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TANZANIA

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Rhino deployment: Royal Gurkha Rifles unit assists Malawi

LONDON

CRITICALLY-endangered black rhinos have been relocated with the assistance of British troops in Africa to help protect the animals against poaching.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles have recently returned home from a three-month counter-poaching deployment in Malawi, in south-eastern

Based in Liwonde National Park, near the Mozambique border, they worked with the African Parks conservation organisation to train current and new rangers, as part of a crack down on the illegal wildlife trade by improving the effectiveness of patrols.

Towards the end of their mission, the Gurkhas helped with one of the largest international rhino translocations to date, offloading the 1.4-tonne animals which were hauled by air and road from KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

African Parks said that the mission saw 17 black rhinos moved from South Africa to Malawi.

Major Jez England, officer commanding British Army Counter-Poaching Team in Liwonde said the operation had been "hugely successful."



According to African Parks, the mission saw 17 black rhinos moved from South Africa to Malawi

"Not only do we share skills with the rangers, improving their efficiency and ability to patrol larger areas, but it also provides a unique opportunity for our soldiers to train in a challenging environment.

"Helping with the rhino move was a fitting end to our time in Malawi, getting up close to the animals we are here to help protect was an experience the soldiers won't forget."

So far, the army has helped train 200 rangers in Malawi and no high-value species have been poached in Liwonde since 2017.

The project was led by African Parks in conjunction with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

There are around 5,500 black rhinos in the wild today as they are poached for their horn. This project will help boost the rhino population in the region and help preserve this critically endangered species for the next

generation. Since their release, African Parks is continuing to intensively monitor the rhinos as they settle in to their new environment.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said the illegal wildlife trade is the fourth largest

TURN TO PAGE 2



Half of Tanzanians living in 'multidimensional poverty'



Dar es Salaam residents spend Boxing Day breezing at Coco Beach yesterday. Photo: Selemani Mpochi

The breadth of deprivation in Tanzania, as the average deprivation score noticed for people in multidimensional poverty, is put at 49.3 percent

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

AN ESTIMATED 55.4 percent of Tanzanian population or around 31,778,000 people are in multidimensional poverty while an additional 24.2 percent or 13,872,000 people are classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, a recently released report indicates.

The Human Development Report (HDR) 2019, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sees multidimensional poverty as basically income poverty, measured by the percentage of the population living below \$1.90 per day.

The multidimensional poverty index (MPI), used in the HDR, identifies multiple overlapping deprivations suffered by individuals in three dimensions: health, education and standard of living. The health and education dimensions are based on two indicators each, while standard of living is

TURN TO PAGE 2

DC curbs revenue losses from smuggling of goats

By Guardian Reporter, Longido

THE government has been losing over 4bn/- in revenue annually from people selling goats that are later smuggled across the border via nonmonitored routes.

Commissioner Frank Longido District Mwaisumbe said that this habit has been going on for many years but since last year the district has been able to control the sale of livestock outside the country, to save revenue that was being lost.

"Goats were being sold to Kenya through legal and illegal routes, but the latter was more rampant. We have take measures to control this situation; we have been harsh and now things are going on well," the DC stated.

He said the district authorities opted for harsh methods to impose legality in goat sales, sometimes

going as far as forfeiting the animals confiscated

"When we confiscate goats that were being smuggled out we forfeit them as I can't agree to see the government losing revenue from the greed of a few," he declared.

He appealed to dealers to understand the position, that revenue enables the government to pursue urgent work to take Tanzania to middle level income status and reduce poverty.

The change in attitude had enabled traders to form groups of between 30 and 45 people that will be officially recognized so that they sit and discuss revenue loopholes and formulate business plans in an approved manner.

He said the groups will help authorities in collective bargaining in matters like exporting the TURN TO PAGE 2

NCAA targets schooling to diminish population

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Serengeti

ESTABLISHMENT of schools in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area is currently the only tool left in ensuring that the growing human population in the World Heritage Site controls itself automatically.

The board chairman of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, Prof Abiudi Kaswamila, pointed out that at the moment the swelling population in the NCAA is threatening the ecosystem just as the protected area marks its 60th anniversary.

"The conservation area started off with a population of 8,000 Maasai grazers in 1959 but now their number has bulged twelve times to more than 100,000 people and counting," he stated.

Addressing a scientific conference to mark the 60 years of Serengeti and Ngorongoro, the board chairman noted that in 1959 the herders kept 200,000 livestock between them, but as of 2019 the number of cattle, goats and sheep stood at 800,000 or above.

"It is normal for humans and animals to reproduce, but since the land they occupy does not expand in synchrony, the situation calls for drastic measures to control this increase in order to save the conservation area," the don maintained. The conservation area measures

8,292 square kilometers. One of such measures is to educate the Maasai youth and children in the area, as records show



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NATIONAL.NEWS

Half of Tanzanians living in 'multidimensional poverty'

FROM PAGE 1

based on six indicators.

The report authors say income poverty only tells part of the story. 'The multidimensional poverty headcount is 6.3 percentage points higher than income poverty. This implies that individuals living above the income poverty line may still suffer deprivations in health, education and/ or standard of living," the report noted.

The breadth of deprivation in Tanzania, as the average deprivation score noticed for people in multidimensional poverty, is put at 49.3

In the gender inequality index (DII), the report highlights that 37.2 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 11.9 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 16.9 percent of their male counterparts.

For every 100,000 live births, 398 women die from pregnancy related causes, while the adolescent birth rate stands at 118 births per 1,000 women of ages 15-19. Female participation in the labour market is 79.4 percent compared to 87.2 for men, it says.

UNDP Resident Representative Christine Musisi said in launching the report that in every country many people have little prospects for a better future. Lacking hope, purpose or dignity, they watch from society's sidelines as they see others pull ahead to ever greater prosperity.

Worldwide many have escaped extreme poverty, but even more have neither the opportunities nor the resources to control their lives. "Far too often gender, ethnicity or parents' wealth still determines a person's place in society," she stated.

These inequalities in human development are a roadblock to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "They are not just disparities in income and wealth, and they will shape the prospects of people that may live to see the 22nd century."

Officiating at the launch, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Prof Adolf Mkenda affirmed that the report will help the government to find the way forward to work on identified

"The report will form the basis of discussions on how to steer the nation further in the quest for industrial and middle income economy."

UNDP said this HDR pioneers a more precise way to measure countries' socioeconomic progress. Just as the gap in basic living standards is narrowing, with an unprecedented number of people escaping poverty, hunger and disease, the dimensions of basic necessities to thrive have evolved.

New inequalities are becoming more pronounced, particularly around tertiary education, and the seismic effects of technology and the climate

For the first time this year, an African country - Seychelles - has moved into the very high human development

Others are rising in the ranks as well. Four countries - Botswana, Gabon, Mauritius and South Africa - are now in the high human development group, and 12 countries - Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Zambia, and Zimbabwe - are in the medium human development group.

While poverty rates have declined in across the continent, progress has been uneven. If current trends continue, the report asserts, nearly 9 of 10 people in extreme poverty - more than 300 million - will be in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2030, the report added.

> The report will form the basis of discussions on how to steer the nation further in the quest for industrial and middle income economy



A Netherlands tourist takes photo of buffalo carcass at Lake Manyara National Park yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Sabuni

FROM PAGE 1

that once they complete secondary school most of them leave the precincts to seek abodes and occupations elsewhere.

Ngorongoro Conservation Area sponsors the education of local Maasai and during the 60 years period of its existence, it has financed over 6000 students from the local community, an average of 100 beneficiaries annually.

"Many of the 6000 youth who

were educated in the area have left Ngorongoro for metropolitan centres like Arusha, Mwanza and Dar es Salaam, with some even flying abroad," he pointed out.

Earlier, the NCAA Commissioner of Conservation, Dr Freddy Manongi affirmed that NCAA had started constructing schools outside the conservation area to maintain the park's natural environment.

This would also allow children from the area to get exposure outside their usual grounds, he added.

NCAA targets schooling DC curbs revenue losses to diminish population From smuggling of goats

animals legally so that the government loses no revenues.

"We have controlled the situation by 90 percent, but with the traders cooperating we expect to make it 100 percent," he further stated.

On October 17 last year, the government established a livestock market in Kirumi in Mara Region near the border, targeting to control sales of smuggled cattle.

Fisheries, Luhaga Mpina sounded raw leather and unprocessed milk, discomfort that the country was losing ministerial data indicates.

large sums of money to livestock smuggling through porous borders. The international market is also aimed at hosting buyers from neighbouring countries to transparently purchase livestock.

Tanzania has an estimated 32.5 million head of cattle, 16 million goats and seven million sheep with smallscale herders.

The government was estimated to lose 263.95bn/- (\$116 million) per The Minister for Livestock and year due to smuggling of livestock,



A member of road sweeper hire company directs traffic at Mwananyamala in Dar es salaam yesterday. Photo: Selemani Mpochi

8 Kenyan fishermen rescued in Indian Ocean after 18 days

POLICE have rescued eight fishermen who miraculously survived 18 days in the Indian Ocean along the Kenyan

The eight were spotted and rescued by marine police on patrol on Christmas

"Their boat were taken to the deep waters and capsized by strong winds and they have been in the ocean," said

Malindi Sub County Police Commander Vitalis Otieno who confirmed the incident.

They had been reported missing at Ziwayu beach, on the north coast and were using an Alhafidh Fibre 15HP boat.

Upon their rescue, the eight were rushed to Malindi Sub County Hospital for a medical check-up.

were not immediately available, have missing alert on the said date. since been discharged.

"The actual date of their disappearance was not reported to us but friends and relatives say they went in their normal fishing expedition but failed to return on December 8," he told Xinhua on Wednesday.

A citizen-run rescue organization dubbed Coast Sea Survival team officially known as Captain Shallo Otieno said the eight, whose names confirmed that they received the

"One of the survivors is a close relative

to my wife. We have been following their disappearance until their rescue today," he said.

Other reports indicate the eight survived on raw fish and other sea creatures.

It is not uncommon for fishermen to drown in the ocean waters in Kenya's coast where the economy relies predominantly on fishing and tourism.

AGENCIES

Bishop calls for independent commission to run elections

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

RETIRED Bishop of the Baptist Church in Dodoma, Anthony Mlyashimba has called for creation of an independent electoral commission to avoid complaints from political parties.

He made the statement when addressing a congregation at Dodoma Baptist Church on Christmas Eve. Bishop Mlyashimba urged clerics to condemn incidences of abduction reported at different places countrywide.

He said incidences of abductions depict a negative picture of the country and security organs. He was concerned that such incidences may affect the country's economy since no investor will want to inject monies in the country.

"It is the responsibility of religious leaders to condemn such harsh acts in our society, you should speak for the

people", he urged the clerics. According to him, creation of an independent electoral commission would have reduced politicians' complaints during the recent civic polls to elect local leaders.

He reminded worshipers on former

President Benjamin Mkapa's motto-'Truth and Transparency' insisting truth and transparency are key in reducing complains especially during elections.

"Politicians are complaining because they have not gotten what they want, a solution to all these complaints is creation of an independent electoral commission that will ensure elections are conducted openly", he said adding avoiding complaints reduces chances of post-election chaos.

The Bishop insisted the need for officials of the national electoral commission and Registrar of Political parties to ensure justice, and always put God first before making decisions.



It is the responsibility of religious leaders to condemn such harsh acts in our society, you should speak for the people

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Rhino deployment: UK army unit aids Malawi

FROM PAGE 1

transnational crime behind drugs, arms and human trafficking and can have hugely destabilising consequences.

"With this deployment, our armed forces have once again demonstrated their versatility and value by contributing to the conservation work taking place in Malawi.

"Working with local communities, host governments and wildlife groups is key to our approach. We want to see sustainable, community-led solutions that help promote security

and stability for both the people and wildlife in Africa."

counter-poaching ranger partnering programme is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and delivered by the UK armed forces.

The British government has committed over £36 million to tackle illegal wildlife trade between 2014 and

Part of this funding is to help support transboundary work to allow animals to transit more safely between areas, and across national borders.



Simanjiro district commissioner, Manyara region Zephania Chaula (2nd L) serves food to orphans at Mirerani during Christmas celebrations on Wednesday. Photo:

Police in Arusha on lookout for a man over allegedly wife's murder

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

a man who allegedly killed his wife-Mary Mushi by attacking her with an axe on Christmas Day.

The suspect–Mosses Pallangyo is said to disappear to unknown destination, according to Arumeru District Commissioner, Jerry Muro.

POLICE in Arusha are searching for are searching for the suspect so that Eve. he is arrested and arraigned," said the District Commissioner who arrived occurred on Wednesday afternoon.

DC Muro called upon residents to executes their duties. collaborate with security organs by tipping police on the whereabouts of Pallangyo said the incident occurred in "I am saddened by the killing Mushi's husband. He said the murder the afternoon of December 25, 2019.

of Mary Mushi at Kilinga village in was one of the bad incidents to happen Arumeru district, our security organs in the district especially on Christmas

"My condolences to the family of the late Mushi and all Kilinga village at the scene shortly after the incident residents," said Muro pleading to the villagers to remain calm as police

The suspect's father–Latiaeli Samson

Narrating, he said Pallangyo and his wife Mushi, have so far lived together for three months, and that there were no any conflict between them.

"We didn't expect our son to kill his wife since it was all peaceful and we had breakfast together. Mary prepared breakfast for the family, and thereafter she continued with other routine duties until her husband attacked and killed her in their bedroom.

State to recruit 40,000 fresh civil servants in February '20

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government plans to employ more than 40,000 people in various cadres in February 2020, a senior official has said.

This was revealed by the Permanent Secretary, President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance Dr Laurean Ndumbaro this week while responding to a reporter's question on the shortage of workers in the health sector following the building of many health centres and hospitals during Phase Five Administration.

He said in order to deal with workers shortage in various sectors the government has allocated 40,000 jobs.

"The employment exercise will begin in February 2020, and there will be opportunities in the health sector that will alleviate shortage of staff at various health centres and other hospitals that have been built during the Phase Five Administration.

Speaking on the issue of promotions in the public service for those qualified, he said the President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance) had issued permission to employers to implement the exercise on promotions for FY 2017/18 and changes in rankings for 2017/18.

He said: "In implementing this directive, up to now 95,905 officers had qualified for promotion according to Public Service laws and regulations, and as the rankings have been changed their respective emoluments changed

He said promotion for those servants who are qualified and budgeted for in FY 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 will be done during this financial year after completion of the mentioned directives.

Dr Ndumbaro said the President's Office (Public Service Management and Good Governance) has found out that there are employers who are submitting to his office fictitious recommendations for promotion.

He said the recommendation details are being submitted by employers without adhering to yardsticks that are in place according to laws and regulations governing such promotions.

"My office will continue to take appropriate action against all employers who will be found to be cheating by misinforming the Office of the President (Public Service Management and Good Governance) so as to recommend promotions to public servants who had no qualifications for such promotion," he said.

"In implementing this directive, up to now 95,905 officers had qualified for promotion according to Public Service laws and regulations, and as the rankings have been changed their respective emoluments changed as well."

Engage in businesses with focus on nutrition to lower country's malnutrition level, SMEs urged

By Guardian Reporter

SMALL businesses in support ventures centering nutrition not only for its viability but also as a means to combat malnutrition.

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) Country Director, Enock Msinguzi, told participants of Lishe Accelerator II over the weekend that innovation is crucial for any business model to succeed and that the same goes with nutrition.

He stressed that people need to be encouraged to do more business in matters that focus on nutrition because besides the area being profitable, it is also important in terms of health for the general population.

"Confidence is important and this can be made possible through training as we have witnessed over the period that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been going through the accelerator," he said.

Lishe Startup Accelerator is a programme to accelerate Tanzania's nutrition sensitive SMEs to be investor ready undertaken by GAIN in collaboration with Sahara Ventures.

thanked thus Sahara Ventures for their professionalism and called on all participants to take heart because at the end of it all the five finalists would all have emerged winners.

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, in collaboration with key partners, launched the second edition of the SUN Competition for 2019/2020, with the theme **'Rethinking** Nutrition Innovations', according to Project Manager, Abbas Sykes.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in emerging markets with technical assistance and

investment opportunities. According to Sykes, the SME that emerged the winner out of five finalists during this year's competition will represent the country at SUN Business Network in Singapore in March next year.

During the event in Dar es Salaam, Assistant Director in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Policy, Coordination and Parliament (Performance Management), Devota Gabriel observed that the programme is crucial for the country in many ways.

Gabriel said that since it is a permanent endeavour,

Malnutrition leads to stunting and if the problem of stunting persists the country is bound to lose crucial manpower in the future.

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He noted that the it will go a long way to provide competition aims to a platform for SMEs to network innovative with different organisations on the country have been solutions for improved how to tackle the problem of encouraged to engage in nutrition by connecting malnutrition, especially among

Malnutrition leads to stunting and if the problem of stunting persists the country is bound to lose crucial manpower in the future. This programme will help low income households to get access to affordable improved diet," she said.

Govt starts granting subsidy on chemicals for livestock dips By Guardian Correspondent, Mbarali

THE Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries says it has begun to grant subsidy on chemicals for cattle dips to ease the burden borne by herders

in accessing the chemicals at lower prices. The ministry has also embarked on the mobilization of livestock keepers in the country to dip their animals as protection against diseases that reduce their quality.

This was revealed on Tuesday this week in Mbarali District, Mbeya Region by the ministry's statistician Makunga Seleman during the mobilization exercise on cattle dipping at Igurusi Ward attended by herders.

Selemani said the government has started

giving the subsidy due to the importance of the livestock sector in injecting huge income to the government from sale of animals' products including hides and skins and dairy products.

He called on herders to grab the opportunity to improve their livestock for more income for them and to abandon traditional livestock keeping. He said as of now the main target of the mobilisation is cattle, goats and sheep others livestock like donkeys and others are not to be involved.

On their part, livestock keepers in Mbarali District thanked the government for starting the campaign and that they have started seeing its benefits.

The chairman of Livestock Dipping

Committee for Igurusi ward, Pius Mwandenga said the subsidy on the chemicals for cattle dipping has been of great relief to them as the cost has been more than halved.

He said in the past a herder was paying 200/-

per cow every month, but now they are paying 600/- every six months, equals to 100/- per Mbarali District Veterinary Officer Agostino

Lawi said subsidy for livestock dips given by the government has seen the increase in the number of livestock taken for dipping every week in the district.

A livestock vet in Mbeya Region Dickson Nyanda said the region has more than 80 dips but only 65 are in working condition.









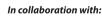
















Guardian

NATIONAL.NEWS

Highest maize prices fuelled by increased domestic and regional demand, says report

By Guardian Reporter

THE highest maize prices in the country is said to be fuelled by increased domestic and regional demand from south African countries.

According to the December Eastern Africa Crop Monitor issued by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) the region has to improve supply of grains, specifically maize, beans and rice in the urban markets.

It said in Kenya domestic stocks of the major grains remained low in most of the production regions.

"Trade between Uganda and Rwanda is still hampered by ongoing disputes between the two countries", read part of the bulletin.

It said from October until the end of the year, grain prices are relatively stable as compared to the previous month. In Kenya, maize prices are expected to go down due to the harvest season, which will see increased supply

In line with seasonal predictions, early rains and higher than usual rainfall was observed in most of the region while tropical storm in the Horn of Africa region caused rains and flooding in parts of Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti.

From the beginning of the season to the end of November, most parts of the region recorded wetter than normal conditions.

The crop season was characterized by an early start in western parts of normal rains in northern sub-regions of Eastern Africa.

Harvest is underway for the main cereals in northern sub-regions, while equatorial sub-region crops are in vegetative stages and early planting in the southern sub-region.

Crops are generally in favourable condition due to above average rainfall. In some of the crop lands, excessive rainfall led to flooding.

The bulletin highlights that the eastern Africa region is currently under different crop stages; harvest in the northern sub-region and planting to vegetative stages in equatorial and southern regions. Most crop regions are under favorable conditions as per November 2019 assessments due to above average rains experienced in most parts of the region.

Excessive rainfall due to a tropical storm in the Horn of Africa has caused flooding and the impacts on crops will be established in December and January assessments.

Trade between Uganda and Rwanda is still hampered by ongoing disputes between the two countries



A painter working at a bridge linking Mwananyamala and Tandale in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Staff

By Guardian Correspondent, Mtwara

THE National Housing Corporation (NHC) who are the main contactors tasked to build Southern Zone Referral Hospital at Mtwara say they will ensure to work day and night to complete the project in time as per the agreement.

Speaking to reporters during her inspection visit at the project site, Mtwara NHC manager Angelina Magazi said they recognize has given over 15bn/- for the project in order improve medical services in the southern

She said they, as contractors of

Mtwara referral hospital project set to be completed in time - NHC

the big project will not let down the offering services to the wananchi. government as they will work hard to complete it in time, and added that 20 per cent of the work has been completed.

Magaza said according to the contract agreement the construction of the referral hospital was supposed to be completed July 1 2020 and start She also assured that as the

main supervisors they will ensure the construction to be of quality standard that commensurate with the government expenditure.

The Mtwara District Commissioner Evodi Mmanda said as the regional government they are satisfied with the work progress.

He said every time they have been visiting the project site they become more assured the project will finish in

"We will be making close follow up on the project to see how the work is going on b ut up to now everything has been going on quite well," Mmanda said.

Collect more data from low-income earners, researchers told

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

RESEARCHERS on statistics in the country have been urged to allocate more time in their schedules to meet the wananchi in the low-income bracket so as to get extra data for their researches.

This call was made on Wednesday Dr Albina Chuwa while speaking with while doing research on the availability application.

of electricity in Tanzania Mainland. Dr Chuwa said wananchi understand

the meaning of statistics hence it is important for all statisticians in the country to ensure they meet with them for their opinions and extra responses with the aim of getting responses to the question "why?."

She said in her meetings with

She said to offer statistical details is both collaborative and constitutional in that the government should get data and the citizen should give the correct details so that at the end of the day the public should exert pressure on the government that he/she gave data on a

certain issue, what has it done about it? She said the government will by the government Chief statistician the public for their opinions, she continue to give earnest cooperation whether or not issues that are being they can use it for cooking instead of

raised are dealt upon. Earlier the wananchi told Dr Chuwa

and her team that the availability of electricity - that is power in their homes is satisfactory and has reached many urban and rural areas but the challenge they face is it's high cost.

A resident of Muungano area in Forest Ward, Solomon Mwandenuka

He appealed to the government to lower power tariffs so that the wananchi completely abandon the use of wood fuel which will also see the reduction of tree cutting that depletes

Another resident, Rhone Chilewa said due to the availability of electricity said electricity for home lighting is in many areas, many youths are discovered they understand the to the wananchi in various researches not a big issue but it is expensive and now self employed by opening small residents of Forest Ward in Mbeya City importance of statistics and their on statistics it conducts so as to see appealed for cheaper power so that factories such as sawing wood and

...the government will continue to give earnest cooperation to the wananchi in various researches on statistics it conducts so as to see whether or not issues that are being raised are dealt upon



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Liwale Amcos chairman in Lindi region, Hassan Mpako inspires sunflower growers (not in picture) at his farm as captured





Pambogo street residents in Mbeya urban visit their farms to resolve the tug of war between them and Mbeya city council. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

By Guardian Reporter, Siha

FEMALE Genital Mutilation (FGM) on babies has resurfaced in great secrecy in Siha District, Kilimanjaro region after circumcisers allegedly devised a new technique of doing so during baptism festivities.

District Community Development Officer Marko Masue said at present they are investigating the claims that people in the herders' community are conducting FGM on their small children during baptism.

"We have information that in pastoralist communities, FGM on babies has resurfaced in secrecy especially when you hear children baptism was being conducted for the

FGM perpetuators in Siha find new ways of doing it

Christians, then you should know what wards. is actually taking place.

investigative reports and I am certain that by establishing Tanzania Alliance Peoples Organisation (TAPO) in our district we shall expose these people, but we, as government will arrest

in FGM are Ormelili, Songu, Makiwaru, Donyo, Biriri, Karansi, Gararagua, and a fine not exceeding 100,000/-, Mitimirefu, Ndumeti and Ngarenairobi the offender can also be called to pay

According to a report by Tanzania "We have started collecting Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) for 2015/16, Kilimanjaro region

was cited to have 10 percent of FGM incidents. On the ongoing FGM on babies, when found to comment, Advocated Dorice Kinyoa said: "On FGM offence, Areas that are mentioned rampant the law clearly say the punishment is imprisonment for not less than 15 years

examine babies on whether or not they have been FGM victims.

Earlier,

government's

"It is true we are the ones who created TAPO to fight GBV in Siha and these women will be representatives for other women at much lower levels," Ullomi explained.

compensation to the victim."

speaking

Coordinator for Kilimanjaro Region

veronica Ulomi said as of now they

continue to educate women on how to

statement,

TAPO

Communities reject new oil palm plantation in southern Cameroon

KRIBI, Cameroon

Alarm flashed through Cameroon's conservation community in mid-September, when images of untidy rows of black polythene bags in a freshly bulldozed gash in the rainforest made the rounds of social media. It was soon confirmed that the pictures came from a forest concession adjacent to Campo Ma'an National Park, in the south of the country. A little-known company, Camvert, intends to convert 60,000 hectares (148,000 acres) of forest here into oil palm plantations.

There had been warnings. On May 15, Cameroon's Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife announced its intent to reclassify nearly three-quarters of this logging concession, known as FMU 09-025, for industrial agricultural production.

But legally, this announcement should have been followed by public consultations, an environmental and social impact assessment, and then, after any objections had been addressed, formalized by a decree from the prime minister's office.

Map of FMU 09-025, the national park, and existing plantations. Image by Mongabay via Global Forest Watch.

The concession Community leaders and NGOs have challenged the reclassification of this important tract of forest. The concession sits to the south of areas of intense deforestation for existing palm and rubber plantations owned and operated by agroindustry giants Socapalm and Hevecam. To the west, it shares a 50-kilometer (31-mile) boundary with Campo Ma'an National Park, which is home to 26 species of medium and large mammals, including elephants, buffalos, great apes, panthers and pangolins.

Between 2005 and 2016, FMU 09-025 was run by the Dutch logger Wijma. According to NGOs, it was an example of sustainable management practices, earning certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as "well-managed." "FSC standards for sustainable forest management are way higher than the government standards. via Wikicommons (CC BY-SA 4.0)

One can therefore say that this is one of the best managed logging concessions in Cameroon," says Aristide Chacgom, environmental campaigner and coordinator of the NGO Green Development Advocates (GDA).

