people have become an indispensable part of their everyday lives since they bid farewell to poverty.

The experience of Atulieer village in Zhiermo township of Zhaojue county is the best example of the great changes in Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture. In recent years, the village has witnessed how people walked an unusual path out of poverty and shifted from rattan ladders to steel ladders and then stairs.

According to local villagers, their ancestors migrated to the village as they found the place has pleasant climate and a natural environment suitable for living, farming, and raising livestock, and that the mountain paths, though steep, can help protect them from banditry and wars.

A special group of people have since lived a confined and self-sufficient life in the village for six or seven generations.

As times change, the “land of idyllic beauty” in the eyes of their ancestors gradually became a barrier blocking people's expectations of a better life.



Photo shows children climbing the steel ladders of the “cliff village” under the guidance of parents in a cultural tourism project launched by Atulieer village in January 2018. (Photo by Rao Guojun/People's Daily Online)

With an elevation drop of about 800 meters between the village and the bottom of the cliff it is located atop, Atulieer village is called “cliff village”.

In the past, when there were no

roads, Internet, or stable power supply in the village, local people lived in adobe houses and relied on the weather for food. Besides, the only access from Atulieer village to the outside world was slippery rattan lad-

ders, which made it extremely difficult for villagers to deliver goods and materials to the village or even get out of the village.

During the annual meetings of China's top legislature and its top political advisory body, or the “two sessions” in 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid special attention to the newly-built steel ladders in the “cliff village” at the deliberation of Sichuan delegation.

The new path is made of welded steel tubes and consists of a total of 2,556 steps. It is 2.8 kilometers long and 1.5 meters wide. With steel tubes penetrating deep into the rock wall, and every joint firmly welded, the steel ladders can remain absolutely still in strong winds.

Thanks to the steel ladders, the road up and down the mountain has become much easier. In less than a year, the village got access to electricity, the Internet, and 4G signals, and enjoyed closer ties with the outside world.

As more and more people came to the “cliff village” to experience the steel ladders and visit the village atop

a cliff, Atulieer village has seen rapid growth in its tourism revenue.

In 2019, the “cliff village” received nearly 100,000 person-times of tourists, generating an income of nearly 1 million yuan (about \$148,900) for villagers.

In May 2020, 84 households of the “cliff village” were gradually relocated to houses with stairs at a poverty-relief resettlement site. The resettlement caught the attention of foreign media.

For villagers of Atulieer village, life surrounded by the clouds is over, said an article published on CNN.

The resettlement site is at Nanping community near the central area of Zhaojue county. The new houses are spacious and bright, while the community is clean and tidy. In addition, the community also holds popular cultural and sports activities for villagers on a regular basis.



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, Hassan Abbas.

Government calls for submission of sports plans before December 31

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE government has set December 31 this year as a deadline for receiving plans, guidelines and fixtures from sports associations which will send athletes to various countries to participate in international games next year.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, Hassan Abbas, issued the directive in Dar es Salaam recently, pointing out the move has been reached to enable the government to examine the guidelines carefully.

"The government now wants to be close to the country's flag bearers in a variety of sport disciplines by giving them a helping hand for them to have adequate preparations before they fly out to represent the country in major competitions," he disclosed.

"Gone are the days when we used to hear that a certain sports association in Tanzania fielded an athlete in a particular international event and the athlete finished 99th out of 100 competitors" he said.

He added: "For now, the government through the National Sports Council (NSC) would like to have on the desk plans, fixtures and budgets for all sport federations whose teams will battle it out in international games next year to avoid excuses when the teams fail to do well in such contests."

Abbas, moreover, noted that if a certain sports association would like to have athletes travel to a particular

country for further preparations before heading to the competitions, it will be the government's duty to ensure that enough resources are provided for them.

He stated: "For example, if we have a team which will compete in Olympic Games, we need to know their plans, how they will prepare for the event and their budget, as it is the case for a team which will compete in Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). We deserve to have key details prior to the event for us to gather the required resources."

"All these are encouraged so that if we win, we should win together and, if we lose, we should lose together, this is what we want to see happen as the government collaborates with private stakeholders," he narrated.

