




National Pg 2
Addressing problems at work places



National Pg 3
Police gun down suspected bandit



National Pg 4
Dodoma city water woes



Minister trashes accounts, orders 2 managers sacked

By Guardian Reporter

WATER minister Jumaa Aweso has directed Permanent Secretary Anthony Sanga to revoke the appointments of managers for Rural and Urban Water and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) in Mara Region and Tarime District over laxity.

In a directive issued on Tuesday in Tarime, the minister said regional manager Sadick Chakka and Tarime district manager Marwa Murasa have failed to implement various water projects in their areas.

The minister visited Magoto water project in his first day of tour and was dissatisfied with the way key investments were being supervised.

Speaking while receiving a report on water projects in the region, the minister trashed the accounts produced by the managers—both water engineers—as fabricated and not corresponding to reality on the ground.

“I have gone through the report and it has a lot of flaws,” he said, changing the schedule of his visit and cancelling visitation to projects listed in the report for Tarime, and instead moving on to see other projects.

He went ahead to instruct the

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Train passengers from upcountry regions heading to Dar es Salaam stranded at the Dodoma railway station after part of the track was submerged in ongoing rains at Godegode and Gulwe in Mpwapwa district yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

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SIMBA SC QUALIFIES FOR THE CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GROUP STAGE

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA'S soccer giants, Simba, have booked a place in the group stage of the 2020/21 CAF Champions League, clobbering FC Platinum of Zimbabwe 4-0 in the second leg of the first round, held at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

Simba have notched a 4-1 aggregate victory over FC Platinum, given the Zimbabwe club posted 1-0 victory over the former in the first leg tie, held in Harare at the end of last year.

Defenders Erasto Nyoni and Shomari Kapombe, midfielder Clatus Chama and striker John Bocco netted the goals for the hosts and saw to it they qualify for the group stage of the competition for the third time.

In the yesterday duel, Simba had an upper hand for the better part, with their opponents resorting to playing defensive approach and seeking to catch the form on counter attacks.

Nyoni scored the opening goal for Simba on the 39th minute through a spot kick that Simba had won when Kapombe was fouled by one of FC Platinum's defenders.

The visitors strongly contested the penalty call, claiming Kapombe was fouled outside the area, which means Simba were to take a free kick.

The FC Platinum threatened to walk out of

the pitch, as they disapproved the referee's call and the side's players had to be calmed by their coaches.

Nyoni then stepped up to confidently send FC Platinum keeper, Francis Tizayi, the wrong way. The first period saw Simba boast of the 1-0 lead.

Kapombe scored the second for Simba on the 61st minute, following a dangerous attack launched by Simba, which had FC Platinum keeper Tizayi saving a fierce attempt by Simba's midfielder, Larry Bwalya.

Kapombe pounced on the rebound to calmly slot in.

The visitors later pushed forward, seeking to find Simba's back of the net and get a crucial away goal, which could have put Simba in difficult position.

With FC Platinum pressing for a goal, they were consequently prone to counter attacks by Simba and the former were punished by the latter.

Simba score two other goals during the closing stages, with Bocco making it 3-0 as he easily slotted in a second ball within FC Platinum's area.

Chama made certain of the hosts' progression to the group stage, conveing a spot his side won when midfielder Luis Miquissone was fouled within the visitors' area.

Stray elephant crushes three family members

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

A VILLAGE in Karagwe District, Kagera Region is in mourning after a stray elephant trampled over and killed three family members.

Briefing reporters here yesterday, Regional Police Commander Revocatus Malimi said the incident occurred Sunday afternoon at Nshabaiguru village whose residents are now on a round the clock vigil, as the village is located near the Rumanyika National Park.

Those who fell to the elephant were listed as Fred Muhire (45), his wife Aneth (33) and their one-year-

“The woman did not manage to run fast enough to escape the animal as she was carrying a child”

old daughter, Angel.

On the fateful day, the mother who was carrying her daughter went to fetch water in the well when she met a man running in the opposite direction. The sprinting man told the woman that he was being chased by an elephant.

“The woman did not manage to run fast enough to escape the animal as she was carrying a child,” he said.

Muhire who was grazing cattle in the neighbourhood got word that his wife and child had been attacked by an elephant. He took to his heels to the area in the hope of saving his

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‘Mistresses on the route to blame for truck accidents’

By Guardian Correspondent, Tunduma

MOST long-distance drivers ferrying goods to neighbouring countries maintain multiple lovers stationed at several truck stops, a factor police now say fuels road crashes due to impaired driving.

Unveiling a report on a one-month road patrol exercise across the country here yesterday, Traffic Police Commander Wilbrod




Mutafungwa (pictured) said his officers established that instead of resting in guest houses at the service centres before continuing to their destinations, many of those behind the wheels of trailers and lorries go to their lovers' premises from one station to another.

Eagle-eyed officers who were interested in the private itinerary of truckers at work, among other

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Police haul fellow cop but a 'jack of all vices'
By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

A POLICE officer in Arusha City has been arrested for stealing electricity at his house, being in possession of prohibited alcoholic



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Agriculture minister Prof Adolf Mkenda hands over a vehicle to Simiyu Region assistant cooperatives registrar Ibrahim Kadudu in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Dr Ndugulile urges ministry workers to come up with new ways of addressing people's problems

By Guardian Reporter

THE Minister for Communication Science and Technology Dr Faustine Ndungulile has asked workers under his ministry to stop doing things as business as usual instead innovate ways to address challenges facing Tanzanians.

Dr Ndungulile said the national communication backbone was currently the global route to technology.

The minister made the remarks when he addressed workers of his ministry in Dodoma which was

also attended by the Permanent Secretary Dr Zainab Chaula, Deputy PS Dr Jim Yonazi and the management of the ministry.

He called upon the workers to stop business as usual behaviour saying he is a true believer of outcomes and not processes emphasising that what he wants to see was that technology was used in ensuring that people received services without necessarily visiting government offices physically. "I want to see agriculture extension officers get seeds through internet, farmers get markets through

technology, teachers use the same in teaching, therefore we have a task to ensure we come up with the best solutions to address our challenges," he said.

He said it was sad to see the government using a lot of money in importing technological systems adding that it was the task of the ministry to develop and empower young and talented Tanzanians to establish local apps and systems which will also help in revenue generation.

In her remarks, PS Dr Chaula said the meeting was very important as it added morale

to the workers and chatted a new way on how to go about the strategies put in place.

Recently, the Minister directed the Consumer Consultative Council for the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) to analyze and address complaints by users over being shortchanged on bundle packages.

According to the minister, there have been complaints by users over being shortchanged by telecom operators saying there is need to address the matter with immediate effect.

Stray elephant crushes three family members

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family but he got trampled upon as well.

"The man died on the spot; the woman and the child were taken to Nyakahanga hospital where they succumbed to injuries," the RPC noted.

The elephant also attacked and injured Juma Rashid (18), also a villager, who the RPC said is responding well to treatment, appealing to resident living very close to the park to be cautious or if possible, shift to other areas farther from the protected area.

Rumanyika is one of five game reserves that were upgraded to national parks in 2019, along with Biharamulo, Burigi, Kimisi and Ibanda, all within the Lake Zone,

in Geita and Kagera regions.

Parliament voted unanimously to elevate the areas, bringing to 22 the number of national parks managed by the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA).

However, TANAPA does not have a mandate over game reserves such as Selous, entrusted to the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, which is run by an autonomous authority.

"The man died on the spot; the woman and the child were taken to Nyakahanga hospital where they succumbed to injuries"

Minister trashes accounts, orders 2 managers sacked

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managers to prepare and furnish him with a realistic report before dropping the bombshell—that the two should be released from their duties.

The decision came after the Deputy Minister in the President's Office (Union and Environment) Mwitwa Waitara who accompanied the minister, declared that a number of water projects in the district had stalled.

Waitara, the MP for Tarime Rural constituency, told the minister that people in charge of water management and distribution are the problem, urging him to sack them.

Observers noted that the two are not the only water managers to find themselves in trouble and going by the trend, they probably won't be the last.

On Sunday, Water deputy minister Maryprisca Mahundi dissolved the board of directors for Rujewa Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (Rujewa-WSSA) in Mbeya Region for poor service delivery.

She also instructed the Director General of the Rural and Urban Water and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) Clement Kivegalo to sack the Mbarali district RUWASA manager Job Mwakasala for failing to supervise water projects and "issuing falsified reports."

She reached the decision in an inspection of water projects in the district, as residents complained of acute shortage of piped water.

"Many projects have been mismanaged and abandoned, and even for those completed no water comes out of the taps," the deputy minister lamented.

Police haul fellow cop but a 'jack of all vices'

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drinks packed in sachets (viroba) and a range of other products.

The policeman whose name and rank were not disclosed was arrested yesterday following an impromptu inspection by District Commissioner Kenan Kihongosi conducted at his home where he was also found with 20 marijuana sticks, petrol and diesel in plastic containers and illicit brew "gongo" hidden in his car boot and some in his sitting room.

The DC, in his capacity as chairman of the district defence and security committee, said the arrest of the policeman followed information he received on a person suspected to be stealing electricity.

"When I received the information I informed the company's regional manager and the police and on the night of Tuesday (January 5) at around 9.00pm we arrived at the house and discovered the occupant is a policeman," he said.

He said they first inspected the wiring of electricity and ascertained that he was illegally connected as he had not paid power charges since July 2019.

"He was stealing power without being concerned by our president's efforts in constructing big power projects whilst others steal the power, and a policeman for that matter. This is not acceptable at all, hence I ordered his arrest and further inspection on his house," he elaborated.

Kihongosi said after his house was more intensely inspected they found many boxes containing prohibited alcoholic drinks prepackaged in sachets (viroba) as well as in Konyagi bottles.

The suspect was filling alcoholic drinks into empty Konyagi bottles to sell them at his bar, which is contrary to legislation, he said.

"We cannot ascertain the safety or health of people who drink the "Konyagi," and in addition we found plastic containers full of

diesel which he first claimed was water, but after pouring out some we found it was diesel," he stated.

He said it was hard to know the source of the fuel, as it was probably stolen from somewhere. It is the habit, tied to public servants taking out fuel from vehicles.

Thereafter they inspected his vehicle and found marijuana sticks in a pouch. There were other plastic containers in the boot which he also said contained water, but on pouring they contained the illicit brew (gongo), and some contained petrol, he further noted.

He pointed out that storing inflammable fuel in a house was dangerous for occupants of the house as well as neighbours, saying the committee intends to widen such inspections, not minding that position the suspects occupy in society or in government agencies.

The suspect was also found with a large quantity of metal items used in ongoing government projects, a very unpatriotic practice as he was supposed to guard government projects and not to steal from them, he further remarked.

"Upon figuring all these crimes I handed the suspect to police authorities for relevant legal steps including being arraigned in court," he added.



We cannot ascertain the safety or health of people who drink the "Konyagi," and in addition we found plastic containers full of diesel which he first claimed was water, but after pouring out some we found it was diesel



Former Prime Minister Joseph Warioba pays his last respects before the casket bearing the body of Rosemary Nyerere the daughter of Father of the Nation Mwalimu Julius Nyerere held at St Immaculate Catholic Church Upanga in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent

'Mistresses on the route to blame for truck accidents'

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factors, were baffled at how the drivers jump from one woman's house to another and expect to drive safely for hundreds of kilometers, the commander asserted. "They over-indulge in sex with different women while on duty and this leads to a rise in road crashes due to exhaustion," he declared.

Apart from having private resting places with female hosts, another aspect of behaviour exhibited by the truckers is excessive drinking at the various stopping centres, he further noted.

As if reading from the same script, Mutafungwa said the

drivers would park the vehicles, proceed to an eatery which serves alcohol—then drink excessively before proceeding to a woman's house.

The 'driver track' operation which started on December 1 and ended January 1 led to withdrawal of licences for 32 drivers for various traffic offences while a total 299 drivers have been taken to court.

The report also blamed owners of logistics businesses for not being mindful of their drivers' interests and behaviour while on duty.

"For a company that cares for the welfare of its workers must have a mechanism of ensuring

that such employees behave in accordance with the law and safety regulations," the traffic chief affirmed.

Many vehicles were not well maintained and hence not roadworthy but they were being released by owners to make long journeys, thus causing avoidable accidents, he stated, noting further that most drivers have no employment contracts; some are compelled to drive for 12 hours without resting.

Speaking for drivers, Angetile Mwakisyala said most of them work under harsh conditions and endure mistreatment by employers, citing vehicle maintenance as a key duty of the

owner.

"But in case of emergency if a driver spends money for service, that amount is deducted from their wages," he stated.

Data from the Traffic Division show that in 2019 there were 2,519 road accidents which claimed 1,248 lives and 2,462 survivors had vast injuries.

The World Health Organization (WHO) affirms that 1.35m people die each year all over the world as a result of road traffic crashes, with 93 per cent of the world's fatalities on the roads occurring in low- and middle-income countries, despite that they have around 60per cent of the world's vehicles.



Water minister Jumaa Aweso makes a point after visiting Magoto water project in Tarime District, Mara Region yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

PM calls for strengthening of disaster preparedness dept

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has reiterated the commitment to strengthen disaster preparedness department in efforts to tackle tragedies whenever they occur.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, responsible for Policy, Parliamentary Affairs, Labour, Employment, Youth and the Disabled, Jenista Mhagama made the statement here when she visited victims of train accident at Dodoma Referral hospital.

She said the government was working on strategies to ensure the department strictly implement plans on how to swiftly respond to disasters whenever they occur in order to save lives and property.

Addressing the 2nd January 2021 train accident victims, the minister expressed sorrow, wishing them a quick recovery. She however expressed satisfaction with the health services provided at the hospital.

"I'm impressed with the kind of treatment the hospital offered to fellow Tanzanians who were injured in the accident" she said, adding that the commitment saved lives.

She said the government has greatly invested in the health sector, improving health care services throughout the country.

She told the victims that it is the government's commitment to continue improving main infrastructures like health sector, roads to ease response whenever accidents and other disaster occur.

"I feel sorry to all those who were involved in the accident that claimed lives and causing injuries to others and the government too is touched by the tragedy" she said, adding that it is the government's obligation to ensure they get proper treatment.

On his part, the Dodoma District Commissioner, Gerald Magangga thanked the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) management for perfectly enabling those who came out safe from accident continue with their journey.

"It is commendable how TRC management ensured there were buses ready to transport those who were not injured to their destinations without problems" he said.

One of the victims, Stephano Kasole narrating how they were received at the hospital joyful said they got good treatment, thanking the government for the improved provision of health services.

"We were well received and got treatment on time one of the reasons that might have led to quick recovery and I am glad for being discharged" said Kasole.

At least three people were killed and 66 others injured after a passenger train derailed in central Tanzania on Saturday evening, said the TRC on Sunday.

The train was ferrying 720 passengers from the country's port city Dar es Salaam to up-country regions of Tabora, Katavi, Kigoma and Mwanza, when it derailed 58 km from the capital Dodoma, the TRC said in a statement, adding that six of the 12 wagons derailed at around 7 pm local time in the Kigwe-Bahi area.

Heavy downfall poured recently in the central zone has been said to the cause of a train accident that claimed the lives of three and 86 left injured over the weekend.

"We were well received and got treatment on time one of the reasons that might have led to quick recovery and I am glad for being discharged"

Police gun down suspected bandit

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

POLICE in Mbeya Region have killed suspected bandit in a fierce exchange of fire.

fire exchange with suspect at the city's main bus terminal.

Acting Mbeya Regional Police Commander, Jerome Ngowi told reporters here that the killed suspected bandit was with his five colleagues who managed to run away.

He said that the incident occurred on Tuesday evening at around midnight after police being tipped off by Good Samaritans in the presence of a gang at the bus terminal.

RPC Ngowi said that the suspected bandits were planning to rob at the bus terminal.

Following the tip-off from citizens, police camped near the bus terminal and the criminals discovered that they were being tracked and then started running.

"When they were running, one of them, who had a shotgun, started firing and police officers responded and one of the bandits was badly injured and he died on the way to Mbeya Zonal Referral Hospital," the RPC said.

According to the regional police chief, after searching, the suspected robber was found with a handmade short gun and 12 ammunition, and two bullet casings.

"We have launched a manhunt for the five suspected bandits who fled and disappeared unnoticed so that the law takes its course," he said.

In another incident, RPC Ngowi said the police force was looking for two residents of Matundasi in Chunya District on suspicion of collaborating to carry out a murderous incident.

He named the suspects as Juma Sunzima and Marry Daimon, who are allegedly killing a 48-year-old man, who was a husband of Marry.

According to RPC Ngowi, Kitemango is alleged to have been killed by the two in a sexual altercation after he (deceased) found Sunzima and his wife (Marry) having sex at his home and during the fight, the suspects killed him by cutting him with a sharp object and stabbing him in the left eye and forehead.

"The deceased died while undergoing treatment at the Matundasi Dispensary," he said

By Guardian Reporter

PM urges supervision on construction sites

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has said there is need for strict administration of all projects undergoing in the country to ensure value for money.

"The directive in all government circles is that all projects should be well administered especially the standards of the materials and the projects themselves, we have seen the construction of Tunduru secondary school, the construction of Mbinga district council buildings and the Mbiga-Mbamba-bay road there is value for money," he said.

The PM gave directive yesterday

when he spoke to Ruvuma regional leaders at Songea airport on his way to Dar es Salaam.

He said about 37bn/- has been used for the construction of the airport, in involves expanding the runway, passenger boarding building as well as expanding it to allow flights landing both at night and during the day.

The PM called upon Wananchi to continue pushing them to use the availability of the ongoing projects to expand their businesses as well as improve their livelihoods.

PM Majaliwa called upon the leaders to ensure they maintain the infrastructure so that they last longer and contribute to economic growth.



USAID | TANZANIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Next Generation

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, posts this Request for Information (RFI) to inform Tanzanian Organizations an upcoming OVC Next Generation activity designed to increase access to and use of health/HIV, social, and protection services among OVC and youth. The purpose of this RFI is to solicit feedback from Tanzanian, American, and other organizations on the draft program description which is available on the link below.

This RFI is not a Request for Application or Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and in no way commits USAID to issue a NOFO or to make an award. Please note that responding to this RFI will not give any advantage to or preclude any organization or individual from any Request for Application that may be subsequently issued as any/all comments received will be strictly for information gathering purposes only. USAID will not pay for any costs associated with responding to this RFI. Information received in response to this RFI shall become the property of USAID. Therefore, information that cannot be shared should not be sent.

To see the full RFI notice and detailed information including instructions on how to respond, please visit www.grants.gov for an opportunity titled **720-621-21-RFI-00001** or follow the following link: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=330535>.

The full notice and other information will be available under the "related documents" tab.

Responses must be received by email only to the addresses provided in the full RFI notice. Response due date and time is **January 14, 2021, 8:00AM East Africa Time**. Phone calls will not be entertained, and hard copy submissions will not be accepted.

If you have a problem accessing the full RFI notice on the provided website link, please write to anganga@usaid.gov and usaidtco@usaid.gov with **ACCESS TO OVC NextGen RFI** on the email subject line.

TENDER

FOR HIRING SCHOOL BUS



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PM Majaliwa called upon the leaders to ensure they maintain the infrastructure so that they last longer and contribute to economic growth

Morogoro police hold 29 muggers

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

TWENTY-nine suspects are being held by police in Morogoro Region for mugging and in Mwembesongo Ward, Morogoro municipality.

The operation was led by Morogoro Regional Police Commander Fortunatus Musilimu who said it took place after receiving many complaints from the people in the areas who claimed of being attacked and robbed of their belongings by young people.

He said the youth also use girls in their crimes and added that some of the suspects were found in possession of marijuana as well as industrial illicit drugs.

"We embarked on the operation yesterday (Tuesday) and arrested

15 youth including a girl being used as bait in their criminal activities and later we arrested 11 youth and three girls who were found with marijuana sticks and other illicit drugs," said RPC Musilimu.

He also warned some owners of guest houses near the Msamvu bus station to stop using their premises as brothels.

He said in the ongoing operation the police have already received reports of some guest houses being used as brothels in violation of their business licences, hence they should watch out.

He added: "There are also other areas that are hiding places for the muggers, tell them they are not safe at all." Mwembesongo Ward residents including Hamis Totoro thanked the government for arresting the criminals as they have been committing crimes in the area for many years.



Minister for Home Affairs George Simbachawene (L) presents a certificate to Fire and Rescue Force member Denis Minja as recognition for his courageous performance to save the life of a child in Karagwe, Kagera Region recently. The event was held in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Cultivate plenty of food crops to access neighbouring markets - DC

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

FARMERS in Kahama District have been required to cultivate food crops in abundance since the crops were in high demand in neighbouring countries including Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Congo DRC.

The appeal was given here Tuesday by Kahama District Commissioner Anamringi Macha as she was speaking to reporters and added that Kahama District has many farmers of both food and cash crops hence he appealed to them to grab the opportunity from the crops' current high demand.

He said: "If we can assist our neighbours in the basic issue as

food, then our farmers will benefit as well from extra income for their economic wellbeing.

He said as for now many farmers in the district have been facing a big challenge in accessing the rice markets, adding that the government was aware of the situation and was working on it.

Meanwhile the Kahama DC called on the Kahama Town residents to live by adhering to the country's laws including payment of property tax for those owning houses.

He said payment of property tax was mandatory for every house owner saying it is one among government sources of revenue for national development.

Kibaha DC happy with pace of classrooms building

By Guardian Reporter, Kibaha

KIBAHA District Commissioner Eng. Martine Ntomo on Tuesday inspected preparations for receiving Form I students to the district's secondary schools.

The inspection visit was in implementation of Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa's directives to ensure all students who passed examinations to join Form I should start lessons on January 11 this year.

At the schools the DC inspected classrooms, pit latrines and desks, and was satisfied that many schools had made adequate preparations to receive all eligible students.

He however gave instructions to schools that are stuck in their preparations to learn from headmasters of other schools in order to have schools whose environments woo students to stay at the schools.

"In every school I visited,

I saw some in final stages of preparations, I request those that face challenges to visit those that have done well in classrooms construction to learn," said DC Ntomo.

He said the visit was the first one, he will visit the schools again after they open to see how students are accommodated in the classes.

Speaking during the visit, the District Administrative Secretary Sozi Ngate warned headmasters

over the issue of contributions by parents especially contributions towards classrooms and desks.

For his part Kibaha Town Director Jenifa Omolo said every official should discuss with the people on how to solve challenges in the education sector instead of waiting for the government to do so. She said the government will continue providing funds to finalise the construction of classrooms to eradicate shortage of classrooms at schools.

Mwinyi warns new DCs against idling in office

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Mwinyi has directed newly appointed District Commissioners to embrace work ethic and solve challenges facing the islanders.

He warned the leaders against the business as usual attitude in public service, saying this is not time for appointed leaders and civil servants to sit in offices while people are grappling with developmental challenges they are hired to solve.

Dr Mwinyi issued the message here yesterday during a ceremony to swear in the officials at the State House.

Mwinyi said there are many challenges facing Zanzibaris in various parts of the country including land conflicts because the State House has been receiving the complaints on daily basis.

"Ensure that you go and listen to all land conflicts in our areas of duty, I know there will be some

which will be above you because they have been addressed at regional level we want to reach a point where conflicts will be history in our country," he said.

President Mwinyi emphasized on the need to improve cleanliness in their districts saying there were all reasons for the officials to intensify on the exercise.

He asked the officials to work addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and abuse on children by working together with all stakeholders and come up with solutions.

He also asked the DCs to improve education in their respective areas including improving infrastructure to facilitate quality of education.

"In the past there were competitions between schools and schools, regions and regions, which made students, compete and contributed to the improvement," he said.

President Mwinyi asked the DCs to be innovative in addressing challenges facing wananchi.



