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'This is proof that Samia is in full control'

By Correspondent Ani Jozeni

IT is now clear that President Samia Suluhu Hassan is firmly in control of organs of the state, following the tempestuous resignation of outgoing National Assembly Speaker Job Ndugai (pictured), some analysts have said.

The firm grip on power on the part of the president, Union who assumed office in a situation of national emergency mid-March last year, and the second president from Zanzibar since the Union with Tanganyika in early 1964, is now without doubt.

Until the Speaker's resignation, the political map was characterised by groups in CCM having divergent loyalties, especially in the spirited dispute in the legislature at the start of the sixth phase presidency, or specifically in evaluating her first 100 days in office, on the pros and cons of her visions vis a vis former president, the late Dr John Magufuli.

At that time the president intervened to say it is irrelevant to weigh their performances and more relevant to move with continuity of innovation and problem solving, underlining that the debate was petty, as "me and Magufuli are the same thing."

This intervention calmed the legislature but left an impression that she was beholden to the previous phase for vision, thus groups in CCM seeing the thaw with the

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Clerk suspends all committee sittings

● Parliament will first elect new Speaker on February 1

By Guardian Reporter

THE National Assembly has suspended the scheduled parliamentary standing committee meetings slated for next week, following Thursday's resignation of Speaker Job Ndugai.

Nenelwa Mwiambi, the Clerk to the National Assembly, said in a statement yesterday that parliamentary committee meetings set for January 10 to 17 have been suspended and will instead meet on February 1, the starting date for the wider parliamentary session.



When branches of the state collide, it is healthy for the country; this is what he was supposed to do as head of the legislature," the new constitution activist asserted.

Section 84 (8) of the Constitution of the United Republic (1977), provides that there should be no National Assembly proceedings if the Speaker's seat is vacant, which includes meetings of parliamentary committees.

MPs must first conduct a poll to fill the Speaker's chair, the parliamentary executive underlined, specifying that MPs must report for the National Assembly sitting on January 31.

Speaker Ndugai resigned after coming

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CCM national Chairperson, President Samia Suluhu Hassan pictured yesterday at Makombeni Stadium in Mkoani District, South Pemba Region, receiving the National Flag from Abdalla Ali Chumu. This was at the end of a CCM Youth Wing walk held as part of the countdown to the January 12 climax of the commemoration of Zanzibar Revolution's 58th anniversary. Photo: State House

...URGES YOUTH CREATIVITY IN ZANZIBAR'S BLUE ECONOMY

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday urged youth to properly utilise opportunities available in the sea by initiating innovative projects, saying the country has all potential for developing the blue economy.

There is massive untapped potential of marine resources, she stated, calling upon youth to grab them, officiating at the climax of

the CCM Youth Wing (UV-CCM) walk to mark 58 years of the Zanzibar Revolution, ousting of Sultan Jamshid after inconclusive elections towards independence late 1963 where a party allied to the sultan took office.

Samia said the Indian Ocean has a lot of opportunities including fishing, seaweed farming, octopus gardening, oil and gas extraction plus other areas that can transform the Islands' economy.

"Zanzibar is surrounded by the sea, and if the youth will grab and utilise the range of opportunities in marine resources it will help them fight dependency, promoting self-reliance and employment. Good enough the government of Zanzibar has set aside 85bn/- to support the youth with capital but also various projects."

Ocean resources provide jobs, goods and services for millions of people around the world and have

immense economic importance, so the youth should figure out how to use opportunities to utilise this potential, she stated.

"We also have a lot to do in relation to climate change. The youth can be creative by coming up with programmes to help overcome the impacts of climate change," she elaborated, underlining that the government is working on procedures to establish an entrepreneurship bank so as

to support youth entrepreneurs with capital to support business initiatives.

"We are discussing with various organisations including the African Development Bank (AfDB) to see how we can get funds to support programmes aimed to lift the youth economically," the president highlighted.

Citing population data, she said the youth is the mainstay of the country's workforce and contribute

a lot to the country's development. The government has invested in the fight against employment and in the past nine months around 14,000 job opportunities were created in various sectors, she stated, focusing her remarks on Zanzibar.

"The majority of youth lack essential skills to make them employable, with most of them graduating without having practical skills. The government will invest much in vocational

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EABC: Take up EAC-wide approach to Covid-19 tests

By Guardian Reporter

THE East African Business Council (EABC) has urged East African Community (EAC) partner states to adopt a coordinated approach on the COVID-19 pandemic to eliminate

non-tariff barriers arising from the pandemic, to spur trade.

The council appealed to the partner states to mutually recognize COVID-19 test and vaccination certificates and eliminate the need for confirmatory testing and quarantine for persons

with valid COVID-19 test and vaccination certificates.

In a statement yesterday, the council expressed concern that the newly introduced COVID-19 mandatory testing of truck drivers entering or transiting through Uganda hampers



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Ahmada Yahya Abdulwakil (2nd-L, foreground), legislator for Zanzibar's Kwahani constituency, assists Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi yesterday in unveiling a plaque to inaugurate six classrooms at Sebeni Primary School in Unguja Urban District. This was all part of the run-up to the climax of the commemoration of the 58th anniversary of the January 12 Zanzibar Revolution. Left is the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council's Secretary, Zena Ahmed Said, who doubles as Zanzibar Chief Secretary. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Clerk suspends all committee sittings

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under intense pressure to step down following unprecedented public criticism by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, prompting the CCM Youth Wing and a number of MPs to call for his departure.

Following his resignation, the legislature will elect his successor, who will be the eighth Speaker since independence, when it reconvenes early next month.

The chairman for the National Convention for Construction and Reform (NCCR-Mageuzi), James Mbatia, has meanwhile stood by Ndugai's comments on the government's borrowing spree saying, "the government should have taken his advice instead of personally attacking him."

Addressing a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the opposition leader said that

Ndugai's sentiments were valid in the sense that the country's national debt was growing at an alarming rate, which is not healthy for a country with vast natural resources.

"When branches of the state collide, it is healthy for the country; this is what he was supposed to do as head of the legislature," the new constitution activist asserted.

Ndugai's resignation was not entirely unexpected as his future as the head of the legislature became untenable when President Samia Suluhu Hassan censured him on Tuesday for criticizing what he said was "reckless" borrowing by the government.

The Head of State said the remarks were part of an orchestrated campaign to destabilize her government ahead of the 2025 General Election.

...urges youth creativity in Zanzibar's blue economy

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training programmes so as to reach more youths and thus fight unemployment," she emphasised.

The government will increase the number of vocational training colleges to train more youths, also coming up with measures to ensure that youth access capital and funds to establish income generating projects, the president affirmed.

She urged the youth to stop

being used as a ladder for others to succeed and then left where they were but rather work hard for their own development. The youth must fight violence and corruption within the party especially during elections, she reminded the gathering, alluding to gathering storms ahead of the 2025 polls.

"Male leaders with power should stop violating female candidates," she further cautioned, urging the youth to focus on development

thinking and economic change, not things that can divide them and ruin the party and the country.

Kenan Kihongosi, the UV-CCM secretary general, said the walk was aimed to leave a sustainable mark by educating and insisting upon the youth to hard work, fight violence and corruption tendencies.

The walk started on January 3, 2021 in Konde grounds, Micheweni district in North Pemba region and was inaugurated by Zanzibar

President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi. It passed in the districts of Lete, Chakechake and Mkoani, he said, noting that the walk attracted 700 participants walking 124.9km under the theme "Blue economy is youths' opportunity. Let us utilise it."

He said President Samia has done a tremendous job in just nine months including ensuring youth with employment opportunities where we have witnessed thousands of employment

opportunities in public services being announced, he said. The Head of State has also continued to supervise various strategic projects which in-turn provide employment to the youth and develop the nation, he said, acknowledged that Covid-19 pandemic has brought negative impacts in various sectors. But the government has taken various initiatives to overcome the shortcomings, he stated.

He hailed the president for

securing vaccines against Covid-19 and being in the forefront to campaign for people to take jabs so as to protect their health.

"We, youth, will continue supporting your initiatives which aim to bring development to Tanzanians. We will coordinate and work together to ensure that all priorities as highlighted in the CCM Manifesto are implemented," he added.

'This proves President Samia is in full control'

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large taxpayers, foreign investors and rapprochement with Tanzania's partners in the East African Community, relaxing controls on the media and moving towards normal political activity as a slap in the face for that legacy.

Still the spirited remarks on the rising national debt by the incumbent Speaker was in the direction of a wider outlook in CCM, that of founding president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, in his far reaching campaign on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and indebtedness of poor countries.

Ndugai's remarks similarly underlined fears of privatization that preoccupied the presidency of the late Benjamin Mkapa, after being championed by second president Ali Hassan Mwinyi. The auctioning of loss making parastatals or exchanging such assets for portions of the debt is a lingering fear on the part of senior CCM cadres, while the younger generation is less sensitive on the matter.

Those who brought Ndugai to take note of the president's public rebuke and resign were chiefly drawn from the CCM Youth

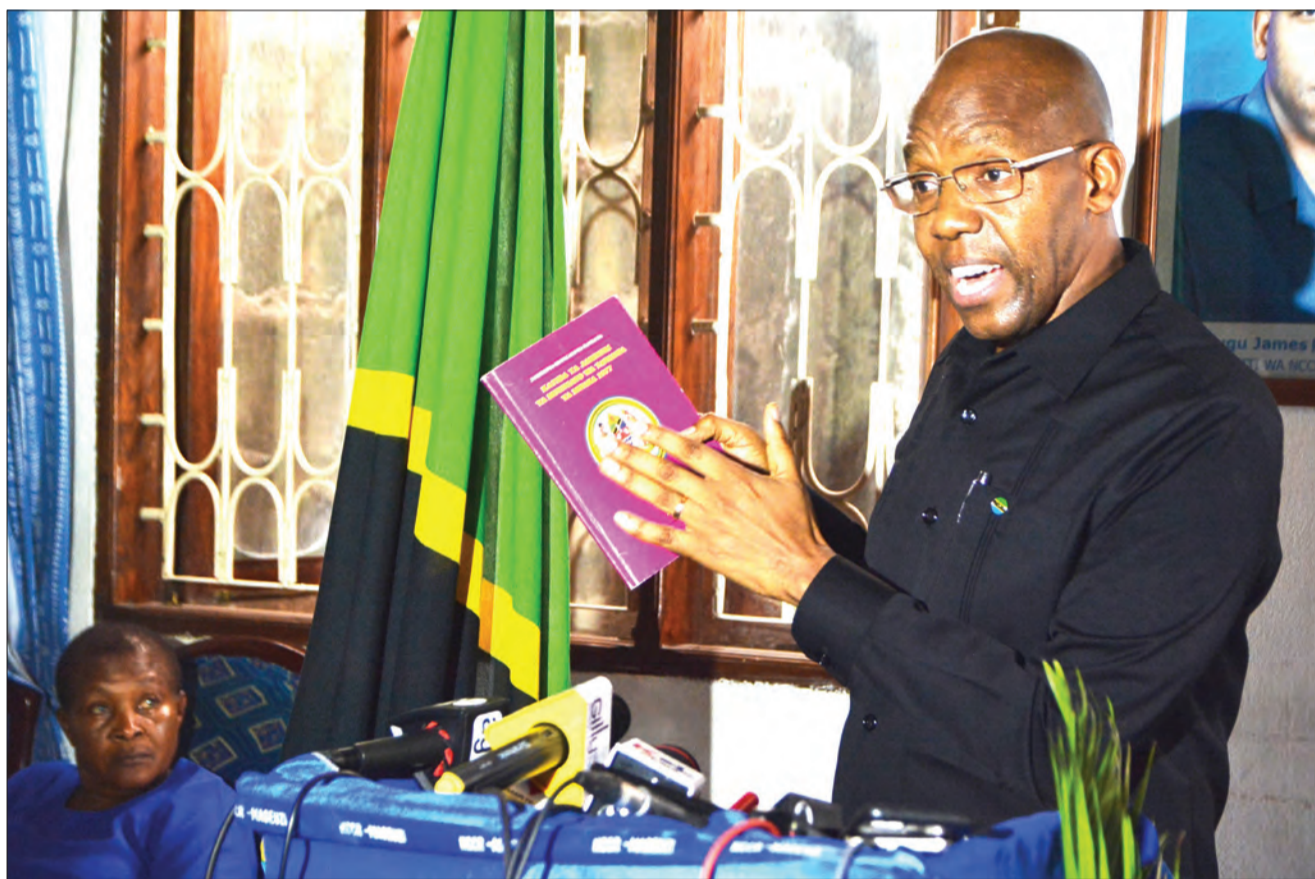
private sector,

Organisation, who issued a rallying cry from different regions asking the Speaker to take responsibility and accountability for the air of disloyalty arising from his remarks, and quit.

This show of militancy and inability to tolerate the Speaker after the disturbance caused upon the presidency similarly reaffirmed an unacknowledged principle in CCM, that what unites the party is loyalty to the president, who is virtually by that office entitled to the chairmanship of the party.

Ex-Speaker Ndugai talked from an ideological viewpoint, which the president qualified as an aspect of machinations for the 2025 polls, as to what sort of person CCM needs, what visions should be espoused, etc.

And in a contradictory tone, the Speaker's resignation has given ammunition to some of his erstwhile worst critics, the new constitution camp around the top leadership of Chadema, insisting that being forced to resign over sentiments he expressed on a well-known public issue, which carried no personal remarks of a negative character, illustrates the lack of freedom of expression in the legislature,



Opposition NCCR-Mageuzi national Chairman James Mbatia comments at a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday on Thursday's resignation of National Assembly Speaker Job Ndugai, in part suggesting that the whole thing was untenable. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

EABC: Take up EAC-wide approach to Covid-19 tests

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the smooth flow of cargo across the region.

The new measure mandates truck drivers to pay \$30 for COVID-19 test each time they cross into Uganda, increasing the cost of doing business and resulting in traffic pile up at border posts, along with increased turnaround times and demurrage charges.

EABC applauded concerted efforts by public and private sector stakeholders in Uganda to resolve the week-long stand-off on the issue, to ease the work of drivers entering or transiting through Uganda.

It similarly urged the partner states to embrace the Regional Electronic Cargo Driver Tracking System (RECDTS) to accommodate emerging COVID-19 testing demands as it offers minimal disruption for transport and logistics business.

Launched in 2020, RECDTS is a mobile phone application enabling the issuance of an EAC COVID-19 digital certificates that are mutually recognised by the

partner states. This eliminates the need for multiple testing, contributing to alleviating congestion at a number of East African border crossing points.

RECDTS provides a surveillance system to monitor long distance truckers' crew health, facilitating contact tracing. It allows partner states to electronically share truck drivers' COVID-19 test results, discounting multiple COVID-19 tests in one trip.

Reliance on manual certificates and delayed test results at border points are a major reason for long delays at border points, as in Busia, Malaba, Nimule and Elegu, it stated, noting that delays have caused tail backs of trucks measuring tens of kilometres in some cases.

"EABC is committed to continue engaging the EAC via the technical working group and respective inter-ministerial teams to adopt and implement an EAC coordinated approach on COVID-19 measures, procedures and protocols," it added.

Govt withdraws mandatory Covid vaccination requirement for passengers in public transport

KAMPALA

THE government in Uganda has withdrawn mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for all passengers using public transport.

The cancellation of the directive comes barely a week after it was announced by President Yoweri Museveni as a condition for reopening the economy and allowing public service vehicles to load to their full passenger capacity. Initially, during the lockdown, public transport vehicles were restricted to carrying only half of their licensed capacity in order to ensure that there is a safe distance between passengers.

With the full reopening of the economy, passengers had been required to carry vaccination cards, a measure which, however, has been found to be difficult to enforce, according to Works and Transport minister Gen Edward Katumba Wamala. He says that many public transporters could not differentiate between genuine and fake vaccination cards, yet some already

vaccinated travellers never received their cards from the ministry of Health.

Katumba has now revised the directive, restricting proof of vaccination to just operators of public transport vehicles, among them drivers, conductors and their staff. He told a press conference at the Uganda Media Centre that travellers using public transport will only be required to have a mask on at all times, adding that the police have been directed to arrest non-compliant passengers.

"I want to emphasise that every crew member of the service vehicle which includes the driver and the conductor or turn man and any other crew member must be fully vaccinated. That one we agreed with the transporters, and we have agreed with traffic to be making spot checks if they find the driver or turn man is not vaccinated, they can decide that the bus or taxi will not continue. So those ones must be fully vaccinated and must be ready to present their vaccination certificates all the time," Katumba said.

Katumba also cautioned the public against faking vaccination cards, noting

that preventing COVID-19 is a personal responsibility.

"Of course, it would also be preferable that all passengers are vaccinated, it may not be possible now but the transporters can double-check on that. But for your personal health, personal safety, don't go to Nasser [road] and get a forged certificate. It doesn't help you, you're cheating nobody, and you're cheating yourself. Don't buy any certificate just because you want to make the travel... In the event that the people have to travel, the minimum is, you must have the mask on. The police have a right to stop any vehicle any time, and if they find passengers without masks, they find the driver and conductor without masks; they are free to stop that vehicle and stop that journey and arrest the vehicle on the stop."

Mustafa Mayambala, the chairman of the Uganda Transport Development Agency (UTRADA), noted that they equally want to see the police dealing with all drivers and conductors who are reluctant in enforcing standard operating guidelines in the control of COVID-19.



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister William Lukuvi cuts ribbon to launch the ministry's customer service centre at Dodoma's Mtumba 'government city' yesterday. Left is the ministry's permanent secretary, Mary Makondo. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Lukuvi launches customer care call centre in Dodoma

By Guardian Correspondent Dodoma

THE Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development has launched a customer care call centre aimed at addressing challenges facing Tanzanians on land related matters.

The centre was launched yesterday in Dodoma by minister William Lukuvi will among other things offer real time responses and solutions to some of the challenges and take up opinions on the same.

"Using technology, the ministry has seen that there is a need to offer some of our services online but also link up with our clients," he said.

Through the centre one can ask, inquire and get answers on all matters related to land but also get correct information from experts via a special Whatsapp number.

According to Lukuvi, the centre which is located at the ministry's Mtumba headquarters in Dodoma is equipped with land experts who will give timely answers to all burning issues.

The minister used the opportunity to call upon Tanzanians to use the call centre in order to avoid falling in the hands of connen who end up taking their money.

"Through this center people will just call freely and speak to our experts via 0739-646-885 or send a short message via Whatsapp during working days from 8am to 3pm," he said.

He said the establishment of the centre was one of the priorities by the ministry to ensure that they reach out to a large population with services.

In October last year, the government formed a ministerial team directed to work on addressing conflicts between

human and wildlife in 920 villages surrounding protected areas across the country began the task yesterday.

The team, which involves eight ministers of sectors of agriculture, Water, Defense, environment, housing and settlements, natural resources and tourism and livestock and fisheries, will tour 10 regions.

This was first preceded by the launch of guidebooks to guide investors on best to engage communities and make them part of the process aimed at addressing deadly land conflicts between the two sides.

The guidebooks provide resources for reference which include, sample contracts and others which are important to ensure interests of communities and other groups involved are considered.

Researchers on the development of the guidebooks were developed in groups, namely a guide book for the government, a guide book for investors and a guide for the communities on how to engage and be part of the investment process.

“Through this center people will just call freely and speak to our experts via 0739-646-885 or send a short message via Whatsapp during working days from 8am to 3pm,” he said.

Mtwara traders urged to use alternative transport to serve neighbouring Comoro

By Correspondent Abdallah Bakari, Mtwara

MTWARA traders have been urged to use alternative transport including boats to transport food crops to the neighbouring Comoro which is in high demand of food.

The country is importing food from Brazil and Madagascar instead of nearest-Mtwara due to lack of ships connecting the two countries.

Mtwara Regional Commissioner Brigadier General Marco Gaguti made the call yesterday here that

instead of waiting for ships to unlock business between the two countries, Mtwara traders should immediately start using boats to feed the Comoros.

"It is about 300-kilometres to Comoro from Mtwara, but due to lack of transport, our counterpart import food stuff from Brazil and Madagascar, those food products are plenty available in our region, so traders have to think deeply and see how they can chip in and utilise the opportunity," Brig. Gaguti said.

He wanted traders to start with boats as the government and

other shipping agencies are trying to respond to this as it's a great opportunity.

Chairman of Mtwara- Chamber of Commerce, Investment and Agriculture (TCCIA), Kizito Galinoma said lack of ships from Mtwara to Comoro hinders business cooperation growth between the countries.

"We had an order of supplying food stuff in Comoro, but the barrier is lack of ships, our fellows decided to import from Brazil and Madagascar to fill their gap, we need to unlock this which will also cultivate the use of our Mtwara

Port," Galinoma said.

Hasnein Murji, one of the traders, called on the government to look at short and long term plans which include using ships from Zanzibar to pass to Mtwara to take cargo to Comoro.

"We advise that the government to communicate with businessmen from Zanzibar who owns cargo ships, so that they can reschedule their routes to Mtwara and later Comoro, I am not sure that using boats will bridge the gap, we need reliable transport," Murji said,

ACT-Wazalendo calls on govt to repeal warehouse receipt system

By Guardian Correspondent

ACT-Wazalendo has called on the government through the ministry of agriculture, to repeal the warehouse receipt system in the crops and areas which it hasn't performed well to support farmers' progress.

The party's secretary general Ado Shaibu made the call yesterday during a tour in the constituencies of Ruangwa, Liwale and Kilwa North in Lindi Region.

Shaibu is on the party's building tour with other leaders and visited various constituencies in Ruvuma, (the Selous part), Mtwara and Lindi regions.

"When the warehouse receipt system was introduced, it was said that it would liberate farmers from the clutches of the dishonest traders. But, wherever I have passed, this system has failed to help the farmers, so it is better to revoke it," he said.

He said in the areas, cashew nuts, pigeon peas and sesame growers are crying foul over falling prices, delays in payment for their produce and huge deductions in sales.

He said ACT-Wazalendo, through the 2020 General Election Manifesto, promised to grant farmers the freedom to sell their produce locally or abroad after clearly seeing that the warehouse receipt system did not address farmers' grievances.

While in Kilwa North, Shaibu warned that if the government did not take immediate action to address the on-going conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, the country would be plunged into chaos.

"This is a huge challenge; it is a bomb waiting to explode. I have visited so many places, this is the 18th constituency. Everywhere I went, there were conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, it is important for the government to take urgent and long-term measures on this," he explained.

He cited some measures which should be taken, is to engage locals in the areas before bringing livestock into the villages so that they could have their consent.

Shaibu also urged the government to set aside special areas for pastoralists and farmers to avoid the conflicts.



Education, Science and Technology minister Prof Joyce Ndalichako speaks at the launch of the Seventh Tanzania Institute of Education council in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Left is the council's chairman Maulid Mwatala. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

'Government working to create public awareness programme to fight Covid-19'

By Guardian Reporter, Kilimanjaro

THE government is strengthening the public awareness programme in Kilimanjaro Region to encourage more people to take Covid-19 vaccines to fight spread of the disease and prevent deaths.

Dr Georgina Joachim, programme officer of the national vaccination programme under the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children made the statement yesterday when speaking to journalists from Tanga, Manyara and

Kilimanjaro regions on vaccination progress. She said that despite various efforts taken by the government and stakeholders, response has been low in Kilimanjaro as majority of them are yet to be vaccinated.

"Kilimanjaro region has 327 vaccination centres, so residents are encouraged to utilise them by getting job to protect their health," she said.

She said the government cannot achieve this vital task alone, hence the need to work together with stakeholders such as the media, the civil society, religious institutions and

the private sector in order to make this possible.

