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JPM makes Prisons seed producer, to stem GMOs

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli has directed the Tanzania Prison Services to embark on the production of crop seeds for the country to get away with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and save billions of shillings spent on imports.

Launching the new headquarters for the Prisons Department in Dodoma, Dr Magufuli said if well managed, prisons' farms can be a tool to preserve local seed varieties which are resistant to diseases, while saving up on importing seeds.

He directed the Ministry of Agriculture to collaborate with the Prisons Department in producing seeds which will be distributed to farmers countrywide.

"If you expand the palm oil seed project and embark on producing other seeds we can get away with the GMO seeds which sometimes do not even germinate, and even stop the importation of seeds," he said.

The president said Tanzania imports about 20percent of all its seed needs and 55.5 per cent of its edible oil requirements despite having vast and promising production potential in the palm oil and sunflower sub-sector.

Plugging domestic needs through



President John Magufuli unveils plaque yesterday to launch quarters for Isanga Prison officers in Dodoma Region. Dignitaries who witnessed the event included Home Affairs minister George Simbachawene, Commissioner General of Prisons Suleiman Mzee, Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau director general Brig Gen John Mbungu and Fire and Rescue Force commissioner general John Masunga. Photo: State House

“If 30 days pass and they have not paid I will personally deduct the money and pay the Prisons Service Department”

imports gobbles up over 600bn/- in foreign exchange annually, he pointed out.

The Head of State expressed satisfaction with the performance of the Prisons service in the past year especially for implementing various projects using internal funds, including the construction of its state of the art headquarters at a low cost of 900m/-.

The Commissioner General of Prisons, Maj. Gen. Suleiman Mzee said that its production activities are weighed down by debts amounting to 10bn/- that various institutions have not yet paid, as this situation impedes the implementation of various projects being pursued by the department.

Dr Magufuli asked the Prisons chief to list down all debtors and submit the list to the Treasury, giving the concerned institutions 30 days to pay up for the goods and services delivered.

"If 30 days pass and they have not paid I will personally deduct the money and pay the Prisons Service Department," he declared, commending the department for reforms it had carried out in its work methods.

He also directed the disbursement of 3.6bn/- to complete the implementation

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Run while men walk, Z'bar CS tells women

By Songa wa Songa, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Chief Secretary Zena Ahmed Said is a strong believer in meritocracy such that she wants women to earn leadership positions based on their qualifications and little else.

Speaking to The Guardian in an exclusive interview here on Wednesday, Zena who is also Secretary to the Revolutionary Council said all that women need to do to succeed is to work hard, or rather harder than men.

"To catch up with men, women have to run while men walk," she said.

The first woman to hold that powerful position said she has no problem with affirmative action but

“I thank President John Magufuli for appointed me to those positions. I believe my strength was seen there”

finds it more fitting when women fight for and earn leadership positions.

The biggest enemy of women is upbringing and socialization that place them at the back of society, the Isles top civil servant affirmed.

As a result of this situation, most women lack self-confidence, a vital asset in training and career success, she stated.

As for her most challenging role, she said her main mission is to strengthen discipline in the public service as discipline is the key to improvement of service delivery.

"To me, work is like a prayer; it has rules and regulations that must be adhered to," she asserted.

The head of the Zanzibar civil

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PM wags finger at defiant DEDs

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

PRIME Minister Kassim Mjaliwa has instructed regional commissioners to take action against district council authorities failing to relocate to official administrative confines.

He directed the Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments) to find out why some



of district executive directors have not implemented President John Magufuli's directive issued late 2019.

"I am aware of district councils whose top officials have already moved to newly constructed offices, but there are some who still operate from urban premises. The ministry should tomorrow submit to my office a report on the implementation of the president's directive," he stated.

The premier was responding to a question by Geita MP Joseph Kasheku during the traditional Thursday session of the Prime Minister's Question Hour in the legislature.

Kasheku told the House that despite relocation of offices, some civil

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DIMMAS to link police detectives in five regions

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

POLICE in Dodoma, Morogoro, Iringa, Singida and Manyara regions have launched a coordinating mechanism to track down criminals reported in crime activities and crossing regional borders, as part of a wider plan to curb rampant crime in the capital.

The Regional Police Commander, ACP Gilles Muroto (pictured), told a press conference yesterday that a task force with the acronym 'DIMMAS' referring to initials of involved regions has been formed to facilitate tracking down of criminals linked to crime incidents in those regions.

Police commands in the regions have merged efforts to block runaway routes of criminals entering or leaving the capital, he stated, noting that there was an increase in robbery incidents, especially car theft.

This tendency was noticed in crime statistics for January to March last year, and upon revisiting these trends, police commands opted to start close coordination of criminal investigation and road checks to control the situation.

Consolidating efforts of regional police headquarters is useful in controlling inter-regional theft incidents as the perpetrators run from the capital to neighboring regions to avoid arrest, the RPC noted.

"The aim is to ensure that the capital city is a safe place for all," he said, noting that

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Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has an audience with the Commissioner General of Immigration, Dr Anna Makakala, at Zanzibar State House Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Run while men walk, Z'bar CS tells women

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service, who is an engineer and procurement expert, underlined that laxity and theft of public resources are the biggest bottlenecks to quality in public services. "There are servants who steal resources meant for public services and others steal time. All forms of theft must stop," she declared. Appointed by President Dr Hussein Mwinyi early last month, the CS hopes that her work will

help to show women in Zanzibar and widely in the country to embrace hard work and a positive attitude to meritocracy. Asked about what could have informed her pick, she said her previous posts as Regional Administrative Secretary for Tanga and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy may have prepared her for bigger things. "I thank President John Magufuli for appointed me in those positions. I believe my strength was seen there," she added.

Mbeya potato farmers fear losing harvest to heavy rains

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

POTATO farmers in Ilungu ward in Mbeya District Council have expressed fear to suffer losses in the coming harvest season as the ongoing heavy rains have damaged yields in farms with some of them starting to rot. The farmers told this paper in an interview that the situation has also raised costs of production as farmers are forced to purchase more pesticides and fertilizers to save the crop. Joseph Sote, one of the farmers said their farms are currently waterlogged with rain water. "We are forced to apply fertilizers regularly because whenever we put the fertilizer in the crop, the rain comes to wash it. This hurts us a lot and we do not know if we will harvest anything this year," he said. Another farmer, Vumilia

Mshombe expressed fear that if the rains persist it would destroy the rest of the crop. According to her, the majority of the potatoes in farms have been badly affected by diseases and it is hard to overcome them. "The loss however, is not immense so far but if it continues to rain, then the problem will be serious. We all pray for the rain so as to have something good from our farms, but in this year, the rains have surpassed exceptions," she asserted. Vumilia said that despite spending a lot of expenses to produce the crop, majority of the farmers are yet to benefit from the farming due to unfair prices. "We end up getting little in this crop because buyers are the ones who decide the price of the crop, something which continues to affect our development hurdles," she said.

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DIMMAS to link up police detectives in five regions

police in Dodoma can't assure this need alone and opted to join forces with neighbouring regions to help each other in tackling crime. In car theft incidents, the stolen cars were being driven to Arusha or Dar es Salaam, in which case the police in Morogoro and Manyara regions, when involved, would crack on their movement before reaching either destination. Investigations show that criminals have collaborative networks from one region to another, compelling teamwork in the police force to square up to the challenge, he said. Among the more recent incidents, police in Dodoma intercepted illegal migrants before they entered Iringa region, which shows the importance of law enforcement collaboration between regions, he said in illustration. At the same time, police in Dodoma are holding 28 suspects, mostly below 30 years of age who are expected to face charges of robbery, housebreaking, cybercrime and possession of drugs, the RPC added.

JPM makes Prisons seed producer, to stem GMOs

FROM PAGE 1 of remaining projects, including finalising the construction of the headquarters. He told the gathering that prisons are supposed to use the vast human resources housed there to make a genuine contribution to productive activities. Tanzania has 33,500 prisoners as of yesterday, a wakeup call for the institution to feed itself by 100percent, he added

More Indonesian investments coming to Tanzania, says envoy

By Correspondent Felix Andrew

THE tireless efforts done by the Indonesian embassy in Tanzania to attract more investments in the country have started to bear fruits, it has been learnt. This was said on Wednesday in Dar es Salaam by the Indonesian Ambassador to Tanzania, Prof Ratlan Pardede during the official opening of the first Authentic Indonesian cuisine restaurant in the city. He said opening of the Danau Toba restaurant was a tireless effort done by the embassy in collaboration with Indonesian businessmen and local investors. "The Indonesian embassy in Dar es Salaam did its efforts to sensitize Indonesian and Tanzanian traders to open the restaurant in Dar es Salaam, congratulations goes to a local investor Desdery Rutta for the decision," he said. Ambassador Pardede said that all the ingredients to be used in the restaurant effective next week will come from Tanzania. He assured that the existence of the restaurant in Tanzania would contribute to the growth of the economy particularly in the value addition of agricultural products. He said the restaurant would be using local agricultural products in cooking hence help the economy and local farmers, challenging local businessmen to open a Tanzanian cuisine restaurant in Indonesia. "There are so many African cuisine restaurants in our country, but Tanzania did not take the opportunity, we believe that a Tanzanian cuisine restaurant will be opened in Indonesia," he said.

Ambassador Pardede also used the opportunity to inform the gathering that the second phase of the Indonesian language course in Dar es Salaam has been opened. Speaking during an event to launch the course at the Center for Foreign Relations in Dar es Salaam last year, the envoy was quoted as calling Tanzanians to apply for it. He said the cycle of the course will be finished in one year, in which we expect the student to reach the intermediate level of fluency. Some alumni of Indonesian scholarship will be teaching the course for free. The alumni have undergone training of trainer session by a professional instructor that came directly from Indonesia to ensure the quality of the course. Some native speakers will also join the team which will add more benefit to the learning sessions. "We hope that by having this course it will help Tanzanians and students who have interests to pursue higher studies in Indonesia be it with a scholarship or by their own resources, as well as preparation for the incoming of Indonesian companies that started to come to invest in Tanzania which we believe will be more for years to come," he said. He said they hope that by convening the course there will be even a deeper collaboration and cooperation between Indonesia and Tanzania on a stronger basis between people of two countries. Ambassador Pardede said in recent years, Indonesia and Tanzania have seen remarkable achievement in terms of economic cooperation.



CCM Secretary General Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa briefs journalists in Dodoma city yesterday on the Land Rover (pictured) Father of the Nation Mwalimu Julius Kambarege Nyerere once used during the struggle for independence. This was at an event on the occasion of the eve of the ruling party's 44th anniversary. Photo: Correspondent Renatha Msungu

PM wags finger at defiant DEDs

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servants are still staying in urban areas, thus contributing to increased transport costs, to which the premier said civil servants' failure to shift to where the new offices are located is to defy the president's directive. The government's directive was meant to take services closer to

the people, he stated. In October 2019, addressing a rally at the Nelson Mandela Stadium in Sumbawanga municipality, President Magufuli issued a 30-day ultimatum to 30 district councils' executive directors to relocate to their administrative areas. Dr Magufuli vowed to expunge any council director

defying the directive to move to where they were instructed to construct their offices, with a view to taking services closer to the people, expressing concern that the majority of the rural dwellers wish that district authorities are close to where they live. Selemani Jafo, the Minister of State (PO-RALG) identified the 30 district councils on the transfer

list as including Arusha, Kondo, Geita, Iringa, Mufindi, Bukoba, Mpanda, Kasulu. He named others as Kigoma, Moshi, Lindi, Babati, Mbulu, Musoma, Bunda, Tarime, Mbeya, Kilombero, Mtwara, Masasi and Newala. Still others are Njombe, Kibaha, Sumbawanga, Mbinga, Shinyanga, Bariadi, Singida, Nzega, Korogwe and Handeni, he added.



Vision Care Tanzania country director Taeyun Kim (2nd-L) and Muhimbili National Hospital (Mloganzila Campus) deputy executive director Dr Julieth Magandi pictured in Dar es Salaam yesterday signing a five-year agreement on the strengthening of cooperation in supporting people with blindness in the country. Looking on are ophthalmologist Dr Catheline Makunja (L) and medical specialist Dr Stephen Mihungu. Photo: Beatrice Philemon

South Korean NGO, Muhimbili seal pact to assist people with blindness

By Beatrice Philemon

SOUTH Korean International Blindness Relief Organisation (Vision Care) and the Muhimbili National Hospital-Mloganzila Campus yesterday signed a five-year pact aimed at strengthening cooperation and support people with blindness in the country.

Speaking during the signing ceremony in Dar es Salaam yesterday Vision Care Tanzania Country Director, Taeyun Kim said during the implementation, Vision Care will provide capacity building and technical support to the hospital's ophthalmology department.

He said the main objective is to help patients to access quality medical services, as well as support ophthalmologists,

provide the best services.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on behalf of the Deputy executive director of the Muhimbili National Hospital- Mloganzila Campus Dr Julieth Magandi and Vision Care Tanzania Country Director, Taeyun Kim.

Meanwhile, Vision Care in collaboration with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has donated Slit Lamp Biomicroscope worth 20m/- to the Muhimbili National Hospital-Mloganzila Campus that will be used for eye exams.

The machine will allow Ophthalmologists to examine eye diseases more easily and provide the best medical services in accordance with patients' needs. Kim said that Vision Care will

continue extending its support to ensure that patients get the best medical services so as to restore their sight, work jointly with Tanzanian doctors to reduce blindness in the country.

In her remarks, Dr Magandi expressed gratitude to Vision Care and KOICA for donating the machine as well as singing the MoU.

"The machine will strengthen eye examination to our patients because has come to us at the right time, we have so many patients who are coming from different areas across the region to get an eye exam, we really appreciate what you did to us thanks so much," she said.

She added: "So far the department will have two Slit Lamp Bio-microscopes which

will be used by ophthalmologists who examine eye diseases. We however need more machines so as to serve more patients."

According to her, before the support, the department had one machine, a situation that was affecting the delivery of services to patients.

Dr Catheline Makunja, an ophthalmologist at the hospital said the machine will assist them to conduct their medical examinations smoothly.

"This is a very important machine because every patient who comes here to seek service has to pass in this machine before getting further medical services," he said.

According to her, they normally receive 290 to 380 eye patients per month.

Councils urged to come up with permanent solutions to school infrastructure shortage

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

LOCAL government councils have been urged to come up with long term plans that would provide permanent solutions to shortage of school infrastructure at both primary and secondary schools.

The move is expected to be a solution to the shortage of infrastructures such as classrooms and desks and ensure enrollment of all the primary school pupils and secondary school students at the beginning of every academic year.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa told the National Assembly yesterday that councils have to use funds from their own sources to undertake the school infrastructure development projects.

He added: "There is no need for the councils to keep waiting for directives from the Prime Minister, Vice President and the President every year, it's high time for them to have a strategy that brings permanent solutions to that."

Majaliwa asked the local government councils to use projections on student's performance in their schools to know the number of students expected to join Form One and Form Five studies each year.

The premiers' statement came as he was responding to the question from Sengerema legislator, Hamis Tabasamu who sought to know the government's plan to finish school structures that have been built through joint efforts of citizens from the respective areas.

"We don't have to wait until rush hours in December for the construction of classrooms and other related infrastructure to begin. Let's go some extra mile and provide a permanent solution," he noted.

In his basic question, the MP said since Tanzanians have been active in supporting efforts on improving the education sector by constructing classrooms and other related infrastructures, then the government has to support the ongoing projects for them to be completed by the end of this month.

"Most of the structures that are built by the contributions from citizens are incomplete, does the government have any plans to complete these school structures?" he asked.

In his response, Majaliwa asked the local government councils to use their domestic funds to support the projects for the immediate completion of the buildings.

The government has its budget for the projects but local government councils have also to ensure timely completion of all the projects, to enable all students who have passed their examinations proceed with studies as it is required.

On December 7 last year, Prime Minister Majaliwa ordered all Regional Administrative Secretaries (RAS's) countrywide to ensure that employees in their jurisdictions especially in the education sector remain in the office during the Christmas and New Year eve.

He said the move aimed at providing them with ample time to supervise the construction of pending classrooms and desks ahead of the opening of schools in January this year.

"All classrooms and desks must be completed by February 20, 2021 and all District and Regional Education Officers, Construction Engineers and Procurement Officers should not be allowed to go on leave until February 28, 2021. We need all 3,000 classrooms to be completed by that time, noted the premier.

By Guardian Reporter

EXIM Bank Group has posted a cumulative profit before tax of 25.3bn/- as of 31st December 2020 compared to a loss before tax of 8.4bn/- in the previous year, depicting a 402 percent year-on-year growth.

The positive operating results are an outcome of the perseverance of the business despite Covid-19 impact. The bank has capitalized on performing sectors while containing expenditure to ensure optimization of its operations.

"Understanding the shock of the pandemic, the bank supported the impacted sectors during the year by restructuring their facilities in order to match their current cash flows and ensure the smooth running of their businesses," said Jaffari Matundu, Exim Bank's Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) while speaking to journalists during the press conference in Dar es Salaam.

As of 31st December 2020, the bank had given a moratorium of over 290bn/- in form of payment holidays and extension of loan repayment periods to help our clients in various sectors to absorb the impact of Covid-19 in their businesses. "Our operation in Tanzania recorded a remarkable performance reporting a profit before tax of 18.8bn/- compared to a loss before tax of 14.5bn/- in the previous year. The good performance was driven by an increase in asset quality following clean up done during the

Exim Bank records huge pre-tax profit in 2020 despite COVID-19



Exim Bank Tanzania CEO Jaffari Matundu pictured at a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday making a remark on last year's performance by the bank. He is flanked by head of credit Zainab Nungu (L) and chief financial officer Shani Kinswaga. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

year which led to non-performing loans ratio improving to 74percent in December 2020 from 22.3percent reported in December 2019," he said.

