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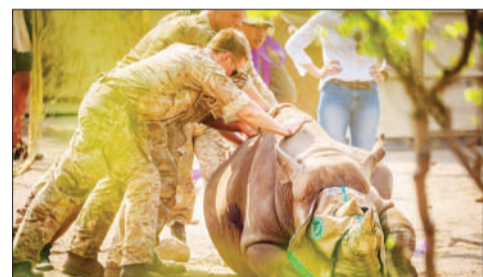


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Rhino deployment: Royal Gurkha Rifles unit assists Malawi

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 Africa.

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

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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

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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 non-monitored routes.

Longido District Commissioner Frank 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 taken 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 from dealers.

"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

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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

TURN TO PAGE 2

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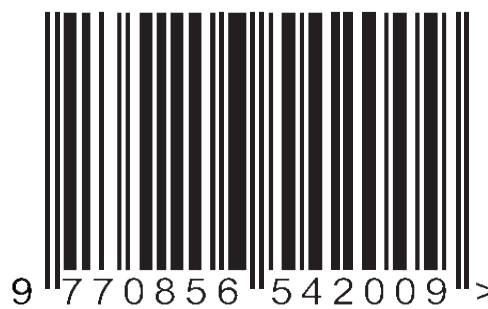
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Half of Tanzanians living in 'multidimensional poverty'

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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 percent.

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 challenges.

"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 crisis.

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

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

NCAA targets schooling to diminish population

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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.

DC curbs revenue losses from smuggling of goats

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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.

The Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Luhaga Mpina sounded discomfort that the country was losing

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 small-scale herders.

The government was estimated to lose 263.95bn/- (\$116 million) per year due to smuggling of livestock, raw leather and unprocessed milk, ministerial data indicates.

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 worshippers 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



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

MOMBASA

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

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

"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.

Otieno said the eight, whose names were not immediately available, have 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 confirmed that they received the missing alert on the said date.

"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

Rhino deployment: UK army unit aids Malawi

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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."

The 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 2021.

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: Correspondent Gift Thadey

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

as well."

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."

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

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

POLICE in Arusha are searching for 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.

"I am saddened by the killing

of Mary Mushi at Kilinga village in Arumeru district, our security organs are searching for the suspect so that he is arrested and arraigned," said the District Commissioner who arrived at the scene shortly after the incident occurred on Wednesday afternoon.

DC Muro called upon residents to collaborate with security organs by tipping police on the whereabouts of Mushi's husband. He said the murder

was one of the bad incidents to happen in the district especially on Christmas Eve.

"My condolences to the family of the late Mushi and all Kilinga village residents," said Muro pleading to the villagers to remain calm as police executes their duties.

The suspect's father—Latiaeli Samson Pallangyo said the incident occurred in the afternoon of December 25, 2019.

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.

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

By Guardian Reporter

SMALL businesses in the country have been encouraged to engage in ventures centering on 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.

He thus thanked 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 Pitch Competition for 2019/2020, with the theme 'Rethinking Nutrition Innovations', according to Project Manager, Abbas Sykes.

He noted that the competition aims to support innovative solutions for improved nutrition by connecting 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,

it will go a long way to provide a platform for SMEs to network with different organisations on how to tackle the problem of malnutrition, especially among children.

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.

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

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 Selemani 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 month.

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.

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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 to markets.

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

the equatorial region and higher than 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 contractors 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 regions.

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 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

offering services to the wananchi.

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 Mmamba 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 time.

"We will be making close follow up on the project to see how the work is going on but up to now everything has been going on quite well," Mmamba 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 by the government Chief statistician Dr Albina Chuwa while speaking with residents of Forest Ward in Mbeya City while doing research on the availability

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 the public for their opinions, she discovered they understand the importance of statistics and their application.

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 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.

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 said electricity for home lighting is not a big issue but it is expensive and appealed for cheaper power so that they can use it for cooking instead of

wood fuel.

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 forests.

Another resident, Rhone Chilewa said due to the availability of electricity in many areas, many youths are now self employed by opening small factories such as sawing wood and welding.