"We are also wondering what has happened in Kilimanjaro, people are not coming out to vaccinate, while earlier it was doing well, so we need to increase mobilisation so as to attract them, we are calling for the media to support us on this," she said.

She said: "We are implementing a number of strategies to encourage people for the vaccination; we have education programmes that reach people through various means."

Dr Georgina said Manyara Region

has set aside 321 immunisation centres and Tanga Region has more than 300 facilities. Countrywide, there are 6,784 centres for vaccination.

Earlier, Kilimanjaro Regional Medical Officer (RMO) Dr Credianus Mzimba said they have set goals to vaccinate 5000 people every day in the region.

"We have seen that this will help us reduce the problem and we will encourage more people to get vaccinated. It is true that the speed of vaccination is low and in order to reach 70 percent of the target, we need some months to get there," he said.

Tanzania has received a total of 6,408,950 Covid-19 vaccines which involves Sinopharm, Janssen and Pfizer since it joined the COVAX global vaccine sharing facility, mid this year.

This comes after the government received another consignment of 376,320 doses of Moderna vaccines late December, 2021 which will protect 188,160 people in the country.

Speaking shortly after receiving the vaccines at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam, Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and

Children, Dr Dorothy Gwajima, said the consignment of the 6.4 million vaccines will protect 3,204,475 people in the country. The vaccines will require a person to take two jabs to reach full immunity against the virus.

She expressed appreciation to the COVAX facility led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), GAVI Alliance and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for facilitating the donation.

The minister encouraged citizens to get the vaccines, saying they are safe and they have been approved by the World Health Organisation.

Shinyanga authorities 'bless' water projects contracts worth 4.3bn/-

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

AUTHORITIES in Shinyanga Region have approved ten water projects contracts worth 4.3bn/- which will be implemented in 10 villages benefiting 37,269 residents.

The funds are part of the 1.3trn/- loan provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to support Tanzania's efforts in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic by addressing the urgent health, humanitarian, and economic costs.

Speaking shortly after signing of the contracts yesterday here, Regional Commissioner (RC) Sophia Mjema wanted supervisors including the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) to ensure that the projects are well implemented with required quality standards and completed within a scheduled timeframe.

She said that President Samia Suluhu Hassan has issued the funds to implement the projects and ensure that residents are supplied with enough clean and safe water.

"After these water projects are completed I do not expect to see they are misused by allowing improper water connection, while others destroying pipes, I want the projects to be sustainable and benefit other generations, district commissioners and directors have to supervise these projects and ensure that they remain safe and productive for citizens," she said.

She said the government's aim to dish the funds is to improve water supply in the

areas and ensure that people wash their hands frequently to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The RC urged Shinyanga residents to protect the water infrastructures and stop misusing them so as to benefit them for long and rescue them from water blues challenges which have been facing the populations for years.

RUWASA manager for Shinyanga Eng. Juliety Payovela said the implementation of water projects under the 4.3bn/- funds will be closely supervised to ensure that they adhere to required standards.

She said in the Shinyanga region, RUWASA serves 500 villages out of which 315 villages have access to clean and safe water.

"There are 185 villages which were yet to be reached with clean and safe water but in the 2021/22 fiscal year budget, we expect to spend 16bn/- to implement 46 water projects and this will address water challenges in various villages in the region," she added.

John Ntalimbo, a contractor from Jonta Investment assured leadership in Shinyanga that they are going to implement all the projects well and complete them in a scheduled timeframe.

"After these water projects are completed I do not expect to see they are misused by allowing improper water connection, while others destroying pipes, I want the projects to be sustainable and benefit other generations, district commissioners and directors have to supervise these projects and ensure that they remain safe and productive for citizens," she said.



Manyara regional commissioner Charles Makongoro Nyerere (R) and regional administrative secretary Caroline Mthapula (C) look on yesterday as regional Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) manager Walter Kirita signs documents on Babati Urban constituency 12 water projects. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey.

SADC meet rescheduled

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) extraordinary summit initially planned for this week has been rescheduled to next week in Malawi.

It is scheduled to review progress of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) which was deployed to combat terrorism and acts of violent extremism.

SADC secretariat confirmed the postponement of the meeting

and the new dates, "its preceding meetings that were scheduled to take place virtually from 5th-7th January 2022 had been rescheduled.

"The meetings will now take place in Lilongwe, the Republic of Malawi from 11th-12th January 2022," reads part of the statement released by the SADC secretariat.

"The extraordinary summit of heads of State and Government to be held on 12th January 2021 will review progress of the SADC Mission in Mozambique

(SAMIM) which was deployed to support Mozambique to combat terrorism and acts of violent extremism."

Dr Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, in his capacity as the chairperson of SADC, will chair the extraordinary summit.

The SADC secretariat said prior to the conference, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation will on January

11, convene an extraordinary SADC Organ Troika Summit, comprising Heads of State and Government from Organ Troika members.

Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and Mozambique will attend.

"In accordance with the SADC treaty, the SADC summit is responsible for the overall policy direction and control of functions of the community, ultimately making it the policy-making institution of SADC."



Zuhura Faridi (5th-R), chairperson of the CCM women wing in Mtwara Region, presents a wheelchair to Rosina Steven (11) of Mailisita village in Masasi Town yesterday. The beneficiary is a Standard Two pupil at Mailisita Primary School. Photo: Correspondent Hamisi Nasri

Mandela's Robben Island cell key returning to S. Africa - minister

JOHANNESBURG

THE key to the prison cell on Robben Island once occupied by Nelson Mandela is going to be returned to South Africa rather than be auctioned in the US, the minister said.

The auction had been due to take place in New York on January 28th until South Africa's Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa objected.

"This key belongs to the people of South Africa," he said.

Mandela spent 27 years in prison for campaigning to end white minority rule.

Eighteen of those years were spent on Robben Island, an island off Cape Town.

In 1994, he became South Africa's first black president after the country's first democratic elections, and he remains a national icon.

Mthethwa said Guernsey's auction house had agreed to send the key back to South Africa and also to halt the sale

of other items that belonged to Mandela.

These included Mandela's original painting The Lighthouse, Robben Island, as well as the exercise bike he was allowed to use and a prison tennis racket.

"The key symbolises South Africa's painful history whilst also representing triumph of the human spirit over evil," Mthethwa said in a statement.

It had been put up for sale by Christo Brand, Mandela's

former prison guard in the notorious jail. The pair had become good friends.

The auction was to raise funds for a memorial garden and museum around Mandela's burial site.

Mandela was released from prison in 1990 as South Africa began to move away from strict racial segregation (apartheid).

He served a single term as president, stepping down in 1999.

He died in 2013 aged 95.

'Suspension of Uganda flights to Dubai over'

By Eve Muganga

UGANDA Civil Aviation officials said on Friday that the suspension of flights from Uganda to Dubai had been lifted.

"This is to confirm that the suspension of flights from Uganda to Dubai has been lifted with immediate effect," said Uganda Civil Aviation Authority Spokesman, Vianney Luggya.

According to him, passengers planning travel to Dubai can now get in touch with their respective airlines to schedule their flights.

He said the move is good news for the aviation industry because Dubai is the number one destination for passengers departing Uganda who mainly include businessmen, job seekers and tourists among others.

"In 2020, the Middle East which includes Dubai and Doha accounted for 21 percent of the total passengers' traffic from Entebbe. In December 2021, Entebbe international airport handled about 124,402 arriving and departing passengers up from 111,600 in November 2021. The December figures had 63,311 arriving passengers, 61,091 departing passengers and 7,139 in transit," Luggya told this reporter.

The national carrier, Uganda Airlines said it would resume flights to Dubai tomorrow (January 8).

"Enjoy unlimited convenience with our direct flights to Dubai every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday," the airlines tweeted.

However, two PCR tests are required for both passengers flying from Uganda to Dubai and

those in transit.

The first test is supposed to be undertaken within 48 hours from the time of sample collection to boarding aircraft and the second one within six hours before the flight's departure time. In addition, passengers leaving Uganda will be subjected to another PCR test upon arrival in Dubai.

UAE suspended flights from Uganda with effect from December 28, and said the ban would remain in place until further notice, following a surge in the number of passengers from Entebbe airport testing positive on arrival at Dubai International Airport. Following the ban, Uganda airlines suspended all its flights to the country until the ban was lifted.

However, inbound flights from Dubai to Entebbe continued to carry passengers and cargo.



"In 2020, the Middle East which includes Dubai and Doha accounted for 21 percent of the total passengers' traffic from Entebbe. In December 2021, Entebbe international airport handled about 124,402 arriving and departing passengers up from 111,600 in November 2021. The December figures had 63,311 arriving passengers, 61,091 departing passengers and 7,139 in transit," Luggya told this reporter.

TANZANIA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTRONIC AUCTIONING

under regulation 8 of the Wildlife Conservation [Tourist Hunting] Regulations, 2015)

Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) invites applications from qualified applicants for the allocation of Tourist Hunting Blocks through electronic auctioning (e-auctioning). Currently, there are 75 hunting blocks within Game Reserves (GRs), Game Controlled Areas (GCAs) and Open Areas (OAs) that are immediately available for e-auctioning. The 75 hunting blocks are in two groups (A comprising 26 blocks which their tenure will commence immediately after the auctioning exercise in 2022 and B comprising 49 blocks which their tenure will commence on 1st January 2023). Eligible hunting companies can be allocated up to five (5) hunting blocks each, which shall be of different categories. **Auctioning will commence on 12th January 2022, and will last for seven consecutive days.**

1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALLOCATION OF HUNTING BLOCK (S)

According to the Wildlife Conservation Cap. 283, no person shall be considered for allocation of a hunting block unless:

- He has a company registered with the Registrar of Companies within Tanzania intending to engage in hunting of animals;
- At least one of the Directors has five (5) years experience in Wildlife based business and Conservation in Tanzania; and
- The company meets requirements of Section 39(3)(a) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

2. TENURE OF OWNERSHIP OF HUNTING BLOCKS

The tenure of ownership of hunting blocks shall be **10 years for Category I and II** hunting blocks and **15 years for Category III** hunting blocks. The Minister shall on the fifth year of the tenure of ownership of a hunting block, determine the continuity of the tenure. The Minister's decision shall be based on:

- the annual performance assessment and the evaluation of the hunting block utilization; and
- the full performance of the company allocated a hunting block to be carried out in the fourth year of the tenure, which shall take into account the annual assessment and the evaluation criteria prescribed in the regulation.

3. MODE OF APPLICATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

- Applicants will complete an online registration at <http://portal.maliasili.go.tz> through the appropriate e-form provided. After successful registration an applicant will be assigned an auto generated username and password sent via their registered e-mail addresses to enable them to access the e-auction portal,
- Applicants will then select hunting blocks they intend to bid, which will automatically generate an e-invoice for the applicant to pay a non-refundable application fee based on the block category being applied for (see table below).

Application fees per categories of hunting blocks

Applicants will pay a single application fee per category (and apply across the category) not per category per block.

S/N	Category of Hunting Block	Fees per category in USD
1	I	5,000
2	II	2,000
3	III	1,000

- Only applicants who paid registration fees will be permitted to participate in e-auctioning of hunting blocks, which will remain open for a period of seven consecutive days.
- A bidder will use his/her username and password to access the bidding dashboard and bid according to the information specified on the bidding interface.
- A bidder will remain anonymous.
- Bids will be automatically ranked, the contents of which will be encrypted.

Bidders will:

- Assign a fee and compete only on pre-selected hunting block(s),
- Log in the e-auction system more than once during bidding,
- Be notified automatically on new bids as they are placed, together with their corresponding prices, so that they will be able to track their rankings in the course of bidding,
- Identities of bidders shall not be disclosed by any party during the course of auctioning,
- All invalid bids submitted shall be rejected with a message explaining reasons for a rejection,
- Bidders shall not provide any additional information or clarifications related to the auction that may distort competition; and where necessary, such information shall be availed by TAWA,
- Users shall be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all particulars associated with their accounts,
- An e-auction award shall be based solely on ranking of prices, such that the allocation is awarded to the highest successful bidder,

- No bid may be withdrawn after the completion of bidding process,
- Bidders will only be allowed to increase their bidding prices during the auctioning process,
- A successful bidder shall pay 100% of the highest price reached within fourteen (14) days from the date of receipt of due diligence results, failure of which will lead into cancellation of the offer, and,
- A successful bidder shall pay the hunting block fees annually equivalent to his bid price.

NOTE:

Only successful bidders will be issued with a Hunting Block Allocation Certificate by the Minister. Should you need any further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact us or visit the following offices:

- Conservation Commissioner
Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority
Dar es Salaam Road-Kingolwira Area
TAFORI Building
P O Box 265
MOROGORO -Tanzania
Tel: +255 23-293424
E-mail: cc@tawa.go.tz
- e-Auction of Hunting Blocks Help Desk
Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority
Phone: +255 784 999 191;
+255 717 187 156; +255 754 043 280

E-mail: e-auctionhuntingblocks@tawa.go.tz

TOURIST HUNTING BLOCKS AVAILABLE FOR AUCTIONING

GROUP A: 26 BLOCKS WHICH THEIR TENURE WILL COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE AUCTIONING EXERCISE

No.	NAME OF HUNTING BLOCK	SIZE (Sq Km ²)	CATEGORY	ECOSYSTEM
CATEGORY I				
1	Kizigo GR (E) 2	1287	I	Ruaha-Rungwa
CATEGORY II				
2	Kizigo GR (E) 1	1196	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
3	Inyonga GR (C)	2041	II	Katavi-Rukwa
4	Inyonga GR (E)	3070	II	Katavi-Rukwa
5	Kilwa OA S	852	II	Selous-Mikumi
6	Kizigo GR (C)	1313	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
7	Lwali-Nkamba GR	3320	II	Katavi-Rukwa
8	Moyowosi GR (N 1)	1392	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
9	Moyowosi/Njingwe G.R 1	1781	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
10	Muhesi GR	2633	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
11	Pili GR W	1072	II	Katavi-Rukwa
12	Selous GR MT1	307	II	Selous-Mikumi
13	Ugalla-Mama East	2099	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
14	Ugalla-Mama West	2104	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
15	Mile GCA N	1252	II	Katavi-Rukwa
CATEGORY III				
16	Chunya OA (E)	730	III	Ruaha-Rungwa
17	Liparamba GR	617	III	Selous-Mikumi
18	Litumbandoyosi O.A./Gazamusa	1346	III	Selous-Mikumi
19	Luwewa-Lumesule GR.	402	III	Selous-Mikumi
20	Magnamila O.A.	1066	III	Selous-Mikumi
21	Misungwi G.C.A.	600	III	Selous-Mikumi
22	Muhwesi G.C.A.	1438	III	Selous-Mikumi
23	Pili OA (E)	1822	III	Katavi-Rukwa
24	Rungwa (N) O.A.	1515	III	Ruaha-Rungwa
25	Wembere South	5430	III	Ruaha-Rungwa
26	Kilwa South West	1473	III	Tarangire-Manyara

GROUP B: 49 BLOCKS WHICH THEIR TENURE WILL COMMENCE ON 1ST JANUARY 2023

No.	NAME OF HUNTING BLOCK	SIZE (Sq Km ²)	CATEGORY	ECOSYSTEM
CATEGORY I				
1	Burko OA	712	I	Lake Natron
2	Kizigo GR W	1296	I	Ruaha-Rungwa
3	Lake Natron GCA S	1768	I	Lake Natron
4	Lake Rukwa GR	2040	I	Katavi-Rukwa
5	Lokisale GCA	739	I	Tarangire-Manyara
6	Masai OA W	877	I	Tarangire-Manyara
7	Mto wa Mbu GCA	1208	I	Lake Natron
8	Rungwa Hill GR	1064	I	Ruaha-Rungwa
9	Rungwa Mtera GR	2058	I	Ruaha-Rungwa
10	Rungwa Rungwa GR E	1431	I	Ruaha-Rungwa
11	Rungwa Rungwa GR W	1344	I	Ruaha-Rungwa
CATEGORY II				
12	Chunya Lukwati OA	2344	II	Katavi-Rukwa
13	Chunya Msami OA	1496	II	Katavi-Rukwa
14	Kilombo Ruhuji Mtinga (W)	2199	II	Selous-Mikumi
15	Kilwa OA Mowemkuru	1426	II	Selous-Mikumi
16	Kilwa OA Naku	1841	II	Selous-Mikumi
17	Kilwa GCA SE	1146	II	Tarangire-Manyara
18	Lake Natron GCA N	1955	II	Lake Natron
19	Lake Natron GCA W	1791	II	Lake Natron
20	Londolo GCA N	591	II	Lake Natron
21	Luganzo GR	5217	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
22	Lukwati GR N	1757	II	Katavi-Rukwa
23	Lukwati GR S	2058	II	Katavi-Rukwa
24	Lunda Nkwamba GCA N	1046	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
25	Masai OA E	1865	II	Tarangire-Manyara
26	Mile GCA S	1251	II	Katavi-Rukwa
27	Monduli Jau OA	896	II	Lake Natron
28	Moyowosi GR S	3077	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
29	Moyowosi/Njingwe G.R 3	1762	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
30	Nogera OA	591	II	Lake Natron
31	Rungwa Mwangembe GR	997	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
32	Rungwa Mzombe OA	1933	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
33	Rungwa OA S	1679	II	Ruaha-Rungwa
34	Ruvu Masai GCA	2477	II	Selous-Mikumi
35	Selous GR LR1	1110	II	Selous-Mikumi
36	Selous GR LR2	1146	II	Selous-Mikumi
37	Selous GR LR3	1146	II	Selous-Mikumi
38	Selous GR MA1	1865	II	Selous-Mikumi
39	Selous GR MUA	1147	II	Selous-Mikumi
40	Selous GR MS1	1343	II	Selous-Mikumi
41	Selous GR UB	779	II	Selous-Mikumi
42	Selous GR U4	683	II	Selous-Mikumi
43	Ugalla GR E	1865	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
44	Ugalla GR S	1446	II	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
CATEGORY III				
45	Makeke-Uvinza OA	2565	III	Malagarasi-Muyovosi
46	Kilombo Ruhuji Mtinga (E)	2310	III	Selous-Mikumi
47	Simanjoro GCA W	1254	III	Tarangire-Manyara

Issued by:

Conservation Commissioner
Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority - TAWA
Morogoro Road-Kingolwira Area
TAFORI Building
PO Box 2658
Morogoro - Tanzania
Tel: +255 (0) 23-293424
E-mail: cc@tawa.go.tz

TRA conducts educational campaigns to business people at Kariakoo market

By Guardian Correspondent

Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) is conducting educational campaigns to traders at the Kariakoo market in Dar es Salaam on the use of Electronic Fiscal Device (EFD) which include collecting information on taxpayer identification numbers (TIN).

During the exercise, the officials also identify EFD machines registration numbers as well as the types of businesses conducted by specific trader.

TRA senior Tax officer in Ilala, Paul Ramadhani said the campaign is sustainable and that it aims at ensuring that traders pay taxes voluntarily and use EFDs in issuance of receipts.

"We want traders to build a culture of issuing electronic

receipts whenever they sell their products. Customers should also demand for receipts to help traders to comply with the law," said Ramadhani.

Some interviewed traders commended TRA for the conducting the educational campaign, saying it has reminded them on the need to comply with the country laws.

Glory Msuja said issuance of electronic receipts helps traders to keep records of the daily sells.

Msuja said: "What TRA is doing is good because as humans we sometimes forget to fulfil our responsibilities to our customers."

Another trader, Abdul-Rashid Mohamed urged TRA to make sure such education is provided frequently to both sellers and buyers.

He said educating citizens on the importance of demanding for receipts is commendable because it helps to facilitate enforcement of the laws.

The campaign which is going to cover all the streets in Kariakoo, in now conducted at four streets namely-Lindi, Congo, Msimbazi and Uhuru.

Those eligible to use the EFDs include persons who are not VAT registered with a turnover ranging from 14m/- and above per year, traders trading in the region's prime areas, identified on the basis of rent payable and traders dealing with selected business sectors such as spare parts, hardware, mini supermarkets, petrol stations, mobile phone shops, sub wholesale shops, bar and restaurants, pharmaceutical stores and electronic shops.

GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Affiliate of the University of California, San Francisco

Plot 385 Mtitu Street, #7
PO Box 38665
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

info.tanzania@ucglobalprograms.org

Job Opportunity – Health Information Systems Developer – Re Advertised

Location: Dar es Salaam

Application deadline: Jan 15, 2021

Start date: February 1, 2022

Background:

The University of California San Francisco (UCSF) is engaged in a five-year Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Tanzania (CDC-Tanzania) to provide strategic information and health information systems (HIS) technical assistance to the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) as well as the United States' President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and their implementing partners (IPs). We are recruiting an individual through our affiliated international NGO 'Global Programs' to serve as a Health Information Systems Developer with a focus on C# programming.

This is a full-time 12-month position with the possibility of extension subject to continued funding. The position is expected to start on February 1, 2022.

Main duties and responsibilities:

Under the supervision of the Health Information Systems Director, the HIS Developer shall be responsible for designing, developing, implementing, testing, maintaining, auditing, and improving new and existing health information systems and project software. The developer will also bring expertise to activities related to developing EMR (electronic medical records), Lab, and other health information systems. The developer shall also ensure that all software developed conforms to set software development standards by conducting rigorous diagnosis, tests, code debugging, and technical documentation through reference manuals.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Work with the HIS team to design software solutions by studying information needs, systems flow, data usage, and work processes while adhering to the software development lifecycle.
- Evaluate, maintain, and evolve existing health information systems such as CTC2, CTC3, CTC Analytics, and Monthly Portal.
- Assist the HIS team in designing and implementing interoperability between existing health information systems such as CTC2, CTC3, CTC Analytics, Monthly Portal, Lab Visual Tool, IQSMS, PTCQI, etc.
- Support the piloting, rollout, training, and maintenance of HIS systems to Implementing Partners.
- Investigate, analyze, and make recommendations to management regarding technology improvements, upgrades, and modifications.
- Analyze user needs and software requirements to determine feasibility of design within time and cost constraints.
- Develop and coordinate software system testing and validation procedures, programming, and documentation.
- Prepare reference materials for users by writing operating instructions, flowcharts, layouts, diagrams, charts, code comments, and clear code.
- Undertake other tasks within the scope of the role as directed by management from time to time.

Experience, skills, and minimum required qualifications:

- A Bachelor's Degree or equivalent qualification in computer science, software engineering, or information systems required. Experience working with health information systems required.
- Advanced knowledge and skill with C#, Java, and/or VB programming language(s). Advanced knowledge in Python and other common programming languages is an added advantage.
- A minimum of 5 years of experience as a software developer or engineer; demonstrable experience in developing a variety of software systems while taking on increasing responsibility for analysis, design, implementation, and development tasks [reference required].
- Advanced experience developing data-driven applications utilizing significant relational database engines as part of the overall application architecture (experience with at least two of the following is highly desirable: MS SQL Server, PostgreSQL, MySQL, MS Access).
- Working experience using jQuery, Git, Restful web services, Agile methodology, and android SDK.
- Proficiency in developing and troubleshooting complex software systems that run in mixed environments including Windows on desktop, server, tablet, and mobile systems.
- Demonstrable skills in enterprise application integration.
- Ability to work successfully in a team.
- Fluent in written and spoken English and Swahili.

Other desired skills/qualities:

- Excellent skills in critical thinking and analysis
- Excellent organizational and oral/written communication skills
- Ability to work independently and manage various tasks under tight deadlines

To Apply:

All applicants must address each selection criterion detailed in the minimum requirements above with specific and comprehensive information supporting each item.