Tanzanite billionaire Saniniu Laizer plants a tree at his school in Semanjiro District, Manyara Region recently. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

TSC cites truancy, alcoholism and sexual relationship with students among the mistakes committed by many teachers

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has cited absenteeism, alcoholism, and sexual relationship with students as among the most serious mistakes made by some teachers, which in turn contribute towards lowering the standard of education in the country.

TSC acting secretary, Moses Chitama made the remarks yesterday here while presenting a paper on ethics, at the Second Meeting of the Association of Primary School Head Teachers in Mainland Tanzania, held in Dodoma.

Chitama clarified that, TSC being the disciplinary authority for teachers in the country, has identified that the three offenses are the ones that are currently being reported, among several offenses related to misconduct in the relevant cadre.

He further said: "Due to this the commission has been using various methods to ensure that the issue is eradicated, including providing education to the perpetrators and taking strict disciplinary action against those found guilty of such offenses."

Chitama strongly rebuked teachers with such behavior, urging them to stop immediately while stressing that the government through TSC, will not tolerate them.

He said that teachers are the main source of development in the country as they have been given the responsibility to raise children mentally and physically. "We expect them to become leaders and professionals in

various fields, so they should fulfill their responsibilities accordingly."

"If you (teachers) do not uphold the values of your profession as well as the values of the children you, we will have a corrupt nation," he said.

Giving the statistics, Chitama noted that in five years (2016-2020), a total of 9,819 teachers were fired by their employers of which 5,441 of them were fired.

In addition, he explained that, during the same period, a total of 1,803 teachers were given warnings and 520 received warning and had their salaries reduced, a total of 244 were suspended and 403 were demoted.

On the other hand, he said 149 teachers were compensated and 438 others were released.

Chitama also urged teachers to treat students as their own children and treat them as they treat their families.

Director in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (in charge of Pre-Primary and Primary Education) Susan Nussu, urged teachers to avoid issues of exam fraud in their schools.

She said many commit the crime out of a desire to gain a reputation for excellence in their schools but urged them to remember that the practice is healing their students by causing them to have their results canceled.

She further urged primary school head teachers to stop the practice of arranging careless and lazy teachers to teach pre-primary classes and instead to hire skilled teachers so that they can build a good foundation for children in education.

Z'bar children to access education - Second VP

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla says his government has put in place a strategy to ensure children in the Isles get education without any problems so as to create a nation with adequate professionals.

Speaking at the inauguration of Donge secondary school in Zanzibar North Region as part of Revolutionary Day celebrations, Abdullah said the construction and refurbishment of schools is an indication for development strides including the implementation of free education.

He said the government was making efforts to improve the

environment in the education sector by building new schools to reduce congestion.

He said Donge secondary school will now make the North District B to have 11 secondary schools which is a major development stride.

"My hope is that you will use this opportunity to study hard and that the new building should go in tandem with high marks in examinations, so there is no reason to let us down, said the Second Vice President.

He also instructed regional government authorities to have in place fresh strategies to rescue the region education-wise, and bring it to the level of other regions to speed up development.

He also called on parents, guardians and teachers in the region to increase efforts to supervise their children in order to increase pass marks enrollment for Form V students at the school.

Vice President also said the phase VIII government will not tolerate any official who fails to implement his/her duties.

At the same event, Zanzibar North Regional Commissioner Ayoub Mohamed Mahmoud said during his leadership he promised to improve education in the region by boosting pass marks in examinations.

He said Donge secondary school building was the only one school building in the region built by residents' efforts and pledged

to work together with parents and guardians to boost education in the region.

For his part, Minister for Education and Vocational Training Simai Mohammed Saidi said he has amended the curricula at primary level to reduce the number of subjects to enable student manage them.

He further said the government plans to build secondary schools at Gamba in Zanzibar North Region and Mfenesini in Micheweni in Pemba.

The school building, costing more than 1bn/- was constructed by contributions from the Zanzibar government, Donge residents and Indonesia's Kinderhut Foundation.

NCBA BANK TANZANIA LIMITED, NEW TARIFFS EFFECTIVELY FROM 8th JULY 2020

ITEM/ TRANSACTION	TZS ACCOUNTS	FCY ACCOUNTS	ITEM/ TRANSACTION	TZS ACCOUNTS	FCY ACCOUNTS
DEPOSITS RATES			FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRANSACTION		
Fixed Deposits	3.5%-10%*	1.25% - 4.5%*	Export Documents;		0.65% minimum 275 USD + Swift 40
Savings Accounts	Below 500,000 - 0% and above 500,000 - 3%	Below USD 500 - 0%; Above USD 500 - 1.5%	Examination of documents		USD 165
Toto Saving Accounts	Below 500,000 - 0% and above 500,000 - 3%	Below USD 500 - 0%; Above USD 500 - 1.5%	Courier Charges		0.3% Min USD 275
Mwanafunzi Account	7% - 10%		Negotiations Charges		
CURRENT ACCOUNTS			Bonds & Guarantees;		
Required minimum opening balance	Corp CA /NGO's - 1000000	Corp CA/ NGO's - USD 1,000	Issuing commission	1.65% per qr min 110,000	1.65% per qr min USD 110
Current Account-Company (SME & Corporate)	SME/ BB - 500000	SME/ BB - USD 500	Amendment/ Extension	1.65% per qr min 110,000	1.65% per qr min USD 110
Current-Personal	50,000	USD 50	Bid bond	1.65% for secured, 2.2% for unsecured	1.65% for secured, 2.2% for unsecured per qr min USD 110
Monthly ledger fee	10,000	USD 10, GBP 10, EURO 10		per qr min TZS. 110,000	
Manual Statement Current	2,500	USD 1.25	Performance/ Advance Payment	1.65% per qr min 110,000	
Accounts per month					
Interim Statement	3,000	USD 1.50			
Closing account	10,000	US 10			
Account Activation	10,000	US 10			
Over the counter withdrawal limit	Corporate 100M;	Corporate 100K;			
Over the counter withdrawal fee (CORP)	> 100M see OTC below	> 100k see OTC below			
Over the counter withdrawal fee (PB)	5,000	1% of Amt, Max USD 150			
Certificate of Balance (to Auditors)	2,500	1% of the amount Max USD 60			
	50,000	USD 25			
CHEQUES			OTHER SERVICES		
Cheque book			Salary processing fees per transaction	2,200	USD 1.20 per page
New cheque book (30 leaves)	25,000	USD 15	Cash Deposits fees	Free	FREE
New cheque book (50 leaves)	35,000	USD 15	3rd party charges Upto 1M	N/A	N/A
New cheque book (100 leaves)	55,000	USD 30	maximum payment amount		
Counter Leaf	25,000	USD 25	Confirmations of balances to clients' auditors	55,000	USD 30
Unpaid Cheque (insufficient funds) - Inward	50,000	USD 25			
Unpaid Cheques - technical	Nil	Nil			
Bankers Cheque	15,000	USD 10			
Bankers Cheques - Cancellation	20,000	USD 10			
Bankers Cheques- Repurchase	10,000	USD 5			
Stop payment	25,000	USD 15			
SAVINGS ACCOUNTS			STANDING ORDER FEES		
Required minimum opening balance:			Inward Standing Orders	Free	Free
Savings-Personal (Nufaika Savings A/C)	50,000		Outward Standing orders to other banks	10,000	USD 10
Gold Savers	500,000	USD 50	Standing order within the bank	Nil	Nil
Mwanafunzi	50,000	USD 500			
Junior Savers	50,000	USD 50	Setup/ Amendment of Standing Order	2,200	USD 2.2
Prosaver Saving Account	50,000	USD 50			
Young Champion Savings Account	50,000	USD 50	Unpaid Standing Order (penalty)	27,500	USD 16.5
Monthly Ledger Fee	Nil	USD 100	Stop/ Cancel Standing orders	27,500	USD 16.5
Interest earning min balance	Below 200k = 0% Above 200k = 3%	Below USD200 = 0% Above USD200= 1.5%			
Over the counter withdrawal limit	Personal 50m; > 50m see OTC below				
Over the counter withdrawal fee	2,000; for amounts <50M, 100K for amounts >50M	USD 0.12% max 25			
ELECTRONIC BANKING			ATM CHARGES		
Online Banking Monthly Fee-Corporate	5,000	USD 2.5	New Card Issuance (Issued Only Shilling)	15,000	
Online Banking Monthly Fee-Retail	1,000 monthly	USD 0.5	ATM withdrawal - NCBA ATMs	1,000	
TISS	7,000	USD 3.00	ATM withdrawal from Non - NCBA ATMs (Tanzania)	1,600 for local, 3000 for international	N/A
TTs	NIL	0.25% of amount, minimum USD 60; Max 250	ATM withdrawal from Non - NCBA ATMs (Outside Tanzania)	3,000 for international	N/A
TELEGRAPHIC TRANSFERS INTERNATIONAL			ATM mini statements	300	N/A
Outward TT			Daily withdrawal Limit	1,000,000	N/A
Charges Borne By Sender (OUR)		0.25% subject to Min & Max balances of USD 60 & USD 250	Minimum withdrawal amount	5,000	N/A
Charges Borne By Receiver (BEN/SHA)		USD 25	Replacing lost/ Destroyed cards	10,000	N/A
Inward TT	USD 10	USD 10	Blocking/ Unblocking ATM cards	N/A	N/A
Amendment of Transferred instructions	200,000	USD 100	Card renewal	N/A	N/A
Tracer	200,000	USD 100	Cheque Status Enquiry	300	N/A
Recall	200,000	USD 100	Cheque Book Request	200	N/A
TANZANIA INTER-BANK SETTLEMENT SYSTEM (TISS)			Account Balance Enquiry	200	N/A
EFT - (Manual)	3,300				
EFT - (Electronic)	2,200				
EFT Inward	Free	Free			
TISS Outward Manual	10,000	USD 10			
TISS Inward	NIL	NIL			
Local TISS Amendment	6,000	USD 6			
Tracer	6,000	USD 6			
Recall	6,000	USD 6			
Mobile banking Transactions B2W	1,100 for amount 1,000 - 50,000 1,650 for amount 50,001 - 100,000 2,200 for amount 100,001 - 200,000 3,300 for amount 200,001 - 500,000 4,950 for amount 500,001 - 1,000,000 2,200 per transaction				
Payments to Mobile wallet (Via Internet Banking)					
FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRANSACTION			SAFE LOCKERS FEES*		
Foreign cheque collection (Local and International), Courier fees	0.3% of value, Min of 15,000 plus courier fees 200,000	0.3% of value, Min of USD 7.50, plus Courier fee of USD 100	Small	250,000	N/A
Letters of credits (Import LC)			Medium	350,000	N/A
Issuing commission	1.65% per Quarter	1.65% per Quarter	Large	500,000	N/A
General amendment Commission	1.65% per Quarter + 110,000 Swift Charge	1.65% per Quarter + USD 55 Swift Charge	Fees per visit	5,000.00	N/A
Extension Commission (Period / Amt)	1.65% & Min 440,000 per Quarter	1.65% & Min USD 220 per Quarter			
L/C Cancellation unutilised LC	110,000.00	USD 330			
General correspondence follow up	0.3% Flat	USD 330			
Acceptance LC	110,000.00	USD 55			
Release document (Letter of undertaking)	110,000.00	USD 220			
Export Letter of Credit;					
Examination of documents	2.5% per Quarter Min 250,000	2.5% per Quarter Min USD 150			
Confirmation Charges	330,000.00	USD 165			
Advising commission (Non Customer)	2.5% per Quarter Min 250,000	2.5% per Quarter Min USD 55			
Negotiations Charges	110,000	USD 110			
Discrepancy Fees	Free	USD 110			
Courier Charges	55,000	USD 165			
Import Documents For Collection					
Advising commission		0.3% + Swift 40			

NOTE: USD EQUIVALENT WILL APPLY FOR TRANSACTIONS IN OTHER CURRENCIES OUTSIDE TZS AND USD (KES,GBP AND EUR).



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TFS hands over tree seedlings to state owned 'Magufuli English Medium School'

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) has handed over 1000 tree seedlings to the government's owned 'Magufuli English Medium School' in Mbeya city so as to conserve the school's environment.

Assistant Commissioner for Conservation in the Southern Highlands, Cosmas Ndakidemi said that they decided to donate the seedlings with the aim of promoting and preserving the conservation of the school's environment.

He said the seedlings will be planted around the entire school area which currently has no trees and that planting the seedlings will also help fight strong winds.

Speaking during the seedlings planting exercise yesterday at the school, Ndakidemi said that apart from distributing the seedlings to the school, the agency has also prepared a plan to distribute feelings to other needy citizens.

The event was also attended by the Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila.

"We have come up with an offer where any citizen who needs to plant seedlings will access them for free at the TFS office in Mbeya," he said.

RC Chalamila commended TFS for supporting the school with the seedlings where he called on the school's management to monitor and supervise the growth of the trees.

"I recommend each teacher should have his/her tree so as to be easier to take care of them, it is also better to talk with the

Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI)-Uyole for the school to get fruits seedlings," he said.

The regional commissioner said that the fruits trees will strengthen nutrition at the school because children will be having fruits as part of the meals.

Chalamila also urged the school's management to also establish vegetable gardens to further promote nutrition.

Sharifa Issa, the school's head teacher commended TFS for supporting the school's environment conservation initiatives which will benefit the current and future generation.

"Teachers and pupils, we now have a big role to play here so as to ensure that we maintaining good growth of these trees make our school environment more attractive," she said.



I recommend each teacher should have his/her tree so as to be easier to take care of them, it is also better to talk with the Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI)-Uyole for the school to get fruits seedlings



Members of forum service providers in Songea District, Ruvuma Region collect various items from Good Samaritans to distribute them to the needy. Photo: Correspondent Michael Emmanuel

'Utilise economic potential available in road projects'

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

THE government through the country's Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) and the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS), is preparing a Roads to Inclusion and Socioeconomic Opportunities (RISE) Programme which is aimed at encouraging residents to utilise economic potential available in road projects.

Funded by the World Bank (WB), the project's objective is "to improve rural road access

for population in selected rural areas and build capacity in the sustainable management of rural roads incorporating community engagement approaches."

Speaking during the stakeholders meeting here, project coordinator Humphrey Kanyenye said that the programme which will be implemented in 25 regions of mainland Tanzania except Dar es Salaam will focus on institutional strengthening, spot improvements, maintenance, community engagement and

emergency response.

He said that all the necessary environmental and social risk management documents have been prepared for the RISE Programme.

"The programme will also involve renovation of roads in six district councils of three regions of Tanga, Geita and Iringa. Implementation in other remaining areas will consider availability of funds," he said.

Kanyenye said that in the implementation of the primary project, TARURA will prepare

a national strategic plan for renovations and conservation of rural roads which will also be used in later investments.

According to him, TARURA has already formed forums in every region which will be used to discuss various issues concerning the project.

"The objective of the forum is to introduce the RISE Programme and its environmental and social risk management documents to the public and all the stakeholders and gather comments for more improvement," he added.



Kibaha Rural Member of Parliament Michael Mwakamo (R) talks with Dar es Salaam Water and Sanitation Authority chief executive officer Cypryan Luhemeja (L) together with Dawasa officials moments after visiting Upper Ruvu river water pump. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Correspondent, Rorya

RORYA District Commissioner (DC) Saimon Odunga has banned tree cutting for charcoal production warning the residents that more patrols have been launched to hunt those destroying the environment.

According to him, majority of trees are lost due to charcoal production, firewood harvesting and other human activities which later bring huge impacts to the forests and environment.

Odunga told this paper in an interview that there is a special task force which is currently conducting patrols to catch all people who are engaging in tree cutting in the district.

Rorya DC bans tree cutting

According to him, the district is currently facing acute drought due to increased deforestation. "This should be controlled so as to conserve nature and avoid other climate change impacts."

He also said that a special task force is also conducting patrols in Lake Victoria to find illegal fishing fishermen who use the banned illegal nets to fish thus affecting fish reproduction," he said.

"We will not spare anyone in this war, all ways and techniques will be deployed to catch all people promoting illegal fishing activities and those cutting trees

illegally," he said.

According to him, most of the forests in the district have been destroyed following high demand of charcoal in and outside the district, something which puts some of the trees on the verge of extinction. "Human activities and charcoal demand have left our land empty, people are cutting down natural forests without replanting them, Rorya District has been relying on food crops from Tarime District because our area has been affected by drought, we will conduct a special patrol in each ward to ensure this charcoal

business decreases," he lamented.

Odunga wanted Rorya residents to change and start investing their efforts in tree planting, cultivating drought resistant crops including cassava, maize, sunflowers, millet, sorghum and others.

He said that the war against deforestation and illegal fishing in the district involves collective effort from a number of people including villages and wards, leaders who are required to cooperate with Natural Resources, Forestry and Fisheries departments to bring positive outcomes.

Motor vehicle owners urged to insure their automobiles

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MOTOR Vehicle owners in the country have been urged to cut insurance for their vehicles so as to be covered whenever they fall into road accidents and thus avoid to spend much expenses.

National Insurance Corporation (NIC) director of marketing and customer services Yesaya Mwakifulefule made the call here when the institution's officials from headquarters and Mbeya office visited various customers.

According to him most of the road accidents have been leaving damages in both human and vehicles, so having motor insurance in hands was imperative.

The officials visited various motor garages that have been working with NIC including the China Garage located in Uyole ward in Mbeya city.

"Some accidents are inevitable, so if the owner of the vehicles has insurance he/she will have no stress even after the accidents because everything lost or damaged will be recovered," he said.

He named some of the human factors for road accidents as reckless drivers, driving at unmanageable speed, defective vehicles, things that needs more education to curb.

Mwakifulefule said that NIC has a number of insurance products including the motor insurance which covers against accidental damage and theft of the insured vehicle, bodily injury and third party property damage.

"We are currently available in all regions providing exceptional services to over 200 customers per year, so we urge all motor vehicles owners and those in need of other insurance products to visit our offices," he added.

HesaidNICprovideshighquality

customer focused insurance services to organizational, commercial and personal line clients through innovative marketing, efficient and effective management of resources thus maximizing stakeholders' returns. According to him, the corporation covers insurance payments to a victim of road accident within seven days.

Some of the customers and stakeholders commended NIC for valuing them and for always coming up with products that favours its customers.

Yang Jie, director of China Garage said they have been working closely with NIC to ensure that customers access their rights on time.

"We have been sending explanations of all the things that are needed including repair of damaged vehicles due to accidents and NIC has been responding on time to ensure that we provide quality services to our customers," he said.

Jie urged motor vehicle owners to send their vehicles in trusted garages instead of sending them in street garages that ends up putting fake equipment in their cars.

NIC is a state owned entity working to oversee all insurance operations in the country. At its inception in 1963, the Corporation was owned in partnership between the government and the private sector.

After nationalization in 1967 NIC became a full government controlled insurance entity and became the sole insurance operator in Tanzania mainland. The situation continued up to 1990 when the government embarked on an economic structural programme in which it witnessed private insurance companies enter into the market and started operations.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all Clearing & Forwarding Agencies (CFAs) dealing with transit goods

That, the underlisted Clearing and Forwarding Agencies(CFAs) are hereby required to account for all outstanding transit transactions in the TANCIS system within seven days from the date of issue of this notice.

The companies that will fail to account for outstanding transit transactions in the TANCIS system within the above specified period, will be prosecuted for undermining our Taxation system and involving in Tax evasion, Economic Fraud and sabotage.

Usaje B. Asubisye
COMMISSIONER FOR CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

LIST OF COMPANIES WITH UNACCOUNTED TRANSIT TRANSACTIONS FROM 2014 TO AUGUST 2020

S/N	CFA TIN	CFA NAMES	No. of Declarations For Each Year						Total	
			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		2020
1	100100223	SAID SALIM BAKHRESA & COMPANY LIMITED	1	46	11	68	8	1	9	144
2	105300972	UKOD INTERNATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	78	16	0	0	0	94
3	100181819	ORYX OIL COMPANY LIMITED	2	17	14	16	7	8	13	77
4	103051258	JOE OCEAN CLEARING & FORWARDING LTD	0	0	50	19	0	0	0	69
5	100663449	SWITCH TRADE LTD.	0	5	4	0	29	3	0	41
6	106049181	FREDDY JUNIOR INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT	7	21	0	0	0	0	0	28
7	100105004	VIVO ENERGY TANZANIA LIMITED	4	12	2	1	2	4	1	26
8	134931612	JOVKA INVESTMENT LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	16	6	22
9	102560566	AFRI VISION INTERNATIONAL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	22
10	104202365	NORTH INTER TRADE LIMITED	15	6	0	0	0	0	0	21
11	100241439	BOLLORE TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS TANZANIA LIMITED	0	1	0	1	0	4	13	19
12	100182939	TOTAL TANZANIA LIMITED	0	0	5	0	0	2	11	18
13	103659701	ACER PETROLEUM (T) LTD.	0	0	4	3	2	0	8	17
14	102327373	E 3 FREIGHT LTD	0	0	0	0	0	16	1	17
15	103896215	SWIFT GLOBAL LOGISTICS LIMITED	0	4	3	9	0	0	0	16
16	110127324	WAFEM TZ LIMITED	2	6	2	2	3	0	0	15
17	100726300	MS KASFREIGHT LTD	1	0	0	0	1	12	0	14
18	119175127	SHIRE PETROLEUM	0	8	6	0	0	0	0	14
19	100880164	M/S EDPAC COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	13
20	127659141	INTERCON TRADING COMPANY (T) LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	13
21	108829966	FIRST CHOICE C&F	8	0	3	1	0	0	0	12
22	111023948	KDK CARES SERVICES AND SUPPLIES LTD	1	3	4	4	0	0	0	12
23	100839032	JAGUAR CARRIERS JUNIOR S. A. R. L.	0	10	1	0	0	1	0	12
24	107404368	BANDAWE FREIGHT COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	12
25	121484986	GLOBAL INTELOG LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12
26	100181908	ALLYVAY FARM PRODUCTS LTD.	0	0	1	4	0	2	4	11
27	106043701	KIWAPEA INTERNATIONAL COMPANY LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	11
28	100107589	PUMA ENERGY TANZANIA LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	11
29	100214245	QUALITY BUSINESS CONSULTANTS (T) LTD	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
30	104700225	LINDI MODERN CLEARING & FORWARDING CO. LTD.	7	1	2	1	0	0	0	11
31	130076505	MIGHTY INVESTMENT COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	2	2	7	11
32	135216208	MARINETECH INTERNATIONAL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11
33	106145962	COSMOS HAULAGE CO. LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	10
34	100100126	KUEHNE + NAGEL LIMITED	0	1	0	7	0	2	0	10
35	100143690	OILCOM (T) LTD	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
36	102181697	R. H. G. GENERAL TRADERS LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
37	106145806	DOLUSI (T) LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
38	103977231	MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT AFRICA LIMITED	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
39	117417530	WARREN LOGISTICS COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	10
40	128099131	DAKIMP INTERNATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
41	105136285	KIGOMA MN ENTERPRISES LTD	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	9
42	101395073	WORLD OIL LTD	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	9
43	131806094	EXCELLENT CHOICE CLEARING & FORWARDING LTD	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
44	102875230	NAL BUSINESS COMPANY LTD.	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	8
45	101837424	RUKWI HOLDINGS CO. LTD.	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	8
46	107420924	MAMBONA FREIGHT COMPANY LTD	0	1	1	3	3	0	0	8
47	131668821	KISANGARA COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
48	107413367	OVERLAND CARRIERS & FORWARDERS (T)	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
49	100224844	SUNFRESH LTD.	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	7
50	106145911	X-PRESS MARITIME AGENCY CO. LTD	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	7
51	101007804	STEPSO FREIGHT LTD.	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
52	107346783	KURSKFREIGHT LIMITED	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	7
53	131692129	N&S OCEAN FREIGHTERS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	7
54	111952132	MULTILINES INTERNATIONAL TANZANIA LIMITED	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	6
55	127182833	DOMUS INTERNATIONAL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
56	103813182	FEDROL CARGO (T) LTD	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
57	100917491	SEKA COMPANY LTD	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	6
58	101831817	RUMA GEMS INTERNATIONAL LTD.	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
59	105920113	ARISTEPRO INVESTMENT CO. LTD	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	6
60	105671865	SMITHS FREIGHT FORWARDERS LIMITED.	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	6
61	100232812	MOUNT MERU MILLERS LTD.	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
62	101893650	QUINCHER FREIGHT FORWARDERS COMPANY LIMITED	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	6
63	130778658	BRIGHT MINDS TRADING COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	6
64	139033035	PISHON TANZANIA LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
65	107405399	IRA LINKS COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
66	110948131	SPACELAND LOGISTICS LIMITED	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
67	103045878	FUTURE CARGO FREIGHT SERVICES LIMITED	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	5
68	131476426	ADEL INTERNATIONAL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
69	101896153	FULL CARGO SUPPORT LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
70	104911757	LAKE OIL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
71	131746091	TRYCE AGENCY (T) LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
72	105341814	KINYAKWE INTL LOGISTICS CO. LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
73	102395077	A & HIS D CO LTD	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
74	100687143	ARUSHA CARGO CLEARING AND FORWARD	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
75	125686451	DEL-EX CARGO LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
76	101333957	INTERTRANS HAULAGE SERVICES LTD	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
77	104810985	DELTA PETROLEUM TANZANIA LIMITED	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
78	127900728	CHAMPION CARGO EXPRESS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
79	104154263	EXCELLENT AFRICA TRADING AND SERVICES LIMITED	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
80	131790856	TOPMAX TANZANIA LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
81	130556418	THE HEROES SIT TRADING CO. LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
82	105874847	THREEWAYS SHIPPING SERVICES (G) LTD	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
83	134376228	LUPULI FREIGHT FORWARDERS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
84	105132115	CONTINENTAL RELIABLE CLEARING(T) CO. LTD	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
85	140164526	LABOCK COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
86	113219025	AUGUSTA ENERGY TANZANIA LIMITED	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
87	110993714	CLASSIC CHOICES INVESTMENT LTD	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
88	102359488	A. B. M. GROUP COMPANY LIMITED	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
89	101903788	CARGO WORX (T) LTD	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
90	100841592	INTERMARINE C & F AND GENERAL TRADI	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
91	125599664	NEXT STAR CLEARING & FORWARDING CO. LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
92	135040932	SECHENGA ENTERPRISES LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
93	114393096	RATEGO FREIGHT FORWARDERS COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
94	107400338	DOLPHIN SEA AND AIR (T) LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3