As a result, impairment charge reduced significantly year on year and interest income increased by 4.5bn/- year on year. The bank also optimized operating costs during the year without affecting its core operations.

In Tanzania, the bank was able to navigate the tide through segment-specific initiatives such as focusing and creating a niche market in the corporate and SME sector via the Cash Management Solutions such as cash deposit machines on/off site and handy cheque scanners which proved to be favorites amongst corporate customers for their ease of use, accuracy, speed and safety of transactions.

As for retail customers,

the bank encouraged the use of its digital self-service channels during the pandemic to make transactions more convenient for customers. Channels like mobile banking either through USSD or smart phones, bouquet of cards, vast POS network as well as online banking via web or app through which customers were able to access services and perform transactions twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week with ease.

"Our overseas subsidiaries in Djibouti and Comoros recorded a robust performance during the year with profit before tax of 4.9bn/- and 5.7bn/- respectively despite the impact of Covid-19. The profits were driven by well-diversified sources of income - interest income and non-funded income streams - FX trading and transaction banking and

commissions on fund transfers."

"Uganda recorded a loss of 3.9bn/- owing to Covid-19 that led to economy lock down in the country. We are pleased to report good results for the financial year 2020. We have realised 9.0% return to shareholders fund compared to a negative return of 9.2% in 2019," said Matundu,

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The letter should be addressed to A. Mutoka P.O. BOX 66769, Dar es Salaam

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Review legumes warehouse receipt system performance, Agriculture ministry directed

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE Ministry of Agriculture is due to review the performance of the warehouse receipt system on legumes so that it remains applicable for mostly cultivated strategic crops.

Prime Minister Kassim Mjiliwa told the National Assembly in Dodoma that since lentils and other legumes are cultivated by small scale farmers, it was crucial that they sell their crops in a separate arrangement to enable them get the money on time.

"Most smallholder farmers, especially those engaging in legume farming, would wish to get their money within a short period. Selling crops through the warehouse receipt system requires a farmer to wait until the crops are sold by primary cooperative societies through auctions, an arrangement which takes some time to be concluded," he said.

The warehouse receipt system requires farmers to deliver their crops to primary cooperative societies whereas the warehouse operators accept the deposit of crops in the warehouses and provide a receipt to the farmers. Under the system, farmers receive a part of the payments through bank financing based on the receipts.

Majaliwa said the warehouse receipt system should be applicable for other crops such as cotton, tobacco, tea, coffee, cashew nuts and sisal.

He however added that farmers are likely to get better prices when selling their crops through auctions. He said, for example, a kilo of legumes can be sold at between 900/- and 1,200/- per kilogram when marketed by primary cooperative societies through auctions.

"When individual farmers market their legumes, a kilo is sold at 600/-," said PM Majaliwa urging

District Commissioners to educate farmers on the importance of the warehouse receipt system and how it operates.

He said that during his recent tours in Bariadi-Simiyu, Mwanza and Mara Regions, small holder farmers complained about the warehouse receipt system.

The Premier was responding to a question from Kwimba Member of Parliament, Sharif Jamal (CCM) who wanted the government to allow small holder farmers to individually sell their legume crops. He noted that the directive by the Ministry of Agriculture that all the crops should be sold through the warehouse receipt system does not benefit small holder farmers.

In another development, Korogwe Rural MP, Timotheo Mzava (CCM) wanted the government to outline strategies to further improve cultivation of strategic crops as well as ensuring availability of coordinated markets.

Responding, the Prime Minister said efforts are now directed on promotion of local and foreign investments as well as construction of processing industries. He said value addition in agricultural crops would offer farmers better prices and create jobs for Tanzanian youth.

He said the government is determined to protect investors including those in the agro-sector. He said plans are underway to ban production of plastic fibers to boost production at the Tangabased factory which produces various products including sisal fibers which are used to make several products including paper, cloth, footwear, hats, bags and carpets.

"We banned the use of plastic carrier bags, we will now ban the use and production of plastic fibers ropes to protect investors in the sisal value chain," asserted the Premier.



Maendeleo Bank customer service manager Sylvia Chaula addresses a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday at the launch of bank's campaign dubbed "Upendo Wote Kwako". It is meant to encourage the customers to use the bank's mobile networks and services in depositing money in their accounts. She is flanked by head of operations and ICT George Wandwalo (R) and the drive's coordinator, Elinipendo Mziray. Photo: John Badi

Ministry to set up special camps to ensure stray wild animals don't invade residences

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

IN a move that is aimed to end conflicts between national parks and wildlife protected areas the government plans to establish special camps that will be used by game rangers to keep wild animals invading residential areas before they are taken back to the parks.

Plans are also to re-demarcate all wildlife corridors with official beacons so that local people may know their limits in terms of extending farms and grazing areas.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said this when responding to

a question from Nkasi Morth legislator, Aida Bakari (CHADEMA) who was concerned that most of the conflicts between national parks and wildlife protected areas are caused by poor demarcation. The legislator complained over lack of clear demarcation and beacons, urging the government to re-demarcate the conserved areas.

PM Majaliwa ordered the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to supervise the exercise and make sure all the parties are involved. He said installation of the beacons should not only be conducted in Nkasi District, but across

the country because such complaints are being raised by citizens in various regions.

He urged villagers residing near the conserved areas to conserve and maintain the corridors used by wild animals to reduce human-wildlife conflicts at national parks and wildlife protected areas.

"Villagers should not conduct activities at the corridors; they must ensure a distance of at least 500 meters from the corridors to avoid disturbing the wild animals," he noted adding that human encroachment to the protected wildlife areas has been a

challenge but also affecting the ecosystem that wild animals depend to survive.

Experts cite various reasons toward increasing human wild animal conflicts. Some of them are global warming and environmental destruction that drive wild animals out of their habitats to areas inhabited by humans. Multiplication of wild animals due to successful conservation efforts also contributes to the problem. Increasing population that leads to humans encroaching on wild animals habitats for agriculture and other activities lead to conflicts with animals.



Traffic police officer in business at the spot where a commuter bus and a motorcycle were involved in a crash at the junction of Bibi Titi Mohamed and Maktaba streets in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

Horticulture officials in Zanzibar undergo special training on improvement of efficiency

TWENTY officials in-charge of the horticulture project in Zanzibar have undergone special training aimed to support them improve their daily activities so as to achieve the project's goals.

These are the workers who are working to facilitate smooth implementation of the project which targets smallholder farmers who engage in vegetables, fruits, and spices.

Officiating the one-day training, project manager Amina Ussi Khamis said that the training was provided by experts from the Dar es Salaam-based People development Forum (PDF).

He said the project which is funded by the European Union (EU), targets at least 21,000 small farmers in 50 shehias (on both Unguja and Pemba Islands).

"As the project mulls to transform lives of small-holders farmers in the Isles through horticulture, training workers of the project was vital so as to achieve the intended goals, the workers should have the essential skills to support them deliver the best in their daily activities," he said.

He said the main objective of

the project was to contribute to unlocking the potential of Zanzibar smallholder farmers' horticulture value chains to ensure the sustainable supply of high-quality products to local, international markets.

John Malaniko from PDF wanted the workers to observe ethics in their daily duties so as to ensure that the project produces positive outcomes for the majority of the Isles farmers.

"If workers of the project will recognize their responsibilities, it will be easier for the project to produce promising results to the

smallholder farmers who have been grappling for years to benefit from farming," he said.

Ali Abdalla Mbarouk, head of the research unit at the Community Forest in Pemba (CFP) urged the workers to ensure that they document the implementation report of everything done in the project.

This project is co-implemented by Tanzania Media Women Association (Tamwa-Zanzibar), Community Forest Pemba (CFP), and the Dar es Salaam based People's Development Forum (PDF).

TFRA to investors: Venture into fertiliser manufacturing business

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Fertiliser Regulatory Authority (TFRA) has called on local and foreign investors to explore untapped investment opportunities in the sub-sector value chain by building more factories in a bid to increase the availability of fertiliser in the country's market outlets.

TFRA Executive Director, Dr Stephan Ngailo made the call on Wednesday when addressing journalists on the authority's success in strengthening quality control of fertiliser and supplement in Tanzania.

"Despite having almost all the raw materials required in manufacturing fertiliser, 90 percent of the farm input is imported, something that needs to be reversed," said Dr Ngailo, who is interested to see Tanzania produce 90 percent and import 10 percent only and the country can only do so if investors chip in and invest in the sector, which employs thousands of people across the farm input value chain.

According to Dr Ngailo, the government through Tanzania Investment Center (TIC) has opened windows for any investors in the fertilizer value chain—manufacturing, blending and packaging.

"That's why TFRA is calling upon more investors in fertilizer manufacturing, as there is a huge local and foreign market," the official said, stressing that domestic manufacturing will reduce fertilizer prices, create employment for Tanzanians and contribute to the national economy at large.

Other factors for more investment in the sector include political will, ever-increasing population - assured fertiliser markets, presence of raw materials—natural gas and

phosphates.

Other issues include huge local and foreign markets, favourable infrastructures such as roads, railway, ports and power, agro-processing industries financial institutions, labor are some of the enabling environment for domestic fertilizer manufacturing.

According to Dr Ngailo, this year the demand for fertiliser in the country is 700,000 tonnes and in the next five years, the demand is expected to go up taking into account more farmers are using fertiliser.

Fertilizer utilisation is estimated to be 23-25kg/ha equivalent to 50% of the Abuja declaration of using 50kg/ha fertilizer nutrients.

"Opportunities are available for investors in any of the distribution networks. Most of the roads are passable throughout the year to the regional level and most of the local government authorities.

On the part of principal/agent relationships in fertilizer distribution TFRA has issued licenses to more than 4,000 fertilizer business premises across the country. These help in fertilizer distribution; however, not sufficient," he assured the prospectus investors.

On input/output market linkages, the government has instituted the warehouse receipt system (WRS), and farmers/agro processors contract farming arrangements as a way of assuring farmers of reliable markets and better prices.

The same arrangements pose opportunities for farmers to be provided with inputs by off takers and/or agro processors through bank guarantees instead of expensive credit guarantees

On storage, the official said that the increased fertilizer utilization has resulted into increased crop yield. The increased yield results in increased supply in the markets leading to lower prices.



For these Rungwe District motorcycle riders, transporting bunches of green bananas from Kiimo village to Kiwira mixed-goods market is reliable business. Correspondent Nebart Msokwa caught up with them on Wednesday.

Government out to procure eight fishing vessels

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government plans to procure eight fishing vessels in effort to utilise the special zone deep-sea fishing resources as part of steps to revive the Tanzania Fisheries Corporation (TAFICO).

Speaking in Dodoma yesterday after fishing stakeholders' roundtable with financial institutions, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in charge of the Fisheries department, Dr. Rashid Tamatamah said the move would also design to create employment opportunities from ocean's products.

According to Dr. Tamatamah, the arrival of those fishing vessels would trigger development in the fishery sector as the country aimed to triple productivity to boost its contribution to GDP.

"We have not utilized the deep-sea region in the Indian Ocean since independence but the government has taken serious measures to ensure we tap the benefits from the sectors," he said.

The PS noted that the first vessel will arrive in the country in November or December this year while other five will arrive later. He said this is support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), adding that eight other vessels will be purchased, four to Zanzibar and four for Tanzania mainland.

He said apart from bringing those fishing vessels, the government has 10 programmes that will be executed during revival mission for TAFICO, adding that the revamping of the corporation will shape the growth of the fisheries sector.

Dr. Tamatamah also argued that

up to now Tanzania does not have any vessel on the deep sea region, terming the situation not healthy for the national security.

"With people around the area it will be easy to get information on what is going on there including the illegal fishing and pirates who might be operating on the deep sea without our concern," he argued.

Dr. Tamatamah maintained that TAFICO will be in charge of fishing activities and strengthen cooperation with private sector institutions.

The government has vowed to revive the TAFICO which started operating in the mid-1970s before the collapse in the 1990s. Some financial institutions have already expressed interest investing in joint ventures with the government to run the company for the national interest and fishermen.

On part, Chief Executive Officer of Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) Japhet Justine said the revival of TAFICO would open up a wide range of economic opportunities, including bringing in foreign currency.

"We have at least 223,000 km on deep sea, but we are not yet investing enough to extract resources found there. We are going to issue capital to smooth those 10 programmes that would put better infrastructures for the fishery industries," he expressed.

"With people around the area it will be easy to get information on what is going on there including the illegal fishing and pirates who might be operating on the deep sea without our concern"

By Guardian Reporter

Mwegelo in new drive to promote Kisarawe's tourism opportunities

KISARAWÉ District Commissioner Jokate Mwegelo has embarked on a special campaign dubbed; 'Ushoroba Kisarawe Festival' to promote the available tourism opportunities in the district.

DC Mwegelo told journalists yesterday in the district that the event will also be attended by Minister for Natural resources and Tourism, Dr. Damas Ndumbaro, and Minister of State in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, Seleman Jafo. She said the ministers will have chances to visit various tourist attractions including cultural tourism.

A number of activities related to tourism promotion will be conducted during the three days from February 19 to 21, 2021, said the District Commissioner.

"The Kisarawe Ushoroba Festival is aimed at promoting the many tourism opportunities available in our district. We have animals and rare bird and insect species," she said adding the area is endowed with a huge land that can be used for various tourism activities.

According to the DC, they have chosen to use the Kiswahili word 'Ushoroba' which means wild animal corridor because Kisarawe is geographically positioned as the easiest route to reach the Mwalimu Nyerere National Park.

"You can easily reach the Mwalimu Nyerere National Park by passing through Kisarawe District, we are now working to improve road infrastructures to and from the park as directed

by President John Magufuli," she said calling upon tourist heading to the Mwalimu Nyerere National Park from the Julius Nyerere International Airport (JNIA) in Dar es Salaam to use the proposed Kisarawe route.

DC Mwegelo said they are planning to offer free land plots to potential investors with interest to invest in the tourism sector. She said the various efforts by leaders in the district have resulted in an increased number of tourists as well as revenues from the previous 4m/- to 12m/-.

DC Mwegelo called upon tourism stakeholders to attend the three days festival to see a number of tourist actions and explore the available investment potentials. She said visitors will

have opportunities to visit the Mwalimu Nyerere National Park, Kizimzumbwi forest reserve, and several others.

Senior Conservator at the Mwalimu Nyerere National Park, Seth Mihayo said the festival is important in promoting Kisarawe's tourism potential. He said they are working closely with the government to ensure an increased number of investors as well as tourists.

"We really appreciate the efforts of the Kisarawe District Commissioner in promoting the tourism sector. We are optimistic that this festival will bring about a lot of changes in the tourism sector," said Mihayo promising continued support to the DC's efforts in improving the sector.

TAMWA's efforts to empower women with leadership skills win government accolades

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

PEMBA South Regional Commissioner, Mattar Zahor Massoud has commended the efforts taken by the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) Zanzibar in defending and fighting for women's rights to participate in various leadership positions in the country.

RC Massoud made the remarks yesterday here when speaking during a working session with male change agents who have been facilitated by TAMWA Zanzibar.

The session was aimed at discussing and reminding regional leaders on the importance of gender equality in electing women in various positions from the grassroots to the national level.

He said the government recognizes and appreciates the efforts made by TAMWA Zanzibar in building a society based on justice and equality at decision-making levels and pledged to continue to provide partnerships to ensure the goal of gender equality is achieved in every sector.

"The government is very much aware of what TAMWA is doing in defending women's rights, but we still have a lot

of work to do particularly to continue educating the community on the need of women to take leadership positions," she said.

The RC also said that despite these efforts, there is still a need to focus more on preparing women to be leaders to enable them to carry out their responsibilities more effectively when they have the opportunity to be leaders in various positions.

"We must realize that more efforts are needed to prepare women for leadership so that they can be effective in leadership positions often focusing not only on gender but also on one's ability, values, and personal responsibility," the RC said. He, however, advised the association to continue working closely with clerics to change people's mindsets on women's participation in political leadership.

RC pledged to prioritize women in various leadership positions in the Shehia based on the potential of those who will be able to assist in performance.

Coordinator of TAMWA Zanzibar in Pemba, Fat-hiya Mussa Said explained that the association is implementing a project to

enable women to participate in leadership positions aimed at building the capacity of women in Zanzibar to partake fully in leadership and political positions.

One of the male agents of change is among 20-members male change agents who encourage women to vie for leadership positions. Dr. Ali says he is confident that community members who had attended sensitization meetings from different shehias currently would support women's political emancipation. He said the agents are holding meetings with various groups in the community with the aim of lobbying and defending women's rights in leadership.

Dr. Ali said: "As male agents of change, we're working to educate the community on the need to change the mindsets so that people know to recognize the role and ability of women in leadership positions."

Since 2019, TAMWA-Zanzibar in partnership with UN Women has been implementing the Women's Participation in Leadership and Politics project by encouraging the community to view the woman as a legitimate candidate and capable of being a leader at all levels.



Gaudensia Kabaka, national chairperson of the CCM women's wing, addresses a meeting on the occasion of the party's 44th anniversary eve in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

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Tasks

- manages incoming and outgoing correspondence
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- at least 3 years experiences of working for GIZ and solid knowledge of its systems, policies and structures
- in-depth understanding and insight knowledge of GIZ and German development cooperation
- good working knowledge of ITC technologies and computer applications (e.g. MS Office)
- proficiency in the GIZ internal IT systems
- language skills: excellent spoken and written English, German and Kiswahili
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Tanzania to benefit from Rockefeller Foundation's US\$34.9 health grants

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

TANZANIA is among the ten African countries that will be receiving grants worth US\$35million from the Rockefeller Foundation to assist in health and renewable energy related interventions on the continent.