All applications must include the following:

- A current CV with names and telephone numbers for at least 2 referees
- Copies of academic and professional certificates

Applications and supporting documents should be sent via e-mail to info.tanzania@ucglobalprograms.org and must be received by **January 15, 2022**.

NOTE: Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

4 police officers killed in suspected al-Shabaab attack in Lamu County

NAIROBI

At least four police officers were on Friday killed when a vehicle they were travelling in was attacked by gunmen in Milihoi, Lamu County.

An unknown number of police officers were injured in the attack that happened between Mkunumbi and Hindi.

The officers also fought back and reports indicate a number of the attackers believed to be al-Shabaab militants were injured.

The gang is believed to have attacked the police Landcruiser using a rocket-propelled grenade or an improvised explosive device.

It is the same area where former PS Mariam Elmawy was attacked and killed in 2018. Witnesses said the attack happened at about 9 am.

This was as the police vehicle moved towards Lamu direction in a convoy.

A contingent of officers stormed the scene and reported seeing bloodstains into the nearby forest amid a hunt on the attackers.

The area is among those under the dusk to dawn curfew. And that explains why the attackers targeted the officer's daytime.

The National Security Council met for the first time this year to discuss attacks in parts of Lamu County that have now left 11 people including the officers dead.

The council which met under the chairmanship of President Uhuru Kenyatta on Wednesday later issued a number of orders to be implemented as part of efforts to address new insecurity threats in the area.

Among them was the 30 day dusk to dawn curfew effective Wednesday, January 2022.

Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiangi also declared four divisions in the disturbed area.

"Incidents of criminal attacks that have led to the loss of seven innocent lives have been reported in Widho Sub-location, Majembeni Location

of Lamu County."

"The attacks have also occasioned the destruction of private property and unsettled residents in the affected and surrounding areas," said the CS.

He added in accordance with Section 106 (I) of the National Police Service Act, 2011, the National Security Council declared some parts of Lamu County as disturbed areas and ordered a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

The areas include Lamu West Sub County and the affected include Mukunumbi Division, Majembeni location, Ndamwe Location, Mkunumbi Location while in Witu Division the affected places include Pandanguo Location, Binde Warinde location, Witu location and Hamasi Location.

In Mpeketoni Division the affected places include Bomani Location, Pongwe Location, Mpeketoni Location, Bahari Location and Mapenya Location. In Lamu Central Sub-County and Hindi Division's Hindi location.

The NSC also directed the immediate deployment of a multi-agency security team to mop-up illegal firearms and activities in the affected areas.

"Residents in the disturbed areas are requested to cooperate with the security agencies and to share information on suspicious persons and activities," said Matiangi.

Officials said the incidents are domestic terrorism which is being fanned by some.

At least 15 suspects were arrested over the attacks.

It came as more security officers were deployed in the area to trace more suspects over the latest attacks.

A team of detectives has been sent there to back up with locals to help in the operation.

It came two days after a boda boda rider was on New Year day killed after his motorcycle ran over a bomb that was set on the road in Kiunga, Lamu County.



Tabia Maulid Mwita, Zanzibar's Information, Youth, Arts, Culture and Sports minister, pictured yesterday having a feel of bread at a bakery owned by the Zanzibar Anti-Smuggling Force (KMKM). She had just launched the facility. Photo: Rahma Suleiman.

'Covid-19 has affected the global gemstone market'

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

MINERALS Minister Dotto Biteko has said the outbreak of COVID-19 has affected the global gemstone market.

Biteko made the statement in Morogoro recently when he visited a female miner who deals with Rhodorite mining at Ng'alo village in Lubeho ward, Gairo District.

The minister is in an official tour of miners across the country, a move which is aimed at meeting them and discuss their various challenges.

"The global gemstone market has fallen, but the government

has continued to look for markets to solve the on-going crisis which has resulted in misunderstandings between miners and their workers," said Biteko.

According to him, most buyers of the Rhodorite are in China and Thailand. He said efforts are on-going to promote that specific type mineral to attract more foreign buyers.

The minister noted that Tanzania's mining sector is male dominated whereas in every 100 miners, there are only seven women. He said that most women are engaged on provision of other services at mining sites such as food

vending.

"We want to encourage more women to engage in mining activities as we strive to ensure them with reliable market within and outside the country," said Minister Biteko.

Biteko said that President Samia Suluhu Hassan has directed the ministry to work on the various challenges facing small scale miners across the country. He said the government is committed to finding solution to miner's challenges to ensure they benefit with the mining activities.

Owner of the mine, Fatuma Hassan informed the minister

that they have been facing challenges in accessing markets for their minerals. She said that poor production of the minerals has resulted in them failing to pay their workers.

"We were previously selling the minerals in China and Thailand; we have been struggling to access the markets since May 2021. We have a good stock of the minerals and we are not sure of selling them in near future," said Fatuma.

Morogoro Regional Minerals Officer, Emmanuel Shija said they have been educating miners on safe mining as well as helping them to secure markets in and outside the region.



Saniniu Laizer (R) of Mirerani Township in Simanjiro District, who has made a fortune from tanzanite mining, hosts Simanjiro's acting district commissioner, Mbaraka Batenga, for talks in his office on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey.

Airtel Africa: We're at all-time high in shares

ABUJA

SHARES of Airtel Africa hit an all-time high on Wednesday, lifting Nigeria's main stock index, after the mobile phone company said it will use proceeds of a tower sale to reduce debt.

Airtel, the third-biggest listed firm in

Nigeria, with a dual listing in London (AAF.L), gained the maximum 10 per cent allowed to 1,050.50 naira.

The main index was up 1.05 per cent at a seven-week high.

Airtel Africa, with a presence in 14 African countries, announced the first closing of the transaction to sell its tower

assets in Tanzania to a joint venture company for \$176.1 million.

Around \$60 million from the proceeds will be used to invest in network and sales infrastructure in Tanzania with the balance used to reduce debt at group level.

Minister Mhagama advises employees on vaccination

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

MINISTER of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliamentary Affairs, Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disability), Jenster Mhagama (pictured) has urged the ministry's employees to go for COVID-19 vaccination to prevent themselves from the disease.

She made the statement on Thursday during her meeting with the ministry staffs whereas among other things, she insisted the need for them to receive the COVID-19 jabs following the outbreak of the fourth wave-Omicron.

Mhagama said that as the world struggles to fight the fourth wave, it is important to ensure that many Tanzanians are vaccinated against COVID-19. She called upon them to also play a role in educating the community on the importance of receiving the jabs.

"You are all aware that Tanzania as well as other countries around the globe is fighting against the pandemic. You must get the jabs to be protected and convince other to go for the vaccines," she said, adding that although the exercise is voluntary, it was crucial to take preventive measures.

She urged Tanzanians to continue taking all precaution measures as advised by health experts, noting the vaccines are safe and have been tested and proved by international and local experts.

Speaking shortly after receiving the vaccines at the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam on December 24th 2021, Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Dr Dorothy Gwajima said that Tanzania has so far received a total of 6,408,950 Covid-19 vaccines which involves Sinopharm, Janssen and Pfizer since it joined the COVAX global vaccine sharing facility, mid last year.

On December 24, 2021 the government received another consignment of 376,320 doses of Moderna vaccines which will protect



188,160 people in the country.

Dr Gwajima said the consignment of the 6.4 million vaccines will protect 3,204,475 people in the country.

The vaccines will require a person to take two jabs to reach full immunity against the virus.

Dr Gwajima expressed appreciation to the COVAX facility led by World Health Organization (WHO), GAVI Alliance and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for facilitating the donation.

The minister encouraged citizens to get the vaccines, saying they are safe and they have been approved by the World Health Organization.

She said the vaccines will help increase the country's drive to vaccinate 60 percent of the population against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prior to this, Tanzania had received 500,000 Pfizer vaccine doses in November 2021 from the US government and in early October it received 1,065,600 doses of Sinopharm vaccines donated by the Chinese government via the COVAX facility.

In July 2021, Tanzania received over a million doses of the single-shot Janssen and Johnson vaccine from the U.S. government.

Farmers in Zimbabwe concerned over delays in payments for cotton

By Elita Chikwati

THE Cotton Council of Zimbabwe (CCOZ) has called for the early payment of farmers to ensure they remain viable and not abandon production of other high-value crops.

Cotton farmers are yet to get an outstanding payment of \$2 billion from last season.

In a statement, the CCOZ said Government was doing a good job in supporting cotton farmers with free inputs and subsidised producer prices but expressed concern over the delays in payments.

"In an inflationary environment such as currently prevailing in our economy, the outstanding payments lose buying power to the extent that by the time the farmer gets the money, it would not reflect the true value that it would have had at the time the farmers' cotton was collected by the buying contractor.

"This inevitably results in the

industry losing experienced farmers," said CCOZ.

Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement Deputy Minister Vangelis Haritatos said Government was aware of the payment delays and had approached the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the release of the money.

"We have written to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development urging them to release all outstanding dues in the shortest period of time. We understand our cotton farmers' plea and also share the same sentiment for an urgent resolution by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development who are seized with the issue of the outstanding amounts," he said.

Meanwhile, farmers have planted 68 446 hectares of cotton with 19 045 hectares having been planted under the Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme.



Justin Abraham, Tanesco (Tanzania Electric Supply Company) neighbourhood chairman in Endiamtu Ward in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region, addresses a meeting in Mimerani Township on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Zambia chairs inaugural meeting of African group of negotiators on climate change

LUSAKA

THE government has pledged its full support to the African group of negotiators on climate change.

Minister of Green Economy and Environment Eng. Collins Nzovu, MP, officiated at the inaugural meeting of the 54-member States African Group of Negotiations (AGN)

yesterday.

"Let me express our Government's gratitude to you all for the confidence you bestowed on Zambia by electing us to serve the continent in this capacity as chair at such a critical time when climate change is escalating and the continent is preparing to host a critical Conference later this year,"

said Nzovu during the virtual meeting.

The Minister said the Government of the Republic of Zambia had assembled a team that will support the chairperson, Ephraim Shitima, to effectively and efficiently serve the continent.

He told the participants that he had instructed

Ministry of Green Economy and Environment Director in charge of Green Economy and Climate Change, Shitima, and support team to constantly keep him and the Government informed of the progress in the negotiations and any obstacles requiring intervention.

"Government will also provide all the necessary

"Government will also provide all the necessary support, including, if you agree among yourselves, hosting you for one of the preparatory meetings before COP-27 in our beautiful tourist city of Livingstone. I can already extend that invitation to you all," said Nzovu.

support, including, if you agree among yourselves, hosting you for one of the preparatory meetings before COP-27 in our beautiful tourist city of Livingstone. I can already extend that invitation to you all," said Nzovu.

The Minister added: "You can count on my personal commitment and that of

His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, whose credentials on the green agenda is now well known."

Zambia was elected Chair of the African Group of Negotiators at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow Scotland in November 2021 for a two-year period.



Residents of Rukuba Island in Musoma Rural constituency collect sand for use in the construction of a science laboratory and mother and child hospital ward worth 250m/- using Covid-19 control funding, as found earlier this week. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Govt invites Indians to invest in energy sector

By Guardian Reporter

ENERGY Minister January Makamba has appealed to Indian investors to visit the country to know the various investment opportunities in the energy sector.

Makamba said there are many investment opportunities in the energy sector including the North Mnazi Bay plot in southern Tanzania.

He made the statement in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday during his meeting with the High Commissioner of India to Tanzania, Binaya Pradhan. The two discussed Tanzania and India cooperation in the energy sector.

He said an investment opportunity at the North Mnazi Bay requires immediate investments in collaboration with the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC).

Minister Makamba asserted that Tanzania has a lot of investment opportunities in solar power as well as construction of oil reserve tanks as the country prepares to become a major supplier of oil to Eastern and Southern African countries.

"We are welcoming investors in the oil and gas sub-sectors in collaboration with the Tanzania International Petroleum Reserves

Limited (TIPER) because it has all required infrastructures," said Makamba noting that investors would only need to improve the available infrastructures.

The proposed gas hub planned for Tanzania's commercial capital will accommodate an oil refinery to process crude oil into various petroleum products and manufacturing plants.

The hub will be getting consignments directly from the Middle East and ensuring that the country is self-sufficient in domestic fuel supplies and having surplus for export.

India High Commissioner to Tanzania, Binaya Pradhan said that his government will continue to cooperate with Tanzania in different sectors as well as insisting on Indian investors to grab the available opportunities.

He said that India is now gearing up at investing in construction of reserve tanks for oil and gas following implementation of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project as well as the various energy projects including a solar power project in Kishapu District, Shinyanga Region.

"The Indian government will continue to cooperate with Tanzania; our plans are to continue investing in different countries including Tanzania," he said.

RC orders eligible children to be enrolled in school

By Guardian Correspondent, Mkuranga

THE Coast Regional Commissioner Aboubakar Kunenge has tasked government executives to make sure all eligible children report at their respective schools in January 17th, 2022.

Kunenge made the order on Thursday during a tour to inspect various development projects

in the education sector in Mkuranga District. The projects are those implemented through the Covid-19 recovery funds from the International Monetary Funds (IMF).

The RC also banned parents from letting their children take care of cattle instead of going to school, insisting stringent would be taken against parents whose children will not report at schools. He said all the

children have the right to educations for their future prospects.

He said that efforts by President Samia Suluhu Hassan to ensure all the schools have enough classrooms must be supported by making sure that all eligible children are enrolled for both primary and secondary schools.

He said that Coast Region received 13.39bn/- from the central government

whereas 10.9bn/- have been directed for construction of classrooms for Form One students and at satellite primary schools.

Kunenge said they have succeeded to construct 535 classrooms, among them, 422 are for secondary schools and 133 at satellite schools. He said construction of classrooms at satellite schools will be completed in coming weeks.

He said that a total of

32,399 children will start learning on January 17, 2022.

"We commend the President for these efforts in improving the learning environment for our children. We would like to get more funds to further improve our classrooms as well as purchase of desks and chairs," he said.

Mkuranga District Commissioner, Khadija Ally said the district has constructed a good number

of classrooms compared to others whereas it has so far completed construction of 151 classrooms.

Finance and Planning Minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba was quoted saying the 1.3trn/- financing facilities was to build 18,000 classrooms in both primary and secondary schools.

According to the Minister, the division of classrooms in the region followed all the criteria needed to ensure

that all councils in the country had classrooms.

"We considered the number of students expected to participate in Form 1 in all criteria, all councils, all regions, and the number of children filled out in Form 4 implemented justice. We will meet the needs of everyone. No council will run out of classrooms," said the Minister.

The Guardian

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SATURDAY 8 JANUARY 2022

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

New TANESCO connection charges a measure of realism

A BRIEF disconcerting outcry was visible on social media in the wake of new electricity connection charges for individuals, based on locations on one hand and level of electricity connection being demanded on the other. On the whole there is a sobering shift for urban dwellers from a casual 27,000/- payment and TANESCO proceeds with the connection, to a 320,000/- demand note if the connection spot is within 30meters of the nearest pole. Evaluating this shift has a few plausible starting points but they are finally controversial, and thus mixed feelings as to the level of welfare of the move, or its commercial justification as it were. Why did 27,000/- appear plausible earlier and now it is found to be uneconomic?

The only probable answer to that question is that earlier the government had the feeling that this was a public service move that is needed to that electricity is connected everywhere, rapidly and that helps in other spheres. As to whether it is economic or not, the issue would be settled by whether the power charge includes the costs involved in connecting clients or for some reason the latter need is made to stand on its own. Leaving the connection fee at 27,000/- implied that user bills cross subsidize the cost aspect, which is admittedly more egalitarian than separating the connection to be paid on its own, penalizing poor users.

There is another aspect to the matter that would have counted

more significantly during the fifth phase when charges similar to the ones being imposed were in existence, namely that TANESCO doesn't, for all practical purposes, maintain accounts of cost and revenue autonomously from government subsidies. Anyone who looks into the structure of the national debt would realise how much the company costs the government to maintain its activities to make them accessible to the people, so finally it is really up to the government to set out its terms of connection to the users. Using company calculations is a fiction, as it proceeds from a tabula rasa where the debt is removed from view and then it starts laying out a budget!

As that view can't be avoided, it would appear that the government decided to add another 'tozo,' to use the familiar term used in relation to mobile cash transfer charges, in which case the charges are less of tariffs than they are camouflaged levies. The next issue is how far they are justified, that is, not removed from an egalitarian view of things, where they stand, which - once the principle of a levy is admitted - is seen to be fairly realistic. If one builds a house in town, he ought to prepare 320,000/- for electricity connection, and if it is a three phase heavy connection in an outlying area, a factory or service institution, being levied 1.6m/- isn't really out of the way. That way it is easy to understand the charges, not from a strict commercial viewpoint but as an accessory to government effort, an auxiliary public service charge.

Promotion of community action is essential to combat leprosy

The National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme was launched by the government in 1977 to fight TB and leprosy in Tanzania. Since then, the programme has joined hands with international and local development partners in an effort to prevent and control TB and leprosy to the point that they are no longer a public health concern.

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease. Infection can lead to damage of the nerves, respiratory tract, skin, and eyes. This nerve damage may result in a lack of ability to feel pain, which can lead to the loss of parts of a person's extremities from repeated injuries or infection due to unnoticed wounds. An infected person may also experience muscle weakness and poor eyesight. Leprosy symptoms may begin within one year, but, for some people, symptoms may take 20 years or more to occur.

Leprosy is spread between people, although extensive contact is necessary. Spread is thought to occur through a cough or contact with fluid from the nose of a person infected by leprosy. Genetic factors and immune function play a role in how easily a person catches the disease. Leprosy does not spread during pregnancy to the unborn child or through sexual contact. Leprosy occurs more commonly among people living in poverty. There are two main types of the disease - paucibacillary and multibacillary, which differ in the number of bacteria present. A person with paucibacillary disease has five or fewer poorly-pigmented, numb skin patches, while a person with multibacillary disease has more than five skin patches. The

diagnosis is confirmed by finding acid-fast bacilli in a biopsy of the skin.

Leprosy is curable with multidrug therapy. Treatment of paucibacillary leprosy is with the medications dapson, rifampicin, and clofazimine for six months. Treatment for multibacillary leprosy uses the same medications for 12 months. A number of other antibiotics may also be used. These treatments are provided free of charge by the World Health Organisation.

Leprosy is not highly contagious.[12] People with leprosy can live with their families and go to school and work. In 2018, there were 209,000 leprosy cases globally, down from 5.2 million in the 1980s. The number of new cases in 2016 was 216,000. Most new cases occur in 14 countries, with India accounting for more than half. In the 20 years from 1994 to 2014, 16 million people worldwide were cured of leprosy. About 200 cases per year are reported in the United States. Separating people affected by leprosy by placing them in leper colonies still occurs in some areas of India, China, areas in the African continent, and Thailand.

Leprosy has affected humanity for thousands of years. "Hansen's disease" is named after the Norwegian physician Gerhard Armauer Hansen. Leprosy has historically been associated with social stigma, which continues to be a barrier to self-reporting and early treatment. Some consider the word leper offensive, preferring the phrase "person affected with leprosy". Leprosy is classified as a neglected tropical disease. World Leprosy Day was started in 1954 to draw awareness to those affected by leprosy.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

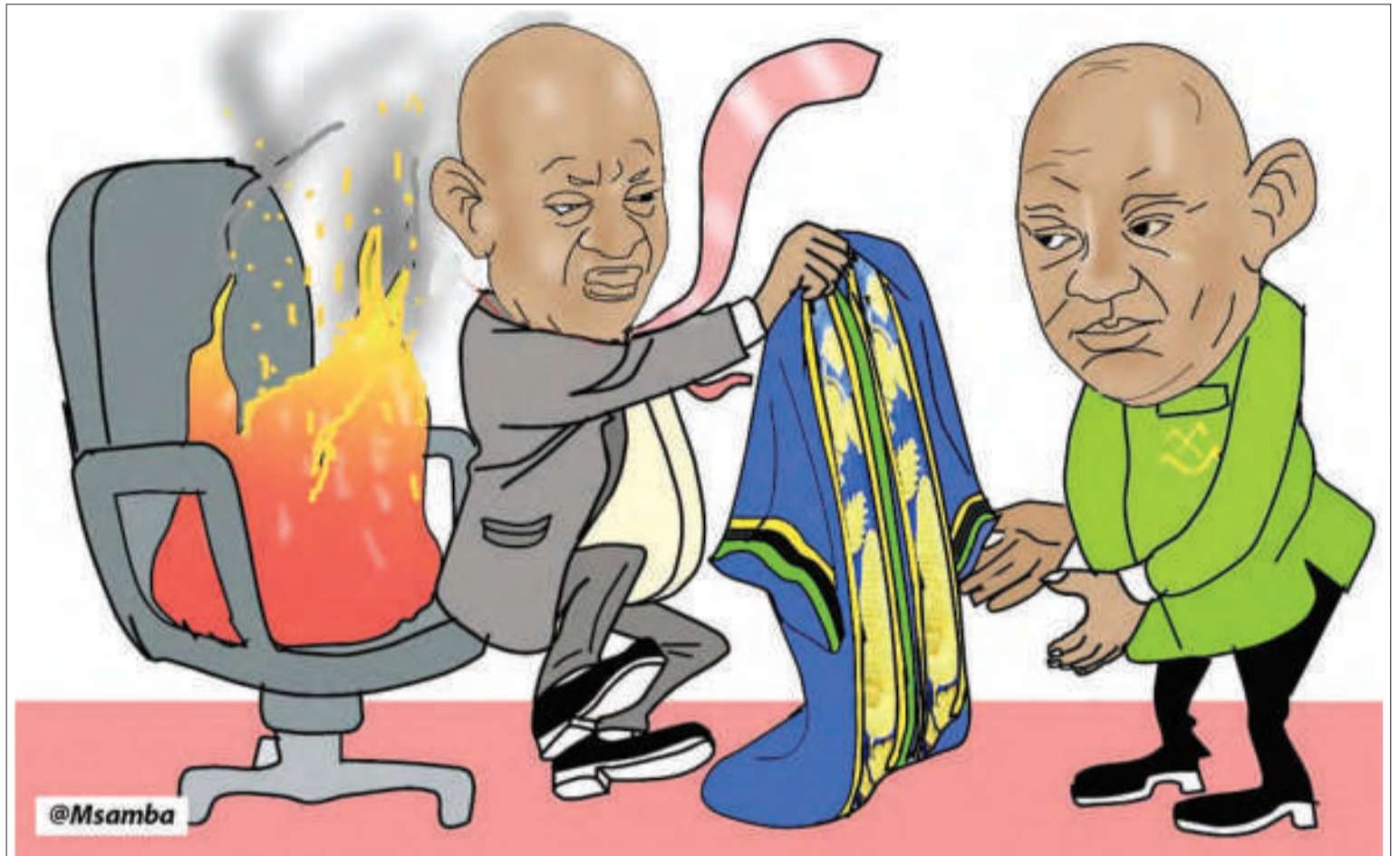
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO
Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO

Newsdesk

News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON
0757154767
General line: 0745700710
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

Advertising

Mobile: 0782253676
E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz
Website: www.ippmedia.com
epaper.ippmedia.com



Buhari should reconsider his stand on direct primaries, embrace transparency

By Tope Fasua

Last week, we looked at some preambles with regards to this direct primary issue. I have considered all the arguments of those against it, and none of the arguments are tenable. All of those on the other side of the argument are supporters of the status quo of befuddlement, summary replacement of party candidates, and most have also benefited greatly as super delegates and whatnot, from the bribes shared by powerful candidates. It would be great if Buhari could blast the space open for the involvement of everybody in Nigerian politics and defuse the tight confederacies already formed especially in the two big parties.