...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 recently. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika



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

FGM perpetrators in Siha find new ways of doing it

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.

Siha 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

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

"We have started collecting 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 them."

Areas that are mentioned rampant in FGM are Ormelili, Songu, Makiwaru, Donyo, Biriri, Karansi, Gararagua, Mitimirefu, Ndumeti and Ngarenairobi

wards.

According to a report by Tanzania 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, the law clearly say the punishment is imprisonment for not less than 15 years and a fine not exceeding 100,000/., the offender can also be called to pay

compensation to the victim."

Earlier, speaking after the government's statement, TAPO Coordinator for Kilimanjaro Region veronica Ulomi said as of now they continue to educate women on how to examine babies on whether or not they have been FGM victims.

"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.

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.

One can therefore say that this is one of the best managed logging concessions in Cameroon," says Aristide Chacgom, an 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 via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0)



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 liquidate 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



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 (1) (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

By Guardian Reporter

Countries implementing about half of WHO recommendations

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

and 2017 to calculate implementation scores for 151 countries for the 18 policies.

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, anti-tobacco 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

as failure to reduce marketing around 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 low-income 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 Maua which was swept away by floods last week. Photo: Selemani Mpochi

By Guardian Reporter

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

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.

The unique geographic distribution in Africa of sorghum plants that contain condensed tannins, or biomolecules that often induce a bitter taste, provided one side of a "domestication triangle" that helped the researchers piece together the domestication 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 varieties with high levels of tannins

commonly grow in eastern and southern Africa, while western African farmers tend to prefer varieties with low tannin content. In contrast, domestication processes in other continents removed condensed tannins from most other cereal crops, 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 retained as a defense mechanism from the red-billed quelea, a bird species

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 of certain tastes, and the patterns in

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 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 NMB's 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, negotiating.
- Focus on demand management (internal clients and their needs), as demand management is key to the HR Operating Model
- 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.

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

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

www.radarrecruitment.com

Tanzania Country Program
P.O. Box 33759 | 1469 Masaki Street Off Haile Selassie Road,
Mwananyamala Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255 (0) 22 2602816 +255 (0) 22 2502803 +255 (0) 22 2602831
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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 Ngarantoni, 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 Ngarantoni Water Utility Offices.

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 years.
- 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 - Mwananyamala 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 - Mwananyamala, 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

BY FRANCK KUWONU

Small arms fueling deadly communal violence

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

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 arms—particularly 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. Government-related 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 by involving the communities themselves in resolving conflicts. This year the government launched the 10-year National Livestock Transformation Plan to help end communal conflicts around land and pasture by making the sector more productive and sustainable including through

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 limited.

The UN Mission reported this November that two previously feuding communities in CAR, the Niém 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 Istiqama Muslimu community aimed to boost economic empowerment. Photo: Correspondent ShabanNjia

By Charles Choi

Oldest fossil evidence of animal parenting discovered in Canada

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 finds.

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-day monitor lizards were more than 260 million years old.

In 2017, the researchers discovered the partial skeletons of an adult and juvenile of a different type of varanopid preserved together in a 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 tail," said study lead author Hillary Maddin, a vertebrate paleontologist at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. They each also likely had a long tail,

"but we can't tell how long it is in our specimens," she noted.

The researchers suggested a concealed area within the stump 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 years 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 to 400 million years ago. "To me this suggests that evolution in terrestrial communities was proceeding at a much faster rate than we thought before," Maddin said.

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 of 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

evolving cooperation in the health 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.

"From South Africa to Turkey, we 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 Africa.

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 high-level delegations visiting each other

to enhance cooperation in various sectors.

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

Alp said the two nations exchanged a 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 said.

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 and cultural diplomacy

On the humanitarian front, Turkish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to provide 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.

UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE ACCESS FUND



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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.**
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.**
- 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.
- The Procuring entity is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

Chief Executive Officer
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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

WE welcome the statement by the Electoral Commission (NEC) 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 testifies. 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 constitution.

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

58 years ago.