Wijma's selective logging left most of the forest in the concession standing, leaving it to serve as a carbon sink, a corridor for wildlife, and a buffer zone for conservation in the adjacent national park, which includes a promising gorilla habituation project on an island called Dipikar.

The forest is also a cultural asset and spiritual sanctuary for the Bagyeli indigenous peoples. Under Wijma, locals could still enjoy wild nuts, game, fish, medicinal plants, and a range of livelihood services. Community leaders have warned during public consultations that if the concession goes into agricultural production, they would lose access to the land and its livelihood services. In the north, where Socapalm and Hevecam have operated industrial-scale plantations for more than three decades, poverty has deepened as land became scarce.

Converting this bloc of forest into oil palm plantations is the least sustainable land use option for the area, says John Takang, executive director of the NGO Environmental Governance Institute (EGI). "Industrial agriculture will take away land from local communities, deprive them of forest-based livelihood services and eventually lead to deeper impoverishment."

He adds that communities that have experienced the fallout from Hevecam's and Socapalm's operations for more than 40 years and stand to lose more land to Camvert's plantation have overwhelmingly rejected the plan. "But in places like Campo, where there is little or no social infrastructure, the people are more receptive, hoping it will bring jobs and development. Their areas have no experience of agroindustry and its negative impacts," Takang says.

A gorilla at the habituation project in Campo Ma'an National Park. Image courtesy Campo Ma'an National Park



TANZANIA REVENUE AUTHORITY

ISO 9001: 2015 CERTIFIED

PRESS RELEASE

THE DUE DATE FOR TAX AMNESTY UNDER THE TAX ADMINISTRATION (REMISSION OF INTEREST AND PENALTY) ORDER NUMBER 282A, 2018

Dar es Salaam, 19th December 2019:

Tanzania Revenue Authority (henceforth "TRA" or "the Authority") wishes to remind the taxpayers that on 14th June 2018, the Minister for Finance and Planning announced a tax amnesty ORDER under the Tax Administration (Remission of Interest and Penalty) ORDER Number 282A, 2018 for taxpayers with outstanding tax liabilities and those who voluntarily disclosed or affirmed their tax liabilities and were ready to settle their outstanding principal taxes due within a period and conditions prescribed by the ORDER.

The referred tax amnesty ORDER was designed to operate within a limited period of time commencing from 1st July 2018 through 30th June 2019. Nonetheless, with justifiable cause, the Government, through the Tax Administration (Remission of Interest and Penalties) (Extension of Period of Payment) ORDER, 2019, extended the period for payment of principal taxes to 31st December 2019 for taxpayers who had:-

- Applied to the Commissioner General for remission of interest and penalty;
- Been granted remission;
- Executed a settlement agreement with the Commissioner General for remission of interest and penalty under the Tax Administration (Remission of Interest and Penalty) ORDER Number 282A, 2018;
- Agreed to pay the principal tax assessed in lumpsum or installment; and Up to 30th June 2019, failed to liquate the agreed amount of principal tax assessed.

Based on that background, therefore, eligible taxpayers with the remission of interest and penalty are hereby reminded to use this opportunity to liquidate their principal tax liabilities as specified in the settlement agreement either on or before 31st December 2019. It should further be noted that where an eligible taxpayer, who has been granted with a remission under the Tax Administration (Remission of Interest and Penalty) ORDER Number 282A, 2018, fails to meet or implement any of the terms of the settlement agreement, the Commissioner General shall rescind the settlement agreement and proceed to demand the eligible outstanding principal tax, interest, and penalty as if no remission was granted. With this final reminder, kindly be informed that, with effect from 1st January 2020, the Commissioner General shall institute the recovery measures against all the defaulters of the referred amnesty to collect any outstanding principal tax, interest, and penalty WITHOUT further notice.

Kindly, be so informed and comply accordingly.

"Together We Build Our Nation"

Msafiri Mbibo. **ACTING COMMISSIONER GENERAL**



ANZANIA REVENUE AUTHORITY

ISO 9001: 2015 CERTIFIED

PUBLIC NOTICE

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TANZANIA REVENUE AUTHORITY (TRA) AND TAXPAYERS' REPRESENTATIVES

Dar es Salaam, 20th December, 2019:

The Tanzania Revenue Authority ("TRA" or "Authority") recognizes and appreciates the importance of communication through discussions that concerns tax issues between the Authority and our taxpayers. This is one of the key pillars that ensures efficient Tax Administration with regards to our key functions of assessment, collection and accounting for Government Revenues. Also, through these discussions, taxpayers have the opportunity to gain better understanding that helps them to fulfill their legal obligation of paying taxes voluntarily and on time.

Thus, we would like to inform all taxpayers and the general public that, according to Section 27(1)(a) of the Tax Administration Act No.10 of 2015, taxpayers have a right to be represented by a person/persons that they have formally chosen to represent them. Such representation however, shall be in accordance with Section 27(1)(b) of the above mentioned Act, that emphasizes that it is the responsibility of the taxpayer to inform the TRA Commissioner General in writing of his/her authorised representative. However, since the taxpayer's information is confidential between the taxpayer and TRA (as provided for in Section 21 of the aforementioned Act), any representation other than the taxpayer himself, must comply with the requirements of Section 27 (I) (b) of the Act, in which the taxpayer must notify, in writing, the TRA Commissioner General regarding such representation. It should be noted that, any person who is not the owner, Director, or a Manager of a company has no right to represent a taxpayer if they have no Power of Attorney that empowers them and duly registered by the registrar of documents.

Furthermore, professional representatives like Advocates, Tax Consultants, can only represent their clients (taxpayers) upon being appointed by them and the said appointment be communicated to the TRA Commissioner General in writing as per Section 27(1)(b) of the Tax Administration Act No. 10 of 2015. In addition, much as Tax Consultants are recognized by Section 28, they are also obliged to be registered by Tanzania Revenue Authority as per Tax Administration Regulations No.5 of 2016.

With regard to customs matters administered by TRA through its Customs and Excise Department, Section 6 of the Tax Administration Act No. 10 of 2015 empowers the TRA Commissioner General through the Tax Administration Act to enforce Customs & Excise matters where there are no contradictions to the customs procedures as provided for in the East African Community Customs Management Act (EACCMA 2004).

Hence, the registered Clearing and Forwarding Agents as per Section 145 and as per the requirements of Section 146, 147 and 148 of the said Act, Advocates and any other agents/representatives that are authorised from time to time by Taxpayers to represent them and introduced to the Commissioner of Customs officially shall be recognized as authorised representatives as per Section 27 of the Tax Administration Act 2015. It should be further noted that having an Identify Card or being dressed in a company's uniform is not necessarily the authority for representation as per the requirements of the law.

Therefore, I urge all taxpayers and the public at large to take note of the above explanation to ensure that communication between TRA and taxpayers is legal and binding. It should also be noted that discussions with persons who are not legitimate taxpayers' representatives, is not only a violation of Section 21 of the Tax Administration Act No. 10 of 2015 but also leads to non binding decisions which may either not be honored by taxpayers or not legally binding to any party.

We thank you for your continued cooperation.

"Together We Building Our Nation"

Msafiri Mbibo. **ACTING COMMISSIONER GENERAL** NATIONAL.NEWS

Guardian

By Guardian Reporter

ABOUT half of the recommendations suggested by the World Health Organisation to reduce chronic disease are put into practice, according to a new study.

Implementation is slowly improving, yet alcohol and tobacco policies are the least widely practiced, researchers report in The Lancet Global Health.

"It's a matter of holding countries accountable for their international commitments and speaking truth to power when they fail to take action," said Dr. Luke Allen of the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, who led the research.

Non-communicable diseases, like cancer and heart disease, account for 73% of deaths globally, the researchers note. In 2015, 193 countries committed to reducing these deaths by one third, by 2030, through 18 policies to improve healthcare provision as well as public health through nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use and alcohol use.

"We need to understand which policies are being systematically overlooked and which particular groups of countries may require additional support so that we can help to protect people from these conditions," Allen told Reuters Health by email.

The researchers analyzed WHO progress monitor reports from 2015

Countries implementing about half of WHO recommendations

and 2017 to calculate implementation as failure to reduce marketing around scores for 151 countries for the 18

In 2017, the average policy implementation score was 49%. Costa Rica and Iran had top scores for implementing 86% of the recommendations. Scores were lowest in Haiti and South Sudan, with 5.5% of the policies implemented. Overall, scores rose in 109 countries between 2015 and 2017 and dropped in 32 countries.

In general, implementation increased for all 18 policies except for mass-media campaigns around physical activity and bans on alcohol advertising. The most commonly implemented policies were graphic warnings on tobacco packaging, disease risk-factor surveys and national clinical guidelines. Least-implemented policies included tobacco taxation, antitobacco mass-media campaigns and provision of cardiovascular therapies.

Scores tended to be highest in wealthy countries that invest in healthcare and education, the authors note. Countries in Europe and central Asia, for instance, landed in the top 20 more often. Their weaknesses often involved market-related changes, such

tobacco and alcohol.

Among the bottom 20 countries, 17 were in sub-Saharan Africa, and none of the bottom countries scored points for interventions around fats, child food marketing or heart therapies. This highlights an area where financial and technical support could be provided, the study authors write.

Allen said a large number of lowincome countries and former Soviet Union states landed at the top of the list.

"You wouldn't naturally think of Iran, Costa Rica, Moldova and Estonia as offering the highest standards of health policies to their populations, but it goes to show that it isn't actually that expensive - just a matter of political will - to prioritize health," he said. "All 151 countries have repeatedly committed and publicly endorsed the full list of policy options, yet no country has actually implemented all of them."

Future studies should look at the effects of the policies that are implemented, said Robert Beaglehole of the University of Auckland, New Zealand, who wasn't involved in the analysis



Kwa Mtogole residents in Dar es Salaam cross highly dangerous make-shift bridge linking Mwananyamala and Kwa Ali

By Guardian Reporter

A new study that examines the genetics behind the bitter taste of some sorghum plants and one of Africa's most reviled bird species illustrates how human genetics, crops and the environment influence one another in the process of plant domestication.

The study untangles these factors to create a more complete look at crop domestication than is possible in other major crops, said Xianran Li, an adjunct associate professor in the Iowa State University Department of Agronomy and corresponding author of the paper. The study, published recently in the scientific journal Nature Plants, looked at how human genetics, and the presence of bird species with a taste for sorghum seeds might have influenced the traits farmers in Africa selected in their crops over thousands of years.

Sorghum study illuminates relationship between humans, crops and environment in domestication

Africa of sorghum plants that contain southern Africa, while western African condensed tannins, or biomolecules that often induce a bitter taste, provided one side of a "domestication" domestication processes in other triangle" that helped the researchers continents removed condensed piece together the domestication tannins from most other cereal crops, puzzle, Li said.

"It's a systematic view that gives us a full picture of domestication," he said. "Looking at just one component only tells us part of the story."

Sorghum is a cereal crop first domesticated in Africa that remains a staple food throughout the continent. The researchers noted that sorghum retained as a defense mechanism from varieties with high levels of tannins the red-billed quelea, a bird species

The unique geographic distribution in commonly grow in eastern and farmers tend to prefer varieties with low tannin content. In contrast, such as wheat, rice and corn, due to the bitter taste they produce.

But farmers in south and east Africa grow many cultivars that retained tannin, which would seem to be a puzzling decision considering the taste and unfavorable nutritional values. Li said the condensed tannins were likely

NMB

sometimes referred to as a "feathered locust" that can cause up to \$50 million in economic losses in Africa every year from eating crops. Li and his co-authors found the distribution of sorghum cultivars with tannin correspond to areas with red-billed quelea populations.

They also consulted publicly accessible genotype information on human populations in Africa and found an associated distribution of the taste receptor TAS2R among Africans in regions that commonly grow sorghum with tannin. Taste receptors are molecules that facilitate the sensation

the distribution of TAS2R could make people living in those regions of Africa less susceptible to the bitter taste caused by tannin.

Li called this unique interaction among sorghum tannin, human taste receptors and herbivorous birds a unique triangle that offers unique insight into crop domestication. And, because condensed tannins were bred out of other cereal crops, this kind of research is possible only with sorghum, he said. "Our investigation uncovered coevolution among humans, plants and environments linked by condensed tannins, the first of certain tastes, and the patterns in example of domestication triangle," Li

said. "The concept of a domestication triangle has been proposed previously and generally accepted. Discovering a concrete case, particularly with some molecular evidence, is very exciting. We think this study could help uncover future cases.'

To arrive at their conclusions, the research team grew sorghum varieties with and without tannin and analyzed publicly available datasets on human genetics and wild bird populations in Africa to untangle how these factors interact with one another to influence the domestication of sorghum in Africa. The experiments involving sorghum grown in Iowa found sparrows would feed on the seeds of plants without tannin but left alone the cultivars that contained tannin, reinforcing the concept that herbivore threats to sorghum crops prefer non-tannin varieties.

Chief Human Resources Officer

Ref 32211

Our Client, NMB Bank Plc., is seeking to recruit a Chief Human Resources Officer who will lead the HR functions and report to the Managing Director. By leading the HR Leadership Team, he/she carries the final responsibility for the department's vision, strategy, and perennial plan and, derived from the latter, annual HR plan.

Responsibilities

- Manage the HR Leadership Team, hierarchically and functionally, supporting the individuals in their professional development. Challenge the team to translate the strategy to their fields of expertise safeguarding the implementation in Employee Relations, HR Business Partnering, HR Centre of Expertise and HR Shared Services.
- Visibly be the leader of HR throughout NMB and towards third parties representing the organisation
- Fill the role of strategic advisor for the CEO and the NMB Board HR Committee
- Safeguard succession management for top management
- · Lead the Leadership Team in identifying, addressing and mitigating potential risks in HR given the internal and external environment. Timely escalate any issues that may jeopardise NMBs reputation
- Align the HR systems so that all areas in HR are focused and advance the leadership's strategic goals and direction · Lead by example amongst others representing NMB's values, the (internal and external) client focus and the HR vision,
- strategy and plans
- Further strengthen a culture and environment in which people can use their talents optimally supporting the bank's strategy and ambitions, in which ethics and NMB's values are safeguarded in dealings with employees
- Periodic self-assessment of risk and controls

Attributes

- Impeccable integrity and customer focus
- Insight into how to translate a company strategy to the various areas of HR, creating a coherent HR vision and approach Experience in strategy implementation, translation to daily practice with a team and assessment of impact in the business
- Good working knowledge of the legal HR requirements
- Experience in dealing with trade unions, deescalating potential issues and preventing and managing conflicts, negotiat-
- · Focus on demand management (internal clients and their needs), as demand management is key to the HR Operating Mode
- Interest in people's development, including listening, coaching, team building and leading by example
- Stakeholder management at executive and board level and externally Counselling skills
- · Passion for HR in banking, current state and future developments Cool headed crisis management, damage control in case of calamities
- **Qualifications & Experience**
- Master's degree in Business, Human Resources or other relevant area gained from a recognized university and/or 7+ years as an HR executive for a large international, commercial organisation
- Either a minimum of 10 years' experience in leading an HR department and creating an HR strategic framework for a large (1000+ staff) professional company.
- · Proven track record in defining and executing an HR approach that is focused on global and local best practices and based on the latest insights from international HR leaders and institutes

Key Competencies required are Intellectual Potential, Inspirational Leadership, Execution, Building Talent and **Change Potential**



How To Apply

Email your CV and application letter to jerome@radarrecruitment.com stating the Reference Number 32211 in the subject line.

To view the full job description go to www.radarrecruitment.co.tz and enter the Job Reference Number in the search field.

radar The closing date for applications is Friday 10th January 2020.

recruitment Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. www.radarrecruitment.com

Tanzania Country Program P.O. Box 33759 | 1469 Masaki Street Off Haile Selassie Road, Msasani Peninsular Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel: +255 (0) 22 2602816 +255 (0) 22 2502803 +255 (0) 22 2602831 Fax: +255 (O) 22 2602838 | Email: wateraidtz@wateraid.org



INVITATION FOR BIDS

CONSTRUCTION OF THREE STRUCTURES (MIN-LAB, **SECURITY HOUSE) LOCATED IN ARUSHA DISTRICT COUNCIL - ARUSHA REGION**

WaterAid Tanzania is part of an international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), dedicated on improving access to clean and safe water, decent sanitation and hygiene services. We work in partnership with the Government of Tanzania to support achievement of national targets on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) through the Water Sector Development Programme (WSDP) Phase II.

WaterAid Tanzania is inviting bids, from registered and competent companies, for construction one mini-lab and security house at Ngaramtoni, another security house at Hazina area where WaterAid in collaboration with Arusha District Council are currently finalizing water supply project in Five villages of Arusha District Council, Arusha Region. The project is funded by Department for International Development (DFID).

All eligible interested bidders should request the "tender document" through ZuenaMasumay@wateraid.org. Bidders will be given a chance to visit all sites on 6th of January 2020 starting from 10:00am at Ngaramtoni Water Utility

Bidders should submit documents to evidence their qualifications including but not limited to:

- Registration by Contractor Registration Board Class VII and above.
- · Valid licenses and legal documentation to operate in Tanzania e.g. incorporation certificate, business license and relevant tax certificates.
- Major equipment(s) for carrying out the works.
- Qualification and experience of key personnel for technical and administration of contract execution.
- Recent audited financial statements of the bidder.
- Contacts of at least three references for recent similar projects commissioned preferably within the last two
- Other essential information for bid preparation and submission is available on the tender document.

Eligible interested bidders should submit one original and two copies of their respective bids each in separate sealed envelope to WaterAid Tanzania Office before 10th January 2020 at 10:00am East Africa Time; Bids shall be addressed to: "Country Director – WaterAid Tanzania, P.O. Box 33759 Plot No.1469 Rufiji Street: Off Haile Selassie Rd - Msasani Peninsular Dar es Salaam: Tanzania." and clearly marked "Bid for construction of three structures at Arusha District Council"

The opening will be on 10th January 2020 from 11:00am at WaterAid Tanzania Offices located at Plot No.1469 Rufiji Street: Off Haile Selassie Rd - Msasani Peninsular, Opposite Namibian Embassy in Masaki Area, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Bidders and/or representatives are welcome.

> All enquiries relating to this advertisement should be sent via e-mail to ZuenaMasumay@wateraid.org and copy to TwahaMubarak@wateraid.org

Guardian

BY FRANCK KUWONU

THE Boko Haram insurgency, with its spillover into Cameroon, Chad and Niger, is the most reported-upon security crisis in Nigeria. Yet in 2018 conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria was six times deadlier than the Boko Haram crisis, according to the International Crisis Group.

Scarcely reported on are local and low-level disputes such as cattle rustling and competitions for resources between farmers and herders. These disputes are being fueled by a proliferation of small arms and light weapons in remote and marginalised areas in Africa where government

Small arms fueling deadly communal violence

presence is generally light.

In 2019, for example, 160 people were killed by armed men in a Malian village close to the border with Burkina Faso in what local media described as the "worst ethnic bloodletting in living memory."

The perpetrators are reported to have been from the hunting and farming Dogon group, while the victims were presumed to be Fulani, a nomadic ethnic group of cattle herders. They have traditionally clashed over access to water and pasture.

This is just one example of the kind

of communal conflicts happening in many countries in Africa, where increased availability of small arms has turned traditional rural conflicts into deadlier confrontations and fueled an increase in criminality in rural and urban centers.

"Since the 1990s, small armsparticularly AK-47 rifles-have become weapons of choice for cattle rustlers, replacing traditional and less deadly weapons," the Institute of Security Studies, based in Pretoria, South Africa, observes

According to the Small Arms Survey

(SAS), an independent Geneva-based research center focused on reducing the illicit flow and impact of small arms and light weapons, more than 80% of small arms in Africa are held by civilians.

A 2019 SAS and African Union study, Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa, estimated that civilians, including rebel groups and militias, hold more than 40 million small arms and weapons. Governmentrelated entities hold fewer than 11 million.

Besides Nigeria, communal conflicts remain a concern in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, among other countries. In most of the situations, the problem is compounded by a partial or total lack of security forces in areas of conflict. Even when present, these forces are usually outgunned.

After the "ethnic bloodletting" in Mali, a group of soldiers was chased away when they tried to take into custody one of the alleged perpetrators detained by the villagers. A video of the encounter was later posted on social media to embarrass security forces.

Community involvement in peace Governments usually deploy extra security forces in affected areas and sometimes conduct military operations aimed at detaining militias and seizing their weapons. Disarmament and weapons buy-back programmes have been conducted in several countries, but any ensuing peace rarely lasts long.

In Nigeria, authorities are trying to go beyond police and military responses involving the communities themselves in resolving conflicts. This year the government launched the 10year National Livestock Transformation Plan to help end communal conflicts around land and pasture by making the sector more productive and sustainable including

UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE ACCESS FUND

modernizing livestock breeding and dairy production methods.

In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, where communal conflicts still occur despite government efforts and the presence of thousands of peacekeepers, the UN is working with local communities to help diffuse tensions through community violence reduction (CVR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes.

In CAR, the programme appears to be having an impact, although it is

The UN Mission reported this November that two previously feuding communities in CAR, the Nièm and Yéléwa groups, now live in peace. As part of the CVR programme, members of both communities were given cattle and trained on improved livestock rearing methods. Two years after the launch of the programme, both communities are now able to generate revenue, expand their activities and rebuild their villages.



Isaka ward women in Msalala district, Shinyanga region display sewing machines offered to them free of charge by International Istiqaama Muslimu community aimed to boost economic empowerment. Photo: Correspondent Shabar

By Charles Choi

BONES of a reptile-like beast curled around a younger member of its species may be the most ancient fossil evidence yet of a parent taking care of its progeny after birth, a new study

Parental care of offspring after birth, also known as prolonged parental care, is common among many vertebrates today, including birds, reptiles, fish and amphibians and especially mammals, but is absent in other groups. Analyzing the evolution of this behavior is challenging because it is rare to find the remains of parents and infants preserved together. Previous research suggested the earliest example of prolonged parental care involved South African fossils from the extinct animals known as varanopids. These particular fossils of creatures resembling modern-260 million years old.

Oldest fossil evidence of animal parenting discovered in Canada

the partial skeletons of an adult and juvenile of a different type of varanopid preserved together in a concealed area within the stump petrified wood stump in the cliffs along the coast of Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, Canada. They named the species Dendromaia unamakiensis -- Dendromaia meaning "tree mother" in Greek and unamakiensis referring to the name for Cape Breton Island in the local Mi'kmaq language.

The fossils came from a rock formation dated roughly 309 million years old. "This species could have been around 20 to 30 centimeters from the tip of snout to the base of to 400 million years ago. "To me this tail," said study lead author Hillary suggests that evolution in terrestrial Maddin, a vertebrate paleontologist at communities was proceeding at a day monitor lizards were more than Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. much faster rate than we thought They each also likely had a long tail, before," Maddin said.

In 2017, the researchers discovered "but we can't tell how long it is in our specimens," she noted.

> The researchers suggested a might have served as the pair's den. The way the juvenile was positioned behind the adult's hind leg and encircled by its tail suggested a protective relationship between parent and offspring.

> These findings suggest prolonged parental care began at least 40 million vears earlier than scientists previously had fossil evidence of, not that long after a few pioneering fish left the water to colonize land about 350 million

Tender No. IE/037/2019 - 20/HQ/W/01

For

Design and Build for the Establishment of the Fund's Office in Dodoma

Invitation for Tenders

Date: 24th December, 2019

- 1. This Invitation for Tender follows the General Procurement Notice (GPN) for this Project which appeared in TPJ Issue no. 1821 - 6021 dated 18th June 2019.
- 2. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania through the Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) has set aside funds for the operation during the financial year 2019/2020. It is intended that part of the proceeds of the fund will be used to cover eligible payment under the contract for Design and Build arrangement for the Establishment of Fund's Office Building at Njedengwa Area, Plot No. 6, Block "K" in Dodoma City.
- 3. The Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) now invites sealed tenders from eligible contractors registered or capable of being registered in class III and above for carrying out Design and Build for the Establishment of the Fund's Office Building in Dodoma.
- 4. Tendering will be conducted through the National tendering procedures specified in the Public Procurement Regulations, GN. No. 446 of 2013 and Public Procurement (amended) Regulations, GN. No. 333 of 2016 and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Regulations.
- 5. Interested eligible Tenderers may obtain further information and inspect the Tendering Documents at the office of the Secretary of the Tender Board, Universal Communications Service Access Fund, The University of Dodoma (UDOM), Old Computer Lab building, 2nd Floor in Dodoma, Tanzania between 09:00 am and 04:00 pm excluding weekends and public holidays at the same address or through a telephone contact +255-26-2965771 or e-mail address: ceo@ucsaf.go.tz.
- 6. A complete set of Tendering Document in English may be purchased by interested Tenderers on the submission of a written application to the address given under paragraph 5 above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of TZS 300,000/=. Payment should either be by Cash, Banker's Draft, or Banker's Cheque, payable to Chief Executive Officer, Universal Communications Service Access Fund.
- 7. All Tenders must be accompanied by an original tender security in an acceptable form as shown in the tendering document in the amount of 10% of the contract sum.
- 8. All tenders in one original plus two copies required, properly filled in, and enclosed in plain envelopes must be delivered to the Secretary of the Tender Board, Universal Communications Service Access Fund, The University of Dodoma (UDOM), Old Computer Lab building, 2nd Floor in Dodoma at or before 14:00 hours 13th January, 2020. Tenders will be opened promptly thereafter in public and in the presence of Tenderers' representatives who choose to attend in the opening at the Universal Communications Service Access Fund, The University of Dodoma (UDOM), Old Computer Lab building, 2nd Floor in Dodoma.
- 9. Late tenders, portion of tenders, electronic tenders, tenders not received, tenders not opened at the bid opening ceremony shall not be accepted for evaluation irrespective of the circumstances.
- 10. The Procuring entity is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

Chief Executive Officer Universal Communications Service Access Fund, P.O. Box 1957, Dodoma, Tanzania.

Turkish-African relations thrived in 2019: Diplomats

JOHANNESBURG

Turkish diplomats and organizations in Africa say 2019 was a positive year for Turkish-African relations as they held bilateral talks leading to more visits of delegations between their countries.

"Our bilateral relationship has been swiftly developing, particularly since the 2018 visit of President [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan to South Africa. Throughout this year, we have seen a number of mutual visits of delegations from both Turkey and South Africa," Elif Comoglu Ulgen, Turkey's ambassador to South Africa, told Anadolu Agency on Monday.

Ulgen said some of the official delegations that visited Turkey from South Africa this year included technical and high-level political delegations.