The cost of direct primaries is not the issue at all, as everything depends on intention. If intentions are right, INEC will instruct on how to keep the costs minimal. In fact, it can be said that whatever is spent on the transparency of direct primaries will be saved later because there should be less confusion, litigation and what have you, in the real elections. It is all about starting right. I know that Buhari will not agree. He has written his own testimonial. All the same, please readers, let me conclude my points this week.

As regards whether the idea of instituting direct primaries for all parties is democratic, of course it is. Our democracy is based on laws. We have chosen some and rejected others, from the options that present themselves in a democracy. Some of what we have codified into laws could as well be called undemocratic. Our people just like to rabble rouse when it suits them. Is the banning of small parties after one incomplete round of elections not undemocratic? Did CSOs not join forces with government and even the main opposition which is not an opposition, PDP, to enact that in justice? Why not just allow anyone to form any political party even without going through INEC? After all, the constitution guarantees freedom of association. In Ghana here, they have members of parliament like a parliamentary system of government, but they still vote for a popular president like a presidential system of government. Ditto in Kenya, France, and many other countries around the world. They did not come here for validation. They did not have to read it from some



O'level textbook on Government. And those countries are plodding ahead. Perhaps what we should be asking ourselves is why are we so twisted as a people? When did we become like this; that nothing works straight and any ideas that may afford us some level of progress, through transparency and doing things properly in spite of ourselves, is summarily shot down?

Choosing direct primaries is, therefore, just one of the choices we may take, and is indeed necessary given how we have turned out as a people. It has nothing to do with the fundamentals of democracy; after all it is even more about the right of the PEOPLE to choose their own leaders from the ground up. The idea also promotes the involvement of the people in political parties, not this current situation where most people are disinterested except when to collect chicken change while the few 'stakeholders' who own the parties - and by extension the soul of this country - do anything they like. Part of what they do is to impose absolute ne'er-dowells, touts, thugs, criminals, and to summarily substitute the names of anyone who falls out of their favour. If Nigerians are serious about democracy, this direct primary issue should be pursued to a logical conclusion, alongside the electronic voting proposal. Direct primaries will not be perfect at all. It can be

manipulated, but we will see a few wins here and there, and then it gets better. Electronic voting too, can be summarily hijacked by the tweaking of a few algorithms from the back-end. But for a corruption-ridden system like ours, these innovations are worthwhile.

The question now becomes: how do we make any progress in this country, politically and otherwise? Of course, we needn't be reminded just how intricately woven the politics of a society is, to its economy. In the president's reply, when he cited the cost, he is just chasing pennies and hemorrhaging pounds. We shouldn't be sparing expense in fixing our politics, so that our economy may take flight. My thinking is that direct primaries are the only way by which truly popular candidates may sometimes emerge even if they are disfavoured by those moneybags who have constituted themselves into principalities and idols to be worshipped. Direct primaries are the only way to begin a gradual cleansing - sorry exorcising - of our politics from the many demons that have held it down. Rather than lodge 'delegates' in hotels and commence the process of dollar competition, let whoever wishes to bribe start looking for all party members wherever they may live. They will get tired, and hopefully the politics will regain some sense of objectivity. And if they can indeed give dollars to all party members, perhaps

that could be written down as a transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor - income redistribution.

Overall, this is power to the people. Let the people take centre stage in our politics please. And still talking about rules, when Nigeria adopted Option A4 for the 1993 elections, we saw the results. It was out there in the sun. And it was very democratic. The National Assembly has the right to tweak the constitution, by a majority vote, and to override the president, even in electoral matters. We are refusing to grow. We sometimes talk of 'true federalism' and all that jazz, which equates to copying what America is doing verbatim. But do we know, that in the same USA, when their democracy started and for several decades after, the first runner up in a presidential election became the vice president irrespective of the political party he belongs to? Is that 'democratic' enough for us? Did they come here to ask us for approval? Or are we saying we are truly inferior beings? In the interest of our own future, let us invite the Sun. For according to the holy books, that was perhaps the first thing created by God himself. Let there be light. Direct Primaries and electronic voting please. Thank you!

Happy, blessed 2022 and beyond to all readers and your kin. We wish our nation better fortunes going forward.

Too harmful: The march of salt and plastics on world soils

MADRID

There are more under-reported consequences of human activities un-matching the rhythm of Mother Nature. Such is the case, among many others, of the growing salinisation and 'plastification' of the world's soils.

In fact, currently it is estimated that there are more than 833 million hectares of salt-affected soils around the globe (8.7% of the planet). This implies the loss of soil's capacity to grow food and also increasing impacts on water and the ability to filter pollution.

Not only: salt-affected soils have serious consequences on soil functions, such as in the decrease in agricultural productivity, water quality, soil biodiversity, and soil erosion and have a decreased ability to act as a buffer and filter against pollutants.

Salt-affected soils reduce both the ability of crops to take up water and the availability of micronutrients, and they also concentrate ions that are toxic to plants and may degrade the soil structure.

A threat to global pantry

Soil salinity is a naturally occurring phenomenon in arid environments, such as deserts, where intense evaporation and a chronic lack of water often turn the earth overly saline. Soils like these are less fertile because salt hampers plants' natural ability to take up water from the ground, explains the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

"But unsustainable human activities are exacerbating soil salinity. Excessive tillage, the over-use of fertilisers, inappropriate irrigation methods and use of poor-quality water, deforestation or the over-exploitation of groundwater are the main drivers of human-induced soil salinisation."

The World Soil Day 2021 and its campaign "Halt soil salinisation, boost soil productivity" aimed to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, fighting soil salini-



sation, increasing soil awareness and encouraging societies to improve soil health.

According to FAO, these are, among others, the impacts of salt-affected soils:

- Salt-affected soils have serious impacts on some of the ecosystem services soils usually provide, which are critical for supporting human life and biodiversity leading to an array of consequences including:

- decreased agricultural productivity, water quality, soil biodiversity, and increased soil erosion; decreased ability to act as a buffer and filter against contaminants; degraded soil structure; decreased functions of hydrological systems such as the hydrological and nutrient cycles;

- reduced ability of crops to take up water reduced soil fertility and availability of micronutrients.

Half of Uzbekistan's soils covered by salt

The Central Asian country is doubly land-locked - meaning it is surrounded by countries that are themselves landlocked - and more than half of Uzbekistan's soils are salt-affected, making it extra hard to farm productively, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) re-

ports as an example.

Not only salt... also plastic

A December 2021 new report by FAO suggests that the land human beings use to grow food is contaminated with "far larger quantities of plastic pollution," posing an even greater threat to food security, people's health, and the environment.

The report - "Assessment of agricultural plastics and their sustainability: a call for action" - is the first global report of its kind by FAO and contains some startling numbers.

According to data collated by the UN agency's experts:

- Agricultural value chains each year use 12.5 million tonnes of plastic products.

- A further 37.3 million tonnes are used in food packaging. The crop production and livestock sectors were found to be the largest users, accounting for 10.2 million tonnes per year collectively, followed by fisheries and aquaculture with 2.1 million tonnes, and forestry with 0.2 million tonnes.

- Asia was estimated to be the largest user of plastics in agricultural production, accounting for almost half of global usage. In the absence of viable alternatives, de-

mand for plastic in agriculture is only set to increase.

- According to industry experts, for instance, global demand for greenhouse, mulching and silage films will increase by 50 percent, from 6.1 million tonnes in 2018 to 9.5 million tonnes in 2030.

- Such trends make it essential to balance the costs and benefits of plastic. Of increasing concern are microplastics, which have the potential of adversely affecting human health. While there are gaps in the data, they shouldn't be used as an excuse not to act, FAO warned.

"This report serves as a loud call to coordinated and decisive action to facilitate good management practices and curb the disastrous use of plastics across the agricultural sectors," FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo said in the report's foreword.

The report was presented today at a virtual event in conjunction with World Soil Day marked each year on 5 December.

Ubiquitous

"Plastics have become ubiquitous since their widespread introduction in the 1950s, and it is difficult today to envisage life without them.

In agriculture, plastic products greatly help productivity, according to the report.

"Mulch films, for instance, are used to cover the soil to reduce weed growth, the need for pesticides, fertiliser and irrigation; tunnel and greenhouse films and nets protect and boost plant growth, and extend cropping seasons and increase yields."

This is also the case of "coatings on fertilisers, pesticides and seeds control the rate of release of chemicals or improve germination; tree guards protect young seedlings and saplings against damage by animals and provide a microclimate that enhances growth."

Meanwhile, plastic products help reduce food losses and waste, and maintain its nutritional qualities throughout a myriad of value chains, thereby improving food security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the report explains.

Billions of tonnes of plastic not properly disposed

Of the estimated 6.3 billion tonnes of plastics produced up to 2015, almost 80% has not been disposed of properly, says FAO.

Once in the natural environment, plastics can cause harm in several ways. The effects of large plastic items on marine fauna

have been well documented.

However, as these plastics begin to disintegrate and degrade, their impacts begin to be exerted at the cellular level, affecting not only individual organisms but also, potentially, entire ecosystems.

Microplastics (plastics less than 5 mm in size) are thought to present specific risks to animal health, but recent studies have detected traces of microplastic particles in human faeces and placentas. There is also evidence of mother-to-foetus transmission of much smaller nanoplastics in rats.

While most scientific research on plastics pollution has been directed at aquatic ecosystems, especially oceans, FAO experts found that agricultural soils are thought to receive far greater quantities of microplastics.

Since 93% of global agricultural activities take place on land, there is an obvious need for further investigation in this area, concludes the report.

Need to know more?

Very little of the plastic we discard every day is recycled or incinerated in waste-to-energy facilities. Much of it ends up in landfills, where it may take up to 1,000 years to decompose, leaching potentially toxic substances into the soil and water, according to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which warns that one third of all plastic waste ends up in soils or freshwater.

Furthermore: over 400 million tonnes of plastic are produced globally each year. It is estimated that one third of all plastic waste ends up in soils or freshwaters, according to Researchers from the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB).

More than marine pollution

Most of this plastic disintegrates into particles smaller than five millimetres, referred to as microplastics, and breaks down further into nanoparticles, which are less than 0.1 micrometre in size.

"In fact, terrestrial microplastic pollution is much higher than marine microplastic pollution - an estimate of four to 23 times more, depending on the environment. Sewage, for example, is an important factor in the distribution of microplastics."

Also that "80% to 90% of the particles contained in sewage, such as from garment fibres, persist in the sludge. Sewage sludge is then often applied to fields as fertiliser, meaning that several thousand tonnes of microplastics end up in our soils each year."

What ANC deployment committee minutes reveal about how the party works

Johannesburg, South Africa

The minutes of the ANC's deployment committee meetings reveal the party's determination to ensure that key state positions are filled by approved individuals, and that such individuals meet gender and race criteria.

The 58 pages of minutes, recording meetings held between 2018 and 2020, show the ANC's committee deliberating over individuals to fill positions in entities ranging from the Nuclear Energy Board to the Road Accident Fund, as well as top posts in government departments.

The existence of the deployment committee, which is headed by Deputy President David Mabuza and was previously helmed by Cyril Ramaphosa when he was deputy president, is no secret.

More controversial is the DA's claim that the minutes clearly prove the committee prioritises "party cadres rather than qualified and independent professionals".

There is indeed some evidence from the minutes to suggest that loyalty to the ANC is considered when the committee is appraising candidates. When the committee discussed the composition of the Nuclear Energy Board on 3 December 2018, for instance, it was noted that the recommended chair and board members were all ANC members.

But that is the sole explicit mention of party membership, or ANC loyalty, within the minutes. References to candidates possessing the necessary skills, experience and CVs are far more frequent. At a meeting to discuss Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Dirco) candidates in August 2019, moreover, the minutes specifically warn against flooding the department with "political appointments" rather than career diplomats.

At other points, however, the committee seems most intent on ensuring diversity of gender, race, age and other identity criteria



South African Deputy President David Mabuza. (Photo: Gallo Images / Sharon Seretlo)

among candidates. When seeking to appoint commissioners for the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, for instance, the committee noted that the previous nominees were drawn too heavily from evangelical churches rather than "mainstream churches or the non-Christian religions". For another board, persons from the Eastern Cape were felt to be over-represented.

Some candidates are endorsed or rejected

for more subjective - and sometimes opaque - reasons. The previous Municipal Demarcation Board is criticised in the minutes for being "rigid" and "not as rational as it should be". Former Sanral boss Nazir Alli has "proven to be dogmatic" and should be removed. With regards to PetroSA, there is an intriguing reference to a "cheeky HR specialist" and "disruptive" unions.

In 2019, it appeared that some Cabinet ministers were going rogue in making appointments and needed to be brought back in line.

"The committee is dependent on the cooperation and respect for process that includes the Deployment Committee by the Ministers serving in Cabinet," the minutes sternly noted on 8 March 2019, adding that a workshop would be held after the elections with new ministers and premiers to address "the general misunderstanding of the concept of democratic centralism".

Those words seem to have fallen on deaf ears when it comes to Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan, who in January 2020 was hauled over the coals for apparently making an unspecified appointment without consulting the deployment committee.

"The committee made it known to the Minister that he must follow the correct procedure of informing the committee before any appointments of such are made," the minutes record.

In May of the same year, the then finance minister, Tito Mboweni, appears to have fallen foul of the committee in the same way when it came to staffing the Public Investment Corporation and the South African Special Risk Insurance Association (Sasria).

"Process had not been followed, however, the candidates recommended were diverse, skilled and experienced," the minutes note. "The committee on those grounds allowed the two items to process."

In June 2020, it was Ramaphosa himself in the committee's bad books, with Ramaphosa apologising for having appointed the Presidential State-Owned Enterprises Council without the involvement

of the deployment committee - but explaining "that it was an omission due to the pressure".

At the same meeting, Dirco Minister Naledi Pandor also had to commit to working "more closely" with the deployment committee.

Although it's not quite clear to what degree the DA is justified in accusing the ANC of selecting candidates based on party loyalty rather than skill, the opposition party is on safer ground when it comes to criticising two revelations in particular, emanating from the minutes.

The first is the fact that the deployment committee can be witnessed discussing candidates for bodies like the South African Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality, which are Chapter 9 institutions. This means that they are supposed to be independent bodies "subject only to the Constitution and the law", and "no person or organ of state may interfere with the functioning of these institutions".

The second is that the ANC deployment committee on at least one occasion (22 March 2019) is recorded as deliberating over judicial appointments. In this meeting, former justice minister Michael Masutha is recorded as briefing the committee on various judicial vacancies - to be considered by the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) a few days later - and the committee then makes recommendations on its preferred candidates.

One can assume that the ANC members of the JSC proceed to advocate for these candidates accordingly when the judge selection

body carries out its own deliberations.

As Judges Matter campaigners Alison Tilley and Mbekezeli Benjamin have pointed out in a Daily Maverick op-ed, this is not totally unexpected. It is likely that the JSC representatives from other political parties are similarly given instructions before the body meets.

But, write Tilley and Benjamin, "Only the ANC has been named as using a high-level political structure to do so, and then instructing members of the JSC accordingly." They suggest that in general the JSC should be reformed to reduce the influence of political parties in appointing judges.

Tilley and Benjamin also note, however, that the ANC deployment committee's recommendations for judges at this time actually almost all failed. They also stress that regardless of the deployment committee's activities, the sitting president has sole discretion on who to appoint as a judge - and in at least one case Ramaphosa defied the committee's recommendation.

"The minutes from the ANC's deployment committee meeting are shocking in the brazen way that they discuss appointment to strategic positions in the government and other important institutions like the judiciary, Chapter 9 institutions and state-owned companies," the two legal campaigners write.

But they caution that the DA has slightly over-egged the pudding in its expressions of outrage, given that the deployment committee did not actually succeed in placing all its preferred judges in this instance.

Underfunded and deadly tuberculosis needs its own Bill Gates

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe

Global efforts to end tuberculosis (TB) are futile without dedicated investment in research into the debilitating disease that is killing 4000 people a day, Stop TB Partnership warns.

"TB is a disease that is not a darling of donors and investors," Lucica Ditiu, the Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership, told IPS in an interview from Geneva.

"We do not have a Bill Gates that can support TB research, yet TB remains a disease of concern with deaths increasing for the first time in over a decade," she added.

TB, a bacterial disease mainly affecting the lungs, has been around for over millennia and remains one of the top killer diseases globally. But it is preventable and curable with the right investment in diagnosis and treatment.

Ditiu attributed the rise in TB incidents to several factors; many people diagnosed and on treatment for TB have defaulted owing to the disruption of health services in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and global lockdown. Furthermore, many people remain undiagnosed because they have not been reached.

"Southern Africa has done a good job in respect of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa as well as Rwanda in trying to disrupt as little as possible the treatment and diagnosis of people with TB," Ditiu said. She commended awareness programmes in the media and community door-to-door campaigns to promote diagnosis and treatment.

Countries need to invest more in finding people with TB and putting them on treatment. Until you find people, you cannot put them on treatment, and this is where we are very much lagging, she said.

Ditiu fears the worst should the world fail to change the current TB transmission trend. An estimated 5.8 million people received treatment for TB in 2020; a drop of 21 percent from 2019, and more than 4 million people worldwide remain un-

treated. According to Stop TB Partnership, half of those untreated are likely to die from the disease.

Admitting that funding for TB has always been insufficient, Ditiu said TB was the poor cousin compared to the deep pockets for HIV and AIDS.

"In general, we have available only 30 percent of the funding needed globally. We have places that have done well in preventing TB in people living with HIV. Prevention of TB in people living with HIV is going well, especially in African countries because HIV has resources."

According to the Stop TB Partnership, a network of international organisations established in 1998 to help end TB as a public health problem, funding for TB research and development (R&D) has remained flat since 2018.

Global funding for tuberculosis (TB) research totalled 915 million US dollars in 2020 – less than half the goal of 2 billion US dollars set forth by participating country governments at the 2018 United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB.

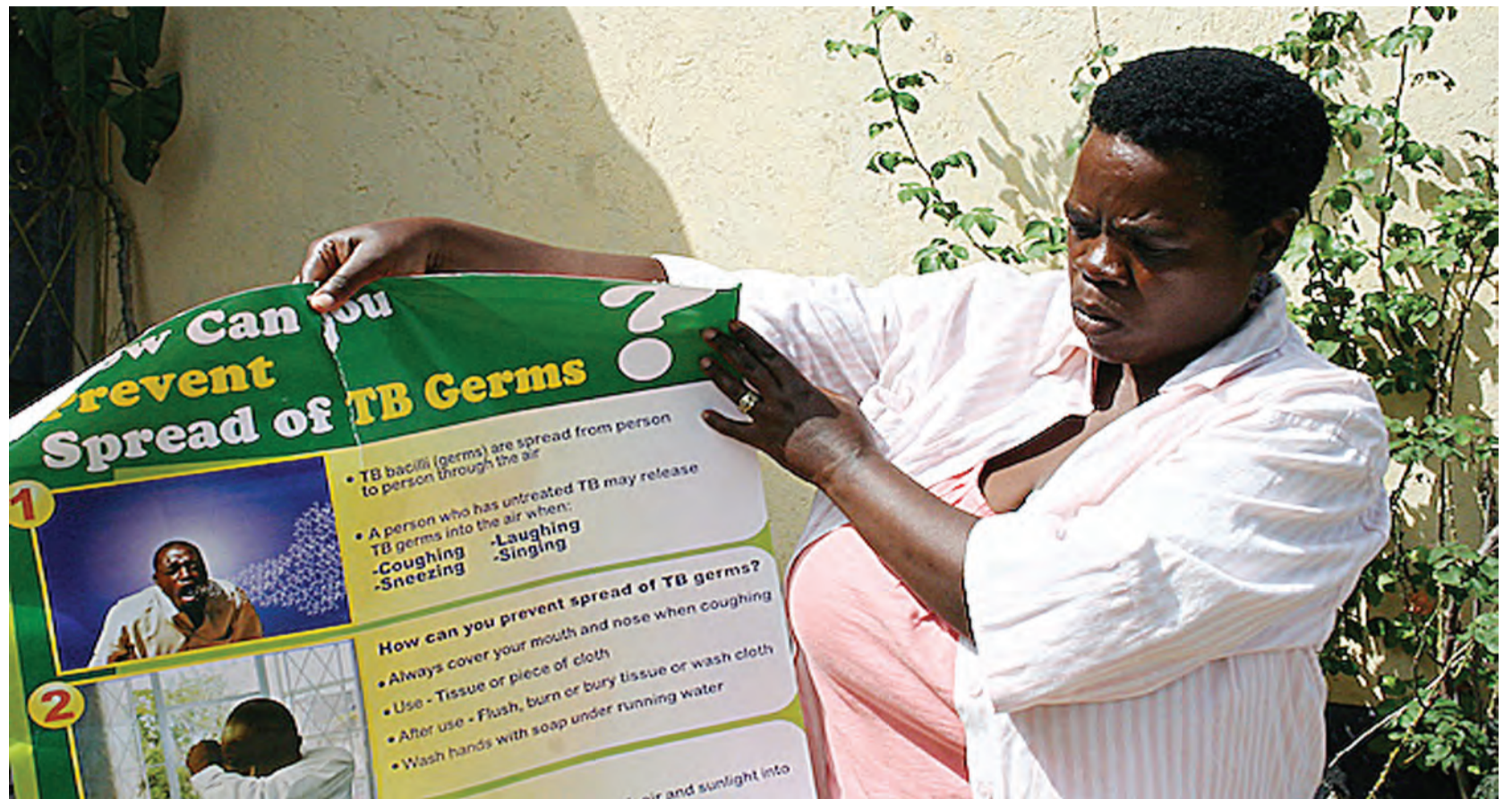
In 2021, TB had a funding gap of 13 billion US dollars globally, with only 5.3 billion US dollars available for its programmes. It experienced a drop in funding amounting to 500 000 US dollars in 2020 as many countries took money away from TB to respond to COVID-19.

A new report, Tuberculosis Research Funding Trends, 2005-2020 by Treatment Action Group (TAG) and the Stop TB Partnership, found that TB received less than 1 percent of the amount invested in COVID-19 Research and Development over the first 11 months of the pandemic.

"The mobilisation of over 100 billion US dollars for COVID-19 research and development in the first 11 months of the pandemic shows us just how powerful a coordinated effort against a disease can be," noted Ditiu.

While the pandemic has shown that effective vaccines can save lives, the world is still banking on a 100-year-old vaccine, Bacillus Calmette-Guérin or BCG. However, a more effective vaccine could have higher efficacy rates, especially for adults. Why

Community support workers are key in raising awareness about TB and promoting diagnosis and treatment. Credit: Busani Bafana/IPS



Dr Lucica Ditiu, Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership. Credit: Stop TB Partnership

has it taken so long to develop a new, more effective TB vaccine when the health burden of TB is increasing?

"This is the drama," Ditiu commented. "We have a vaccine for a hundred years that we know for the last 40 years does not work (effectively) except for newly-born babies, and yet we have not done much about it."

While ongoing research on new vaccines had been slow because of poor funding, Ditiu said several potential vaccines

were in the pipeline, and a vaccine could be expected by 2027.

"It takes a long time to get a vaccine. But because of COVID (we realised), it is possible to have a vaccine much quicker, and we hope to use the learnings from COVID-19 to get a TB vaccine," Ditiu told IPS.

Tuberculosis vaccine research has been slowed by chronic underfunding with only one moderately effective century-old TB vaccine,

compared to over 20 COVID-19 vaccines.