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 centres.

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

NATURAL resources are resources that exist without actions of humankind. 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 and 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, rare-earth 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 Mkennda, 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

Secretary said that while human activities like agriculture, construction 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 Mkennda.

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

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.

Recently, Prof Adam Habib put his finger on the disturbing rise of populist anti-democratic politics that eschew non-racialism, accountability and 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 folk vs the outsiders.

At present this country is distinguishable 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

By Brezh Malaba

RECENTLY, 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 levels.

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 governance.

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

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 again.

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 folk. 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 you 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.

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 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

its part in delivering liberation. Herbert Chitepo, Jason Moyo and Joshua Nkomo would have a tough time recognising today's Zanu PF. The party has failed to evolve into a forward-thinking 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.

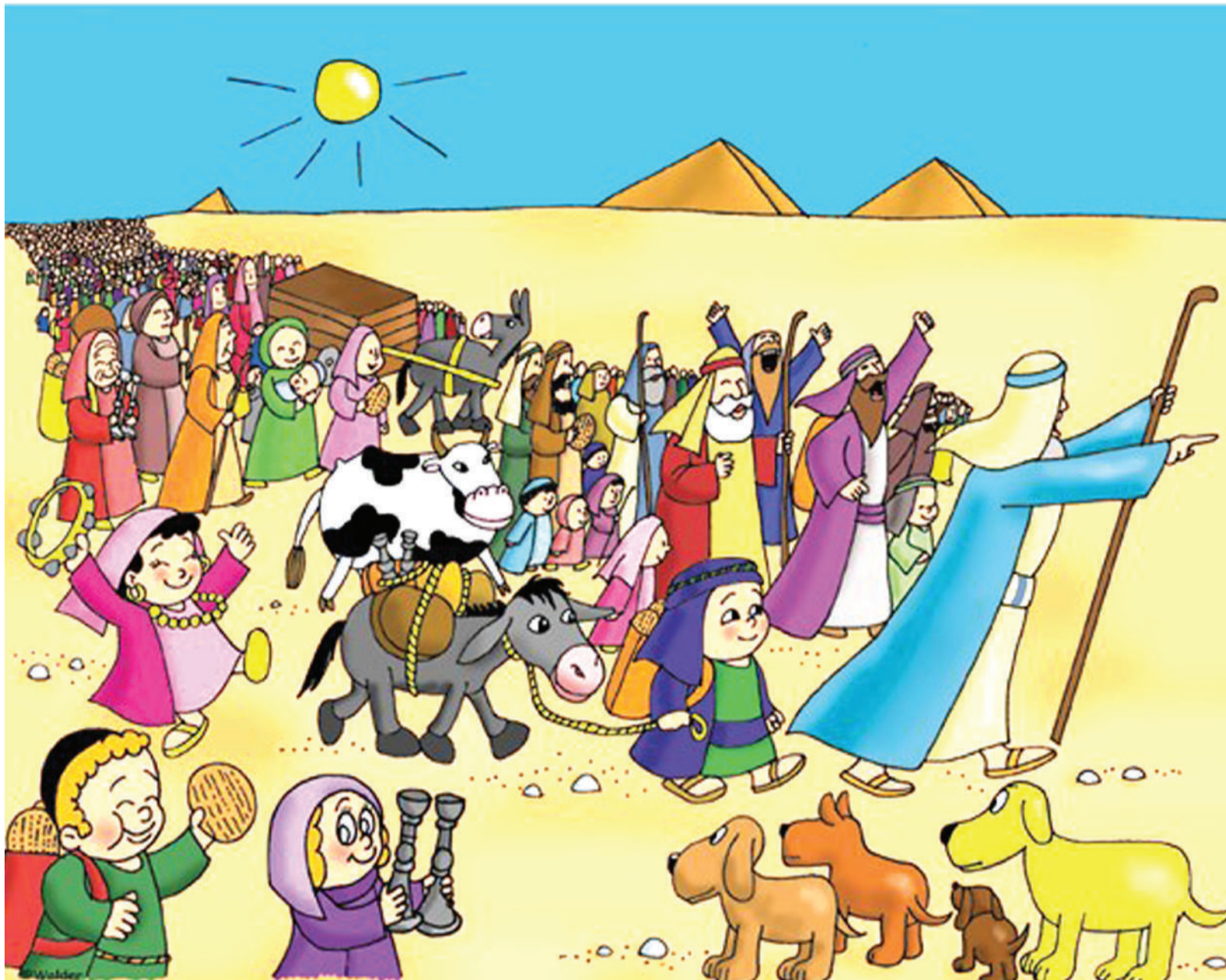
Xmas legacy: The covenants and the children, past and present