"We had a high-level delegation from South Africa's Department International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) that visited Turkey for preparations for the upcoming bi-national commission that will take place between South Africa and Turkey in 2020," she said.

Ulgen also revealed that another breakthrough in bilateral relations between the two countries was the meeting between South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) party and Turkey's Justice and Development (AK) Party, which met in both Turkey and South Africa this year.

The two political parties agreed to cooperate on several fronts and signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

The diplomat also said that South Africa sent a delegation headed by its health minister to meet with his Turkish counterpart in Ankara for talks on health cooperation.

"Indeed we are very happy with the

sector," she said.

Ulgen further said the Turkish delegations that visited South Africa showed interest in a number of areas, including the defense industry and economic cooperation.

have also seen an increase in the number of tourists visiting Turkey, which made us even happier. This also highlights the very important role being played by Turkish Airlines, which flies to three destinations in South Africa," she noted.

Ulgen also said the election of a new South African government in May 2019 headed by President Cyril Ramaphosa cemented their relations as President Erdogan immediately sent him a congratulatory message wishing him and his cabinet well.

The Turkish embassy in Pretoria also held several events this year, including a commemoration of the July 15, 2016 failed coup, Victory Day and National Day. The embassy also held various seminars to promote Turkey in South

Golden Jubilee

This year, Turkey and Uganda also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Ambassador Kerem Alp told Anadolu Agency earlier this month that relations between the two countries were at their best.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations, we have focused on a number of priorities such as enhancing trade, investment, education and humanitarian assistance and military and defense cooperation," he said.

Alp also said there were many highlevel delegations visiting each other

evolving cooperation in the health to enhance cooperation in various sectors.

Uganda's speaker of parliament and prime minister along with several ministers also visited Turkey this

Alp said the two nations exchanged a "From South Africa to Turkey, we number of drafts and texts that will see increased cooperation in many fields once they are signed.

The agreements include cooperation between parliaments, labor and social services. Other areas are investment avoidance of double taxation, higher education, law enforcement, military and defense cooperation and the establishment of cultural centers, he

Alp said the Maarif Foundation, an educational arm of the Turkish government, and the Yunus Emre Cultural Center will open offices in the East African nation soon.

Humanitarian cultural diplomacy

On the humanitarian front, Turkish non-governmental organizations continued to provide (NGOs) humanitarian aid to disaster-affected people in various countries on the continent, including victims of the cyclone in Mozambique and floods in Somalia. Turkish NGOs also distributed food packages and meat to Muslims during the holy month of Ramadan.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) continued to refurbish mosques, equip hospitals and provide vocational training to hundreds of youth across the continent.

The Yunus Emre Institute in Johannesburg meanwhile continued to teach people the Turkish language and other courses including calligraphy which introduced them to Turkish culture. They also took South African students for summer school in Turkey.

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

We welcome NEC's call for views in improving voters register

statement by the Electoral Commission Chairman, Judge (Rtd.) Semithocles Kaijage that his Commission invites ideas from all people who hold reasoned views to offer on the improvement of the Permanent Voter Register (PVR).

He said NEC has often been doing its work in collaboration with various stakeholders for the improvement of the register and the conduct of elections in general.

He added that in order to realise this goal, NEC has incorporated various groups of stakeholders including leaders of political parties, civil society and people with disabilities, he said.

We however give a word of caution seeking - views might not be the same as incorporating those views in the conduct of elections as past history restifies. Besides, as he said, the conduct of elections and all matters pertaining thereto is vested in NEC according to Section 74(6) of the 1977 Constitution; hence one might say proper conduct of the entire process is something to be revered - it is entrenched in the

For elections misconduct could spell disaster and for testimony of this we need not go farther than what befell one neighbouring country just over a decade ago and the all the arduous task it took to calm things down, the task that included mediators from our country.

We sometimes tend to forget that as our political leaders conduct political business to get into government, that government means ourselves and not an alien power over us, as that ended

If they are to be raised from their graves, ancient Athenians would be infuriated to discover that the result of their efforts in ensuring mankind are governed justly, by elected representatives of their own choice had come to naught.

Hence the ultimate rulers of our democracy are the voters of this country. That, of course is what it ought to be - voters ruling over themselves.

So with all this in mind including the challenges glimpsed in last month's civic elections, there is a need for NEC and all other stakeholders to be much serious in the preparations of the big one - next year's General Elections.

What it needs is not just welcoming the so called well reasoned views for the improvement of the Voter Register but also well reasoned views for the conduct of the entire election - as voters registration is just one process, no less important though. It serves no one, let alone the democratic process itself if after people have registered themselves to vote, they don't find their names on the lists posted at the polling

Or what could be the justification, positive justification for the returning officers to engage in 'disappearing acts' whenever some party approved candidates want to lodge their nomination forms? This practice has been widespread in the past, but more so for by-elections.

We therefore believe that NEC's advertised quest for people to offer reasoned views for the conduct of elections should look into these issues and a host others that have often been talking points at election time.

Community participation in the conservation, management of wildlife extremely important

This includes all valued characteristics such as magnetic, gravitational, electrical properties and forces. On Earth it includes sunlight, atmosphere, water, land (includes all minerals) along with all vegetation, crops and animal life that naturally subsists upon or within the heretofore identified characteristics and substances.

Natural resources may be further classified in different ways. Natural resources are materials components (something that can be used) that can be found within the environment. Every man-made product is composed of natural resources (at its fundamental level). A natural resource may exist as a separate entity such as fresh water, air, and as well as any living organism such as a fish, or it may exist in an alternate form that must be processed to obtain the resource such as metal ores, rareearth metals, petroleum, and most forms of energy.

Communities living around conserved areas must benefit from natural resources and it is upon authorities to ensure that these benefits are transferred to future generations through rational use of these resources. Such benefits must also reflect improved quality of lives by reducing poverty among families.

"We are tasked with the responsibility of stewardship of these resources on behalf of the future generations and it is our duty today to promote rational and sustainable use of the resources so that the benefits that we enjoy are transferred to our children and generations to come. The beneficiaries who are community members living around conserved areas hold the key not only to successful conservation but also to sustain these benefits," said Prof Adolph Mkenda, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

Addressing participants in the Fourth Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) Forum held in Arusha last year, the Permanent

TATURAL resources are Secretary said that while human resources that exist without activities like agriculture, construction actions of humankind. and livestock keeping usually don't rhyme with conservation efforts, it is important that stakeholders strike a balance between conservation and protection of natural resources on one hand and sustaining community livelihoods on the other.

> He explained that in order to attain this balance, it is imperative to engage communities living around conserved areas through education and awareness raising campaigns in order to increase their understanding of conservation issues and build their sense of ownership of available natural resources. "It is not enough for them to understand what conservation entails; they must realise tangible benefits or see high prospects of benefitting from their stewardship of those resources because they will be ready to conserve and protect what benefits them," said Prof Mkenda.

> He highlighted the importance of changing the mindset of communities particularly when it comes to reducing the wildlife-human conflicts.

Speaking at the forum and with a focus on wildlife management a representative from UNDP, Emmanuel Sulle, countered the argument that communities lack education hence the continued poaching for game meat and government trophies. "They know everything that they are required to know about wildlife management and conservation of the environment in general. These people have been conserving the environment and managing wildlife since time immemorial, so there must be something else which makes them uncooperative," he said. "Communities want recognition' they want to be valued. Why would a district's top brass, for example, rush to a site where a lion or an elephant has been killed by poachers but only one or two officials would visit a family whose member has been killed by a lion? Under the circumstances communities feel that wild animals get more recognition than them and therefore see no point in conserving and protecting natural resources," he said.

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By Professor Balthazar Balthazar

E will either seek the construction of a nonracial society based on a democratic idea of what it means to be South African or we will have no democracy.

Recently, Prof Adam Habib put his finger on the disturbing rise of populist anti-democratic politics that eschew non-racialism, accountability transparency, three central features of the constitutional scheme. In this, South Africa is not alone: the rise of Bolsanaro in Brazil, Orban in Hungary, Erdogan in Turkey, Johnson in Britain, Modi in India and Trump in the United States illustrates the widespread dominance of reactionary politics in which each leader is elected without the slightest regard for constitutional guardrails and each of them with project of their own based upon the creation of the dichotomy of the volk vs the outsiders.

Atpresentthiscountryisdistinguishable in that it is led by a constitutionalist. But, as Prof Habib has pointed out, the path to securing a constitutional democracy faces a number of obstacles including the politics of the EFF, the substantial grouping within the ruling party which remains committed to state capture, the challenges posed to democracy by way of the exploitation of social media and the concomitant inability of other media to counter the poison spewed into the political discourse.

The key question that is posed by these observations is how best to protect and promote democracy in South Africa. The success achieved by Trump and his fellow democratically elected autocrats provides the best possible guidance. A

A country as unequal as South Africa will struggle to sustain democracy

global economy dominated by finance and high tech capital has produced huge benefits for the few, impoverished the many, hollowed out the tax base and thereby weakened the last remaining components of social democracy. These developments have been central to the success of populists who feed off

legitimate deep-seated grievances. In South Africa, the design of the Constitution envisaged that the political freedoms contained therein would be accompanied by socio-economic measures to ensure that the right to vote was not accompanied by continuous poverty and egregious levels of inequality. Alas, that is exactly what has happened: after 25 years of democratic rule, race and class continue to overlap, the Gini coefficient is well above .6, almost no growth in GDP per capita has occurred since 2014 and poverty is on the rise, once

A country as unequal as South Africa, with tepid to no growth, declining levels of tax revenue and unemployment over 30%, will truly struggle to sustain democracy. Of course, the entire constitutional venture was undermined by a decade and more of rampant corruption, while those who are credibly alleged to have been central to the looting continue to appear immune to legal process. The last few days have seen the NPA finally awake, as has SARS, but for each step taken to install the principle of accountability, there are always institutions that appear to have a different agenda. In this connection the recent reportage concerning whistleblower on the role of the Public Protector is illustrative.

Thus in 2020, it is critical that criminal prosecutions of those who diverted much-needed public funds for the reconstruction of the lives of millions living on the margins into their and their friends' pockets should take place. Similarly, if the ruling party is serious about restoring legitimacy in public administration, a comprehensive inquiry into the fitness of office of the Public Protector needs to be commenced in the first half of 2020. There are manifestly compelling grounds for such an inquiry of an office, which for many has lost its legitimacy and which is a crucial mechanism to ensure accountability, integrity and transparency in public administration.

The populism that has taken over in many countries should not be conflated with a critique of institutions that fail to deliver to the majority and are only concerned with the interests of elites. What is meant within the context of this column is a reconfiguration of all instruments of government to serve 'we' the party, the agents of the people, who stand in sharp contrast to the 'other', being all who are thus defined as outside the volk. It is an outlook that spawns the kind of hatred that Prof Habib illustrated by way of a series of tweets which he reproduced, all of which were directed against him and all of which defined him

as not one of 'the people'. Donald Trump makes similar moves - 'make America great again' - by which he means 'make America' white again. Narendra Modi defines the Indian people as excluding Muslims and Boris Johnson invokes the nostalgia of a Britain as it was as an imperial nation devoid of immigrants.

In South Africa, the political banner under which millions marched for more than 50 years was that South Africa belonged to all who lived here. It is no longer the dominant discourse. The Trump cry of 'go back to where vou once came from as in the case of Congresswoman Ilhan Omar is alive and well in this country.

One thing is for certain: we will either seek the construction of a non-racial society based on a democratic idea of what it means to be South African or we will have no democracy. This vision is not incompatible with the radical transformation of the economy, the polity and our spatial geography. To the contrary; without determined progress in addressing the true legacies of 350 years of racism and take seriously the aim that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, there can be no lasting democracy.

The way we have wasted so many opportunities over the past 25 years has placed the majestic aims of the Constitution in serious jeopardy. Another year where at best we mark time can only quicken the demise of these aims and with it the possibility of a lasting, vibrant democracy.

By Brezh Malaba

ECENTLY, I met one of the big shots in the government and he said to me: "You journalists are always negative about the government. Can't you see the good things we are doing?"

I told him, point blank, that the performance of this government will be measured on the quality of life, not the populist articulation of issues.

As economic collapse intensifies, more than seven million Zimbabweans are at risk of starvation, inflation has gone haywire, public hospitals are now mortuaries, life has become unbearably tough and, with extreme poverty spiralling out of control, the quality of life has generally plunged to medieval

The ruling Zanu PF blames this catastrophic state of affairs on "Western sanctions" rather than its own internal failings. But the Zimbabwean crisis is essentially the result of failed

Of late, one of the recurring themes of any serious discussion on Zimbabwe is Zanu PF's failure to embrace genuine, far-reaching reforms.

Whether it is trade lawyer Petina

Zimbabwe must re-imagine the future

Gappah revealing in shocking detail her frustrations with a system that stubbornly refuses to change, or British ambassador Melanie Robinson emphasising the importance of true reform before Zimbabwe can even begin dreaming of re-admission into the Commonwealth -- there is a common thread running through: a reform project that has gone off the rails.

I find it bemusing that, once in a while, a prominent personality narrates a story reminding us just how incapable of reform Zanu PF is. It seems to me those who are really expecting the party to reform are amateurs in the game of politics. After four decades in power, it would be wishful thinking to expect Zanu PF to reform itself out of power.

To understand how the "system" actually works, you must first come to terms with the realisation that the political elites and their securocratic handlers who run Zimbabwe are not driven by such lofty concerns as advancing the cause of democracy or serving the public interest. Their main preoccupations are power retention,

power consolidation and regime its part in delivering liberation. Herbert security.

Regime survival is all about furthering the interests of the ruling elites. That explains why an elderly woman carrying a placard denouncing the authorities is seen and treated as a greater enemy of Zimbabwe than the corruption, incompetence and misrule which have destroyed the public health service and brought hunger to the doorsteps of half the entire population.

The Zimbabwean post-colonial project is now totally devoid of any meaningful ideological value beyond the chanting of hollow slogans. We have the worst-performing economy in the world outside a war zone -- yet you hear politicians glibly campaigning for their preferred candidates in the 2023 national election, as if this pointless sloganeering can rescue the millions of children in this country who are staring death in the face as a direct consequence of failed leadership.

As a nation, we must re-imagine a better society for all, a place of hope, opportunity and prosperity. The nationalist ethos of the 1960s played

Chitepo, Jason Moyo and Joshua Nkomo would have a tough time recognising today's Zanu PF. The party has failed to evolve into a forwardthinking and people-centric entity that cherishes democracy, civil liberties and constitutional governance.

Respected intellectuals Masipula Sithole, Stefan Mair and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni have outlined four major influences that have shaped Zimbabwe's political culture: the pre-colonial, the colonial, the armed liberation struggle, and Zanu PF rule. It is trite wisdom that we cannot change the past.

Brutal colonial oppression and a protracted armed struggle have had a profound impact on the nature, character and reflexes of post-colonial Zimbabwe. That cannot be denied.

But with Zanu PF clearly unwilling or unable to re-imagine a new governance ethos, what does the future hold? My take is that if a viable post-nationalist alternative is not found, a failed state will take root -- with disastrous consequences for livelihoods and the republic's very survival.

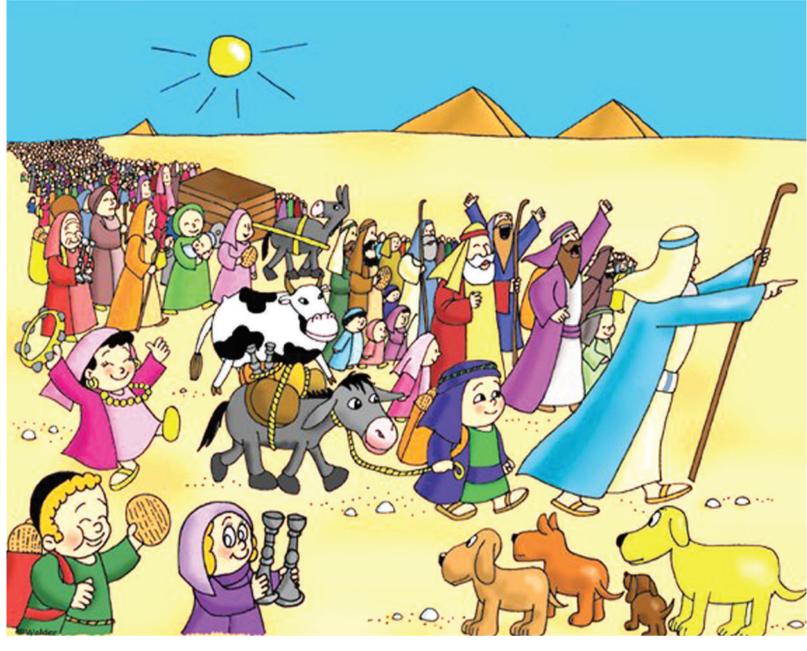
Xmas legacy: The covenants and the children, past and present

By Anil Kija

HILDREN are an undercurrent in the Xmas narrative, with the whole story of how the Persian magicians saw the star of the child Jesus, and then the commotion around the visit to Bethlehem and the talk about a 'king of the Jews' having been born. That led to refuge in Egypt- a short trek surprisingly, while the historical trek took slightly over one generation meandering down the coast of the Red Sea in the Sinai, and approaching Israel from the south of the river Jordan. The Jews encircled Jerusalem from the east and north, capturing it as a climax of its rise with David.

Two major instances involving children are part of the Christmas legacy, which as it is usually the case observe the pointers set out in a rule pointed out by German philosophers Hegel and Marx. It is the latter who set out its principle when he remarked in 1852 that 'Hegel says somewhere that great men in history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add, first as tragedy and then as farce.' That is precisely how children come up in the story of salvation, first as a tragedy involving the killing of all first born male children in Egypt, to impress the Pharaoh too allow the Jews to leave - as the ultimate sign that convinced Pharaoh he couldn't win the issue.

While the tragedy involved the angel of the Lord smiting all children of an enemy people hell bent on keeping the Jews as slaves, the second smiting of children was self-made, that among them there is a king, of that same people. It was fear that there was an illegitimate usurper, but with a portion of



divinity apparently backing him, thus releasing signs of the birth of that king to be, implicitly by overthrowing the lineage ruling at that period. What other solution existed but to destroy him, so when the informing group of magicians avoided that route, collective smiting of children followed,

under a misguided impres- of his plans to harm him, of inflicting death was resion of his being killed as well, in the mayhem.

The shortsighted King Herod could not figure out that if divine powers had indicated they know about why would they not know state, where the power

and thus remove him from the scene well before his hordes of killers arrived? The genocide of babies led to a change in rules governing Roman 'indirect the little boy in the manger, rule' of the Jewish vassal

moved from the king and deposited with the Roman governor. That was why the priesthood couldn't execute Jesus without a stamp of approval from the viceroy, Pilate.

This event however this time of the year as the

would appear, as it confirmed Genesis 49:10, that at the time that the rod of kingship and staff of lawgiver was removed from Judah, it would be the moment of the coming of the messiah. Yet the event was lopsided as the sense of messiah that the Jews had were diametrically opposed to the messiah the Lord had planned, not to repair the broken house of David in the sense of normal kingship but the broken house of faith, where the Jews habitually worshipped Baal, the sun god of Babylon. The nailing of Jesus on the cross was an event that undermined the spiritual rule of Baal and all ancestors, gradually losing the world.

What Herod the king did not realize in his mindless pursuit of destroying the Bethlehem infant by the manger was that his heinous act was a symbolic reversal of the covenant that the Lord had reached with Moses at the time of liberating the Jews from bondage in Egypt. In so doing the king readied the Jewish people for relentless Roman bondage, a point repeated by the high priest

Caiphus when pleading with Pilate on Jesus, 'we have no king but Caesar,' in which case, 35 years later, they were given the bust of Caligula, the reigning Caesar, to worship. They refused in a repeat of the Maccabeus revolt earlier. This time the Lord wasn't with the Jews; they perished.

The revolt of the Maccabees is the Jewish version of Xmas and it falls at around

wasn't an accident as it Jews use a solar calendar. unlike their Muslim cousins who use a lunar calendar and thus the key festivals shift each year to a different date or month, a bit later than the year before. The Jews do not celebrate the next fall, the revolt of Jerusalem against worshipping the bust of Emperor Caligula, as it led to onerous tragedy with Israel swept off the face of the earth more or less permanently, until the 1948 partition of Palestine, widened by the land conquests in 1967 after the surrounding Arab countries lost in their revolt against the presence of the Jewish state.

> Still, current day Israel was created via another covenant involving children, when Holy Mary came to Fatima, a town in Portugal named after the daughter of the prophet, who like her ancient spirit guide Mary was blessed by the Lord. The angel Gabriel (spelt Jibril elsewhere) told the prophet that his daughter 'would be head of women in heaven, just behind the virgin Mary.' That doesn't mean there is a women's department in heaven that Holy Mary heads, but a fusion of the heavenly space of the two religions behind the Gospel, for a common ethos. That same year, 1917 is when the British war cabinet issued the Balfour Declaration, leading to the creation of the state of Israel 30 years later. Had visits to Fatima been appreciated it would be a century of joy. Holy Mary with three Fatima kids in six visits was glory and love, but preach-

ers ignored it.

Reinventing divinity: 'For unto us a child is born...

Christmas is that it is the only birth of a child in history that was not only prophesied earlier but also celebrated in a vivid manner at least for those with a minimum of spiritual acumen to notice what was taking place. This is also a problem of understanding as to the distinction between the birth and the work of Christ, and why the two aspects were so highly represented in the prophetic tradition, and why their aims and realization were so diametrically opposed. Even now the Jews are waiting for a messiah who supposedly came 2000 years to date.

Even more intriguing is the miracle that is attached to the birth of Christ, which some secularists have attempted to contest but to no avail, as both the Christian and Muslim traditions hold to the same narrative of a virgin birth. The point is - why was it so vital that the messiah be born that way, rather than normally like any of the prophets before his advent? Obviously explanations abound but they do not meet the curiosity of secular disputation, as the notion of Christ being offered in sacrifice lacks an object, as God can't sacrifice to any force that is above his powers.

Taking the two points together, one finds a situation like that which Kwame Nkrumah sort of espouses in his book, Consciencism, as to access, in which case some priests rejected Jesus, and

whether, 'on the morrow of creation, God girded up his enigmatic loins, to find out if there was a shortage of raw materials.' In other words, what was divinity lacking, to compel a miraculous or divine birth first, and then an intentional release of this divine person unto sinners, to suffer all possible humiliation for the rectification of sin? Secular critics have it that if the Lord has power over the devil, then this itinerary of Jesus would be avoided.

> And that is exactly where the shoe pinches, that the Lord attains power over the devil, or over evil in general in the sense of what guides attitudes of men by precisely an act of birth that brings into the world someone who can think like divinity, and instruct people in that manner. The key point is that men would of course reject that teaching for it removes plenty of the leverage they had in the law, that is the Torah as a covenant between men (Israelis) and the Lord. In sum, it is a situation where men pray to the Lord and offer presents (offerings, even blood offerings) and on that basis they are given what they ask, without having to cleanse themselves from evil practices.

Strictly speaking this is a version of religion that has lasted unto the last days, as the religion that came out of the teaching and sufferings of Iesus wasn't the Gospel per se but a modified version of it, The simple reason for this situation is that Christ's teachings targeted the heart,



fundamental rules of thumb had to be created as to who could be recognized as a Christian, by the disciples once they broke free of the Jewish religion in Antioch, a town in modern day Turkey. The moment was the dispute about whether they should observe Jewish where the priests have no rituals even after the high

the decision came that the rituals were defunct - and it is this decision which created the church as it grew

That is where the two enigmas come up, that of the birth of the child and putting to a symbolic sacrifice, not by capturing a defenseless Jesus and nailing him to the cross, but the opposite

as someone who knew what the Lord wanted and pushed the Jews and one of his disciples, to do their bidding in it. Without the divine birth, Jesus would not have been able to understand the need for his being nailed to the cross and push the situation to that event, while not doing it

with pride and conceit but in

spiritual misery and psychic resolution, bravery. Only a miraculous birth could bring about such understanding, make the young person part of heaven, inclined to its will.

The miraculous birth of Christ at the same time built bridges with ancient religion, for instance in the that he did not exist, or it is Egyptian legend of Osiris (a Babylonian deities who were divine king), whose wife Isis awash with happiness for

(the spirit behind modern the work of their daughter. day phalanges of divine warfare) rubbed herself with body parts of Osiris after he was killed by Seth (an equivalent of Seth in Genesis inherits the good in Abel, after Cain killed him, and Cain is the father of worldly priesthood, as 'Cohen' or in Kiswahili, Kuhani. There is even a saying 'kuhani msiba,' that is after the priest (of Egypt and Babylon) passes by that house, it has a funeral, grief.

To lay a wreath on the secular dispute on the miracle birth of Jesus, a Hellenist (schooled in Greek and Roman legends, archeology, languages, etc), Dorothy Murdock who preferred to use a pseudonym, Acharya S, said that this Egyptian legend was just refurbished by the fathers of the church. She dared to suggest that the whole legend of Jesus is an adaptation of Greco-Babylonian fables of sun gods and sons of gods, adding the fact that Xmas was similarly adapted from the festival of Mithras. Mithraism was the worship of Mithras, the Iranian god of the sun, justice and contract in pre-Zoroastrian Iran. Known as Mithras in the Roman Empire during the 2nd and 3rd centuries Christian era, this deity was seen as patron of loyalty to the emperor, a unifying force.

Acharya S (b. 1960) died on December 25 2015; her closest followers could not explain if it was Jesus who had responded to her claims

of heaven. Many who have disputed the presence and divinity of Christ have paid with awful afflictions down the centuries and even at present. What seems to be the case is that the Lord brought Iesus into the world miraculously to optimize his ability to understand, to exceed that of common prophets, not to speak of ordinary people or kings. At the same time, as Christ grasped the divine wish that he accepts being put to death by powers insisting on the Torah, his suffering empowered the Lord to judge the world to the letter. All forces opposed to Jesus perish by the sword and other plagues. King David was shown all this 1000 years before Christ, "the Lord said unto my lord, sit on my right hand until I put all thy enemies under thy feet,' all enemies of the Gospel (Psalms 110:1). It is this legacy that

and called her to their part

makes the birth of Christ a reinvention of divinity, as the Lord had not been grasped by the mere fact of raising worldly order and forms of worship, until the Gospel was heralded. It is thus an act of the Lord's renewal of identification of divinity, to dust off affinities with post-Flood deities whose cornerstone is the power of the Lord rather than a morally divine ethos, seen as an auxiliary to this power. It was redefined to suit the kings, but Jesus reinforced it in the later days and finally he comes in judgment in the last days, hence in total

By John Battersby

seething rapidly African metropolis, is a regular transit stop for north-south travellers and a destination for officials connected to the African Union and its many commissions.5

While transit travellers benefit from the cheaper rates of Ethiopian Airlines - Africa's largest and most globally connected national carrier - the development of Ethiopia's tourism industry is still at an early stage.