"What's enabled the development of dozens of COVID-19 vaccines in less than a year has essentially been money," noted Austin Aurinze Obiefuna, Executive Director of the Afro Global Health Alliance and incoming Vice-Chair of the Stop TB Partnership Board.

"I think that the same enormous amount of funding should be applied with equal vigour to the development of

TB vaccines. But that simply doesn't seem to be happening."

According to the Stop TB Partnership, making much-needed progress against TB demands investment that matches the threat of the disease around the world. This includes a commitment to rectify the inadequate funding of the past. Over the next two years, 10 billion US dollars are needed to close the tuberculosis R&D funding gap.

"Wealthy countries need to step up and put more money

into correcting global health inequalities, which COVID-19 vaccine allocation inequities laid bare," urged Mark Harrington, Executive Director of TAG, an independent activist, and community-based research and policy think tank.

"COVID-19 made more people around the world aware of the importance of R&D spending than ever before. Now is the time to finally start making investments ambitious enough to end TB for good."

CAPITAL RADIO

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS HALI HALISI 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-21:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPORTS 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS MALUMBANO YA HOJA 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	05:00-09:00HRS MORNING JAM 09:00-13:00HRS LETE RAHA 13:00-14:00HRS DW-RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CLUB 101 16:00-18:00HRS DALA DALA 18:00-18:10HRS HABARI 18:10-20:00HRS BOZOUK TIME 20:00-21:00HRS SPORTS 21:00-23:00HRS KIPIMA JOTO 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:30-10:00HRS DK 90 DUNIANI 10:00-11:00HRS KADOGOO 11:00-13:00HRS BONGO HITS 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS ZAIDI YA UMJUAYVO 16:00-18:00HRS ALIYEVUMA 18:00-21:00HRS BUZUKI TIME 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)	07:00-09:00HRS HABARI NA MATUKIYA YA WIKI 09:00-11:00HRS THE SUNDAY 11:00-13:00HRS TOP 20 13:00-14:00HRS DW RADIO 14:00-16:00HRS CAPITAL MICHEZONI 16:00-18:00HRS UKURASA WA MBELE 18:00-21:00HRS JIACHIE 21:00-22:00HRS SPOTI 22:00-01:00HRS LADHA LAINI 01:00-05:00HRS MUZIKI MCHAGANGANYIKO)

Tembelea mitandao ya kijamii ya CAPITAL RADIO



CAPITAL RADIO

Giant rats help scientists in trying to snuff out tuberculosis

By Guardian Reporter and Agencies

SCIENTISTS in the country are putting rats' highly developed sense of smell to good use by helping detect tuberculosis at public hospitals quickly and accurately.

The African giant pouched rats, known for saving countless human lives by detecting landmines in former conflict zones, have now been trained by the Belgian non-governmental organization APOPO to detect the highly contagious -- and often deadly -- disease caused by a bacterial infection of the lungs.

Further, the rats have been found to outperform conventional testing methods in accuracy, speed, and cost, helping diagnose thousands in Tanzania, one of the world's 30 tuberculosis high-burden countries, as it deals with climbing case numbers.

According to a 2021 global tuberculosis report, tuberculosis-linked deaths are on the rise for the first time in a decade due to reduced access to diagnosis and treatment amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like COVID-19, tuberculosis can cause coughing, by which it can spread to new hosts as an airborne disease. It is the second leading infectious killer in the world after the coronavirus.

About a quarter of the world's population has a tuberculosis infection, according to World Health Organization (WHO). Though most do not show symptoms and cannot infect others, having the tuberculosis bacteria in a person's body carries a 5%-10% risk of falling ill.

In Tanzania, symptomatic infections number 253 for every 100,000 people, with the port city



of Dar es Salaam accounting for 20% of all cases in the country, official figures show.

Joseph Soka, APOPO's program manager, said the non-profit teamed up with multiple partners to reach out to specific target groups in the community to break the chain of transmission while also seeking to build awareness and encourage people who need medical care to seek it.

Citing a recent study, Soka said trained rats could detect tuberculosis with an accuracy of up to 85%, compared to smear microscopy using sputum, or mucus from a patient's lower airways, which has a

sensitivity ranges of 20% to 60%.

"One rat can screen 100 samples in just 20 minutes," said Soka, adding: "We use the rats to re-evaluate human sputum samples delivered from our partner clinics."

Across Tanzania, people in communities where tuberculosis is prevalent often fail to show up for screening due to lack of awareness or money, creating a huge burden for health authorities trying to fight the disease, according to public health experts.

Other major challenges are lacking accuracy, speed, and cost-efficiency that health systems need to scale up

screening. In all these respects, the rats are often a major upgrade to microscopy, which is a slow, costly process that has not changed for years and suffers from limited accuracy.

While Tanzania is making progress in reversing swelling infections and improving treatment, public health experts say that, among other things, more attention needs to be given to early diagnosis.

However, microscopy is severely limited providing mass testing that is needed for the disease to be caught early on. The WHO insists that one lab technician should test no more than 20 patients a day and says the

chances of misdiagnosis are high if this exceeded.

Further, while a laboratory test can take four days to detect tuberculosis, a trained rat can screen 100 samples in 20 minutes at a cost of as little as \$0.20 when APOPO operations are running near capacity, Soka said.

The rats undergo rigorous training that begins when they are four weeks old. As soon as the rodents open their eyes, they are introduced to various stimuli and learn how to socialize and interact with people.

Learning to recognize the presence of tuberculosis in test samples,

they are rewarded when they correctly react to infected specimens. The testing process starts when a rat is presented with a row of 10 sputum samples, and when it detects tuberculosis, the rat hovers over the sample for three seconds, Soka said.

One of the only drawbacks, APOPO scientists say, is that though the rodents are good at detecting the disease, they are unable to distinguish between normal and drug-resistant strains.

Lily Shallom, APOPO's communications manager, said that since the project started in Tanzania in 2011, the rats have screened 579,770 sputum samples from 337,737 suspected TB patients.

"A sample marked positive by a rat undergoes confirmation testing with internationally approved tests before the result is returned to the clinic," she said.

According to her, the initiative has helped more than 16,053 patients to begin treatment. "These patients could've passed the disease on to other people over the course of a year, which means that we effectively helped prevent over 116,715 new infections in Tanzania, she added.

Sharifa Shomale, who lives in an impoverished Manzese suburb in Dar es Salaam, got very concerned after recognizing the symptoms of tuberculosis, which she had once before in 2008.

"I had a bad cough and lost a lot of weight instead of gaining it. I became very weak and wasn't able to look after my family," she said.

APOPO's current programs have screened more than 340,000 tuberculosis samples, halting over 36,000 further infections, and increased detection rates by over 40% in several partner clinics, officials said.

By Special Correspondent

Warmer, oxygen-poor waters threaten world's 'most heavily exploited' fish

IN 2008, a team of researchers boarded an expedition vessel and set sail for the anchovy-rich waters searching for a place to extract a sediment sample that would unearth secrets about the ocean from 130,000 years ago, a time when the planet was experiencing its last interglacial period.

About 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Lima, the researchers found an ideal spot; they bore into the seabed and drew out a 20-meter (66-foot) core sample.

Over the next 13 years, researcher Renato Salvatelli and a team of colleagues worked to date the core and measure fish debris. They were trying to figure out what fish were living along the Humboldt Current system off the coast of Peru during that interglacial period, when the ocean contained little oxygen and was about 2° Celsius (3.6° Fahrenheit) warmer than the average temperature experienced in the current Holocene epoch -- conditions that almost match what scientists project for 2100 as climate change rapidly transforms our modern world.

Today, the Humboldt Current contributes to more than 15% of the global annual fish catch, mainly due to its abundance of Peruvian anchoveta (*Engraulis ringens*), a species in the anchovy family. It's also what global conservation authority the IUCN calls "the most heavily exploited single-species fishery in world history."

Every centimeter of the sediment held an aston-



ishing amount of information -- about 90 years' worth, said Salvatelli, a fisheries engineer at Kiel University in Germany. What they found embedded in the ancient sediment wasn't anchoveta, but the vertebrae of "considerably smaller" fish, such as mesopelagic and goby-like fish, that were able to cope with the low oxygen levels in the water. They published their findings in *Science* on Jan. 6.

"There are many lines of evidence saying that a warm ocean with less oxygen will drive [the] shrinking of the fishes of the world," Salvatelli told

Mongabay in a video call. "But this is the first one [with] empirical evidence showing smaller fishes in the last interglacial, a period warmer than today. That's why this paper is important."

Salvatelli and his colleagues argue that the "environmental conditions and fish communities in the Humboldt Current are progressing toward those we reconstructed during the last interglacial," posing a substantial threat to the global fish supply. Already, an increasing number of mesopelagic species -- from the deeper, darker part of the ocean,

known as the twilight zone, where less than 1% of sunlight penetrates -- have been found in the region, such as *Vinciguerra lucetia*. At the same time, anchoveta biomass landings have decreased, according to the paper.

While conditions in the near future may be similar to the last interglacial period in terms of ocean temperature and oxygen levels, today there is the added pressure of industrial fishing, says co-author Arnaud Bertrand, a scientist at the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD by its French

acronym). This makes it difficult to determine the threat of climate change alone to the Humboldt Current system.

"Additional pressures from fishing could also be affecting fish size and communities, so it has been hard to tell if it is the warming climate that is affecting fish size or fishing pressure," Bertrand told Mongabay in a joint interview with Salvatelli. "But during the interglacial period, this fishing pressure wasn't present."

In other words, this new study provides compelling evidence that the combination of warming

waters and deoxygenation does indeed lead to smaller fish. But, of course, today's fishing pressure puts additional pressure on the Humboldt Current ecosystem.

The Peruvian anchoveta fishery reported its highest annual catch, more than 13 million metric tons, in 1971, according to the NGO Oceana. Since then, catches have decreased, averaging 4 million to 8 million metric tons per year. This fishery is still one of the largest and most productive in the world, with a large majority being exported to China to be made into

fishmeal, according to the FAO. "Nobody knows when we are going to reach a tipping point, but ... the peak of anchovy production in Peru has already passed," Salvatelli said. "Maybe there will be years with huge anchovies in the ocean, but the trend is to lower anchovy biomass in the ocean in front of Peru, because of warming [and] because of the oxygenation. But we don't know when that will happen."

Boris Worm, a professor of marine conservation biology at Dalhousie University in Canada, who was not involved in this

research, says the report is a "timely study that utilizes the past to understand our likely future in a warmer world."

"Its findings support the prediction that warmer waters will hold smaller fish that may be better adapted to future conditions, but less likely to feed the world," he told Mongabay in an email.

According to Worm, we need to anticipate climate related shifts in the ocean, not only in the Humboldt Current System, but just about everywhere, and manage fisheries appropriately. "We cannot expect fish harvest to remain the same under climate change, and need to use our dwindling supply more cautiously, allowing for wider margins of error," he said. "We also need to stop wasting fish, and use it more fully for human nutrition, rather than grinding it up for fishmeal (that is where >90% of Humboldt current anchovies end up)."

But is our future already written in the sediment, so to speak? The researchers call their results "concerning," and urge fishery managers, global markets and other stakeholders to take measures to "cope with this threat" to the fish biomass in the Humboldt Current.

"There's a phrase I love to say, that history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes -- it's Mark Twain who said that," Salvatelli said. "So we may find some clues in the sediment and while we cannot say that this exact scenario will happen in the future ... it's very likely that we will not have a huge population or biomass of anchovies or other *Engraulidae* fishes in the future."

Activism will be key to overcoming the Covid-19 crisis

ROME

As the Omicron surge overwhelms the world, it is clear to people everywhere that the actions which leaders so far have taken in response to the Covid-19 crisis have not been sufficient to overcome it.

We are not beating Covid. It looks rather like Covid is beating us. What is to be done?

Crucially, they are two key dimensions to what is needed now which, though related, are distinct. The first dimension is what policies are required to get us out of the crisis. The second dimension is how to get those policies put into place.

In other words, the first key question is "what do leaders need to do?", and the second key question is "how do we make them do it?"

On the first question, the world is fortunate that we are not short of excellent public health expertise. Whilst there are no quick fixes, the contours of the policies required are not a mystery, and have been set out, to leaders and to media, repeatedly, by the World Health Organisation, by leading academics, and by health practitioners.

They come down essentially to this: in a pandemic emergency, leaders need to deploy the whole range of tools that have been shown to help. The key here is the



Protest sign, London. Credit: People's Vaccine Alliance

whole range. Importantly, in terms of how these approaches can be realized, this requires that they are realized for the whole world. Until they do, none of us will get out of the crisis. When Desmond Tutu said that "I am because you are, I am because we are", that was not only true ethically, but, it turns out, true epidemiologically too.

The approaches required include vaccines,

treatments, and also, as the WHO's Peter Singer has noted, "public health measures that encourage spending time outdoors, physical distancing, wearing masks, rapid testing, limiting gatherings and staying home when sick".

None of these alone is enough. Any approach that only does one of these, however well, would fail - all of them are needed, together.

It requires the applica-

tion of the whole range of policy tools. For example, rich countries, and Foundations based in rich countries, have emphasized the importance of sharing doses as a solution (even whilst they have comprehensively failed to deliver on their promises to do so).

In contrast, developing countries, the World Health Organisation and civil society have all highlighted that sharing

doses alone cannot ensure enough for everyone, and that it is essential also to share the technology so that multiple producers across the world can simultaneously manufacture enough to vaccinate the world.

This requires rapid agreement and implementation of the TRIPS Waiver proposed by South Africa and India at the WTO, and it also requires that rich country

governments use their huge leverage (as procurers, investors and regulators) over the companies they host to make them share knowledge, know-how and material. Furthermore, this requirement to share Covid technologies needs to apply to vaccines, medicines and diagnostics.

As public health professors Madhukar Pai of McGill and Manu Prakash of Stanford have noted, "Science has delivered many tools that work against Covid-19. But equitable distribution of these tools is where we are failing.

If we can find a way to share effective tools equitably and increase their production across the world, then we have a real shot at ending this pandemic.

If we heard these tools, block TRIPS waiver, and think we can boost our way out of this pandemic in the global North, we will begin 2023 by playing whack-a-mole with the rho, sigma, tau or Omega variants."

The challenge then, is not that we don't know what leaders need to do. The challenge is that they are not doing it. We like to believe that our leaders are led by the evidence. But evidence alone is not enough.

The brilliant and essential reports of scientists will not be enough to shift the much harsher world of political interests. Getting leaders to do what is needed to overcome the Covid-19 crisis - in particular getting leaders to force the big pharmaceutical companies to share technologies so that the billions needed - will depend on pressure from ordinary people.

This is not a new lesson. We saw it in the late 1990s and early 2000s with antiretrovirals for HIV. Then, as now, a monopoly hold on production was preventing people in developing countries from accessing life-saving help.

Then, as now, the big pharmaceutical companies worked aggressively to block other producers from manufacturing

what would save millions of lives. Then, as now, rich country governments sided with the big pharmaceutical companies. Twelve million people died. Finally, massive global public pressure, together with assertive action by developing countries, ensured that production was opened up and lives could be saved.

It was not a coincidence that when the Covid-19 crisis erupted the first groups to call for the sharing of medical technologies, and to start to organise for it, were groups of people living with HIV. They are the heart of the movement for a People's Vaccine because, from painful experience, they know what it takes. Health, like justice, is never given; it is only ever won.

Some people are inspired by activism. Others, understandably, just want to get on with their lives. Activism feels like another burden. They're ready to do their part by wearing a mask when available and getting vaccinated when offered. But they want to leave the leadership to our leaders.

The thing is, that's not enough. Our leaders are not leading. They are not doing all they can to end the crisis. They are not forcing the big pharmaceutical companies to share technologies so that the billions needed - will depend on pressure from ordinary people.

The past two years can best be summed up like this: the science is working, but the politics is failing.

It is only through bold action by political leaders that the Covid-19 crisis will be ended. It is only through people's organising that we'll make leaders take that bold action. As the great novelist Alice Walker once put it so powerfully, "activism is the rent we pay for living on the planet".

Ben Phillips is the author of 'How to Fight Inequality' and an advisor to the United Nations, governments and civil society organisations (CSOs).

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 200 00--

In this puzzle you have no clues, only a list of words that all fit into the grid. The Guardian have given you a head start

3 LETTERS: ART, HUT, RIB
 4 LETTERS: COST, TING, LEAD, TASS, STAR, ROME, UNIT, (7 WORDS)
 5 LETTERS: ASIDE, DOORS, TSARS, SKULL GRATE (5 WORDS)
 6 LETTERS: ENDURE, ARREST, BEAGLE, SERENE ASSIGN (5 WORDS)
 7 LETTERS: MEXICAN
 8 LETTERS: HARANGUE
 10 LETTERS: CALAMITIES

WORD-FIT

T	Y	R	R	H	E	N	I	A	N
A	E								
M	E	A	N	A	W	A	S	H	
E	M	P	O	E	M	S	W		
C	M	S	O	F	E	W			
L	A	R	E	R					
M	I	N	T	L	E	A	S	T	
N	A	G	R						
A	D	A	P	T	O	R	S	I	
D	I	N	E						
D	A	S	S	E	T	S			

CROSSWORD

N	E	W	S	P	A	P	E	R	S
M	A	I	D	A	S	S	E	S	
E	T	O	A	S	T				
T	M	H	G	O	D				
O	E	D	E	M	A	K			
A	A	M							
O	B	E	Y	E	S	T	E	R	
A	O	H	E						
A	L	L	U	S	I	O	N	A	
B	L	A	T						
A	G	H	O	S	T	S			

CLUES: Across

- able to operate independently
- a list of meals
- a tripod frame used to support an artist's canvas
- Chief city of Jordan
- the whole quantity
- an inlet
- group of musicians playing together
- an enzyme which breaks down RNA into smaller molecules
- afflicted
- the chief male character in a book
- the chemical element of atomic number 68

Down:

- an unspecified amount
- former monetary unit of India
- a thing that is borrowed
- an instrument for sewing
- community of Muslims
- festival of the Christian church celebrating the resurrection of Christ
- unusual
- ended, stopped
- person who donates something
- beard in Kiswahili
- exclamation expressing triumph
- a kind of rock in which metal is found

RADIO One

RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME	TIME PROGRAMME
05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM MATANGAZO 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.10 AM MATANGAZO 07.15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07.25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07.40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08.00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08.10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 08.30 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09.10 AM MATANGAZO 09.20 AM BRAND TALK 10.00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10.10 AM YALUYOMO YAMO 13.00 HRS DJ SHOW 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS DJ SHOW 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18.30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.10 HRS RADIO ONE DOCTOR 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.05 HRS DAKIKA 45 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01.00 - 05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM MATANGAZO 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.10 AM MATANGAZO 07.15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07.25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07.40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08.00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08.10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09.00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09.10 AM MATANGAZO 09.20 AM BRAND TALK 10.00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.10 AM YALUYOMO YAMO 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS DJ SHOW 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18.30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.05 HRS CHAGUO LA DJ 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01.00 - 05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM MATANGAZO 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.10 AM MATANGAZO 07.15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07.25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07.40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08.00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08.10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09.00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09.10 AM MATANGAZO 09.20 AM BRAND TALK 10.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.10 AM YALUYOMO YAMO 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS DJ SHOW 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18.30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.05 HRS CHAGUO LA DJ 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01.00 - 05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM MATANGAZO 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.10 AM MATANGAZO 07.15 AM TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI 07.25 AM UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI 07.40 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA II 08.00 AM HABARI NYEPESI 08.10 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA III 09.00 AM HABARI ZA BIASHARA 09.10 AM MATANGAZO 09.20 AM BRAND TALK 10.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.10 AM YALUYOMO YAMO 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS DJ SHOW 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.30 HRS HOJA YA LEO 18.30 HRS DIRA YA DUNIA BBC 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.10 HRS MATANGAZO / MUZIKI 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.05 HRS CHAGUO LA DJ 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS AFRO TIZI 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS AFRO TIZI 01.00 - 05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM COMMERCIALS 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.15 AM NEWS PAPERS REVIEW 07.30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA - KISWAHILI 09.00 AM WATOTO SHOW 10.00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.15 AM MIWANI YA MAISHA 11.00 AM MTA WA MAGOMA 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS CHAGUO LAKO 15.00 HRS MUZIKI NA MICHEZO 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.15 HRS MIDUNDO MOTOMOTO 18.00 HRS BONGO TEN 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.15 HRS CHEMBA BONGO 21.00 HRS MABVO ZANGU 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.03 HRS WEEK END SHOW I 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS WEEK END SHOW II 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS WEEK END SHOW III 01.00 - 05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	05.00 AM HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUKA I 06.00 AM AMKA NA BBC 06.30 AM NIPASHE 06.50 AM COMMERCIALS 07.00 AM NEWS BULLETIN 07.15 AM NEWS PAPERS REVIEW 07.30 AM KUMEPAMBAZUKA - FAMILIA 10.00 AM NEWS BRIEF 10.03 AM DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 10.15 AM SUNDAY SPECIAL 11.00 HRS TOP 20 13.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 13.10 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 13.30 HRS NANI ZAIDI 16.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 16.03 HRS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS 16.30 HRS WAMBO YA PWANI 18.00 HRS AFRICAN PANORAMA 19.30 HRS SPOTI LEO 20.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN 20.10 HRS MABVO ZANGU 21.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 21.03 HRS WEEK END SHOW I 22.00 HRS NEWS BULLETIN (24 HRS) 22.15 HRS WEEK END SHOW II 23.00 HRS NEWS BRIEF 23.03 HRS WEEK END SHOW III 01.00 - 05.00HRS MUZIKI (MCHANGANYIKO)	

FATAL

Pollution killing nearly 2 million a year in world's cities

WASHINGTON

Nearly nine in 10 people living in cities worldwide are exposed to high levels of air pollution that resulted in 1.9 million deaths in 2019, according to a study.

The research, published today in The Lancet Planetary Health, examined deaths, disease and pollution in more than 13,000 global cities and showed that average levels of harmful tiny particles in the air in urban areas were unchanged from 2000, despite significant declines in the Americas, Europe and Africa.

The researchers suggested that more than 600,000 lives could have been saved if authorities had achieved the pollution targets set by the World Health Organisation. The findings showed the urgent need to improve air quality in cities and to reduce exposure to pollution, particularly for the elderly and children, who are most likely to die from pollution-related diseases, said the study's authors. More than half of the world's population live in cities.

The study examined data over 20 years related to just one measure of air pollution, PM2.5, harmful particles that measure less than 2.5 micrometres across. A micrometre is equivalent to one millionth of a metre. Inhaling the particles is known to increase the risk of premature death from heart and lung diseases and cancer.

The WHO estimates that more than 4 million people in the world die each year from conditions linked to outdoor air pollution, with much of the

problem caused by traffic fumes. The study by researchers from the US and Canada found that 2.5 billion, or 86 per cent, of people living in the world's cities were exposed to unhealthy levels of pollution above WHO targets.

The average of PM2.5 across all urban areas around the world was 35 micrograms per cubic metre in 2019 – seven times the WHO guideline. The study's authors estimated that 61 in every 100,000 deaths in urban areas were attributable to PM2.5 in 2019.

The highest rate, at 86 per 100,000 deaths, was recorded in South-east Asia, while the lowest was in the Americas at 18. The Eastern Mediterranean region – which includes the Middle East and North Africa – was just below the global average at 50.

While pollution fell in some areas of the world, deaths linked to PM2.5 did not, suggesting that an ageing population and underlying health problems were also playing their part. "The majority of the world's urban population still live in areas with unhealthy levels of PM2.5," said the lead author of the study, Veronica Southerland, of George Washington University in the US.