According to the statement from Ashley Chang, of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, the Foundation's initial US\$34.95million is to ensure more equitable access to Covid-19 testing and vaccines; leverage innovation, data, machine-learning; combat the escalating food crisis; and scale up access to renewable energy in Africa.

Collaborating with 24 organizations, businesses, and government agencies, this pan-African effort will focus on 10 countries including, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

The announcement of the grants whose total value translates into 80bn/- comes 100 days after the Foundation's landmark commitment of USD 1 billion over three years to help end the Covid-19 pandemic and drive a more inclusive and sustainable global recovery.

"Tanzanian health systems have faced recurring challenges around supply procurement and healthcare worker shortages, both of which have impacted care accessibility. Meanwhile, the emergence of infectious diseases poses an added threat to care access, as new outbreaks risk straining existing systems," reads

part of the dispatch.

To address these issues and build back a more sustainable and equitable future, The Rockefeller Foundation is investing in innovation and supporting organizations in Tanzania and other African countries to among other things; scale a crowd sourced epidemic intelligence platform and improve abilities to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks.

The grants also target to support small and medium size healthcare providers through a loan guarantee facility; Provide technical and financial support—through The Rockefeller Foundation Catalytic Capital (RFCC), the Foundation's new public charity—to small- and medium-sized enterprises addressing the issues of availability, equitable access, and affordability for protective, healthy foods among poor and underserved communities.



Tanzanian health systems have faced recurring challenges around supply procurement and healthcare worker shortages, both of which have impacted care accessibility



Monduli district commissioner Jotham Balele (2nd-R) cuts the ribbon when receiving fourteen 5,000-litre water tanks from World Vision Tanzania through the agency's Kisongo-Makuyuni community development project on Wednesday as a donation to 13 villages in Makuyuni Division. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Sabuni

Herders ask govt for grazing areas

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

HERDERS in Kimondo Village in Igoma Ward Mbeya District have appealed to the government to provide them with grazing areas for their livestock claiming that their former grazing areas were taken away by TANAPA who transformed it into part of Kitulo National Park.

They made the request early this week when they were receiving chemicals for dipping their livestock given to them

for free by the Livestock and Fisheries Ministry for use by the village dip.

The Village Chairman Subi Njate said as for now the village does not have any areas for grazing, adding that they are forced to graze their animals near farms, the practice that results in frequent conflicts with farmers.

"We appeal to President John Magufuli to assist us to get areas for grazing our livestock," Njate said.

He thanked the Livestock and

Fisheries Ministry for the free chemicals for dipping their cattle.

Some herders at the village said since the government started providing them with the chemicals, they have seen great benefit to their cattle's health.

Modestus Shungu, one of the herders said earlier they used to raise funds among themselves for purchase of cattle dip chemicals, and asked the government to continue providing them with the chemicals as the livestock sector

was an important contributor to the country's economy.

Handing the chemicals to the herders on behalf of the Ministry, Mbeya Regional Veterinary Officer Dr Samora Mshang'a said the region has more than 500,000 livestock.

He said the government has provided 350 litres for all cattle dips in the region and that it can cater for not less than 40,000 cattle for six months and added that herders should grab the opportunity.



Almas Ahmad (L), manager with the Lake Victoria Zone Tanzania Coffee Research Institute's (TaCRI) Lake Victoria Zone at Sirari, briefs Mara Region district commissioners who toured at the institute's coffee farms in Tarime District yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

EU proud to dish out Euro 263m to water, energy and transport sectors - envoy

By Guardian Reporter

THE European Union (EU) prides itself in dishing out to Tanzania more than Euro 263 million (equivalent to 738.5m/-) towards water, sanitation, energy and transport sectors over the years.

The remarks were given by EU Ambassador Manfredo Fanti at his residence in Dar es Salaam as he addressed editors and heads of media institutions mid this week.

He said the projects have brought positive results to Tanzanians including speeding up development activities.

He said as an important sponsor towards water and sanitation, the EU provided Euro 28 million (78.6bn/-) for improving water supply and sanitation, enhancing cleanliness, and for capacity building to initiate changes to institutional systems.

"The EU water project known as Iringa Clean has improved the health and cleanliness to more than 57,000 residents in Iringa's five wards of Nduli, Mtivila, Kihesa, Mkimbizi and Kitwira as well as to 60 schools," Amb Fanti said.

He said EU, in collaboration with German Development Corporation contributed Euro 51 million (143.2m/-) for water and sanitation projects under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) plans.

He said the plan was launched in 2011 and prioritized in improvement to water availability and sanitation in Kigoma, Sumbawanga and Lindi that enabled reliable water supply to 500,000 residents.

"Under this plan, the ability of urban water and sanitation authorities and public mobilization campaign have been strengthened that in turn improved water treatment and distribution. In Kigoma water distribution network has seen the increase of water supply points,

and the construction of new plants for pumping water from Lake Tanganyika," he said.

Amb Fanti said new water boreholes and water treatment plants have been constructed in Lindi and Sumbawanga.

In regard to the transport sector, since 1975, the EU has been investing in the plan to improve agriculture in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) by strengthening the 67km Kidatu - Ifakara road to tarmac level and the construction of a big bridge over Ruaha River.

"The road will greatly improve the availability of markets for agricultural crops from Morogoro Region, a big agricultural area hence enhancing SAGCOT economic capability," he said.

He said the EU contributed Euro 22 million (61.8bn/-) to bituminize 100km of roads in rural areas aimed at assuring farmers on the availability of internal markets as well as accessing health services centres during all times of the year.

He also said the EU has been providing financial aid to sectoral budgets, NGOs and the private sector valued at more than Euro 115 million (322.9bn/-) to support the government's efforts in poverty reduction.



The road will greatly improve the availability of markets for agricultural crops from Morogoro Region, a big agricultural area hence enhancing SAGCOT economic capability

Dr Mwinyi appoints govt officers in-charge for Pemba

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has appointed officers in-Charge for the government ministries in Pemba.

A statement issued by the office of the Secretary of the Revolutionary Council and Chief Secretary Eng. Zena Ahmed Said said the appointments took effect yesterday February 4 2021.

The statement said under powers conferred upon him under Article 53 of the 1984 Zanzibar Constitution and Section 12 of the Public Service Act (Act No 2 of 2011, President Mwinyi

appointed Dr Fadhil Abdallah as Officer in-Charge in the President's Office (Labour, Economy and Investment; Halima Khamis Ali as Officer in-Charge in the President's Office (Constitutional Affairs and Legal Affairs, Public Service and Good Governance.

Others are Abdulwahab Said Abubakar as Officer in-Charge in the President's Office (Finance and Planning; Thabit Othman Abdalla as Officer in-Charge in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government, and Special SMZ Department, and Ahmed Abubakar Mohamed

who becomes Officer in-Charge in the Office of the First Vice President.

Others appointed are Ali Salim Matta who becomes Officer in-Charge in the Office of the Second Vice President (policy, coordination and House of Representatives; Ibrahim Saleh Jama as Officer in-Charge in the Ministry of Works, Communications and Transport and Zuhura Mgeni who becomes Officer in-Charge in the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage Affairs.

Other Officers in-Charge appointed with their portfolios in

brackets are Eng Suleiman Hamad Omar (Ministry of Water, Energy and Minerals); Yakoub Mohamed Shoka (Health, Community Development, elders, Gender and Children; Bakari Ali Bakari (Lands and Human Settlements Development and Dr Salum Mohamed Hamza (Blue Economy and Fisheries).

Other Officers in-Charge appointed are Salum Ubwa Nassor (Information Youth, Culture and Sports), Ali Suleiman Abeid (Commerce and Industrial Development) and Mohamed Nassor Salim (Education and Vocational Training).



Sisawo Konteh (R), CEO of Dar es Salaam's Aga Khan Hospital, briefs journalists in the city yesterday during the launch of its digital health App - dubbed "Pigia Daktari App". He said it is meant to help the public access specialist healthcare faster from the comfort of their homes, wherever they may be. He is with regional head of business development Mili Rughani (L) and senior marketing and communication manager Olayce Lotha. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Dar hospital launches mobile 'App' to boost health services

By Correspondent James Kandoya

AGA Khan Health Services Tanzania (AKHST) yesterday launched the 'Pigia Daktari App' a new telemedicine mobile App to help Tanzanians access specialist care safely in urban and rural areas at homes.

Speaking at the launching ceremony yesterday in Dar es Salaam, the Aga Khan Hospital Chief Executive Officer Sisawo Konteh said: "The app will address an emerging necessity as it will enable access and utilisation to safe quality health care without the patient having to visit a health facility."

He said innovative digital health app platform was the first to be launched across the global Aga Khan Health network which is a testimony of Tanzania's fastest-growing social-economic and technologically conducive environment attracting private healthcare investors in driving changes on how they can take control of the health and lives during and after the pandemic.

"The patients across Tanzania will be able to have their timely consultations with different specialist's consultations without visiting Dar es Salaam. The need for safe quality care became more pronounced in this covid-19 pandemic era which has changed norms and ways of thinking about providing enriching medical accessibility to patients without compromising quality standard and safety measures as a key priority."

He said with the digital app, patients can quickly register with their family members by entering the necessary credentials and select the doctor or services of their choice from the comfort of their home/physical locations.

"The app would be beneficial for patients who need various specialist consultations by high-quality professionals who are

not available in their community, unable to travel, and those who want to save time by not travelling too far to seek medical care from specialists," he said.

Also for those seeking privacy and who do not wish to be seen in their community with privacy issues, it is an affordable way to get a second opinion with a specialist.

Expressing government concerns, the Associate Dean Medical College, East Africa, at the Aga Khan University Prof Hussein Kidanto said the Digital health resources centre has developed the app in collaboration with the Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam to complement the government's efforts in innovating techniques using technology to enhance access to quality healthcare for communities across Tanzania.

He said: "the application provides an opportunity to reduce the burden on health systems not only in Dar es Salaam but countrywide."

He said the government has supported the innovations within the private and public health settings and through strong partnerships with health providers in the private sector, including AKHST.

The don added that the strategy provides a strong precedent for other health providers to enrich healthcare information, awareness, and services available to the people.

He reiterated that they will continue to strengthen its efforts and encourage health sector players to bridge existing gaps within the health care system enabling access and quality healthcare through joint efforts.

Prof Kidanto added that the app also seeks to tackle myths and misconception by featuring educational information to combat the increasing amount of unverified information on numerous diseases currently circulating on social media platforms.

2,500 villagers set to benefit from WaterAid Tanzania water project

By Guardian Correspondent, Babati

OVER 2,500 residents of Sangara Village in Babati District, Manyara Region are to benefit from a water project sponsored by WaterAid Tanzania that they are in the second phase of implementation.

A statement on the project was issued mid this week by WaterAid Tanzania Country Director Anna Mzinga during the launching of the project before the Babati District Commissioner Lazaro Twange.

Mzinga said they were launching

the project the first programme of which is named "Sustainable Water Supply in Rural Areas" and sponsored by the Coca-Cola Foundation.

She said the project will be implemented in Sangara Village and began in January this year and will end in June.

She said other the project's other programmes include the "WASH" (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) that would be implemented in all east African countries, and for Tanzania it is implemented in Babati under the sponsorship of People Postcode

Lottery (PPL).

"The aim of this project is to enable the availability of water supply services, modern pit latrines and environment cleanliness," Anna added.

She also appealed for cooperation during the project's implantation from the local council, RUWASA, and the village and ward leaders.

WaterAid Tanzania Coordinator for Arusha Region Upendo Mntambo said during this second phase, they will work closely together with RUWASA.

Launching the project, Babati

DC Lazaro Twange said they have received the project with two hands and great humility.

Twange said every year the government increases its water budget resulting in many Tanzanians pushed closer to water supply services. "Stakeholders like you assist us greatly and I assure you of adequate cooperation," Twange said.

Sangara Village Chairman Martine Duuma said the project's first phase saw the construction of six water supply points hence, he added, they request for more supply points.

50 percent of Mbeya's secondary schools to have dormitories by 2025 - RC Chalamila

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE government in Mbeya Region says it will make sure by the year 2025 half of secondary schools have dormitories built for them to enable all students, especially girls stay in schools aimed at improving education levels and make them circumvent child pregnancies.

This was revealed mid this week by the Mbeya regional commissioner Albert Chalamila during the visit by the ruling CCM Political Committee to inspect the implementation of various development projects including those for water, health, and education.

Speaking at Wigamba Secondary School in the City's Isanga Ward that was faced by lack of two classrooms, Chalamila said students take long periods of time going to school and back, hence they are prone to many untoward activities.

He said when they mobilizing for the construction of the dormitories, as for now, the government plans to ensure all students get their lunch at school because, he added, hunger often makes students not following up with their studies.

"But also we have to make our youth spurn temptations, as new statistics for HIV infections are worrying, as they show the youth who are infected more with HIV are those of the age between 15 and 24 years, many of who are students," the RC said.

Mbeya Region CCM Chairman Jacob Mwakasole who led the Committee during the visit

praised the government for its vision in building dormitories saying the step will remove bad temptations from students.

He called on Mbeya residents to work together with the government in strengthening education infrastructures including the construction of classrooms, pit latrines, laboratories, and dormitories to enable students to learn in a friendly environment.

He called on students to study hard and avoid intimate relations while young as they could end their education through pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

He also said they were satisfied by the construction of the two classrooms and an office at Wigamba Secondary school and called on the Ward leaders to improve the pit latrines to avert the eruption of infectious diseases.



But also we have to make our youth spurn temptations, as new statistics for HIV infections are worrying, as they show the youth who are infected more with HIV are those of the age between 15 and 24 years, many of who are students



Naledi Pandor, Chairperson of the AU Executive Council

By Special Correspondent, Addis

Ababa

THE 38th ordinary session of the African Union (AU) Executive Council, which comprises ministers of the 55-member pan-African bloc, opened on Wednesday in the framework of the 34th AU summit.

The two-day session, which is being held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, is expected to consider the draft agenda and declarations of the assembly with appropriate recommendations for consideration by the AU heads of states, whose session is slated to take place from Feb. 6 to 7.

Naledi Pandor, Chairperson of the AU Executive Council, who

African ministers kick off meeting in framework of 34th AU summit

is also Minister Of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, said in her opening remarks that the COVID-19 pandemic "has had severe effects on our countries and yet it has also united us in a manner reminiscent of the solidarity that the OAU (Organization of African Unity) led against apartheid South Africa."

"While we are not yet at a level that allows a focus on post COVID-19 recovery, it will be logical to use our precious unity to devise solutions that allow

Africa to grow together," the South African minister said.

Noting that the COVID-19 crisis has created "an unprecedented opportunity to devise innovative responses to new challenges and problems," she also stressed that the Executive Council may need to initiate an AU-led reflection on what next and how should we coordinate.

Pandor also said that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the continent in March 2020, African countries have made "huge strides in containing the spread of the

virus."

The AU summit is being under the theme "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want," which is also the theme of 2021.

The AU had dedicated 2020 a year of Silencing the Guns in Africa, which followed the 33rd AU Summit in February last year that was held under the theme "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development."

South Africa has been serving the rotating chairmanship of the African Union (AU) since last year.

The Guardian

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**Taking A New Look
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Tour guides' pay, recruitment criteria will impede efficiency

THE government has underscored the need for Mount Kilimanjaro tour operators to observe contractual obligations with respect to the engagement of tour guides, porters and other "assistants".

Natural Resources and Tourism deputy minister Mary Masanja made remarks to this effect in the National Assembly earlier this.

She was responding to a question from Vunjo legislator Dr Charles Kimei, who raised concerns that some operators did not abide by laid down employment and remuneration guidelines.

Tracking pay for Kilimanjaro tour guides has been in the air for some years, and is taking up greater formalisation as it isn't apparently a matter of reaching such agreements but observing or enforcing them.

The government is demanding that tour operators make sure all the people they hire or otherwise deploy to serve tourists climbing the mountain are paid in accordance with set guidelines.

This refers to the 2015 guidelines on tour operators, where a tour guide is supposed to be paid \$20 per day, equivalent to at least 40,000/-, a chef's pay pegged at \$15 (not less than 30,000/-) and porters \$10 (around 20,000/-) per day.

It appears that this payment schedule is only scrappily observed, with a lot of hesitation in how employers meet these guidelines.

While it isn't possible here to list out the pros and cons of arguments by both sides, there are preliminary problems with that schedule, for instance whether this is indicative pay or capping levels.

If the pay is indicative, it means that it is minimal and thus employers will have to pay higher for longer-serving porters and other

categories to avoid unhealthy flows of labour fuelled by competition between service providers.

If on the other hand the payment levels are caps, it means the porters and others can't demand greater pay.

When specific guidelines point at exactly what a person should be paid, that means all those in that category will be paid the same way, which is a non-starter.

In that sense, the guidelines are meant to be capping to employers and are intended to be indicative for employees, with the MP seemingly putting up a case for those still obtaining less than that indicative payment.

The question that comes up is whether the conditions were the same in 2015 as at present, especially in the flow of tourists and competitiveness among service providers.

Payment is often pegged to business turnover, and it is uncertain how such a criterion can be applied today. Is it yet time for 'business as usual' in wage demands in tourism?