By Anil Kija

CHILDREN 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 impression 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 the little boy in the manger, why would they not know

of his plans to harm him, 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 rule' of the Jewish vassal state, where the power

of inflicting death was removed 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

wasn't an accident as it 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 Maccabean 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 this time of the year as the

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 preachers ignored it.

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

By Anil Kija

WHAT is enigmatic about 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 Dr Kwame Nkrumah sort of espouses in his book, *Consciencism*, as to

whether, 'on the morrow of creation, God girded up his 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 Jesus wasn't the Gospel perse but a modified version of it. The simple reason for this situation is that Christ's teachings targeted the heart, where the priests have no access, in which case some



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 rituals even after the high priests rejected Jesus, and

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

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, 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 Egyptian legend of Osiris (a divine king), whose wife Isis

(the spirit behind modern 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 that he did not exist, or it is Babylonian deities who were awash with happiness for

the work of their daughter, and called her to their part 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 Jesus 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 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 victory.

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 (VCA), 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 executive building digital

businesses and understands 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 Ba, who is originally from Senegal. She argues this is

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 de-risk 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 benefiting, 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 micro-financing with "small amounts and big interest rates" she points out. The



funding gap is particularly striking as research from sources including the Global Entrepreneurship

Monitor shows African women are easily the most 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 of necessity with a lack of