95	131107919	FABER ENTERPRISES LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
96	101823652	NYAKSONS FORWARDERS LTD.	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
97	106129029	TESNA QUALITY CLEARING AND FORW LTD	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
98	107427783	MWIMADA GENERAL SUPPLIES LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
99	101832929	INTERLINK COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
100	100714329	NERM (T) COMPANY LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
101	100104466	F. K. MOTORS LTD.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
102	106077606	JAS EXPRESS LTD	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
103	102280458	WELLFIND CLEARING AND FORWARDING (T)	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
104	100978369	MAYO (1999) CO. LTD.	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
105	100193051	AFRI-TOKI ENTERPRISES CO. LTD	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
106	127322112	P & N FREIGHT FORWARDES LIMITED	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
107	101936945	REINDEER INVESTMENT LTD	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
108	101824438	POA AFRICA GROUP CO. LTD	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
109	105451504	SHAMY INTERNATIONAL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
110	104621937	E. M. CLEARING & FORWARDING LIMITED.	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
111	122202909	S.A LINK TRADERS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
112	106148120	FEDROL FREIGHTERS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
113	128019014	T&M CLEARING AND FORWARDING CO LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
114	125823467	LIMAC LOGISTICS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
115	101810194	GWIHOLOTO IMPEX LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
116	131816936	SMILE LOGISTICS SERVICES LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
117	139238419	RYAN LOGISTICS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
118	111846022	RINGO LOGISTIC LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
119	108204796	PWANI HAULERS LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
120	115501968	MAXIMA CLEARING AND FORWARDING LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
121	103326729	PRESS FREIGHT (T) LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
122	100195488	GETCA INTERNATIONAL CO. LTD	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
123	101854655	B N M COMPANY LTD.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
124	119521823	KEKE (T) LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
125	107399135	RURU CO. LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
126	106153655	HELLMANN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
127	137760053	DOPPELT M CONSULTING LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
128	102330110	DOW ELEF INTERNATIONAL (TANZANIA) LIMITED	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
129	106544840	DALBIT PETROLEUM (T) LIMITED	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
130	100115255	TEE-TE CLEARING HOUSE LTD	0	0							

THURSDAY 7 JANUARY 2021

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

E-ticketing can be done on the spot, not just on mobile phone

WITH government authorities insisting that upcountry buses start right away to give tickets to passengers electronically, bus owners say they want more dialogue on e-ticketing as its procedures aren't clear. Basically they aren't saying they themselves don't understand the procedure but can't quite say their ticketing agents can gather what needs to be done and how, and indeed how to sort out a series of operational matters tied up with it. Not least is tax remittance to the Tanzania Revenue Authority. (TRA)

What the bus owners want is more sensitization and dialogue on how to operate an electronic ticketing system, on the basis of remarks by the secretary general of the Tanzania Bus Owners' Association (TABOA), Joseph Priskus. He was more emphatic on inadequate sensitization and grasp of the issue among the general public and ticketing agents especially, pointing out elements like receipting and amount in taxes remitted to TRA through the system. One would probably have a bus seat number with that e-ticketing method but not a proper ticket, of that bus, and it isn't clear if e-ticketing is fully reliable.

In terms of procedure, the TABOA leader says the association has engaged TRA on the matter but no agreement has been reached, even as LATRA (the land transport regulatory body) moved to proclaim the start of enforcing e-ticketing regulations. Surprisingly, LATRA Director General Gilliard Ngewe said in a statement reminding owners of upcountry passenger buses plying major routes "to comply with licensing conditions on e-ticketing" effective yesterday. All buses have licences and they were issued before e-ticketing started being

considered as alternative mode of service delivery for long haul passenger buses.

There are other areas of divergence on what regulatory authorities know about the matter and the bus operators, as for instance LATRA indicated that sensitization on using the new system had thoroughly been undertaken, but TABOA says only bus owners have been reached, not other key stakeholders. They point out that ticketing agents and conductors have not been reached by the spate of information directed at bus owners, which is also intriguing. These agents are supposed to work for bus owners, who are the ones targeted with compliance notices; if TABOA members were reached as owners, they deliver the orders to their agents and conductors, as it is inconceivable that LATRA works with TABOA servants.

So strictly speaking the matter is still with TABOA as an organisation and LATRA along with TRA, as here it is evident that they may communicate differently, each talking to TABOA members in the sense of bus operators as such. TABOA is a representative body to pick leaders to engage regulatory authorities, rather than the ones to whom the directives are intended for in the first place. As the TABOA leader said, these issues need to be resolved (what is done by agents and conductors) to avoid a lot of inconveniences. It doesn't appear that seeking a ticket by mobile phone is workable but installing electronic devices for each operator where the whole manifest tickets are backed by such input, or with ability to scan a ticket by agents of the regulator. It isn't a matter of phoning in, paying and getting a seat number, not a ticket. Passengers want real tickets and especially those close to windows, but e-ticketing is blind to such needs.

African free trade bloc opens for business, but challenges remain

GENDER equality, also known as sexual equality or equality of the sexes, is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender.

Gender equality is the goal, while gender neutrality and gender equity are practices and ways of thinking that help in achieving the goal. Gender parity, which is used to measure gender balance in a given situation, can aid in achieving gender equality but is not the goal in and of itself. Gender equality is more than equal representation, it is strongly tied to women's rights, and often requires policy changes. As of 2017, the global movement for gender equality has not incorporated the proposition of genders besides women and men, or gender identities outside of the gender binary.

UNICEF says gender equality "means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike."

On a global scale, achieving gender equality also requires eliminating harmful practices against women and girls, including sex trafficking, femicide, wartime sexual violence, gender wage gap, and other oppression tactics. UNFPA stated that, "despite many international agreements affirming

their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They have less access to property ownership, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence."

As of 2017, gender equality is the fifth of seventeen sustainable development goals (SDG 5) of the United Nations. Gender inequality is measured annually by the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Reports.

In countries where women are most marginalised, discriminated under the law and where gendered norms prevent women from owning property and resources, people are also the hungriest. This is because gender equality and food systems are intertwined.

However, too often, we only focus on the roles that women play in production, processing, trading of food and in making decisions about consumption and purchase of food at household level.

A just and equitable food system will require the recognition of women as farmers, with rights to the land they cultivate, technologies that reduce the drudgery of agriculture and policies that ensure women can make a living wage from agriculture. And while this is important, we must also focus on whether the food system as organised is just and equitable and whether it promotes the empowerment and livelihoods and health of women and girls.

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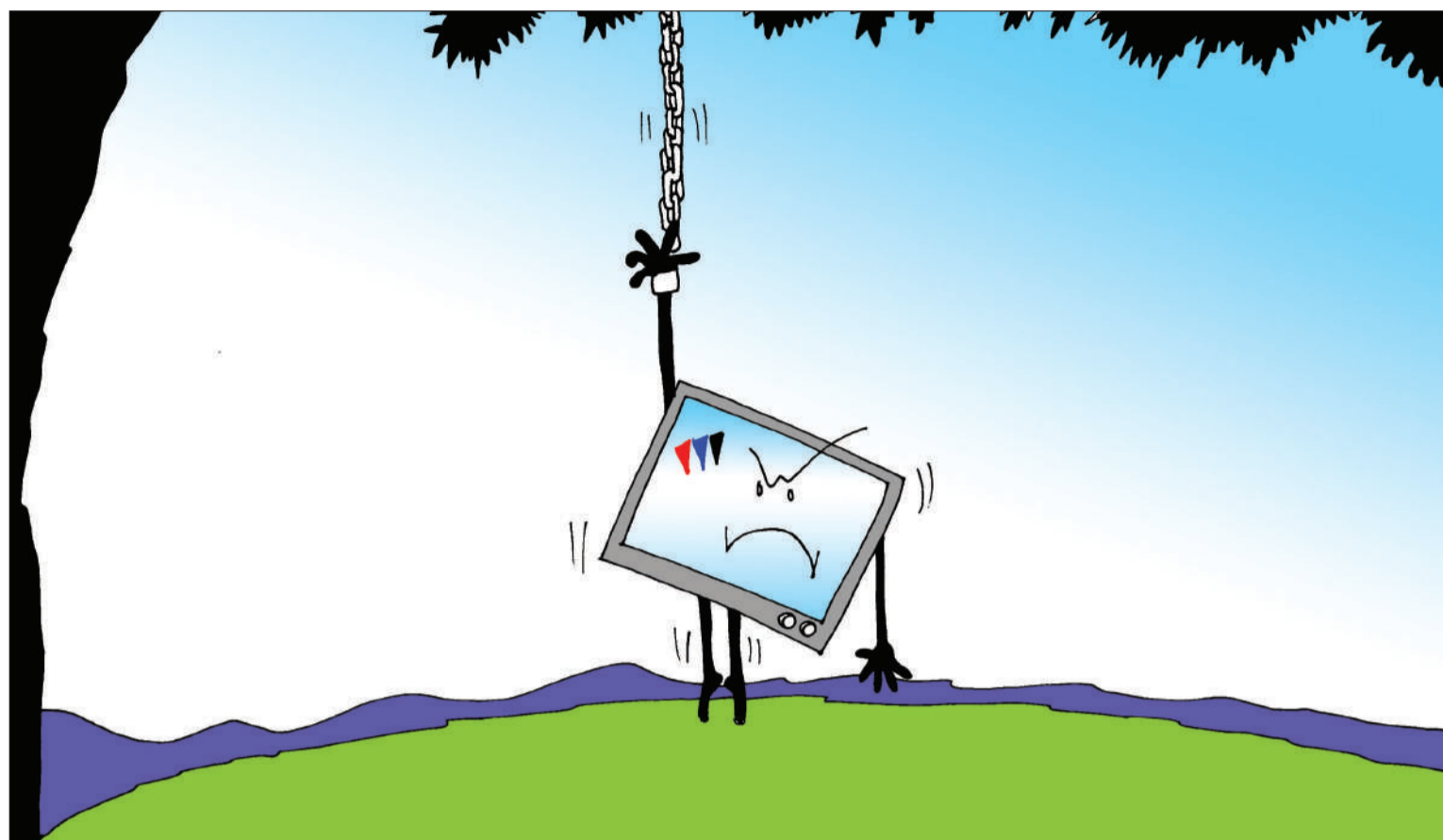
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By Timi Olubiye

Coronavirus economy: How bad will it get with inflation?

IT is no news that many economies including Nigeria are currently in recession. In reality the year 2020 has been eventful, chiefly with the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Its impact has continued to have been felt severely on businesses, households, and economies globally and one of its consequences is inflation. Though inflation is a concept that affects all of us; but most importantly high inflation could be hostile to the economy and businesses especially the micro, small and medium enterprises, MSMEs.

With a persistent inflation, businesses and households usually perform poorly, and expectedly more money is paid for the same goods and services. This has been the troubling trend in Nigeria in recent times, where high price increases have been recorded in transportation, food cost, household needs, raw materials, pharmaceutical products, health care, motor cars, vehicle spare parts, equipment, and in prices of services amongst others.

Admittedly, inflation erodes our value of money and also erodes the purchasing power of all of us. Therefore, the nexus of impact of inflation is the specific focus of this piece. However, it was mainly instigated by the continuous rise in the level of inflation rate in Nigeria in recent times. The consequences and impact of inflation (price instability) in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised.

Key amongst the consequences of inflationary pressure is the persistent decrease in the purchasing power of citizens especially at a time when the economy is in recession and pandemic is ravaging. Inflation is simply seen as a persistent rise in the general price level of the broad spectrum of goods and services in a country over a long period. Largely, when prices of energy, food, commodities, goods, and services go up, it hurts all of us and hardship is heightened.

A major driver of Nigeria's headline inflation has been the consistent rise in food cost. Agreeably, the inflation rate is determined by calculating the percentage change in a price index such as consumer price index, CPI, wholesale price index, WPI, and producer price index, PPI, etc. in an economy. The commonly used metric is the Consumer Price Index, CPI, which measures the change in income a consumer needs to maintain the same standard of living over time. That is, the CPI is the economic measure that tracks changes in the cost of living over time. It is simply a more acceptable means of measure of inflation or price



movements in an economy.

Therefore, because CPI is available on a more frequent basis, it is mostly in use for monetary policy purposes even by the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, when determining inflation rate. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, reveals that the headline inflation rate in Nigeria rose for a fifteen-straight month to 14.89 per cent in November 2020 from 14.23 per cent in October 2020 as against 13.71 per cent recorded in September 2020. With this metric, the 14.89 per cent rate is the highest recorded in the country since March 2018 which is over a two-year high and is a cause for concern.

Noticeably, in a study on inflation in Nigeria using panel-data models by Sani Ibrahim Doguwa of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Kaduna State there is a threshold inflation level of 12 percent applicable to Nigeria. This threshold implies that below the level, inflation has a mild effect on economic activities; while above it, the magnitude of the negative effect of inflation on growth is very high.

Consequently, from the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, data the country has experienced high volatility in inflation rates in recent times and the continuous rise above the threshold level of 12 per cent is a cause for apprehension. The sharp increase in the inflation rate, lull in economic activities, and the economic recession could be attributable in specific terms to the increase in Value Added Tax, VAT, rate, increasing public debt, volatility in the price of crude oil, and the multifaceted COVID-19 consequences effects of government policies, COVID-19 pandemic, external shocks, and insecurity in the northern part of

the country amongst others.

The coronavirus pandemic has negatively affected the global economy and most especially in Nigeria. It has significantly affected industrial output, the fortune of businesses especially MSMEs, more so causing a decline in economic activities with an attendant shrink in GDP. Furthermore, COVID-19 has caused severe shortages in the supply of goods and services across borders, due to series of restrictions and this has necessitated depressing foreign earnings for Nigeria and also impacted negatively on economic growth and the fortune of businesses particularly MSMEs. So far, we have seen the inflation rate rise from month on month, MoM, in the year 2020.

Significantly, history and literature present some other factors adduced to the unsustainable economic growth in Nigeria apart from the high inflation rate, recession, and impact of COVID-19 pandemic to include: the incessant insecurity in the northern part of the country, rising foreign and domestic debt, currency exchange rate volatility, propensity to consume more and save less, decrepit infrastructure and poor policy implications, among others.

Regrettably, these issues can further compound and manifest in areas we already have deficit as a nation, staggering unemployment, rising cost of living, bleak business continuity, poverty level increase, illiteracy, crime, and terrorism. Another perennial issue is the country's over-reliance on crude oil production revenue, which has posed unsustainable due to exposure to global shocks.

Based on the aforementioned and from the inflationary

perspective, to achieve adequate price stability in the country, the government needs to reduce budget deficit, adopt significant structural policy reforms with monetary and fiscal policies. Such as reducing import duties on some essential items and commodities and so on. This will help to control inflation and maintain stronger growth rates in terms of improved Gross Domestic Product, GDP, and to stabilise the tide of inflationary pressures on the economy and in business operations.

It is advocated that political leaders should minimise avoidable public spending, reduce spending on non-development activities, address insufficient infrastructure, and build strong and effective institutions. The massive growth and developmental challenges of the country can improve by also promoting the human and SME ecosystem.

The SME sector can play a major role in the economic growth of the country through the distribution of wealth, poverty reduction, and job creation. The sector is labour-intensive and can provide a reasonable reduction in the unemployment rate in the country but the government needs to provide an adequate enabling environment and support for the sector to thrive.

Considerably, institutions, businesses, and individuals have the opportunity to beat inflation by accelerating the preservation of capital and strengthening purchasing power with income addition. This can be done by acquiring investments particularly assets such as real estate because they usually keep up with inflation. Remember N100,000 today will not acquire the same value of goods and services in 10 years mainly due to inflation. Therefore, investing is key to hedge against a sharp inflation impact because it erodes the value of savings if funds are just left in the bank accounts.

Supportively, it is imperative to consider investing in other currencies, diversify your investment portfolio internationally if you can, consider inflation-protected securities with potential for higher-growth like equities, Gold Shares ETF, or mutual funds. These can earn more interest returns per year than the inflation rate therefore the options are reasonable. It is also possible to start a business, cultivate passive income, and even buy items with a long shelf life today to mitigate the impact of inflation. Good luck!

The white pipe keeps burning

BY RICHARD CHELIN

On 14 September 2020, South Africa's Hawks swooped down on a drug trafficking network operating from a luxury estate in Ballito north of Durban on South Africa's east coast. Inside one of the houses, officers from the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation found an estimated 3.9 tons of methaqualone powder (called Mandrax in South Africa), 170 800 heroin capsules and 7.5 kg of heroin powder.

Of greater interest was the discovery of one ton of anthranilic acid - the main precursor in the manufacture of Mandrax. There is a high likelihood that methaqualone was being synthesised from chemical starting materials, which is concerning.

Methaqualone is a synthetic drug that acts as a central nervous system depressant, similar to barbiturates. First synthesised in 1951, methaqualone was then used medically in the treatment of sleep problems and insomnia and as a muscle relaxant or general sedative. Patients with high blood pressure and anxiety attacks were also treated with the drug.

In the 1960s and '70s, the drug was commonly marketed as Quaalude and Mandrax and quickly gained notoriety as a recreational drug. It was eventually placed under Schedule 2 of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances due to abuse, addiction and the high potential for dependence among users. Methaqualone is now predominantly produced in clandestine labs due to its illegality.

The fact that synthesising methaqualone is not a complicated process makes it appealing to criminal networks and illicit drug manufacturers. It usually involves chemical reactions that can be simply performed in clandestine labs.

Mandrax is extremely addictive and can become dangerous when mixed with other substances.

One of the primary precursors essential for this process is anthranilic acid, which is also a key ingredient in the manufacturing of dyes, perfumes and colourants, among other things. When clandestinely produced,



Mandrax isn't as profitable as heroin or meth but remains a lucrative trade for South African organised crime networks. File photo

methaqualone has a brown, grey or black tacky powder of between 30% to 70% purity. Drug dealers also use the powder as a cutting agent for heroin. (Cutting increases bulk, dilutes, complements or enhances the effects of the illicit drugs.)

In South Africa, methaqualone was introduced into the pharmaceutical market under the trade name Mandrax. By the time the drug was listed on the 1971 Convention, it had already gained a market in the country, which criminal networks capitalised on. The 2018/19 South African Police Service annual crime report recorded various major seizures and the dismantling of clandestine labs in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

In South Africa, Mandrax is usually sold in small colourful tablets with a logo imprinted on them under various street names such as 'buttons', 'MX', 'lizards' and 'flowers', among

others. While Mandrax was originally meant to be taken orally, users tend to smoke or inject the drug for a faster onset of effect.

The preferred mode among South African Mandrax users is a 'bottle neck' or 'white pipe'. This is when Mandrax is crushed and mixed with cannabis, after which the mixture is placed in the neck of a broken glass bottle and smoked.

So what makes the drug so popular in South Africa? For users, the drug contains similar effects to those of other central nervous system depressants, including calmness, and the relief of stress, anxiety and tension.

Drug networks that struggle with the heroin or meth market venture into the Mandrax space.

A former user told the ENACT organised crime project that 'Mandrax is taken to calm down and is often referred to as

'downers'. It is not like your 'uppers' drugs such as crystal meth or ecstasy (MDMA) which makes one euphoric and energised.' Depending on the dose, the effect of the drug can last for up to five or more hours when taken orally and one to two hours when smoked.

Mandrax is extremely addictive and can become dangerous when mixed with other substances. Side effects include dry mouth, headaches, dizziness, chills and diarrhoea. There have been instances where an overdose of the drug has resulted in delirium, convulsions and even death.

For criminal networks, Mandrax is popular for quite different reasons. While not as common as heroin or methamphetamines, Mandrax occupies a good share of the illicit drug market. As one police officer remarked to ENACT under condition of anonymity, 'simply put, organised criminal networks

deal in Mandrax so they can benefit from the illicit drug market.'

Often these networks find it difficult to break into or control the heroin or meth market and so venture into the Mandrax space. Since organised criminals aim to make a profit, Mandrax presents an ideal opportunity to do so, although not on the scale of heroin or crystal meth.

For instance in KwaZulu-Natal, the reach of the drug has expanded from Durban to surrounding areas. Seizures have been reported in Phoenix, Umhlanga, Sydenham, Chatsworth, Newcastle and Port Shepstone. The lack of data on drug usage makes it difficult to estimate the size of the Mandrax market and its users. But as long as South Africa has a sizeable consumer market for Mandrax, it will remain a key target for illicit drug criminal networks.

India and China are the common sources for Mandrax precursors such as anthranilic acid.

One way to stop the proliferation of Mandrax in South Africa is to disrupt and dismantle the criminal networks involved in the market. While dismantling clandestine labs and seizing the drugs is necessary, law enforcement should also target key individuals in the criminal chain such as the manufacturers and suppliers of the drugs and their precursors.

There is little evidence that precursors such as anthranilic acid are produced in South Africa. Countries such as India and to a lesser extent China are the common sources for these. One of the reasons is that Indian organised criminals have a long history in the supply of the drug and its precursor chemicals.

In its response to the challenge, the government needs to balance actions that stem the criminal market with those that could criminalise people who use Mandrax for health purposes. One way is to provide a more regulated market with standard supply which will effectively help control the flow of illegal Mandrax trafficking.

Strengthening drug detection at key points of entry into the country such as harbours and airports is also essential to curb the illicit drug market. Customs and law enforcement officers at these points need to be trained to detect precursors of methaqualone as well as other synthetic drugs.