In another development, Abbas disclosed that they have succeeded to open a Dar es Salaam branch for the Malya College of Sports Development, which will be located at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

He added: "We have opted to open a branch for Malya College of Sports Development in the city to enable sport stakeholders to upgrade their skills and we have started with short term courses but as time goes, we will embrace long term ones."

"Previously, I was privileged to give a lecture to spokespersons of clubs on what they ought to do when executing their responsibilities through making sure that they do not go beyond the requirements of their profession," he noted.

When BBC wakes up officials to reflect on Dar's state of athletics

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

A TIMELY awakening may have been administered on a section of top sports administrators in Tanzania to focus on the parlous state of athletics countrywide, especially the disappearance of the country in the field, especially middle distance running.

Tanzania was a respected, if not upper level participant, in Commonwealth Games and All Africa Games in the past, and even won an Olympic Games silver medal in 1980 - the difference being a US-led boycott of the Moscow Games owing to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. That was 40 years ago, and Tanzania has never broached Olympic Games' honours ever since.

The moment of awakening was a recent rapid interview on BBC World Service of a top ranking Athletics Tanzania (AT) official, Anthony Mtaka, the association's president, who is also Regional Commissioner for Simiyu.

Checking online the way the AT top official is followed or what preoccupies him on a day to day basis, it is evident that the RC position is a hands on portfolio with plenty of challenges, leaving him with little time to conduct AT activities.

Many will say the day to day part falls on the AT secretary general, but ordinarily the chairman (or president) must also afford plenty of time for consultations for all this to work.

What is noticeable in this profile alone is an amateurish situation where the top official(s) of athletics are not capable of earning a living in that occupation, and conduct themselves as



Tanzanian marathoner, Alphonse Simbu, features in the 2017 London Marathon, which took place in London. Simbu finished fifth in the race.

amateurs helping the public with organizing athletics.

That is not the pedestal upon which Tanzania can gear up to battle for honours with virtually any country in Africa, let alone pace setters like Kenya or Ethiopia, and Uganda is not far behind.

Tanzania used to be a lower ranking member of that group, like Uganda, but our energy has since dissipated, and that is precisely what Mtaka was having to reflect upon, for a global audience.

There was light at the end of the tunnel in the manner in which the AT president answered the questions posed to him, especially on what should be done so that Tanzania does not continue slumbering in field athletics but wakes up.

To a good number of listeners the diagnosis

he made of the situation was fairly convincing and to the point, as to the difference between Tanzania and Kenya in grooming young athletes - even if perhaps his remarks did not go far enough.

There was a vital observation on the absence of training camps for athletes, which would presumably be open all the year round, relevant academies, etc.

A summary message that the AT top official left for local and regional listeners was that there is need for having athletics training camps, and especially in high altitude zones like Arusha and Manyara regions.

This is likely to have been the case before and hence nurtured many good runners, the more notable of whom have also had opportunity to preside over athletics organization

including the Tanzania Olympic Committee but to no avail.

They have not had the resource basis to actually work out a viable grassroots encouragement of athletics, and facilitating constant exposure to high altitude training, competition, etc.

How far there is zeal or 'mental energy' with the current authorities to change the situation is a different matter, as this was not pointedly clear or visibly emphatic in the AT president's remarks, but there was an indication of movement in the right direction.

Mtaka referred to a pointed assertion by top government spokesman, Hassan Abbas, that the national athletics team is not simply the prerogative of athletics authorities but ought to involve the government as well. That definitely is a

change from the posture we are used to, where it is athletics organizations that seek out funds, but do not have what it takes to do so, as there has to be something in exchange for investors to put up money, but nothing tangible in athletics is attractive enough for the purpose.

But what will be the breadth of involvement of the public authorities remains a moot point.

Shall it reach down to grassroots facilities or remain entirely at national team level?

Mtaka's remarks were either too brief or too specific to include reflections on possible professionalization of the sector, which means obtaining private investors and benefactors to delve into the matter.

For that matter there are school owners with excellent facilities, for instance the Black Rhino Academy in Karatu, which lately hosted the CECFA U-20 men's championship where our team reached the final but lost 4-1 to Uganda.