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

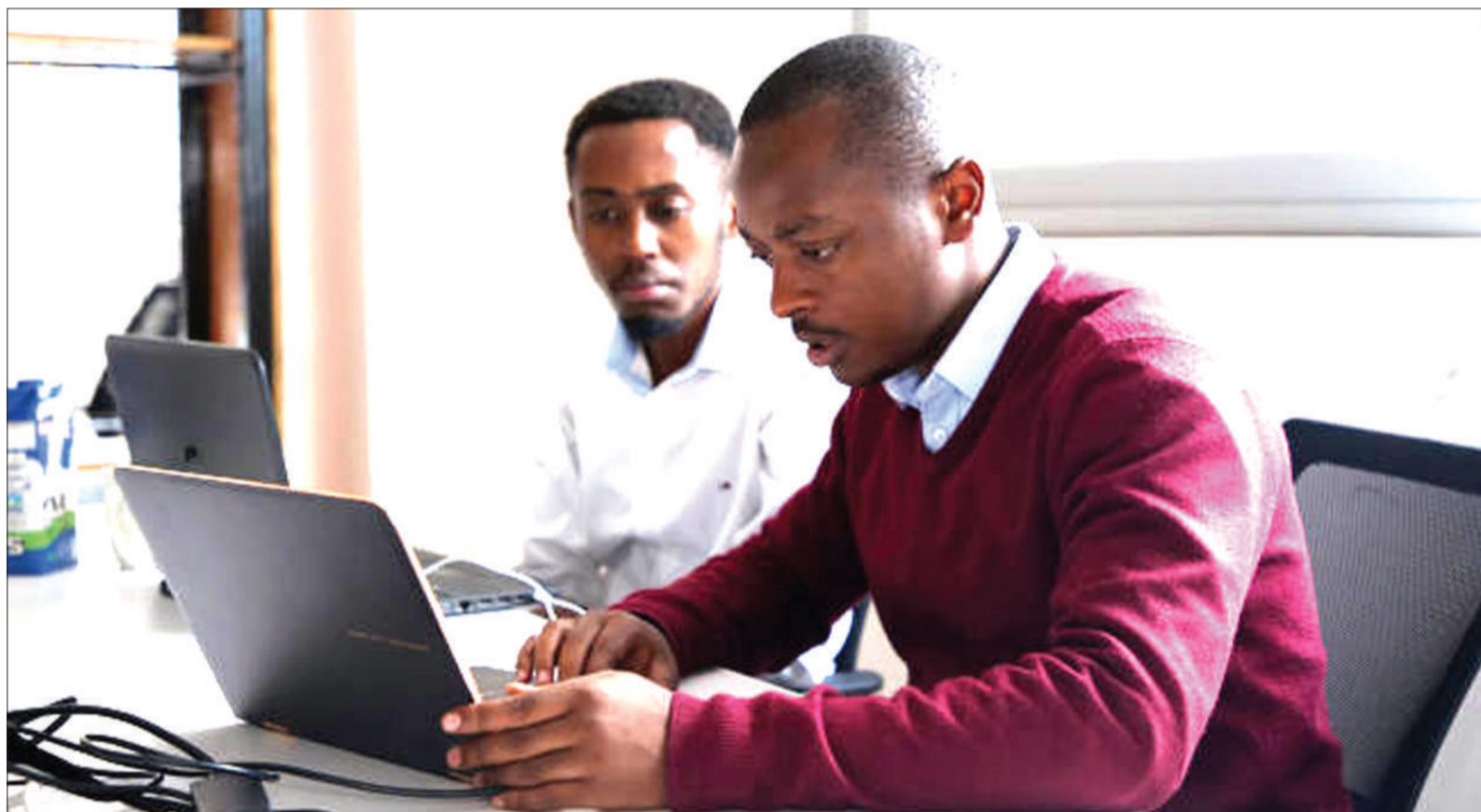
Ba is not alone, of course, in focusing on the paucity of funding for female founders. Last year, Alitheia Capital launched a gender fund led by veteran investor Tokunboh Ishmael, with a target of between \$75 million to \$100 million for women entrepreneurs.

"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 to make strong returns, particularly in Africa where

the diamonds in the rough 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 tech 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 yield 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, a Paris-based online education company, began offering technical courses to students 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 other 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 usual 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 have unprecedented opportunities today beyond their own national borders in the tech sector. They can benefit from trends in remote working, the global search for cheaper labour and the

power of the internet.

In theory, this should allow skilled people in less industrialised countries to "leapfrog" workers in more developed economies in attracting work and boosting employment at home.

Vibrant tech hubs have emerged in countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and 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 remain between the pool of potential talent, the capacity of local education systems to provide training, and the likely scale in demand from employers.

The World Economic Forum estimates 15m-20m will join the African 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 imbalance is already frustrating business. PwC's latest Global CEO Survey

showed 87 per cent of African chief executives were concerned about the availability of key skills, including 45 per cent who were "extremely concerned".

The first difficulty is the poor provision of basic schooling. A report by Unesco this year highlighted low levels 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 9 per cent in Senegal achieved basic reading levels. For rudimentary maths skills, the shares were 2 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively.

Adamon Mukasa, a senior researcher at the African Development Bank, estimates that 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 compared with 21 per cent elsewhere.

Like other analysts, he highlights the need for

both enhanced science technology engineering and maths (Stem) and improved soft skills such as the teamwork required in the workplace.

Post-school education is 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 US philanthropists, aimed at training and creating programming jobs in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria to supply US

businesses, announced brutal cutbacks. Jeremy Johnson, the chief executive, said the business would refocus on supplying higher-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?"

Ms Gras of OpenClassrooms 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 work.

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

By Amindeh Blaise Atabong

In 2009, Tsige Gebre-Mariam, professor of pharmaceuticals and drug delivery at Addis Ababa University was excited when he discovered a drug to expel worm-like parasites from the human body.