The legislator also wanted the government to put in place procedures requiring tour operators to give priority to youths residing in the villages near Mount Kilimanjaro for such jobs.

He said very few of them secure jobs from tour operators but did not give reasons. But surely, we should not reach a point where service providers are directed who to employ and what to pay them.

Should such job opportunities be turned into a right for particular people - and at given terms and conditions - the sector would find it hard maintaining competitiveness and efficiency. Some compromise would prove invaluable to all parties concerned.

Line-up of Zanzibar's new projects promises bright future for the Isles

A SERIES of important projects are being initiated by the Zanzibar government under the leadership of President Hussein Ali Mwinyi.

The strategic anchor of the pace of initiatives is a Blue Economy centerpiece whose outreach on potential stakeholders includes the Omani Diaspora and its immediate neighbours, while to a certain extent the Union authorities are also involved.

Plenty remains to be set out in the latter aspect but the groundwork projects are being initiated to take off in a few years.

Zanzibar has lately signed a memorandum of understanding with a Spanish company Tange & Intertorco Group, covering a feasibility study and the construction of a joint fishing port at Mpigaduri on Unguja Island, a port at Mkoani on Pemba Island and power generation from natural gas.

President Mwinyi said after the signing that he was pleased with the big project that incorporates Unguja and Pemba fishing ports that will feature seven berths for fishing vessels - five at Mpigaduri and two at Mkoani.

It is also an act of integration when the two islands conduct a series of economic activities together rather than living far apart.

The project involves the purchasing of fishing vessels for deep-sea fishing and a floating barge for construction and repairs of fishing vessels for small fishermen, along with a factory for making fishing gear, including nets.

That means that the specific types of fishnets needed and indeed the pricing will be within the reach of ordinary fishermen, when their manufacturing is embedded into a

turn-key project.

Along with a fish processing factory, a fertiliser plant to use fish remains as raw materials are included in the project.

Also included are an international fish auction mart, rooms for cold storage of fish, and a fishing industry training centre.

The Zanzibar leader noted that when the projects are implemented, the Isles will register more rapid economic growth in that the projects involve the government collaborating with 12 firms from Norway, Spain, Germany, South Korea and the United States.

All this is far from coincidental or arising just from new ideas of the current authorities, but part of Africa emerging as a market to be reckoned with.

While Dr Mwinyi renewed his appeal to potential investors to put their feet into Zanzibar as there are many project openings especially in relation to the Blue Economy strategy, something more can be said.

The fact of the participating companies being drawn from a scatter of countries from the US to Europe and the Far East stands testimony that there is a favourable climate for investments, and thus more companies will be drawn into the fold.

We could also note what a top Tange & Intertorco Group official said, which is that Zanzibar is an integral part of a Tanzania continuing to attract investors from the world's various sources of venture capital.

This effort at attracting foreign investors into projects with evident relevance in the sub-regional, continental and international markets ought to be applauded and encouraged the best way possible.

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By Makhtar Diop

CLIMATE change is the defining challenge of our time, and clean energy and green transport are the keys to addressing it.

Less than two decades ago, energy emissions seemed to be spiraling out of control as countries were locked into a debate about who should bear the costs of a green transition.

A few years and international agreements later, the energy outlook is more hopeful, with renewable sources helping reduce power emissions by 1.2 per cent in 2019.

Decarbonising energy is heading in the right direction, but transport - the second-biggest global source of greenhouse gas emissions - is in a very different situation.

Emissions from transport increased by less than 0.5 per cent in 2019 and, although this is an improvement compared with 1.9 per cent annual growth since 2000, transport still accounts for about 24 per cent of direct carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion.

If we are to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius, the time to make green transport the norm is now.

At the root of the problem is that transport is a harder sector in which to control emissions than energy. It is highly decentralised with a wide range of actors across many different modes, such as rail, road, air, and maritime.

Human behaviour plays a larger role in demand patterns and is more difficult to manage proactively. Technological innovation in transport has not been primarily oriented to decarbonisation but rather to greater consumer convenience, such as shared riding, with unclear effects on carbon emissions.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic slump, growing economies and expanding middle classes often meant shifts away from public transport toward more and larger vehicles.

It does not help that transport also lacks a strong multimodal planning tradition because of institutions and jurisdictions' fragmentation.

Transport's impact on climate change is plain to see. But addressing it will require a shared international commitment and a high degree of cooperation.

This week, the World Bank and World Resources Institute (WRI) Ross Centre for Sustainable Cities are convening leaders in the sector to do just that. Transforming Transportation 2021 will discuss how COVID-19 recovery can be an opportunity to decarbonise

Climate change: Time ripe to decarbonise transport globally



the sector by adopting the "avoid-shift-improve" framework.

Among other policy tools, this three-part framework aims to avoid unnecessary trips; shift passengers to public transport and non-motorised transport, as well as freight to railways; and improve vehicles' fuel efficiency to make lower-carbon modes competitive.

The World Bank is already helping countries undertake fossil fuel subsidy reforms and adapt technologies such as e-mobility to their contexts.

Innovative initiatives are also on the table, such as regulating the export of used cars - which are, on average, more polluting and less safe - from higher-income countries to lower-income ones, especially to those in Africa.

WRI designs practical, evidence-based policies to support cities and countries implementing mobility solutions that promote inclusion, sustainability, and safety, most recently supporting the transition to electric bus fleets in dozens of cities worldwide.

The good news is that the decarbonisation trajectories of transport and energy are interconnected, allowing for mutually reinforcing reforms.

Increased diffusion of disruptive technologies such as e-mobility and electric buses means that the power mix's greening will ultimately lead to cleaner passenger mobility.

Moreover, the use of electricity to produce hydrogen fuel cells could enable decarbonisation benefits in the heavy-duty vehicle and maritime sectors. Technological advancement in

transport will benefit energy, and vice versa.

Nonetheless, to realise these new technologies' full potential, policymakers need to provide adequate incentives and take bolder actions. They should seek partnerships with the private sector and academia across industry boundaries.

Thanks to regulatory sandboxes, emerging technologies and business models can be tested at a smaller scale to determine how to craft appropriate policies that will produce sustainable results.

Much remains to be done to ensure that the decarbonisation of transport systems and infrastructure benefits everyone, especially those with the lowest-incomes and most likely to suffer job and income disruption during the transition.

Building greener, more livable, and inclusive cities requires low-carbon transport modes, along with better urban planning and infrastructure that encourage cycling, walking, and improved access to opportunity for more people: shorter, less dangerous commutes; more connections to jobs, health care, and education; and green space.

The coronavirus has put many hard-earned achievements - from poverty reduction to climate action - on the line. But it has also opened a brief window of opportunity to help countries rebuild better, addressing obstacles to the low-carbon, more resilient, more equitable economy of tomorrow.

Globally, there are many promising initiatives. In India, the World Bank is helping to

convert a 1,360-kilometre stretch of the Ganges into a modern inland waterway that will cut an estimated 162,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

From Bangalore to Buenos Aires, safer, more extensive cycling networks are providing new ways to get around cities. Across the world, WRI is working to support and revive public transport services in the wake of lockdowns.

The bank is also launching an ambitious global transport trust fund facility to support analytical studies and knowledge exchange with a strong focus on decarbonisation.

To improve air quality and reduce emissions, the International Finance Corp., the World Bank's private sector development arm, is investing in battery-electric buses and e-delivery trucks.

To help cities better understand access to opportunity, WRI is pioneering data analytics that show the impact of transportation investments and policy changes at the neighborhood scale.

As the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP26, approaches and the world looks to a sustainable COVID-19 recovery, there is a unique window to accelerate transport decarbonisation.

Political will, technological tools, and economic incentives are aligned to turn transport's climate trends around. We should not let this opportunity pass by.

• **Makhtar Diop is the World Bank's vice president for infrastructure.**

Stolen election? Republican lawmakers paralysed by Trump's false fraud claims

WASHINGTON

On Jan. 6, right after the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, 147 Republican lawmakers voted the way then-president Donald Trump and the rioters had demanded - to overturn his election loss, after months of Trump's baseless claims that the election had been stolen.

A month later, the Republican party remains paralyzed by that false narrative. Fully 133 of those lawmakers, or 90%, are now declining to either endorse or repudiate Trump's continuing insistence that he was cheated by systemic voter fraud, according to a Reuters survey of all 147 lawmakers and a review of public statements they made to explain their votes against certifying the Electoral College results.

Just two of those lawmakers told Reuters they believed the election was stolen through fraud; two others who did not respond to repeated inquiries made similar public statements previously. Ten of the 147 lawmakers told Reuters they do not believe the stolen-election narrative; they cited unrelated reasons for their failed attempt to invalidate millions of votes.

The refusal by the vast majority of the 147 lawmakers to take a firm stand on the truth of Trump's central claim underscores the political peril they face as they struggle to appease voters on both sides of a rift in the Republican Party.

Many Republican lawmakers believe they can't survive challenges in party primary elections without the votes of Trump supporters who are enraged at any suggestion that he lost a fair election to Democrat Joe Biden, Republican strategists said.

The lawmakers also fear losing general elections against Democrats without the votes of more moderate Republicans and independents who are repelled by Trump's false fraud claims and his alleged incitement of the Capitol insurrection.

The Reuters survey illuminates a semantic sleight-of-hand many Republican lawmakers have adopted to avoid taking a firm position on stolen-election claims that were discredited by judges in more than 60 lawsuits that failed to overturn the election result.

Many lawmakers tried instead to thread a rhetorical needle - saying, for instance, that they would "stand with" Trump to protect "election integrity" or "the Constitution" - while avoiding any mention of Trump's debunked fraud claims, the Reuters review of their public statements reveals.

Most lawmakers cited legal arguments that some states' expansions of mail-in or early voting during the coronavirus pandemic violated the U.S. Constitution - a contention rejected by multiple courts in Trump's failed challenges to the election result.

The lawmakers who declined to provide a yes-or-no answer to the Reuters survey included some of the most strident backers of Trump's bid to overturn the election, such as Representative Mo Brooks of Alabama. Brooks spoke at Trump's rally before the Capitol riots and encouraged "patriots" in attendance to start "taking down names and kicking ass."

In a Jan. 4 public statement explaining his vote to overturn the election results, Brooks railed against "the largest voter fraud and election theft scheme in American history."

But when asked directly by Reuters if Trump lost because of fraud, Brooks avoided a clear answer. He instead relied on technical arguments involving some states' voting process changes, saying in a statement that Trump lost because some votes, in his view, were not "Constitution-compliant" and "lawful."

While the vast majority of the 147 lawmakers never endorsed Trump's outlandish fraud allegations, their support of his bid to overturn the election played a crucial role in perpetuating the stolen-election myth that has become a central flashpoint in American politics.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll on the subject, taken Jan. 20 and 21, shows that 61% of Republicans still believed Trump lost because of election-rigging and illegal voting.

The lawmakers' attempt to appease newly polarized camps of voters within the Republican Party "won't fly" with voters on either side of that divide, said Gabriel Sterling, a top Georgia election official - and a Republican - who has been debunking what he called "nonsensical" election fraud claims since the Nov. 3 vote.

"They were trying to have their cake and eat it, too," he said of the lawmakers.

That won't work, Sterling said, because future voters will form their opinions on the lawmakers' actions - their vote to overturn the election - rather than their words explaining their reasons. Both pro- and anti-Trump voters, he said, are going to see "147 people who agree with Trump that the election was stolen."

Some Republicans are fed up in the wake of the Capitol riots they believe Trump incited. In one striking example, Reuters reported this week that dozens of Republicans who worked in the administration of former President George W. Bush are leaving the party out of disgust at the failure of most elected Republicans to disown Trump's attempt to overturn the election.

Trump's false fraud claims are likely to figure in his impeachment trial next week in the Senate on a charge of inciting insurrection. Democrats face the steep challenge of convincing 17 Republicans to join in convicting the former president. His lawyers, in a document laying out his defense, have signaled Trump will continue to insist in the proceedings that his stolen-election story is true.

Republican strategist Alex Conant - a former aide to Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and a former spokesman for the Republican National Committee - said Republican House members largely backed Trump's bid to overturn the election out of fear of angering his base of voters. But those in more moderate districts - or senators who campaign in statewide races - could pay a heavy political price for their votes against certifying the results.

That dynamic was evident in the Jan. 5 losses by both Republican candidates in two U.S. Senate races in Georgia, who were perceived as strong backers of Trump's fraud claims.

"Any race where independents are a factor, this becomes very awkward," Conant said. "Senators are much more hesitant to go down the path of election fraud for that reason."



Supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump gather in Washington

Most of the 147 lawmakers come from heavily Republican House districts where voters backed Trump by wide margins. But 43 of them hail from more moderate House districts where they won their general election last November by less than 20 percentage points; within that group, 20 of the lawmakers won by less than 10 points.

Jason Miller, a representative for Trump, did not answer questions from Reuters about its survey results and the refusal of most of the 147 lawmakers to endorse the former president's stolen-election claim.

The Biden White House did not respond to requests for comment.

HAWLEY, CRUZ DENY TRYING TO 'OVERTURN' ELECTION

On Jan. 6, the two houses of the U.S. Congress held votes on whether to accept the Electoral College results from the states of Arizona and Pennsylvania, though members also questioned other states' elections during the debates. Congressional certification of the results, which occurs in every U.S. presidential election, has almost always been a formality in which members declare a winner after merely counting Electoral College votes previously submitted by each state, based on its popular vote.

The 147 Republicans who voted to reject the two states' results included 139 House members - about two-thirds of the party's House caucus - and 8 of the 51 Republican senators serving at the time in the 100-member chamber.

Reuters asked the office of every lawmaker who voted against the certification of Electoral College results a single question at the heart of the political crisis: Do you believe that Donald Trump lost the election because of voter fraud? Reporters then followed up with each office to seek a yes-or-no answer and additional comment.

The vast majority - 133 - either declined to answer or did not respond to repeated inquiries. Reuters also reviewed all the lawmakers' public statements and Twitter postings explaining their votes. For some

members, Reuters also reviewed public statements and speeches at a rally Trump held just before the riot and on the floor of Congress before the vote on the election results.

The two senators who led the coalition of Senate objectors - Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley - both avoided directly endorsing Trump's fraud claims even as they pushed for a special commission to investigate them. Both have faced backlash from corporate donors and moderate Republicans in the wake of the riots, as have many of the lawmakers who voted to reject Electoral College results.

A spokesman for Cruz declined to answer the Reuters survey question or to provide additional comment. Representatives for Hawley did not respond to repeated inquiries.

Hawley, outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, raised his fist in solidarity with protesters as they demanded that the "traitors" in Congress unseat Biden and install Trump. Yet after that protest devolved into a deadly riot, Hawley made no fraud claim in explaining his vote against the election results on the Senate floor. He instead focused solely on the argument that the Pennsylvania legislature in 2019 - which was then, as now, controlled by Republicans - violated the state constitution by expanding mail-in voting.

That's the same argument from a failed lawsuit filed by Pennsylvania Congressman Mike Kelly and other plaintiffs. The state Supreme Court called the suit's timing "beyond cavil" - meaning petty - noting that plaintiffs waited until after Trump lost to object to a law the state legislature passed in 2019, with bipartisan support, and to seek the "extraordinary" remedy of nullifying 6.9 million votes. The U.S. Supreme Court denied a petition to review the state court decision.

Both Cruz and Hawley, echoing many other lawmakers, have said they never intended to overturn the election.

"Let me be clear," Cruz said in his speech inside the Capitol on the day of the riots. "I am not arguing for setting aside the result of this election."

Days earlier, Cruz gave a different answer when pressed on the goal of

his support for the idea of appointing an investigative commission into electoral fraud. Fox News host Maria Bartiromo asked him: What happens if the commission finds fraud?

"Then the results would have to be set aside," he said, arguing that the nation's founders gave Congress the ultimate power to determine "what counts as a valid vote."

'ABSURD' LEGAL ARGUMENTS

After the riots, Cruz condemned Trump's stolen-election rhetoric as reckless even as the senator continued to defend his vote to overturn the results. Trump never proved his claims of "massive fraud" or that the election was "stolen everywhere," Cruz said in his podcast, the Verdict, on Jan. 23. "That's not responsible, and you've never heard me use language like that."

Conant, the Republican strategist, said such careful and contradictory positioning may not insulate the lawmakers who voted to overturn the results from blowback in future elections.

"Nuance is rarely a successful message in politics," Conant said. "Whenever politicians try to be lawyerly or have it both ways, they end up turning off more people."

In interviews and public statements, some of the 147 lawmakers now say their objections had nothing to do with voter fraud. More than 80 of them have cited one particular constitutional argument. They contend that, in battleground states Trump lost, state courts and election officials violated the U.S. Constitution by making procedural changes such as expanding mail-in voting or extending vote-counting deadlines without a vote of their state legislature.

That theory was rejected by judges ruling on some of the lawsuits filed by Trump and his allies, including a federal judge in Wisconsin who said it lacked "common sense." Lawrence Douglas - a legal scholar who called the argument "absurd" - said such procedural changes by state election officials or courts are "quite routine," and regularly delegated by state legislatures to election administrators.

Douglas, an election law specialist at Amherst College, said the passage of the Constitution cited by lawmakers - Article 2, section 1 - says only that state legislatures should determine "the manner" in which electors are chosen, such as by popular vote, as happens in every U.S. state. Process changes such as extending a mail-in ballot deadline have "nothing to do with changing the way electors should be chosen," Douglas said.