It will not stay that way for

Africa's diplomatic capital - which means "New Flower" in the native Amharic language - is inundated with construction sites, leading hotel chains and sprawling markets amid chaotic traffic in overcrowded streets.

Mountain lodges and hilltop hotels are appearing in the main historic towns in the north of the country where ruined palaces, obelisks and monasteries of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church add to the Ethiopian enigma.

A recent 10-day visit to fastest-growing Africa's economy - it grew at an average of 10% a year between 2008 and 2018 - revealed a country of 105-million people with a fascinating history and a kaleidoscope of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.

It is Africa's second-most populous country and was the fastest growing economy in the world last year, albeit from a low base.

The ancient kingdoms of Yeha, Axum, Lalibela and Gondar weave a narrative rooted in a deep-seated faith spanning the three major monotheistic religions.

12 iconic rock churches of Lalibela where Christianity was first declared a state religion in AD 300 - vie with the Seven Wonders of the World for vision, scale and resilience.

The breathtaking rock

Enigmatic Ethiopia: Africa's still hidden jewel in the crown?



Addis Ababa Skyline

churches, which have been in regular use continuously for the past 700 years, defy both imagination and description.

We were in Axum, the 10th Century capital of the Kingdom of Ethiopia, on what is called Saint Mary's day: one of the most important festivals on the Ethiopian Christian calendar.

From morning to night there were rivers of pilgrims clad in white muslin cloth streaming towards the Church of Saint Mary of Zion.

Axum is the city of the Queen of Sheba's ancient palace and the Ark of the Covenant which is never seen by anyone other than the lone custodian charged with its safe-keeping, according to the legend.

the mosaic of

ethnic and regional loyalties Front which appear to contribute to a somewhat precarious equilibrium which erupts from time to time

Some 63% of the population is Christian, 34% are Muslim and there are some 80 ethnic groups living in ten states or provinces.

The largest ethnic groups are the Oromo (34%), Amhara (27%) and the Tigrayans, who span the border with Eritrea and box well above their 6% of the total.

The government is made up of four liberation movements which resisted in 2018, he has pursued a and defeated the Sovietbacked military junta, the Derg (1974-91), headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam, a brutal dictator who fled to Zimbabwe where he still by ethnic and regional lives in exile.

Ethiopia is an intriguing by the Ethiopian People's 3.5-million people displaced intertwining of religious, Revolutionary Democratic since 2015.

(EPRDF) which ruled for 27 years under Minister Zenawi's policy of ethnic federalism and his successor, Hailemariam Desalegn.

The four movements are now being subsumed along with five other groups in a single party - known as the Prosperity Party - which is the brainchild of reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali who was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating a peace deal with

Since Abiy was elected vigorous process of reform, releasing political prisoners, promoting freedom of speech and attempting to unite a country riven conflicts which have claimed The Derg was followed hundreds of lives and seen

Lifting decades repression has unleashed resistance including an attempted coup in which two senior officials were killed in June 2019 and a spontaneous uprising in his Oromia heartland in October 2019 which claimed more than 80 lives, with 200 injured.

The recent referendum granting the Sidama ethnic group in the south a tenth state has opened the floodgates to demands from at least five other ethnic groups wanting their own

The dynamics of conflict are complex and often occur within ethnic groups over differences regarding regional vs federal power; sometimes, religion also plays a part but is not the primary cause of conflict.

catastrophic famines (1888, one of the world's poorest 1973 and 1984/85), Muslim-countries and faces massive bearded monkeys in the

Christian wars (1490-1529), youth unemployment. invasions by the Egyptians and Somalia, five years of occupation by the Italians (1935-1941), decades of war with Eritrea and a seventeenliberation struggle against the Soviet-backed

Derg (1974-91).

But the country has never been colonised and it shows in the pride, dignity and independent spirit of the people ruled by successive emperors and kings over two thousand years, culminating with the interrupted fourdecade rule and ignominious death of Emperor Haile Selassie (1931-1974) ousted by the Derg.

Ethiopia has not yet managed to fully realise its natural position as a regional power in the Horn of Africa due to landlocked territory - and conflict with troublesome neighbours such as Eritrea, the Sudan and Somalia.

But there is opportunity looming now for a forward leap under the energetic leadership of Abiy.

Investment flows from China, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and India. Chinese friendship signs abound and it is a major investor in the massive Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other key road, rail telecommunication infrastructure projects.

The IMF and World Bank have also weighed in with major support.

Ethiopia is Africa's major producer and exporter of coffee but it is diversifying a traditionally agricultural economy with a focus on the industrial and service

Abiy has encouraged liberalisation of the economy but despite the phenomenal growth - it has halved poverty Ethiopia has survived in a decade - Ethiopia is still

Yet some experts see Ethiopia as the future "China of Africa" and Bloomberg has listed Ethiopia and the Ivory Coast as the only two African countries in the world's top ten growth destinations.

The mountain landscapes in the north are breathtaking as are the cultivated plateaus, river canyons and patchwork of smallholdings clearly visible on the flight from Lalibela to Axum.

And the four-hour drive from the ancient city of Gondar to Bahir Dar reveals fertile plains and valleys planted with the staple grain, teff, and cow-drawn ploughs and threshing circles that are as ancient as the Bible.

The Ethiopian belief that it houses the Ark of the Covenant, containing the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, is at the centre of the faith of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Ethiopian Christians also believe that the first King of Ethiopia, Menelik I, was conceived in a union between the Queen of Sheba - known as Queen Makeda in Ethiopia - and King Solomon in Jerusalem during a visit to the Holy City.

Lake Tana, adjoining Bahir Dar, is the source of the Blue Nile as it begins its journey to the Mediterranean. The Blue Nile Falls, several hours away on foot, are an impressive

But the volume of water cascading 150 feet has been diminished by the diversion of water to the massive Renaissance Dam which is already a source of tension with the Sudan and Egypt as the main source of water for those two countries.

As our visit with New York Times Journeys had as its focus Ancient Lands and Religious Festivals we did not get to see the renowned

Simeon Mountains or the extraordinary Danakil Depression which claims to be the lowest and hottest destination on earth.

But we did get to visit the Ethnographic Museum in Addis which houses a replica of Lucy, which vies with South Africa's Little Foot, as the oldest hominid of the genus Australopithecus found in Africa, which is estimated to be 3.2-million vears old.

Little Foot is estimated to be 3.7-million years old. The species Afarensis has been found only in the Afar depression - dubbed the Cradle of Civilisation - in Ethiopia while Africanus has been found only in the vicinity of the Sterkfontien in South Africa known as the Cradle of Mankind.

Hominids are the oldest known relatives of Homo Sapiens, modern humans, who are about 200,000 years old.

Successive finds in South Africa since 1925 of the species Australopithecus Africanus have included the skull of Mrs Ples, the Taung Child and most recently the almost complete skeleton of Little Foot.

Even older species of hominids, which are found only in Africa, have been found in Ethiopia, Kenya and Chad and go back between five and six million years.

We learned from our guide at the museum was that Lucy, Ethiopia's oldest and most famous female. owes her name to famous Beatles' hit Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds (LSD), from the album Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heartsclub Band, which is said to have been inspired by the psychedelic drug LSD.

It could be that enigmatic Ethiopia is still Africa's bestkept secret. DM

he women at the front lines of India's citizenship law protests

"Why is everyone asking why so many women are out on the streets in protest? Women have always been protesting all their lives. Did you just wake up?" asks 20-year-old Salma Khan, a postgraduate student at Jamia Millia Islamia University in the Indian capital. It is about 2pm on December 16, and Salma is holding a heavy box with water bottles and pamphlets for protesters at a demonstration on the university campus.

protests continue against India's contentious anti-secular Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that excludes Muslims and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), some of the key images galvanising demonstrators are that of young women on the front lines - dancing and singing defiantly, holding witty posters, protecting fellow male protesters from police brutality, handing out roses to the police and gathering in public places in large numbers across the country.

Protesters like Salma, as with many other women students in India, contend not only with getting their voices heard, but also family opposition to their studies.

"My parents would have rather spent money on my wedding than on my higher education," says Salma who

ago, she finally convinced her the Cage) campaign as parents to allow her to sit the university admission test.

a protest picture. "You did exactly what we were scared of. What about our honour

Although the number of women in higher education in India has risen in the past few years to comprise 47.6 percent of the students currently enrolled, the societal expectation is for women to remain passive bystanders when it comes to political protest.

Swati Sinha, 24, a student from Lucknow who has attended every protest march in New Delhi since December 12, the day after the citizenship law was passed, says: "My parents want me to get married soon. First, this country needs to stay worth having a family. It is now or never." The determination and defiance of young women like Salma and Swati have become more visible in recent years. The 2012 anti-rape movement in India galvanised mass support and stirred the consciousness of many teenage students at that time. Since then, women's participation at demonstrations has grown

with the help of women-led movements. **Break the Cage**

women

what introduced them to organised protests. This Recently, they saw her in Indian women's collective of university students and alumni advocates for less regressive regulations at hostels and other college now?' they told me," she says. accommodation for female students. It counters the security narrative that these places use to restrict women from being in public spaces. Many Indian colleges impose arbitrary curfew timings as

> The campaign, which saw women take to the streets at night to protest, spread quickly across women's colleges in India. Thousands of students protested against the time restrictions and demanded that "safety" and "security" should not be used to silence women's right to mobility and freedom among others. Campaigns were successfully led at Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi University, Aligarh Muslim University, Punjab University, Banaras Hindu University, and many more.

early as 5.30pm for women

residents citing security

"A lot of media is calling students 'first-time protesters'. Were they blind to us protesting against curfew timings, sexual violence, #MeToo cases? Do they only notice protests driven by men? Women students



Indian women in Kolkata protest against a new citizenship

are actually well trained in mobilising through practice," says Salma, who participated in a 2015 project denouncing rape culture by posting sanitary pads with protest messages around Jamia University.

A number of women are maintaining the hidden infrastructure of continuing CAA protests across university campuses.

Apart from running errands organising snacks, warm clothes, and mics for protesters and making posters, women students are compiling contact details of doctors, lawyers and police stations for emergency help.

"The protest may have been led by men in many parts but how did they spread so quickly across the

country? Because women students have been quietly working round the clock from their homes in an organised manner to circulate messages regarding protest venues and subsequent police action," says Swati. When a number of

students were beaten up by the police on December 15 at Jamia University, students at the on-campus hostel for girls from the state of Jammu and Kashmir provided first aid to some 150 female and male students. In August this year, the disputed region was split into two union territories by the Indian government. The internet blackout and the communication blockade continue in Kashmir, now for more than 140 days. It is the longest ever internet democracy. Bushra Khanum, 21, a

second-year postgraduate student who lives at the hostel, says: "We have grown up with police and army brutality all our lives. We know how to treat teat gas itches, skin burns and baton injuries." Fighting for an education

Najima Begum, a 24-yearold doctoral student at Iamia University who comes from Imphal, in the country's northeast, joined the protests partly because of her own struggle to pursue an

education. When she was 18, her parents locked her inside her room for more than a week because she wanted to go to New Delhi. "I refused to eat anything all those days," she says. Her parents were opposed to sending her 2,500 kilometres (1,553 miles) away for her education.

"Mine is a conservative family. Most women are born they do not have the right to get married. They could see no reason to send me away only if they had to find me a groom eventually," she says.

She stuck to her demand. Ten days later, her parents more than 14,000 UNHCRgave in.=

Najima grew up in Manipur, a state which like Kashmir is under the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act that allows security forces to arrest people, search any

anyone with complete legal impunity. Human rights violations including killings, disappearances and sexual violence by security forces have been reported in the state. Because New Delhi was her escape from the violence she witnessed while growing up, Najima says she avoided "political things" at university. Yet, she could not hold herself back from participating in the current protests.

Najima researches biotechnology and its effect on the poor. Part of her fieldwork involves visits to the Rohingya settlement near Kalindi Kunj, just 5km (3 miles) away from the university campus. She says that since the CAA was passed, there is a sense of despondency among the teenage girls in the settlement.

"A couple of them have been waiting for the past two years to apply for admission in class 10, but as refugees, paperwork to do so because they are not Indian citizens," she says.

According to the latest home ministry data, there are registered Muslim-majority Rohingya in India who fled religious persecution in Myanmar. However, security agencies estimate the number of Rohingya living illegally in India to be 40,000.

now it would be impossible for many of them to get a college education because of their religion. Many may meet the same fate as the deported family," she says, referring to a family of five deported back to Myanmar in January.

Najima says that she joined the protests because "she understands the meaning of higher education in a woman's life".

Since the protests erupted, her parents have demanded that she return home. "I now know Manipur, Delhi, and Kashmir are alike. So let me just deal with my parents at home and I will be back to deal with things here. I won't stop," she says.

Atmosphere of security With many hostels closing for the winter holidays,

Subhashini Shriya, a founding member of the Pinjra Tod campaign, says that once home, many women are not allowed by their parents to attend local protests. But pictures of women at

the forefront of the protests have helped create an atmosphere of security that has inspired other women to keep returning - and more to join.

*Some names have been changed to protect the identity of the students. Salma Khan, Swati Sinha and Najima Begum are pseudonyms.

Female-led venture capital fund focused on African women masterminds nearing its €60 million target

By Yinka Adegoke

The number of women founders and co-founders in Africa is on the rise, according to research by Venture Capital for Africa (VC4A), an online community for startups. In 2019 that number was still just at 18 per cent, or fewer than one in five-but it's still better than in supposedly more "advanced" startup hubs like Silicon Valley.

Fortunately, African hubs don't have to replicate the flaws of more mature markets. Several female African leaders in the tech and finance space are taking matters into their own hands.

Fatoumata Ba, a 2019 Quartz Africa Innovator, has spent the last decade as an entrepreneur and

the challenges Africans face in raising startup funding on the continent. That's why she, the former founding head of Jumia in Abidjan, just launched the Janngo Capital Startup Fund.

Janngo Capital has just

raised €15 million (\$16.5 million) from the European Investment Bank as a key step in her team's target of closing a €60 million fund in the first quarter of 2020. It has previously raised undisclosed amounts from family offices among other sources. But it isn't waiting till the fund closes and has already quietly invested in three early-stage ventures.

It aims to be the largest pan-African VC fund able to deploy capital from seed through growth stage, says

businesses and understands key because "the toughest thing about building a startup is actually starting up." Pointing to the 70% failure rate in the first two years globally, she intends to take a hands-on approach to help founders pilot and derisk their business models.

> Crucially, Ba and her team are 60% female, with plans for 50% of its portfolio to be founded or co-founded by, or directly benefitting, women. "This is critical and was an essential part of my motivation to take a leap of faith and become an investor myself," she says.

In Africa, there's a \$42 billion funding gender gap across the board, according to the African Development Bank and even when there is funding it's often microfinancing with "small Ba, who is originally from amounts and big interest executive building digital Senegal. She argues this is rates" she points out. The Global



funding gap is particularly sources Entrepreneurship

Monitor shows African striking as research from women are easily the most including the entrepreneurial in the world. with a rate of about 26% of

the female population aged between 18 to 64. While some of that might come out to make strong returns, of necessity with a lack of

formal jobs, a key feature is the diamonds in the rough the lack of funding for these female-led businesses.

Ba is not alone, of course, in focusing on the paucity of funding for female founders. Last year, Alitheia Capital launched a gender fund led by veteran investor Tokunboh Ishmael, with a target of between \$75 million to \$100 million for women entrepreneurs.

"Female fund managers are also more likely to invest in and have access to female founders through networks male fund managers may not have access to," explains Barbara Iyayi, a fintech growth equity investor. "These expanded networks give rise to more opportunities that increase the quality of deal flow and opportunities particularly in Africa where

are not easily noticeable."

Ultimately, fund managers will always have a fiduciary responsibility to achieve the best possible returns for their investors but focusing on female founders won't be an impediment to achieving those targets in a more level playing field.

In fact, there's an argument to say better gender-balanced ecosystems across Africa with more female engineers, executives, board members and fund managers will do more than just match previous levels of return. "Such an ecosystem would more scalable, impactful companies and in return, more exits and stronger commercial returns," says Iyayi.



Growth of tech hubs masks Africa's IT skills dilemma

By Andrew Jack

When OpenClassrooms, began offering technical in globally, it soon identified an intriguing pattern of demand from Africa.

Alongside more basic courses, there was high uptake for training in Python, JavaScript and programming languages – notably in north Africa.

In Tunisia alone, 80,000 students – nearly a third of all those enrolled in higher education – are viewing its materials every month. That suggested high potential, but also limitations with domestic training capacity.

"Despite the belief that there is less capacity or literacy in Africa, there is a talent pool that is comparable to Europe and the US," says Stéphan-Eloïse Gras, the company's director of strategic partnerships for Africa. Many Africans unprecedented opportunities today beyond their own national borders in the tech sector. They can benefit from trends in remote working, power of the internet.

allow skilled people in less company, to "leapfrog" workers more developed courses to students economies in attracting concerned". work and boosting employment at home. Vibrant tech hubs have

> emerged in countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, helping support international businesses such as Cellulant, a pan-African digital payments platform, and fellow fintech start-up Flutterwave. Yet behind the success stories, substantial mismatches provide training, and the likely scale in demand cent, respectively. from employers.

Forum estimates 15m-20m African will join the African Bank, estimates that workforce every year for the next two decades.

By 2030, the continent will be home to more than a quarter of the world's population under 25 and 15 per cent of its total working-age population.

The already the global search for business. PwC's latest

In theory, this should African chief executives were concerned about a Paris-based online industrialised countries the availability of key skills. including 45 per cent who were "extremely

> The first difficulty is the poor provision of basic schooling. A report by Unesco this year highlighted low levels Uganda and of investment, with a substantial and growing gap between the number of teachers needed and those actually employed.

Data released by the OECD, a club of mostly rich nations, showed just 5 per cent of children aged 15 in Zambia and remain between the 9 per cent in Senegal pool of potential talent, achieved basic reading the capacity of local levels. For rudimentary education systems to maths skills, the shares were 2 per cent and 8 per

Adamon Mukasa, a The World Economic senior researcher at the Development under-skilled youth comprises nearly 30 per cent of Africa's population, compared with 13 per cent in other developing regions. Just 8 per cent of young people had tertiary education imbalance is compared with 21 per frustrating cent elsewhere.

Like other analysts, he cheaper labour and the Global CEO Survey highlights the need for Nigeria to supply US

showed 87 per cent of both enhanced science businesses, announced technology engineering brutal cutbacks. Jeremy and maths (Stem) and improved soft skills such as the teamwork required in the workplace.

> also often lacking. Patrick Dunne, chair of Education Sub Saharan Africa, a charity seeking to improve teaching across the continent, says: "The population is growing more quickly than the skills to respond. We need to do something urgently about the capacity of colleges and other learning institutions."

> A final problem, even for those who do emerge better trained by the education system, lies in the recruitment market itself. Many African entrepreneurs complain about political and infrastructure barriers to expanding their businesses. There are also signs that the scope for arbitrage by western employers seeking to tap into the continent's lower-cost talent pools is being squeezed.

> Andela, a company backed by philanthropists, aimed at training and creating programming jobs in Kenya, Uganda and

Johnson, executive, said business would refocus on supplying higher-Post-school education is level programming staff while cutting hundreds of jobs. "We now have significantly more junior talent than we are able to place," he said.

Some, such as Mr Dunne, question how long the current excitement around coding will last. "It's helpful but what's the half-life?" he asks. "More important is how do you sustain training and shift to life-long learning?"

Gras O p e n C l a s s r o o m s concedes that her business model remains difficult to operate in Africa, despite strong demand across the continent for online training to supplement traditional learning. It has not been able to charge students. Instead, it offers courses for free, backed by some funding from companies, donors and governments.

That reflects a more fundamental problem for the students themselves: poor local opportunities for well-paid jobs means many still feel forced to emigrate in order to find

Africa's medical scientists struggle to get funding to back their researches

By Amindeh Blaise Atabong

In 2009, Tsige Gebre-Mariam, professor of pharmaceutics and drug funding. Even when they go delivery at Addis Ababa overseas just for training, University was excited when he discovered a drug to expel worm-like parasites completion after working from the human body.

Besides the anti-parasitic modern laboratories and in drug, Gebre-Mariam also conducive environments. had a breakthrough in the hemorrhoid treatments and eczema and developed a formula from medicinal Challenges forum for plants for the treatment medical science researchers of malaria. He had been and policymakers in Addis working on it for 20 years. More than 213 million people were affected by malaria in accelerating the translation Africa in 2018, with 380,000 of innovation and address deaths, according to WHO's the continent's most urgent World Malaria Report 2019.

But after reaching out to the government and continent was still reluctant marketplace for Africans to translate laboratory and the rest of the world. findings into locally relevant evidence. "Production substantial investmentcultivation of the plants, extraction facilities and standard production that said, noting that setting up a factory is beyond researcher's financial capacity. Since then, the discovered medicines have even in Addis Ababa.

Like the case of Gebre-Mariam, who also president of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, limited funding on research and development (R&D), is a challenge for scientists across Africa, significantly hampering innovation. The funding gap is glaring when the continent's gross expenditure on R&D of circa 0.5% of GDP is compared to the global average of 2.2% and the OECD average of

Even though a few African countries are rising up to the challenge of spending on R&D, their efforts remain largely epileptic. Africa has fewer than 1% of patents on earth. This implies that their findings are hardly converted into workable solutions even when money is spent on research.

Against this backdrop, for decades now many

African scientists have been forced to leave their home countries to work abroad where there is better they are often reluctant to return home upon in well-equipped ultra-

Funding for scientists was at the top of the agenda at this year's Grand Ababa, Ethiopia. The aim was to chart ways of health and development problems. discussions, the key issue other funders to bankroll which kept recurring the project, he discovered was the lack of funding financial support in to take research findings his country and across off the shelf and into the

The African Union has said the right things but in large scale requires little impactful change has happened. In 2006, after recognizing the role of science and technology in increasing innovation, meets good manufacturing productivity and economic standards," Gebre-Mariam growth, African heads of state committed to raising their national gross expenditure on R&D to at least 1% of GDP by 2025. But the reality is that while a few not reached any drug store, countries including Malawi, Senegal, South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia are making efforts to meet this modest target, the pledge on a continental scale has remained elusive.

The setback of scarce funding for R&D in Africa has been perennial. It is only gaining prominence now as there's growing awareness and ambition for Africans

to find solutions to African problems.

Financial Hiccups

"Our researchers don't have the money," says professor Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang Agbor, African Union commissioner for human resources, science and technology. But she said the continent could overcome this challenge by putting in place technology transfer offices in research institutes and universities which would link the private sector with researchers and their innovations. The hope is "that when they come out with their patents there are already industries which are ready to buy the research and make them into final

products." Besides appealing for political will of African states, the AU Commissioner, urged commercial banks and the private sector to invest in the transformation of research findings.

To drive up sustainable research, there must be a sense of urgency for countries which are still lagging behind like Nigeria and Ghana, according to Felix Dapare Dakora, president of the African Academy of Sciences

Dakora posits a change of attitude from donor driven to personal ownership could help leverage concrete innovations in Africa. "The donors can help us to some extent but our governments have to stand up. It is not because our countries are poor, it's because we don't just have the vision and we don't have that selflessness and leadership."

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SPECIAL REPORT

As giant of human origins turns 100, Homo sapiens teeters on its most daunting edge

While the astronomer Edwin Hubble was trudging up the mountains of Los Angeles exactly 100 years ago to rewrite humankind's place in the cosmos, a fledgling medical school on Africa's southern tip was preparing to take a giant leap into humankind's past. Excerpts...

Broom had – by piling his massive Australopithecus collection on the doorstep of science – imposed on the European establishment a duty to accept Africa as humanity's mother continent.

Dart's and Broom's most vocal critic, the British palaeoanthropologist Arthur Keith, recanted in 1947 in a show of such public remorse, or generosity some say, that he proposed renaming the Australopithecus genus as "Dartians". It was an act of self-preservation just as well. A 1953 review by English palaeoanthropologists exposed the motley Piltdown assemblage as a 500-year-old human skull and a modified orangutan jaw.

Recent morphological thinking doubts that africanus evolved into our species, Homo sapiens. However, it does position the Australopithecus genus as the forerunner of big chiefs among hominin genera. One of these big chiefs is Homo, as well as our hominin cousins Paranthropus.

Featuring a braincase larger than Australopithecus, but some 40% smaller than those of modern humans, Paranthropus fossils are important for showing the multi-branched. messy complexity of the hotly contested hominin family tree. They, of almost inconveniently large tooth and apparently zero tool-making skills, lived at the same time as the Taung child. None other than Broom described this twilight genus, re-emerging from its primordial hideout some 60 kilometres southwest of Pretoria in 1938, thanks to the clever eves of schoolboy Gert Terblanche. As a vegetarian genus that may have been too specialised to become us, Paranthropus surrendered to oblivion about one million years ago.

Today science still considers Paranthropus a possible Australopithecus offshoot, and record-breaking discoveries continue to vindicate Dart's 1925 description of africanus.

Unveiled in August, the first near-complete skull of our earliest-known Australopithecus ancestor - the tree-climbing anamensis – reveals that this species may have co-existed with, rather than going before, the more famous "Lucy" species (Australopithecus afarensis), sprouting the family tree's branches into an ever-growing filigree of mirage and intrigue.

From 'killer apes' to homin-

Corroborative finds between southern and eastern Africa from the Fifties onwards, including Ethiopia's 3.2-millionyear-old "Lucy", would kill most lingering doubts. Fossil breakthroughs up to seven million years old would even indicate other regions, such as central Africa, as a possible hominin birthplace.