With the right incentives, any English medium academy can put up a Department of Athletics with a camp that has paying invitees from all over the world, capable of repaying the costs of the facility.

The magic wand has always been tax waivers, a sports academy nurturing young talent is a contribution to national prestige and dignity, but a blanket outlook has always applied to cream off whatever can be garnered from private schools, like any other business.

How far Mtaka and others are in a position to convince the relevant authorities as to a proactive approach to facilities is a different issue. It was not aired.

Johnson masters annus horribilis to return to the top

LONDON

WHILE 2020 was an annus horribilis for the vast majority of people, Dustin Johnson was a rare exception.

In the year COVID-19 brought the world to its knees, the American reclaimed his place as golf's leading player, shrugged off his own brush with the virus, and won the rescheduled Masters in stunning style.

The pandemic decimated the golfing calendar, with dozens of events cancelled, including the Open Championship, the sport's oldest major, which was not held for the first time since 1945.

The PGA Championship, won by Collin Morikawa in August, was the only major played in the 2019-20 season. The Masters and U.S. Open were moved to the end of 2020 and made part of the 2020-21 season, with the Ryder Cup also pushed to next year.

Johnson, who cemented his place as one of the best of his generation, won the second major title of his career despite testing positive for the virus a month before teeing off at Augusta National in November.

He emerged from golf's three-month hiatus in sparkling form, winning the Travelers Championship when play resumed in June with fans barred. He also led the PGA Championship after 54 holes before settling



Golf - The Masters - Augusta National Golf Club - Augusta, Georgia, U.S. - November 15, 2020 Dustin Johnson of the U.S. is presented with the green jacket by Tiger Woods of the U.S. after winning The Masters at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, U.S. in this November 15, 2020 file photo. REUTERS

for a share of second place.

Johnson regained the

world's top ranking after winning the Northern Trust Cup at East Lake in Septem-

ber, and was named PGA Tour Player of the Year for a second time.

Yet the 36-year-old saved his best for last, winning the Masters with a 20-under-par 268 total to set a tournament-record low score.

"I know 2020 has been a really strange year, but it's been good to me," Johnson said. "As a kid, you dream of putting on the green jacket."

While Augusta gave Johnson the chance to fulfil his childhood dream, it proved a nightmare for Tiger Woods.

The 15-time major champion's hopes of defending the title he won to such acclaim last year ended in despair when he struck a 10 on the par-three 12th hole on the final day.

Woods also missed the cut at the rescheduled U.S. Open in September and finished in a tie for 37th place at the PGA Championship.

THE INCREDIBLE BULK Johnson showed men-

tal toughness in 2020, but Bryson DeChambeau took a different route to success, spending lockdown in the gym and packing on about 30 pounds (14 kg) of muscle.

The hard work resulted in a powerful new swing that helped DeChambeau bludgeon his way to a six-shot victory at the U.S. Open for his maiden major title.

The 27-year-old's brawny approach did not work quite as well at the Masters, however, where he finished well back in the pack despite arriving as the favourite.

Across the pond, Englishman Lee Westwood ended the year as the European Tour's top golfer for the third time after winning the Race to Dubai.

Four of the five Ladies Professional Golf Association majors went ahead, with the Evian Championship cancelled, and the women's tour crowned a first-time major champion at each of them.

Sophia Popov started the trend by winning the British Open in August to become Germany's first female major winner, before South Korea's Mirim Lee continued it with victory at the ANA Inspiration the following month.

Lee's compatriot Kim Sei-young won the KPMG Women's PGA Championship in October and Kim A Lim, also from South Korea, pulled off a thrilling come-from-behind victory at the U.S. Women's Open in December.

Golf mourned several deaths in 2020, including 13-times major champion Mickey Wright (85), the only LPGA golfer to hold all major titles at the same time, and former Ryder Cup player and commentator Peter Alliss (89).

The sport also lost course designer Pete Dye (94) and 20-times PGA Tour winner Doug Sanders (86).