HOW DEMOCRACY FAILS

Only a handful of the 147 lawmakers are explicitly backing Trump's stolen-election claims. The two that told Reuters they believed voter fraud robbed Trump of victory are House members Paul Gosar of Arizona and Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia.

Two others - House members Louie Gohmert and Ronny Jackson, both of Texas - did not respond to the Reuters survey but have explicitly claimed in other public statements that Trump lost because of voter fraud. A handful of other lawmakers have publicly alleged widespread fraud but did not claim, in their statements explaining their votes, that the alleged fraud was extensive enough to change the election's outcome.

Greene declined an interview request. A spokesman, Nick Dyer, confirmed that she believes the election was stolen. Greene said Trump "won by a landslide" in one recent video and made other similar statements.

Newly elected in November, Greene has taken a hail of criticism since joining Congress for her history of making allegedly anti-semitic statements and endorsing a host of outlandish conspiracy theories. The debunked theories she has embraced include QAnon, which holds that elite Democrats are part of a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles and cannibals.

Gosar spokeswoman Jessica Lycos said the Arizona congressman "strongly believes" the election was stolen from Trump, though she added that "we can't explain how it happened." Gosar, she said, is convinced that statistical anomalies in Arizona's election data suggest that hundreds of thousands of ballots had been altered or miscounted.

Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, called that claim one of many "vague" conspiracy theories that Gosar has promoted. Such baseless claims, she said, undermine "the foundation of our democracy."

Most of the 10 Republican lawmakers who now say they don't believe Trump lost a rigged election had previously issued relatively mild statements that avoided any direct allegation of fraud. But one of them - Rep. Madison Cawthorn, newly elected from North Carolina - made a speech at Trump's rally on Jan. 6, firing up the crowd to "fight" the election result just before the storming of the Capitol.

"The Democrats - with all the fraud they have done in this election - the Republicans hiding and not fighting, they are trying to silence your voice!" Cawthorn shouted in the speech. "They have no backbone!"

Cawthorn spokesman Micah Bock told Reuters: "Rep. Cawthorn cannot prove fraud." Bock said Cawthorn instead relied on the same constitutional theory most of his colleagues cited in explaining their votes.

Only Republican leaders can restore voters' confidence in the security of U.S. elections, and only by firmly repudiating Trump's fraud claims, said Nicholas Valentino, a University of Michigan political science professor.

"We've seen in many other countries how democracy fails," he said, "and it fails most often in this way - because electoral outcomes are not considered legitimate by the citizens themselves."

Agencies



New treatment therapy launched to boost Africa's TB fight

By Special Correspondent, Nairobi

AFRICA'S war against tuberculosis (TB) received a boost on Wednesday with the launch of a new treatment therapy that is expected to halt the benign version of the bacterial disease from developing into life-threatening stages.

The Fixed Dose Combination

(FDC) therapy, developed through a collaborative venture between donors, researchers and manufacturers, will be rolled out from mid-February in five high TB-burden African countries including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

"WHO welcomes the new fixed-dose combination TB preventive treatment that will

result in reducing the pill burden for people with TB infection, enabling better adherence and outcomes," Tereza Kasaeva, director of WHO Global TB Program said in a statement. The short course TB treatment therapy which combines two drugs, rifampin and isoniazid, will reduce the number of pills a patient takes every week from nine to

three. It will cost US\$15 and it is part of an ambitious global strategy to expand access to cheaper and efficacious TB treatment options in low and middle income countries.

"We now look forward to a surge in action from national programs supported by donors and partners to scale up access to TB preventive treatment and reach the UN High-

Level Meeting targets," said Kasaeva.

Policymakers and experts said the launch of a cheaper short course TB treatment therapy will address access and adherence bottlenecks that have derailed the fight against the disease in the continent. "The availability of this new fixed-dose combination is good news for everyone,

especially patients and their families," said Ahmed Bedru, KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation Country Representative for Ethiopia.

Robert Maturu, director of Programs Division at global health agency, Unitaaid said that an innovative collaboration model involving research organizations, donors and pharmaceutical compa-

nies will enhance access to the new TB treatment therapy at a cheaper cost in Africa.

Gavin Churchyard, founder and CEO of pan-African health research agency, Aurum Institute said that launch of the new short course TB treatment therapy marked a milestone in efforts to eliminate the disease in the continent.

AfDB, FAO, South Sudan ink protocols for \$14 million grant to boost agricultural markets

By Guardian Correspondent

THE African Development Bank on Wednesday signed protocols to disburse a \$14 million grant to the Government of South Sudan to boost agricultural markets in a project to be implemented by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The Agricultural Markets, Value Addition and Trade Development (AMVAT) project aims to enhance agricultural productivity and boost the marketing and trade of agricultural products in South Sudan. The project will be implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in close liaison with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

The five-year project will help increase the productivity and incomes of almost 20,000 farming families in Central and Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei states, most of whom are formerly internally displaced persons who have now returned to their homes.

The project will create aggregation business opportunities for farmers and traders, including women and youth, and provide them with new skills and the agro-processing equipment they need to produce competitive products.

Twenty aggregation business centers will serve as 'one-stop shops' where farmers can access exten-

sion services and connect to markets for their value-added products. Farmer groups joining the aggregation centers will have their products not only tested and quality certified, but also traded with the private sector on their behalf.

"A diversified economy away from oil and long-term growth depends on promoting agribusiness development," said Athian Ding Athian, South Sudan's Minister of Finance and Planning at the signing ceremony, thanking the African Development Bank for its growing assistance. "With the support from our partners, we are building an improved marketing and trade environment for agribusinesses, increasing people's incomes and creating new jobs, particularly for the youth."

The Bank's Country Manager for South Sudan, Benedict Kanu, noted that "a key factor explaining Africa's and indeed South Sudan's low level of agricultural value addition is the inefficient marketing infrastructure. This prevents farmers and processors from realizing the full value of their produce, even in their raw form." South Sudan has considerable unrealized agricultural potential, but the effects of continued violence combined with unprecedented flooding have seriously damaged food production, resulting in a huge food import bill.

"Thanks to this generous contribution from the African Development Bank, farmers will move faster



from subsistence to commercial agriculture by having access to new technologies, markets and linkages with other services and actors," said Meshack Malo, FAO Representative in South Sudan.

Despite the country's agricultural potential and 78 percent of the population employed in agriculture, the sector contributes only one-tenth of the GDP of

South Sudan. Agricultural and food products struggle to find their way into international markets due partly to the lack of adequate food quality controls.

The Bank and FAO are partnering with government bodies to strengthen the safety and quality of local agricultural products. To this end, two mini testing laboratories will be established in Central

China-Africa economic and trade cooperation keeps forging ahead

By Ye Lu

IT has always been an important cornerstone of China's independent foreign policy of peace and one of China's long-term and firm strategic choices to strengthen the unity and cooperation with African countries.

No matter how the international vicissitude changes, China always stands wholeheartedly by the side of African countries and join hands together with them to keep pushing China-Africa relationship into a new depth.

Working Together to Overcome the Present Difficulties

Since 2020, due to the rapid expansion of COVID-19, huge reduction in the price of bulk commodities, acceleration in the reconstruction of international industrial chains and other factors, the economic and social development in Africa has encountered many challenges and China-Africa economic and trade cooperation has also been affected. In face of the dire situation, China and African countries have been walking shoulders by shoulders to face up to the difficulties which have led to new achievements yielded in the pragmatic cooperation between China and Africa.

First, China and Africa remain committed in fighting against COVID-19 together. When China was in the hardest moment in its fight against COVID-19, African countries offered their valuable support. When the pandemic erupted in Africa, China was the first to reach out its hand by providing urgent anti-pandemic supplies in nearly 120 times to almost all African countries and African Union, dispatching medical teams to 16 African countries, organizing 6 anti-pandemic video conferences between Chinese and African medical experts and building counterpart cooperation mechanisms with 46 hospitals in 42 countries. Moreover, Chinese companies and 46 Chinese medical teams in Africa have actively participated in the local fight

against the pandemic. The construction of the China-aided Africa CDC headquarter is now underway. China has also promised to make Africa and other developing countries first when it has finished the research and development of the COVID-19 vaccine and put it into use.

Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged opinions and reached consensus with national leaders in Africa on supporting Africa's efforts in fighting against COVID-19 and deepening China-Africa and international anti-pandemic cooperation at the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19, demonstrating the brotherhood between China and Africa in weal and woe once again and fully reflecting the strong determination of China and Africa in working together to fight against COVID-19 and overcome difficulties, setting up a new model for international anti-pandemic cooperation.

Second, China will promptly implement the Eight Major Initiatives. To implement the Eight Major Initiatives of the FOCAC Beijing Summit serves as the mainline and major task for China and Africa to overcome the current negative influence of COVID-19 and carry out pragmatic cooperation. In fact, China and Africa have conducted coordination and collaboration closely by adjusting programs in a scientific, problem- and result-oriented manner and have made good achievements in the implementation. For example, the first China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo was successfully held, a number of key projects have been completed or are steadily moving ahead, a series of face-to-face events between Chinese and African brands have been organized, several Luban Workshops have been put into operation in Africa and 70% of the USD60 billion counterpart funds have been used or arranged.

In December 2020, the 14th Senior Officials Meeting of the



FOCAC was successfully held during which the Chinese and African sides jointly reviewed the implementation of the Beijing Summit outcomes and unanimously thought that the Eight Major Initiatives and other outcomes have been put into action efficiently and cooperation in various fields have reached positive progress, injecting strong momentum into the development of China-Africa relations.

Third, a combination of measures has been applied to deepen cooperation. The first three quarters in 2020 have witnessed global trade contracting for more than 10%. Both the foreign trade and export volumes in Africa have decreased for nearly 30%. As Africa's major trading partner, China is among one of the countries whose trade with and import from Africa have decreased for the smallest degrees. In this sense, China has adopted positive measures and taken the initiative to expand its import from Africa. By inviting 65 enterprises from 31 African countries to China to attend the Third China International Import Expo, USD30 million worth of trade has been reached. By supporting online recommendation, live commerce and other new models of trading, China has helped superior goods of African countries enter the Chinese market. By speeding up the access review and approval procedures of agricultural products, forage sorghum in Nigeria, fresh blueberry in Zambia, soybean in Tanzania and other products have been approved to access the Chinese market.

Chinese companies continue to be optimistic about the prospects of the African market. In the first three quarters of 2020, direct investment in Africa has maintained stable, newly-signed engineering contracts have increased by over 35%. China attaches great importance to the challenges caused by COVID-19 to African countries and is actively implementing the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). At present, China ranks first among G20 member countries who have carried out DSSI by suspending USD1353 million worth of debt service payments from 23 countries, including USD817 million from 15 African countries. China takes Tanzania's debt fragility issue resulted by COVID-19 into account seriously. The two sides have successfully signed the DSSI agreement for 2020 and are now positively discussing the debt service suspension by June 2021.

Profound Accumulation for Sound and Steady Development

China and Africa have long been in the inseparable and shared community of interests and future. Since the beginning of the 21st century, together with the establishment and improvement of the FOCAC mechanism, China-Africa relations has developed from the new type of partnership to the new type of strategic partnership and to comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership. A series of pragmatic measures announced at previous conferences have pushed forward the China-Africa economic and trade co-

operation to develop by leaps and bounds which have benefited people in both China and Africa.

First, the level of trade has improved significantly. During the past 20 years, China-Africa trade has increased by 20 times. In 2019, the total trade volume in goods and foreign trade in Africa have both contracted by about 3% while the trade volume between China and Africa has reached USD208.7 billion, up by 2.2% against the general trend, ranking first among Africa's main trading partners. China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 11 consecutive years and the trade volume between China and Africa against Africa's total foreign trade has been keeping increasing for years and has reached 8.4% in 2019.

During the past 3 years, China's import of agricultural goods from Africa has been increasing at an annual average rate of 14%. At present, China has become Africa's second largest importer of agricultural goods and more than 350 types of agricultural goods and food can now be imported into China.

Second, fruitful results have been made in project cooperation. Within the framework of previous FOCAC conferences, China has arranged a total of over USD85 billion credit capitals to Africa which have helped Africa build more 6000 km of railways and highways respectively, nearly 20 ports, over 80 large-scale electricity facilities, over 130 medical institutions, 45 stadiums and over 170 schools, bringing remarkable changes to the economic and social development in Africa. Meanwhile, Chinese companies in Africa continue to improve their localization level by hiring a large number of local employees in project construction and operation, which has created more than 4.5 million job opportunities for Africa.

According to the Africa Construction Trends Report by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, China has become the leading infrastructure

partner in Africa. From statistical year 2016 to 2019, the number of projects with Chinese financing has increased from 12.6% to 20.4% among all the infrastructure projects under construction in Africa. The percentage point of projects implemented by Chinese companies has increased from 22.4% to 31%.

Third, industrial investment has been further integrated. Since 2003 when official data is available, China's direct investment in Africa has been increasing at an annual average rate of over 25%. According to the World Investment Report 2020 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, from 2014 to 2018, China's stock of investment in Africa has been increasing by over 40% while other main investment partners of Africa have all witnessed contraction. To further guide and encourage companies to invest in Africa, China has specifically set up the China-Africa Development Fund and China-Africa Fund for Industrial Cooperation with a total scale of USD20 billion. By the end of 2019, China has set up more than 3800 companies of various types in Africa with a total stock of investment of USD44.4 billion, which has offered great help to Africa in improving its industrialization level, industrial supporting capacity and the capacity to earn foreign exchange through exports.

In recent years, the economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa built with investment from Chinese companies have increasingly shown their combined industrial effects and have become the new highlights in China-Africa industrial cooperation and an important platform to promote Africa's industrialization. Currently, 25 economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa recorded with the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China have received more than 580 enterprises with a total investment of about USD7.3 billion and taxation of USD1.45 billion.

The world today is going through changes of a kind unseen in a century with COVID-19 accelerating the changes. Against this background, China is actively establishing a "dual circulation" development pattern in which domestic economic cycle plays a leading role while international economic cycle remains its extension and supplement and will unswervingly expand opening-up to spur the common rejuvenation of the world with its own to benefit all countries in the world with Africa included. At the same time, the integration of African countries is speeding up significantly with economic diversity speeding up, emerging industries flourishing in full blossom and China-Africa cooperation facing broad development prospects.

In 2021, FOCAC is going to hold another conference when China and African countries will meet once again to discuss China-Africa cooperation in the new period of time and to propose new measures for pragmatic cooperation. In this respect, China will adhere to the principles of sincerity, practical results, affinity and good faith and uphold the values of friendship, justice and shared interests to promote the greater integration of China's second centenary goal, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the development strategies of African countries. On the one hand, China will draw a blueprint for China-Africa cooperation from a strategic and long-term perspective with a view to solidifying the foundation for cooperation, tapping into the cooperation potentials and joining all the forces to improve the level of cooperation. On the other hand, China will unswervingly push forward China-Africa cooperation, support the development of Africa and to build together with Africa an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future.

Ye Lu is the current affairs observer in China

Connecting African citizens with African decisions

By Gustavo de Carvalho

TO be effective, the African Union (AU) needs to become more accessible, responsive and relevant to the average African citizen. This means we need more information about and involvement in the AU's decision-making processes. The AU summit on 6 and 7 February is an opportunity to remind Africa's leaders of that.

Member states gathered at the summit will no doubt reflect on their responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and the African Continental Free Trade Area which was launched on 1 January this year. They're also expected to discuss the implementation of the AU Commission's long-awaited structural reforms and elect new AU Commission leaders.

Heads of state should use this summit to discuss the importance of multilateral institutions in Africa and the continent's quest to make them more effective. By pooling ideas, goals and resources, multilateralism and its institutions can make a vital contribution to the continent's future.

Regional Director of the Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) Addis Ababa office, Roba Sharamo, says the AU event provides an opportunity for the AU Commission to become more fit for purpose and responsive to Africa's needs.

When member states are invested in achieving specific outcomes, multilateral institutions work better and can benefit the citizens of the countries involved. Bodies like the AU provide expertise and guidance in norm-setting and encourage states to implement decisions taken. In 2020 for example, African states identified collective responses to Covid-19 that might prevent the continent being left behind in the global rush for medical equipment and vaccines.

Continental-level Covid-19 initiatives are a good reminder that African citizens should be the main beneficiaries of multilateral institutions. But the voices of ordinary people are still largely absent in discussions at the AU level.

Liesl Louw-Vaudran, ISS Senior Researcher, says there isn't enough interaction between the AU and



A general view during the 32nd African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10 February 2019. The 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly is set to take place on 6 and 7 February 2021.

civil society. Despite the spaces that have been opened for increased virtual communication in response to Covid-19, the 2021 AU summit agenda still largely reflects the priorities of governments. There's little space for civil society to raise its views and voices in the continental decision-making process.

Being inclusive is not easy for a bureaucracy. To achieve tangible outcomes, organisations like the AU have to overcome complex decision-making processes involving the interests of many governments. Institute for Global Dialogue Executive Director,

Dr Philani Mthembu, said at an ISS seminar in late January that "multilateral institutions are as strong as their member states are willing to make them."

Describing the power of multilateral bodies, political expert Prof Thomas Tiekou notes that policy influence is not only achieved by the countries that make up inter-governmental organisations like the AU. Individuals like the AU Commission staff also play an important and often overlooked role.

For instance, since 2002, AU Commission staff in Addis Ababa and in the field have

developed many policy guidelines, strategies and responses on diverse issues such as peace operations, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction and development. When commissioners, the chairperson or their representatives engage in mediation, political advice and good offices in countries such as Madagascar, Sudan or Central African Republic, the AU is complementing the role of its member states.