Besides the anti-parasitic drug, Gebre-Mariam also had a breakthrough in the treatments hemorrhoid and eczema and developed a formula from medicinal plants for the treatment of malaria. He had been working on it for 20 years. More than 213 million people were affected by malaria in Africa in 2018, with 380,000 deaths, according to WHO's World Malaria Report 2019.

But after reaching out to the government and other funders to bankroll the project, he discovered financial support in his country and across continent was still reluctant to translate laboratory findings into locally relevant evidence.

"Production in large scale requires substantial investment—cultivation of the plants, extraction facilities and standard production that meets good manufacturing standards," Gebre-Mariam said, noting that setting up a factory is beyond researcher's financial capacity. Since then, the discovered medicines have not reached any drug store, 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 2.3%.

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 funding. Even when they go overseas just for training, they are often reluctant to return home upon completion after working in well-equipped ultra-modern laboratories and in conducive environments.

Funding for scientists was at the top of the agenda at this year's Grand Challenges forum for medical science researchers and policymakers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The aim was to chart ways of accelerating the translation of innovation and address the continent's most urgent health and development problems. During the discussions, the key issue which kept recurring was the lack of funding to take research findings off the shelf and into the marketplace for Africans and the rest of the world.

The African Union has said the right things but little impactful change has happened. In 2006, after recognizing the role of science and technology in increasing innovation, productivity and economic 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 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." Support Quartz and become a member. You have 1 free story remaining this month. See my o

to find solutions to African problems.

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

By Property Watch

THE success being made by DZ Cards Africa Limited, a hi-tech smartcards manufacturing company which has invested US\$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 as 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 US\$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

CAIRO

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 master-plan 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 ordered 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.

a loan of US\$75 million to establish four 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, US\$21.25 million will be invested at NIT.

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

and transport operations will include 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 Rector Engineer, Zacharia Mganilwa said that the institute has already started to implement some

projects in fulfilling TCU's requirements 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 include shipping engineers, pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, and maritime engineers; aerospace engineers, offshore engineers, mechanical engineers, automobile engineers, safety engineers, railway signalling and telecommunication engineers.

Briquettes fuel varsity student's business dreams

NAIROBI

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 Kitegela 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

will not necessarily depend on the 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 Kitegela. "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

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 gardens.

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.

TBA CHIEF PROMISES MAGOMENI QUARTER RESIDENTS MOVE IN BY DECEMBER 2020

By Francis Kajubi

RESIDENTS 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 change.

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



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 resume 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 noted.

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.

RGM International Airport expansion works under way in Zimbabwe

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 the 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

Nigeria launches construction of the US\$5.3B Ibadan-Kano railway

ABUJA

The construction of the Ibadan-Kano railway will commence early in 2020 according to the Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Amaechi who was on an inspection tour of the project. The US\$5.3billion project is being undertaken by the China Civil Engineering Construction Company who have just completed the 156 km Lagos to Ibadan section of the standard gauge railway

Completion date

The minister was not happy with the progress with construction the stations along the Lagos-Ibadan route as this has been scheduled for completion in April next year while he would have preferred completion in February. The contractor has given the December holiday as being the reason for the April date.

The minister also urged the contractor to source materials from local suppliers for doors, windows and tiles so as to boost local industries rather than importing the materials from China. According to the minister the hope is to have the construction of the Ibadan-Kano railway completed by 2023 before the present regime leaves office and loses any claim for completing the project.

Lagos-Kano SGR

Construction of the Ibadan-Kano railway is part of the 2,700-km Lagos-Kano rail standard gauge line which will offer transport connections from the Port of Lagos to Kano, near the border with Niger.

The sections completed are the 187km Abuja-Kaduna section and the 156km Lagos to Ibadan section. The present project will be in 4 sections namely the 200km Ibadan-Ilorin section, the Ilorin-Minna section a distance of 270km 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 with Niger.

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 the villagers hence request that you send a team that will involve us in the exercise because our farms remain



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 at Ikulu in Dar es Salaam seeking to meet President Magufuli, Patrick Mnyota and his Secretary, Oswald Mndeva said they the 11 villages

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 Nyeregete, Ibohola, Mbarali, 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

ADDIS ABABA

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.