While the Mandrax market is not as lucrative as the heroin, methamphetamine or cocaine trade, it nonetheless provides an opportunity for organised criminal networks to make a profit. In the process, it has a devastating impact on the health, social and economic aspects of society. Unless the problem is curbed, the white pipe may continue to burn.

AGENCIES

Democrats' bid hangs in balance after first Georgia win

By Agencies

Democrats' hopes of taking control of the U.S. Senate hung in the balance early Wednesday after the party captured one seat in the Georgia runoff elections and waited on the outcome of another race that remained too close to call.

To secure a narrow majority, Democrats need to win both Senate seats, which would split the chamber 50-50 between Republicans and the Democratic caucus, with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris casting tie-breaking votes.

Democrat Raphael Warnock defeated Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler in one of the runoff races, the Associated Press reported Wednesday, while Republican Senator David Perdue and Democrat Jon Ossoff were locked in a dead heat with some absentee votes yet to be counted and as many as 17,000 military and overseas ballots due by Friday.

The uncertainty about Senate control comes as Congress meets in a joint session on Wednesday to count Electoral College votes that will ratify President-elect Joe Biden's win, even as President Donald Trump urged Vice President Mike Pence and lawmakers to overturn the results based on baseless claims of a "rigged" election.

Benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury yields rose past 1% for the first time since March and S&P 500 futures pared earlier declines as traders evaluated the implications of a potential Democratic control of the Senate, such as additional fiscal stimulus and tax hikes. Nasdaq 100 futures tumbled, a sign of concern about the possibility of stepped up

antitrust scrutiny of internet giants under a so-called "blue wave."

In Georgia, Republicans began pointing fingers at Trump for damaging their chances as they confronted the possibility that Democrats could win both races.

With Loeffler's loss, Republicans must hold on to the other Georgia Senate seat to preserve their hold on the chamber and be able to thwart Biden's agenda and cabinet nominees. It could take days to determine the final outcome, and the narrow victory margins will almost certainly spark legal challenges or recounts.

But GOP state officials were grim.

"From the numbers we're looking at right now, it doesn't look good for the two incumbent Republican senators," said elections official Gabriel Sterling, a Republican.

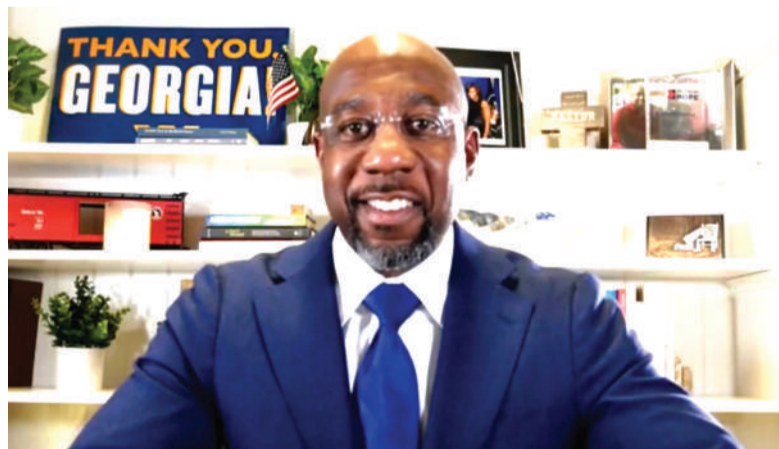
Warnock declared victory, becoming Georgia's first Black senator, and noted that his mother, 82, had picked "someone else's cotton before picking her youngest son to be a United States senator."

"Georgia, I am honored by the faith you have shown in me and I promise you this tonight: I am going to the Senate to work for all of Georgia, no matter who you cast your vote for in this election," he said, echoing Biden's bipartisan tone.

Warnock, 51, is the senior pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, the position once held by Martin Luther King Jr.

Loeffler showed no sign of conceding. "There are a lot of votes out there, as y'all know," she told supporters. "And we have a path to victory and we're staying on it."

The race bounced back and forth between the Republicans and



A video grab shows US Democratic Senate candidate Rev. Raphael Warnock speaking via his YouTube channel after midnight as votes continue to be counted in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 06 January 2021. Republican Senator David Perdue is running against Democrat Jon Ossoff and Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler is running against Democrat Rev. Raphael Warnock in the 05 January 2021 runoff election. File photo

Democrats all evening, reminiscent of the November election, which Trump appeared to be winning early in the night before Biden ultimately won with about 12,000 more votes out of 5 million cast.

Trump Questions Results Trump challenged the results as Democrats gained ground and votes were still being counted. He tweeted that "they are setting up a big 'voter dump' against the Republican candidates," and that Democrats "just happened to have found another 4,000 ballots from Fulton County," which includes the Democratic city of Atlanta.

The president will continue his attack on the Georgia elections as well as his own defeat on Wednesday, when he plans to speak to supporters in Washington. Hours later, some Republican members of Congress will turn what is usually a formality to ratify Biden's Electoral College victory into a lengthy,

but unconstitutional, attempt to overturn it. Both Loeffler and Perdue backed this effort.

Republicans needed a strong turnout of voters on Tuesday to overcome an expected Democratic advantage in early and mail-in ballots. That may have been hampered by Trump's false insistence that the results in Georgia in November were so tainted that they needed to be thrown out. Loeffler and Perdue issued a rare statement in the late afternoon pleading with their supporters to go to the polls before they closed.

Sterling, who has aggressively refuted Trump's unfounded claims of fraud, blamed the outgoing president for the GOP defeat.

"When you tell people your vote doesn't count and has been stolen and people start to believe that - and then you go to the two senators and tell them to ask the secretary of state to resign and trigger a civil war

inside the Republican Party when you need Republicans to unite, all of that stems from his decision-making since the Nov. 3rd election," Sterling said.

Fraud Claims

Fighting for party control of the Senate made the races important enough. But against the backdrop of Trump's baseless claims of vote fraud and corruption by Georgia elections officials - topped by his extraordinary hour-long phone call demanding that officials "find" enough votes to overturn the presidential election - the races also became a test of Trump's continued hold on the GOP.

If Perdue manages to pull out a win, Biden would face a still-GOP-controlled Senate largely unwilling to back many of his plans to develop a federal response to controlling the coronavirus pandemic, deliver more economic stimulus, or raise taxes on corporations and the wealthy.

Perdue, 71, a first-term Republican senator and former corporate executive, ran against Ossoff, 33, a documentary filmmaker who gained national attention in a 2017 special election for an Atlanta-area House seat.

Interest in the races was intense, with record-setting early vote turnout for a runoff and spending of more than \$700 million, including spending for the general election as well as the runoff.

Georgia's rapidly changing demographics are making the state competitive for Democrats.

White voters opted for Loeffler with 72% and Perdue with 73%, according to AP VoteCast, a phone and online survey of more than 2,700 verified Georgia voters conducted

over the past eight days. Black voters, who made up almost a third of the electorate, went overwhelmingly for Ossoff, 94%, and Warnock, 93%. Latino voters went for Ossoff with 55% and Warnock with 57%, the survey showed.

Perdue and Loeffler, and Ossoff and Warnock, essentially ran as party tickets in their unprecedented all-or-nothing runoff, with good reason. History suggested they would be joined at the hip in the eyes of voters, anyhow.

Trump Allies

In almost every way, Perdue's and Loeffler's calculations were to stick tightly to the president, or at least not alienate Trump voters and the party's base. The duo both called for Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to resign after he dismissed Trump's allegations of voter fraud, and both have backed the effort in the Senate to challenge the election results when Congress certifies the November election on Wednesday.

Both Republican senators described their foes as "dangerously radical" and warned Ossoff and Warnock would hand over power in Washington to "socialists" like Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Ossoff and Warnock depicted their wealthy Republican opponents as out-of-touch multimillionaires. Loeffler's husband, Jeffrey Sprecher, recently became a billionaire and is the chief executive officer of Intercontinental Exchange, the parent company of the New York Stock Exchange. Loeffler co-owns the Atlanta Dreams WNBA team and some players have campaigned against her.

DM

International Person of the Year: Joe Biden was the needed medicine

By J Brooks Spector

To rectify that error in judgement - and in public relations - they came up with the idea of designating Lindbergh their "man of the year", complete with his face as cover art and a splashy lead story on the aviator, the man now dubbed "The Lone Eagle". With this edition's success, the magazine's leadership decided they would follow through on this idea annually. Eventually the appellation became person of the year, rather than just man of the year.

As the editors determined their selection criteria, the person of the year featured and profiled a person, a group, an idea, or an object that "for better or for worse ... has done the most to influence the events of the year". That expansive definition of man of the year has meant that, along the way, both Hitler and Stalin have won the magazine's accolade, along with the personal computer, the American worker, and even Dumbo the flying elephant, the protagonist of Walt Disney's full-length feature cartoon. Dumbo had been picked in 1940 for the honour, until he was replaced at the last minute by President Franklin Roosevelt. Probably for the best.

On the frontlines

This year has been an extraordinary one for reasons all too obvious to anybody who has survived to read this article. Given the disasters that have befallen us in 2020, there are numerous possible choices for our international person of the year.

There are thousands of memorable persons worthy of acknowledgement and recognition. Let's start with some of the easy ones.

First there are the thousands of "first responders" - the ambulance drivers, paramedics, emergency and intensive care unit technicians, nurses, doctors, along with the administrators and managers of all those established and temporary emergency hospitals (not to mention the many thousands more essential workers in their quotidian but indispensable jobs). In this, the year of the plague, all of these healthcare workers have risked their own lives and health, both to administer Covid-19 testing and then to minister to those already sick with the disease.

These people did their jobs, even as Covid-19 treatments were uncertain, the way the disease spread was unclear, and a real path to its cure, even now, remains unknown. In fact, many of these caregivers around the world have died in the course of their work, even as others continued on, regardless of the potential consequences to themselves.

Beyond that circle of the front-line caregivers, there have been hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other physicians, medical researchers and support staffers, working in a dozen or more nations, who have worked hard to develop vaccines to ward off the further spread of the disease, as well as to improve treatments for existing Covid-19 infections. Most of these people may never get international accolades or be featured in television newscasts, even as those research results will have profound, lifesaving effects.

Then there are brave individuals like Dr Anthony Fauci, the long-serving head of immunology at America's National Institutes of Health, who have become the kind of leaders who arm a nation with the facts, without giving oxygen to false hopes or fanning the terrifying flames of eschatological fears, despite fierce pressure from political leaders to tone down their difficult truth-telling. Even as some people chose to believe in leaders who have preached the pernicious, fraudulent virtues of bleach or ultraviolet light, Fauci, and others like him, have continued to be there, speaking unvarnished facts to those in power - and to the powerless.

But then, too, there have been the legions of ordinary citizens - in China, Russia, Korea, Japan, the



US, Britain, France, Germany, South Africa and beyond - who have volunteered as test subjects for as-yet-unproven vaccines, with every one of them doing so without knowing if the vaccine being tested might have dangerous side-effects, or even no effect at all against the disease. Regardless, they allowed themselves to be exposed to the disease and the vaccine, even though there was a chance an unproven vaccine might give them the disease rather than immunity. But they volunteered by the thousands anyway.

Providers of information

Then there are the broadcasters, journalists and media medical analysts who devoted their energies, skills, knowledge and talents to educating the public on Covid-19 and its dangerous implications for us all. Some field reporters risked their lives, going into those wet markets in Wuhan, China, in the early days of the pandemic, to file stories even as it was unclear if just doing their jobs was a death sentence.

Others went into overdrive to assemble the knowledge needed to make sense of the disease for the global public, dispelling the rumours and dangerously fraudulent news about the source of the disease, its spread, and its impact on those who caught it.

Some in the media, people like CNN's Dr Sanjay Gupta and a growing roster of colleagues and special medical commentators, brought on board from around the US and elsewhere, did extraordinary work in communicating what the global public needed to know. Their efforts helped millions make sense of the disease and its consequences, and helped squelch inevitable rumours and fakery spread by con-men, snake-oil salesmen and not a few national political leaders who insisted the disease would vanish magically over the summer.

Meanwhile, more specialised scientific and medical periodicals like The New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet, Nature, Science, and Scientific American devoted entire issues to the latest research, both in print and electronically, on the pandemic. In so doing, they kept a worldwide audience of laymen and specialists informed about this new plague and what needed to be done to deal with it.

Around the world, among political leaders, some, like New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and several other less media-savvy public figures helped mobilise national understandings and action, even as other political leaders chose, instead, to demonise science and medicine. Among the latter, of course, was US President Donald Trump and several Republican state governors. This behaviour has almost certainly increased the death toll among publics often unable to determine which politicians spoke truth, versus those babbling utter nonsense.

Beyond the impact of Covid-19 on the world, it is also possible to consider the vast, global impact of the racial redress movement, Black Lives Matter. This loosely coordinated body of like-minded people appalled at racial injustice has spread from its beginnings in the US to become a global movement, generating mass marches and other public protest activities - as well as political responses to the calls they have made.

But if the measure, per Time's original precepts, was one of impact, not simply the betterment of humanity as with a Nobel Peace Prize, a case could even be made for this year's honour going to the virus, given the astonishing impact as it has had on mortality, illness, the devastation to the global economy, and drawing virtually all the oxygen from the global public space. Yes, it obviously is not a person or even a living creature, but consider just what anyone or anything else has had by way of impact this year.

In sum, in an ordinary year, almost any of these individuals or groups would be powerful candidates to becoming the international person(s) of the year.

But this, of course, has not been a normal year.

The man who unseated Trump

While a serious case can be made for each of these candidates, this year we will be going with the individual who defied conventional wisdom about sitting presidents and, instead, achieved what so much smart money believed was nearly impossible: unseating an amoral, bombastic, wannabe authoritarian, an incumbent president with his

mobs of cult followers; and someone with only a passing acquaintanceship with the truth, who had ridden roughshod over a country's political and social mores for nearly half a decade.

This now-defeated president's ruinous administration had been on course for a disorganised response to Covid-19 and its nearly leaderless, halting response to the ensuing economic crisis. Beyond domestic damage, the international impact of this same president and his administration has been nearly as destructive as it drew back from engagement with allies and other friendly nations.

And so, on the basis of his astonishing victory over Trump in the US presidential election, the winner of international person of the year for 2020 is President-elect Joe Biden. The president-elect has had a lifetime of experience and service in politics. He was first elected to the US Senate when he was still several months shy of the minimum age for such an elected position and he then served for some 36 years, representing the State of Delaware.

Third time's the charm

Twice before 2020, Biden had reached for his party's presidential nomination, in 1988 and then again in 2008, but both times had to bow out without coming anywhere close to garnering even modest support. In 2008, however, he was selected by candidate Barack Obama as his vice-presidential running mate and a new door opened for Biden.

When Obama won the presidency, Biden proved to be a steadfast partner in that administration. He took on the difficult but crucially necessary tasks such as shepherding the complex and controversial economic emergency relief packages through Congress in the midst of the great financial crisis of 2008/09. During the eight years of the Obama administration, Biden became the confidential advisor and sounding board every president needs.

Still, seen by many as an overreaching, yet somehow curiously lightweight politician throughout his early and middle years, a number of personal circumstances eventually converged to temper and strengthen him for a final push towards the presidency

in the midst of yet another national crisis.

Even before taking up his Senate seat, his wife and infant daughter had been killed in a horrific car crash that also sent his two seriously injured young sons to the hospital for lengthy stays. Then, in 1988, in the midst of his first presidential campaign, he suffered two brain aneurysms that very nearly killed him.

And, in the final years of his second vice-presidential term, his son, Beau, by now the attorney general of the state of Delaware, died agonisingly from a rare form of brain cancer. Mourning this loss, Biden realised the fire of any further ambition had been extinguished, opening the way for the ultimately losing candidacy of Hillary Clinton against Donald Trump.

Several years on, however, observing the growing national economic and epidemiological devastation, Biden, by then seemingly in political retirement, decided to make one final run for the presidency. At first, this third effort seemed doomed to the same defeat as previous ones, with poor finishes in the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary.

But, in the South Carolina primary and then in primaries across the country, Biden bid began to catch fire, increasingly bolstered by growing revulsion over Trump's rhetoric, policy incoherence and strident identity politics, the growing devastation of the pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis. The desire grew for a calm, authoritative, steady hand. The Biden message became one of an adult coming to the rescue of a struggling nation - a response to the national need for someone with the human warmth and empathy to minister to a stricken nation.

A way out of misery

In the hard-fought 2020 general election campaign that followed, in contrast to the incumbent president's increasingly disruptive, juvenile, bizarre, even delusional, behaviour, Biden (and his revolutionary choice of California Senator Kamala Harris, a woman with a bi-racial heritage, as his running mate) became the appropriate medicine for what ails the country. And, if the electoral results were any guide, his election

was what the country wanted as well.

In the election of 3 November, Biden gained a record number of popular votes, capturing them in states thought to be well off the table for Democrats, and rolling back Trump victories in the 2016 election across the Midwest. Of course the nation's judiciary has also helped enormously in protecting Biden's victory (and democracy itself), refusing to accept any of the Trump campaign's evidence-free claims of fraud and corruption in the electoral system.

Still not yet in office, what Biden has really offered the nation, even before taking his inaugural oath, is a chance. He held no public office in 2020, but he has now given Americans the chance to believe that a way out of their current misery is finally at hand and - together with a crew of similarly experienced adults - Biden would take the helm, just 20 days into the new year. By that time, there will be a coherent, cohesive, comprehensive national plan to deal with both the pandemic and the economic crisis. In fact, it is clear that Trump's wild, delusional charges and wild rants are already in the rear-view mirror for a majority of citizens.

A sigh of relief heard across the world

Similarly, internationally, the feeling about the US and its leadership, except perhaps for those disappointed dealmakers in the Kremlin, has already begun to rebound from the nadir Trump drove it to, with both the US's allies and friends. Expectations are that, in a Biden presidency, the US will make a return to the international community, resume full participation in that community, and embrace the very norms it once helped create as part of the post-war world.

Those hopes are already taking hold, along with a near-global sigh of relief. As The Economist wrote - commenting on Biden's own statement that "America is back, ready to lead the world, not retreat from it" - "The happy gurgles of relief this elicited in Washington, DC, London, Tokyo and beyond may be imagined."

Of course it all may yet go badly. The pandemic does not read the newspapers and it does not respect the borders drawn on a map. The economic revival could prove to be stubbornly resistant to measures pushed by President Biden. Or, a Republican-led Senate may yet make it impossible to achieve support for a more egalitarian economy and society, for reform in immigration laws and regulations, for a return to strong environmental protection and support for significant climate change legislation and norms of behaviour.

But all of those remain in the future. For now at least, Joe Biden has given Americans (or at least most of them, save for bizarre fringe groups like Michigan's "Wolverine Militia", the "Proud Boys", and their ilk) hope that help is now finally at hand; and that waking up in the morning will no longer fill citizens with existential dread that some new, erratic, thoughtless decision or tweet shot off by a president at 3am may again send the globe spinning off to an entirely new, more dangerous orbit.

For this righting of the balance, Joe Biden is our international person of the year. His unlikely triumph is enough to earn him that honour.

DM



Africa's confirmed COVID-19 cases pass 2.85m, says CDC

By Special Correspondent, Addis Ababa

THE number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Africa has reached 2,854,971 as of Tuesday, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said.

The continental disease control and prevention agency said in a statement that the death toll

from the pandemic had reached 67,986 as of Tuesday afternoon.

The Africa CDC, a specialised healthcare agency of the African Union (AU) Commission, also said that a total of 2,361,900 people infected with the virus have so far recovered.

The most affected African countries in terms of the number of positive cases include South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Ethiopia, figures from the Af-

rica CDC showed.

South Africa has the highest number of confirmed Covid-19 cases at 1,113,349. The country also has the highest number of deaths from the disease at 30,011 according to the Africa CDC.

Last week, the AU Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat called on the African continent to ensure economic recovery from the effects of Covid-19 pandemic as the new year begins.

"As we mark the end of the year 2020, we also mark the end of one of the most extraordinary and challenging years in living memory," the chairperson of the 55-member pan-African bloc said in a statement.

Mahamat warned that "the challenging task of protecting our health and livelihoods, while ensuring recovery of our economies, still lies ahead as we begin a new year".

Satellite alerts help fight illegal logging in Africa

By Special Correspondent

A system using satellite data to send free alerts when trees are destroyed has been linked to a significant drop in forest losses in Africa, researchers and academics have said.

Deforestation dropped by an average of 18 percent across nine central African countries after the alerts were introduced, found a study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

"This is really a small revolution," said study lead Fanny Moffette, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"Now that we know subscribers of alerts can have an effect on deforestation, there's potential ways in which our work can improve the training they receive and support their efforts," she added in a statement.

Trees absorb about a third of greenhouse gas emissions produced worldwide, but tropical rainforests disappeared at a rate of one soccer pitch every six seconds in 2019, according to data published by Global Forest Watch.

The study looked at whether the alert system - launched by the Global Forest Watch monitoring project in 2016 - was affecting tree losses in 22 tropical countries in South America, Africa and Asia.

It draws on satellite images updated every eight days, and uses artificial intelligence to identify where trees are vanishing by comparing pictures.

It then warns subscribers covering the area so they can investigate and take action.

Organizations signed up to the alerts include governments, wildlife officials and park authorities, as well as NGOs and local forest protectors.

They have used the data to stage extra patrols in areas shown as losing trees and to catch illegal loggers in the act, said Katherine Shea at Global Forest Watch.

Overall the risk of deforestation was 18 percent lower in 2016-18 than in earlier years in the nine African countries, which included Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

However, deforestation did not decrease overall in South American or Asian countries covered by the alerts.

The authors said similar technology already available in those areas may have lessened the impact. They estimated the alert system is likely to have stopped between \$149 million and \$696 million worth of damage and economic consequences from climate change.

"These new systems are making it really easy for people to have a look and see what is going on - and then take action," said Simon Lewis, professor of Global Change Science at University College London, who was not involved in the study.

"Having a free alert system to give people near real-time information is incredibly helpful."

WWF supports South Africa in the fight against wildlife crime

By Boris Ngounou

THE South African branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has just donated 15 toolkits to the government to strengthen the fight against wildlife crime. The kits will be used at wildlife crime scenes to identify those responsible. This is a necessity for this country where poaching has reached an all-time high in 2014, causing the death of 1,215 rhinos.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is stepping up its fight against the illegal trade in endangered wildlife in South Africa. This is the message of the donation that the international wildlife protection NGO presented on December 28th, 2020 in Cape Town in south-western South Africa to representatives of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and SANParks, South Africa's national parks management authority.

The donation, valued at just over 32,476 euros, consists of 15 toolkits. These are backpacks containing around 20 tools including a metal detector, GPS, frame markers, flags, ballistic rods, and magnifying glasses. These are all the tools an investigator may need to secure a wildlife crime scene and collect evidence.

Environmental crime is considerably established in South Africa. It is a threat to many wildlife species and can lead to their extermination. According to WWF, in 2014 poaching caused the death of 1,215 rhinos.

To cut the evil at its roots, the NGO has launched the Khetha programme to support the efforts of organisations in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers in rhino horns and elephant tusks. "Our strategy is to work with relevant government structures, with a particular focus on where wildlife poaching has taken place, as well as transnational trafficking networks," says Lara Rall, head of communications and implementation of the Khetha project at WWF South Africa.

Endangered vulture poisoned in Zululand

By Nivashni Nair

A critically endangered African white-backed vulture was poisoned in Zululand over the festive season.

Wildlife ACT, a non-profit organisation which aims to save Africa's iconic and endangered species from extinction, suspects more carcasses may be have been removed from the area.

The organisation's Mark Gerrard said the poisoning came exactly a year after an incident in the same area which resulted in the rescue and rehabilitation of four African white-backed vultures and one lappet-faced vulture.