Tiekou goes on to explain that external actors who aren't members of multilateral organisations, can also have an influence on the daily affairs

of these bodies. Relying on such actors has been a sore point for many followers of AU debates, particularly when it comes to the AU's dependency on external funding.

Part of the rationale for UN Security Council debates about predictable and sustainable funding for the AU is that a dependence on external funding will limit the AU's ability to shape its own future. This has been an important driver for revitalising the AU Peace Fund in recent years.

Debates about external influence have sometimes exposed the AU to global geo-

strategic rivalries. For instance, the process of establishing the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) last year generated some debate. While China's contribution to building the Africa CDC headquarters was welcomed by the AU Commission, it was criticised by countries such as the United States for potentially bypassing AU member states in its decision.

Governments, multilateral bodies and external actors don't operate in

isolation from each other, and all have a vital role to play in achieving development and stability in Africa. Organisations like the AU are not passive agents in decision-making processes, and often have more influence than we give them credit for. But the AU needs to prove its commitment to the continent's people by showing that multilateralism matters, not only for member states in high-level discussions but for its citizens.

DM

Cultural industries catering for senior citizens enjoy huge potential for development in China

By Zhao Beijing

CONTRARY to the stereotype of old people who are usually believed to idle away their time enjoying warm sunshine in a rocking chair, Chinese senior citizens are engaging in increasingly diverse recreational and sports activities.

Li Fanglan, a senior resident in Chaoyang district of Beijing, is among a fast-growing number of elderly citizens in China who have led rich lives since retirement.

Li is a frequenter of an activity center for senior citizens in the residential complex she lives in. With facilities for such leisure activities as ping-pong, karaoke, dance, bowling, billiards, as well as badminton, the activity center is just like a gym or an indoor stadium.

"This place has good facilities, and the charges are reasonable. I could learn to play sports from staff members of the center and have lunch downstairs, which is very convenient," Li told People's Daily after finishing a badminton game in the badminton hall on the third floor of the activity center, adding that she takes exercise here basically every other day.

As China gradually improves old-age pension system, senior citizens' material requisites have been well guaranteed, and they have therefore started to have more spiritual and cultural needs, said Li Jing, head of the research institute of aging society and culture under the China Research Center on Aging (CRCA).

According to Li, China hasn't become a graying society for long, and more than half of the country's senior citizens are in fact "young elderly people" between the ages of 60 and 69.

These "young elderly people" enjoy relatively high savings after retirement, Li said, explaining that these people who have both money and time to spend are also referred to as the "new elderly people."

The "new elderly people" are willing to take part in extensive cultural activities,



A female citizen who has learnt how to shoot videos with smart phone shows a video of her life after retirement in a community bookstore in Hanjiang district, Yangzhou, east China's Jiangsu province, Nov. 12, 2020. File photo

buy high-quality cultural products, and seek personalized cultural services, according to Li, who noted that most of these "new elderly people" can learn to use computer and smart phones, and accept new concepts like paying for knowledge, online shopping, and social networking.

Cultural industries catering for the elderly are going to witness a growing trend toward products and services that are popular among relatively young senior residents, Li said.

In March 2020, when the country was

making nationwide efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, China Association of the Universities for the Aged provided online learning platforms for all universities for the aged for free, including a mini program and an app.

Since they were launched, the mini program and app have won favor with elderly students.

As data have shown, the mini program and app got more than one million users within two months, during which each of the popular courses, including courses in

vocal music, matching clothes, basics of traditional Chinese medicine, electronic organ, and cucurbit flute, were viewed more than two million times.

A 61-year-old senior female citizen in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province, has taken over 160 online courses via the mini program of online universities for the aged.

Ma Jun, a 65-year-old female citizen in Dongcheng district, Beijing, enjoys capturing beautiful things in life with smart phone and sharing pictures via her We-

Chat. It gives her great joy when her friends like or forward the photos she carefully edited.

"We didn't have mobile phones when we were young. Now these technological products make us feel like we are young again," said Ma's husband, who has been listening to audio books via app on his mobile phone.

"Although I need to pay for the contents, it's definitely money well spent. Audio books are just so convenient for me—a bookworm with presbyopia," he added.

"My friends who are in their sixties always set aside part of their budget for cultural consumptions like travel and reading, for which they would rather be thrifty in other aspects," said Yu Hai, a professor with the Department of Sociology of Fudan University.

"Seniors long for a good life, just like young people. They are willing to spend money and take action for their wishes. They hope for both good care and a rich life," Yu added.

As the Chinese government and society are paying more and more attention to the country's elderly population, cultural industries serving the elderly see great prospects for development, despite the fact that cultural industries serving the elderly are still in their initial stage, when a mature market is yet to be cultivated and supervision of relevant market activities is yet to be strengthened.

In the future, the development of the Internet industry will generate endless, diverse and high-quality cultural products and services for the elderly, said E Junyu, chairman of Anxin Pension, a Beijing-based construction engineering firm that provides services for improving living environment for the elderly.

Cultural products and services designed for the elderly will be available both online and offline and enjoy more categories and diversified market, E said.

People's Daily

WORLD VISION INVESTS 167M/- IN MONDULI INFRASTRUCTURE, TARGETING CHILDREN

By Property Watch Reporter, Monduli

IN supporting government efforts to tame poverty and improve development of children, World Vision Tanzania has invested 167m/- in community projects in Monduli District of Arusha Region.

Coordinator of World Vision Tanzania in the district, Emili Sanka said under World Vision US funding, the project has involved construction of classrooms, desks purchasing, tables and chairs for teachers but also water storage tanks.

Sanka said the project has been implemented in the district's 13 villages since 2002, targets to improve children's development from their homes to school. "Honourable District Commissioner, we are also handing over 14 water storage tanks with capacity of 5,000 litres each in addition to a rain water harvesting system," he told Monduli DC, Jotham Balele who received the finished project mid this week.

He further noted that in commemorating its 40th anniversary in the country, World Vision Tanzania will drill a 25m/- borehole at Manyara Ranch Primary School which was over 800 pupils with no reliable water supply.

"Since 2002, we have implemented many projects of which what we are handing over today are just part of the many that have been completed and are in use by the public," the World Vision Tanzania Monduli Coordinator added while adding that another 32m/- water project is underway at Mswa-



Monduli district commissioner, Jotham Balele (2nd R) cuts the ribbon to launch one of the 14 water storage tanks donated by World Vision Tanzania to communities in his district. This was at a handover ceremony held mid this week. Photo courtesy of World Vision

kini but also 40 health workers are being trained on how to handle coronavirus cases.

World Vision Tanzania Northern Zone Manager, Mkama Nagu said in the past four decades, a lot has been invested in community projects and capacity building of rural people in various areas including education and health.

"Our goal is to assist the government fight poverty by building capacity of communities to respond to their basic needs including child nutrition," Nangu said while pledging continued support to rural based communities.

Speaking after receiving the project's components, DC Balele paid tribute to World Vision for backing state efforts to eradicate poverty through investment in community projects such as education, health and water supply.

Balele warned not for profit organization working in his district against legal measures for spending much of donor funds on recurrent expenditure other than investing in community projects like World Vision Tanzania.

"You can't use 500m/- for capacity building theoretically without showing anything practically, let's all emulate World Vision's example," he advised adding that the not for profit organization has shown the practical way of ensuring that communities have tangible benefits from donor sponsored projects and programs.

Investment in infrastructure, innovation now our digital-era focus, declares telco

By Property Watch Reporter

FOR digital transformation to rapidly infiltrate the market, investment in infrastructure and innovation is important according to new Vodacom Tanzania Plc's Digital Director, Nguvu Kamando.

Kamando said in Dar es Salaam earlier this week that digital revolution is the backbone of economic, technological and social prosperity after the industrial revolution. He said the importance of digital transformation is crucial for any modern company and more so for the telecommunication industry that has played a central role in rolling out digital solutions in the market.

"One of the fundamental pillars of creating a digital society is investing in world-class infrastructure and we have invested heavily on this to build a state of the art network that offers the best user experience," Kamando said.

Five years ago, Vodacom Tanzania unveiled its vision of leading Tanzania into the digital age by transforming lives through technology. At the heart of the vision is a desire to create a digital society. "We have seen Vodacom successfully deliver on this vision by not only connecting Tanzania to the world through affordable access to the internet but also by rolling out products and services that meet both customer current and future needs," he added.

Kamando who heads the powerful Digital and Value Added Services (VAS) directorate further noted that the market's leading telecommunications company strategically embraces digital transformation as digitization reshapes the industry landscape.

"Ultimately the customer doesn't care if the network they are on is 2G, 3G, 4G or Wi-Fi as long as their experience is seamless - that is why Vodacom has heavily invested in

ensuring a seamless experience," he stated.

Kamando explained that Vodacom's infrastructure is fine end-to-end from the backbone to the core cable and radio network which is continuously upgraded to meet growing market demand especially among a new generation of tech savvy youths.

With the proper infrastructure in place, the company shifted focus to roll out innovative products and service which not only meet real challenges faced by Tanzanians but also deliver a seamless customer experience. "We believe in the power of technology to change lives, as a telco we aim at improving lives by providing cutting edge digital products and solutions to problems facing our society in business, health, education and many more sectors," Kamando bragged.

He pointed out that in today's highly competitive marketplace, innovation has become a necessity as it allows companies to grow, not only in profits, but in market share and brand recognition. Nurturing ideas and innovation is a principle that Vodacom operates by and the digital department is driven by a mantra proudly displayed in Kamando's office, 'We are inspired by Ideas and ambition!'

"At Vodacom we welcome and celebrate new ideas ensuring that we translate them into reality. One of the main ways we do that is encourage staff ideas by holding hackathons and competitions across the company devised to garner ideas from employees whose daily job isn't centered around new product development," the Vodacom Digital Director explained.

As Tanzania embraces digitization, technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), connecting things and people are becoming a reality and Vodacom has used the technology to create digital solutions for health care, agriculture, transportation, education, stock management to even SIM



Vodacom Tanzania Plc's Digital Director, Nguvu Kamando.

management all offering great productivity.

"Because we embrace a digital-first mindset, we have the drive to experiment and create new technologies that customers need and want, so we welcome new ideas, test and evaluate them to see their impact on revenue, community and planet before rolling them to the market," Kamando stated.

Creating a culture of innovation requires a complete change of mindset and way of working. The spirit at Vodacom requires experimenting and learning fast so agility is everything. "As part of our drive to become a digitally-led company, we are among the first companies in Tanzania to adopt Agile structures, principles and tools, which we anticipate will stimulate innovation and realize material efficiency and productivity gains- right now we have agile teams across departments," he revealed.

Agile squads at Vodacom which are comprised of young, dynamic and energetic individuals have been responsible for rolling new products and services in market. One of such products is 'My Vodacom App' which was developed by these teams and has revolutionized customer experienced in the market. "Another challenge that the squads was able to respond to swiftly was biometric registration where the team developed a system that reduced the time and cost of registration," he noted.

The Vodacom Digital accelerator is a strategic move by the company to help grow digital startups that come up with innovative solutions for social problems through financing, partnership and mentoring. The accelerator received over 600 applicants in different areas such as education, health, finance etc where 15 of them were selected for incubation to turn them into revenue generating applications for the Tanzanian consumer.

"Vodacom supports the innovation ecosystem because we want to see transformation through technology. We recently opened our M-Pesa API giving local to local and international developers an opportunity to create innovative products and services by integrating into our superior mobile money service," Kamando pointed out while naming programs such as Instant schools and Code like a Girl as part of such initiatives.

Inside Rwanda's \$175m green urbanisation project

KIGALI

RWANDA Environment Management Authority (REMA) has unveiled a new \$175 million (approx. Rwf173bn) project to 'green' the City of Kigali and the six secondary cities. The secondary cities are Nyagatare, Rubavu, Rusizi, Rubavu, Musanze and Huye.

Speaking during the wetland day celebration on February 2, Theogene Ngaboyamahina, the Environmental Mainstreaming Officer at REMA said that the project mainly includes rehabilitating urban wetlands and wetlands management, controlling floods, water management, upgrading unplanned settlements, building drainages among others. Dubbed "Rwanda Urban Development Project (RUDPII)," the five-year project runs from December 2020 to December 2025.

The project was financed by International Development Association (IDA), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) and

government of Rwanda. In secondary cities, the green investment will build roads, drainages, pedestrian ways and street lighting as well as upgrading unplanned settlements.

In Kigali city, the project will rehabilitate wetlands that have been impacted by historical land-uses mainly industries and urbanization and monitor systems for wetland health and water levels, Ngabo said. The wetlands to be rehabilitated include Gikondo, Rugenge, Kibumba, Rwantare, Nyabugogo and Rugunga.

The rehabilitation activities, he said, include clearing debris of removed properties, construction of water retention ponds, streams rehabilitation and flood attenuation

structures, flood bypass water channels and footpaths to access wetlands.

Works also include construction of recreational facilities, planting native trees, and wetland species for water retention and purification and promoting nature-based solutions to reduce land degradation and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

Why rehabilitating wetlands? Environmentalists say that wetlands capture, store, regulate, filter and release freshwater, curb floods and erosion control at the right time to the right place to sustain human life and biodiversity. There are about

1,000 wetlands across the country which make approximately 10.6 per-cent of the Rwandan surface area.

However, survey dubbed "Wetlands Biodiversity and Ecological Integrity Assessment" conducted by Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS Network) indicates that over 40% of those Rwanda's wetlands lost their quality due to encroachment. Most of the wetlands are in Kigali city but the area of wetlands in Kigali city has also decreased from 100 Square Kilometers to 77 square kilometers.

The minister for environment, Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya reminded all who still have

construction and other illegal activities in wetlands to relocate them to ensure they function as a natural mechanism in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

"Wetlands are still facing pressure, especially uncontrolled use of fertilisers and pesticides in agriculture, soil erosion, peat extraction, illegal mining, illegal infrastructure and pollutants from industrial wastewater discharge," she said. According to Jean-Paul Munyandamutsa, Director General for Good Governance in the City of Kigali, 92 percent of illegal activities were removed from wetlands last year.

"The activities were removed from 33 wetlands with 260 hectares. We still have challenges of remaining activities like petrol stations, some big schools and residential houses that are still waiting for relocation and resettlement. We want to remove all debris and remaining activities from wetlands by this year," he said. He said there is need for budget for wetland cleaning adding that there is still lack of wetland rehabilitation plan and guidelines.

MWANGA GEARS UP TO BECOME MAJOR MACADAMIA NUT PRODUCER

By Francis Kajubi

TANZANIA is gearing up to become a major producer of organic Macadamia nuts, a commercial crop that is quickly gaining popularity in the global market.

With such rising demand of the nuts at the global market, a foreign company is investing millions of dollars to mobilise local farmers grow the commodity and supply consumers worldwide. Kilimanjaro based MACJARO Limited, which has invested US\$1.2 million (over 2.78bn/-) in cultivation of 160 acres of the commodity.

According to Grand View Research's report for 2020 dubbed 'Macadamia nut, market size, share and trends analysis', the global market size for the commodity was valued at US\$1.17 billion in 2019 and is expected to grow at a compounded annual rate (CAGR) of 9.2 percent from 2020 to 2027.

Speaking last week during a handing over ceremony of 1,200 macadamia seedlings to Mwangi District Council farmers for cultivation, MACJARO Limited Spokesman, Austin Makani said the company is willing to deliver another 1,800 seedlings by March this year at discounted price as part of its corporate social responsibility.

"The first distribution of 2,000 seedlings to farmers was done in November last year, all being part of a pre-ordered 5,000 seedlings from the company. The seedlings are supplied to Mwangi District farmers at a discounted rate of 1,500/- per seedling from a market price of 7,000/- each,"



MACJARO Limited director, James Powell (2nd-R) presents an organic macadamia seedling to Mwangi district commissioner Thomas Apon at an event symbolising supplying to smallholder farmers in the area. Photo courtesy of MACJARO.

Makani said.

According to him, the company's plan for the near future is to reach more districts of the region and other regions of the country. He said the crop is environmentally friendly and sustainable because it allows for biodiversity as it sequesters carbon from the atmosphere hence mitigating climatic change.

The other benefits of the crop is that its husks can be used as a source for compost and animal feed while also protecting soil erosion as it can intercropped in the field. "The cost of

cultivating the crop is small hence affordable to smallholder farmers.

"The nuts are a good source of foreign currency to the nation if produced in high quality but also large quantities," Makani added saying it only takes up to three years to start reaping the nuts.

Backing his junior staff member, MACJARO Director, James Powell said his company is determined at improving the out-growers' scheme with the company as a main buyer of the nuts to be shipped to global markets.

"Farmers can practice intercropping of other food crops with organic macadamia nuts as it is rich in nitrogen fixing to the soil. Our company also offers capacity building training to smallholder farmers so that they produce efficiently and profitably."

Powell said. He urged farmers to prefer organic farming than conventional when it comes to cultivation of the crop so that their returns can be substantial.

According to International Nut and Dried Fruit Council (INC), Statistical Yearbook

2018/19, tree nut consumption has been increasing across the globe during the last decade. It also highlighted that, in relative terms, the rise was highest in the low-income economies.

"Increasing awareness regarding the benefits of nuts and dried fruits has been acting as an important factor for market growth. Macadamia nut comes along with huge health benefits," the INC report stated noting that the nut is considered a valuable food crop and is a rich source of numerous essential nutrients.

"It is known to lower heart disease risks," read part of the Grand View Research report for 2020 adding that Asia Pacific held the largest share of over 45 percent of production in 2019. The consumption of the product has been increasing in China, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. This growth in consumption is attributed to increased penetration of both organic and conventional macadamia nuts.