REUTERS

FIFA's The Best: Lewandowski beats Messi, Ronaldo for best men's player

LONDON

BAYERN Munich forward Robert Lewandowski has won The Best FIFA Men's Player of the Year for 2020, beating Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo.

Lewandowski, 32, joins Luka Modric (2018) as the only players other than Lionel Messi (6) and Cristiano Ronaldo (5) to have won the FIFA Men's Player of the Year since 2008.

He also led Poland to Euro 2020 qualification and was named the 2019-20 UEFA Men's Player of the Year in October.

"To win such an award and share this title with [previous winners] Messi and Ronaldo is unbelievable and means so much to me," Lewandowski said. "I am very proud and happy. This is a great day for me, and also for my club and colleagues."

"This award also belongs to my colleagues, the coach and Bayern in general. It is an incredible feeling, a lot of emotions."

Manchester City and England defender Lucy Bronze won The Best FIFA Women's Player of the Year. She is the first player, male or female, from England to land the honour from FIFA.

"I don't have the words right now to explain how I'm feeling," Bronze said. "If there's anything 2020 has taught us to appreciate every moment you've got, not look too far ahead and live in the here and now."

"I appreciate it more than ever. I'll remember this moment forever, for the rest of my life."

Bayern's Manuel Neuer won the award for best goalkeeper -- becoming the first German goalie to take home the prize -- while Son Heung-Min was handed the Puskas Award for the best goal with his stunning end-to-end run and strike in Tottenham's 5-0 win over Burnley on Dec. 7, 2019.

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp was named Coach of the Year for the second time. He also won it in 2019, making him the first man to win the award twice. Netherlands manager Sarina Wiegman was given the women's Coach of the Year award, also for the second time, joining Jill Ellis (two) and Silvia Neid (three) as the only multi-time female winners.

FIFA's The Best award is the rebirth of the FIFA World Player of the Year award, which ran parallel to the Ballon d'Or award from 1991 to 2009. The two awards then merged to create the FIFA Ballon d'Or from 2010 to 2015 before FIFA The Best was reintroduced in 2016.

The winners, who were voted on by selected members of the media, national team captains and coaches as well as fans, were announced via a virtual ceremony on Thursday.

Lewandowski, whose 55 goals helped Bayern win the Treble in 2019-20, said he was disappointed the Ballon d'Or award had been cancelled due to COVID-19. But he added his first FIFA The Best award, edging Ronaldo, who has won it twice, and Messi, who won in 2019.

(Agencies)

Premier League pretenders seek to prove title credentials

LONDON

LIVERPOOL top the Premier League table but the defending champions -- like all of the traditional big guns -- are finding it tough to pull away from an eager pack of contenders.

The stumbles of the "Big Six" have allowed a clutch of unfashionable clubs to dream of overthrowing the established order as Leicester did so dramatically in the 2015/2016 season.

AFP Sport looks at three of the teams who might be eyeing a fairytale end to the 2020/21 campaign, with a third of the season gone.

Saints go marching on?

Southampton manager Ralph Hasenhuttl, dubbed the "Alpine Klopp" after Liverpool's manager Jurgen Klopp, looked more suited to the foothills than the peaks when his side were embarrassed 9-0 by Leicester last year.

But they are now third in the table, just four points off the top, ahead of Saturday's match at home against a Manchester City side who have yet to find their rhythm this season.

Southampton, playing with style and confidence, will feel they can get the better of City and keep themselves on the shoulders of Liverpool after losing just one of their past 11 matches in the Premier League.

Hasenhuttl's side failed to capitalise against 10-man Arsenal on Wednesday, settling for a point in a 1-1 draw after taking the lead but he was sanguine about the result.

"Unbeaten again, this is the most important thing and now we step up again," said the Austrian. "We are still 10 points above Arsenal. This explains everything."

Toffees show stickability

Everton fans have waited even longer than their city rivals Liverpool did to win the English top-flight -- the last time they were champions was during their golden era under Howard Kendall in 1987.