Helios Towers chief executive officer Kash Pandya and the

company's chief financial officer 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 state-owned 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 sector, the country's government is considering various options

for telecom towers including 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.

According to its third quarter earnings for 2019, adjusted

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

Moreover, the company's nine-month revenue was up 8% to US\$288.0-million, and adjusted EBITDA up 16% to US\$151.5-million. While quarterly tenant numbers rose by 9% to 14,226 tenants, its sites grew by 5% to 6,903 total sites. "We continue to focus on driving top-line growth and adjusted Ebitda performance,

leveraging the exciting growth in our sub-Saharan markets, our long 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.

Challenges to tower installations include access to land, electricity, security concerns, and currency repatriation. To minimise running costs, Pandya said Helios Towers has connected about 90% of its towers to efficient and reliable power supply.

CONSTRUCTION

LONDON

Dubai 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 | ↑ |
| 4. | Singapore | ↑ |
| 5. | London | ↓ |
| 6. | Paris | ↔ |
| 7. | Dubai | ↔ |
| 8. | Delhi | ↑ |
| 9. | Istanbul | ↑ |
| 10. | Kuala Lumpur | ↓ |

Source: Euromonitor

list shows tourism in Asia is outpacing other regions. Asia accounts for 43 of the top 100 cities, rising steadily since 2013, because of higher income levels and the increasing number of Chinese as well as millennial travellers from Asian economies boosting intra-regional travel.

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

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

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

are investing in greater entertainment avenues such as theme parks, concerts, health and wellness and medical tourism," the report said.

Egypt made a comeback, thanks to its tourism reform programme and improving security, with Hurghada making the biggest jump in the list. It is projected to jump 19 positions to 63rd place in 2019 from 82nd last year.

Egypt remains the leading North African destination, according to the report. Sharm-el-Sheikh, Hurghada, Cairo, Alexandria and Luxor have all seen strong growth, with the return of visitors from the UK and Russia, it said.

Among the cities to watch this year is Delhi, which is forecast to climb to 8th position in 2019, from 11th last year, thanks to its connectivity and improvements in infrastructure.

"It is witnessing rapid development in its tourism infrastructure, having a world class airport and is focusing on 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 visitors 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 and visiting friends and relatives. It excludes 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 part-year data.



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-on-year 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 south-east and 2.6 per cent in the east of the country. However, there was only a 1.1 per cent rise in London and the north

recorded the weakest growth of 0.2 per cent.

A sharp drop in the number of 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 accelerated throughout 2019, moving back towards its long-term average. Average rents rose 2.1 per cent in

November 2019, nearly double the rate recorded last year. While rents rose in every region, the South led the 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 price falls and steady rental growth are gradually enticing investors back," she added.

London and the south-east remain the most expensive places to rent while northern England is the cheapest. Per 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 managed by Countrywide annual and is based on achieved rents.

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 backer SoftBank in October, Mr Neumann accepted a 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 Coworking 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, Mahmood 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.

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. 20, 1999.

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 economies.

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.

Today's Macao boasts harmonious 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 15-year free compulsory education



Ho Iat-seng, Macao chief executive

covering kindergarten, primary and 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 interest-free 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, all senior citizens are well supported, and every child has access to educa-

tion. 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 long-term prosperity and stability in Macao as a focus and ultimate goal of its efforts while dealing with Macao-related 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 luxury 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.

Agencies

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.

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 world economy.

On the complex international stage, China has become a true pillar of world peace and stability and a key engine for global development and prosperity.

This year has seen close exchanges between Chinese and Russian leaders. What is your comment on the current China-Russia relations?

Wang: This year marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Russia. The relationship has broken new ground in a number of areas:

First, there has been a new characterization of our bilateral relations. President Xi Jinping and 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 unprecedented level.

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 mark of US\$100 billion.

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 has been further strengthened.

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 practices.

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 harmonious co-existence and win-win



State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi

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 challenges 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 Keqiang 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 world.