Europe is expected to be the fastest growing regional market with a CAGR of 10.8 percent from 2020 to 2027. According to the International Nut and Dried Fruits Statistical Yearbook 2018-19, Europe imported over 25 percent of the tree nut.

On his part, Mwangi District Commissioner, Thomas Apon urged farmers to make sure that they take care of the seedlings in cropping hence transforming their family income through bumper yields.

"It is high time that Tanzania transforms its agriculture by focusing on commercializing it to realize industrialization as the country has now entered middle income status," said Apon while paying tribute to MACJARO investors for choosing Mwangi as their investment destination.

House price boom in Nairobi slows down in pandemic-stricken market

NAIROBI

HOUSE prices in Nairobi's suburbs stagnated last year, owing to an overall drop in the property costs due to lower demand tied to the economic fallout of Covid-19.

HassConsult, which conducts property pricing index in the country, said on Wednesday that overall housing prices in the city increased by a mere 0.17 per cent largely due to a 1.2 per cent price decline in the three months to December. It attributed the stagnant growth to a decline in prices for apartments by an average 1.8 per cent in the last quarter and 4.6 per cent over the year.

The cost of homes in upmarket Kileleshwa and Kilimani suburbs, which accounted for 45 per cent of all properties on sale, registered the biggest decline in the year by 9.9 per cent and 8.6 per cent respectively. The firm linked the price fall to high land prices amid a pandemic economic fallout - which has led to job losses and pay cuts - as well as cuts on bank loans and mortgages.

"We have seen the Kilimani and Kileleshwa markets move from steep price



Kileleshwa Estate in Nairobi.

growth, in all ways a price boom, until it reached levels that buyers could no longer reach with the roadblocks in mortgage finance and reduced liquidity from a global pandemic," said Sakina Hassanali, head of property development consulting and research at HassConsult. This, she said, forced property developers to put up smaller apartments with lower price tags resulting in an oversupply in the market.

"While smaller apartments dominate the new build market in Kilimani and Kileleshwa and provide middle-income housing at lower ticket prices, the sheer volume of new stock created rental price vulnerability for larger and older stock during the economic slowdown caused by 2020's global pandemic, resulting in rental price corrections."

Apartments prices in Riverside, Parklands and Lavington also declined by 7.1 per cent, 6.0 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively. In Langata, property prices dropped by 3.1 per cent last year despite a rise of 2.3 per cent in the three months to December after the easing of Covid-19 containment measures.

But, detached and semi-detached houses defied the trend, recording a 0.03 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively in the year. Housing has been one of Kenya's fastest-growing sectors over the last decade, fuelled by a growing middle class, with returns from real estate outpacing equities and government securities.

Teraco secures R2.5-billion in new funding round with Absa

JOHANNESBURG

TERACO DATA Environments has concluded its biggest fundraising round to date, securing R2.5-billion from Absa and other lenders that will be used to build a giant new data centre east of Johannesburg.

The money will go into the construction of Teraco's new 38MW "hyperscale" data centre in Ekurhuleni. It will also use internally generated cash to finance construction. Samuel Erwin, Teraco's newly appointed chief financial officer, said the funding round also includes "several large institutions" that have joined the lending group. He declined to name them. Erwin previously worked at Absa.

"Absa has continued along the growth path with Teraco. Their understanding of our business model and funding requirements and ability to offer tailored funding solutions to suit our needs has contributed to Teraco's success," Erwin said in a statement on Tuesday.

TechCentral reported last November that Teraco had decided to break ground on a new, R4-billion data centre facility north of OR Tambo International Airport. The new data centre will be the biggest standalone data centre in Africa, with 16 000sq m of IT space,

Teraco CEO Jan Hnizdo said in a telephonic interview at the time of the announcement.

Expansion

The multibillion-rand data centre, which will be located just off the R21 highway near the Serengeti Golf & Wildlife Estate, is being built to cater for expected future demand, especially from international technology companies looking for "hyperscale" cloud computing facilities to serve both the South African and sub-Saharan African markets.

The new facility is effectively an expansion of Teraco's Bredell data centre further to the south, which is "pretty much sold out". It is, however, much bigger than Bredell, which has 13MW of critical power load capacity.

At 38MW, the new site — known as JB4 — is only 1MW less than what's available at the entire Isando campus, which is the site of Teraco's initial data centre built in Gauteng. The Isando site has expanded significantly over the years from JB1 (which now consists of two buildings) to JB3. The Bredell site is known as JB2.

Teraco, whose main shareholders are Berkshire Partners and Permira Holdings, has raised just over R6-billion in debt financing to date. Erwin declined to comment on the terms of the debt and when repayments fall due.



Rendition of the Teraco JB4 data centre.

TECHNOLOGY

LONDON'S OFFICE MARKET TO ATTRACT £3.9BN FROM MIDDLE EAST INVESTORS

LONDON

LONDON'S office investment market will attract £46 billion (\$62.9bn) in capital this year as investors look beyond the Covid-19 pandemic and focus on the strengths of the UK capital's commercial property sector, according to Knight Frank.

The top three locations "with the highest amount of dry power capital" earmarked to buy commercial assets in London in 2021 include Greater China (China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) at £12.6bn, Singapore with more than £5bn and the Middle East with £3.9bn, according to the property consultancy's annual London report.

"Despite the UK's lockdown restrictions and the impact on global travel due to the pandemic, London's appeal remains unwavering to global investors," said Faisal Durrani, head of London commercial research at Knight Frank. "This continues to be the case for Middle East investors who have spent £16.4bn over the last 10 years on London offices, accounting for just over 10 per cent of all London office investment."

Britain saw the biggest rise in vacant shops in over two decades late last year, and the sharpest increase in empty offices since the global financial crisis of 2008-09, according to a quarterly study by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The RICS study showed a swing in demand towards industrial space - such as warehouses to service booming online shopping - and away from traditional retail and offices.

Forty-five per cent of working adults were working from home in the third week of January, according to the Office for National Statistics, the highest since June, after new restrictions were enforced across the country at the start of January. RICS said office demand was weaker in London than elsewhere, especially away from prime locations, and surveyors do not expect any rise in office or retail rents



The area around City Hall stands quiet in London, during England's third coronavirus lockdown.

for the next year at least.

However, Knight Frank said a development shortfall in London's office investment market will spur future rental growth despite the pandemic-induced surge in remote working. Only 3.2 million square feet of 26.6 million square feet of pipeline office developments tracked by Knight Frank will be delivered to the market by 2024.

At the same time, the long-run annual average take-up of new and refurbished space is 5.3 million square feet, said Knight Frank, with the supply and demand imbalance putting upward pressure on rents in the longer term.

London's reputation as a safe haven and leading global city is also still an attraction for international investors, particularly as returns are attractive compared with other European and global gateway cities. Removal of the

'no deal Brexit' risk premium will be a further catalyst for capital markets activity, Knight Frank said.

"The pandemic will likely go down as one of the greatest disruptors commercial property has ever seen, however we may be on the cusp of a post-pandemic road to recovery for real estate," said Mr Durrani. The pandemic has also accelerated the focus on high-quality offices, with businesses increasingly choosing modern workplaces that offer amenities, wellbeing and sustainability. Knight Frank expects demand for prime offices to intensify, relative to poorer quality buildings, creating a greater disparity between the prime and secondary markets. London also boasts the highest concentration of green buildings globally, at almost 3,000, offering opportunities for "green" investors and those looking to rebalance their carbon targets.

"Once you factor in a requirement for buildings to meet increasingly ambitious ESG [Environmental, Social, and Governance] credentials, it is clear the volume of office space available to satisfy demand for prime office space is limited," Mr Durrani said.

In Britain's residential sector, house prices fell in January for the first time since the introduction of a stamp duty holiday, according to the Nationwide Building Society, indicating that a mini market boom might be over as the end of the tax break approaches. The average price of a house fell by 0.3 per cent from December to £229,748.

Red Sea tourism project awards contracts to build hotel, villa infrastructure

RIYADH

RED Sea Development Company, the developer of the mammoth tourism project on Saudi Arabia's west coast, said it awarded contracts to complete structural work for a luxury hotel and villas.

Saudi Arabian contractor Al Bawani will conduct civil and structural works across 40 hotel villas on the Southern Dunes site while Swiss timber specialist Blumer Lehmann will carry out planning, construction and fabrication works for a hotel on Ummahat Al Shaykh Island, the developer said in a statement on Wednesday. The company did not disclose the value of these contracts.

The contract awards "signify the start of a new phase" for the mega tourism project as it advances into hotel development, John Pagano, chief executive of the Red Sea Development Company, said. "The Red Sea Development Company has made significant progress in terms of the design and construction of key infrastructure to enable the development of hotel assets," he added.

Al Bawani will conduct civil and structural works across 40 hotel villas on the Southern Dunes. A villa model in Southern Dunes. The project is a key tenet of Saudi Arabia's tourism strategy, which aims to increase the contribution of tourism to more than 10 per cent of the kingdom's GDP by 2030, up from 3 per cent in 2020.

The Red Sea Development Company's masterplan covers a 28,000 square kilometre site containing 90 islands. Set

to welcome its first visitors in 2022, the project is expected to be completed by 2030. It will house 50 hotels containing 8,000 rooms, a luxury marina, entertainment and leisure facilities.

The company, which is owned by the kingdom's Public Investment Fund, is developing 16 hotels with 3,000 rooms across five islands and two inland sites as part of the first phase that will be delivered by 2023. This phase will cost an estimated 28 billion Saudi riyals to 29bn riyals (\$7.46bn-\$7.73bn) to develop. Al Bawani's work will help the developer to link villas, restaurants and central buildings within its resort, the company said.

Blumer Lehmann will design and manufacture all engineered timber material for a hotel, overwater and beach villas, spa and fitness building, restaurants and an arrival building. The company said last year it had awarded contracts worth 7.5bn riyals to date.

Last month, the Red Sea Development Company chose Dublin-based DAA International to operate the project's international airport. It awarded the airport design contract to UK-based architecture firm Foster + Partners in October 2019.

The project is being built under a "regenerative tourism" model, which aims not only to protect local habitats, but also create conditions for local environments to thrive. Only 22 of the site's 90 islands will be built on and visitor numbers to the area will be capped at one million a year.



A rendition of the 40 hotel villas to be built on the Southern Dunes at Red Sea Project.

Technology and green infrastructure investment can boost Mena recovery

ABU DHABI

MIDDLE East and North Africa policy makers need to remain accommodative with fiscal and monetary measures, while countries can accelerate their economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic by investing in green infrastructure, technology and digitalisation, a senior International Monetary Fund official said.

The recovery across countries is uneven and hinges on the vaccination roll out, containment measures and the ability of countries to limit the scarring from the pandemic, Jihad Azour, the director of the Middle East and Central Asia department at the IMF said in an interview with The National.

"We see certain improvements in some of the fundamentals like oil price, the level of low interest rates, some countries bouncing back, but the fog of uncertainties of the second and third wave of the pandemic ... are casting a shadow on this year," Mr Azour said.

"We need to accelerate the recovery ... because to regain the levels of pre-Covid we need still more effort. We will not regain this before 2022 and we don't want to have a lost decade whereby we will be slower with reforms and slower in recovery."

Mr Azour said 2021 is a year where the region finds itself in a "race between the virus and the vaccine, and a recovery ... will hinge on three important factors; access to vaccines in terms of inoculation, the strength of the policy response; fiscal monetary all that has been deployed over the



A Cira-03 robot capable of taking swabs for Covid-19 PCR tests.

last few months and the impact of the global economy on the region, on the oil price, and the global outlook on interest rates."

The economies of the Mena region are projected to grow 3.1 per cent this year after contracting 3.8 per cent in 2020. Countries that have accelerated the vaccination could benefit from an additional 0.3 or 0.4 per cent growth this year. Those lagging could lose 0.3 per cent or 0.5 per cent.

For instance, Mr Azour said despite the challenges Palestinians faced in the first wave of the pandemic and the second, their economy, which relies largely on donor aid, managed the first wave "in a relatively good way."

But he added, "it's important for Palestine to get access to the vaccine because we see the positive impact of vaccination in reducing the spreading of the virus and allowing the economy to recover." Lebanon whose economy contracted 25 per cent in 2020, may see an additional contraction of 9 per cent this year de-

pending on the capacity of forming a cabinet and implementing needed reforms, as it battles the pandemic, Mr Azour said.

Iran, which has the highest number of Covid-19 infections in the region at over 1.4 million, may see an economic recovery of between 3 to 3.3 per cent growth in 2021, after contracting 5.7 per cent last year.

While vaccinations are key to kickstarting growth and revitalising economies, continued fiscal and monetary support is critical to preventing socio-economic disparities from widening, protecting businesses and mitigating rising unemployment.

Arab countries are projected to have the equivalent of one million fewer full-time jobs this year, compared to pre-crisis levels, according to the International Labour Organisation.

"Countries that still have fiscal space need to target further and focus on where the issues are in 2021. The capacity of countries to provide additional support ex-

plains the disparities that we see in terms of recovery," Mr Azour said.

"Countries who have lower level of debt are in better shape. Those who have limited or no fiscal space need to re-allocate their resources and redirect spending on the priorities and need to be much more proactive in their policy making."

Central banks across the Arab world rolled out a slew of monetary measures to provide liquidity, support banks and ease debt concerns for borrowers, by reducing interest rates and capital reserves requirements of lenders, as governments provided fiscal stimulus to cushion the impact of the pandemic on economies.

The Covid-19 pandemic which tipped the world economy last year into the worst recession since the 1930s saw governments and central banks globally pour more than \$12 trillion in fiscal and monetary stimulus to stabilise financial markets, support their economies and protect jobs.

While banks in the Mena region are well capitalised with a good level of profitability and central banks have taken the necessary measures, the expanding health crisis means "there will be a risk of increase in non-performing loans," Mr Azour said.

"This is why in terms of policy recommendations, countries that have the capacity, [should] extend the measures."

Mr Azour said policies that were put in place to combat Covid-19 and the treatment have helped countries battle the second wave, but there are areas and trends that countries need to seize upon moving forward.

Blackstone group fourth quarter profit surges 62pc

NEW YORK

Blackstone Group, the world's biggest alternative asset manager, reported a 62 per cent increase in fourth quarter net profit on Wednesday on the back of higher earnings.

The US-based company grew quarterly profits to \$748.9 million as revenue rose by 71 per cent to \$3.63 billion. However, profits for the full year almost halved to \$1.04bn as revenue fell 17 per cent to \$6.1bn. "Blackstone achieved record results in the fourth quarter," the company's chairman and chief executive, Stephen Schwarzmann, said. "Despite the highly challenged economic backdrop in 2020, we continued to deliver differentiated investment performance for our limited partners, leading to nearly \$100bn of capital inflows - the fourth consecutive year at this level or better."

Assets under management rose 8 per cent year-on-year by December 30 to \$610bn, with fee-earning assets up 15 per cent to \$469.4bn. Inflows reached \$32.3bn during the quarter and \$95bn for the year. The company's perpetual capital assets grew by 30 per cent to \$134.9bn.

More than one-third of the inflows, or \$33.4bn, was into the company's real estate business, the credit and insurance arm attracted \$28.1bn, private equity \$23bn and its hedge fund solutions arm \$10.4bn. All of its divisions reported positive performance, with its core real estate business offering a gross return of 7.9 per cent over the 12-month period and its corporate private equity arm growing 11.9 per cent. Its hedge fund arm provided a gross return of 5.5 per cent and its credit arm 4 per cent.

The company deployed \$61.7bn of capital during the year, including a record \$25.4bn in the final quarter. It also committed but did not deploy a further \$7.1bn in during the period, and has \$147.7bn of dry powder ready to invest.

"Looking forward, we have an extraordinary range of growth initiatives across every area of the firm, with an increasing focus on perpetual capital. The firm ended 2020 in a position of strength and we have great confidence in the path ahead," Mr Schwarzmann added.

WORLD

In uneasy truce, House Republicans fail to punish Greene or Cheney

WASHINGTON

U.S. House Republicans opted on Wednesday not to punish newcomer Marjorie Taylor Greene for incendiary comments, including support for violence against Democrats, and turned back an attempt to oust a leader who had voted to impeach President Donald Trump.

The twin actions, taken in a closed-door meeting, amounted to an uneasy truce for a party that has faced internal strife following Trump's tumultuous presidency.

By a vote of 145-61, Republicans chose not to strip Representative Liz Cheney of her position as the No. 3 Republican in the House of Representatives.

Cheney, like nine other House Republicans, had voted to impeach Trump on

Jan. 13 on a charge of insurrection after the deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol a week earlier. The other 197 had voted against impeachment.

"We're not going to be in a situation where people can pick off any member of leadership," Cheney said after the vote.

She told CNN on Wednesday night she did not regret her vote to impeach Trump. "Absolutely not," she said.

Republicans also decided not to take action against Greene, who has propagated a series of unfounded conspiracy theories and, according to CNN, voiced support for violence against Democratic lawmakers.

Republicans in the room said Greene apologized for those comments. She received a standing ovation from some members, according to media reports.



Marjorie Taylor Greene

Greene still faces an effort by Democrats who control the House to strip her of two high-profile committee assignments, with a vote likely on Thursday. "Anybody who advocates assassinations of members of Congress or anybody, I don't believe should enjoy the privilege of serving on a committee," Democratic Representative Jim McGovern said after the House Rules Committee voted to advance the motion. He said she should resign or be expelled from Congress.

Republicans said voters, not law-

makers, should decide whether to punish her for those remarks.