"Poisoning is the primary threat facing these birds in KwaZulu-Natal. Without swift response, a single poisoning incident can affect an entire breeding cluster.

"Vultures are poisoned and then sold in traditional markets where their parts are sought-after," he said.

Wildlife ACT's emergency response manager PJ Roberts said a helicopter was deployed to search for any additional birds that may have been affected to minimise the effect of the poisoning.

"It is crucial the poison is neutralised and the area swept to avoid any long-term impact on vultures and other species in the environment."

Clumps of feathers were noted around the area where the carcass was found, indicating other vultures could have been harvested and removed from the site prior to the team's arrival.

A case was opened at the Mkuze police station.

"Vulture numbers across the continent are in a steep decline, affected by many anthropogenic threats. It is critical conservation efforts are increased to address these threats and halt the population decline," said Gerrard.

"Vultures play an extremely important role in our ecosystems, cleaning up carcasses across the landscape and removing risks of certain disease outbreaks. As such, every individual vulture is important, and mitigating threats to these birds is a primary focus of Wildlife ACT's vulture programme."

As part of this programme, Wildlife ACT monitors KwaZulu-Natal populations of vulture species, including the African white-backed vulture.

"Through this monitoring effort,



the team is able to understand fine scale movements of individuals and groups. The monitoring, continued by the team over the Christmas period, enabled Wildlife ACT to pick up a high-risk area and, through the deployment of the emergency response unit, find the site of the poisoning," Gerrard said.

Wildlife ACT species conservation director Chris Kelly said vultures face many threats.

"Poisoning is just one of them. Power lines and other energy infrastructure, habitat change and loss and lack of food all play a role."

"It is therefore important we address the conservation of these species at many levels, including reactive approaches such as our emergency response fund, as well as proactive measures such as long-term monitoring, education and awareness about the value of the species, and working with governments to develop a long-term policy framework to guide their conservation," Kelly said.

Monitoring endangered species involves fitting individuals with patagial wing tags, GPS backpacks or both.

Gerrard said last year two African white-backed vultures were found shot in two separate incidents adjacent to protected land. "Discussions with local leaders revealed the shooting of vultures was not uncommon in the area, with few people understanding their protected status and the ecological value the species provide.

"As is the case with many other endangered species, vultures are not confined to protected areas and game reserves. It is therefore everyone's responsibility to assist in the conservation of the species."

The biggest mistake I've made since quitting drinking

By Benya Clark

Throughout most of my adult life, I've struggled with two serious addictions: alcohol and tobacco.

My drinking and smoking habits grew hand-in-hand, both becoming daily vices during college. By the time I graduated, I was smoking a pack of cigarettes a day and getting drunk every night.

My entire twenties were filled with attempts to quit these habits. Sometimes I tried to tackle them one at a time, and sometimes I would attempt to cut both from my life at once. I never found much success with either method.

I would occasionally manage to give up one or both vices for a month or two, but I never lasted much longer. Sooner or later, I always found an excuse to relapse.

It wasn't until I started nearing my thirties that I finally achieved more success. Even though 30 is relatively young in the recovery community, approaching this big milestone birthday really made it hit home for me just how long these habits had lasted.

At age 29, I finally stopped smoking, and this time I lasted for months without too much trouble. I was inspired by that success when I quit drinking a few months later.

Giving up drinking and smoking in the same year was incredibly hard. I had come to rely on these substances for stress and anxiety relief - or at least that's how it felt at the time. Now it felt like I had nothing



left to turn to when I had a rough day.

Unfortunately, that first year sober was very rough for me, and one day in particular was overwhelmingly stressful. I was dealing with a job I hated, relationship trouble and deep depression, and I felt like I just couldn't abstain from my two vices of old any longer.

I remember sitting in my apart-

ment and thinking: "I'm definitely going to either drink or smoke, so I might as well smoke since that's less harmful."

It was terrible logic, but in the moment I believed it. I went to the gas station and bought a pack of cigarettes.

I told myself I would just smoke a few cigarettes and then toss the rest of the pack away. Instead, those

"few" cigarettes turned into another three years of smoking.

I don't have many regrets about how I've handled my sobriety, but I do still consider this one of the biggest mistakes I ever made.

When I quit drinking, I focused all my attention on staying sober. It was so incredibly hard that I chose to be forgiving of myself in most other areas of my life. For example, I let myself eat plenty of junk food, and I played way more video games than anyone should.

To some degree, this decision made sense, but I never should have extended that logic to smoking cigarettes. Cigarettes are just far too unhealthy, and I should have known better than to go back to them.

For much of my time sober, I continued to use cigarettes to replace part of the void that alcohol had seemed to have left. I thought of them as my way to ease anxiety, and as my way to relax after a hard day at work.

I started to wonder if I would just need to remain a smoker for the rest of my life. Even though I had gone months without cigarettes when I first got sober, it now seemed impossible to quit again.

I spent a lot of time beating myself up for buying that first pack, and smoking those "few" cigarettes. Every current and former smoker knows how easy it is to go from one or two cigarettes to an entire pack.

My decision to start smoking again damaged my health, wasted hundreds - if not thousands - of dollars, and disappointed many people in my life. Although I was maybe unnecessarily hard on myself about it, it truly was an awful mistake.

Fortunately, there's a happy ending to this story. Almost exactly one year ago, I managed to quit smoking again. It has now been nearly four years since I quit drinking, and for the past year I've stayed sober while also remaining cigarette-free.

It was harder to stop smoking this time than the first time around but, after many attempts, I did finally manage to do it. I quit smoking in part by using the same techniques that I had used to quit drinking. One of the tools that helped me the most was "playing the tape forward".

Every time that I thought about going to the store and buying a pack of cigarettes, I would try to visualise exactly how that would turn out.

Would I really buy a pack just to smoke a few (cigarettes) and throw the rest away? Of course, not. Instead, I would end up finishing the pack, and then buying another the next day.

It was easy to imagine how this would play out, because I had just spent the past three years experiencing it. I could no longer be under any delusions about how easy it would be to fall right back into my pack-a-day smoking habit.

Quitting smoking hasn't had a negative impact on my sobriety either. If anything, I feel happier than ever knowing that I've eliminated another terrible substance from my life.

This whole experience has also taught me an important lesson about being sober: I should never use my sobriety as an excuse for other bad decisions. Just because I'm doing one thing right in my life, that doesn't mean I have permission to do everything else wrong.

Instead of using my sobriety to justify bad habits, I now try my best to use it to build new good habits.

Benya Clark is a lawyer and teacher from North Carolina who writes about sobriety, mental health, running and more.

Africa's free trade agreement: Great expectations, tough questions

BY TENIOLA TAYO

The start of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement on 1 January 2021 marks the dawn of a new era in Africa's development journey. Over time, the AfCFTA will eliminate import tariffs on 97% of goods traded on the continent, as well as address non-tariff barriers.

Opening up a market of over 1.3 billion people is expected to spur more intra-African trade while increasing the appeal of direct investment in Africa for the rest of the world.

Intra-Africa trade has historically been low. In 2019, only 12% of Africa's \$560 billion worth of imports came from the continent. African countries have also been trapped in the lower levels of the global economy by selling low-value raw materials and buying higher-value manufactured goods. This is seen as one of Africa's major challenges for development. The free trade agreement seeks to reverse this.

The rationale behind it is simple in theory, but complex in reality. Free trade between African countries is expected to stimulate structural transformation in Africa. Structural transformation is expected to increase growth in exports of more complex goods and services. Export growth, in labour-intensive sectors at least, is expected to create jobs.

The start of trading under the AfCFTA marks a new era in Africa's development journey.

The creation of a larger African middle class means more consumption, which should trigger more production and even higher incomes on both national and individual levels. The cycle is expected to continue.

Data shows that intra-African trade comprises a higher share of manufactured goods, and meeting domestic demand for these can better position African countries in global value chains. For this, African countries must find answers to several questions



In a world that's increasingly divided, African cooperation is gaining momentum. File photo

including production growth, productivity growth and reduced transport costs.

Increased production for exports cannot happen in a vacuum. The agreement attempts to solve demand issues by creating a single African market, but there are reasons that countries haven't been able to scale up production to match the consumption of their citizens.

After petroleum products, cars are the highest-value imports into Africa. In 2019, the continent spent about \$19 billion importing cars and only 3% of this was fulfilled by African exporters. Nigeria spent close to \$4 billion importing cars in the same year and has done so for five years.

Understanding why Nigerian producers have been unable to meet even the local demand for cars will highlight what needs to change in the context of a single African market. The logic, however, is that a larger market will improve the business case for foreign direct investment, bringing much-needed capital and technology into Africa.

Africa's history of slavery, colonialism and global marginalisation provides an impetus for change.

On the other hand, productivity, or being able to produce more output with fewer resources, may be a harder nut to crack. Increased productivity has been recognised as a key driver of growth. Improv-

ing productivity will require more efficient allocation of factor endowments like land, labour and capital while leveraging appropriate technologies.

One way to drive productivity growth may be through using industrial policies by encouraging the transition of economic activity from the simple extraction of raw materials to the more complex production of manufactured goods. This is sometimes done by providing infrastructure, loans, subsidies and tax incentives to support producers, or by 'protecting' them with trade restrictions.

The third issue is transport costs. Tariffs aren't the only reason intra-Africa trade has

been so low - non-tariff barriers like transport costs have played a significant role. Conversations around implementing the free trade agreement have recognised the need for investment in transport infrastructure to facilitate trading. Although several options are being considered, high transport costs continue to pose a threat to the pricing competitiveness of intra-African exports, especially in the cross-regional context.

There will be several other barriers to trade including the deficit in hard and soft infrastructure, certification requirements, bureaucratic red tape and rent-seeking by government officials. A mechanism has been set up for re-

porting and addressing non-tariff barriers.

African countries will need to work together to find lasting solutions to these problems. More specifically, for industrial policies to work for and not against the AfCFTA, they may have to be coordinated on the continental level. Otherwise, most African countries could focus on similar goods and services, again limiting themselves to their domestic markets.

Africa could become a beacon of cooperation in an increasingly divided world.

Coordinating industrial policies will also help countries or regions specialise production in specific and complementary directions. Speciali-

sation facilitates economies of scale and productivity growth. It can also lead to lower prices and more competitive goods for both the African and global markets.

There have been several attempts - both nationally and regionally - to find collective solutions to these problems. Almost all regional economic communities have created collective industrial strategies at some point. The African Union launched the implementation strategy for its Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa plan in 2008.

Some of these attempts at supra-national cooperation and coordination have failed for several reasons including legitimacy and enforcement challenges with regional bodies, and insufficient political will from national governments.

Similar to China's 'century of humiliation', Africa's history of slavery, colonialism and subsequent global marginalisation provides an impetus for change. From the independence to the post-independence period, leaders like Kwame Nkrumah laid out a vision of unity and cooperation for Africa. With 54 signatories and 36 ratifications, the speed at which African leaders have moved on the AfCFTA may signal a new level of commitment to these ideals.

Cooperation has its difficulties, as shown by the decline of multilateralism. African leaders must navigate the path to collective development with sufficient wariness for these issues. The ubuntu philosophy captures the famous African collectivist idea that is often proudly contrasted with the Western individualist version.

Africa could become a beacon of multilateral cooperation in an increasingly divided world. Will the AfCFTA lay the foundation for African advancement? Or will it be a precursor to the premature unravelling of African unity and cooperation? We'll soon find out.

AGENCIES



Kiteto's Makame Savannah REDD Project wins Etihad Airways deal

By The Banker Reporter

IN a rare feat, Makame Savannah REDD Project in Kiteto District of Manyara Region has won a carbon credit offset deal with Etihad Airways with an unspecified amount.

Carbon Tanzania Limited which is working in partnership with Makame Savannah REDD Project said the deal has been brokered by UK based Respira and will involve approximately 130,000 carbon credits.

"Respira has signed a deal with Carbon Tanzania to purchase the verified emission reductions (carbon credits) generated by the Makame Savannah REDD Project for a fixed period. The first sale of approximately 130,000 carbon credits was completed in December 2020," said Carbon Tanzania's Director, Jo Anderson.

Anderson said Respira which sells these credits to various corporate customers who wish to use the credits to "offset" their company's carbon footprints successfully managed to negotiate the deal with Etihad.

"The Makame Savannah REDD project is implemented by the Makame Wildlife Management Area in cooperation with Carbon Tanzania. The revenues from the project are shared by employees and officers of the WMA, the resi-



Members of Makame Wildlife Management negotiating team (pictured) with Carbon Tanzania officials in Kiteto District of Manyara Region.

dents of the five villages that comprise the Makame WMA and the Kiteto District Council in Manyara Region," he added.

The Carbon Tanzania Director further noted that the Etihad deal may open many other similar opportunities in future. "We do not have any certain information about other airlines from the Gulf States, but it is possible that this deal may pave the way for other airlines to make a similar commitment," he added saying if the UAE's other major airline, Emirates decides to purchase offsets for their carbon reduction strategy, they will likely not purchase from the same pro-

ject used by Etihad.

Many international airlines are currently purchasing carbon credits to compensate for their operational emissions ahead of 2022 when an International Civil Aviation Organization scheme called CORSIA takes effect.

The scheme will designate carbon credit projects that are authorized to sell to the member airlines. Government carbon reduction schemes and large projects implemented in a jurisdictional setting currently qualify, but not private projects such as those implemented by Carbon Tanzania.

Last month, Abu Dhabi based Etihad Airways which is the national

airline of the UAE, said it will purchase carbon offsets to neutralise all of the CO2 emissions generated by its wide-body 787-10 'Greenliner' aircraft this year.

The initiative marks the first step of the airline's journey to cut its CO2 emissions to 50 per cent of last year's levels by 2035 and to reach full net zero emissions by 2050, which is a first for any major airline in the Gulf, it said. It will also roll out an additional voluntary programme offering flyers the chance to offset their own carbon emissions via its website.

"It's encouraging to end a difficult

year with such a positive move for the sustainable future of aviation," said Etihad chief executive, Tony Douglas. "While the year brought many challenges, sustainability has remained at the top of our agenda, and the work hasn't stopped."

The company's offset programme has been sourced through Respira, a carbon offset finance business that specialises in creating tailored offsetting projects. Etihad's scheme will see it buy 80,000 tonnes of CO2 offsets that will fund a Tanzanian forestry project.

SA-based Global Credit halts Prime Bank's Tausi Assurance firm rating

NAIROBI

South Africa's ratings firm Global Credit Ratings (GCR) has suspended the credit profile of Prime Bank's Tausi Assurance company for failing to disclose some information.

GCR says the A rating issued after a review in October 2019, indicating high credit quality and certainty of timely payments, has been withdrawn. The ratings firm, however, said this did not mean the company is not paying its debt or struggling to stay afloat.

"GCR has suspended Tausi Assurance Company Limited's national scale financial strength rating of A(KE) without review. No information has been received and therefore a review of the ratings cannot be finalised based on GCR's information sufficiency standard requirement," GCR said.

"A credit rating suspension does not imply that the entity is not servicing its debt obligations or that its financial position has deteriorated, but rather that it has failed to provide important information pertaining to its credit profile," the ratings firm said.

Prime Bank bought Tausi Assurance in 2018 in a takeover that saw the lender gain 80.7 per cent control of the insurance solutions provider. The acquisition was meant to help the lender scale up to offer its customers a wide range of insurance solutions through the bank's network.

Established in 1992, Tausi Assurance covers all industrial risks, fire, business interruption, engineering, burglary, marine, workmen's compensation and group personal accident. The firm also offers cover against loss emanating from political violence and terrorism, domestic insurance and motor vehicle accidents.

Innovators demand state involvement in policy formulation

By Correspondent Theresia Victor

THE government should involve stakeholders in information communication technology when formulating policies and legislation to ensure such documents are friendly to start-up entrepreneurs.

At a meeting with Deputy Minister of Education, Science, and Technology, Omary Kipanga who visited Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) this week, one of the innovators, Isaya Yunge who is Founder and CEO of Goodsam Technologies, said the state should look at current policies guiding start-ups because its unfriendly.

"We request policies to be looked at so that small innovating entrepreneurs can be able to establish start-up technology companies," said Yunge who requested for a grace period before taxation and other regula-

ry requirements to allow such companies establish themselves.

He further noted that currently, start-ups are burdened by a number of taxes which apply immediately after registration before even making any income. "Startup companies are being registered when we have ideas that we expect to make money from which taxes are supposed to be paid in a normal situation," he argued.

Yunge's observation was backed by Founder and CEO of Fundi Apps, Godfrey Kilimwiko who noted that innovators are not reluctant to pay tax but want time until when their companies are making money.

"We should be given ample time to see how our startup technology companies perform in the market so that we can be taxed fairly," Kilimwiko argued adding that technologies companies are delicate businesses



Costech director general, Dr Amos Nungu.

which, unlike others where clients come as soon as they start, take time to attract customers and make money.

On her part, Founder and CEO of Huduma Smart, Bablina Gulam said innovators simply want to see a conducive working environment created by the state so that they can earn money and employ people. "Unfortu-

nately our policies and laws are a bit hush for start-ups to survive," Gulam said.

Responding to the concerns, COSTECH Director General, Dr Amos Nungu said as key players in the country's economy, the government will consider their suggestions. "Your requests will be taken by our government and through multi-sector meetings which are

involved in policy formulation, we will see how best to address these challenges," Dr Nungu said. He said it evident that innovation in the country is growing and giving young entrepreneurs space to establish start-ups that solve market problems.

Alibaba looks to raise \$5bn through bond sale amid regulatory scrutiny

BEIJING

China's Alibaba plans to raise at least \$5 billion through the sale of a US dollar-denominated bond this month, sources said, amid regulatory scrutiny of co-founder Jack Ma's empire. Depending on investor response, proceeds could reach \$8bn which the e-commerce giant is likely to use for general corporate expenditure, one of the people said.

The fundraising will be a test of investor sentiment towards Alibaba, coming months after an October speech from billionaire Mr Ma about regulation stifling innovation that led to the halting of affiliate Ant Group's \$37bn stock market listing.

Mr Ma's absence from public view in the intervening time has fuelled social media speculation over his whereabouts. The bond sale plan, including

the timeline, is not finalised and is subject to change, the sources said, declining to be named. Alibaba declined to comment.

Since Mr Ma's speech, Chinese regulators have begun an antitrust probe into Alibaba and ordered FinTech Ant to change its lending and other consumer finance businesses, including the creation of a holding company to meet capital requirements.



Since Mr Ma's speech, Chinese regulators have begun an antitrust probe into Alibaba and ordered FinTech Ant to change its lending and other consumer finance businesses, including the creation of a holding company to meet capital requirements.

Regulators are also reviewing Ant's equity investments in dozens of companies and considering whether to instruct the firm to divest some of them. Reuters reported last month. Alibaba's international bond offering, if finalised, would be the group's third. Refinitiv data showed. It sold an \$8bn US dollar bond in 2014, and a \$7bn tranche in 2017, the data showed.

With its latest float, Alibaba

will join a slew of Asian companies that have taken advantage of cheaper borrowing costs and abundant liquidity in global markets in recent months. The terms of the offering were not immediately known. Marketing documents were likely to be available as soon as next week, and that the tenure of the bond is likely to be 10 years, according to two of the sources.

Import bill down by over 4trn/- thanks to declining oil imports

By Francis Kajubi

OIL imports which constituted 17.1 percent of the country's import bill in November last year were down by 28.2 percent hence reducing the bill from US\$10.52 billion (over 24.39trn/-) in November 2019 to US\$8.97 billion (over 20.8trn/-).

According to Bank of Tanzania's monthly economic review for December, a decrease in imports of capital and intermediate goods also contributed to the reduction. "Much of the decrease of imports was recorded in transport equipment and oil. The value of oil imports declined by 28.8 percent to US\$1.31 billion from US\$1.84 billion owing to decrease in both price and volume," the report said.

It however, stated that the value of transport equipment dropped by 34.7 percent to US\$750 million from US\$1.15 billion of the previous year. The value of building and construction materials imported dropped slightly to US\$921 million from US\$994 million during the period.

"Service payments amounted to US\$1.32 billion during the period, lower than US\$1.78 billion in the year ending November 2019, due to a decrease in travel payments," the BoT report noted adding that, on monthly basis, the imports bill for goods decreased to US\$636 million from US\$734 million recorded in November 2019.

Service payments value declined by 43.9 percent to US\$93 million during the period, largely explained by low travel payments associated with containment measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus outbreak.



Cashew nut bags at Mtwara Port ready to be shipped abroad last year.

Going by the value of exports of goods and services, the central bank stated that both exports which amounted to US\$8.84 billion during the period which was lower than US\$9.47 billion in the corresponding period of 2019, are a result of the decline in services receipts.

"On monthly basis, the value of

exports of goods and services was US\$837 million in November 2020 compared with US\$857 million in November 2019," the report added while asserting that the value of traditional exports increased to US\$826 million from US\$745 million during the period under review, owing to an increase in export value

of cashew nuts, cloves and cotton.

"Cashew nuts, cloves and cotton rose due to improved export volumes, sustained by increased production. Conversely, export values for tea and sisal declined on account of both low price and volume, while those of coffee and tobacco declined on account of low

Audit woes at SA Land Bank has bondholder worried

JOHANNESBURG

Gaps in the financial statements of South Africa's state-owned agricultural bank are a concern for creditors already fretting over the slow progress in turning the lender around.

The Auditor General issued a disclaimer over the Land and Agricultural Development Bank of Southern Africa's annual results, citing a lack of evidence to reach a conclusive audit. The lender needs a R7 billion government bailout to ease a cash crunch, keep operating and enable it to take on new clients and meet existing customers' full needs.

"The big worry for a lending institution is the disclaimer that is linked to inappropriate audit evidence," Olga Constantatos, head of credit at Futuregrowth Asset Management, said by phone. "That points to a lack of record keeping, lack of internal controls around the model for loans, for impairments charges."

Auditors are questioning the viability of one of the largest providers of loans to South African farmers after the Land Bank's full-year loss widened, costs soared and its non-performing loans ratio almost doubled, the Pretoria-based lender said on December 31. The National Treasury has said it will address the rescue when it tables the annual budget in February. South Africa's finances have been stretched by constant support to money-losing state-owned companies, a drop in tax income and a wage bill that has jumped 40% over the past 12 years.

The Land Bank is starting to address findings by the auditor general, which included weak internal controls, irregular expenditure and concerns over whether expected credit losses were appropriately accounted for, it said.

The lender has filled key vacancies, such as the chief financial officer, chief risk officer and general manager of finance, strategy and planning after resignations in these areas caused a "loss of corporate memory," which was worsened by poor record keeping.

While asset managers and other creditors have been in constant communication with the lender and government, progress has been too slow and the situation seems to be worsening, Constantatos said. "It could be worse than the numbers are showing or it could be better," she said. "The disclaimed opinion means we actually just don't know. That's a big worry for us."

While Treasury has previously said it will not allow Land Bank to fail, what remains to be seen is whether it is able to provide the funding the lender needs on time and in full, said Jones Gondo, a credit research analyst at Nedbank Group. "Without the extraordinary government support, Land Bank is not financially viable," he said.

Rwanda horticulture export prospects high with UAE deal

KIGALI

Rwanda's horticultural products have started being traded in the Carrefour hypermarket thanks to a deal between the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) and this United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based retail firm.

A hypermarket is a very large supermarket with a department store – a large store divided into departments offering a wide range of consumer goods. The partnership between NAEB and Carrefour is seen as a key enabler for Rwandan producers of fresh products, exporters and the country's economy at large, according to Rwandafresh – the brand for Rwanda's fresh products including fruits and vegetables.

"We've just started the New Year with an opportunity for our fresh agriexport producers & exporters. We secured a one-year deal with Carrefour hypermarket. We will be supplying to this wide UAE retailing company with passion fruits, apple banana, pineapple and avocado," Rwandafresh Brand wrote on Twitter on Sunday, January 3.