"Avoiding the large public health burden caused by air pollution will require strategies that not only reduce emissions but also improve overall public health to reduce vulnerability." A second study in The Lancet found that nearly two million cases of asthma in children are linked to traffic-related air pollution – two thirds of the cases in urban areas.



Veronica Southerland of George Washington University.

EXTRAORDINARY

Cape Town couple celebrates by taking wedding photos on bus

CAPE TOWN

A Malibu Village couple ended off 2021 by taking their wedding photos on a Golden Arrow Bus, which they say will always have a special spot in their hearts.

After getting married in a small ceremony in Cape Town among their closest family and friends, Crystal and Marcel Meltor went to the place where they first met – a bus – to take wedding pictures. Crystal, 31, and Marcel, 28, told News24 they met in 2016 on their 06:00 commute on board the Lwandle bus, which travels from Malibu Village to Somerset West, where they had both worked.

"I had taken a keen interest in Crystal when she started getting on the bus and sitting right in front. I used to sit at the back with my friends, but there was just something about her that I couldn't take my eyes off," said Marcel. According to Crystal, one Friday morning when her friend didn't show up, she sat alone on her usual seat.

"He had then asked me to come and sit with them at the back and so I went to sit there. We then started talking, exchanged numbers and we started chatting," Marcel added. The couple said they would often buy each other sweets on the bus. They would get all excited when they saw each other each morning on the bus, he said.

"I really started liking him, and ever since we became close, I never sat in the front of the bus again," giggled Crystal. They said their love story became so "noticeable" to the other passengers that they would often keep the seats open to make sure they sat together.

Marcel said: "We dated for a good couple of years before



Cape Town couple, Crystal and Marcel Meltor aboard Golden Arrows Bus.

I finally decided, 'No man, this is definitely the woman I want in my life forever'. I hatched a plan to propose to her unexpectedly." He added that he had bought the ring in 2020 and kept it for six months because he didn't know how to propose.

"Without giving any hints away, I had roped her sister into my plan days before Christmas, asking her to wrap the ring box for me as I was certain I was going to ask the woman of my dreams to marry me," he said. The couple then got engaged on Christmas Day in 2020. Crystal and Marcel Meltor told News24 they had met in 2016 on their 06:00 commute onboard the Lwandle bus which travels from Malibu Village to Somerset West where they both had worked.

"It was a wonderful moment, definitely a day I will never forget," she said. The couple had originally planned to get married early in 2021. However, tragedy struck when Crystal developed double pneumonia due to Covid-19. "Oh, it was horrible. I really thought I was not going to make it. I spent close to two months at Tygerberg Hospi-

tal, in the intensive care unit (ICU), not knowing when I'd be able to go home. I was so dependent on the bed that eventually my legs started not doing so well because I was constantly in bed," she said. Once she was discharged from hospital, the lovebirds started planning their wedding.

"I needed to marry her immediately. Seeing her in the ICU wasn't a good experience for me, and I just felt that we needed to get married soon," said Marcel. The couple got married on 18 December 2021 at the New Apostolic Church in Westgate, Mitchells Plain, and went to the Westridge Gardens to take some pictures.

"We just had a crazy idea on that day that we should get onto a bus and take some pictures there, as that is where our love story began. And so we agreed and drove all the way to the Town Centre bus terminus," said Crystal. Dressed in her wedding gown and Marcel in his suit, they walked up to the inspector to ask if they could take some wedding pictures on the bus, and she agreed.

"The driver at the time said he

would change the name on the bus to 'Just Married' to make it look extra fancy," she said. The couple said their wedding day turned out to be even more amazing than they had anticipated.

According to the couple, they did not have money for a big fancy reception, so they opted for a casual small get-together at home. "Because of the pandemic we only had a few friends and family over, and we were happy with that," she said. The happy couple said they no longer travel by bus. Marcel now drives her to work.

"I just recently got my licence. My hubby bought me a car for my birthday recently and now we are living our best life together," said Crystal. According to the couple, they plan on expanding their family soon and want to go on honeymoon.

"We had a rough couple of years. Things weren't always easy, but we made it and we are just blessed to be able to spend our lives together," Marcel added. Golden Arrow Bus spokesperson Bronwen Dyke-Beyer was thrilled about the love story.

SANCTIONED

Fake Covid tests behind Dubai's Kenya flight ban

NAIROBI

The aviation regulator has revealed that Dubai banned all inbound and transit passenger flights from Kenya because travellers from Nairobi were testing positive for Covid-19 after arrival in the Middle East nation, despite carrying negative test results.

The Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) director-general Gilbert Kibe told the Business Daily Wednesday that the scheme involved a racket of corrupt officials from Ministry of Health who colluded with travellers to issue fake Covid-19 PCR results to aid travel to Dubai.

The Ministry of Health has however launched a probe on the matter with a view to bring to book health officials who were involved in the shoddy deal that has cost Kenya millions of shillings in lost passenger revenues.

"They banned flights from Kenya due to many false negative Covid-19 PCR results," said Mr Kibe Wednesday. "Ministry of Health is investigating and will report findings soon. Several other African countries were red listed as well."

Mr Kibe said that Dubai had no option but to ban passenger flights from Kenya because in a single day they could detect up to 20 "false negative



Kenya Civil Aviation Authority's director-general, Gilbert Kibe.

Covid tests." The situation, he said, went out of hand the moment health officials in the Middle East nation detected up to 73 cases of Covid-19 negative tests that were fake.

He said that a thorough probe on issuance of the fake Covid-19 clearance documents is underway by the Ministry of Health and that all culprits will be brought to book. "Yes, culprits shall be apprehended after investigations," said Mr Kibe.

The Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA) announced a 48-hour suspen-

sion on all flights from Kenya to the Middle East nation on December 20, 2021. On December 29, 2021, Emirates Airline said it had, in turn, extended its suspension of flights from Kenya to comply with the directive that was to end on December 24 until further notice. However, the Kenyan suspension did not affect cargo freights and passenger flights from Dubai to Nairobi.

The extension of suspension of all inbound and transit passenger flights from Kenya came barely a few days after Kenya Airways (KQ) suspended passenger flights to Dubai following the flights ban by the Middle East country amid a surge in Covid-19 cases in Kenya.

The national carrier said it would refund passengers who had booked for travel within the suspension period. The travellers will also be allowed to rebook when flights resume, said KQ. The temporary suspension of operations came barely a few days after Dubai introduced new travel requirements for those coming on direct flights from Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia.

Under the new measures, travellers from Africa to Dubai were required to provide a report on a rapid PCR test conducted at the departure airport six hours before leaving for Dubai. It is in addition to a negative Covid-19 test certificate issued within 48 hours of arrival in Dubai. Passengers, including those on transit, under the new measures, will undergo a PCR test upon arrival in Dubai and self-quarantine until a negative test result is out. Applying to both passengers terminating their journey and those transiting through Dubai, the rules are expected to affect Africans, most of whom prefer Dubai as a transit point due to its interconnectivity and the lower fares charged by Emirates Airlines.

The report comes at a time Kenya has recorded a sharp increase in cases of Covid-19 infections in recent months, while the number of admissions in health facilities is also increasing. Positivity rate – the proportion of positive tests – climbed sharply by a double-digit from last month, raising concerns among health officials.

ANGELS

Beach babe! Volunteers help deliver baby at Camps Bay beach

CAPE TOWN

City of Cape Town Disaster Risk Management volunteers helped deliver a baby girl who made her unexpected arrival at Camps Bay beach on Sunday.

According to the City, Identikidz staff

member asked for assistance when a young woman went into labour at approximately 11:15. When Disaster Risk Management volunteers Marilyn Afrika, Rahdee Salie, Judith Henn and Aaliyah Anthony assessed the situation, they found that the baby was already crowning.

The City's mayoral committee member for safety and security, JP Smith, said the team assisted the mom with the delivery of the baby and ensured both could wait undisturbed until paramedics arrived.

"Our teams are on duty every day over the holiday season for any emergency and

to assist beach goers. This new year surprise has provided a little extra festive cheer," Smith said. He commended the volunteers for staying cool under pressure and helping the mom give birth. Smith added that their staff had quite the track record in helping bring new life into the world.

"It's just more than five years ago now that two other Disaster Management staff members also helped deliver a baby in the Camps Bay area just before Christmas. On that occasion, it was a boy who was named after one of the staff members. Well done to all."

RECOGNITION

How hero charmed into best bars list

NAIROBI

Tucked on the 9th floor of the TradeMark Hotel in Nairobi's swanky expat suburb - Gigiri, Hero Bar was recently named 70th among the World's best bars in the extended 51-100 Bars list. The ranking that is basically the Michelin Star for bars from all over the world, is the first time it's coming to a Sub-Saharan country, with South Africa having taken the lead in previous years.

Hero, with walls spray-painted with samurais by Lithumised, comic book superheroes doing everyday things and littered with Marvel Universe mementoes, first opened its operations to the public in September 2019, before being shut in March 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and the resulting restrictions came into force.

"We were quite young, trying to stay relevant and ride the wave through at that point. It was a hard sell especially being that Sushi and cocktails, and the expat market were not there so we needed to re-strategise to push this further," says James Kariuki the Hero Bar manager.

"We closed for a few months and in that period decided to be more accommodative in terms of our menu offerings and for the bar, we wanted to introduce the cocktail culture in Kenya so that there's more than just Long Islands, and other Classic cocktails, but instead something fresh, something new," he adds.

The Japanese-inspired bar reopened in June last year on a far smaller scale with limited clientele as per the Ministry of Health guidelines. "When we reopened, we packaged ourselves better for locals to enjoy.

With our drinks and food, we try to be unique. It's not what you'd regularly find in a traditional Japanese restaurant. An example is we have lamb and beef in our sushi, that's not the norm," explains James.

Soon, more local lovers of food started trooping in droves to experience the mesh of Hero Bar's Japanese-inspired food techniques with Kenya's love for all things meat, washed down with a well-thought-through medley of fresh flavours in the drinks on ice.

"It was a group effort" James says, adding, "This process involved everyone including bars as far as from the UK coming over for mentorship like the Scuffs Bar, also listed on the Top



Hero Bar and Restaurant manager James Kariuki during the interview at the establishment on December 7, 2021.

50 bars. They came over to help us improve on our mixology. Today we have a lot of herbs in our cocktails. You don't have to take alcohol while it's bitter, we can have a nice twist while ensuring quality."

Looking at the menu, which is always released as a comic volume would with society-themed stories told through the lead characters, a patron would see herbs and spices like mint, thyme, rosemary, ginger, cinnamon, fruits like pineapple and lychee.

They're currently on Hero menu volume four, so that the regular patron finds something new every time, keeping taste buds guessing,

avoiding the boredom that can come with routine and usual orders.

Asked what the World's 50 Best Bars 2021 judges saw in Hero to add them to the extended ranking, the soft-spoken bar manager says, "what they saw was the creativity, the passion, the drive and the dream to become great.

They go deeper into our cocktails not just ambience and good service we give. It's a very well-thought-out process, there's chemistry involved, it's not just mixing drinks, there's a lot of science which we apply. The drink they chose for the listing was the Madafu Sawa where they had a photograph of Batman sitting on a coconut."

World's 50 Best Bars is the highest achievement for bars. "For us this is a big deal. It's what every bar is looking for or should aspire to," James says adding, "This is the highest accolade you would get for operating a proper cocktail bar."

"They didn't particularly go through one drink, and they also don't tell you when they're coming. So I cannot tell you when they came. We were just out here working then the director broke the good news," a smiling James says.

Gushing over his team, James says, "for the bar team, you find that the best bartender in Kenya 2021 from the Diageo competition

comes from this team, his name is Kelvin Thairu, also a 2019 Remy Martin winner. The Jameson master cocktail winner is also at this bar, his name is Chris Mburu."

What is his team's secret to success? "In short they come and are able to express themselves, when they come in as bartenders with passion, they find enough space for you to think, enough material for you to learn and use to achieve greatness," says James.

Alcohol consumption has increased by and large since the onset of the pandemic, according to publicly available data. James attributes this to "more exposure, even as more people become accommodative to unusual drinks. There's been a healthy increase."

And speaking of healthy, all their fresh ingredients are locally sourced from sustainable farms and the alcohol from EABL. Since the pandemic and with the increase in local tourism, some establishments reaped big focusing on the shifting consumer trends.

"It's a reflection of a people more accommodative to the cocktail culture. Now people allow us to play with premium brands. Initially, they wanted their brands neat, but now they're asking to try things differently," James says.

In conclusion, James says, "We intend to be trendsetters, to be here a while, we want to eventually perhaps have an extension somewhere, a school for bartenders, a creative space where young minds can express themselves."

"We've tried to take a foreign concept for food, and made it our own through what we do with sushi" James says adding, "in terms of drinks, which we are now very big at, I would love for more people to experience it in another dimension just the same way you'd be served in London is how they'd feel here" he concludes.

ANGEL

Good Samaritan steps in to help undernourished dog rescued from roof of Stellenbosch University

STELLENBOSCH

A dog that has been rescued from the roof of Stellenbosch University's engineering faculty building will be the recipient of the dean's goodwill.

The dog, which was found undernourished, was placed in the care of an animal welfare organisation. The dean of the university's engineering faculty will sponsor the dog's food for a year. "[I decided to sponsor it], as a gesture of goodwill, and to ensure that the dog is well cared for," said Professor Wikus van Niekerk on his personal Twitter account.

The dog was rescued on Monday after Animal Welfare Society Stellenbosch (AWSS) received a call from Campus Security. Inspector Rudy Bergstedt was sent out. The dog was not found immediately, so Bergstedt returned later with food and water.

"The fire station personnel and Rudy found her in a room, and he quietly slipped a lead on her and brought her to the shelter," said AWSS general manager Lorna Hughes. "There were a lot of feathers, and Rudy thinks she might have survived on a few pigeons," she said.

The dog, named Sky, was found undernourished. It is currently in the care of Sighthound Rescue SA. How the dog got on the roof and how long it was there were unknown, according to Stellenbosch Municipality spokesperson Stuart Grobbelaar.

Stellenbosch Fire and Rescue said it was also unsure of how long the dog had been stuck on the roof, as they were only notified on Monday, according to station commander Kenny Alberts. "I think she was there for quite some time because she was very thin," said Alberts.

The dog is still underweight and is being fed three times a day. According to Hughes, the roughly 1-year-old rescued greyhound has been named Sky - short for Skywalker - by her new Sighthound Rescue SA (SRSA) foster mom.

"Tomorrow is her sterilisation," said Hughes. According to Van Niekerk, he will donate R5 000 to R10 000 to both AWSS and the person who adopts Sky. "I am sure SRSA will be very happy for a few bags of food," said Hughes.

Sky will be going into foster care with SRSA until they are happy that she is comfortable, her health is good, and she is ready to be rehomed. "SRSA normally sends the dogs for training as well. She is quite shy and slowly learning to trust people. [At SRSA], she will be safe and learn to mingle with some other hounds," said Hughes.

OBITUARY

In remembrance of Professor Edward O. Wilson

MAPUTO

The Gorongosa Project team members celebrate the life and legacy of Professor Edward O. Wilson, the American biologist, who died on Sunday, December 26, 2021 at 92 years of age. Considered the most important naturalist since Charles Darwin, he was an inspiring light in the restoration of Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique.

Ed, as he asked to be called himself, was the University Research Professor of Entomology at Harvard University, USA and the world's leading authority on ants. He has written 30 books and over 300 scientific articles, and has won the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction

on two occasions. Along with a long list of other important awards and honours, he also received the United States of America National Medal of Science.

Professor Wilson's legacy in science and conservation is immense. He discovered fundamental concepts that became the basis of entirely new fields, including Sociobiology and Island Biogeography. The latter formalized the only true law in ecology and provided a theoretical basis for the field of conservation biology. Together with his friend Thomas Lovejoy, he introduced the world to the term "biodiversity," which is now a familiar word.

In his later years,



Professor Edward O. Wilson.

Edward O. Wilson continued to devote himself to educating the world about human nature and the human condition, and to preserving the biological diversity he held dear. It was this critical nature conservation mission that first brought him to Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique, in 2011.

Ed visited Gorongosa three times between 2011 and 2014 and became a beacon for the Gorongosa Restoration Project. In addition to conducting his own field research on ants in the Park, he advised the science and conservation teams as they developed restoration plans and objectives.

PROTEST

Cameroonian customers mobilise online campaign against new mobile money tax

YAOUNDEY

Going forward, mobile money users in Cameroon will have to pay a money transfer tax of 0.2% of the amount transferred or withdrawn.

This is according to the 2022 Finance Law of Cameroon recently adopted by parliament and enacted by President Paul Biya. The law applies to all electronic money transfer transactions but exempts bank transfers and transfers for the payment of other taxes, duties and levies.

Service providers, including Ex-

press Union, Express Exchange, YUP, YooMee Money, BGFI Mobile Services and others, are obliged to collect the new tax and pay it over to government. The new tax is expected to affect the operations of big players like MTN Mobile Money and Orange Money.

Back in August 2021, President Biya ordered that measures be taken to reduce the use of physical cash transactions. This latest development has been met with mixed reaction and critics want the government

to scrap the tax.

Cameroonian techpreneur and CEO of AppsTech Rebecca Enonchong is fronting the #EndMobileMoneyTax online campaign. She believes the new tax will slow financial inclusion whereas Cameroon has plans of becoming a digital economy by 2035.

"The new mobile money tax will especially hit the poorest, unbanked segments of Cameroon society. There is no such tax on wire transfers through banks. And it's paid

twice. Once to send. Once to receive. And all for what? To pay for government excesses and corruption," Rebecca tweeted.

The Bank of Central African States (BEAC) reported that in 2020, there were 806,055,732 electronic money transactions registered in Cameroon valued at over 12.1 trillion Francs CFA. With the mobile money sector on a growth trajectory in the country, the new tax will be an important revenue stream for the government.



WORLD

Biden: Trump's 'web of lies' poses ongoing risk to democracy

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Thursday accused his predecessor Donald Trump of posing a continuing threat to American democracy in a speech on the anniversary of the deadly US Capitol attack by Trump supporters who tried to overturn his 2020 election defeat.

Speaking at the white-domed building that was the scene of the Jan 6, 2021, riot, Biden warned that Trump's false claims that the election was stolen from him through widespread voting fraud could unravel the rule of law and undermine future elections.

"We must be absolutely clear about what is true and what is a lie. Here's the truth: A former president of the United States of America has created and spread a web of lies about the 2020 election. He's done so because he values power over principle," Biden said.

"He can't accept he lost," Biden added.

Launching such a direct attack on Trump -

though Biden never actually said his predecessor's name during the speech - was a departure for the president, who has spent most of his first year in office focused on pursuing his own agenda rather than looking backward.

But Democrats, a handful of Republicans and many independent observers have warned that the damage done by Trump's efforts to undermine faith in the election he lost to Biden lingers on.

"The former president and his supporters have decided the only way for them to win is to suppress your vote and subvert our elections," Biden said.

According to Reuters/Ipsos polling, some 55 percent of Republican voters believe Trump's false claim, which was rejected by dozens of courts, state election departments and members of Trump's own administration.

Accusing Trump of seeking to perpetuate a "big lie," Biden said there is a "battle for the soul of America" and a struggle at home and abroad



US President Joe Biden

between the forces of democracy and autocracy.

Trump in a statement issued after the speech said that Biden "used my name today to try to further divide America."

Four people died in the hours-long chaos a year ago, which occurred after Trump urged supporters to march to the Capitol and "fight like hell." One police officer died the day after battling rioters and four later died by suicide. Around 140 police officers were injured.

One of the officers at the scene, Sergeant Harry Dunn of the Capitol Police, said the attack took an emotional toll.

"You cannot get away from Jan 6 even if you're trying to. It's everywhere, especially if it's your place of work," Dunn said in a phone interview. "Accountability needs to be had, no matter who that comes at."

Biden's remarks began a day-long series of events that will also feature House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other legislative leaders, mostly from Biden's Democratic Party. Biden's speech was carried live on all major US television networks.

Trump remains highly popular among Republican voters. He has been shaping the field of Republican candidates who will contest the Nov 8 elections that will determine which party controls Congress and has hinted he may run for president again in 2024.

Trump's main fundraising committee had \$90 million in the bank at the end of June, while another account had \$77 million, according to public filings.

On Tuesday, Trump canceled plans to mark the anniversary with a news conference. He plans to speak instead on Jan 15 at a rally in Arizona. **Agencies**

Australia, Japan sign security pact

TOKYO

JAPAN and Australia signed their first formal military agreement on Thursday to allow troops to conduct exercises in both countries.

The pact, known as the Reciprocal Access Agreement, was signed during a virtual meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison.

"This is a landmark deal that takes Japan-Australia security cooperation to a new level," Kishida said. "The importance of Japan-Australia security cooperation is increasing in the current security environment, and I am very pleased that the results of the vigorous negotiations between the two countries have come to fruition."

Morrison said Japan is Australia's closest partner in Asia. He said the agreement "will form an important part of Australia and Japan's response to the uncertainty we now face and will underpin greater and more complex engagement in operability between the Australian Defense Force and Japan Self-Defense Forces".

Thursday's agreement follows more than a year of talks between Tokyo and Canberra over removing legal and administrative barriers for more joint training and quick military support.

The deal was also signed less than 80 years after Japan bombed Darwin during World War II. Australia is the second country to have such a pact with Japan other than the United States.

The Status of Forces Agreement signed between Tokyo and Washington allows US military personnel to travel directly in and out of US bases in Japan without custom checks or health screenings. This is now under the spotlight following clusters of COVID-19 infections at US military bases in Japan's southernmost Okinawa prefecture that have spread to local communities, making Okinawa's COVID-19 situation the worst in Japan.

Though China was not mentioned in the agreement, it is widely believed by analysts and media that this is aimed at countering China. On Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said China hopes that the Pacific will be "an ocean of peace, not a place to make waves".

"We always believe that state-to-state exchanges and cooperation should be conducive to enhancing mutual understanding and trust among countries in the region and safeguarding regional peace and stability, rather than targeting or undermining the interests of any third party," Wang said.

"The Pacific Ocean is vast enough for the common development of countries in the region. Along the same line, peace and stability in the Pacific depend on the joint efforts of countries in the region." **Agencies**

Some US officials do not understand situation in Kazakhstan - official

MOSCOW

Some US representatives do not understand what is happening in Kazakhstan and pass it off as the official position of Washington, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

The diplomat commented on the statements of the White House press secretary Jen Psaki that the United States has questions about the legality of the request of the authorities of Kazakhstan to use the forces of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in the country.

"Everyone is accustomed to the fact that some representatives of Washington do not understand everything, passing it off as a position of the United States," Zakharova wrote in her Telegram channel.

On January 2, crowds took to the streets in the cities of Zhanaozen and Aktau in the Mangystau Region, in southwestern Kazakhstan, protesting against high fuel prices.

Two days later, the protests engulfed Almaty, in the country's southeast, where the police used flashbangs to disperse the crowd, as well as other cities, including Atyrau, Aktope (in the west), Uralsk (in the northwest), Taraz, Shymkent, Kyzylorda (in the south), Karaganda (in the northeast) and even Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan.

The president imposed a two-week state of emergency in the Mangystau Region and in the Almaty Region, as well as the republic's largest city of Almaty and the capital Nur-Sultan.

On January 5, the head of the state also accepted the government's resignation. Its members will continue to perform their tasks until a new cabinet is formed.



Wang Yi rejects 'debt trap' claim on China-Africa cooperation

CHINESE State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday rejected the claim that China's cooperation with Africa has brought about a "debt trap."