It is an extended run of equal parts luck and derring-do that would, however, help cement the Cradle's reputation as the world's richest site for hominin fossils. Finds such as early evidence of controlled fire going back 1.5 million years added meaning to the area's claim as a crucible for humanity – as did powerful and competitive personalities such as Tobias, who spearheaded its 1999 world heritage campaign.

a fiendish ark of animal fossils: including evidence for extinct sabre-tooth cats (the "terrible cat" Dinofelis and its fearsome contemporary Megantereon). Then there is the goliath dassie; and the nearly three-metre-tall Chalicothere. An enormous and bizarre quadruped by today's standards, Chalicothere resembled part lumbering horse, part knuckle-walking ape. ' "Man's predecessors seized living quarries by violence, greedily devouring livid writhing flesh"

In the late Forties, expeditions to the Makapans limeworks tucked into a series of dolomite cliffs north of Johannesburg would refire Dart's facility for reimagining the world. Some of these expeditions were led by Tobias. In Dart's words in Missing Link, they were "responsible for thrusting me back into the maelstrom of man's beginnings". Dart was titivated by a homi-

nin skull bone unearthed by his associate, the legendary fossil collector James Kitching. To him, this bone fragment betrayed anatomical differences to africanus. He felt it justified a new Australopithecus species he called "prometheus" - a homage to the gigantic mortal, a Titan, who steals fire from the gods and presents it to humanity to advance its evolution. What appeared to be the fireblackened bones from Makapansgat, were to Dart a giveaway that prometheus had been at work in that unholy cavern, stoking up nefarious culinary pursuits like braaiing its rivals. No other tools had been found here – and, based on what Dart saw as vicious skull damage, the bones had been broken into murder weapons.

It was a fantastical conclusion that came with Dart's dramatically named "Osteodontokeratic culture". Literally translated, this concept was conceived to mean "bones, teeth and horns" as utensils and weapons. It inspired more of Dart's signature writing.

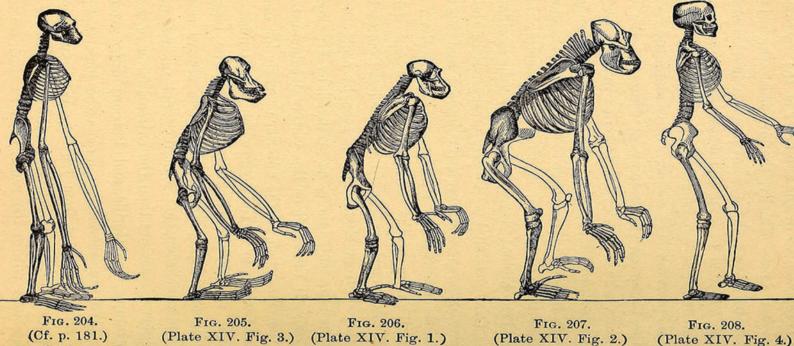
"The blood-spattered, slaughter-gutted archives of human history from the earliest Egyptian and Sumerian records down to the most recent atrocities of the Second World War accord with early universal cannibalism," Dart thundered in a stupendous number of papers between 1949 and 1965. He produced this work to argue his theory of a cannibalistic version of Aus-

tralopithecus. "Man's predecessors differed from living apes in being confirmed killers: carnivorous creatures that seized living quarries by violence, battered them to death, tore apart their broken bodies, dismembered them limb from limb, slaking their ravenous thirst with the hot blood of victims and greedily devouring livid writhing flesh." His concluding crescendo does not disappoint. It is "this common bloodlust differentiator, this predaceous habit, this mark of Cain that separates man dietetically from his anthropoidal relatives".

Bob Brain, the respected South African palaeontologist who found fire evidence at Swartkrans in the Cradle, asked Dart "why he used such powerful prose in his serious scientific writing".

Dart "replied simply: 'That will get 'em talking.'

Talking it did. Slim in authoritative data, Dart's flights of fancy would echo down the generations, first in "Territorial Imperative" originator Robert Ardrey's 1961 book on evolution, African Genesis. This builds on Dart's killer-ape hypothesis. "What if I



The Evolution of Man – A Popular Exposition of the Principal Points of Human Ontogeny and Phylogeny by Ernst Haeckel (New York, Fowle, 1896) / **Creative Commons**

Chimpanzee.

of antique murder committed with a deadly weapon a quarter of a million years before the time of man?" the author intones. The book turned him into a cult figure.

Gibbon.

Both tribes lay claim to a pathetic pool of mud in the dry hell of this earlier Africa'

Dart's cannibalism ideas

live on in the warring ape-like tribes of Stanley Kubrick's enduring sci-fi classic, 2001: A Space Odyssey. In the opening scene of the film, a singing alien monolith bestows an eruption of intelligence on a tribe of ape-like underdogs fighting in a brutal territorial war over water. Both tribes - let's call them the Davids and the Goliaths – attempt to lay claim to a pathetic pool of mud in the otherwise dry hell of this earlier Africa. The scene does not provide an explicit time stamp. It is, however, likely that these proto wastelands are set in the Miocene, that epoch several million years ago in which apes learn to walk.

Thanks to the alien monolith's gift of supernatural intelligence, an intrepid individual from the underdog tribe, the Davids, learns how to recycle a carcass bone as a murderous weapon. And so it comes to pass that the hirsute little Davids of the Miocene, with their murderous weapons of bone in hand, send the Goliaths shrieking away from the source of conflict.

Here we have a confluence of Goldilocks factors inspired by natural selection in a creative mood – the Davids are in their infancy of learning to stand and waddle and even charge ahead when they get it right. Being able to move on two legs is a feat of evolution. This is the moment that the Davids advance from walking on all fours to having versatile hands that can grip weapons, slay the Goliaths and, as we see in one of cult cinema's brightest moments, hurl a godgiven bone into orbit where it morphs into a space station.

'Hominins had been the hunted. Not the all-powerful assailants of Kubrick's Africa'

But Dart's colleagues are sceptical of his theory on our predecessors' homicidal beginnings. This one-dimensional, blood-thirsty interpretation doesn't sit comfortably with them. So they mount a campaign to try and disprove it. It works. It even gives birth to a whole new discipline - taphonomy, which involves a kind of autopsy that probes the effects of animals and natural forces such as water and sunlight on bones, often over millennia. Taphonomy also looks at how these bones accumulate.

Brain himself and Dart's assistant Alun Hughes led the taphonomic charge. In his 1981

held in my hands the evidence account The Hunters or the Hunted?, the result of two decades' investigations into Dart's Osteodontokeratic misadventures. Brain showed it was carnivores who had crushed and amassed the bones. Hominins had been the hunted. Not the all-powerful assailants of Kubrick's Africa. The blackened bones and cavern-interior-askitchen? Darkened by manga-Unintentionally, "Dart's ideas

Orang-outang.

were a major catalyst in the birth of this new field," Tobias, who had been immersed in the Makapansgat excavations, writes in Anatomia. "As these alternative ideas

emerged, I discussed them all with Dart," Brain, the gentleman scientist, recollects. "To my great relief, he was delighted, saying: 'This is wonderful – at last we are getting closer to the truth! "He immediately nominated

me for an award."

The boots that say, you know, 'Africa' '

As if striding along in an unbroken chain of evolution, it was a single lineage of teachers and doctoral students from the anatomy school who would trigger some of our biggest inflection points in the search for human origins. Dart mentored triple Nobel-prize nominee Tobias who, in turn, would mentor his PhD students Clarke and Lee Berger. Both scientists are today at the anatomy school's sister institution, the Evolutionary Studies Institute (ESI), and would go on to make major discoveries in their own right. Many other ESI researchers have also done important

work in the field. A medical doctor by training, Tobias would head up the anatomy school for 30 years until 1990, and hold fast to the school's work until his death in Johannesburg in 2012. Simply "PVT" to scientists and students, Tobias remains one of the respected figures of world palaeoanthropology, publishing prodigiously on fossil hominins and receiving 17 honorary doctorates. He led the founding anti-apartheid movement at Wits in 1948 and made rousing protest speeches. His clout despite political criticism abroad – helped keep South

African fossils in the spotlight. Tobias's famous Olduvai Gorge work with the British palaeoanthropologists Mary and Louis Leakey in the Fifties and Sixties would put him on the map. This work gave the field his analysis of the "Dear Boy" cranium (today classified as Paranthropus boisei) – as well as his formal description of our earliest direct ancestor in the Homo genus, living between 1.5 and two million years ago. Together with Louis and Bigfoot author John Napier, Tobias called it Homo habilis, or

"handy man", a nod to its preference for flaked stone tools. This find was also a compassswinging point on the journey to understanding ourselves. Until then, the oldest-known ambassador of our Homo genus had been erectus, from

The methodical excavations that Tobias co-led at the Cradle with a phalanx of bone excavators for more than 40 years would yield what is probably the world's longest ongoing fossil dig. (One Wits palaeontology academic who did not want to be named said it was an open secret that Tobias "did not really get his hands dirty – he would just oversee these things". However, "overseeing", the academic said in the same breath, meant that Tobias nonetheless brought his monumental energy to the task of fulfilling his titanic vision for the Cradle as a worldimportant site of human origins. Hughes was Tobias's right hand and director of Sterkfontein excavations. Clarke took over running things in 1991.)

These excavations produced many hundreds of Australopithecus fossils, as well as some habilis and ergaster fossils, plus a collection of the oldestknown stone tools in southern Africa dating back two million

Tobias didn't seem much interested in a life of marriage and children, devoting his legacy instead to his work and his 10,000-odd students. (He was "once engaged, but broke it off because of lack of money and his studies at the time", said Clarke). His students were his children, Tobias joked. He was, according to someone who considered him an "unofficial mentor", British human origins authority Bernard Wood, "as meticulous about his manners and dress as he was about his writing and lectures".

When asked during his telephone interview to recollect his first meeting with Tobias, Clarke chuckled. He immediately excused himself. After rustling through his bookshelf, he returned to the phone with the 2013 second edition of the professor's memoirs, Into the Past. Clarke had written the prologue.

"Where have I got it now ... ah, yes! I found what I wrote in the book, I said ... " Clarke announced, signalling in his pointed southeast England lilt something of a performance to follow, set against his mid-Sixties Olduvai excavations with Louis (the young Clarke's mentor and employer). 'The man's a fool!'

Clarke inhaled and began to sing the words, enunciating each letter. "Thus it was that I first met and worked with Phillip when he visited in early 1964 [in Nairobi] to study the newly discovered Olduvai fossils, as well as the magnificent Peninj mandible found by Kamoya Kimeu in January of that year. I was struck by the contrast between the rather erratically attired Louis, with wild white hair, tie reaching only halfway down his chest and weather-beaten Bata safari boots, advertised as the boots that say, you know, 'Africa'."

An ever-so-brief pause of import followed.

"And then the dapper Phillip, in well-tailored safari suit, of lightweight, short-sleeved jacket, shorts and long socks, together with highly polished shoes and neatly combed black hair ... Their different dress and hairstyles matched their personalities. Louis was given to wild, sometimes erratic claims and hypotheses, and would relish the ensuing onslaught by critics, to be answered with a blunt, 'The man's a fool!' or, 'Rubbish!'

"Philip, however, delivered

tailored, well-combed, polished presentations and was ever the stickler for convention and diplomacy. He did not look to do battle with critics, but instead hoped his findings would meet with approval and was dismayed when they did

The Leakeys, Clarke added, "plied Phillip with chocolate". Clarke would also collaborate with Mary in Tanzania in the late Seventies on the 30-metrelong Laetoli footprint trails, preserved in volcanic ash. The 3.6-million-year-old tracks embrace about 70 early human footprints most likely pressed into the sediment by "heelstriking" members of afarensis, much in the way modern humans walk In the Nineties, Clarke had

been rifling through the Sterkfontein laboratory looking for antelope bones. Instead, he recovered four conjoining left-foot bones and a tibia fragment belonging to an Australopithecus. In 1997, he would find a matching footbone and a tibia stuffed into a box of monkey fossils at the anatomy school. This was a remarkable find because a full three years had lapsed since Clarke had found the original fragments at the Sterkfontein laboratory – and the anatomy school was miles away in Johannesburg. In July of 1997, after turning up more specimens at Sterkfontein, Clarke sent assistants Stephen Motsumi and Nkwane Molefe into the bowels of the nearby Silberberg Grotto. A day and a half's search later, Motsumi and Molefe had isolated more complementary pieces of sheared tibia, peeking out of the stony breccia. This is exactly where the rest

of the skeleton seemed to be buried in the rock – it had been cut off from the small foot and tibia fragments during a lime blast 60 years before.

and 2011, the excavation team would double down in Silberberg's black dankness. They fortified themselves with "always basic" equipment: a small hand-held lamp, a couple rechargeable battery lamps, hammers and chisels. But the delicate nature of working on tantalisingly soft bone compelled Clarke to rely on a compressor-powered airscribe for much of the work. It was a striking departure from the crude drilling, breaking and dynamite of earlier years - making the operation the first of its kind using surgical patience to free such a comprehensive human-like ancestor from a rock tomb.

"I decided to excavate it very carefully in position, which ensured the complete preservation, of every bone and every little fragment," Clarke told Daily Maverick. Just as they were convinced of isolating the full skeleton, however, the cruel twist of antiquity would force them to chisel ever deeper into the flowstone labyrinth. Month upon month, year upon year.

In 2011, the team finally lifted a block holding the Australopithecus female's final beguiling remnants - her femurs - where she had rested for millennia.

She was a "nearly perfect" representation, as Clarke described her to Daily Maverick – introducing herself to Anthropocene humans some seven decades after Broom had first raised the possibility of tracking down something like her. She remains the most detailed early hominin skeleton yet

Clarke spent the next several years reconstructing Little Foot. Her name was a tribute to the small, taunting foot bones that had initially alerted him to the idea of her existence. He suggests in his results that she might have foraged for figs or other fruit in a tree near the shaft entrance. Maybe she had been arguing with the owner of a large male monkey skeleton (found naturally interred with her body), before both slipped and plunged into a "natural death trap".

Little Foot's peer-reviewed results first appeared in the Journal of Human Evolution this year, with five more papers now published in the special issue and others "nearing completion", Clarke said. The research unlocks in high resolution how mummification, gravity, rock, water and decay inexorably broke, crushed and displaced Little Foot's skeleton across nearly 37,000 centuries. It's an unforgettable timelapse of the forces of nature acting upon her life in purgatory.

To be continued



Spellbound schoolchildren in the presence of Homo naledi, Cradle of Humankind, October 2015. Photo: Agencies

Guardian PROPERTYMATCH DISCOVER INFORM INSPIRE

FRIDAY DECEMBER 27, 2019

EPZA LURING HI-TECH COMPANIES AFTER THAI INVESTOR DZ CARDS AFRICA SUCCESS

By Property Watch

HE success being made by DZ Cards Africa Limited, a smartcards manufacturing company which has invested U\$5 million (over 11.5bn/-) at Benjamin Mkapa Special Economic Zone shows that there is big market potential for such companies.

Export Processing Zones Authority's Director of Investment Promotion and Facilitation, James Maziku said in Dar es Salaam this week that DZ Cards is also playing a leading role in facilitating progress toward the 4th industrial revolution.

"This is one and the only such hi-tech company to invest in Sub Sahara Africa," said Maziku who pointed out that the rising demand for

electronic and smartcards has convinced DZ Cards investors to choose EPZA are

the place to put their money.

"Going cashless through use of electronic smartcards is not only easing one's life but also helps authenticate and formalise transactions. This helps to curb corruption and flow of black market money into the economy," he said.

Since its establishment in 2015, DZ Cards has increased export earnings from almost nothing to an average of U\$2.9 million (about 6.67bn/-) per annum. The company offers a full range of products and services in partnership with Europay, Mastercard and Visa card business.

He said the hi-tech factory will employ over 400 people



when fully operational with Part of Benjamin Mkapa Special Economic Zone in Dar es Salaam.

capacity to make 300 electronic cards per hour thus guaranteeing the quest to capture the growing market demand for smartcards solution regionally.

The products manufactured by DZ Cards cover a wide range of sectors including telecom (SIM and scratch cards), banking (credit and debit cards) and state identity cards such as driving licences and national identification cards.

"To provide convenient and high speed communication for use in the manufacturer of high tech electronic smart card, the facility has been connected to the National Fiber Optic," the EPZA Director noted.

DZ Card was founded in 1971 by Mr Jø rgen Schmidt and it was then a printing house specializing in computer and security forms. The company became an expert in printing checkbook and bank passbooks with magnetic stripes. In the mid-70s DZ Card expanded into the plastic card business.

Africa devises electricity market master-plan

The African Development Bank and the African Union **Development Agency (AUDA-**NEPAD) have agreed to jointly develop a Continental Power System Master Plan, a blueprint for a pan-continental electricity network and market.

According to a statement released to the media, the agreement to set up the masterplan between the Bank and AUDA-NEPAD was unveiled, on 29 November 2019, during a three-day workshop on the sidelines of Programme for Infrastructure Development

(PIDA) Week held in Cairo. Professor Mosad Elmissiry, a Senior Energy Advisor to AUDA-NEPAD's chief executive officer, said: "The Continental Power System Master Plan will ensure that competitive electricity markets are developed at regional and continental levels, creating unique opportunities to optimally utilize Africa's vast energy resources for the benefit of Africa."

The workshop was aimed at advancing the launch of an Integrated Continental Transmission Network (ICTN) to link national power utilities into regional power pools and, ultimately, into a continent-wide transmission network. Plans also include setting up a market for electricity trading.

The master-plan also will inform the energy component of a PIDA Action Plan, which focuses on key regional integration projects. Development of a unified electricity transmission network and market for electricity trading are viewed as a critical priority to improve the lives of people across the continent.

"Most state-owned electric utilities in Africa today are unable to secure the financial resources needed to implement required segments of regional interconnectors and associated national feeder lines," said Angela Nalikka, the Bank's manager for National and Regional Power Systems, to explain the impetus for the partnership. "The Bank plans to encourage private sector participation in transmission projects in the continent."

Kamwelwe urges NIT leaders to upgrade into a transport, aviation university

By Property Watch Reporter

LEADERS of National Institute of Transport have been order to speed up the process of transforming the institute into a transport and aviation university after approval by Tanzania Commission for Universities earlier this year.

Speaking shortly after inaugurating the NIT governing board in Dar es Salaam earlier this week, Works, Transport and Communications Minister, Engineer Isack Kamwele said decision has already been made hence no need for delays.

"Tanzania has been given support by the Chinese government to upgrade the National Institute of Transport into a transport university, therefore I am directing the governing board to follow all the procedures wanted by TCU to upgrade the institute as soon as possible."

Eng Kamwelwe ordered the NIT governing board to implement the guidelines needed by TCU relating to infrastructure construction so that the transport and aviation university should become operational. NIT is among five transport institutions that the Chinese government has promised to assist in upgrading them to become transport and aviation universities.

Xi Jinping, Chinese President, Xi Jinping said in a speech delivered at the opening ceremony of a Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Johannesburg that his government will build five transport universities in Africa.

Eng Kamwelwe noted that the government has already received



Minister of Communication, Works and Transport, Engineer Isack Kamwele (2nd L) in a group photo with National Institute of Transport's governing board members and shortly after inaugurating the board in Dar es Salaam earlier this week. Looking on is NIT's Rector, Prof Zacharia Mganilwa (1st L). Photo: Guardian Photographer.

centres of excellence for various sectors in the country where experts in different fields will be trained as the nation moves towards middle income semi industrialised economy.

"One of the four centres of excellence to be established will be an aviation and transport operations centre which will be at National Institute of Transport," he added noting that of the amount, U\$21.25 million will be invested at NIT.

He further stated that establishment of NIT's centre of excellence in aviation

a loan of U\$75 million to establish four and transport operations will include projects in fulfilling TCU's requirements construction of various infrastructures in Dar es Salaam (JNIA) and Kilimanjaro (KIA), the purchasing of training equipment for pilots, aircraft engineers and cabin crew training.

> The Minister said African Development Bank is also supporting TIN which it targets to be a regional centre for excellence in road safety that trains professional drivers.

> On his part, NIT's Eector Engineer, Zacharia Mganilwa said that the institute has already started to implement some

as it moves to become a centre of excellence in Africa and transport university.

Professor Mganilwa said some of the ongoing projects include establishment of the centre of excellence in aviation and transport operations and establishment of regional centre of excellence in road safety.

Others are expansion of the Lindi Campus for Maritime Studies and Petroleum Technology; KIA Campus for Aviation training while 800 acres of land in Dodoma City are earmarked for another

transport training facility.

"NIT as a higher learning institution is undertaking deliberate measures to ensure availability and sustainability of experts in the transport and logistics sector," he added while noting that experts to be trained will shipping engineers, pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, and maritime engineers; aerospace engineers, offshore engineers, mechanical engineers, automobile engineers, safety engineers, railway signalling and telecommunication engineers.

For 22-year-old Cecil Chikezie life as a university student cannot be a barrier to entrepreneurship and the creation of jobs for his fellow youth.

The third year mechanical engineering student has already made impressive steps in the world of innovation and business. The student is making briquettes in Kitengela where he has employed two young men and a woman.

His Eco Makaa, an e-commerce

company that connects local fuel briquette producers to customers has seen him win big ticket supplies including leading hotels in the city. He has now set his sights on households to provide them a better alternative to the charcoal as a cooking fuel. The young entrepreneur told Enterprise that he conceptualised the idea in April 2018, when the government began implementing the logging ban.

"I was emboldened by the fact that the making of my Eco Makaa charcoal dust since we are using carbonised maize cobs which are processed in a kiln by farmers we have trained. We mix it (cobs) with soil and water to make the briquettes," Mr Chikezie said during an interview at his business premises in Kitengela. "We can also use sugarcane bagasse as the main raw material,"

Some of his main clients include Nairobi's five-star hotels such as Sankara and Intercontinental

will not necessarily depend on the Hotel as well as Ole Sereni. The entrepreneur has bagged prizes for his effort and innovation. He recently emerged third in the Anzisha awards, securing \$12,500 (Sh1.2m) in prize money to boost the business.

> The Anzisha Prize, which is awarded through a partnership between African Leadership Academy (ALA) and Mastercard Foundation, gave \$25,000 (Sh2.5 m) to 21-year-old Yannick Kimanuka from the Democratic Republic of

Congo and crowned her the winner of the 2019 Anzisha Prize.

The KIM's School Complex, founded by Mr Yannick in 2018, is a nursery and primary school which aims to improve how children perform academically in school in her community.

Mr Chikezie says his business is now targeting homes, which statistics show, still depend on charcoal for cooking. He is working on an innovative packaging that include an eight-kilo brown bag

retailing at about Sh800.

The advantage of the briquettes is that they burn longer and "quietly without sparks" in addition to being smokeless. He hopes to improve the quality of the product to reduce the ash output and make it even friendlier to big scale users such as hotels since households can easily dispose the ash in the kitchen

The student, who only produce the fuel on demand to avoid incurring unnecessary costs, says

he will use the prize money to expand the business through a more aggressive marketing. The government has banned logging in a bid to conserve the environment. However, many Kenyans still cannot afford clean cooking energy such as the Liquefied Petroleum Gas or electricity. Since the logging ban, charcoal prices have sharply increased and this is what motivated Mr Chikezie to search for more sustainable and cheaper fuel alternatives.

CONSTRUCTION

TBA CHIEF PROMISES MAGOMENI QUARTER **RESIDENTS MOVE IN BY DECEMBER 2020**

By Francis Kajubi

ESIDENTS of Magomeni Quarter in Dar es Salaam whose single units houses were demolished over five years ago to pave way for the construction of modern residential cum commercial blocks, will have their apartments by December next year.

Tanzania Building Agency's CEO, Architect Daudi Kandoro said in Dar es Salaam this week that construction work is proceeding well with almost 70 percent done of all the five which have eight floors except one which has nine.

Arch Kondoro said the frustrated residents who had earlier hoped to occupy their new premises this month after President John Magufuli laid a foundation stone in September 2016, should remain patient as construction work is in final stages.

"I am sure that before the end of next year people should be in their houses," he said adding that two main factors have delayed completion of the project as poor disbursement of the funds that are done in installments; and climate

Earlier this week, TBA's Project Manager, Engineer Benard Maemba told the residents that the agency is committed to deliver on the government's promises made to the 644 families which President

Nigeria launches construction of the

US\$5.3B Ibadan-

The construction of the Ibadan-

Kano railway

Kano railway will commence

early in 2020 according to the

Chibuike Amaechi who was on

an inspection tour of the project.

being undertaken by the China

Civil Engineering Construction

the 156 km Lagos to Ibadan

Completion date

The minister was not

happy with the progress with

construction the stations along

been scheduled for completion

have preferred completion in

reason for the April date.

in April next year while he would

February. The contractor has given

the December holiday as being the

The minister also urged the

contractor to source materials from

local suppliers for doors, windows

industries rather than importing

According to the minister the hope

by 2023 before the present regime

leaves office and looses any claim

Construction of the Ibadan-Kano railway is part of the 2,700km Lagos-Kano rail standard gauge line which will offer transport connections from the

Port of Lagos to Kano, near the

The sections completed are

the 187km Abuja-Kaduna section

and the 156km Lagos to Ibadan

in 4 sections namely the 200km

Ibadan-Ilorin section, the Ilorin-

and then the Abuja, Kaduna and

finally Kano a distance of 300km.

The railway will form a vital link

from the sea at Port Harcourt to

Kano in the north near the border

section. The present project will be

Minna section a distance of 270km

border with Niger.

with Niger.

is to have the construction of the

Ibadan-Kano railway completed

and tiles so as to boost local

the materials from China.

for completing the project.

Lagos-Kano SGR

the Lagos-Ibadan route as this has

section of the standard gauge

Company who have just completed

Minister of Transportation,

The US\$5.3billion project is



President John Magufuli when he laid a foundation stone for Magomeni Quarter blocks in September 2016.

Magufuli said should stay in the new apartments for five years without paying rent.

"We are assuring you that the project will be completed as per government directives," Maemba told the residents.

Chairman of the 644 evictees, George Abel said they are patiently $and \, anxiously \, waiting \, for \, completion \,$ of the project so as they can move in and resumes normal life. He said since the demolition of their houses, they have been struggling to pay house rent for their families.

"We ex- Magomeni Quarter residents wish that even today, if it were possible, we move into our new houses because we have suffered a lot. We thank the president for showing concern to our plight," Abel

Addressing the residents whose houses were demolished in 2012, President Magufuli wished that construction of the modern blocks be completed in 12 months from September 2016 when he laid the foundation stone.

"All the 644 residents will live for free for five years once these new apartments are completed. Since you have been living in rented houses for the past five years, you shall not pay rent for the next five years," said the president said then. The project was thus supposed to be accomplished by September 2017.

International

HARARE

The US\$153 million Robert Gabriel Mugabe RGM International Airport expansion works is well underway with 22 percent of the works already done with a scheduled completion date of end 2021.

The RGM International Airport expansion works entails expanding the international terminal building and aprons and installation of four new air bridges. A VVIP pavilion will also be constructed. The project will also include upgrade of the ground lighting system and communication systems and along with this will be service equipment such as ambulances, universal towing vehicles, airside buses and fire-fighting vehicles.