Rwandafresh Brand, which is under NAEB, said that the first shipment to Carrefour on Sunday includes avocado and passion fruits. According to NAEB, the shipment consisted of 1,600 kilogrammes (1.6 tonnes) of which 1,500 kilogrammes were avocados and 100 kilogrammes of passion fruits.

"That was a sample to gauge the appreciation levels of their customers for our products," NAEB Communication officer, Pie Ntwari told The New Times, noting the volumes are likely to increase later. He said that this is one-year-contract that can be renewed.

He explained that the exports are expected to be made weekly, pointing out that they will depend on the purchase order from Carrefour based on its demands and sales statistics. "So, we have hope that it will be a long-term market," he said. For prices, he



A worker sorting passion fruits for export at NAEB warehouse in January 2020.

said they are fair based on the international market.

On the implications of the deal, Ntwari said that the country has been exporting horticultural products to UAE, Asia and Europe among other parts of the world, "but we had no market to which we are directly connected [ready market]."

"But, Carrefour is a potential retailing shop that will be [buying and] selling our products to different buyers," he said, adding that it has major markets in countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Oman.

"It means we are going to see an increase in production and export volumes as well as revenues, which will have an impact on farmers, exporters, and the economy at large," he said of the implications of

the deal.

Commenting on which exporters will get the rights to export fresh produce to the UAE, Ntwari said that all exporters will have equal rights. However, he pointed out that exporters with high-quality products have an upper hand.

Market diversification critical Robert Rukundo, the Chairman of Horticulture Exporters Association of Rwanda told The New Times the deal is one of the strategies to expand the market for "our products, which is largely traded in the UK and European Union. Rukundo noted that having a wide market base enables one to have other people to supply to when some cancel demands, referring to supply disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Carrefour is a big chain supermarket. That is a good thing

for the Rwandan exporters and the Rwandan farmers...with the deal, we are dealing directly with supermarket, so the prices are and revenues are likely to go up as there is no middleman," he said.

Rwanda exported 31,788 tonnes of horticulture commodities (vegetables, fruits, and flowers) which generated \$28.7 million (about Rwf27 billion) during the fiscal year 2019/20, indicate figures from the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB). This represents an increase of 5 per cent compared to \$27.1 million generated from over 37,343 tonnes of horticulture exports in 2018/19.

According to NAEB, despite Covid-19, Rwanda fetched good prices for her products in 2020 thanks to

NEWSINDEPTH



South Africa's Auditor General, Tsakani Maluleke.

World Bank-funded project to integrate EA stocks markets set to get going soon

A World Bank project to digitally integrate stock markets in East African Community may kick off without Kenya later this year, so says Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange CEO, Moremi Marwa in this second of a two-part interview:

There has also been an integration of the four regional stock markets in Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi. What informed this project and what impact will it have on the East African capital market?

This has been a long coming project for almost seven years, this project is funded by the World Bank and managed by the East African Community Secretariat based in Arusha. The intent was to connect the East African markets, where investors in Tanzania will be able to invest in the Nairobi Securities Exchange or Uganda Stock Exchange or the Rwanda Stock Exchange without necessarily needing to have a broker here in Tanzania speaking with a broker in Kenya, or these other countries before a transaction happens. The project entails having the Smart Order Router, which is an infrastructure that will be based at the East African Secretariat offices in Arusha in Tanzania. Each of our markets can be linked technologically through either the automated trading systems or the central depository systems to this SOR.

What progress has been made in this regard practically?

Currently, we have already done the use acceptance tests and now we are doing the demonstrations, posting some of the trades and seeing how the transactions happen in other markets. The expectation is that in the beginning of 2021, we might go live. That is the intent by all stakeholders from the system vendor, the East African Community Secretariat, and for us who are participants to this initiative. And if these demos prove to be not that challenging, then we anticipate to see this happening in 2021. To start with, we will not have Kenya within the platform, but they indicated that they are paying close attention to the ongoing developments and we anticipate that probably some few months down the line, they might see the need to also participate. Kenya contributes significantly to our capital market space in the East African Community and therefore having Kenya will make the project itself commercially and economically viable.

As DSE CEO, how many local and foreign investors have you managed to try to get to the country?

The fact that the level of liquidity has increased by almost 10 times in the past seven years says that the investor base has also increased. From the domestic perspective, we



have moved from around 250,000 to 300,000 to 600,000 investor base, almost doubled. Foreign investors are largely institution investors investing into our market, so much as they may be smaller in number relative to domestic investors but their contribution in terms of liquidity and ownership is significant. In terms of the liquidity, which on average now is around 500 billion Tanzanian shillings or close to \$250 million, a big chunk of that, almost 80 percent comes from foreign portfolio investors mostly from Europe as well as North America. And as much as we continue to profile the exchange and enhance its visibility by achieving frontier market status or achieving full membership to the World Federation of Exchanges, we anticipate that this will enhance the confidence of foreign investors to participate in our market.

How has economic growth assisted in boosting share trading at the bourse?

In Tanzania, for the past almost 30 years, the average growth rate of the gross domestic product (GDP) has been seven percent consistently. So, this year, even with the coronavirus outbreak, the impact on some of the sectors such as tourism, which is quite big in Tanzania, as well as trade which has been impacted, still, our GDP is grew at 5.5 percent according to the National Bureau of Statistics, Bank of Tanzania, as well as the IMF and World Bank. So, the growth level of 5.5 percent is relatively larger compared to some of the economies within the East African Community or even Sub Saharan Africa.

Which sectors have benefitted from DSE investors?

Some of the sectors that we are seeing some developing interests include infrastructure and the government is putting a lot of investments in that area. There is a significant public spending that goes into infrastructure, railway, roads, ports, airports, and so on that is attracting a lot of capital. We are seeing the same in sectors such as manufacturing, especially industrial related manufacturing, agro-

processing, telecommunication, financial services, and mining. Because of that, the economy is anticipated to continue doing relatively well. The investors are investing in what they are seeing that the economy will be able to produce and given that the economy will continue to do relatively well, then we anticipate to see investors both domestic and foreign participating in our market.

Aside from growth, what have been the challenges that are affecting the DSE?

The first challenge is the size of our market. For significant global investors, they are looking into our market and see that even with something like \$5 billion of domestic market capital, this size is still on the lower side to them. Therefore, we are missing that opportunity and the kind of foreign investors that we are getting are mid-sized fund managers and not the big global fund management investors. So, if we can make our market more vibrant, getting some more entities listed in the market, that will be able to attract even more and larger global investors coming into our market.

So what is being done here?

To be able to attract more entities to come into our market it is a matter of financing needs and the public education—whether the business community understand and are willing to use the capital market. The more the business community and entrepreneurs are informed about the diverse and various forms of capital, and some of these will be more efficient capital compared to bank-based kinds of capital, which is also short term in nature, then we will see some more companies listed at DSE. We also encourage our business community to be more ambitious in terms of looking into their business and how they can expand those kinds of business.

What about decision makers, is there anything that they can do here?

We are engaging with policymakers also. Back in 2010, we had two pieces of legislation. One was called the Electronic and Postal Communications Act and the other one is the Mining Act. Part of the provisions in those pieces of legislature was to require companies within the telecom space as well as the mining space to consider offloading part of their shares and invite the public to invest in those companies, and then they get listed on the exchange. Those Acts require these companies to use the capital markets, but that implementation has not been aligned to the spirit of the laws.

What are some of your success stories and achievements with DSE?

Our success is aligned to whether we are achieving what we intended to achieve, or not. Our first strategic plan ran from 2012 to 2017. We were able to implement some of the activities and now we are implementing the second five-year development strategic plan for DSE, which runs from 2018 to 2022. We have almost two years before we will see how far we have come. So far, in line with our own strategic plans, we are seeing that we are almost over 70 percent of what we intended to do.

IMF: Kenya risks Eurobond access over pile-up of debt

NAIROBI

Kenya risks losing access to cheap Eurobonds due to its debt pile-up, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned, citing investor concerns over possible defaults or deferment of repayments.

The IMF's latest assessment of Kenya's debt sustainability shows the country is likely to breach the threshold over the next decade going by the level of external loans against the value of dollar-earning exports, tax revenues and gross domestic product (GDP)—factors that drive lending decisions and pricing of sovereign debt. Official data shows that Kenya's debt stood at 69.2 percent of the GDP in August 2020, having climbed from 61.7 percent at the end of 2019 and 50.2 percent at the end of 2015.

"The DSA (Debt Sustainability Assessment) suggests that Kenya is susceptible to export and market financing shocks and more prolonged and protracted shocks to the economy would also present downside risks to the debt outlook, including from the continued potential loss of market access for frontier economies at reasonable prices, thus raising the probability that the debt indicators would remain in breach of the thresholds over time," the IMF said in its assessment report.

The IMF warning comes barely a month after Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani told Parliament that Kenya expects to return to the Eurobond market in 2024 to refinance Sh130billion (\$1.2billion) maturing bonds it borrowed in 2014.

Sub-Saharan African countries have been tapping cheap dollar loans that saw outstanding debt nearly double to \$625 billion between 2011 and 2019, according to the World Bank. But now the continent is facing jittery investors since Zambia defaulted on its Eurobonds and other countries restructured bilateral loans under a deal offered by the Group of 20 of leading economies.

The IMF projects that Kenya's debt in present value terms will hit 69.9 percent of the GDP in 2022 and breach the 70 percent threshold up to 2024 when the country is scheduled to settle the 2014 Eurobond in a bullet payment -- a single repay-

ment of principal of a bond or loan on its maturity date. The fund's assessment further shows that Kenya will also be in breach of the amount of interest payments against dollar-earning exports and debt service against tax revenues in 2024.

The country has recently turned to expensive commercial loans to refinance maturing debt and fund the budget. These include syndicated loans arranged by banks which are short-term and charge interest rates as high as eight percent.

In 2013 only seven percent of external debt was commercial, 27 percent bilateral and 64 percent borrowed from multilateral sources. Currently, commercial debt makes up 31 percent of foreign loans, bilateral debt is 30 percent while multilateral debt is 39 percent.

Out of Kenya's Sh3.2 trillion external debt, \$6.1 billion (Sh652.7 billion) is owed to holders of the country's Eurobonds. The current Jubilee administration has borrowed nine syndicated loans compared to a single one during the tenure of President Mwai Kibaki's, reflecting the recent borrowing spree.

These have been borrowed from Standard Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Citi Bank, Trade Development Bank (former PTA Bank), Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and Qatar National Bank. TDB is Kenya's biggest lender of syndicated loans and has issued the country with over Sh160 billion over the last four years.

The IMF and the World Bank are helping Kenya balance its books by offering low-cost loans with long grace periods and lengthy maturity to reduce interest payments and make debt easy to service. Last year Kenya turned to the two institutions for cheaper concessional loans, tapping Sh100 billion from the World Bank and Sh79.3 billion from the IMF.

Kenya plans to borrow an additional \$1.5 billion (Sh150 billion) from the World Bank in 2021 and take a \$2.3 billion (Sh250.4 billion) loan facility from the IMF for budget support. The loans are offered at less than two percent with a grace period of five years and a 30-year repayment period.



Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani.

BANKING & FINANCE

Retail banks need to beef up their offering or risk losing 15-25pc of revenue

By Dr Tijsbert Creemers-Chaturvedi

Regulatory changes, rising customer expectations, new competition, and technological advancements are weakening the daily interactions that cement the relationship between banks and their clients, thereby threatening banks' profitability.

We estimate that a retail bank puts 15% to 25% of its revenue at risk if the institution fails to enhance its daily banking proposition by adding innovative new features, improving customer experiences, making better use of data, and commanding higher prices that reflect the added value enabled by open banking.

Additionally, Covid-19 is on a path to change the way consumers interact with their banks, with one in four customers planning to use branches less or stop visiting them completely. Millennial and Gen-Z consumers have particularly warmed to digital channels during the crisis with nearly half of participants enrolling in online or mobile banking for the first time.

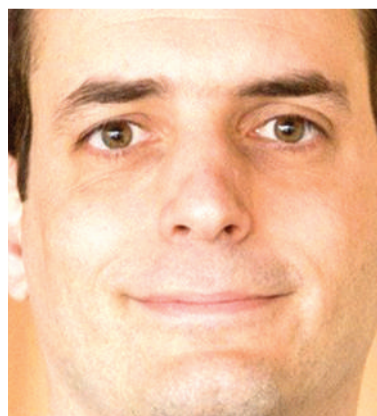
Locally, a number of digital banks have launched over the last few years and they can potentially capture a significant slice of the banking value

chain. Incumbent banks are boosting their digital capabilities by innovating and collaborating with startups to offer digital-first services, drive efficiencies and attract new customers.

To remain competitive and unlock new business opportunities across sectors, banks must provide mobile payments and other digital services. This form of payment represents a must-win opportunity for banks on the continent because technology companies outside of Africa will capture the market if local banks fail to provide these services.

Retail banks can draw on best practices established by other B2C service providers during the past two decades to transform daily banking. Inspired by data-driven insights and attuned to the power of behavioural science, companies in large, global industries—as varied as telecommunications and media, transportation, and even personal care—have creatively and profitably transformed their approach to pricing and product propositions in response to similarly rapid changes in their markets.

Data as a source for value creation
The challenges in retail banking



today are numerous, relatively new and urgent. Low interest rates have put pressure on traditional earning models. Low growth has intensified competition for market share among incumbents, direct banks and financial-technology companies which also pose an emerging threat.

However, these shouldn't overshadow the numerous opportunities. Banks are realising that customer relationships formed on the basis of daily banking contribute more than just deposits. They also provide a rich supply of data that can serve as a source for value creation. Such data yields insights that can help boost profits by improving risk as-

essments, uncovering ideas for more cross-selling and developing personalised value-added services.

Just like other B2C service providers, banks can use this data to enhance customer relationships. They can understand customers better, predict behaviours and make a bank's offerings more intuitive—an especially important factor—because so much of today's consumer banking activity is online and self-service.

Move away from one-size-fits-all
Another substantial and lucrative opportunity involves redesigning the daily banking proposition itself, in which banks choose one of several ways to leave behind their one-size-fits-all past and strive for the right combination of bundling and differentiation for the future. Improvement requires attention to all three elements of the daily banking proposition—features, price structure and price levels—rather than a narrow focus on only price levels.

To create winning propositions in daily banking, the best banks take three steps, which they then integrate into a holistic solution: they outline their solutions at a high level, gain a

more thorough understanding of their customers and quantify their customers' value perceptions.

The personalisation imperative
Although much of the discussion about personalisation in banking focuses on marketing, its true potential lies in transforming all of an organisation's customer interactions by using data and analytics to anticipate individual needs and build deep relationships that stand the test of time.

Several consumer brands have shown the way forward and although many financial institutions are conceptually on board, true end-to-end personalisation requires developing new muscles—such as strong cross-channel offerings, cross-enterprise collaboration, a single view of the customer and a new technology ecosystem—all of which are difficult to build.

Ultimately, if done well, personalisation at scale can provide a direct route to lower rates of customer churn and higher sales. Conservatively speaking, it can lead to annual revenue uplifts of 10% for banks. In many ways, personalisation at scale is a 21st-century approach to delivering what the banking industry lost many years ago: the abil-

ity to truly know customers, anticipate their needs, engage in a rich dialogue about their financial lives, and, as a consequence, foster loyalty that can last a lifetime.

The pandemic is set to accelerate digital transformation in the retail banking industry. While it is likely that consumers will continue to switch from physical banking to online and mobile banking, banks will need to rise to the challenge of embedding the benefits of in-branch, personal interactions within their digital offerings and at the same time, improve on the holistic customer experience.

But the process begins when the bank truly understands the needs and value perceptions of its customers and offers them a choice among propositions. This leads to greater customer satisfaction and drives better financial performance. B2C service providers have known about these approaches and outcomes for years and have acted accordingly. Banks now need to do the same.

NB:
Dr Tijsbert Creemers-Chaturvedi is managing director and partner at Boston Consulting Group.

WORLD

Democrats on brink of US Senate control

ATLANTA

DEMOCRATS won one U.S. Senate race in Georgia and surged ahead in another yesterday, moving closer to a stunning sweep that would give them control of the chamber and the power to advance President-elect Joe Biden's policy goals.

Raphael Warnock, a Baptist preacher from the historic church of Martin Luther King Jr., beat Republican incumbent Kelly Loeffler to become the first Black senator in the history of the deep South state. Jon Ossoff, a documentary filmmaker who at 33 would become the Senate's youngest member, held a narrow lead over incumbent David Perdue in the other race, with a final outcome not expected until later on yesterday at the earliest.

The results were a repudiation of outgoing President Donald Trump in a state his Republicans have controlled for decades.

Trump campaigned for both Republicans in Georgia on Monday. But his support was overshadowed by the two months he has spent trying to subvert his own presidential election loss, with false accusations of fraud, including attacks on Republican officials in the state.

Later yesterday, Congress was expected to meet to certify Trump's election loss over the objection of a number of Republican lawmakers who have said they will try to reject some state tallies though there is no chance of success.

With 98% of votes counted, Warnock was ahead of Loeffler by 1.2 percentage points, roughly 54,000 votes, according to Edison Research. Ossoff led Perdue by more than 16,000 votes.

Winning both contests would give Democrats control of the Senate, creating a 50-50 split and giving Vice President-elect Kamala Harris the tie-breaking vote once she and Biden take office on Jan. 20. The party already has a narrow majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

If Republicans hold the second seat, they would effectively wield veto power over Biden's political and judicial appointees as well as many of his legislative initiatives in areas such as economic relief from the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, health-care and criminal justice.

Trump's relentless but flailing efforts to overturn the election in Georgia and nationally will move to Congress on Wednesday, when Vice President Mike Pence presides over the counting of electoral votes to certify Biden's victory.

Trump's supporters plan to rally in the streets of Washington. Trump has repeatedly called on Pence to throw out the results in states he narrowly lost, although Pence has no authority to do so.

POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

Trump's attacks on the November election split his party and drew condemnation from critics who accused him of undermin-



This combo photo shows the US Democratic challenger in one of the Georgia contests, Raphael Warnock (L), and his rival, Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler. (AP)

ing democracy. Gabriel Sterling, a Republican and a top official in the Georgia Secretary of State's Office, told CNN that if Democrats won, the losses would "fall squarely on the shoulders of President Trump and his actions since Nov. 3."

The victory by Warnock, a preacher at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church legendary in Georgia because of its role in the civil rights movement under King, was the first win by a Democrat in a U.S. Senate race in the state in 20 years.

The result underscored the state's political transformation in recent years, made evident by Biden's narrow statewide win over Trump in the Nov. 3 election - the first victory for a Democratic presidential candidate in Georgia since 1992.

"We were told that we couldn't win this election. But tonight, we proved that with hope, hard work and the people by our side, anything is possible," Warnock told supporters in a livestream message before he was projected the winner.

"I am going to the Senate to work for all of Georgia, no matter who you cast your vote for in this election."

DEMOCRATIC OPTIMISM

Most of the votes remaining to be counted were in counties Biden won in November, fueling Democratic optimism about Ossoff's chance to complete the sweep. Both Democrats, particularly Warnock, won a larger share of the vote in county after county than Biden won in November.

The critical races drew an estimated 4.5 million voters - a record for a runoff - along with nearly half a billion dollars in advertising spending since Nov. 3 and visits on Monday by Trump and Biden.

Fresh Democratic control of the Senate could facilitate the smooth confirmation of Biden's Cabinet and federal judicial nominees. After securing control of both chambers of Congress in 2010, Republicans thwarted many legislative goals of Trump's Democratic predecessor Barack Obama, under whom Biden served as vice president.

Agencies

Saudi Arabia hails 'new chapter' in Gulf as crisis with Qatar ends

RIYADH

SAUDI Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan on Tuesday hailed end of the Gulf crisis with Qatar as a "new chapter" for the Gulf's security and stability.

The Al-Ula Declaration signed on Tuesday at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit, held in the Saudi city Al-Ula, ended the dispute of the Saudi-led Arab camp with Qatar, the Saudi top diplomat was quoted by Al Arabiya TV as saying.

He said that the accomplishment was "a new chapter" to promote security and stability in the region.

The foreign minister made the remarks while addressing a press conference after the summit, highlighting the commitment of concerned countries to tackle all topics of the declaration through negotiations.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud stressed, while chairing the summit, the importance of the Al-Ula Declaration for the solidarity and stability in the Gulf.

He said that the declaration would strengthen the bonds of friendship and brotherhood among GCC member countries and peoples to serve their aspirations.

Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah praised the historic achievement by signing the Al-Ula Declaration, which he called as "the Solidarity Agreement" that reflects keenness on the unity of the Arab nation.

A Saudi-led Arab quartet, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, cut diplomatic ties with Qatar in June 2017 and imposed a full embargo on the Gulf state, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism. Qatar has repeatedly denied all the charges.



Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud wears a face mask to help curb the spread of the coronavirus as he speaks at a press conference during the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday. (AP)

The end of the crisis started on Monday with the decision by Saudi Arabia to reopen its airspace and borders to Qatar.

The 41st GCC Supreme Council session was attended by Gulf leaders, and senior of-

ficials from the US, Arab and Islamic organizations, including Senior Advisor to US President Jared Kushner, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Yousef Al-Othaimeen, and Secretary-

General of the Arab League Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

Egypt also took part in the meeting, represented by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

Xinhua

Russian Foreign Ministry hopes presidential election in CAR to stabilise situation

MOSCOW

RUSSIA hopes that the success of the presidential election in the Central African Republic will help bring about stabilization, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a news release on Tuesday.

"We express the hope that the election's success will contribute to normalization of the situation in the country and consolidate all constructively minded political forces for the sake of strengthening civil peace, order and the solution of urgent socio-economic development issues," the news release runs.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said that the election took place despite the uneasy security situation on the eve of the polling day.

The authorities managed to achieve this with assistance

from the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and international partners, the Foreign Ministry said.

On January 4, the chief of the CAR's National Election Commission, Mathias Bar-

thelemy Moruba, said the incumbent president, Faustin Archange Touadera, emerged the winner in the first round of the presidential election on December 27, having collected 53.9% of the votes.

Seven candidates contested the presidential seat.

England's lockdown could last into March, minister says

LONDON

ENGLAND entered its third period of national lockdown on Tuesday as the government began its latest effort to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

According to official figures released on Monday, there were 26,626 COVID-19 patients in hospital in England, which is now more than 40 percent up on the peak of the first wave of infections in April.

Sky News also reported that there was an increase of almost 25 percent in the fatality rate over the previous seven days, compared with the week before.

The United Kingdom has reported more than 75,500 virus-related deaths, one of the highest tallies in Europe, with nearly 2.7 million cases.

The lockdown announcement came after the post-Christmas return to work and school began in chaotic fashion on Monday, with schools closed in some areas but not others.

On Sunday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson appeared on the BBC, saying: "Schools are safe. It is very, very important to stress that...the risk to kids, to young people is really very, very small indeed... the risk to staff is very small."

However, the next day he announced schools in England would be shutting, with a review on Feb 15. Schools in Wales have shut for at least two weeks, and students in Northern Ireland will have what has been called an "extended period of remote learning". Scotland's schools are shut until the end of this month.

The new restrictions mean people should only leave home for medical needs, food shopping, work that cannot be done at home, and exercise.

Hospitals, Johnson said, were under "more pressure ... than at any time since the start of the pandemic". He also said everyone aged over 70, all front line social care and health workers, the clinically vulnerable and care home residents and staff will be offered one dose of a vaccine by the middle of next month.

The summer's vital GCSE and A Level school exams have also been canceled, with an announcement about alternative assessment methods due later in the week.

Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove told the BBC's Today program that school shutdown was a decision taken "very, very reluctantly" and with "the heaviest of hearts", but one that was made after the United Kingdom's chief medical officers recommended the country move to threat level five for COVID-19.

Gove added that the coming weeks will be "very, very difficult", but that the expansion of the vaccination program should allow for gradual relaxation as time passes.