"China has never attached any political conditions to its cooperation with Africa and has never imposed anything on others," Wang said during a joint press conference with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Rachelelle Omamo in Mombasa.

The so-called "debt trap" is not true, but hyped up by some with ulterior motives, Wang said.

"It is a 'speech trap' that has been created by those who do not want to see Africa speed up its development," he said. "If there is any 'trap' in Africa, it is

the 'poverty trap' and the 'underdevelopment trap,' both of which should be got rid of as soon as possible."

Noting that 80 percent of Kenya's foreign debt creditors are multilateral financial institutions and that its debt to China is mainly concessional loans, Wang said all China-Kenya cooperation projects had been scientifically and thoroughly planned, bringing benefits to the Kenyan people and boosting the country's development and revitalization.

China is ready to work with other friendly countries to help Africa speed up recovery, eliminate poverty to build a better future together, he said.



A train leaves the Nairobi terminus of Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) in Nairobi, capital of Kenya, on May 31, 2018. File photo

Iraq's new govt faces livelihood issues, balance between political parties

FOLLOWING the withdrawal of the United States-led combat mission in Iraq in December, the country's socio-economic development path will depend on its incoming government and how it prioritizes people's livelihood issues, experts say.

Iraq's new parliament will convene on Jan 9 and elect its speaker. Within 30 days of this session, the parliament should elect a new president who will task the biggest bloc with forming the government.

On Dec 27, Iraq's Supreme Court ratified the parliamentary election, held in October, which the Sadrist movement bloc, led by Muqtada al-Sadr, won 73 seats, more than any other group in the 329-seat house.

The Sadrist movement, named after prominent clerics from the al-Sadr family, emerged after former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was deposed in 2003 by a coalition led by the US.

Zaid Al-Ali, a lawyer and former legal adviser to the United Nations, said the negotiations to form a new government will depend on how specific parties position themselves.

Al-Ali, who is also the author of *The Struggle for Iraq's Future and Arab Constitutionalism: The Coming Revolution*, told China Daily that while Iraq still faces threats from various terrorist groups, the country's security forces are now better prepared to tackle these challenges.

"The best approach would

be to deal with the social conditions throughout Iraq and improve (the people's living standards) to reduce terrorist groups' capacity to recruit and carry out attacks," said Al-Ali.

Nagapushpa Devendra, an analyst at the West Asia Centre of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, said that in order to solve the problems faced by Iraqi society, the incoming administration needs to strike a balance between the demands of various sects and political parties.

"Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, political elections have led to the formation of unwieldy (coalition) governments," Devendra told China Daily.

In March 2003, the US in-

vaded Iraq - which was ruled by Saddam from 1979 to 2003 - on the basis of false intelligence that the Middle Eastern nation was developing weapons of mass destruction. The then United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan called the war illegal and that it "was not in conformity with the UN Charter".

Though it was announced earlier that the 3,000 US combat troops in Iraq would exit by Dec 31, 2021, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi said a few hundred US troops would remain behind to provide support and advice to Iraq's security forces, according to a report by Xinhua on Jan 5.

Devendra noted that Iraq continues to play a significant

role in the US' actions to secure its multilateral interests in the region.

According to a Wall Street Journal report on Dec 31, the US had spent \$14 trillion on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since the Sept 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US, noting that America's military interventions had created "opportunities for profit" as the wars in the two countries stretched on.

According to the Global Terrorism Index 2020, an annual report produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, a nonprofit think tank based in Sydney, Afghanistan was the country most impacted by terrorism, overtaking Iraq in 2018.

Agencies

Progress made in AI-powered prediction of protein structures

SHANGHAI-BASED Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) startup Tianrang recently announced that its independently developed deep-learning protein folding prediction platform had delivered remarkable performance in the 14th round of the Critical Assessment of Structure Prediction, ranking among the best of its same kind in the world. It took only 16 seconds for the platform to predict the protein chains of 400 amino acids.

Proteins are major functional molecules that play a variety of roles in cells. For instance, as a catalyzing enzyme, they adjust metabolism and carry metabolic substances to form cytoskeletons. Besides, they also join the immunologic, cell differentiation and apoptosis processes.

To decode the functions of proteins, a basic element composing life forms, is fundamental to uncovering the secrets of

biological phenomena.

Xue Guirong, founder of Tianrang, introduced that proteins must fold into particular structures in order to perform their functions. Only a few types of proteins are functional when they are not folding. The functions of proteins are determined by their three-dimensional structures. Once the structures are damaged, the proteins lose their functions.

Many diseases are caused by abnormal structures of important proteins. Therefore, the studies on protein structures lead to better understanding of proteins' functions, thus stimulate improvement in healthcare, food sustainability and innovative biotechnology, and promote the development of life science, R&D of drugs and synthetic biology.

The observation and analysis of protein structure have always been a fascinating topic in life science which many

scientists are studying. However, the study is difficult and costly, and facing limited progress.

There are three major traditional methods to observe protein structures - magnetic resonance imaging, radiology and cryogenic electron microscopy.

These methods need huge trial and error and expensive devices, and normally take years to complete the study of a single structure. In addition, these experimental methods are not capable enough to reveal some important protein structures, and more bioinformatics technologies and computational biology approaches are needed.

However, usual computer software could not take the astonishingly massive computing volume of protein structure, and even supercomputers are not able to do that.

Therefore, protein structure predic-

tion has become an important branch of structural biology, and researchers predict spatial structure of proteins based on amino acid sequence through relevant AI algorithm they have developed.

"AI is showing surprising decision-making capabilities in dealing with complicated systematic problems, from defeating the world champion of the Go game, to managing urban traffic.

The prediction of protein structures, though a biological issue, is also a problem in complicated scenarios where AI can demonstrate its huge potential in handling basic science research. That's something we don't want to miss," said Xue.

Such a project is very precious, as it has made innovations in inter-discipline studies, industry, basic science, AI algorithms and engineering capability, Xue noted.

The recent progress indicated that the application of AI in the studies of protein structure can decode some structures that are not able to be analyzed through traditional observation methods, and the results are reliable and very close to the fact. Such AI-powered structure prediction is expected to become a sharp tool of scientists and accelerate the development of research in life science.

At present, the prediction of single protein folding is just a start. Proteins often function as compounds in pairs or groups, and the structures of many protein compounds are still a mystery.

Xue believes that the adaptability and precision of AI algorithms shall be further improved, so as to make contributions to revealing how proteins interact with each other and help mankind find new and accurate ways to cure diseases.

People's Daily

Horn of Africa: Wang details peaceful development initiative

MOMBASA

CHINA stands ready to propose the "Initiative of Peaceful Development in the Horn of Africa" to support regional countries in addressing security, development and governance challenges, visiting Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here on Thursday.

He elaborated on China's views on the current situation in the Horn of Africa when meeting with journalists after holding talks with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Raychelle Omamo.

The Horn of Africa, albeit with a unique strategic location and great development potential, has in recent years experienced flare-ups of hot issues and eruptions of conflicts and confrontations, which run counter to the interests of the people in the region and have to be stopped, said the Chinese minister.

China is willing to propose the initiative to support the region in realizing long-term stability, peace and prosperity, he said.

The Horn of Africa should strengthen intra-regional dialogue to overcome security challenges, he said. The countries and people in the region should stay out of the geological competition between major countries, firmly follow the path of unity and self-improvement, and hold the region's fate in their own hands through equal consultation, Wang said.

It is suggested that regional countries hold a peace conference to conduct in-depth discussions, reach political consensus, and coordinate joint actions on this issue, he said, adding that China is ready to appoint a special envoy for the Horn of Africa affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, to provide necessary support to this process.

The Horn of Africa should accelerate regional revitalization to overcome development challenges, Wang stressed.



Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta (right) meets with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (third right) in Mombasa, Kenya, on Thursday. XINHUA

The region should expand and strengthen, and extend to neighboring countries in a timely manner, the two main axes of the Mombasa-Nairobi railway and the Ethiopia-Djibouti railway, while accelerating the development along the coasts of the Red Sea and of East Africa to form a development framework of "two axes plus two coastal areas", he said.

To keep pace with the times, countries of the region should also speed up the building of industrial belts and economic belts, create more jobs and promote

growth, and enhance capacity for independent development, he said. Wang stressed the need for the Horn of Africa to explore effective ways to overcome governance challenges.

China supports the regional countries in seeking development paths that suit their own national conditions, he said, adding that the Horn of Africa should strengthen exchanges on national gover-

nance, share with each other useful experience, and break through governance bottlenecks.

The countries in the region should properly handle various ethnic, religious and regional disputes in an African way, and build a united, stable and harmonious environment for development in the Horn of Africa, he said.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council

and a sincere partner of Africa, China will deepen the synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and Africa's development strategies, take solid steps to advance the "nine programs" put forward at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and make unremitting efforts for and play a constructive role in the peace and development of the Horn of Africa, he said.

Xinhua

Russian COVID-19 vaccines likely to be recognized by WHO in 2022 – expert

MOSCOW

THE Russian COVID-19 vaccines are likely to be authorized by international regulators, including the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2022, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Alexander Sergeev told TASS.

"I'm one hundred percent [sure] that it will happen in 2022. But we need to understand that this is a two-way street.

The WHO says that the jabs we produce at different enterprises are not exactly the same, asking to standardize [the process]. They are right, all stages of vaccine production require appropriate control," the expert noted.

Sergeev (pictured) also pointed out that foreign companies "were promoting their interests, in particular, by making it harder for Russian vaccines" to be authorized all over the world.

Earlier, in late December, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus discussed the issues relating to the Sputnik V vaccine's approval.

Furthermore, the sides addressed the need for mutual recognition of COVID-19 vaccination certificates. **Agencies**



China's democracy is translated into concrete and pragmatic practices

During the drafting of the proposals for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, the Communist Party of China (CPC) solicited public advice and suggestions online about the formulation of the proposals for the first time in the history of the country's Five-Year Plan.

Among more than one million pieces of advice and suggestions made online, the advice of "mutual-aid elderly care" from a netizen with the username "Yun Fan" was included in the proposals for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, and eventually became a concrete measure in the document.

The story serves as a vivid demonstration of the fact that China's democracy is translated into concrete and pragmatic practices.

"Whole-process people's democracy in China is a complete system with supporting mechanisms and procedures, and has been fully tested through wide participation," said a white paper titled "China: Democracy That Works" issued by the country's State Council Information Office. Thoroughly expounding the practice of the whole-process people's democracy in China, the document pointed out that the whole-process people's democracy is a comprehensive and coordinated system involving extensive and regular participation.

Whole-process people's democ-



Residents in Qianxibian village, Tangya township, Jindong district, Jinhua city, east China's Zhejiang province, cast their ballots to elect officials for the villagers' committee, Nov. 26, 2020. File photo

racy operates a democratic system covering a population of more than 1.4 billion from 56 ethnic groups of a vast country, making possible the wide and sustained participation of all the people in the country, according to the white paper.

Whether the people enjoy democratic rights depends on whether they have the right to vote in elections and whether they have the right to continuously participate in political affairs in their everyday life.

In China's practice of democracy, the country lays emphasis on both the role of electoral democracy and the advantages of consultative democracy, ensuring that people exercise their right to vote in elections and participate in state and social affairs through extensive consultations.

Integrating electoral democracy and consultative democracy, the whole-process people's democracy in China consolidates the people's

principal position in the country's political and social life and leaves no room for politicians to shower promises while campaigning and break them all once elected.

Whether the people enjoy democratic rights depends on whether they have the rights to take part in democratic elections, decision-making, management, and oversight.

By exercising their right to vote in elections, the Chinese people elect those who represent their will to hold and exercise power. At the same time, they undertake extensive deliberations before major decisions are made.

In China, hearing people's voices, acting on their needs, and pooling their ideas and strength have become a standard practice. More and more ideas and suggestions of the general public are flowing directly to decision-makers at all levels, and they are increasingly reflected in the major decisions of the Party and the government. **People's Daily**

Pakistan on course to appoint 1st female Supreme Court judge

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN'S judicial commission on Thursday confirmed the nomination of the first female Supreme Court judge in the Muslim-majority nation's history, an action that ruling party members and legal experts said all but ensures her appointment.

A commission that decides on the promotion of judges voted to make 55-year-old Justice Ayesha Malik the first female judge on the Supreme Court in the 75 years since the South Asian country's independence.

The next step is a parliamentary panel where the ruling party has more than enough members to affirm her appointment, said Zahrah Vayani of the Women Lawyers Association. She said Thursday's action effectively "is an appointment more than a nomination."

"An important & defining moment in our country as a brilliant lawyer & decorated judge has become Pakistan's first female SC judge," a legislator of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and parliamentary secretary for law Maleeka Bokhari posted on Twitter.

"To shattering glass ceilings," she added. Though historic, the move has been divisive. The nine-member body that was to confirm her appointment turned down her elevation to the top court last year, and Thursday's repeat vote was close - divided five votes to four - according to sources familiar with the proceedings.

Many lawyers and even judges, in the forum and outside, said Malik's selection was made in contravention of seniority lists. Malik was not among the top three most senior judges of the lower court from which she was elevated.

"The major issue is not that there was ever a question mark on Justice Ayesha Malik's

competence or the fact that she is a good judge," Imaan Mazari-Hazir, an Islamabad-based lawyer and vocal rights activist, told Reuters.

"The question mark was and remains on the Judicial Commission of Pakistan's arbitrary and non-transparent decision making and the process," she said, adding the judge's gender was exploited.

A number of lawyers' bodies have threatened to strike and boycott court proceedings, saying their calls for the drafting of fixed criteria for the nomination of Supreme Court judges were ignored.

But Vayani countered: "I know some bar associations were opposing the same on the basis of the seniority principle, but there have been over 40 judges elevated to the Supreme Court out of turn, and the appointment of the first female judge is a great step in the right direction." **Agencies**



The next step is a parliamentary panel where the ruling party has more than enough members to affirm her appointment, said Zahrah Vayani of the Women Lawyers Association

SINCE the establishment of Xiong'an New Area in north China's Hebei province, the ecological environment of Baiyangdian Lake in the area has been improved at a fast pace, which mirrors the advantages and strengths of the new area in pursuing green development. Besides clearer water and increasing number of birds, the overall water quality of Baiyangdian Lake was also elevated from below Grade V in 2017 to Grade IV in 2020, and the average water quality of core areas of the lake has reached Grade III (good quality), according to a report on the progress made by Xiong'an New Area and Baiyangdian Lake in pushing ahead with ecological protection released by the State Council of China.

As China has entered a new

Green development gives impetus to China's Xiong'an New Area

development stage, it is both a definite requirement and a general trend to prioritize ecological conservation, boost green development, and advance high-level protection of the ecological environment while promoting high-quality economic development through coordinated efforts.

A good ecological environment is believed to be one of the prominent strengths of Xiong'an New Area in the future. Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, and Xiong'an New Area needs to realize its value and enhance its appeal by relying on a sound ecological environ-

ment, said Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, while visiting the new area on Jan. 16, 2019.

Green modes of production, lifestyles and a sound ecology are expected to make Xiong'an more capable of taking on Beijing's non-capital functions.

Xiong'an New Area has a good ecology since it came into being. Dubbed the "kidney" of northern China, the Baiyangdian Lake serves as an ecological barrier of the area. Established because of the lake and built along the lake, Xiong'an New Area has made ecological restoration and conservation of Baiyangdian

Lake one of its priorities since its establishment.

A whole package of measures have been taken to restore and protect the ecological environment of Baiyangdian Lake, including thoroughly treating 606 polluted ponds, establishing and improving sewage treatment facilities in over 70 villages located in or near the lake, and diverting water to the lake under China's South-to-North Water Diversion Project and from upstream reservoirs, which have injected new vitality into Baiyangdian Lake, or the "pearl of north China".

The ecological strength of Xiong'an New Area is also

manifested in the planning and construction of the area. Today, the proportion of green and blue spaces in the area stands at 70 percent, signaling a beautiful blueprint for the development of the new area.

Over the past more than four years, a large area of trees has extended across Xiong'an New Area under the Millennium Forest Project, not only forming a magnificent landscape, but becoming a green fortress for carbon emission reduction.

Green development is an inevitable path for Xiong'an to building a national model for high-quality development in

the new era and an innovative development demonstration zone for the implementation of China's new development concept - innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development.

Xiong'an New Area, which has been built from scratch, has some late-mover advantages. It has promoted the design, construction and operation of green buildings, with new residential buildings in its starting area reducing energy use by more than 75 percent and new government-invested and large public buildings implementing three-star standard of green building, the highest level in

China's building rating system.

The citizen service center of Xiong'an New Area, which is among the first batch of buildings constructed at the new area, is a prefabricated building that can be reused. Besides, it achieves heating and cooling through natural energy conversion, thus saving energy as much as possible.

The recently delivered Xiong'an business service center, one of the first batch of jobs-housing integrated parks built to take on Beijing's functions nonessential to its role as a capital city, has adopted over 100 green building technologies, showing concrete implementation of the concept of green development in terms of both theory and practice. **People's Daily**



Waziri Junior Shentembo

Former Yanga attacker opens up on return to Premier League

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

DESPITE having stayed in Tunisia for a few months, Tanzanian forward, Waziri Junior, could not sign a contract with Tunisian side, Olympique de Béja. That led the footballer to make his way back to Tanzania and join NBC Premier League outfit, Dodoma Jiji FC, during the mini transfer window.

The striker had previously played for top-flight outfits including Azam FC, Yanga, and Mbao FC that has been relegated to Championship.

The footballer had become a free agent after leaving Yanga last year, a situation that allowed him to start looking for a team that will allow him to play.

Junior was mostly restricted to the bench while turning out for Yanga.

The attacker disclosed getting an opportunity to play regularly forced him to return to the Premier League instead of staying out of action and waiting for completion of his transfer to the Tunisian outfit.

The footballer noted: "The decision to return home to play football targets to ensure I'm fit and add the number of goals in my statistics, as as a player I do not have to be out of the pitch for long."

"This is also a fundamental decision for me, unlike what some people think because going back to the pitch will give me time to re-examine myself so that even if I go back to Tunisia, I can be fast."

Waziri came close to signing a contract with Dodoma Jiji FC during the previous main transfer period before heading to Tunisia.

Having made his way back to Tanzania, the forward disclosed he did not turn Dodoma Jiji FC down but he received an offer abroad.

He pointed out he was hoping to play football abroad as is the case for other Tanzanian footballers, Simon Msuva and Mbwana Samatta, so when the opportunity arose he did not hesitate

to go and try his luck.

"When Dodoma Jiji FC wanted to register me then an offer came from Tunisia which I found to be of great interest to me economically as well as football development, so it persuaded me to stop signing a contract with Dodoma Jiji FC, I did not reject it as people say," he stated.

"Although the offer was brought to me I wanted to go out and develop my talent and showcase my quality, as I know I will find challenges that will turn out to be opportunities in my football career."

After deciding to return to the NBC Premier League, Junior noted he felt Dodoma Jiji FC will be the right place for him for various reasons including the presence of some players he had played with in other outfits in previous seasons.

Junior noted that when everything was ready for him to start playing in Tunisia, his agent became the reason for blocking the deal and forcing him to return home.

The attacker noted: "Something happened that led to the failure of the deal. I can say that the agents who were responsible for my transfer were the reason, they were greedy and some of the agreements turned out to be wrong."

Junior says the success he has had at Yanga has boosted his performance.

He noted a player has an opportunity to continue enjoying a good reputation once such a player moves to an outfit that will see to it he develops his talent. Junior said: "Yanga has helped me garner experience and I have learned a lot at the outfit, it has helped me improve my profile because when I was asked which team I played for, I was trusted once I mentioned Yanga."

"I could not regularly play for Yanga and I also could not make it to the starting squad in games I played, this is the reason for my decision to leave Yanga and look for another club."

Why do clubs lay off third of players even on mini registration window

By Correspondent John Kimbute

STABILITY of professional soccer is still an issue in local Premier League sides as many of the clubs have temporary squads being renewed not just each season but at times even a third of the squad leaves in the short registration window, December to January.

With a more professional environment changing a third of the club layout within one season is something unexpected, a bit strange, as registration targets unique players (relative to the club's ability to spend, that it) for crucial gaps in its regular lineup.

It is not expected that the club was so wrong about its players it has to change a third after three playing months.

That is in part what needs to be explained, as to how a third of the club players whom the technical bench saw as good enough for its Premier League commitments are seen to be not good enough after three or four months of play.

What is evident is that the club feels there are good players out there who are readily available, whether it is from the Championship or other Premier League sides, as clearly there are considerable differences in resources between the various clubs.

Yet admittedly that is also true of any Premier League, in which case seeking to change a third of the players is a structural problem, not just cash.

For one thing, no club can have all the best players, first because there is no list of best players anywhere regarding this or that position on the pitch, and secondly a club doesn't need the very best players to make a club side.



Former Yanga attacker, Ditram Nchimbi.

It is enough to have good players who can train well, based on acknowledged ball skills, and thus be able to respond to what the coach says in this or that regard.

There is also an issue of being able to imitate what other players do for instance in tackling or shielding the ball, following the ball on air, all of which are part of what a player does in routine training, and its effects are seen on the pitch.

To release a player - and that costs a certain amount of money to cover the remaining part of the contract - is simply to say he can't be trained, and the club cannot wait to the end of the season to get a replacement but has to move quickly.

It is hard to make a hard case out of such a position, as it bespeaks of a bench that is new to the players they have, as otherwise none of their abilities or dispositions would be strange enough to require

a revamping of a third of the squad at midseason.

It is an overreaction to predictable levels of play, or a panicky position taking in the face of enormous pressure from the fan base or leadership.

It is unclear what kind of criticism leads to a team losing money by shortening contracts and signing new players at midseason, but it is evident that club leaderships and technical benches are under pressure for results, especially for sponsorships.

Non-performing sides do not attract sponsors, so a team has to do all it can to ensure it remains on the Premier League where there is assured preliminary sponsorships for instance by NBC Bank Ltd as the lead sponsor, and own benefactors chip in, or definitely, had already laid the groundwork.

All these stakeholders need to be convinced to maintain their effort from one season

to another, so inconsistent performance spells danger for maintaining such loyalties and needs to be avoided.

This hence fingers the problem, namely shaky loyalties of institutional or other stakeholders when a team is not performing well, where the lot of the team and its condition in the league becomes a community feeling, where solidarity isn't diminished in case of a bad turn, etc.

One explanation for this patchy club commitment is the lack of entrenched local interests underlining each Premier League side, other than a collection of well-wishers, at times out of temporary vocation concerning the game, who underpin its expectations.

When the club leadership isn't assured of loyalty in case of lower than predicted standing in the Premier League, it will be ready to overspend on players at midseason to avoid end-season catastrophe.

In that case, this sort of attitude is likely to remain for years to come, as clubs will take a while to generate the sort of community affinities that thrive the length and breadth of club fortunes.

For lack of helpful comparisons, it can be said that premier league clubs are not betrothed to their communities in what can be described as an unbreakable relationship, and instead they appear to be casual infatuations at the regional or institutional level, where consideration is easily withdrawn if likeability (via performance) drops.

As such a stance is in the final analysis subjective leadership is pushed to extremes to avoid the worst.

Paul has triple-double, NBA-leading Suns top Clippers 106-89

PHOENIX

CHRIS Paul and the Phoenix Suns have turned into some of the league's best closers. It's a big reason they've reached 30 wins before any other team in the NBA this season.

Paul had a triple-double with 14 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists, and the Suns improved to 25-0 when leading after three quarters by beating the Los Angeles Clippers 106-89 on Thursday night.