The works are being undertaken by Chinese construction company China Jiangsu International who also undertook the expansion works for the Victoria Falls **International Airport from 2016** that was a great boost for the tourist circuit in the region.

The funding for the RGM International Airport expansion works has been through a concessionary loan from the China Exim Bank that was availed after a state visit to Beijing by President Mnangagwa in 2018

Joel Biggie Matiza, Transport and Infrastructural Development Minister said recently that Government was impressed with the progress works so far. The 36-month project happens to be one of the vital infrastructure development ventures undertaken by the Second Republic in 2019. It is expected that once complete teh airport will be able to handle 6 million passengers annually.

The Robert Gabriel Mugabe (RGM) International Airport is one of the projects that was recently in the spotlight when the Chinese financial institutions suspended financing because the Zimbabwe government raided an escrow account at Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and withdrew US\$10m and converted it to local currency. The other affected projects were the Hwangwe Coal Fired Power Station and the NetOne telecoms expansion project. The Zimbabwe governments action effectively put US\$1.3billion on the line.



The funding for the RGM **International Airport** expansion works has been through a concessionary loan from the China Exim Bank that was availed after a state visit to **Beijing by President** Mnangagwa in 2018

Mbarali villagers in land row with their legislator now petition JPM

By Property Watch Reporter

RESIDENTS of 11 villages in Mbarali district of Mbeya region who are accusing Highland Estates Limited owner who is also their legislator, Pirmohamed Mulla of grabbing their land are seeking President John Magufuli's intervention.

In an open letter to President Magufuli, the residents say the head of state's directive made while on a visit to the district earlier this year to return their land and present him with names of the beneficiaries has yet to be fulfilled.

"Your decision to hand back our farms grabbed by Highland Estate Limited while on a visit to Mbarali in May this year and directive that regional authorities present to you a list of villagers and their signatures after getting back their farms, is yet to be implemented," the letter which has been signed by 12 representatives said.

Dated December 12, 2019, the residents said Mulla's estates has not removed beacons erected in 2017 which annexed their farms as directed hence request the president to intervene and demand the list of beneficiaries as earlier demanded.

"We have not been involved in the exercise as a committee representing at Ikulu in Dar es Salaam seeking the villagers hence request that you send a team that will involve us in the exercise because our farms remain Mndeva said they the 11 villages



A Highland Estate banner at the company's Mbarali farm.

annexed by Highland Estates," the letter added.

In May this year, President Magufuli ordered all land grabbed by authorities and other powerful individuals to be returned to villagers and that the signed list of the beneficiaries be presented to him for verification.

Chairman of the residents who had earlier this year pitched camp to meet President Magufuli, Patrick Mnyota and his Secretary, Oswald

have not cultivated their paddy rice farms for many years because of the Highlands Estates annexation of over 3.200 acres of their farm land.

The 11 villages which include Ibohola, Mbarali, Nyeregete, Ubaruku, Utyego, Mayota, Warumba, Urinda, Ibumila, Imalilosongwe and Mwanavala, allege that Mulla and his company has annexed farms which are outside the two National Food Company (Nafco) farms which he acquired in 2014.

Mulla however maintained that the villagers had actually invaded

parts of his Nafco farms hence qualified to be evicted. Responding to the villagers' letter addressed to a farmer from Imalilo village, Job gwimile, Mulla acknowledged receipt of the letter dated November 27, 2017 which disputed boundaries of the Nafco farms.

"The company would like to inform you that the boundaries to Highland Estate Limited Mbarali were not put by the investor but the government," Mulla wrote in his letter dated December 6, 2017 which he signed as HEL Director.

Helios Towers focuses on Ethiopia opportunity

Telecom infrastructure company Helios Towers is understood to be interested in opportunities within the Ethiopian market. According to the company, Ethiopia will require US\$1.5-billion in investment in tower infrastructure over the next five years to meet the demand for additional installations - these will increase the number of telecoms towers in the country to 10,000 within the period.

company's chief financial officer for telecom towers including earnings before interest, tax, leveraging the exciting growth in Tom Greenwood have confirmed business interest in Ethiopia's towers market. Pandya said Helios Towers is interested in buying existing towers owned by Ethio-Telecom if the stateowned operator intends to sell them. Ethiopia has nearly 8,000 telecoms towers and a standard requirement of 10 square-meter plot per telecom tower.

Since the announcement of its privatisation plans for the telecom Helios Towers chief executive sector, the country's government officer Kash Pandya and the is considering various options

management within Ethio-Telecom, partnership with an independent tower company or a comprehensive sale and leaseback.

Helios Towers is seeking growth opportunities to reinforce its current operations in South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania and Congo Brazzaville. In October 2019, it was officially listed on the London Stock Exchange at an IPO of 115 pence but has grown by 21.7% to

140 pence on December 12. earnings for 2019, adjusted and adjusted Ebitda performance, power supply.

depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) rose by 16% to US\$52.5million which was a 19th consecutive quarter of adjusted EBITDA growth.

Moreover, the company's ninemonth revenue was up 8% to US\$288.0-million, and adjusted EBITDA up 16% to US\$151.5million. While quarterly tenant numbers rose by 9% to 14,226 tenants, its sites grew by 5% to 6,903 total sites. "We continue to has connected about 90% of its According to its third quarter focus on driving top-line growth towers to efficient and reliable

term client contracts and a sharp focus on operational excellence. The business is performing in-line with our expectations which gives us confidence in the outlook for the full year," Pandya said. include access to land, electricity, security concerns, and currency

our sub-Saharan markets, our long

Challenges to tower installations repatriation. To minimise running costs, Pandya said Helios Towers

FRIDAY DECEMBER 27, 2019

CONSTRUCTION



LONDON

ubai is set to retain its rank among the world's top 10 most popular cities with international visitors in 2019 while Egypt's Red Sea resort town Hurghada is expected to make the biggest leap up the ranks, a new study found.

The UAE hub remains the seventh most-visited city in the world with 16.3 million international arrivals, beating Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur and New York with 14.7m, 14.1m and 14m visitors, respectively, according to the Top 100 City Destinations report by UK-based market research consultancy Euromonitor International.

Asian cities dominated the charts with Hong Kong expected to remain the most popular city to visit this year, despite ongoing anti-government protests marked by violent clashes that clipped international visitor numbers in the second half of 2019

"Dubai continues to lead the [Middle East] region in terms of numbers of arrivals, despite a flat growth rate during 2018," the report said. "A free transit visa for two days for Dubai and Abu Dhabi helped to sustain arrival numbers."

Globally, inbound arrivals are expected to grow 4.2 per cent this year to 1.5 billion trips in 2019. Euromonitor's

DUBAI RANKS AMONG WORLD'S TOP 10 MOST POPULAR CITY DESTINATIONS IN 2019

TOP 10 DESTINATIONS

1.	Hong Kong			
2.	Bangkok			
3.	Macau	1		
4.	Singapore	1		
5.	London	2		
6.	Paris			
7.	Dubai			
8.	Delhi	3		
9.	Istanbul	1		
10.	Kuala Lumpur	1		
	Source:	Source: Euromonitor		

list shows tourism in are investing in greater Asia is outpacing other entertainment avenues regions. Asia accounts for such as theme parks, 43 of the top 100 cities, concerts, health and rising steadily since 2013, wellness and medical because of higher income tourism," the report said. levels and the increasing number of Chinese as well thanks to its tourism as millennial travellers reform programme and from Asian economies improving security, with boosting intra-regional Hurghada making the travel.

Europe is the second biggest region that travellers visit in 2019, however, London dropped two places to fifth position leading North African because of uncertainty around Brexit. North performed America well, but most American cities slipped in the study have all seen strong because of competition growth, with the return of from Europe and Asia.

The Middle East and North Africa posted "stable growth" led by Dubai, according to the includes 13 Middle Eastern cities with the region posting an 8.7 per cent and improvements in rise in tourist arrivals and 9.1 per cent increase in tourism earnings year-onyear in 2019.

"Leading cities with good infrastructure, such as Dubai and Riyadh,

Egypt made a comeback, biggest jump in the list. It is projected to jump 19 positions to 63rd place in 2019 from 82nd last year.

Egypt remains the destination, according to the report. Sharm-el-Sheikh, Hurghada, Cairo, Alexandria and Luxor visitors from the UK and Russia, it said.

Among the cities to which is forecast to 2019, from 11th last year, thanks to its connectivity infrastructure.

"It is witnessing rapid development in its tourism infrastructure, having a world class airport and is focusing on part-year data. luxury, medical, sports

and cultural tourism," the report said. "Delhi's connectivity to important locations across North India has boosted inbound arrivals to the city."

Among the key concerns facing tourism is the escalating trade tensions between the US and China, though many cities in the US are focusing on marketing activities to attract Chinese visitors and tap into that lucrative market, the report said.

Euromonitor's research covers 400 cities around the world to examine international who stay in the country for longer than 24 hours and less than 12 months. These arrivals include all purposes of visit, such as business, leisure watch this year is Delhi, and visiting friends and relatives. It excludes report. Euromonitor's list climb to 8th position in those in employment, who study abroad, military personnel, transportation crew, and people displaced because of war or natural disasters. The 2019 rankings were calculated using estimated arrivals figure based on



Residential apartments for rent in London.

Rent prices in Britain nearly double in 2019

LONDON

Rental growth nearly doubled in the UK in 2019 as lower stock levels drove up prices, despite the uncertainty of Brexit and an exodus of some jobs from the country.

Rent increased 2.1 per cent year-onyear in November across the country, compared with 1.1 per cent for the period last year. An average newly let home was £989 a month last month - up £20 from 2018, according to the Hamptons International Lettings Index.

The trend was particularly noticeable in southern England where rents went up 4.2 per cent year-on-year in the south-west, 4.1 per cent in the southcountry. However, there was only a 1.1

A sharp drop in the number properties available for rent, particularly in the south, was the reason with a falling number of landlord purchases meaningless homes to let. according to the Hamptons index.

But this could change, albeit slowly, amid signs that "investors are starting to return to the market, particularly in London", Hamptons said. While there were 7.8 per cent fewer properties to rent in the first 11 months of 2019 compared to the year before, the south of England had 11.7 per cent less homes to let. Hamptons said more landlords in the region had sold up this year.

"Rental growth in Great Britain east and 2.6 per cent in the east of the accelerated throughout 2019, moving back towards its long-term average. per cent rise in London and the north Average rents rose 2.1 per cent in

recorded the weakest growth of 0.2 per November 2019, nearly double the rate recorded last year. While rents rose in every region, the South led the northern England is the cheapest. Per way," said Aneisha Beveridge, head of research at Hamptons International.

> "Rental growth has been driven by a decrease in the number of homes available to rent. The tax and regulatory changes announced in 2016 have resulted in fewer landlord purchases, particularly in the South, causing some landlords to sell up.

"Landlords purchased 11 per cent of homes sold in Great Britain so far this year, 5 per cent less than the peak in 2015. However, after four years of falls there are now signs that landlords are beginning to return to the market particularly in London where house gradually enticing investors back," she is based on achieved rents.

London and the south-east remain the most expensive places to rent while calendar month the average London new let would cost £1,724 to rent and in south-east England £1,076.

This is compared to £641 in northern England, £673 in Scotland, £671 in Wales and £694 in the midlands of England. A report by Hamptons last month found that the number of homes rented out by overseas landlords had increased to 11 per cent from 7 per cent of the private housing market. The rise was likely motivated by a weak pound.

The Hamptons index is based on figures from the Countrywide Group, Britain's largest letting agent. It uses data from the 90,000 homes let and price falls and steady rental growth are managed by Countrywide annual and

WeWork co-founder could make millions more from future float

NEW YORK

WeWork co-founder Adam Neumann, who stepped down as the company's chief executive in September with an exit package of \$1.6 billion could earn millions of dollars more if the company ever floats on the stock market, reported the Financial Times.

Under the restructure deal agreed with its main ker SoftBank in October, Mr Neumann accepted much lower valuation for his stake than when the company was seeking for a flotation. He also renegotiated terms on a class of shares he held known as "profits interests" earning a larger payout if the company's price appreciates following a future float.

Mr Neumann agreed with WeWork and SoftBank to forfeit some of his profits interests, while receiving improved terms for his remaining stake. "A future flotation – even at a valuation significantly lower than the company was seeking this summer - could result in Mr Neumann receiving hundreds of millions of dollars if he sells the stake," the FT report said.

The newspaper said documents showed Mr Neumann's profit interests convert into stock at a value equal to the price of the public shares minus a designated "catch-up price", meaning they are financially similar to share options.

Following the restructure, Mr Neumann's catch-up price was slashed to either \$19.19 or \$21.05 a share from \$38.36, according to the documents reviewed by the FT. The restructure valued WeWork at \$19.19 a share, or \$8bn in total, so if shares later hit \$25 per share on public markets, giving the company a value of \$10bn, Mr Neumann's profits interest would convert into shares worth about \$111 million.

If WeWork's valuation were to reach \$15bn, or \$35 per share, Mr Neumann would receive shares worth \$352m and at \$18bn, or \$45, the value of its profits interests would rise to \$593m. However, going public will not be easy for the troubled company. One of the hurdles to a future float would be investors' concern about plummeting losses. The company, which has lost more than \$5bn since 2016, had accrued \$49.9bn of lease commitments to landlords by the end of September. Founded in 2010, WeWork offers membership of shared office spaces that range in value depending on requirements and location. For instance, a desk in Mumbai can be rented for \$150, but would cost at least \$400 in London.

The company was seeking a valuation of up to \$47bn earlier this year, but as it moved closer to a proposed initial public offering in September, investor concerns about its finances and corporate governance practices led to the plug being pulled on its listing, Mr Neumann resigning as chief executive, as well as the restructure.

Last month, the company said it was laying off about 2,400 employees, almost 20 per cent of its workforce, as it sought to drastically cut costs. The shared office space market is picking up globally. Almost 1,688 new co-working spaces will be opened worldwide in 2019, a little under half in the US, found a report by Cow-working Resources. While that is 500 fewer than last year, the number of co-working spaces is set to grow more than 40 per cent in the next three years to reach 25,968 globally, it said. WeWork plans to open its first UAE facility at Hub71 in Abu Dhabi Global Market in January, Mahmoud Adi, chief executive of Hub 71 told The National in October. The company is also planning to open an office in Dubai and began advertising for staff in August.

Guardian www.ippmedia.com

WORLD

Republican senator 'disturbed' by McConnell's work with White House on impeachment trial

WASHINGTON

REPUBLICAN U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski said she was "disturbed" by the Senate leader's approach to working with White House counsel on the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump, saying there should be distance between the two.

The comments by the Alaska lawmaker come after Mitch McConnell, majority leader of the Republican-led Senate, said during a Fox News interview earlier this month that he was working in "total coordination" with the White House on the upcoming

"To me it means that we have to take that step back from being handin-glove with the defense," Murkowski said in comments aired late on Tuesday during an interview with Alaskabased NBC news affiliate KTUU-TV. "I heard what leader McConnell had

said. I happened to think that has further confused the process.'

Murkowski, who says she remains undecided in how she will vote in the upcoming impeachment proceedings, cited the need for distance between the White House and the Senate on how the trial should be conducted.

Trump was impeached last week by the Democratic-led House of Representatives on two charges over his pressuring Ukraine to announce an investigation of former Vice President Joe Biden, one of the top contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Biden's son. He has been charged with abuse of power and obstructing Congress' investigation.

Trump has said he did nothing

Republicans have a 53-seat majority in the Senate, where 51 votes are needed to pass a set of rules for the Trump trial. The actual impeachment trial



Senator Lisa Murkowski

in the Senate would need a two-thirds majority vote for a conviction.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has not yet transmitted the articles of impeachment to the Senate, a bid to pressure Senate Republicans to reach an accord with the Democrats in the chamber on trial rules. McConnell said the Senate could not take any action until it receives the articles.

Whether or not to call witnesses has been one of the main sticking points between the Democrats and the Republicans in drafting rules for the impeachment proceedings. McConnell on Monday said that Republicans had not ruled out hearing witnesses in the impeachment trial the Republican president.

However, McConnell made clear he would not accede to a Democratic request for the Senate to agree ahead of time to take testimony during the

There is little chance Trump will be convicted and removed from office through a trial in the Republican-led Senate, but the impeachment proceedings could resonate at the ballot box in

Agencies November.

Clip shows determination, confidence in anti-terrorism in Xinjiang

China showed determination and confidence in anti-terrorism, as well as the improvement of China's emergency counter-terrorism capability, a Chinese expert said after military media released a clip of China's seven-day counter-terrorism exercise in a grueling cold desert in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The clip, released by js7tv.cn, a website affiliated with the People's Liberation Army (PLA), introduced the intensive cross-nights exercise participated in by an elite special force contingent of the People's Armed Police in Gobi desert in Xinjiang.

Aiming at enhancing the combat skills of soldiers under grueling conditions in a simulated realistic environment, soldiers finished a range of tasks including positioning and searching, combat casualty care, squad tactics and crawling in the daytime, as well as physical training features like a 10-kilometer fully armed raid and carrying 30-kilogram

In the night operation, soldiers were divided into three squads in charge of reconnaissance, sniping and assault.

Under the cover of flash bang, each squad broke into the target building at the same time and successfully neutralized two imaginary "violent terrorists."

Zhu Yongbiao, assistant director of Lanzhou University's Institute of Central Asia Studies, told the Global Times that Xinjiang, with a complex religion and ethnic situation, has always been at the forefront of China's combat against terrorism, adding difficulty to anti-terrorism works.

According to incomplete data, from 1990 to 2016, Xinjiang endured thousands of terrorist attacks that killed large numbers of innocent people and hundreds of police

Zhao said that the drill shows Xinjiang's determination and confidence in anti-terrorism, as well as the improvement of the region's counter-terrorism capability in an emergency.

In early December, CGTN, China's state broadcaster, released a one-hour-long documentary, Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang.

It begins with explicating the formative years when extremism began evolving in Xinjiang, followed by the grueling fight against terrorism. It also illustrated the interactions of terrorists with overseas forces accompanied by audio and video evidence. The documentary winds up highlighting international cooperation on anti-terrorism.

According to the white paper released by the Information Office of the State Council, no terrorism-related incidents have taken place in Xinjiang for nearly three years.

Global Times

Ethiopia bids farewell to historic year with Nobel Peace Prize, maiden satellite

ADDIS ABABA

WITH the year 2019 coming to a close, winning the Nobel Peace Prize by Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali and the recent launching of Ethiopia's maiden satellite into space have ignited hope of further socio-economic and technological advancements

The East African country would warmly recognize the concluding 2019 as a historic year, mainly due to these positive developments in the country.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE INJECTS **NEW IMPUTES IN SUSTAINING** PEACE IN ETHIOPIA, BEYOND

by the Norwegian Nobel Commit-placed Persons across the country. tee to Ahmed "for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighboring Eritrea," had come at a critical time as the rapprochement of ties among Ethiopia and fellow Horn of African countries ignited hope of new beginning to the fragile Horn of Africa region.

Upon announcing Ahmed's winning of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee in a press statement issued on Oct. 11 stressed that "the prize is also meant to recognize all the stakeholders working for peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia and in the East and Northeast African regions."

Describing the Ethiopian premier's Nobel Peace Prize winning as "a timeless testimony to the main ideals of unity, cooperation and mutual coexistence that Ahmed has been consistently championing," the Ethiopian PM's to monitor the environment and

taken to amend the broken relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea have been "critical to regional stability and integration in the spirit of Medemer (Amharic word for synergy)."

In addition to the recognition's positive implications to the fragile Horn of Africa region as it was the first-ever Nobel Peace Prize that was ever awarded to an East African personality, many analysts also stressed that the phenomenon would inject a positive imputes in solving Ethiopia's own internal conflicts.

According to the UN migration agency, in 2018, Ethiopia recorded the third highest number of new displacements worldwide, with The Nobel Peace Prize, awarded some 3,191,000 Internally Dis-

> A significant portion of these displacements are conflict-induced, largely related to ethnic and border-based disputes.

> On Dec. 10, Ahmed told the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo, capital of Norway his resolve to bring sustainable peace and solidarity in Ethiopia, in particular, and across the Horn of Africa region.

MAIDEN SATELLITE BOOSTS ETHIOPIA'S COMPETITIVE-

Just last week, Ethiopia - Africa's second populous nation next to Nigeria with some 105 million total population - launched a wide-range multispectral remotesensing microsatellite, dubbed ETRSS-1, that was sent into space by a Long March-4B carrier rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China's Shanxi Province.

The satellite, which is expected Office also stressed that the steps weather patterns for better agri-



Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali

cultural planning, drought early warning, mining activities and forestry management of the country, also ignited new expectations as the East African country becomes one of the few African countries to have their own dedicated satellite.

The Ethiopian premier, in his televised address to the nation upon the launch of the country's maiden satellite to space, heralded the start of a historic moment in Ethiopia's quest towards the development of space science sec-

"I believe that this satellite, which was registered as the firstnot be the last as it will be followed by many others in the future," Ahmed added.

Noting that the East African country had been forced to purchase satellite data and image from others due to lack of dedicated Ethiopian satellite thus far, Ahmed stressed that the latest launched satellite would enable the country to carefully follow large-scale projects across the country.

Ahmed also stressed that the satellite "will play a crucial role in modernizing our agriculture sector by creating conducive enever satellite to be launched to vironment through the provision orbit in our country's history, will of scientific data and knowledge."

He added that it will also inject a much-needed capacity for the country to compete and penetrate African and global market.

Noting that China has provided funding support for the project, Ahmed stressed that project had transferred knowledge to Ethiopian experts who have been able to take part "from design to production" in the satellite project.

The newly launched satellite also brings joy to Ethiopians both at home and abroad as many Ethiopian social media users have been posting, with pictures and captions, following the successful launch of the country's first ever satellite into space.

Embattled Netanyahu faces rare challenge to leadership of Likud

By Bloomberg

BENJAMIN Netanyahu has lost his air of invincibility after two inconclusive elections, and yesterday he'll see whether party loyalists are losing faith, too.

The Israeli prime minister's failure this year to form

a government after back-to-back votes has thrust him into the unfamiliar territory of defending his leadership of the nationalist Likud party. His challenger in Thursday's contest, popular former cabinet minister Gideon Saar, says Netanyahu is as hemmed in as a checkmated chess king and it's time for a new leader.

While party leaders and analysts predict Netanyahu will win, it's been a year of unwelcome surprises for the 70-yearold Israeli leader, whose weakened standing after a year of political and legal turmoil invited the challenge from Saar. Saar, 57, wants the party to switch candidates mid-race as Israel heads to its third vote in less than a year on March 2.

Likud's showing weakened in the second vote, and "anyone with eyes in his head knows that there is no chance that Netanyahu will be able to put together a coalition after the March 2 elections," Saar told Likud members on Dec 18. A campaign clip on his Twitter page compares Netanyahu to a king on a chessboard with nowhere to move.

"Netanyahu is blocked, blocked, blocked," the narrator in-

Political Gridlock

Parliament disbanded in December for the third time in 11 months after neither Netanyahu nor former military chief Benny Gantz, the leader of the Blue and White bloc, managed to build a governing coalition. The prime minister's political woes have been closely linked to corruption suspicions that ripened into an indictment against him in November.

Saar has won the endorsement of several mayors, party activists and other Likud lawmakers, but that might not be enough for the party to turn its back on the man who has led Likud for 20 years.

Agencies

Digital economy essential for creating sustainable jobs in Africa - Ghanaian minister

ASWAN, Egypt

THE digital economy provides an opportunity for African countries to transform their economies and create skillful jobs, Ghanaian Communication Minister Ursula Owusu-Ekuful said in a recent interview with Xinhua.

"Many conflicts in Africa are fueled by poverty, inequality and exclusion. With technology, we have a chance of providing more opportunities for people to get sustainable jobs in health, education, agriculture, trade and commerce sectors," Owusu-Ekuful said.

Terming technology as an enabler and accelerator, the minister said "access to the internet data and communication should be treated like water

and electricity utilities." "We can't leave our young people,

who breathes technology, behind," she added, explaining if the youth feel excluded, or have no opportunity for the future, they will get involved in antisocial activities, which may fuel

Developing the banking sector in some African countries like Kenya by revolutionizing digital financial services is an example of embracing technology and utilizing it to create more opportunities for our youth, she

However, Owusu-Ekuful said "many innovative solutions that young Africans have developed are just waiting for investors to help them to take it to

the markets.' She stressed on the role of the governments in providing an enabling and regulatory environment, and the frame

would be "the key to unlocking the poten-

tial of African youth."

It's the right time for African countries to allocate more funds for the

digital infrastructure, she said. So broadband, fiber connectivity and access to electricity and to the skills that will enable them to use this infrastructure are also critical, she emphasized.

"Africa within the next 20 years with our youthful population will provide the workforce for the rest of the world," said the minister.

Commenting on some concerns of losing jobs if work depends greatly on technology, the minister said "I think that some jobs will be lost. Many more will be created if they have the right

So, "the emphasis for us is on providing them with quality education and the digital skills to enable them to succeed," she stressed.

Technology is great for those who have skills, Owusu-Ekuful said, noting that "there is a transition from the old way of doing things to the new exciting way of doing things. And many more jobs which were unheard of a few years ago are now being created."

She highlighted while some traditional labor-intensive occupations, jobs will be lost, the young people will acquire new skills that they need to

succeed.

"I believe that only technology will help Africa leapfrog and it is in our interest to invest in that because governments can't do it alone without the private sector and foreign investments," added Owusu-Ekuful.

She reiterated that technology is a key factor for promotion of the African Union's 2063 Agenda which is a strategic framework for the socioeconomic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years.

She highlighted women in Africa still have a long way to go, but increasingly are pushing forward the bounda-

For women, they can work for better flexible time and deliver the results through communications and technology, without leaving home, so that

they can take care of children and still deliver according to the deadlines, she

The same for the young people who can get included in any digital work. "With technology, we can energize and accelerate every sector and that is what makes it so pivotal."

"Africa doesn't just have to be a consumer of technology produced elsewhere," she added, pointing out Africa is rich with a huge market waiting to be discovered.

"Investing in the infrastructure and the people of the continent will ensure that those men and women take part in the development of our continent without exclusion that destroys the continental potentials and drags it into conflicts," she added.

Xinhua

Guardian

Macao enjoys great prosperity, gears up for brighter future

MACAO has ushered in a whole new chapter at the dawn of the new millennium as it returned to China on Dec.