"I think it is right to say that as we enter March we should be able to lift some of these restrictions, but not necessarily all."

Agencies

Ethiopian police release detained Reuters cameraman without charge

NAIROBI

ETHIOPIAN police released Reuters cameraman Kumerra Gemechu on Tuesday after detaining him without charge for 12 days.

Police had told his lawyer Melkamu Ogo that their lines of inquiry included accusations of disseminating false information, communicating with groups fighting the government, and disturbing the public's peace and security. However, Ogo said he had seen no evidence.

"We are delighted that Kumerra has been released and reunited with his family. His release today affirms he has done nothing wrong," Reuters Editor-in-Chief Stephen J. Adler said in a statement.

"Kumerra is a journalist who has consistently demonstrated his professionalism and commitment to accuracy, as part of a Reuters team that reports from Ethiopia in a fair, independent and unbiased way. Journalists like Kumerra must be allowed to report the news in the public interest without fear of harassment or harm, wherever they are."

The Ethiopian police and prosecutor's office did not respond to questions from Reuters on the reasons for Kumerra's arrest and subsequent release.

Kumerra, 38, has worked for Reuters for a decade.

His family said they were preparing a special meal and looking forward to having him home for Christmas, which many Ethiopian Christians will celebrate on Thursday.

"We are so relieved that Kumerra has been released and would like to thank everyone who has supported us during this difficult time," the family said in a statement.

"Kumerra is a dedicated and professional journalist who has done nothing wrong. He simply wants to report on Ethiopia in an independent way. His family missed him every day he was detained, and we are delighted that Kumerra will be home for Christmas."

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, has overseen sweeping reforms since taking office in 2018, including the unbanning of more than 250 media outlets and the release of dozens of journalists.

Land-sea trade corridor activates new development of western China

A land-sea corridor has been built to connect western China with the rest of the world during the country's 13th Five-Year Plan period, or the last five years.

Along the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor (hereinafter referred to as New Land-Sea Corridor), cargos from China's western provinces and municipality such as Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou and Gansu are sent down south to coastal ports, and then shipped to the rest of the world by cargo vessels.

Thanks to the multimodal passage, oranges from Zhongxian county, Chongqing municipality have grabbed a market share in Singapore, and Malaysian durians are on hot sales at Chongqing's supermarkets. In addition, light-duty trucks manufactured in the municipality

are also exported to the Philippines.

The New Land-Sea Corridor has now developed into a mature international trade route. As of Nov. 30, a total of 2,717 trips had been made by freight trains between Chongqing and Qinzhou, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, transporting 984 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) worth of foreign trade commodities and 728 billion yuan worth of domestic trade commodities.

Logistics used to be a major bottleneck for Chongqing's opening-up, as the western municipality is nearly 2,000 kilometers away from the Yangtze River estuary, a major sea gate of China in the east. However, the distance between the municipality and the Qinzhou port stands at only around 1,000 kilometers.

Therefore, Chongqing started planning a

southward logistics channel in 2017, and the first regular freight train running on the passage departed the municipality on Sept. 25 the same year. The channel has offered a new choice for enterprises in western China - to go south and export their products in the west.

"It usually took nearly a month to export our products to Southeast Asia from east China, but the duration has been reduced to around a week if we do it in Guangxi's Qinzhou port," said Xiong Xiaohua, general manager of Chongqing Dajiang Power Equipment Co., Ltd. The company exports over \$4 million worth of products to Southeast Asia on a monthly basis via the New Land-Sea Corridor, Xiong added.

What the new passage brings is efficiency. So far, over 500 categories of commodities are

being exported through the New Land-Sea Corridor, to 249 ports in 95 countries and regions.

"The New Land-Sea Corridor further makes Chongqing into a logistics hub, as it is where the China-Europe freight service, the New Land-Sea Corridor, and the Yangtze River gather," said Hu Hongbing, deputy director of the Chongqing Port and Logistics Office.

According to him, more than 6,500 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) of cargos with a worth of 6.5 billion yuan were transported via the above logistics channels from January to September this year.

The multimodal transport has to the largest extent reduced the damage to commodities, said Liu Yizhen, general manager assistant of the company that operates the New Land-Sea

Corridor.

The new passage also brings new trade rules, introducing international financial settlement methods to inland areas. "We have signed an agreement with the Bank of China, and are applying a 'single waybill' mechanism to improve efficiency," said Liu, adding that the waybill also enables foreign trade companies to seek financing.

So far, the corridor has covered all 12 provincial-level administrative regions in western China, further improving their level of opening-up. Chongqing, Gansu, Sichuan and Guangxi saw 43.2 percent, 47.2 percent, 19.7 percent and 13.3 percent of growth in their foreign trade with the ASEAN countries last year, respectively.

People's Daily

Africa is a stage for international cooperation, not for great power games, says Wang Yi

Wan Lin

AFRICA should be a stage for international cooperation, not an arena for great power games, said Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, during his visit to Nigeria on Tuesday as part of his five-nation tour to Africa.

The two nations signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of the intergovernmental committee on Tuesday and have reached important consensus on deepening bilateral cooperation.

The cooperation will take place in areas including the anti-pandemic fight, the Belt and Road Initiative, digital economy and green economy as well as military and security fields.

Wang met Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama and other high-level officials during the visit. He is also scheduled to visit the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Botswana and Seychelles later in his tour.

Wang responded to some claims from foreign media asserting that China's cooperation with Africa is aimed at gaining more influence in the region and competing with other countries.

China never attaches any political conditions to its assistance to Africa, and never interferes in Africa's internal affairs, Wang said.

China, as a friend of Africa, is glad to see that other countries followed China in increasing investment in the region. China is willing to promote multi-national cooperation in Africa, as the cooperation has never been closed or exclusive, he said.

Wang's comment is a powerful retort to the smears of some foreign countries



Chinese State Councilor & Foreign Minister Wang Yi (L) and Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama sign a MOU on the establishment of intergovernmental committee in Abuja on Tuesday. Photo: Jiang Xuan/GT

that attempt to undermine the friendly atmosphere of China-Africa cooperation, Xu Jinghu, special representative of the Chinese government on African affairs, told the Global Times yesterday.

The establishment of the China-Nigeria intergovernmental committee will play a major role in the overall planning of the cooperation between the two countries, which has already made significant achievements in trade, infrastructure, energy and technology and other areas over the past 50 years, she said.

Nigeria is China's largest project con-

tracting market in Africa. In 2019, the bilateral trade volume reached 1,900 times what it was at the beginning of the establishment of diplomatic ties, according to Wang. As the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria's deepening collaboration with China will also boost China's cooperation with the whole of Africa, Xu noted.

Wang's visit will vigorously promote the development of the China-Nigeria strategic partnership and inject new impetus into the

deepening of China-Africa friendly cooperation, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said at a press conference yesterday.

The year of 2021 is the closing year for implementing the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and further meetings are scheduled to be held in Senegal in 2021.

China will work with Africa in three priority areas: vaccine coop-

eration, economic recovery and transformative development, Wang said in a recent interview with Chinese media.

Moreover, Xu believed the major domains of China-Africa cooperation this year could focus on digital economy, electronic commerce, industrial chain as well as investment and financing, especially the Chinese private sector's investment in Africa.

Global Times

Russia's deputy ambassador to UN says OPCW is 'unwell and needs treatment'

UNITED NATIONS

ALL countries interested in the proper and effective operation of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must work together against the organization's politicization, Russia's first deputy ambassador to the UN, Dmitry Polyansky, said at a meeting of the UN Security Council.

"The OPCW is seriously ill. The disease is called politicization. Those who turn a blind eye on this merely aggravate its condition," he states.

"Who wishes well to the patient - a doctor who makes a diagnosis and then proceeds with a course of treatment, quite often using certain unpleasant procedures, or somebody who claims in defiance of the objective facts that the patient is absolutely healthy?"

Polyansky asked his colleagues in the UN Security Council. "Regrettably, the OPCW is unwell. Let us restore it to good health together."

Polyansky stressed that Russia "categorically condemns the use of chemical weapons regardless of who might be responsible for this and for this reason is interested to see the OPCW do its job right."

He stressed that there was "growing crisis of trust towards one of once most respected international organizations, which regrettably is being turned into an instrument of political manipulations and persecution."

Agencies

China's poverty alleviation policies aiming at supporting local industries

DEVELOPING local industries is currently a poverty reduction measure of China that covers the widest range, mobilizes the largest population and features the strongest sustainability.

The poverty alleviation policies aiming at supporting local industries have benefited 98 percent of China's impoverished households, said Liu Huanxin, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China on a recent press conference.

According to him, the central government of China has spent over 40 percent of its funds for poverty reduction and rural development on developing local industries this year, and 680 billion yuan (\$104 billion) of poverty alleviation microloans have been issued to help impoverished residents develop businesses. China's 832 impoverished counties have all made plans to eradicate poverty with industrial development, establishing over 300,000 industrial bases of planting, breeding and processing. Besides, new business forms such as tourism, photovoltaic power generation and e-commerce are also giving a leg up to poverty reduction.

Every impoverished county has two to three characteris-



Workers produce quick-frozen foodstuffs at a poverty alleviation base in Qucun township, Puyang county, central China's Henan province, Nov. 18. File photo

tic industries that are able to mobilize a large number of impoverished households.

Over 13 million residents are currently working for rural enterprises and poverty alleviation workshops in their hometowns, accounting for nearly half of the impoverished employees.

The per capita annual income of impoverished residents surged 30.2 percent from 3,416 yuan in 2015 to 9,808 yuan in 2019.

The rapid development of poverty relief industries facilitates the introduction of capital, technology and human resource to impoverished regions, and also accelerates the construction of trans-

portation and logistics. According to statistics, China's impoverished counties have built 210 million mu (14 million hectares) of high-standard farmland and 43,000 initial processing facilities for agricultural products, and fostered 14,400 leading enterprises at municipal level.

They also established 719,000 agricultural cooperatives, 2,100 poverty reduction industrial parks, and 4,100 expert teams. Besides, over 4,000 agricultural technicians have been employed to further drive poverty eradication.

By fostering poverty relief industries, a series of effective modes have been estab-

lished, and the impoverished residents are also inspired to chase a better life with their diligence, Liu said.

Through make to order, land transfer, agricultural production trustee service, local employment, joint stock partnership and asset leasing, 72 percent of the impoverished households have established a close bond with new agricultural entities.

More than 70 percent of the poor residents received guidance on production and technical training, and 900,000 entrepreneur leaders in different industries have been cultivated.

People's Daily

New coronavirus strain, first detected in UK, is found in 41 countries, territories

GENEVA

PROLIFERATION of the highly contagious novel coronavirus strain, first detected in Britain, has now been confirmed in 41 countries and territories, the World Health Organization said in its COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update on Tuesday evening.

"As of 5 January 2021, the VOC-202012/01 variant, initially detected in the United Kingdom, has been detected in a small number of cases in 40 other countries/territories/areas in five of the six WHO regions, and the 501YV2 variant, initially detected in South Africa, in six other countries/territories/areas," the update runs.

According to the WHO bulletin, over the past week - from December 28 to January 3 - the number of people infected with COVID-19 increased globally by 4,035,226, and the number of deaths - by 76,017. Most of the new infections were detected in the Americas - 1,935,621.

Europe is in second place (1,553,332), and Southeast Asia third (208,592). Europe's mortality statistics are the highest: 32,898 patients died there in seven days. North America and South America are second (32,283), Southeast Asia, third (3,756).

The United States ranks first in the world in terms of the number of new infections per week - 1,325,424. Further on the list are Great Britain (343,784), Brazil (252,018), Russia (186,539), India (136,115), Germany (124,808), Italy (102,442), Turkey (98,662), South Africa (93,978) and France (91,595). The highest death rate in seven days was recorded in the United States (17,239), followed by Brazil (4,923), Mexico (4,670), Germany (4,494), Great Britain (4,165), Russia (3,728), Italy (3,365), South Africa (2,654), France (2,346) and Poland (2,001).

On December 14, the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Health and Social



Care, Matt Hancock, said British scientists had identified a new coronavirus strain that might be to blame for high infection rates in southeastern England.

Hancock said preliminary analysis indicated that the newly-discovered virus strain was spreading faster than any of those exposed previously.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson told an urgent news conference on December 19 that according to the current findings the new strain might be 70% more contagious. He added that British experts had not yet found any proof that the virus mutation was fraught with a greater risk of lethal outcome.

The South African authorities on December 21 said that the second wave of the pandemic was due to a mutated coronavirus, detected in the south of the country in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality, Eastern Cape Province on the Indian Ocean.

Local scientists say the new strain harms mostly young people.

Agencies

Protecting intellectual property rights equals to protecting innovation

INTELLECTUAL property rights are the rights given to intellectual creations in social practice, and are an important source of social wealth. As a top filer of invention patents for 9 years in a row, China is witnessing a spike of valuable core patents. Copyrights, brands, and patents are enjoying increasing protection in the country.

The achievements made by China in intellectual property protection mirror the country's transition from a major importer to a major creator of intellectual property.

In recent years, China has comprehensively lifted its overall protection capabilities for intellectual property. It not only advanced the amendment of its patent law, trademark law, and copyright law, but also reestablished

China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), explored to set up intellectual property courts, and started operating intellectual property protection centers.

Protecting intellectual property rights is equal to protecting innovation. This value is gaining more and more recognition from the public as a series of measures have been implemented to promote innovation.

Last year, China's social satisfaction for intellectual property protection was 15.29 points higher than that in 2012, which indicated a wide public recognition for



An officer from market regulation department of Huainan, east China's Anhui province hands out intellectual property brochures to citizens, April 24. (File photo)

the country's achievements in this area.

According to the 2020 edition of the Global Innovation

Index released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), China is ranked 14th among 131 econ-

omies worldwide, becoming the only middle-income economy that has made it into the top 30.

As a fundamental method to encourage innovation, a basic guarantee for the source of innovation, and a core element for global competitiveness, intellectual property protection is playing an increasingly important role.

Gaining rich resources of intellectual property rights over years of development, China is now a genuine major holder of patents. It has been the top filer of invention patents and trademarks for years in a row, and holds

massive core patents in high-speed rail, nuclear power, and 5G.

As of the end of October this year, China had nearly 2.97 million invention patents in force, and the invention patent ownership per 10,000 of population stood at 15.2.

China is now chasing quality of patents rather than just the quantity. It is noteworthy that for the time being, the country still lacks high-quality core patents, and needs to reach further in certain industries.

To translate intellectual property rights into productive forces and make them

drive the country's development is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed by China, to achieve which enhanced protection over intellectual property is no doubt an important link.

Currently, China is accelerating the making of a strategic guideline on building a strong country through intellectual property in the next 15 years, as well as a five-year plan to further enhance intellectual property protection, so as to "set a price" for knowledge and empower innovation, and offer firm support for implementing a new vision of development, building a new development paradigm, and promoting high-quality development.

People's Daily

Manyara trounce Ubungo in 2021 Taifa Cup netball tourney

BY CORRESPONDENT ISMAIL TANO

MANYARA regional netball team yesterday posted 52-25 win over Dar es Salaam's Ubungo team in Group A's clash of this season's national netball tournament, Taifa Cup, which is taking place at Kwarara ground in Babati, Manyara.

Ubungo squad's coach said their defeat was caused by the players' fatigue, given they are scheduled to play three matches a day.

Manyara regional netball team's coach Mariam said their team is gearing up for lifting the title.

Ubungo netball team's captain, Veronica Tossy, noted the court used for match was one of reasons for her side's defeat, which turned out to be a second consecutive defeat in the day.

Manyara netball team's skipper, Demetria Sadala, stated they have high hopes of laying their hands on the Taifa Cup's silverware.

In other clashes, which took place the same day at the venue, Arusha cruised to 75-21 victory over Ubungo, Mbeya conceded 34-51 loss to Dodoma, Manyara went down 68-33 to Zanzibar's Urban West side.

In the day's other games, Ubungo posted 53-36 victory over Simiyu, Arusha maintained their winning ways as they registered 57-30 victory over Tabora, Simiyu conceded 29-72 loss to Zanzibar's Urban West squad, Mara narrowly cruised to 29-28 win over Mwanza.

The national netball tournament officially started on January 3, 2021 involving teams from Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

In the opening day of the showpiece, Arusha recorded a comprehensive 69-12 victory over Simiyu in a clash which took place at Manyara's other venue for the event, Singe Secondary School's court, whereas the second game saw Manyara beat Tabora 38-25 at the venue.

Manyara regional sports officer said the tournament is an opportunity for the region to improve its residents' economic growth.

He also said netball promotion from primary school level will help the country produce good regional and national teams.

He moreover urged Manyara's residents to turn up in large number in the competition's fixtures and motivate the players.

Morris set to retire from Taifa Stars

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

THE Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) has announced that one of two international friendly matches between the senior national team, Taifa Stars, against the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), will be used to bid farewell to veteran defender, Aggrey Morris.

Morris, a member of Taifa Stars' squad, has announced his retirement from the senior national team.

The player, who is as well turning out for Azam FC, started serving Taifa Stars in 2010 and statistics show he has played a total of 35 games for the team, netting two goals.

The international friendly matches between Taifa Stars and DRC team, scheduled for January 10 and January 13 in Dar es Salaam, will be Morris' last for the squad after nearly a decade of serving the team.

The TFF said in a statement: "Taifa Stars vs DRC international friendly match, scheduled for January 10, 2021, which will be played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, will be used to bid farewell to Aggrey Morris, after serving the nation and announcing his retirement from the squad."

The fixtures are part of Taifa Stars' preparations for this year's Africa Nations Championship (CHAN) finals, which will be held in Cameroon from January 16.



Aggrey Morris. PHOTO: COURTESY OF AZAM FC

Taifa Stars will play the two friendly matches against DRC team at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Zanzibar-born Morris has also featured for the Isles' team, Zanzibar Heroes from 2009-2012, playing 15 games and scoring six goals for the squad.

Morris, aged 36, is still playing for his club, Azam FC, and he is now the squad's skipper.

He joined the club in 2009 from Mafunzo FC of Zanzibar, where he began playing in 2003.

Morris was voted as the Mainland Premier League's Best Player in the 2011/12 season.

He received thunderous cheers from soccer enthusiasts at the domestic level after the top flight's organizers had picked him for being outstanding in Azam FC's matches, as well as showing high sense of discipline.

During that season, Azam FC grabbed five of the 12 league awards, including the biggest of them all, the Best Player of the Year's prize that went to Morris.

His success at Azam FC include helping the outfit lift the Mainland Premier League silverware once in the 2013/2014 season, winning Mapinduzi Cup tournament's title with the club five times, clinching the CECAFA Kagame Cup competition's top honour twice with the side.

He has, therefore, lifted a total of eight trophies while playing for Azam FC.

Mgendera, Jongo now to feature in WBF title bouts

BY GUARDIAN REPORTER

TWO World Boxing Federation (WBF) title fights, involving Tanzanian professional boxers Ibrahim Mgendera and Shaaban Jongo, have been slated for January 29 at the Next Door Arena, Masaki in Dar es Salaam.

Several undercards are as well set to take place in what has been termed as 'Jackson Group Fight Night'. Domestic boxing promotion company, Jackson Group Sports, has hosted the fights.

The main fight will pit Mgendera against Dennis Mwale of Malawi in WBF intercontinental Lightweight title bout while Jongo will exchange blows with United States' pugilist Shawn Miller in WBF international Cruiserweight title bout.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Jackson Group Sports' founder and Managing Director, Kelvin Twissa, said apart from the two fights, the day will be spiced by other seven undercards involving boxers from different countries.

Twissa said the Mgendera against Mwale fight will put the Tanzanian boxer, who has a record of 24 wins and six losses since he joined professional boxing, to test.

Mwale will come into the fight as an underdog, albeit with a strong record currently with eight wins and no loss in his career.

Twissa disclosed Jongo against Miller fight is also expected to be the thrilling one due to the standard shown by the two boxers in the career. The bout has been scheduled for 10 rounds.

Jongo has an impressive record, which stands at seven wins, one loss and two fights being declared draw.

He though sands to experience probably the stiffest challenge as he looks to go blow for blow with Miller, who boasts a record of 18 wins, five losses and one fight being declared draw.

He stated: "We have previously spoken of our commitment to backing sports, particularly boxing, in Tanzania and the sport has been our starting point while we continue to expand and promote



Jackson Group Sports' Managing Director, Kelvin Twissa (C), introduces domestic professional boxers, Ibrahim Mgendera (R) and Shaaban Jongo, who will contest for the World Boxing Federation (WBF) titles. Mgendera will fight against South Africa-based Malawian Dennis Mwale in WBF Inter Continental Lightweight title fight, while Jongo will vie for WBF international Cruiserweight title against Shawn Miller of United States. The bouts will take place in Dar es Salaam on January 29. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

the game in our country."

"We will continue to expand and branch out into more sports in and around the country as we look to make Tanzania a sports Mecca, not only in East Africa but also on the continent," he noted.

According to Twissa they have got support from stakeholders namely WBF and Tanzania Professional Boxing Regulatory Commission (TPBRC) along with their partners, Azam Media, Global Boxing Stars and Regency Park Hotel, to stage the fights, which are expected to be thrilling.

He noted: "With 18 fighters, hailing from 10 different countries and three different continents, Jackson Group Sports continues to commit to its vision as stated prior to the very first boxing event that we would look to revolutionize boxing in this country."

He disclosed: "TPBRC and WBF cannot be understated as they continue to go hand in hand with their journey trying to turn professional boxing in this country around as they ensure that their boxers are not only tested against some of the best in the world but

also paid fairly for their craft."

He added "In Azam Media and Regency Park Hotel we have continued to find secure partners to not only broadcast our boxing night to all our fans inside and outside Tanzania that are not able to make it to the event, but also give our athletes state of art facilities that allow the boxers to feel comfortable in Tanzania as they prepare for the fight night."

He explained that during the fight week, Jackson Group Sports have also arranged to host a boxing sustainability and repositioning initiative whereby they will look and hope to uplift the quality and standards of boxing refereeing and judging in Tanzania as they look to make the country a boxing hub by bringing in world class boxers from around the world.

According to Twissa they will also not only have ring officials and judges being flown in but also have their stays paid for by their own boxing commissions.

He added the officials are coming from countries such as Botswana, Kenya and South Africa.

Twissa said WBF president Howard Goldberg, along with former Heavyweight boxer, South African Francois Botha 'The White Buffalo', will instruct the boxing officials.

Botha is one of the famous and the best ever Heavyweight boxers in the world, who took on such prominent boxers like Mike Tyson, Wladimir Klitschko, Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield.

The Jackson Group Sports' Managing Director noted that Global Boxing Stars are a ready-built boxing promotion outlet and with readymade links to Manny Pacquiao Promotions, owned by renowned Philippines boxer, Manny Pacquiao, and Epic Sports Entertainment.

The Jackson Group Sports and Global Boxing Stars, Twissa noted, are looking to host six fights throughout this year alternating them through every second month as they look to take advantage of Tanzania's open borders and create a hub for foreign boxers to come and fight in front of fans.



Some of netball teams that are battling it out in this season's national netball tournament, Taifa Cup, lock horns in a game that took place at Singe Secondary School's court in Manyara last weekend. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Mtibwa Sugar forward ends goal drought

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

VODACOM Premier League's Mtibwa Sugar striker Ibrahim Ahmada has netted for the first time for the outfit in a 1-0 victory over Zanzibar's Chipukizi in this year's Mapinduzi Cup competition's tie, which took place at Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar on Tuesday.

The Zanzibar-born forward, roped in by Mtibwa Sugar this season from Zanzibar's Zimamoto Club, had been enduring a goal drought since he joined the squad from the Isles outfit.

He was the top goal scorer in the last season's Zanzibar Premier League when he played for Zimamoto Club in the competition.

He went as far as netting a total of 35 goals for his side in all competitions.