As usual, the 36-year-old Paul was the maestro making big plays in the final minutes to close out the Clippers. He hit a crucial 3-pointer and had five assists in the fourth quarter.

"Some teams' biggest issue is that they don't know what they want to run or who they want to go to down the stretch," Paul said. "I think we have a good sense of that. We know what our go-to plays are."

The Suns moved a game ahead of Golden State for the best record in the league. They've won three straight and four of five. That's despite several players missing considerable time this season, including All-Star guard Devin Booker.

"I just think the players



Phoenix Suns coach Monty Williams and guard Chris Paul (3) react after a timeout during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers, Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022, in Phoenix. The Suns won 106-89. (AP Photo)

have done a really good job of driving our culture," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "We have unreal guard play, which really helps."

Paul continues to look 26 years old instead of 36, doing a little of everything to keep the Suns among the league's elite. His 13 rebounds were a career high in his 1,128th regular-season NBA game.

Cam Johnson added a career-high 24 points, and Jalen Smith - the second-year forward whose playing time has drastically increased recently because of the Suns' COVID-19 issues - had another good game with 19 points and 14 rebounds.

"We're having a lot of fun playing together,"

Johnson said. "Things are starting to click."

Those performances helped offset a tough night for Booker, who shot just 5 of 22 from the field and finished with 11 points. He was 0 of 7 on 3-pointers.

Williams said center Deandre Ayton, forward Jae Crowder and JaVale McGee have all cleared the league's COVID-19 protocols, but were held out of the game as they work their way back into shape. Guard Landry Shamet is still in the protocol.

The Clippers dropped below .500 at 19-20 despite a season-high 26 points from former Suns forward Marcus Morris Sr. Reggie Jackson added 16. The Clippers were missing guards Luke

Kennard and Xavier Moon, along with center Ivica Zubac, because of COVID-19 protocols.

"We scraped and competed," Clippers coach Ty Lue said. "That is a good ball club over there and they played well. Their stars took over down the stretch and took over the game."

The Suns led by 17 points midway through the third quarter, but the Clippers cut it to 73-66 in the next few minutes. The Suns took a 75-66 lead into the final quarter.

The Clippers pulled to 79-76 with 8:36 left when Amir Coffey converted a three-point play after making a layup while being fouled. But the Suns responded with the next six points and slowly

pulled away.

The Suns jumped out to a 56-40 halftime lead after outscoring the Clippers by 15 in the second quarter. Johnson led the Suns with 17 points before the break. Morris had 13 for the Clippers.

Meanwhile, the first time that Rudy Gobert tested positive for COVID-19, the NBA didn't even have health and safety protocols. It shut down the league instead.

This time, the Utah Jazz center might just miss a few days.

Gobert has tested positive for COVID-19 and was placed Thursday on the virus-related protocols list - something that didn't even exist when he tested positive for the virus on March 11, 2020, the night that the NBA shut down for more than four months and ultimately decided to finish its season inside a bubble at Walt Disney World in Florida.

He has been ruled out for Utah's game Friday in Toronto. It is not clear how long he will be sidelined; typically, even with shorter return-to-play rules in place now than what had been the case earlier this season, most players who enter the protocols are out for at least a week.

Why Man United failed under Woodward, what happens next

By Mark Ogden, Senior Writer, ESPN FC

WHEN the elevator doors slide open on the third floor of Manchester United's offices in London's exclusive Mayfair district, you're immediately greeted by full-size replicas of the Premier League and Champions League trophies.

For the past eight-and-a-half years, Ed Woodward has had to walk past them, tormented by their presence, every time he has arrived for work as United's executive vice-chairman, the man who has held the responsibility of running the club for almost a decade.

The trophies are a constant reminder of what United strive to win, but have singularly failed to throughout Woodward's tenure in charge. When Woodward, 50, clears his desk ahead of his departure later this month, the good news is that he won't have to endure the torture of walking past those trophies ever again.

The bad news? Well, there's plenty. Although Woodward is one of the most affable executives in football, a man who unquestionably feels the pain of not being able to deliver success at Old Trafford, his time in charge has been a story of underachievement on the pitch, a succession of sacked managers and far too many expensive mistakes in the transfer market. All as traditional rivals Liverpool and Manchester City enjoy ongoing success.

Woodward has long been a lightning rod for United fans' frustrations, and he has borne the brunt of much of the criticism from outside the club for failing to keep the trophy room as stacked as it had been for years prior to his appointment in July 2013.

At that time, United didn't need reminding of former glory. Under manager Sir Alex Ferguson, and Woodward's predecessor, David Gill, the club had become the definition of sustained success, winning 13 Premier League titles and two Champions Leagues in 20 years.

United set the standards for the rest to follow, and when Ferguson and Gill stepped down at the end of the 2012-13 season, the club's owners, the Glazer family, promoted Woodward from his role in charge of United's supremely successful commercial department to run the club on a day-to-day basis and ensure that the trophies kept on coming.

Woodward had earned the right to be the top man at Old Trafford, having made United the most powerful money-making machine in the game, but he has learned that selling shirt space to sponsors and negotiating for the world's best players and managers are two wholly different responsibilities.

But as Woodward prepares to walk away, having announced his intention to quit last April following the controversy around United's involvement in the failed



Ed Woodward

attempt to launch a European Super League (ESL), he will admit to friends that for all the modernisation and commercial revenue off the pitch, his time in charge has been a failure.

United haven't won either of those two trophies that he sees every day, and for all the players he has signed for United -- including Paul Pogba, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Cristiano Ronaldo -- nobody generates quite so much divisive opinion and condemnation as Woodward.

Is that fair? Is Woodward misunderstood and misrepresented? The truth can often be found many layers beneath the surface, but first impressions tend to last and, for all of the forward-facing work he has overseen -- rebuilding United's internal structure, the recruitment network, investment in the youth academy -- and refusal to increase season-ticket prices throughout his time in charge, the story of his time as Old Trafford's senior executive has always been viewed through the prism of the mistakes made right at the outset.

'A horrific' start to the job

It was in the Park Hyatt, Sydney, located just beneath the city's iconic Harbour Bridge, in July 2013 that the wheels began to fall off for Woodward and Manchester United. Having been in charge of the club for less than a month, it was clear he had been handed a bigger challenge than he could ever have imagined.

Sources have told ESPN that Woodward believes that the mistakes made in that first summer following Ferguson's retirement impacted the club's psyche and continue to haunt United today, and that David Moyes, appointed as Ferguson's successor prior to Woodward's elevation to executive vice-chairman, was given a job he could never succeed in because the club was simply not prepared for life after Ferguson.

Ferguson had left behind a winning machine on the pitch, but a club without a modern structure off it. In terms of scouting intelligence, sources said that Ferguson leaving was like owning a vault of treasure, but losing the key.

Woodward wanted to launch the new era

with a box-office signing to help make up for the loss of Ferguson's presence and aura, but the caution of Moyes, who vetoed a deal for Barcelona's Thiago Alcantara, combined with Woodward's transfer market naivety left United humiliated by a succession of failures. Ronaldo, Gareth Bale, Cesc Fabregas, Daniele De Rossi were all targeted and gave United encouragement.

In an effort to land a big signing, Woodward left Australia to fly back to Manchester, citing "urgent transfer business," but nothing happened. The weeks dragged on, agents played United and Woodward against other clubs and, having targeted a superstar, the only deal that came off was the £27.5 million signing of Marouane Fellaini from Everton, three minutes before the 11 p.m. deadline on transfer deadline day.

Woodward and Moyes had contrived to make a huge mess of their first transfer window, and Woodward's reputation arguably never recovered. Despite subsequently completing deals for the likes of Pogba and Ronaldo, Woodward has been unable to shake off the reputation of being a man who can't strike a deal without unnecessary drama.

He has since told friends that Ferguson's departure gave him a "horrific" start to his job, denying him the chance to work with a "genius" and be guided by his experience and knowledge.

Ferguson told Woodward of his plan to retire within seconds of sitting down at a lunch arranged by Woodward to get to know the man he expected to work alongside. Not being able to work with Ferguson is Woodward's biggest regret.

Woodward also now concedes he made recruitment mistakes for the first three years of his time in charge and accepts that an initial belief that United's wealth and financial power would enable them to take a shortcut back to the top was misguided. He told reporters in 2014 that United were simply too powerful commercially to suffer more than a one-season blip, but time has proved otherwise.

There is also an acceptance that the club further lost its way under Louis van Gaal, Moyes' successor, because the former Ajax and Barce-

lona coach was given too much control over players and outs.

"Only now are we able to look at signings and say that we have made them better and could move them on for a profit," a United source told ESPN in relation to the club's transfer strategy in recent years.

It has taken some tough lessons to get to the point where United now believe they are able to recruit players as stealthily and successfully as City and Liverpool. Those lessons include telling Jose Mourinho that, after Bastian Schweinsteiger's disastrous and injury-affected move from Bayern Munich in 2015, they would not make a similar mistake by signing defender Jerome Boateng from the German club three years later.

And when dealing with Real Madrid, as they did when a 13-hour overnight summit between club president Florentino Perez and Sergio Ramos saw the defender abandon talks over a £35m move to Old Trafford in 2015, United and Woodward have learned to be wary of attempting to do business with their fellow super-clubs.

The United recruitment team now looks for the next big thing, winning the race to sign Atalanta's Amad Diallo in 2020, but failing to persuade Jude Bellingham to reject Borussia Dortmund in favour of United when leaving Birmingham in the same year.

There was also a narrow failure to sign Erling Haaland in 2020, when the striker also chose Dortmund over United when leaving FC Salzburg. United remain interested in the Norway international, but they are in a congested field and the managerial uncertainty at Old Trafford is unlikely to help.

'The struggle to create Man United's new identity

Woodward has fired four managers in eight years, and it is not a record he is proud of.

"Ed really wanted a manager for six or seven years, like Pep Guardiola at City or Jurgen Klopp at Liverpool," a United source told ESPN. "There have been some real sliding doors moments with some of the best coaches in the game, but the dots never joined up when they needed them to."

Moyes was sacked af-

ter less than a season in charge, and Woodward has made it clear to the now-West Ham manager that he feels United let him down during his brief spell in charge. A rookie chief executive, a group of players ill-equipped to move on after Ferguson and a club searching for a new identity all conspired to make it an impossible job for the former Everton boss.

In 2014, Woodward consulted Ferguson, Gill, Sir Bobby Charlton and former United captain Bryan Robson to map out the requirements for the next manager. Sources have said United needed to "change the engine while flying," so they turned to the experience of Van Gaal after failing to tempt Klopp and Atletico Madrid's Diego Simeone to follow Moyes.

Woodward had set "exciting, attacking football" as a key pillar for all potential managers, but Van Gaal delivered anything but and, two years later, was dismissed the day after winning the FA Cup because the sterile football had alienated the players, who made it clear to Woodward that the Dutchman had lost the dressing room.

After City beat United to signing Guardiola in February 2016, United turned to Mourinho -- a polarizing figure known for winning, but winning ugly -- in an attempt to take another shortcut to success. Sources told ESPN that Woodward read eight books on Mourinho before hiring the former Chelsea and Real Madrid coach.

"Ed knew what United were getting," the source said. "He knew it would become toxic and end badly, but the gamble was that he would win the title before it all went sour. That obviously didn't happen."

With Moyes, Van Gaal and Mourinho, when the

end came, it had been signposted for weeks, even months, that the appointment wasn't working, yet all remained in post until a bad situation had become irretrievable.

History tends to repeat itself at United, however, and Woodward found himself in that position again with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer earlier this season. Solskjaer, a United legend who scored the winning goal in the 1999 Champions League final, oversaw a 5-0 home defeat against Liverpool followed by a 2-0 loss to City this season.

He had failed to win a trophy during his almost three years in charge and the lack of any kind of stylistic improvement in the team appeared to make his exit inevitable.

But Woodward refused to dismiss Solskjaer until he simply had to. Why? Because, sources say, Woodward believe Solskjaer was "a good man who gave it everything."

United resisted the opportunity to tempt Mauricio Pochettino from Tottenham in 2019 because Solskjaer had done so well as interim manager following Mourinho's sacking in December 2018.

They also chose not to remove Solskjaer for Pochettino when he left Spurs in November 2020, or push for another top manager, Thomas Tuchel, when he was sacked by Paris Saint-Germain a month later. (Tuchel has since taken Chelsea to a Champions League title.)

When United finally dismissed Solskjaer, one coach with a winning track record -- Antonio Conte -- was available and keen to take the job, but sources said that Woodward and his fellow executives regarded the former Chelsea and Inter Milan coach, now at Tottenham, as being too demanding for the squad

he would inherit at Old Trafford.

When United hire a permanent successor to Solskjaer this summer -- Ralf Rangnick has taken interim charge for the rest of this season -- Woodward will play no part in the process. Richard Arnold, his successor, and the Glazers will make the final decision and sources have said Pochettino will once again be prominent in their discussions.

Another summer brings another crucial appointment, and one United can't afford to get wrong. But that's not the first time you've heard that message coming out of Old Trafford.

'Where will United go from here?

Woodward will make a clean break from United when he leaves his post. Despite reports of him being given a lucrative consultancy role by the Glazers, sources say that he will take time off before considering his next steps.

Woodward and his wife, Isabelle, have invested in the Quinta Da Pedra Alta winery in Portugal's Douro Valley, but the former investment banker retains a hunger to work again in football. Sources have told ESPN that he resigned at United as a point of principle after being unable to support the ESL breakaway plans.

"He has friends who support West Ham and Leicester and he just couldn't throw his weight behind a competition that had no relegation and would leave clubs like that with no hope of ever competing at the top again," a source said.

Despite the perception outside of Old Trafford that Woodward has failed during his time in charge of United, his loss is keenly felt by the Glazers, who regard him as

having driven the club's commercial growth after initially advising them on their 2005 takeover while working for JP Morgan.

"If the Glazers had 800 staff and they had to make 799 redundant, Ed would be the last man standing," a source told ESPN. "Joel Glazer trusts Ed implicitly, so behind the scenes at least, this is a big moment for the owners."

Woodward's replacement, Arnold, has followed the same career path as the man heading out of the door, going from Bristol University to the banking sector and then to Manchester United. To many he is regarded as nothing more than a Woodward clone, another Glazer executive who ultimately only acts as the gatekeeper to those who make all the big decisions: the Glazers.

Yet sources also told ESPN that Arnold is a more demanding, forceful figure than Woodward, "somebody who will carry the flag and lead," so there may be a subtle change in approach to the way the club is run and how managers and players are recruited.

Arnold's connection with Woodward ensures that the new man will have to emerge from his predecessor's shadow and assert his own personality, however.

Woodward has been criticised -- criticism he accepts as valid -- for being too accessible in his early days; Arnold is less likely to be encouraging supporters and the media to offer their opinions. Arnold is personable, but while Woodward is the type of character to invite you into a room, Arnold is more likely to usher you out of it. And the big office at United, the one past the Premier League and Champions League trophies, will soon be his.

Right now, on Woodward's desk, there sits a framed photograph of the scoreboard at Olympiakos in February 2013 which reads "Olympiakos 2 Manchester United 0." It was taken by Woodward as Moyes' United trailed in their Champions League round of 16 tie against the Greek champions; the idea was that it would provide a constant reminder of the lowest point of his time in charge. Things arguably got worse, but it's a reminder nevertheless.

Arnold won't be able to get rid of those two trophies, but he can start by removing the photograph and hoping it can be replaced with something more uplifting in the years ahead.

Gwiji by David Chikoko

COACH GOES AWAY
"WHEN ONE DOOR IS CLOSED, MANY MORE IS OPEN"
APPLY



SPORT

Tuchel reaffirms he's boss at Chelsea, where player power long ruled

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TONIGHT @ 9:00

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hills
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Copa Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELEKI
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 SPORTS LIVE
22:30 Bongo Hills

TONIGHT on EATV
Find out how using glass blocks from Canghui Traders Limited can improve your home decor

And Tanfix Quality Choice has an innovative solution for wall fungus

It's all on Ujenzi at 9PM

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
15:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM

Simba SC coach in need of competent midfielder



Simba SC head coach, Pablo Franco Martin.

By Correspondent Faustine Feliciane

SIMBA SC head coach, Pablo Franco Martin, has said he is working with the club's management to ensure they find a player with great potential to play the role of midfielder to add strength to the team's squad.

Pablo said he is aware of the arrival of footballers who came to the club for trials during its participation in this year's Mapinduzi Cup, which is taking place Zanzibar.

"The leadership has in-

formed me of every player who has come to the club, we will look at them and whoever has the criteria I want will be roped in to strengthen the squad," Martin said.

The tactician further said it is too

early for him to comment on the players he has already seen, given he is still monitoring them.

Simba SC has brought foreign players, Sudanese midfielder Sharif Eldin Shiboub, and winger Cheikh Moukoro from Ivory Coast to feature in trials.

The foreign footballers have already started playing for the team in this year's Mapinduzi Cup in the Isles.

Simba SC's Board of Directors' Chairman, Salim Abdallah, stated that any player the coach is interested in will be signed by the club.

Abdallah also noted if the coach is not interested in the footballers, the outfit will not rope them in.

The official stated: "The coach has the final decision on players that are to be recruited, the gaffer knows the footballers that have come for trials... if he is interested in any of them, we will sign the footballer."

Simba SC was yesterday set to confront Zanzibar's Mlandege in the Mapinduzi Cup at Amaan Stadium in the second match for either outfit.

The NBC Premier League defending champion needed only a draw with the Zanzibar club to make it to the tournament's last four.

Simba SC opened its campaign in the showdown impressively after cruising to 2-0 victory over Zanzibar's Selem View FC on Wednesday.

Mlandege settled for a 0-0 draw with Selem View FC in the first match that took place on January 3.

Four, not five fielders allowed outside inner circle for slow over rate in T20Is

DUBAI

In its latest attempt to tackle slow over rates, the ICC has put in place an "in-match penalty" in T20Is designed to hit the fielding team where it could really hurt. ESPNcricinfo breaks down the new ruling.

If the fielding team fails to start the final over by the stipulated time for it to start, they will be docked one fielder from outside the 30-yard circle.

So for the duration of the innings, they will be allowed four, instead of five, fielders outside the 30-yard circle. The rule change applies to both men's and women's T20Is.

According to the new rule, which was made public by the ICC on Friday, the fielding team needs to "be in position to bowl the first ball of the final over of the innings by the scheduled [or rescheduled in case of an unavoidable delay] cessation time for the innings".

Until now each team had 85 minutes to complete 20 overs. In the ICC's new playing conditions for T20Is, the fielding team needs to start the 20th over by the 85th minute.

Match officials will tell both the fielding team and the batters the stipulated end time at the start of each innings. Any time lost due to injuries, DRS reviews, the ball being lost or any unforeseen incident that slows the game, will affect the end time which will be reworked.

"In delayed or interrupted matches where there has been a reduction of 3 or more overs the fielding side shall be in position to bowl the first ball of the penultimate over of the innings by the scheduled (or re-scheduled) cessation time for the innings," the ICC said.

The third umpire, through a timer. In case of any stoppages, the third umpire will rework the end time and let on-field officials know.

It will be implemented for the first time in the men's game during the one-off T20I between West Indies and Ireland on January 16.

It has. The ICC has essentially adopted an idea that the ECB brought in across its white-ball tournaments last year.

With the ICC now following suit, it won't be a surprise if bigger T20 leagues like the IPL include the ruling into its playing conditions. Last season, in a bid to battle tardy rates, the IPL brought in a new rule which made it mandatory for teams to finish the 20 overs in uninterrupted matches within a set number of minutes (85 minutes of match play and 5 minutes of two strategic timeouts per innings).

Before that the over-rate clock stopped at the start of the 20th over, which meant teams could not be penalised even if they went well over the limit by taking more time through the final over - as long as it had started on time.

The final overs of any T20 innings are acknowledged as a significant segment of play. Losing a boundary fielder at that stage thus becomes potentially critical for the fielding side. It's not outlandish to think that it could, in some cases, become the difference between winning and losing - which could hurt teams more than simple monetary fines.

AGENCIES

Djokovic's detention becomes political issue in Australia

SYDNEY

ON a tennis court, Novak Djokovic's timing is perfect. But when he arrived in Australia to play the first Grand Slam of the year holding documents allowing him to enter the country without a COVID-19 vaccine, his timing hardly could have been worse.

When Djokovic landed in Melbourne on Wednesday he found himself in a city beset by surging virus cases.

Border officials rejected Djokovic's documentation, cancelled his visa and ordered him out of the country in a move that many Australians cheered.

The tennis star's outspoken opposition to the COVID-19 vaccine struck a wrong note in a city where 92% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated.

Djokovic is appealing the order to leave and for now remains in Melbourne.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who had not objected to the decision of Tennis Australia and the Victoria state government to grant Djokovic a vaccine exemption, quickly embraced the decision to deny him entry, raising questions about whether the world's top male tennis player - and the reigning Australian Open champion - was being made a scapegoat.

"No one is above these rules," Morrison said. "Our strong border policies have been critical to Australia having one of the lowest death rates in the world from COVID. We are continuing to be vigilant."

Former Australian Open tournament director and Davis Cup player Paul McNamee said the treatment of Djokovic was unfair.

"The guy played by the rules, he got his visa, he arrives, he's a nine-



Protestors gather outside an immigration detention hotel where Serbia's Novak Djokovic is believed to stay, in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. Locked in a dispute over his COVID-19 vaccination status, Djokovic was confined to the immigration detention hotel in Australia on Thursday as the No. 1 men's tennis player in the world awaited a court ruling on whether he can compete in the Australian Open later this month. (AP Photo)

time champion and whether people like it or not he's entitled to fair play," McNamee told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "There's no doubt there's some disconnect between the state and the federal government."

"I hate to think politics are involved but it feels that way."

For the first two years of the pandemic, under Morrison's leadership, Australia pursued a COVID-zero policy, seeking to eliminate the virus through strict border controls and local lockdowns. Australians weren't able to travel overseas except in extraordinary cir-

cumstances and many living abroad couldn't return, creating hardships for separated families.

In recent months, Morrison's government has pivoted to a living-with-COVID approach that includes open borders and a lighter touch on domestic restrictions. He implemented the changes just as the highly contagious omicron variant started to take hold.

Morrison, who is seeking re-election in March, has faced heavy criticism for the new strategy. But he points to Australia's low death rate and strong economy - both among the best in the world

as evidence he can steer the country through the crisis.

"We have no choice but to ride the wave (of omicron cases)," he said. "What's the alternative? What we must do is press on."

Morrison has also been criticized for failing to secure enough rapid antigen tests to take pressure off PCR testing sites where waiting times in some states have exceeded five hours. He has refused to make rapid tests widely available and free.

Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, has been hardest hit by the current omicron surge, which

emerged after state Premier Dominic Perrottet relaxed mask mandates and other rules.

Other states have been slower to relax virus-related restrictions, creating tension between Australia's states and the federal government.

The cancellation of Djokovic's visa was poorly received in his native Serbia, where he is a national hero.

The Serbian president condemned the move and Djokovic's family voiced anger at what they portrayed as an affront to the Serbian people.

"You, famous Prime Minister (Morrison) of the faraway naturally beautiful country, are behaving according to your own principles, which have nothing to do with us and our principles," Djokovic's father Srđan told reporters. "We are humans, and you, sir, are not."

Djokovic has been left to wait out the court process at Melbourne's down-market Park Hotel. Fellow residents there include refugees and asylum-seekers who have been transferred from Australia's off-shore detention centers of Manus Island and Nauru.

In October, a COVID-19 outbreak at the hotel infected about half of the 46 asylum-seekers then being held there.

AP

Flexibles by David Chikoko