"They're going to judge her on things that were said that she has now denounced, before she was ever a member of Congress," House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy said.

Greene, 46, who represents a Georgia district, took office just last month.

Cheney, 54, the daughter of former Republican Vice President Dick Cheney, served in Republican administrations before first winning election to Congress in 2016.

Agencies

China vows to safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity

WASHINGTON/BEIJING

CHINA has been closely following a US warship's transit through the Taiwan Straits, and hopes the US side will play a constructive role for regional peace and stability, rather than the opposite, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said yesterday.

The USS John S. McCain sailed through the Taiwan Straits earlier in the day, marking the US

Navy's first trip through the waterway in 2021, according to a US Navy statement.

"China will continue to be on high alert, stand ready to deal with any threats and provocations, and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a daily press briefing.

US supports one-China pol-

icy' The US move came after the US Department of State said on Wednesday that it supports the one-China policy.

"Our policy has not changed. It has not changed," State Department spokesman Ned Price said during a press briefing when asked if the Biden administration supports the one-China policy.

"We, of course, guided by the one-China policy, correct," he added.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Jan 25 reiterated that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China and said the US should abide by the one-China principle.

"We urged the US ... to prudently handle Taiwan-related issues and refrain from sending wrong signals to 'Taiwan independence' forces to avoid harming China-US relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan

Straits," Zhao said in a media briefing. He said that the root cause of the tension and turbulence in cross-Straits relations is that the island's ruling Democratic Progressive Party refused to recognize the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle.

"It has been colluding with external forces to engage in provocation by seeking 'independence'," Zhao said.

Xinhua



No plans for meeting between Putin, EU top diplomat, Kremlin says

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin does not plan to meet with the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell during the latter's visit to Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters yesterday.

"There are no plans for a meeting between him and President Putin (pictured). Mr. Borrell is the counterpart of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and will hold talks with him," Peskov said.

The presidential spokesman pointed out that Russia considered Borrell's visit to be highly important. Putin has recently expressed regret over the current state of relations between Moscow and Brussels, Peskov noted.

"In fact, they remain suspended and it was not Russia that initiated the suspension. We definitely would like to unlock our comprehensive dialogue, particularly in order to openly discuss the existing disagreements, which are many," the Kremlin spokesman said.

When asked if Borrell's wish to meet with convicted blogger Alexey Navalny would be granted, Peskov said that it wasn't for the Kremlin to decide but to the Federal Penitentiary Service.

EU top diplomat Josep Borrell is expected to make a visit to Moscow on February 4-6 and hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Agencies

UN warns Tigray conflict could spark broader destabilisation

NEW YORK

A conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region could trigger broader destabilisation in the country, UN aid chief Mark Lowcock told the Security Council on Wednesday as he warned that a dire humanitarian situation in the north was set to worsen.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Tigray have not received help and the United Nations has been unable to completely assess the situation because it does not have full and unimpeded access, according to Lowcock's notes for the closed virtual briefing of the 15-member Security Council.

He said there were reports of increasing insecurity elsewhere, which could be due to a vacuum created by the redeployment of Ethiopian troops to Tigray, and that the United Nations was concerned about the potential for broader national and regional destabilization.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered air strikes and a ground offensive against Tigray's former ruling party - the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) - after regional forces attacked federal army bases in the region on Nov 4. The TPLF withdrew from the regional capital, Mekelle, and major cities, but low-level fighting



Ethiopian refugees, who fled the Tigray conflict, gather to receive aid at the Tenedba camp in Mafaza, eastern Sudan on Jan 8, 2021, upon their arrival at the camp from the reception center. (File photo)

has continued.

In the region of more than five million people, thousands of people are believed to have died and 950,000 have fled their homes since fighting began.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "seriously concerned" over the situation in Tigray, a UN spokesman said late on Tuesday.

Lowcock said Abiy's government controls between 60 percent and 80 percent of the territory in Tigray, but does not have full command of the ethnic Amhara and Eritrean forces also operating in the region.

Dozens of witnesses say Eritrean troops are in Tigray to sup-

port Ethiopian forces, though both countries deny that.

The United Nations has received reports that police are operating at a fraction of their previous capacity and Lowcock said he could confidently say that if protection and aid were not quickly increased then the humanitarian situation would deteriorate.

He said there were troubling accusations of sexual and gender-based violence.

Several senior UN officials recently visited Ethiopia to push for greater access to Tigray. Lowcock said he was hopeful there would be concrete progress in coming days to allow aid to be scaled up.

Agencies

Premier Li urges greater stability in China-UK relations

BEIJING

CHINESE Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday delivered a video speech at a New Year banquet held by Britain's 48 Group Club.

Sixty-eight years ago, a group of far-sighted British, represented by Jack Perry, broke the ice and opened the door to Sino-British trade, providing precious spiritual wealth for the friendly exchanges between the two countries, Li (pictured) said.

As long as both countries carry on that "icebreaker" spirit from generation to generation and stay true to promoting friendship and development, there will be no ice that cannot be broken or differences that cannot be settled, he said.

2020 was an eventful year for China, Britain and the entire world. China's economy grew 2.3 percent year-on-year, which was a hard-won achievement, Li said.

Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic still poses severe challenges and the world economy continues to face a multitude of uncertain and unstable factors, Li said that China will keep its macro-policies consistent, stable and sustainable, and ensure that its economy runs within a reasonable range.

Britain is an important partner of China in Europe, and China always attaches great importance to developing bilateral relations, he said.

Both countries should expand cooperation and enhance the stability of bilateral relations on the basis of mutual respect and equal treatment, said the premier.

China is willing to join hands with Britain and all other countries to defeat the pandemic as soon as possible, promote economic recovery and cope with global challenges.

Initiated in 2009, the New Year banquet is held annually by the 48 Group Club, which serves as a communication platform for both Chinese and British people.

This year's banquet, the first to be held online, attracted over 1,000 British people.

Xinhua

Former ECB chief Draghi appointed to form Italy's new government

ROME

FORMER chief of European Central Bank (ECB) Mario Draghi was appointed to form Italy's new government, the office of President Sergio Mattarella said on Wednesday.

"This morning, the president of the Republic has received professor Mario Draghi, to whom he has assigned the task of forming a new government," Secretary-General of the Italian Presidency Ugo Zampetti told a press conference.

The appointment came after Draghi met with Mattarella for over one hour at the Quirinale Palace. A day earlier, exploratory talks to recompose the previous government failed.

Draghi will be tasked with forming a non-political cabinet with the largest possible support in parliament to lead Italy in the next crucial months.

"This is a difficult moment," Draghi acknowledged in a short declaration after being appointed. "Winning over the pandemic, completing the vaccination campaign, providing answers to the citizens' immediate problems, and re-launching the economy are the challenges we face."

Mattarella told a press conference on Tuesday that he would confer a mandate to form a "non-partisan government."

The president explained that Italy can't afford snap elections right now because it needs a fully functioning government that can fight the pandemic and also submit a national Recovery Plan to the European Union (EU) by April.

Former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte had to resign in late January, despite surviving two confidence votes in parliament after former premier Matteo Renzi decided to pull his Italia Viva party from the governing coalition.

According to local media, Renzi's decision was out of disagreement over the government's handling of the pandemic and of the multi-billion-euro EU funding for Italy.



Former chief of European Central Bank (ECB) Mario Draghi speaks to the press at the Palazzo del Quirinale after a meeting with Italian President Sergio Mattarella in Rome, Italy, on Tuesday. (Xinhua)

Zhejiang province establishes 'medical grand bazaar' for Xinjiang residents

"MEDICAL grand bazaar," an innovative medical tour offered by medical staffs assisting China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region from Zhejiang province, is winning the hearts of many in Aksu prefecture in mid-western Xinjiang.

Visiting bazaars, a type of enclosed market place or street usually seen in Xinjiang where goods and services are exchanged, is a routine for many local residents.

That's why the assisting medical workers from Zhejiang are making their services into a "grand bazaar," not only by the name, but also the meticulous services.

The "medical grand bazaar" offers a series of medical services, including check-

ups, examinations, health consulting, pharmacy, psychological counseling and acupuncture, creating an experience just like bazaar-visiting.

Turhan Rozi, 75, is a woman from Aksu who always suffered hypertension, diabetes and cholecystitis. With her husband passing away and children working out-of-town, seeing a doctor was like a mission impossible for her.

It was the "medical grand bazaar" that alleviated her problems. After learning her information, Zhejiang medical experts of internal medicine, surgical medicine, ophthalmology, ultrasonography and radiology worked in collaboration and formulated detailed treatment plans.

"It was really not easy for me to go to major hospitals. I'm so touched that you guys came to me and offered free treatment. Thank you so much," the senior told the medical staff.

Xinjiang is a broad region where residents living in remote and border areas are still facing insufficient medical resources despite the stationing medical experts in Aksu.

Therefore, Zhejiang province specifically allocated a fund to the "medical grand bazaar," supporting it to buy a touring bus equipped with advanced medical devices, which allows the medical staff high mobility.

The high-quality medical services provided by the "medical grand bazaar"

have practically solved the issues faced by residents in border areas, for instance, the lack of medical resources, high medical expense, and poverty led by illness. Besides, the bazaar also makes subsequent visits to patients with mobility difficulties, so that they can enjoy medical services without even stepping out of their homes.

Launching free treatment and health screening activities in remote and border areas, the "medical grand bazaar" is able to identify the groups that cannot receive timely medical services and thus help them in a targeted manner through funds and poverty alleviation programs.

Lithiasis, oral diseases, and eye diseases are of high incidence in Aksu. To solve the problem, Zhejiang constantly sent medi-

cal workers to the prefecture with a series of treatment plans that suited the residents in the region. In addition, a large batch of local medical personnel were trained, so as to bring high-quality medical services to more residents.

The "medical grand bazaar" has made 766 tours to rural areas, mountains, pasturing areas, border regions, military camps, and schools, serving over 15,000 people and giving out 140,000 yuan (\$21,613) worth of free drugs.

"The walls of hospitals contained our assistance. We must go out to people's homes and spread our love to every corner of Xinjiang," said Tu Jianfeng, head of the "medical grand bazaar."

People's Daily

SPORT



Azam FC

Azam FC plots Simba SC downfall in VPL

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

AZAM FC's head coach George Lwandamina has stated his team will have to prepare well for their Vodacom Premier League (VPL) match against Simba SC, to be played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam this weekend.

Lwandamina, who will meet Simba for the first time since he took over as Azam FC's technical bench's head, will be tasked with seeing to it Azam FC gets maximum points in the clash.

Commenting on their preparations for the game, Azam FC's information officer, Thabit Zakaria, reiterated their team need to be well prepared.

He disclosed: "Our side is still training to prepare for the league's second phase's fixtures, we started preparations after the completion of this year's Mapinduzi Cup tournament, we have played three friendly clashes."

He noted: "In those games we won two games and lost one game, before playing against Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC in Dar es Salaam, winning 3-1, we then posted 1-1 draw against DR Congo's TP Mazembe."

"These games are part of the instructions

of coach Lwandamina who, realizing the difficulty of our game against Simba to be played on February 7, has asked for more games to prepare his team for the game."

"We know Simba have a good squad and they have boosted their side via registration of new players but we have also roped in new players and we are well organized," the Azam FC information officer noted.

Azam FC played an international friendly match against TP Mazembe at Azam Complex in the city on February 2, the two teams drew 1-1.

Azam FC scored the opener via midfielder Never Tigere, who beat TP Mazembe goalie Ibrahim Mounkoro with a well taken free kick from outside the 18-yard box.

Tigere made three attempts that were fruitless and he then scored via the set piece.

TP Mazembe led by assistant coach, Isaac Kasogo, who started Tanzanian Thomas Ulimwengu, equalized three minutes later through Adam Boso, after he had dribbled past Azam FC defenders.

The friendly was a third match TP Mazembe took part in. The outfit had also competed in the Simba Super Cup tournament, hosted by Simba, in the city.

The Simba Super Cup's other competitors were Sudan giants Al Hilal and Simba SC.

Yanga fans should expect changes in squad, says coach

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

YANGA's head coach, Cedric Kaze, has said the team's fans should expect to see a lot of changes in his first team.

Speaking to reporters in Dar es Salaam recently, Kaze (pictured) said his club's players who showcased good displays when the squad took part in this year's Mapinduzi Cup tournament, will be given a chance to start in coming fixtures.

According to the Burundian gaffer, the team's other players who will show impressive showing in the next two friendly games will too be given a chance in the starting side.

Kaze nevertheless did not say when the friendly matches would be played and which sides will his squad lock horns with.

The coach spoke to reporters when his club organized a special day, dubbed 'Yanga Media Day' at their camp in Kigamboni, Dar es Salaam.

Sports journalists had the opportunity to have interviews with the team's players, officials and the outfit's women's squad, Yanga Princesses.

He said the changes in the squad would be temporary and he promised that those who would show impressive showing in training would also be guaranteed a spot in the first team.

He stated: "These changes do not mean that those, who will not nail place in the starting squad, are lacking quality. They will have chance to start, should the coach gets a look at players who are doing well at the moment."

"For instance, the ones that played well in Mapinduzi Cup tournament but they were not scheduled for the first team in the league, will start playing," he said.

Commenting on the side's players, who were in the senior national team that competed in this year's African Nations Championship, Kaze noted they have a responsibility to develop their quality to assure themselves of a place in the club.



Cedric Kaze,

He also referred to the signing of Burundian striker Fiston Abdulrazack as a way for the technical bench to increase competition for attacking players.

He disclosed that every player will have a chance, should their performance convince him on the training pitch.

Kaze said signing the forward does not mean striker Michael Sarpong will

not get a chance to play as suggested by some football stakeholders.

He was adamant he knows how to use them in an effort to increase efficiency and improve scoring opportunities.

Fiston joined the side in the mini transfer period and he recently joined his new team mates in preparation for the Premier League matches.

Dar forward moves to England National League



Adi Yusuf

By Correspondents Ismail Tano

TANZANIAN forward Adi Yusuf has signed for England outfit, Chesterfield FC, currently participating in the Vanarama National League.

Yusuf has been signed from Wrexham Club on loan but Blackpool, competing in England's League One, is the forward's parent club.

"I am very happy to join this team, personally I respect it, and it is good, I know some of the players and

the squad and I believe I will achieve success here," he disclosed.

Yusuf was born in Zanzibar in 1992 and he then grew up in England.

He started playing football in 2011 at Leicester City FC, currently participating in the English Premier League, and he left the team after his contract expired.

Yusuf recently featured for senior national squad 'Taifa Stars'.

He was among Taifa Stars' players in the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) showpiece in Egypt, which saw Taifa Stars bow out of the preliminary stage.

Yusuf earned his first Taifa Stars' call up in 2015, but he did not get a chance to play a single game for the squad.

The striker had Taifa Stars' technical bench experiencing criticism from soccer fanatics for failure to include him in the AFCON fixtures.

He first played an international friendly match pitting Taifa Stars against Zimbabwe in Egypt on June 16, 2019.

He thereafter featured in a competitive match in the AFCON against Algeria.

Australian Open to go ahead despite COVID-19 case, say organisers

MELBOURNE

THE Australian Open will begin as scheduled on Monday even though a worker at one of the Melbourne hotels used to quarantine players and their entourages tested positive for COVID-19, tournament director Craig Tiley said on Thursday.

Thursday's warm-up matches at Melbourne Park were called off after the case was announced late on Wednesday, and those who underwent quarantine at the Grand Hyatt hotel were instructed to get tested and isolate until they had a result. "We're absolutely confident the Australian Open will go ahead," Tiley told reporters in Melbourne. "We are starting on Monday."

Tiley said the 507 people affected, 160 of them players, would have their tests completed by late Thursday afternoon.

If the results were negative, the players would be free to participate in the six warm-up events at the venue of the Grand Slam to allow them to get some match practice after 14 days in quarantine.

"This does give us three days for the lead-in events to be completed," he said, adding that the draw for the Grand Slam tournament had been postponed from Thursday to Friday.

Earlier, Victoria state health officials said the testing of the tennis cohort was precautionary.

"We think the risk to other guests in the hotel - tennis players and their accompanying staff - is relatively low," Professor Allen Cheng told reporters. Victoria endured one of the longest and toughest lockdowns in the world to contain the new coronavirus, and Wednesday's case was the first to be locally acquired in the state for almost a month.

State Premier Dan Andrews has made it clear that the safety of the community is paramount and said there were "no guarantees" the Australian Open would go ahead.

"At this stage, the tennis shouldn't be impacted by this," he told reporters. "These things can change (but) this has been a textbook response to this."

Michael O'Brien, the leader of the opposition in Victoria's state parliament, called on the government to make a call by Saturday on whether the tournament would go ahead.

"We don't want to see a situation as we did with the Grand Prix, where crowds were literally turning up, only to be turned away," he told Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper. "I think people are entitled to know what's happening, and the government should be making their minds up in the next 24 to 48 hours."

The Australian Grand Prix, the traditional season opener of the Formula One championship, was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic last March a few hours before the cars were due to take to the track at Melbourne's Albert Park.

Tiley rejected the comparison.

"The probability is very low that there'll been issue. We expect them all to test negative," he said. "The plan is to continue to play tomorrow as planned." Tiley, who has plenty of experience of rescheduling matches because of rain, hot weather and bushfire smoke, said the order of play for Friday, when wet weather is forecast, would be released later on Thursday.

"With the rain, we do have the luxury of having three stadium courts and eight indoor courts," he said. "That will enable us to not get ahead but at least be able to finish by Sunday."