AFP

How Prem bosses coached their teams through the silence

By Julien Laurens, ESPN Correspondent

JURGEN Klopp's staff and players will surely never forget it. Back on Sept. 20 when Liverpool went to Chelsea in the Premier League and walked away 2-0 winners, the absence of fans at Stamford Bridge, like in pretty much every stadium around the world, gave us a great insight of what happens on and off the pitch.

As half-time approached between the English champions and Frank Lampard's new-look Blues, Andreas Christensen was sent off for rugby tackling Sadio Mane after intervention from the VAR. As referee Paul Tierney waved the red card, having originally issued a yellow, some of the Liverpool staff and subs, who sat in the stands behind the bench, celebrated the dismissal.

Klopp didn't appreciate it.

"Are you mad?" he said, turning around to face the culprits. "We don't do that, you understand me? We don't clap when someone from the other team gets sent off!"

The United Kingdom's three-tiered system allows for fans to be at games depending on positivity rates with COVID-19 testing. Football will slowly return to something approaching normal and boast real fans, along with the organic sounds, in the stands. However, London will move into Tier 3 on Wednesday, which means fans will again be absent from games at Chelsea, Arsenal, Fulham, Tottenham and West Ham having been allowed back for a couple of weeks.

Eventually, the fans will all come back. It'll mean an end to what we've seen over the past few months where, like in Klopp's case, we were able to hear pretty much everything that was being said on the pitch and in the dugout.

Usually, this Klopp incident would have been missed by journalists or pundits given that the noise from fans would have drowned out the conversation. Yet at the Bridge that day, his loud voice could be heard clearly, almost echoing in the stadium.

Klopp has always been very animated on the touchline, intensely participating in every Liverpool game from his technical area. He shouts a lot at his players, though all is forgiven at the end of the game. Klopp is, in a sense, like the Dura-cell bunny. His big thing (other than not celebrating an opposition player getting sent off) is the press. He gets into such a state when he encourages his team to press high, put the opposition under pressure and either recover the ball or force a mistake. He celebrates it almost as much as he does a Liverpool goal.

Without fans, you could hear a lot of encouragement from the former Dortmund boss, like "Outstanding, Gini," about Liverpool's all-action midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum -- something we heard a lot during Liverpool's 1-1 draw at Manchester



Jurgen Klopp is known for being one of the more vocal managers in the Premier League, but his instructions are clear to everyone without a full stadium to drown him out. (Agencies)

City on Nov. 8. He's also quick, and vocal, with criticism: whenever Jordan Henderson takes too long to play the ball forward, Klopp shouts: "Come on Hendo, what are you doing?" Meanwhile, Alisson in goal always says the same thing to his defenders: "Keep on working!"

After Arsenal travelled to Anfield on Sept. 28, one of the Gunners players couldn't believe how much and how clearly Klopp could be heard. "I swear, even the people living in the houses around the stadium must be able to hear him," he said, laughing.

That evening, between Klopp and Mikel Arteta, it was a symphony of voices; like Klopp, Arteta never stops. He speaks to Alexandre Lacazette and Nicolas Pepe in French. "Allez Laca, vas-y, c'est bien!" ("Come on Laca, go ahead, that's good!") He talks to Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in Spanish -- "Auba, dentro, dentro!" ("inside, inside!" referring to his options in attack) -- and for Hector Bellerin, Dani Ceballos, Gabriel and Thomas Partey, too, using English with the rest of the squad. Of all the Premier League managers, Arteta is often the one coaching the most. "Come here," "move there," "drop deep," "pass it inside," "press," and "now you go" are all regular terms, delivered with big gestures and intensity.

When Granit Xhaka isn't suspended, Arteta can say he has another coach on the pitch too. The Swiss midfielder is his absolute relay. He tells all his teammates what to do, where to move, how to play. (Though he could use some of that organizational savvy on his own game, having been foolishly sent off in the recent defeat to Burnley.)

Against Liverpool, after Arsenal took the lead against the run of play at Anfield, we could hear Xhaka tell his teammates as they were celebrating Lacazette's goal: "We are not scared, we are not scared. We come here, we play, we are not scared!" A couple of minutes later, Liverpool levelled and went on to win 3-1, but the idea was there: Arteta wanted his team to go to the home of the champions and be brave, try to play out from the back and be authentic. Xhaka relayed the message.