During the past 20 years, the Special Administrative Region (SAR) has witnessed rapid economic growth, continuous improvement in people's livelihood, as well as long-term social stability and harmony, thanks to its successful practice of the "one country, two systems" policy.

Before its return to the motherland, Macao had experienced negative economic growth for four years in a row. In 1999, the region was visited by less than 8 million foreign tourists and its unemployment rate hit 6.4 percent.

Over the past two decades since its return to China, Macao has bid a farewell to the old days and embraced an upward trajectory of development.

The SAR managed to increase its regional GDP from 51.9 billion patacas (about \$6.47 billion) in 1999 to 444.7 billion patacas in 2018, with its per capita GDP ranking among the best in the world. Last year, the number of Macao's inbound tourists amounted to more than 35.8 million.

According to 2019 Index of Economic Freedom, a report jointly released this January by U.S. think tank Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal, Macao's economy was ranked the 34th freest among 180 economies in the world, and 9th in 43 economies in the Asia-Pacific region, becoming one of the world's most vibrant micro

Thanks to the initial success of Macao's diversified economic development, lottery, tourism, convention and exhibition, catering, hotel, and retail industries in the region are thriving.

Twenty years of social harmony and stability in Macao since its return to the motherland is like a constantly unrolling picture scroll depicting lasting peace, stability, and continuous improvement in people's livelihood.

and peaceful atmosphere, but it is unimaginable that the region was in a totally different situation before it returned to China.

Since 1999, the Chinese central government offered firm support for the Macao SAR government in the latter's endeavor to fight crimes, and the numbers of murders and arsons in Macao dropped 72 percent and 40 percent respectively from a year before.

The sense of gain, happiness, and security of Macao citizens comes from not only better public security.

During the past ten years, the Macao SAR government has rolled out a series of welfare policies, such as the all senior citizens are well supported, 15-year free compulsory education and every child has access to educa-



Ho lat-seng, Macau chief executive

Today's Macao boasts harmonious covering kindergarten, primary and tion. secondary education and the Wealth Partaking Scheme through which the government hands out subsidies to its permanent residents.

> Senior citizens, infants, primary and secondary school students, and pregnant women in Macao are all included in the region's free medical service system. In addition, the Macao SAR government has launched an interestfree business start-up loan program for young people.

Macao SAR government is turning its citizens' aspirations for a society into reality where everyone has a home, every patient gets medical care,

Over the past twenty years, Chinese central government has unswervingly implemented the policies of "one country, two systems" and "the people of Macao governing Macao", and realized a high degree of autonomy in the region.

Meanwhile, the central government has always regarded the longterm prosperity and stability in Macao as a focus and ultimate goal of its efforts while dealing with Macaorelated affairs.

Moreover, Chinese central government has spared no effort to support the chief executive of Macao SAR and the Macao SAR government in governing in accordance with the law

and developing economy, improving people's livelihood, and promoting democracy in the region.

Driving from the Macao Peninsula through the Sai Van Bridge towards Macao's Taipa Island, one can see different views at the two sides of the path. While lunxry hotels stand in great numbers on the east side, construction projects on the west side of the road are in full swing.

Macao citizens would always point to the west side and say proudly "that's our hopes for the future".

The land where Macao citizens place high hopes on is Hengqin New Area in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong province. Hengqin New Area, Macao's neighbor separated by a river, is three times the size of Macao.

With a new campus of the University of Macau built on the Hengqin Island, more than 2,000 Macao enterprises registered in the area, the seamless integration of rail traffic between the two sides, and completely open channels of cooperation for the area and Macao SAR, Hengqin New Area has become a convenient access to the diversified development of Macao, and served as an active platform for innovative practice of the "one country, two systems" principle.

People's Daily

Christmas typhoon kills at least 16 in Philippines

MANILA

A TYPHOON that struck the central Philippines over Christmas has killed at least 16 people and left six others missing, disaster agency officials said yesterday.

Typhoon Phanfone hit the Philippines late on Tuesday with winds of up to 120 kph and gusts of 150 kph, heavy rain and flooding.

More than 58,000 people were evacuated from their homes before the storm, which caused widespread property damage, and more than 15,000 were stranded at ports when ferries were suspended. Scores of flights were cancelled.

The fatalities were in the central provinces of Capiz, Iloilo and Leyte, officials said. Thirteen people died in Western Visayas and three others in the eastern part of the island, including a policeman who was electrocuted when his patrol vehicle hit a toppled electric post, regional disaster agencies said. Several roads remained impassable in Samar and Leyte provinces, reports showed.

The typhoon left the Philippines on Wednesday night and was out over the South China Sea, moving west.

An average of 20 typhoons hit the Philippines each year, with storms becoming fiercer in recent years.

Building on 70 years of achievements and pursuing progress in the new era

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's Exclusive Year-end Interview with People's Daily

Q. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of New China. What is your view of the international situation and China's diplomacy in 2019?

Wang: The year 2019 is significant in the course of China's development. The CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as its core led the whole Party and people across the country to solemnly celebrate the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. A more united, stable and prosperous China is proudly embarking on a new journey toward brighter development prospects. Standing in stark contrast to the effective governance of China is the disorder in many parts of the world. In 2019, quite a number of countries have seen political and social turmoil. Instability and uncertainty are on the rise in the international situation. A tug of war between unilateralism and multilateralism is unfolding across the world, and it will determine the future and destiny of humanity.

In 2019, China, weathering rain and storm, has forged ahead on the diplomatic front. Under the wise leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping and the CPC Central Committee, we have pressed ahead, overcome challenges and achieved new, important advances.

In the face of external interference and provocation, we have stood firm, resisted them head on and never backed down. We have effectively defended our country's sovereignty, security and development rights and interests, and resolutely upheld the dignity of the country, nation and people.

In the face of volatility in the international situation, we have stayed committed to multilateralism and championed equity and justice. We have steadily developed relations with other major countries, and vigorously advanced mutually beneficial cooperation with neighboring and developing countries. We have spearheaded global governance and actively mediated various regional issues.

In the face of the sluggish world economy, we have continued to adhere to the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation, and successfully held the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. At the second China International Import Expo, which

attracted more participants than the first one, we announced new, major measures of opening-up. In this way, we have made new contributions to building an open

On the complex international stage, China has become a true pillar of world peace and stability and a key engine for global devel-

This year has seen close exchanges between Chinese and Russian leaders. What is your comment on the current China-

Wang: This year marks the 70th lationship has broken new ground in a number of areas:

First, there has been a new characterization of our bilateral President Vladimir Putin, with their vision and political resolve, have upgraded the China-Russia relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era. This elevation has brought political trust between the two sides to an unprecedent-

Second, practical cooperation has made new breakthroughs. Smooth progress has been made in creating synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union. Steady advances have been made in major bilateral projects in energy, aviation, space and connectivity. The east-route natural gas pipeline has gone into operation. Bilateral trade has exceeded the

Third, friendly exchanges have made new progress. The China-Russia year of sub-national cooperation and exchanges has been brought to a successful conclusion. The number of friendship states/provinces and cities has reached 146 pairs. The Chinese language has been included in Russia's unified state exam. Friendship between our peoples

Fourth, strategic coordination has reached a new level. China and Russia have shown firm mutual support on issues concerning each other's core interests, and worked together to resist attempts by external forces to keep us down. The two sides signed a joint statement on strengthening global strategic stability. We have enhanced back-to-back coordination in international affairs, and stood shoulder to shoulder in opposing power politics and bullying

In the world today, the China-Russia relationship is the closest, strongest, most mature and most stable one between two major countries. It sets a high standard and a prime example for harmo-

world economy.

opment and prosperity.

Russia relations? anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Russia. The re-

mark of US\$100 billion.

has been further strengthened. practices.

nious co-existence and win-win



cooperation between countries. The China-Russia relationship has not reached its full potential; we can do still better. There is no limit to our cooperation; we must always strive to expand it. I am confident that under the guidance of our Presidents, China-Russia relations will continue to make history and scale new heights. They will bring more benefits to our two countries and peoples and play a vital role in international peace and stability.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. How do you see the chal-

lenges for the relationship? Wang: The 40th anniversary of China-US diplomatic relations should have made this year an important opportunity for joint commemoration and new progress. Regrettably however, the US has taken a string of actions to obstruct and repress China in trade, science and technology, and has been meddling in a series of issues concerning China's territorial integrity and sovereignty and smearing China. The US actions not only undermined the mutual trust that the two sides built over four decades, but also swayed stability and development of the whole world. I would like to stress again that China will resolutely safeguard its core interests and legitimate rights to development. No one and no force can stop the historic march of the 1.4 billion Chinese people toward modernization. This said, regarding the problems and disagreements in bilateral interactions, China is always ready to have consultations with the US on the basis of mutual respect. The fact that China and the US recently reached agreement on a phase one trade deal shows that, when both sides demonstrate good faith, work

in concert and communicate as equals, we can always find a solution to whatever issue that may come our way.

The China-US relationship has been through rain and shine and moved ahead amidst ups and downs in the past four decades. The most important thing that this period has taught us is that both countries stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. As President Xi Jinping has stressed repeatedly, cooperation is the only correct choice for the two countries. It is our hope that the US side will return to a fact-based and correct perception of China and a sensible and pragmatic policy toward China. We urge the US to work with us to put the relationship back on the track of sound development and realize the goal of no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. Considering both the long-term interests of the Chinese and American peoples and the international responsibilities we shoulder as major countries, both sides need to and must find a way of peaceful co-existence between the world's largest developing and developed countries. Together, we must embark on a path of mutual benefit and win-win results that serves China, the US and the whole world.

What is your assessment of China's relationship with **Europe? And your expectations**

for next year? Wang: The year 2019 has been a year of harvest for China-Europe relations. President Xi Jinping's successful overseas visits in 2019 started with Europe, and concluded with Europe as well. The leaders of Germany, France and Italy all made visits to China. The China-EU Summit and the China-CEEC Summit were both very successful. These intensive high-level interac-

tions speak volumes about how both China and Europe value their relationship, and lend strong impetus to the deepening of cooperation between the two sides. China and the EU concluded negotiations for an agreement on geographical indications as scheduled. We are speeding up negotiations for a China-EU investment agreement. We are making progress in the Belt and Road cooperation. The membership of China-CEEC cooperation was enlarged for the first time. China and European countries reached consensus on strengthening global governance and many other major issues. Following the official inauguration of the new EU leadership earlier this month, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Kegiang have had phone calls respectively with President Charles Michel and President Ursula von der Leyen. These interactions between Chinese and EU leaders have built consensus and set the course for the further development of China-

EU relations. As the world's two major civilizations and major forces, China and Europe stand together for a multi-polar world and greater democracy in international relations. We stand together for multilateralism and the basic norms of international relations. And we stand together for free trade and an open world economy. Our cooperation far outweighs our competition, and we agree much more than we disagree. We are partners, not rivals. We are friends, not enemies. Next year will mark the 45th anniversary of China-EU diplomatic relations. China is prepared to strengthen high-level exchanges with Europe to jointly take China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership to a new level. Working together, China and Europe can provide more stability to an otherwise uncertain

How will China bring about new progress in the Belt and Road cooperation?

Wang: The second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was the most important diplomatic event hosted by China in 2019. Chaired by President Xi Jinping, it was a tremendous success. It was attended by 40 national leaders and heads of international organizations and more than 6,000 representatives of 150 countries and 92 international organizations. With 283 outcomes, the second Forum marked the start of a new journey in Belt and Road cooperation – one of high-quality development.

Thanks to the continuous efforts of all parties, we have refined the blueprint of Belt and Road cooperation, put forward more effective guidelines and identified clearer paths for implementation. This

new vision is best captured by our commitment to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefit; to open, green and clean cooperation; and to a high-standard, people-centered and sustainable approach. Next year, we will host the second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference. It is an excellent opportunity for forging a global partnership for connectivity, for making new breakthroughs in the major connectivity initiatives of China-Europe Railway Express and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, and for supporting the multilateral mechanisms and forums under the Belt and Road Initiative in playing their full roles. I am confident that with our collective efforts, we will draw more exciting and beautiful sketches in pursuing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Unilateralism is dealing a serious blow to the international order. From your perspective, how should the international community tackle this challenge?

Wang: Confronted with unilateralism, the international community has no choice but to join hands and firmly resist this perverse trend. If we give a free pass to unilateralism and the supremacy of unchecked national interests, the international order and system on which we live and thrive may collapse. That would be an unacceptable outcome for all of us, particularly small- and medium-sized countries.

As a responsible member of the international community, China has been a strong champion of multilateralism. Wherever he traveled in 2019, President Xi Jinping made China's voice heard. It is a voice of justice that rejects unilateralism, hegemonism and power politics in favor of multilateralism, the authority of the UN and the norms of international relations. President Xi has pointed out that our commitment to multilateralism requires us to safeguard peace and development for all, to uphold international fairness and equity and promote win-win results, and to reform the international governance system and build a community with a shared future for mankind. The goal, principle and direction he has set capture the essence of multilateralism of our times. They are being recognized and endorsed by more and more countries.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the UN next year, China is ready to work with the rest of the world to uphold the shining torch of multilateralism, and drive away the darkness of unilateralism, and clear up the sky for world peace, stability and development for all.

What's your comment on the interference of some western

countries in China's internal affairs? How has diplomacy played its role?

Wang: The great renewal of the Chinese nation is a natural trend in human history. That said, there are unprecedented difficulties and challenges that come with it. The closer we get to this goal, the more likely that we will encounter disturbances or even disruptions. Strategically, we have the full resolve, confidence and patience. Moreover, we are gaining more resources, capability, confidence and conviction to overcome whatever hardships that come our way. To quote a Chinese poem that describes the bamboo growing in rocks, "It is strong and firm though struck and beaten without rest; careless of the wind from north or south, east or west." Any attempt to interfere in China's internal affairs or hold back China's development will be crushed by the wheels of history.

On Hong Kong, we firmly support the SAR government in ending the violence and chaos, restoring order, and exercising law-based governance. Time will prove that "one country, two systems" not only works and works well in Hong Kong, but also has the support of the people there.

On Taiwan, this year saw China establishing diplomatic relations with the Solomon Islands and resuming diplomatic ties with Kiribati. As the number of countries having diplomatic ties with China has increased to 180, the one-China consensus is more widely established in the international community than ever before.

On Xinjiang, we have effectively ensured the safety and well-being of the over 24 million fellow countrymen of different ethic groups there, giving no chance to terrorism and radical ideologies. Our de-radicalization efforts have responded well to the call of the UN and are becoming an important part of the global fight against terrorism.

To quote another poem that depicts the resolve of our forefathers to defend the ancient Great Wall, "Were the winged general of Dragon city here; the tartar steeds would not dare to cross the frontier." It falls on China's diplomatic service and everyone working on the diplomatic front to safeguard the sovereignty and security of the country, which brooks no violation whatsoever, and advance China's legitimate development rights and interests. It is such an important responsibility that allows not even the slightest error. Under the unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, we will continue to build up an invincible Great Wall of defense for our national interests.

People's Daily

Guardian



Golden State Warriors guard D'Angelo Russell (0) dribbles past Houston Rockets forward Danuel House Jr. (4) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco, Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2019. (AP Photo)

Green, Lee help short-handed Warriors beat Houston Rockets

AN FRANCISCO

DAMION Lee made a statement on a rare big stage this season for injury-ravaged Golden State. Lee had 22 points and a career-high 15 rebounds, Draymond Green scored 16 of his 20 points in the second half and the Warriors beat

the Houston Rockets 116-104 on Wednesday. "I'm thankful that we got the win, but there's still things that I feel I have to get better at day in and day out to fully solidify myself as an NBA

player and not a two-way," Lee said. D'Angelo Russell added 20 points, and Glenn Robinson III had 18 to help the Warriors win their third straight and end the Rockets' four-game

winning streak. Golden State improved to 8-24. "We're probably not going to play a bigger game than this all year," Warriors coach Steve

Kerr said. "A national TV game against the Rockets. This game meant a lot to us." Russell Westbrook had 30 points and 12 re-

bounds for Houston. James Harden had 24 points and 11 assists, and Danuel House Jr. had 18 points. "We had a lot of great opportunities that we just didn't convert," Harden said. "It's pretty sim-

Westbrook had his ninth consecutive game of at least 20 points, the longest by any Rockets player other than Harden since Tracy McGrady did it in 10 straight games in 2007.

"For whatever reason we just didn't get it done," Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni said. "It's too bad we didn't play with the spirit and energy we usually have."

Green also had 11 rebounds. He gave the Warriors the lead for good with just under five minutes left in the third quarter on a driving layup.

"It's been a really trying season for us," Green said. "To come out Christmas Day and get a win against a very good basketball team feels good."

Ky Bowman hit a driving layup at the buzzer to give the Warriors an 92-87 edge heading into the final quarter.

"This felt like an opportunity for us and the guys seized it," Kerr said. "I think the fans see how hard our guys are playing. Everybody is feeling great on Christmas Day to get that win."

After falling behind by eight points midway through the first quarter, the Rockets outscored Golden State 48-17 over the next 13 minutes to open a 53-40 advantage. Russell hit a short jumper in the final minute of the second and the War-

riors drew to 68-64 by halftime. "We were up by 13 in the first half and for some reason we decided to start fouling them and putting them on the line and that cost us," D'Antoni said. "Defensively we gave up 64 points in the first half and that's not good enough."

CHRISTMAS TIME IN THE CITY

Kerr said playing on Christmas "is definitely a special feeling. It's a great day already with a lot of good vibes in the air. It's nice to be home this year." D'Antoni said: "It's a special day for basketball; privileged to be able to play on these days." Harden said: "I was pretty excited to play on Christmas. It's always a blessing and a honor."

Meanwhile, Philadelphia, Joel Embiid was unyielding under the basket, arms extended sky high as Giannis Antetokounmpo tried to plow through the All-Star center for a bucket. Embiid absorbed the contact and slapped the ball out of Antetokounmpo's hands, one of a bountiful of disruptive plays triggered by the big man.

Embiid used a national showcase to play like an MVP, and the Sixers pushed around a Bucks team that had the best record in the NBA.

"A lot of people have kind of forgotten who I am," Embiid said. "When I'm needed, I'm going to show up.'

Embiid had 31 points and 11 rebounds in Philadelphia's first home Christmas game in 31 years, and the 3-point happy 76ers beat Milwaukee 121-109 on Wednesday.

Tobias Harris sank five 3s, Josh Richardson and Furkan Korkmaz each had four and even Embiid hit three as part of Philly's franchise record-tying 21 3s (on 44 attempts) in its most complete game of the season.

"I think this team is designed for the playoffs," coach Brett Brown said. "I believe the road we have traveled so far has been a little bit erratic, at times. But I think the landing spot is exciting." Harris and Al Horford hit 3s over the final 90 seconds to push back a late Bucks run, and the

Sixers improved to 16-2 at home. There was a charged atmosphere for the anticipated matchup featuring Embiid and Ben Simmons taking on Khris Middleton and Antetokounmpo. Fans dressed as elves, wore ugly sweaters and held signs that said all they wanted for Christmas was a Sixers win.

They got it, with Embiid bullying the reigning MVP in Antetokounmpo on the way to the Sixers' biggest halftime lead (21 points) against the Bucks under coach Mike Budenholzer.

"It was just one of those nights," Budenholzer

Embiid scored 23 points and was troublesome defensively, holding Antetokounmpo to 4-for-14 shooting in the half. The Sixers hit 11 3s in the half and made the NBA-best Bucks (27-5) look like anything but Eastern Conference contenders.

Brown said before the game the Bucks were "NBA royalty." They have a ways to go before they're crowned tops in the East.

With fans chanting "Trust the Process!" on Embiid free throws, the star center was worthy of the holiday highlight video.

"I reminded our team, people in America have more appreciation for this day in the NBA,"

Brown said. "We're grateful for the opportunity." The Sixers aced their test against the NBA's

best. "I'm not going to overvalue one game," 76ers general manager Elton Brand said, "but it's a good barometer." It wasn't just Embiid that flustered the Bucks.

Korkmaz was knocked on his rear and buried Philly's 16th 3 of the game late in the third for a 93-67 lead that had the crowd going wild. Korkmaz's shot capped a string of 3s on five straight Sixers baskets. Mike Scott, the reserve better known for his man-of-the-people popup appearances, became the seventh Sixer to hit a 3 for a 98-70 lead. The 76ers led 100-73 through three.

Middleton scored 31 points and Antetokounmpo had 18 points and 14 rebounds. Antetokounmpo got flustered over a perceived missed call on an eye poke and was whistled for a technical in the fourth.

Antetokounmpo, who was 8 for 27 from the floor, 0 for 7 3s, said he briefly suffered blurred vision. "We had to go through this today. We had to go down 30," Antetokounmpo said. "We had to have our character tested today because the only way you get better is when you face adversity. Our team is going to be better."

Brand held a state-of-the-franchise press conference before the game and preached chemistry and continuity would eventually get the Sixers among the best in the East, a conference many pundits picked them to win.

"We are going to get there," Brand said. "Homecourt advantage is important but having Joel healthy in the playoff in May, June, that is important to us. We could still grow into a team that could be a No. 1 seed."

For a game, the 76ers sure played like one.

Kawhi Leonard, Clippers rally to beat Lakers 111-106

HE Los Angeles Clippers were resilient and dominant in the second half to put away the Los Angeles Lakers, using the NBA's marquee Christmas game to show why the city and the Western Conference might belong to them this season.

Kawhi Leonard scored 11 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter and had 12 rebounds and five assists to help the Clippers beat Lakers 111-106 on Wednesday night.

The Clippers trailed by 12 points at halftime, by 15 in the third quarter, and by seven in the fourth quarter with 6:39 remaining, but they rallied to improve to 2-0 against the Lakers this season.

"And we didn't flinch," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. "Like, we just kind of hung in there. Almost felt like we were biding our time and just trying to make a run. That's something you have to have when things aren't going great for you. You just got to hang in there, and I thought we did that tonight."

Leonard set a franchise record for points on Christmas, and he became the 10th player in NBA history with at least 35 points, 10 rebounds and five assists on Dec.

Montrezl Harrell had 18 points off the bench, and Paul George added 17, and the Clippers are 15-2 at Staples Center.

"We have so many interchanging parts," Clippers guard Lou Williams said. "We have guys that's going to have big nights. I think I had five or six points tonight, and that's just how this team is built. It's going to be different guys every night."

Kyle Kuzma led Los Angeles with 25 points. LeBron James had 23 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds, and Anthony Davis had 24 points. The Lakers have lost four straight games.

Williams made two free throws – after a questionable foul call against Davis for tapping the swingman after his transition layup rimmed out – to give the Clippers a 105-103 lead with 3:29

Leonard, who had a 3 to cap a 7-0 run and tie it at 101 with 5:14 remaining, then made four late free throws.

"They wanted it more," Davis said. "We had a lot of mistakes



second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2019, in Los Angeles. The Clippers won 111-106. (AP

mental mistakes at both ends of They spoiled the festive mood at fourth quarter, put them to the line. ... We gave that one away."

Los Angeles had a chance to tie in the final seconds, but video review showed James touched the ball last after Patrick Beverly knocked it away as James went up for a 3. George hit two free throws for the final margin.

"That wasn't the game right there," James said. "I mean, it's a big play and you want to try to get it right, but it wasn't where the game was lost.'

Meanwhile, in Denver, Brandon Ingram had no clue how many 3-pointers he'd made until a voice from across the locker room informed him.

Seven. An assist to injured rookie Zion Williamson for providing the pertinent information. Ingram scored 31 points, including a career-high in 3-point-

cans surprised Denver 112-100 on Wednesday night to halt the Nuggets' seven-game winning streak. Rarely has Ingram's shot felt as pure as it did – from deep any-

ers, and the New Orleans Peli-

"It's been college and high range accuracy. "They (team- attle 105-96 in front of a sold-out mates) found me when I was crowd at McNichols Arena. The

knock it down." The 9-23 Pelicans are now 2-0 down at the end of the game, against the Nuggets this season. mas games Wednesday, the home

the floor. We fouled a lot in the the Pepsi Center as the Nuggets played at home on Christmas for the first time in 25 years.

> "The character of our guys showed that although our record is what it is, we continue to play," Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry said. "We will continue to play. I don't see any quit in these guys or anything like that. There's no fragmentation or anything like that."

New Orleans sprang the upset despite committing 19 turnovers that led to 27 points. The Pelicans pulled away late courtesy of the long-range shooting of Lonzo Ball and Ingram. They also outrebounded the Nuggets, which included 14 offensive boards.

Derrick Favors was a force in grabbing 13 rebounds and dishing out a career-best eight assists to go with eight points.

"He was huge," said Jrue Holiday, who had 20 points, six steals and eight assists. "We ask him to do a lot, but he's doing it.'

New Orleans finished a fourgame trip with a 3-1 mark, which includes consecutive wins for the first time in a month.

This was the first time the Nuggets have hosted on the holiday school," Ingram said of his long-since 1994 when they beat Seopen. I had the confidence to fans at Pepsi Center didn't leave in a particularly merry mood.

Then again, in the five Christ-

teams went 2-3.

"We got bullied on the boards. They dominated us with their physicality," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "We don't have a match-up for Ingram. So I've got to do a better job helping our guvs out."

Neither team led by more than eight points until Ball's 3-pointer with 4:07 remaining made it 104-95. That all but sealed the win.

Nikola Jokic finished with 23 points and 10 rebounds for Denver, while Jerami Grant had 17. The Pelicans also knocked off

the Nuggets 122-107 on Hallow-"They did the same stuff they

did the first time we played them," Gary Harris said. "We didn't bring the fight today.'

This looked like an entertaining matchup when the NBA schedules were released. But that was before Williamson had surgery to repair the lateral meniscus in his right knee on Oct. 21. On Wednesday, Williamson sat on the bench dressed in a dark suit.

The Pelicans have struggled without Williamson, while the Nuggets (21-9) have soared to one of the top marks in the West.

Williamson did provide some valuable information to Ingram, who knew he made a few 3-pointers but didn't know the total.

"That," Ingram said, "was when

AP

Woods' comeback at Masters named AP Sports Story of the Year

BY EDDIE PELLS

A GREEN jacket. A heartmelting embrace. A stirring return to the top of golf by one of the sport's all-time greats.

choosing Woods' victory at the Masters as The Associated Press sports story of the year, voters went with the uplifting escape of a great comeback over options that were as much about sports as the issues that enveloped them in 2019: politics, money and the growing push for equal pay and equal rights for women.

The balloters, a mix of AP member sports editors and AP beat writers, elevated Woods' rousing victory at Augusta National over the runner-up entry: the U.S. women's soccer team's victory at the World Cup. That monthlong competition was punctuated by star Megan Rapinoe's push for pay equality for the women's team and an ongoing war of words with President Donald Trump.