Ahmada is on a two-year contract with Mtibwa Sugar which will expire in 2022.

Mtibwa Sugar started the Tuesday clash on a

bright note but they found it difficult to score.

It was the same story for Chipukizi, who too made several attempts on Mtibwa Sugar's goal that ended in vain.

The second half saw Mtibwa Sugar keep on pressing for the opener, they eventually went 1-0 up on the 58th minute, as Ahmada smashed in from close range.

Mtibwa Sugar midfielder, Juma Nyangi, was presented with the man of the match award.

Nyangi, who joined Mtibwa Sugar from Mwanza's Alliance FC, got cash prize totaling 200,000/- from Mapinduzi Cup showpiece's sponsors.

The midfielder disclosed that it was a good start for his side, the Mapinduzi Cup tournament's defending champions, in the competition.

"For us it is a good start and for what we have done, it is time for us to do well in our upcoming matches, this is the beginning, thanks to the fans, and teammates for a spirited display," he said.



Mtibwa Sugar striker, Ibrahim Ahmada. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MTIBWA SUGAR

'End of an era' as Chinese football's star power fades

BEIJING

IN January 2017 Brazil international Oscar moved from Chelsea to Shanghai SIPG for an Asian-record 60 million euros, prompting a warning from Arsene Wenger that Chinese clubs were distorting the global transfer market.

But four years later it is a very different story after the Chinese Football Association imposed a series of measures to cool extravagant spending in the Chinese Super League, markedly dimming its star power.

Six months after Oscar's arrival the CFA slapped a 100 percent tax on incoming foreigners, with the levy going to developing Chinese youth players.

Then last month the CFA said that overseas players cannot earn more than three million euros a year. Domestic players also saw their salaries capped.

"CSL club expenditure is about 10 times higher than South Korea's K League and three times higher than Japan's J-league," said CFA president Chen Xuyuan.

"But our national team is lagging far behind. The bubbles not only affect the present of Chinese football, but also its future."

All players must now have new contracts, according to the state news agency Xinhua, adding that teams can sign "supplemental agreements" with players whose existing deals were above the cap.

That means Oscar, the 29-year-old attacking midfielder, will continue to earn more than 20 million euros a year for the time being.

But the message is clear: the days of inflated transfer fees and salaries to lure star players from Europe are over.

Oscar's fellow Brazilian and SIPG team-mate Hulk, 34, a 55.8 million euro purchase in 2016, left the club last month when his contract expired.

Italian forward Graziano Pelle was another high-profile exit this week, even if like Hulk his best days are behind him.

Tuesday's Soccer News said their departures "heralded the end of the super-luxury foreign players era".

- Reining it in -

As well as Oscar, some of the big names who arrived in recent years remain in the CSL, notably former Barcelona midfielder Paulinho and ex-Manchester United star Marouane Fellaini.

But the pool is shrinking and the last major signing in the CSL was Marko Arnautovic from West Ham United in July 2019 for 25 million euros, again to Shanghai SIPG.

In a recent interview with AFP, CFA secretary general Liu Yi denied that the loss of foreign stars made the CSL a turn-off and pointed out that China is still attracting top coaches, such as Champions League winner Rafa Benitez at Dalian Pro.

But Liu said that "the benchmark is not supposed to be about spending, it's about sustainability."

"The profile (of the CSL) has already been there because of the big spending -- Oscar, Hulk etc."

"But now we are looking at better governance, a more sustainable business model and better youth academy system to develop youth players to make our national team more competitive."

"Some big players are still playing here but has that helped the development of the local players?" - "Thrifty Super League" -

Gareth Bale came close to joining Jiangsu Suning in 2019 before Real Madrid pulled the plug and Wayne Rooney also once explored a move to China.

But ahead of the new season in the spring, and with the coronavirus pandemic lingering ominously, nobody is talking about players of that calibre moving to the CSL anymore.

Instead, teams are looking at loans, free transfers or signings under the 45 million yuan (5.7 million euros) threshold that would trigger the 100 percent transfer tax.

Writing in the Oriental Sports Daily, columnist Ge Aiping said that the CSL "peaked" in 2015 and 2016 as the star names rolled in.

"You didn't know which way a game was going until the end, Britain's Sky Sports broadcast the league to the world and the market value of the league was at a record," he wrote.

Along with the CFA measures, most CSL clubs can no longer afford to invest like they did, he said.

The league which had then-Arsenal manager Wenger fretting as a threat to the Premier League has been replaced by a "frugal" version.

"Which is better -- the 2015 and 2016 Chinese Super League or the 'thrifty Chinese Super League' starting in 2021?" asked Ge.

"From a viewing standpoint, of course it is the former."

"However, the trend in the past few years shows that an overheated Chinese Super League is not sustainable."

"A frugal Chinese Super League can at least reserve strength for better development."

January looms as Barcelona's most crucial month in living memory

BY GRAHAM HUNTER, ESPN SPAIN WRITER

JANUARY shapes up as an absolutely colossal month for Barcelona given that: Their greatest-ever player is suddenly free to commit to a rival club for no fee, and they could kiss goodbye to three trophy chances (Supercup, Copa and League) by the time February dawns. Plus, please don't forget there are Camp Nou presidential elections.

For those outside Catalunya, the political dogfighting, mudslinging and vote-casting are the least likely to set your pulses racing. Lionel Messi choosing to join Paris Saint-Germain? Or Manchester City? And using his contractual liberty to commit to them? Absolute dynamite -- the source of a billion news clicks all over the globe.

Barcelona tripping up in the Cup competitions? Or shedding points in their banana-skin run of three straight away Liga matches (against Athletic, newly coached by Marcelino, Elche and Granada) given that they're already a calamitous 13 points off the top of the table?

Sexy news to those who were sick of the past decade being Blaugrana-dominated. It would also be explosive for Barca fans who dread things getting worse than they are. So, fair enough. I'm not expecting many of you to lean over the garden fence with an incredulous expression and demand of your next-door neighbour: "Did you hear what Jordi Farre (the presidential candidate whose agitating brought down the last board) said about Victor (the candidate whose campaign looks most persuasive) Font's five-point plan for Barcelona's economic recovery?"

For that reason it was generous, at the weekend, of Ronald Koeman's team, and title-chasing Atletico Madrid, to give everyone a couple of brutal reminders of what's at stake when the Camp Nou presidential polls close on Jan. 24. Viz: Don't elect another dud.

Did you watch Barcelona winning at basement club Huesca, or Atleti ensuring that they stay top with two games in hand on Real Madrid, their nearest rivals? If not don't worry. Here's a handy summary.

Barcelona were terrific for about 60-ish minutes. Then they left themselves confused, error-strewn and, frankly, embarrassed as they ended up urgently demanding of the match official: "How long left?!" Exactly as teams like Huesca are supposed to do when they are hanging on against giants like Barcelona. More on that in a minute.

Atleti bossed Alaves, who've already beaten Barcelona and Real Madrid this season, for about for 75 minutes, found themselves sabotaged by an 84th-minute own goal before stamping their foot down on the accelerator, switching on the afterburners and reacting like potential champions by carving out a honey-sweet, last-minute winner. Precisely the brutal ruthlessness Barcelona no longer possess. Both matches helped underline a couple of things with regard to the Barcelona presidential elections.

Firstly, Koeman's team. Having initially looked like they could run up a cricket score against a team with one win all season and a record of just 14 goals in 17 Liga matches, Barca crawled over the finishing line. Having dropped four-out of their past six home points, Koeman got football's version of the "yips."

Instead of showing absolute determination to tuck Huesca away, increase the goal margin and assure the three points, Koeman waited until nine minutes before the end to bring on Antoine Griezmann in search of the killer goal -- bizarre. One of Koeman's other substitutions, instead of adding threatening, creative players like Konrad de la Fuente, Francisco Trincao or Riqui Puig, was to add defensive buttressing by bringing on defender Oscar Mingueza.

In the end, "mighty" Barca clung on, and "minnows" Huesca didn't quite nick the draw they had begun to threaten. Arguably the best team ever 10 years ago, treble winners five years ago, and with the potential to win their 11th Liga title in 15 years as recently as last summer, they are now bang average.

Around 300 kilometers north, the previous day, Atleti played with firmness, authority, imposed themselves and then came up with precisely the late-game ruthlessness that Barcelona have lacked for some time. When Felipe crashed a spectacular top-corner own goal past goalkeeper Jan Oblak



As of Jan. 1, Lionel Messi is free to commit to any rival club outside of Spain for no fee. (Agencies)

with so little time left, it looked like this was going to be a pretty special weekend for Real Madrid -- again. They gobble up points, their rivals falter. You know the script. Instead, Luis Suarez, having already made Atleti's first goal for Marcos Llorente, pops up with one of his typical "this game's not over until the Uruguayan says so!" goals.

The man whose imprint is all over these two stark comparisons, but whose name wasn't mentioned all weekend in Spain's football coverage, is ex-Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu. I'd call him "outgoing president," but he has already done a bunk.

The 57-year-old returned to Camp Nou power (having previously walked out on the club in 2005) in 2010 as second-in-command to the landslide-winning new president Sandro Rosell. President Rosell, himself, did something of a midnight flit in 2015 and Bartomeu succeeded him. Across their decade-long joint rule, the club has gone from the peak of all-time football standards to a shambles. Well done, fellas.

Even with one of the all-time great football bibles pre-installed at Camp Nou (Johan Cruyff's), the two men managed to:

- Freeze Pep Guardiola's devotion to the cause;

- Make the club look ridiculous (and the subject of many investigations) over what signing Neymar actually cost;
- Betray a public promise to Eric Abidal about his status if and when he recovered from cancer;
- Stand accused of paying a company to bad-mouth current playing staff on social media;
- Be caught asleep at the wheel over Neymar's €222m departure to PSG;
- Suffer the club's record defeat in European football;
- Leave the greatest player Barcelona have ever seen, perhaps the greatest in football history, desperate to leave a few months ago, and, just a few days ago, claiming that he had been repeatedly lied to by president Bartomeu.

Bartomeu had his fingerprints all over what happened this weekend because his stewardship has left Barcelona in appalling shape, institutionally and in football terms, playing "let's defend our one-goal lead" football against the worst team in La Liga. But also because it was he who decided, without having the merest football credibility to underpin his egotistical whim, that Suarez was to be kicked out the door in the summer -- no arguments, no remorse, no forward planning.

Suarez, faults and all, is currently La Liga's top scorer, was significantly responsible for Atleti wriggling out of Alaves' bear-trap on Saturday and, once fully fit after his recent COVID isolation, threatens to be the "extra" element which makes Atleti champions for only the third time in 44 years.

In case you've not done the arithmetic, his nine Liga goals this season, with only 843 minutes spent on the pitch, have come at an average interval of one every match. Top of the league; top of the scoring charts. Top class.

In Messi's recent TV interview, he expressed disbelief and rancour, not only that Suarez (who'd be performing at least as well at Barcelona, given the quality of chances that Koeman's side are creating and squandering had he been allowed to see out the last year of his contract) was treated so badly, but above all that he was allowed to join a direct rival.

It's feasible, albeit requiring fate to intervene dramatically, that by the time Barcelona are unveiling their new president (Jan. 24), Suarez might have helped Atleti beat the Blaugrana in the Supercopa final (Jan. 17) and be about to knock his old pals out Copa del Rey should the teams be drawn to play each other in the round of 16 (Jan. 27). Wouldn't that be deliciously ironic?

The point about all this is that there is nothing (with the exception of Barcelona failing to qualify for the Champions League and losing a fortune at a time when the club's finances are in brutal shape) which could possibly be more important for this teetering club this season than the presidential elections in a fortnight's time. Not failing to win the league. Not being knocked out of two cups in January. Not even Messi deciding to join Manchester City or PSG in June.

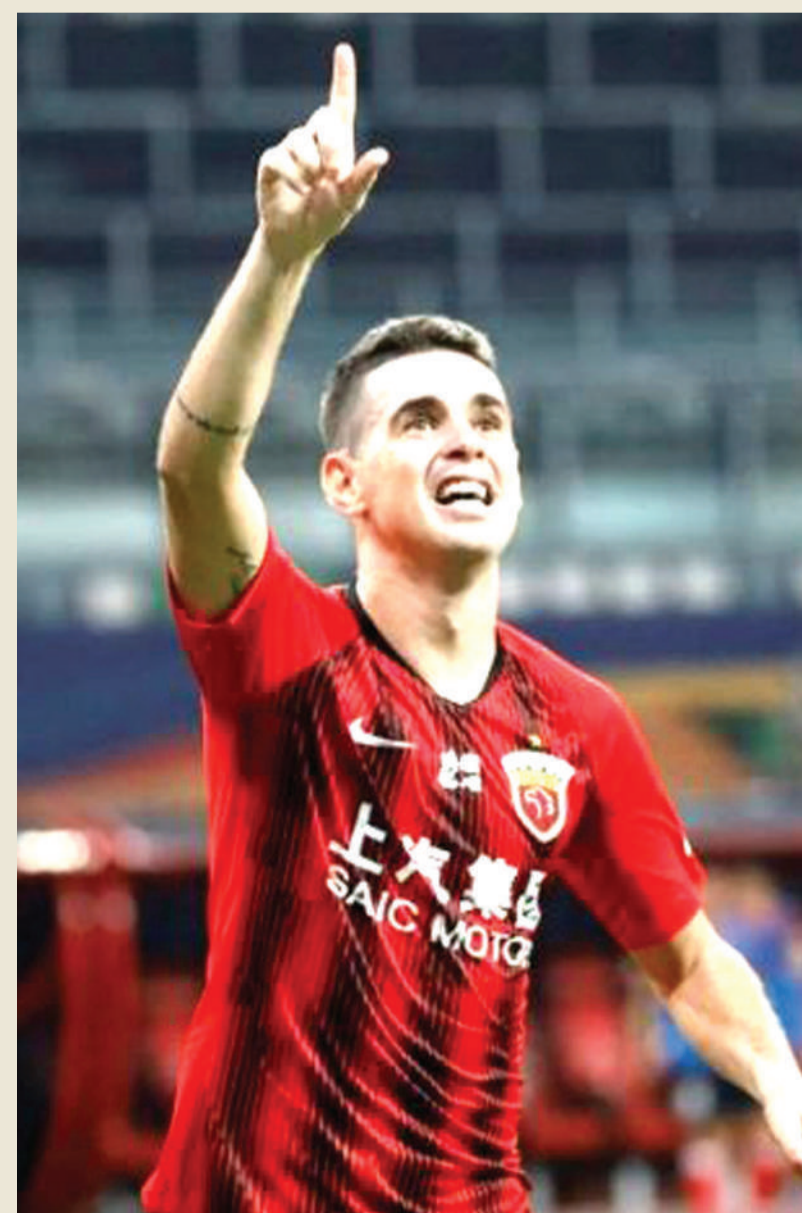
Barcelona has lost its football direction, lost its sheen, is long past the best days of its greatest footballer, is deeply in the financial mire, no longer has an excelsior academy production line, is in the midst of a ludicrously, perhaps ruinously expensive real-estate project on its stadium campus and, frankly, doesn't look likely to be Liga or Champions League competitive any time soon.

In these dire circumstances, it'll reward Barcelona's socios to put the claims of the various candidates (not all of whom will make it to polling day) under the most intense scrutiny.

The media, whether because they are savvy or because they are seduced by a cavalier old favourite, are beginning to claim that Joan Laporta (despite being shorn of literally all the satellite elements which made his 2003-2010 reign important and successful: Johan Cruyff, Txiki Begiristain, Ferran Soriano, Marc Inglá, Ronaldinho, Frank Rijkaard, Guardiola) will win at a canter.

Personally, the team, ideas and structure put forward by ultra-Cruyff and Xavi admirer Victor Font look, to me, to be much more credible. But I'm not a socio -- simply a good judge.

Whatever -- it's a hard fact that when most of your attention, and the vast majority of the sports pages and air time devoted to Barcelona over January, are taken up by matters Messi, matters messy on the pitch and cup calamities or triumphs, it'll be the simple matter of how many of the entitled voters pay attention and make good choices on Jan. 24 which will be the absolutely crucial thing for the Catalan club this month. The phrase "be careful what you wish for" is popular, but in this case, socios, the correct warning is: "Be careful who you vote for." Your club is at risk.



Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

January looms as Barcelona's most crucial month in living memory

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Rahane: Bubble 'challenging' when 'life outside in Sydney is completely normal'

SYDNEY

INDIA are finding it challenging that life outside their hotel in Sydney is "completely normal" but the players are being asked to stay indoors during the SCG Test.

That is the crux of India's discontent, with the break between matches featuring whispers from sources in the Indian camp that they might even boycott the Brisbane Test if the restrictions on their movements remain.

On the eve of the SCG Test, captain Ajinkya Rahane talked about the challenge but also said the players were focused only on the upcoming Test.

"Being in quarantine definitely has its own challenges, but as a team we are focussing on the game," Rahane said.

"We know that life outside in Sydney is completely normal but players are in quarantine, which is a challenge. But we have to face it. We are not complaining about anything. We are just focussing on tomorrow's game. And just want to start well tomorrow again."

Life in Sydney, while not completely normal, is less restrictive than the biosecure environment the players have been put in. Parts of Northern Beaches where the latest Covid-19 outbreak occurred remain in lockdown, but people are generally free to move about.

However, the players have been kept in stricter restrictions because the border between New South Wales and Queensland, which will host the next Test, has been locked down as Greater Sydney is still a "hotspot". For the teams to get an exemption to travel to Brisbane, they will have to have stayed in their hotels and the SCG throughout the duration of this Test.

There have also been reports that India might, instead of going to Brisbane, demand two Tests in Sydney if that allows them freer movement while they are in the city. Rahane was asked if that was the case, but he neither confirmed nor denied the reports.

"As players we are just focusing on this Test match," Rahane said. "BCCI and team management will take the other decisions. For us as players, it is all about giving our

best on the field. There is a Test starting tomorrow. We are just focusing on that, do well and win the Test match."

Meanwhile, Nick Hockley, CA's interim CEO, has maintained the BCCI has been supportive of the schedule. "We speak to our counterparts at the BCCI daily," he said on Monday.

"We've had nothing formal from the BCCI to suggest anything other than they're supportive. Both teams have wanted to play the schedule as we've set out."

Asked if it was annoying to be subject to fresh restrictions towards the end of a long time away from home - some India players have been in bubbles since mid-August, having played in the IPL before flying to Australia - and after they had served all quarantine requirements upon entry into the country, Rahane said: "We are not at all annoyed. There are some challenges in quarantine. Especially when life in Sydney is completely normal outside. But we are not at all annoyed. We know what our priority here is. We are here to play cricket, and we just want to do that. Starting from tomorrow, start well. As a team we are just focused on that."

However, it might appear that the stand-off has annoyed the host team's players with Australia's captain Tim Paine talking about how tensions are likely to rise, making mentions of India being a 'power in world cricket' in light of rumblings about the venues and the restrictions on the players.

Rahane was asked if he was prepared for a less friendly contest than it has been so far, but he sidestepped the question.

"We just want to play some good cricket," Rahane said. "As I said quarantine life is definitely a challenge when we know that in Australia, especially in Sydney, life is normal. And players are stuck in the room, but it's okay. We know how to handle it. We are prepared for any kind of situation. As a team we just want to do well starting from tomorrow, be in the moment and play some good cricket."

AGENCIES

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t," Rahane said. "As I said quarantine life is definitely a challenge when we know that in Australia, especially in Sydney, life is normal. And players are stuck in the room, but it's okay. We know how to handle it. We are prepared for any kind of situation. As a team we just want to do well starting from tomorrow, be in the moment and play some good cricket."

TFF official banned for two years

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA Football Federation (TFF)'s Chairman of the Legal, Ethics and Players' Status Committee, Elias Mwanjala, has officially been banned from taking part in any activity affiliated to football for two years by the government through the Office of the Registrar of Sports Associations and Clubs.

Registrar of Sports Associations and Clubs, Malangwe Mchungahela, disclosed the ban has been issued on Mwanjala because he violated regulations governing Mbeya Regional Football Association (MRFA)'s election.

Mwanjala violated MRFA's constitution by contesting for the association's chairmanship for the third consecutive term, whilst there is a two-year term limit.

The government, through the Office of the Registrar of Sports Associations and Clubs, has confirmed that Mwanjala has been stripped of all his titles and positions in sports for a period of two years.

Mchungahela said that the Mwanjala has been removed from office after being found guilty of taking power illegally.

He disclosed: "Mwanjala has been stripped of all his titles and positions in sports and has been banned from engaging in



Tanzania Football Federation (TFF)'s Legal, Ethics and Players' Status Committee's Chairman, Elias Mwanjala.

any sports administration for two years after being found guilty of taking power illegally."

"Mwanjala has already received a letter from the government at the Office of the Registrar of Sports Associations and Clubs, in which he has been punished for violating the

MRFA constitution and those of TFF and FIFA."

"The government has handed over a copy of the decision to TFF that are Mwanjala's employers," he disclosed.

Asked if they were violating FIFA rules via the government's decision to intervene in football mat-

ters, Mchungahela said: "Every country has its own law and constitution, we manage the right as the Office of the Registrar of Sports Associations and Clubs, so we have the right and mandate to do so."

Mwanjala was the head of a committee, which ruled that the contract of

Ghanaian midfielder Bernard Morrison and Yanga had several shortcomings.

It should be noted that Yanga allegedly signed a two-year contract with Morrison, which he denied and sued Yanga on the grounds that he had not extended the contract.

Kassim issues conditions for rematch with Pazi

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

MOROGORO professional boxer, Twaha Kassim 'Kiduku', has issued conditions for a rematch between him and Dar es Salaam's Abdallah Pazi, maintaining he has to wait for his supporters' approval.

The two boxers, fighting in Super Middleweight division, will meet for the third time if the fight will take place.

Kassim had triumphed once in the two fights, the other was declared draw.

The first of the two boxers' bout, a 10-round Super Middleweight fight which took place at Msasani Club in Dar es Salaam in October, 2017, was declared draw.

Kassim went on to comfortably beat Pazi by points in the other bout, which took place at Uhuru Stadium in the city in August last year.

Pazi, nicknamed 'Dulla Mbabe', recently expressed his intention to face Kassim in a rematch so the former can prove he still has what it takes to excel in the sport at the domestic level.

The outspoken fighter noted: "I was hurt by the outcome of my fight against Kas-



Tanzania's professional boxer, Twaha Kassim (2nd R), jubilates as female boxing referee, Pendo Njau (R), declares the former as a winner of an international, non-title Super Middleweight bout against Thailand's Sirimongkon lamthuan, which took place at PTA Hall in Dar es Salaam recently. The Morogoro-based Kassim won by Technical Knockout (TKO) in the seventh round of the scheduled 10-round bout. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Flexibles by David Chikoko



sim, but I apologize to my fans for what happened and I would like to have a rematch with him, should there be a promoter who is ready to host it."

Kassim was adamant he would listen to his fans to find out if they will approve the rematch.

He moreover noted he will be ready for the bout, should he be presented with the cash he wants.

He stated: "I have fought against Pazi twice, much as the judges had initially declared our first fight as draw I believe I beat him,

now I need to get a different challenge, I need to fight foreign boxers."

"Unless a promoter wants me to again take on Pazi, I'm ready, but the promoter ought to give me the money that my management will ask him," Kassim stated. Much as he did not specify how much does he need so he can take the ring, Kassim noted it would not be either too much or too little money.

"I will tell him how much I need to go for a rematch with Pazi, if we do not reach agreement on the

cash, I will continue focusing on an international fight with a foreign boxer, who will give me new challenge," he said.

He said he is not focusing on the next opponent's record, insisting he is also ready to fight a compatriot with a better record.

Earlier, Kassim expressed his desire to fight compatriot Hassan Mwakinyo, a fight that has yet to materialize because there is no boxing promoter willing to pay Mwakinyo the money the boxer wants for the bout.