Arsenal defender Rob Holding is usually quiet on the pitch, but against Wolves at the Emirates on Nov. 29, he was not happy with what he considered to be an Adama Traore dive, telling the referee "[Traore] is built like a brick s---house, how has he gone down like that?"

Some players who spoke to ESPN off the record referred to the scale of the changes without fans, given how their managers are able to be far more involved in the minute-by-minute action. "Before, you could catch something of what the manager would say but now, you and him both know that you hear every word he says," a Premier League player noted. "It is a nightmare! Now, the managers talk much more than before, more advice, criticism, shouting. It is so different."

Arteta confirmed it recently on Spanish radio: "Without attendance, we are lucky the players hear us more, but if you ask any player, I am sure they would like to hear us a lot less!" said the Arsenal manager, before commenting on his use of different languages.

Without fans in the stands, Spurs boss Jose Mourinho has been notably more vocal than his counterpart at Man City, Pep Guardiola. He has so much energy, whether encouraging his players or endlessly shouting at them, like when Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg would sit too deep in midfield against Chelsea in their dour 0-0 draw on Nov. 29. That said, Mourinho doesn't always get it right. There was an amusing moment in the North London derby against Arsenal on Nov. 6 when Mourinho shouted "back pass, back pass!" at the fourth referee after Ceballos passed the ball with his thigh to

Bernd Leno, before realising that it actually was allowed.

Guardiola has a different approach. He talks much more to his bench and his assistants than to his players. In the defeat at Tottenham a few weeks ago, he repeated three or four times to them: "How can we concede a goal like this?" after Son Heung-Min's opening goal during which his defence, especially Joao Cancelo, fell asleep.

When he does have a message to deliver, though, Guardiola is crystal clear with his team. In the 2-1 defeat at Chelsea back in June, everything was running through Kevin De Bruyne in midfield, meaning that every time one of the City players was on the ball, Pep shouted "Kevin, Kevin, Kevin!" to make sure the Belgian was the first option for a pass. Richard Wright, who used to be City's third goal-

keeper and is now an assistant goalkeeping coach, shouts on a loop in each and every game "be ready" and "can we squeeze?"

Another big change without big crowds is how much more the subs are getting involved. During the Manchester United vs. Arsenal game on Nov. 1, midfielder Nemanja Matic started warming up in the 30th minute along the touchline behind the goal. He never stopped talking and was dabbling in some coaching, more focused on repositioning his United teammates than actually warming himself up. He told Lindelof: "Vic, tell Fred to come inside," before directing the Brazilian. "Fred, deeper." Then it was Pogba's turn. "Yes, Paul, play, again, off the ball." Rudiger does the same at Chelsea.

There's also the litany of nicknames we heard during games behind

closed doors. At Tottenham, "Tonton" ("uncle") is Serge Aurier, while Sergio Reguilon is Regui, Harry Kane is H. At Chelsea, there's Chilly (Ben Chilwell), Jorgi (Jorginho), NG (N'Golo Kante) and Zoum (Kurt Zouma). There's also Ritchie (Richarlison), Shaq (Xherdan Shaqiri) or Willy (Willian) and many more.

We can also hear a lot more swearing. Take Newcastle goalkeeper Karl Darlow, who was furious with how his side started the Sept. 20 home defeat against Brighton & Hove Albion, screaming "Wake the f--- up!" to his teammates on a loop after just five minutes. Mind you, that's nothing compared to the Watford vs. Luton game in the Championship on Sept. 26, when Luton midfielder Ryan Tunnicliffe could be heard yelling "you selfish piece of s---" at his teammate James Collins when he took a shot instead of crossing the ball. (Unfortunately for Collins, Watford won 1-0.)

We could have written a book about all the things we heard and keep hearing without capacity crowds, which might not return for some time in many leagues. But perhaps the image that best sums up the "closed doors" era is what happened at Metz on Dec. 6 when Lyon came to town. Rudi Garcia, the Lyon manager, was suspended after being sent off in the previous game. He was not allowed to be on the bench and had to sit in the stands, yet he was still able to coach his team from as there was no one in the Stade Saint-Symphorien, and all his instructions could be heard clearly on the pitch. Lyon won the game 3-1.



Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta is a little quieter on the touchline, but is known for communicating with his players in a range of languages in order to get the message across. (Agencies)

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

How Prem bosses coached their teams through the silence

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Deogratius Munishi

Mahadhi, Munishi move to Ihefu FC

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

MBEYA's Ihefu FC has stepped up efforts to strengthen the squad with the acquisition of experienced players, midfielder Juma Mahadhi and keeper Deogratius Munishi 'Dida'.

Mahadhi has been roped in by the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) squad on loan from the league's leaders, Yanga, Munishi has been recruited by the outfit as a free agent.

Ihefu FC's Chief Executive Officer, Zagalo Chalamika, stated they have a list of several players they are looking to recruit for the remainder of the domestic top flight and they have lately roped in a trio of Munishi, Mahadhi and Azam FC's Joseph Mahundi.

The side has had less impressive outing in most of its fixtures in the first phase of the domestic top flight and the team's officials, therefore, opted for reinforcement.

"We have roped Mahadhi in on loan from Yanga, Munishi has been signed as a free agent given our head coach Zubeir Katwila has said he needs an experienced keeper," Chalamika revealed.

The Ihefu FC official noted the team have written a letter to VPL defending champions Simba SC seeking to rope in the club's two players Miraji Athumani and Charles Ilamfya, on loan.

He disclosed Simba SC has though yet to respond to the Mbeya side's letter.

He noted: "We have written Simba SC a letter, they have yet to respond to it, I think they will respond, it will really be great for us if we will get the players."

Chalamika stated they are gearing towards getting good results in the VPL's second phase and ultimately keep on featuring in the top flight.

He disclosed: "We have made our maiden appearance in the VPL but we have learnt something and we are seeking to keep on taking part in the top flight, our side's owners are still working hard to see to it the squad turns into a strong outfit and get good players that will bolster the club."

Yanga's information officer, Hassan Bumbuli, admitted the club has let its two players move to other VPL clubs on loan but he stopped short of mentioning the clubs.

Bumbuli stated: "We have let our two players, Abdulaziz Makame and Juma Mahadhi, head to other clubs on loan, we have also loaned our outfit's U-20 side's forward, Adam Kiondo, to a VPL side."

"If Kiondo will not get a club he will play for on loan, he will make his way back to our club's U-20 team, but everything is moving on smoothly," he stated.

Ihefu FC is now placed second from bottom of the 18-team VPL's standing with 10 points.

The Mbeya side is level with bottom-placed Mwadui FC on points.

Confident Simba SC jets off to Harare for FC Platinum showdown



Simba SC players participate in training in Dar es Salaam early this week to shape up for the Vodacom Premier League and CAF Champions League fixtures. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

A total of 22 players making Simba SC have travelled to Zimbabwe for the first leg of the 2020/21 CAF Champions League's first round fixture against FC Platinum, set for Wednesday in Harare.

The team left Dar es Salaam on Friday morning in high confidence, hitting the runway at 10:30am aboard Tanzania Airways flight.

Speaking ahead of the trip to Zimbabwe, Simba SC head coach Sven Vandebroek expressed his confidence of getting desired results.

He said: "We will travel on Friday, we will go with 22 players in the morning. We

are going there for the results, we don't want to play for the beauty of the game, we want to qualify. I will get videos so that I can see how they play and put a tactical plan."

The Tanzanian champions booked their place in the round after beating Plateau United of Nigeria 1-0 on aggregate in the preliminary stage.

Zimbabwe's FC Platinum, on the other hand, cruised past Costa do Sol of Mozambique with a 4-1 aggregate victory.

The first leg of the first round fixture will be played at the National Sports Stadium in Harare behind closed doors because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The hosts will not use their home ground, Mandava in Zvishavane, or

the alternative venue, Barbourfields, in Bulawayo due to CAF restrictions on both stadiums.

The return leg fixture is set for Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam between January 5-6, 2021.