Rapinoe's efforts to use sports as a platform to discuss bigger issues was hardly a one-off in 2019. Of the top 12 stories in the balloting, only three –

Raptors, Washington Nationals and University of Virginia basketball team – stuck mainly to what happened between the lines.

All the rest – including the blown call that cost the Saints a chance at the Super Bowl, a California law that threatens to upend the NCAA and Simone Biles' dominance at gymnastics' world championships, set against the backdrop of the sex-abuse crisis consuming the sport in the U.S. – were long-running sagas that went beyond a single day or event. They painted sports not as an escape from the world's problems but merely another window into them.

It's no stretch to say that the whole of the Woods saga – namely, the sordid, pain-riddled, decadelong prelude to his victory at Augusta National in April would fit into that category, as well.

His downfall began in the wee hours the day after Thanksgiving in 2009, when he ran over a fire hydrant outside his house in Florida, triggering an avalanche of stories about infidelity that would lead to the breakup of his marriage and play into the

titles won by the Toronto near-destruction of his career.

Part 2 was the injuries. Woods came close but did not return to his dominant form after his return to golf following his breakup with his wife. And as time went on, his physical condition deteriorated. He didn't play in 2016 or 2017, and at the end of '17, he conceded his back was so bad that his days of competitive golf might be behind him.

There were four risky back surgeries. Woods also required a good deal of inner healing after a mortifying DUI arrest in 2017 that exposed his reliance on painkillers.

Through it all, Woods somehow kept nurturing his love for golf. And eventually, he found his game again. He climbed his way back to the top. He had close calls at two majors in 2018 – the British Open and PGA Championship – and then won the seasonending Tour Championship, as good a sign as any that, at 43, he could take on the best and win.

But regular tournaments are not the majors, and no major is the Masters.

It was on those hallowed grounds at Augusta National where Woods

set the marker, starting a decade of dominance that would redefine the game. He blew away the field by 12 strokes in 1997 to win the first of what has become five green jackets and 15 major titles.

On that day, Woods came off the 18th green and wrapped himself in a warm embrace with his father, Earl, whose death in 2006 left an undeniable void in the player's life.

Though there had been a handful of close calls between his U.S. Open victory in 2008 and the start of 2019, it was clear that if there was a single course where Woods could conjure the old magic and end a major drought, it would be Augusta National. As a four-time champion, Woods built a career on studying every inch of the layout, knowing every fault line and every sneaky twist and turn of the slickest greens on earth.

But where, at one time, he might have overpowered the course and intimidated the competition, in 2019, he simply outlasted them both. He avoided mistakes while everyone else was making them. Instead of taking a lead into the last day, then never giving anyone a whiff of hope, this was a comeback. He started the day two shots

behind. As AP Golf Writer Doug Ferguson wrote in his wrapup of the final day: "Woods never missed a shot that mattered over the final seven holes, taking the lead with a 5-iron to the fat of the green on the par-5 15th for a twoputt birdie, delivering the knockout with an 8-iron that rode down the ridge by the cup and settled 2 feet away for birdie on the par-3 16th."

When it was Woods came to the same spot where he'd met Earl 22 years before. He scooped up his son, Charlie, and held him in a long embrace, then did the same with his 11-year-old daughter, Sam, and mother, Tilda. "For them to see what it's like to have their dad win a major championship, I hope that's something they will never forget," Woods said.

Very few golf fans will. And in a sports year dominated by weightier topics, Woods at the Masters stood out - a comeback story that left people smiling at the end.

AP

Inter, Lazio bid to end Juve's 8-year grip on Serie A title

DYGUALDO, LuLa or Immobile? The Serie A title race could come down to which team has the best strike force.

Juventus has the superstar trident of Paulo Dybala, Gonzalo Higuain and Cristiano Ronaldo - the socalled Dygualdo. Inter Milan has Romelu Lukaku and Lautaro Martínez - aka LuLa.

Lazio is six points behind the top two but with a game in hand. But it is Lazio forward Ciro Immobile who is leading the goalscoring charts.

Immobile, who was top scorer in 2014 and 2018, currently has 17 goals in Serie A - five more than nearest challenger Lukaku.

Last Sunday's games were the final ones of 2019 and Serie A returns from its winter break on Jan. 5, with the first of the round of 18 matches.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON SO FAR Martínez has burst onto the scene this season after a quiet debut campaign for Inter.

Martínez scored nine goals in all competitions for Inter last season but has already found the back of the net 13 times in a formidable partnership with Lukaku under coach Antonio Conte.

Martínez and Lukaku's partnership has been key to Inter reaching the top of the Serie A standings.

The 22-year-old Martínez has impressed so much that Barcelona is reportedly ready to activate the Inter forward's 111 million euro (\$123 million) release clause.

Martínez signed a contract until 2023 when he joined Inter from Racing Club last year and there is already talk of improving that deal to keep the Argentina forward at the

SURPRISE OF THE SEASON

Unheralded Cagliari could be on its way to becoming this season's Atalanta in Serie A.

The Sardinian club has exceeded all expectations by joining the conversation for a spot in Europe, entering the break in sixth place despite losing its last two matches.

It's among the team's best starts since Luigi Riva led the club to its only Italian league title in 1970.

The lucrative sale of prized midfielder Nicolò Barella to Inter Milan was a deal that could end up being million). It allowed Cagliari to spend a club record 18 million euros (\$20 million) to acquire midfielder Nahitan Nández from Boca Juniors, welcome back combative midfielder Radja Nainggolan in return from Inter in a loan deal and to sign striker Giovanni Simeone (from Fiorentina), midfielder Marko Rog (Napoli) and goalkeeper Robin Olsen (Roma) to loan deals.

Nández, Nainggolan, Simeone, Rog and Olsen have provided big contributions this season. GOAL OF THE SEASON

Ronaldo's towering header might have made headlines around the world but there are several better in the new year to lead it to safety. contenders for goal of the season.

The best of the bunch at this stage is perhaps Goran Pandev's stunning goal against Lecce for Genoa on Dec.

The Lecce goalkeeper's attempted clearance came to the 36-year-old Pandev, who showed great instinct to control and immediately lob into an empty net from more than 40 yards out.

It was downhill from there for Pandev, however. His team let slip a 2-0 lead to draw 2-2 and the Macedonia forward was sent off for two yellow cards in quick succession.

WHO'LL BE CHAMPION? Napoli has pushed Juventus all the way in recent years but this season it is Inter Milan which is threatening

to wrest the title off the eight-time defending champion. Conte's arrival as Inter coach in the offseason has revitalized a team

which has finished fourth the previous two campaigns. Juventus and Inter headed into the winter break level on 42 points

at the top of the table. Inter is top on goal difference although headto-head is the first tiebreaker at the end of the season. Whether Inter can stand the pace

is an issue though, especially as a mid-season slump has become something of a tradition with the Nerazzurri.

Since 2013, Inter has only once managed to win more than one league match in January.

Conte has complained at several points this season of his squad's lack of strength in depth and has said that was partly to blame for its exit from the Champions League.

Not having to compete in Europe's premier club competition could aid Inter, although it will be involved in the Europa League.

Lazio is also not to be ignored, especially as it is the only team to have beaten Juventus this season - something it did in the league and the Italian Super Cup this month, and both by the same 3-1 score.

Lazio has won the Serie A title twice in its history, the last time in

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALI-**FICATION**

While Juventus and Inter Milan look overwhelming favorites to get in the Champions League next season, the other two spots will likely worth nearly 50 million euros (\$56 be fought over by Lazio, Roma, Atalanta and Cagliari.

Lazio enters the break on an eight-match winning streak in the league and is in third place, one point ahead of Roma. Atalanta trails the Champions League places by four points in fifth while Cagliari is six points out in sixth.

WHO'S GOING DOWN?

Brescia, Spal and Genoa currently occupy the bottom three places, with Genoa last on 11 points from 17

Breccia is 18th in the 20-team league - trailing Sampdoria and Lecce by just one point - and will hope striker Mario Balotelli finds top form

China slaps spending curbs on clubs amid finance squeeze

CHINESE football authorities have announced major curbs on spending by clubs ahead of the 2020 season that include a cap on foreign and domestic players' salaries as they seek to stave off financial ruin.

Overseas recruits to the Chinese Super League in the upcoming winter transfer window will be limited to earning 3 million euro (\$3.3 million) after tax, the first time a salary cap has been implemented in the Chinese Super League in more than a decade.

Additionally, a ceiling of 10 million yuan (\$1.4 million) has been placed on Chinese players' salaries.

Clubs will also not be permitted to spend more than 1.1 billion yuan on their operations throughout the upcoming campaign, with salaries not to exceed 60% of that amount.

"Our clubs had too much money burned and our professional football has not been run in a sustainable way," Chinese Football Association chairman Chen Xuyuan said, according to state news agency Xinhua.

"If we don't take timely action, I fear it came president in 2013. will collapse."

The new rules were confirmed after a meeting of the Chinese Football Association on Wednesday and do not extend to bonuses that can be paid, which could give clubs some flexibility to pursue star signings

Clubs will also be permitted to sign a fifth player from overseas, up from the current quota of four, but will only be allowed to field four foreigners on the pitch at any one time.

Officials have routinely sought to curb excessive spending in the Chinese Super League after a major outlay on foreign stars ahead of the 2017 season saw the arrival of players such as Brazilian star Oscar and Carlos Tevez from Argentina on huge salaries.

Later that year, a 100% levy was placed on transfers valued at over 45 million yuan involving foreign players while the same condition was imposed on domestic moves worth more than 20 million yuan.

Money has poured into Chinese football from the country's private sector since Xi Jinping, a football fan who has declared his desire to improve the nation's standing within the game, be-

REUTERS

Barca and Madrid lead in Spain at winter break despite flaws

BARCELONA, SPAIN

EVEN though Barcelona and Real Madrid have yet to dominate like in past seasons, the two heavyweights are at the top of the Spanish league for the winter break.

Lionel Messi's Barcelona will head into 2020 with a two-point advantage over second-place Madrid after completing 18 of 38 rounds.

Barcelona got off to a slow start with only two wins in the first five rounds before newcomer Antoine Griezmann started to click with Messi and Luis Suarez, and the Catalan club ended the year without a loss in seven rounds.

"There are times when you win the league by a wide margin and when everyone expects you to wrap it up months in advance that it loses excitement." Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde, who is seeking a third consecutive league crown with the team, said Tuesday.

"It is better when you win the league on the last round and by one point."

Madrid has only one loss - a 1-0 defeat at Mallorca in October - but it has drawn seven games, including its last three. Its continued scoring problems since Cristiano Ronaldo left two summers ago have left it without a goal in five encounters.

"We had difficulties at the beginning of the season, but now we are much better and strong defensively, improving every day," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said after Sunday's 0-0 home draw with Athletic Bilbao. "Today we couldn't score, but the important thing is to create the chances and we're going to turn this around in 2020 for sure.

A Sevilla side that has been revitalized by former Madrid and Spain manager Julen Lopetegui, and by the new players brought in by sporting director Ramon "Monchi" Rodriguez, is in third place at five points back.

Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid has experienced trouble up front after losing Griezmann in the summer, but its revamped defense has kept it in fourth place, seven points behind



Barcelona.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON SO FAR Messi leads the league with 13 goals in just 13 appearances due to an in-

jury that kept him out of the opening games. He is also credited with six assists by the league as he continues at age 32 to be the team's best scorer and playmaker. An honorable mention goes to

Karim Benzema for stepping up his play after the injury-hit Eden Hazard failed to make an impact since joining Madrid on a club-record transfer from Chelsea. Benzema is second in the league

with 12 goals in 17 matches. SURPRISE OF THE SEASON The breakout player is Real So-

ciedad midfielder Martin Odegaard, who is playing at the Basque club on loan from Madrid.

Odegaard has excelled as a precise passer and is leading one of the most attractive attacks in the league. Sociedad is in fifth place, just one point Karim Benzema

behind Atletico.

Sevilla continues to introduce talented newcomers in powerful defender Diego Carlos and physical forward Lucas Ocampos, both of whom have stood out and are likely on the radar of bigger clubs.

GOAL OF THE SEASON

Suarez scored not only the best goal so far this season in Barcelona's 5-2 rout of Mallorca on Dec. 7 but one of the best in his goal-studded career. The Uruguay striker wowed Camp

Nou when he used an audacious strike with the back of his right heel to scoop the ball around the diving goalkeeper and just inside the far post from a tight angle. The goal put the perfect finish to

a flowing passing combination between Frenkie de Jong and Sergi Roberto to break down Mallorca's tightly packed defense. It unquestionably goes into the

annals of Barcelona's most beautiful

WHO'LL BE CHAMPION?

With Messi, defending champion Barcelona is favored to edge a Madrid team that has yet to replace Ronaldo's missing firepower.

Messi has led Barcelona to 10 league titles in 15 seasons.

"We haven't reached our ceiling," Griezmann said after scoring the opening goal in Saturday's 4-1 win over Alaves. "I am feeling good before the holidays. Messi is the best in the world. We have a great squad, and when we need a push, Messi pro-

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFICA-

While Barcelona and Madrid will surely get Champions League spots, Sociedad and a Valencia side that is coming on strong after a tumultuous coaching change could threaten Sevilla and Atletico for the other two berths.

Getafe, which was in the running for a top-four finish last season until faltering late, cannot be ruled out despite its modest profile.

WHO'S GOING DOWN?

Espanyol earned Europa League qualification last campaign, but it has been in a mess since both top scorer Borja Iglesias and ex-coach Francesc "Rubi" Ferrer left for Real Betis in the summer. The Barcelona-based club is in last

place after winning just two of 18 matches and it fired Pablo Machin, its second coach of the season, on Espanyol has yet to win at home in

the league this season and its fans are asking for a goal-scorer - in addition to yet another coach - in the January transfer market.

Leganes and Mallorca are likely to also feature in the relegation fight.

Celta Vigo has been the biggest disappointment of the season so far and is also near the bottom. But with Spain striker Iago Aspas and former Barcelona midfielders Rafinha and Denis Suarez it has the talent to rebound if it shores up its defense.

Booze and football present tricky choices for Qatar

QATAR will begin sifting through fan feedback from the Club World Cup to see how it can provide supporters with a successful World Cup in 2022, but cultural differences will be a tricky challenge to surmount.

The first 'trial run' for the Qatari 2022 World Cup completed at the weekend, with Liverpool defeating Brazil's Flamengo in the final.

Judging from the views of fans, the feedback is likely to be a mixture of reassurance about their infrastructure but concern about the 'fun fac-

Drinking and partying can be a tricky concept in a country with strict restrictions on alcohol consumption and low tolerance for rowdiness.

"It's much more about people than bricks and mortar now," Hassan Al Thawadi, head of Qatar's World Cup organising committee, told Reuters in an interview.

"We are looking at the fans here at this event as partners, to educate and teach us whether our plans worked or not, what can we improve, what doesn't work and what we need to scrap all together."

The tournament attracted around 13,000 Brazilian fans as well as thousands of Liverpool supporters from around the world. Mexican, Saudi and Tunisian fans were also in attendance to support other teams in the competition.

"All the facilities look top-notch. The stadiums are all state of the art, everything is state-of-the-art here," said Liverpool fan Adnan Vola, who had travelled from Britain.

But Tunisian fan Ahmed Ali, decked out in the red and yellow shirt of his team Esperance, said that the Qataris will need to shift their approach to satisfy fans from around the world who are used to gathering in large numbers to drink and sing before matches.

SINGING AND CHANTING "I think they have to be a little bit

FILE PHOTO: An official uses the players' entrance to leave the Al Bayt stadium, built for the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup soccer championship, during a stadium tour, in Al Khor, north of Doha, Qatar, December 17, 2019. REUTERS

teams coming from England, Germany, France, South America - guess what? They have to be a little bit

Some Flamengo fans took to wearing Arabic-style head-dress in their team's colours and staff on the new metro system appeared a little flustered by large crowds singing and chanting in the carriages.

Ali said that the "openness" was needed primarily in allowing fans to

more open. You are going to have enjoy their usual pre and post-match rituals which often involve drinking.

In Qatar alcohol sales are limited to a handful of hotels which are allowed to operate bars but for the Club World Cup, organisers created a fanzone, at a golf club, where supporters could buy beer at friendlier prices than in high-end accommodation.

Fans were then bussed from the fan-zone to the stadium, where alcohol was not for sale.

For the organisers this has the

advantage of reducing the risk of alcohol fuelled incidents either in the city's public places or at the stadium. It is expected that more fan-zones

will be created for the World Cup with concerts and other entertainment put on to encourage supporters into these separated areas.

But the possibility of allowing beer at the stadium itself is not completely off the agenda.

"That is being discussed, keeping in mind that alcohol is not part of our culture but hospitality is," said Al Thawadi. "We want to ensure that everyone

sure that what we put in place, that bridges the cultural gaps and cultural differences. "We have put something in place, I want to hear from the fans, all of them, about their experiences in

Doha. About their experience of hav-

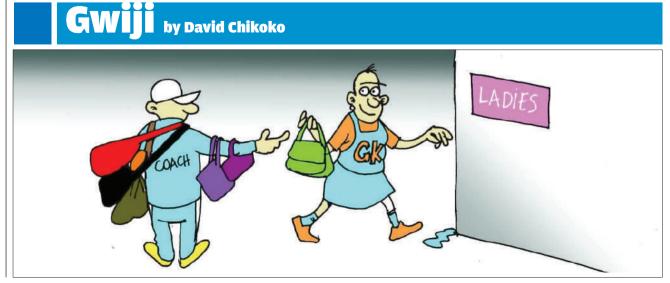
ing a drink, going out to the stadium,

has a good time, we want to make

we are here to listen and to improve," he added. Whatever the organisers settle on, Qataris are likely to be in for a culture shock when the biggest football festi-

val in the world arrives in town.

REUTERS



Guardian www.ippmedia.com

SPORT

Barca and Madrid lead in Spain at winter break despite flaws

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Mara's Hope Cultural Centre group's artistes perform ritungu dance at a recent graduation ceremony for girls who took part in entrepreneurship seminars conducted by Hope for Girls and Women in Tanzania's institute in Mugumu, Serengeti. The institution takes care of girls who have escaped female genital mutilation. PHOTO: SABATO KASIKA

Smith answers all New Zealand questions to make it Australia's day

STEVEN Smith came through his personal battle against the short ball, to finish Boxing Day within sight of another MCG hundred, as Australia took the honours on 4 for 257 after being put into bat on a well-grassed surface that provided a better contest than in the last couple

Marnus Labuschagne, who was at the crease in the first over after Joe Burns fell for a first-ball duck, appeared to be setting himself for a fourth hundred in four Tests but was cut-off for 63 after an innings that had included a fair degree of fortune. David Warner had got himself set during the morning session, when conditions were at their trickiest, but fell a few overs before lunch, and just six balls after taking a blow to the chest off Trent Boult. Matthew Wade's stay was far from convincing as he was worked over by the contrasting approaches of Neil Wagner and Colin de Grandhomme.

New Zealand, playing an MCG Boxing Day Test for the first time in 32 years, needed more than four wickets to justify Kane Williamson's decision to bowl first on the much talked-about wicket which had a considerable covering of grass and offered a little bit of assistance through the day although at no great pace.

However, the masses of travelling support - upward of 15,000 who had filled flights across the Tasman as part of a crowd that tipped over 80,000 - were given an early moment to savour when the returning Boult had bent one back to uproot Burns' middle stump with the fourth ball of the day.

When Wagner removed Warner - superbly caught by Tim Southee at second slip - Smith was immediately greeted by his nemesis from Perth and New Zealand wasted no time in packing the legside field with catchers and resuming the short-ball approach. He had spoken before the match of looking forward to a return to the red ball, coupled with a formidable MCG record where he had scored four centuries in his last four

In the short period before lunch, Smith was not overly impressed as umpire Nigel Llong twice called dead ball when he was struck but was ruled not to be taking evasive action and was denied the leg byes. Smith had worked extensively between Tests to come up with a solution and, while not always pretty, he came through the examination and

he also scored off the short delivery by making sure he got well over the ball to keep it down.

For a large part of the afternoon session it looked as though Smith and Labuschagne were starting to take control of the match as they battled hard against some demanding bowling. New Zealand had a chance to run out Labuschagne on 27 when there was a mix-up with Smith but Williamson could not hit the stumps. He brought up his half-century, his fifth fifty-plus score in a row, with an edge to third man off Boult but just as the prospect of a fourth hundred in four matches was looming he was bowled off his elbow as he attempted to leave a delivery from de Grandhomme, who was rewarded for a probing nine-over spell of nibbling me-

De Grandhomme did an excellent job throughout the day but the shackles were broken somewhat when 17 came off Mitchell Santner's third over with Labuschagne pulling a short ball for six and Smith lofting one straight into the sightscreen. Santner was only used for seven overs in the day and struggled to provide control, but did make a couple of deliveries turn and bounce more than enough to suggest Nathan Lyon will have a big say.

Wade had been given a working over in the brief period he batted before tea and his innings never really got any more convincing although he survived long enough to add a fourth-wicket stand of 72 with Smith. He was predictably bombarded by Wagner's short bowling, but he had just as many problems with de Grandhomme who teased him outside off, unsure of whether to dominate or

He was beaten repeatedly on the drive, saw an edge fall just short of Ross Taylor at first slip (although replays showed it was a missed no-ball) and almost dragged on before de Grandhomme finally had him caught behind pushing at a delivery well wide of off stump.

That wicket came six overs before the second new ball which gave New Zealand a vital opportunity to try and claw back some ground but Travis Head, who retained his place when Australia opted against playing five bowlers, and Smith remained secure. This had been a day a long time in the making for New Zealand and they had a few moments to remember, but not enough to be in a position of **AGENCIES** strength.

Dar es Salaam cricket venues' renovation gets underway

By Guardian Reporter

Salaam is underway, with installation of grass wickets taking place at the Leaders Club and Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) venues this

Domestic cricket venrenovation has turned to be a foremost task the Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA)'s new leadership has set out to accomplish.

Atif Salim, TCA information officer, noted Annadil Burhani and University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) venues will as well have their wickets renovated in the next few weeks.

He was one of TCA who graced the presentation ceremony of a practice tournament, organized by Lions Cricket Club, at Leaders Club recently.

Four squads took part in the day-long event, with TCA chairman Premji Pindoria, as the ceremony's guest of hon-

Pindoria, added: "Though the work is going to start next week (this week), we have planned to first start the upgrading of the DGC pitches and installation of a new wicket at Leaders Club."

"The project will then will follow up with upgrading of the wickets at Annadil Burhani and UDSM. We don't want cricket to stop entirely."

"This will improve the standard of pitches and venues in general, hence, vastly improve cricket playing conditions domestically," Salim noted.

out they have hired ser- training programs for vices of Kenya's veteran young cricketers in Aruwho is known for produc-



batting drills in Gairo, Morogoro recently. The association also hosted the program in Arusha, Dares Salaam and Mwanza. PHOTO: COURTESYOFTCA

ing many high standard host youngsters turning wickets in the country.

He disclosed Komo was accompanied by coach Hamisi Abdallah that gave the former the background of all grounds and the past problems faced.

"All four grounds used for domestic and National cricket, namely Leaders Club, DGC, Annadil Burhani and UDSM were inspected and work will start early next week (this week)," he insisted.

The national cricket governing body had also The official pointed recently been hosting goro and Mwanza, with a in Gairo District, which for developing the game. sisting the official.

for training sessions.

The project, dubbed U-15 elite training camps, had brought primary and secondary schools' junior players, with the latter being ex to the sport's basics, namely batting, bowling and fielding.

Hamisi Abdallah, TCA Development and the association's Development Coordinator, Khalil Rehemtullah, have been running the training alongside senior players and the schools' phys-

ical education teachers. The TCA had, in Morogoro, overseen the U-15 ground curator, Komo, sha, Dar es Salaam, Moro- elite development camp

brought together 60 primary schools.

Abdallah took charge of the camp that took place at Gairo B Primary S and was assisted by cricket players, Seif Khalifa and Nassor, and five primary school physical education teachers.

Abdallah noted the involvement of the primary school physical education teachers centers on giving them chance to the Dar es Salaam's U-15 gain experience in cricket coaching.

disclosed, aims at devel- with cricket players, oping young talents and Mohamed Omary and having strong foundation Abubakar Selemani, as-

The training, moreover, youths from the district's aims at introducing the youngsters that had primarily been using tennis balls to hard balls.

He was also in charge

of the U-15 elite development camp in Mwanza, which took place at Butimba Teachers Training College's oval. Senior player, Ally

Mpeka, was Abdallah's assistant in the camp.

Rehemtulla conducted elite development camp, which took place at The program, Abdallah Chanika Primary School,

Yanga veterans thrash Simba veterans in fundraising clash

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Simanjiro

MORE than 500 sports men and women joined for special Christmas bash at the Mirerani Township of Simanjiro, where veteran footballers, as well as aged Yanga and Simba fans, treated the audience to a friendly soccer match. Held at CCM grounds

of Mirerani, the event was organized by the Community Tanzanite Empowerment Organization (TACEO), with an aim of bringing together

cally disabled persons and elder people to celebrate festive season.

The day-long bonanza started with variety of entertainment events and climaxed with the veterans' match in which Yanga veterans thrashed their Simba counterparts 1-0. Coincidentally, the goal was scored by Charles Mnyalu, who also happened to be the event's organizer.

Children were given special prizes after the be repeated during the next Christmas in 2020, which will take place at

another modern venue. Commissioner, Zephania Chaula, was the guest of honour at the event, which also involved luncheon for the participants.

Chaula lauded the organizers for their philanthropic efforts to unite the community.

pated that, the event will erment Organization (TA-CEO) of Mirerani, Charles Mnyalu, said they decided to organize the bonanza in order give back to the The Simanjiro District community what they have gained throughout the year.

> He said the organization intends to start a special sporting academy that will recruit young talents. Charles also intends to

invest and erect a large stadium, to be known as 'Tanzanite Complex,' The Director of Tanza- at Mirerani Hills to help

orphaned children, physi- match. It is being antici- nite Community Empow- boost sporting activities in the area.

> The arena is going to accomodate 22,000 people, becoming the biggest playground in the Northern Zone, if his words are anything to go by.

> It will comprise a soccer pitch, basketball and tennis courts, netball courts, athletics arena, swimming area and training academy as well as hostel.

> The facility will be unveiled in February 2020 during next season's Mirerani-Tanzanite Marathon.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