Should Msimbazi Street-based Simba SC emerge aggregate winners, they will progress to the group stage for a third time.

The Wednesday duel's aggregate losers will drop to the 2020/21 Total CAF Confederation Cup play offs.

Here are the other first leg fixtures to be played on Tuesday and Wednesday across different countries in Africa:

Tuesday, December 22

Young Buffaloes (Eswatini) VS AS Vita Club (DR Congo), Jwaneng Galaxy

(Botswana) VS Mamelodi Sundowns (South Africa), Teungueth FC (Senegal) VS Raja (Morocco).

Wednesday, December 23

El Merreikh (Sudan) VS Enyimba (Nigeria), Nkana (Zambia) VS Petro Atletico de Luanda (Angola), FC Platinum (Zimbabwe) VS Simba (Tanzania), AS SONIDEP (Niger) VS Al Ahly (Egypt), Gazelle (Chad) VS Zamalek (Egypt), AS Bouenguidi Sports (Gabon) VS TP Mazembe (DR Congo).

Asante Kotoko (Ghana) VS Al Hilal (Sudan), Stade Malien (Mali) VS Wydad (Morocco), RC Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) VS Horoya AC (Guinea), Ahli Benghazi (Libya) VS Esperance (Tunisia), Kaizer Chiefs (South Africa) VS Primeiro de Agosto (Angola), CR Belouizdad (Algeria) VS Gor Mahia (Kenya).

Dar boxer settles for draw in international title bout

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA's professional boxer, Bruno Tarimo, has managed to break Australian boxer Paul Fleming's record, after an international title fight involving the two boxers, which took place in New South Wales, Australia on Wednesday, was declared as Technical Draw.

Tarimo traded punches with Fleming for the interim World Boxing Association (WBA) Oceania Super Featherweight title and the International Boxing Federation (IBF) International Super Featherweight title, which had three judges declaring it as Technical Draw.

The bout was organized by No Limit Boxing, a sports promotion company for sparring athletes in Australia, which is based in Sydney.

Tarimo, currently based in Australia, managed to draw against Flemming, an unbeaten Aussie and the Olympic medal winner who had not fought for almost two years.

Fleming had never either lost or taking part in a bout which was declared draw in any of his previous 26 fights coming to this bout.

The two fighters rumbled on the 10-round fight vying for the two world titles.

Fleming, a 32-year-old boxer, fought for the first time at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing in the Featherweight division. He was an Australian Institute of Sport's scholarship holder.

The tattooed boxer won bronze medal at the World Junior Championships in 2006, when he lost to Vyacheslav Shipunov.



Bruno Tarimo

Fleming, a southpaw stance from Tully, Queensland, hold a professional boxing record of 27 bouts, 17 wins by Knockout

(KO) and one bout, which was declared draw, that came against Tarimo. Referee Will Soulos declared no

decision match for the two boxers after judges John Cauchi, Les Fear and Brad Vocale recorded a Technical Draw for the two boxers.

Speaking shortly thereafter, Tarimo, a Kilimanjaro native, said: "It was a tough fight, I'm pleased with the results though I wanted to win. I fought a boxer who is very experienced and who had not lost in 26 of his previous fights, we finished all 10 rounds, the judges declared a Technical Draw, I'm marching forward."

The 25-year-old Tanzanian, whose current residence is Southport, Queensland, is famously known as 'Wingman'.

Tarimo holds a record 29 bouts, 25 wins with two KO victories, two losses and two fights having been declared draw.

He made his debut against Abdul Ali in a fight, which took place at Bagamoyo Arts & Cultural Institute's venue on December 25 in 2013, emerging with a Technical Knockout (TKO) over Ali.

The Rombo-born boxer went to Australia in 2018 for an international fight but has, since arriving in the country, never come back as he is now recognized as the country's resident.

Tarimo has, in the process, broken Fleming's record of having never either lost or taking part in a fight, which was declared draw, in his 26 fights.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

AS A RUMOUR MONGER
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR
A LIVING?



I'M TECHNICALLY-UNLICENSED
NEWS BROADCASTER!