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 ethnic 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



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 rebounds 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 simple."

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 Warriors 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."

AP

Kawhi Leonard, Clippers rally to beat Lakers 111-106

LOS ANGELES

THE 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 bidding 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. 25.

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 interchangeable 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 to go.

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 down at the end of the game,



Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James, left, and Los Angeles Clippers' Kawhi Leonard (2) chase the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2019, in Los Angeles. The Clippers won 111-106. (AP Photo)

mental mistakes at both ends of the floor. We fouled a lot in the 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-pointers, and the New Orleans Pelicans 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 anyway.

"It's been college and high school," Ingram said of his long-range accuracy. "They (teammates) found me when I was open. I had the confidence to knock it down."

The 9-23 Pelicans are now 2-0 against the Nuggets this season.

They spoiled the festive mood at 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 out-rebounded 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 four-game 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 since 1994 when they beat Seattle 105-96 in front of a sold-out crowd at McNichols Arena. The fans at Pepsi Center didn't leave in a particularly merry mood.

Then again, in the five Christmas games Wednesday, the home

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 guys 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 Halloween.

"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 I found out."

AP

Woods' comeback at Masters named AP Sports Story of the Year

BY EDDIE PELLIS

A GREEN jacket. A heart-melting embrace. A stirring return to the top of golf by one of the sport's all-time greats.

In choosing Tiger 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 —

titles won by the Toronto 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

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 season-ending 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 giv-

ing 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 wrap-up 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 two-putt 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 over, 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

MILAN

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 so-called 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 club.

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 worth nearly 50 million euros (\$56 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 contenders for goal of the season.

WHO'S GOING DOWN? Brescia, Spal and Genoa currently occupy the bottom three places, with Genoa last on 11 points from 17 games.

Brescia is 18th in the 20-team league - trailing Sampdoria and Lecce by just one point - and will hope striker Mario Balotelli finds top form in the new year to lead it to safety.

AP

China slaps spending curbs on clubs amid finance squeeze

HONG KONG

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 will collapse."

REUTERS

The best of the bunch at this stage is perhaps Goran Pandev's stunning goal against Lecce for Genoa on Dec. 8.

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 head-to-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 2000.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFICATION

While Juventus and Inter Milan look overwhelming favorites to get in the Champions League next season, the other two spots will likely 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?

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AP

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



Lionel Messi

Karim Benzema

Barcelona.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON SO FAR Messi leads the league with 13 goals in just 13 appearances due to an injury 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 Sociedad 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

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 Uruguayan 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 goals.

Booze and football present tricky choices for Qatar

DOHA

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 factor".

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

more open. You are going to have teams coming from England, Germany, France, South America - guess what? They have to be a little bit open."

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

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 fan-zone, 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

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 provides it."

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFICATION

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 Monday.

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.

AP

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 has a good time, we want to make 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 having a drink, going out to the stadium, 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 festival in the world arrives in town.

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



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

MELBOURNE

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 of years.

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 leg-side 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 Tests.

In the short period before lunch, Smith was not overly impressed as umpire Nigel Llong twice called dead ball when he was evasive 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 medium pace.

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 defend.

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 strength.

AGENCIES

Dar es Salaam cricket venues' renovation gets underway

By Guardian Reporter

RENOVATION of cricket grounds in Dar es Salaam is underway, with installation of grass wickets taking place at the Leaders Club and Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club (DGC) venues this week.

Domestic cricket venues' renovation 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 honour.

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 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.

The official pointed out they have hired services of Kenya's veteran ground curator, Komo, who is known for produc-



Youngsters, who are participating in a development program conducted by Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA), demonstrate batting drills in Gairo, Morogoro recently. The association also hosted the program in Arusha, Dar es Salaam and Mwanza. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TCA

ing many high standard 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 recently been hosting training programs for young cricketers in Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Mwanza, with a

host youngsters turning 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 Officer, and the association's Development Coordinator, Khalil Rehemtullah, have been running the training alongside senior players and the schools' physical education teachers.

The TCA had, in Morogoro, overseen the U-15 elite development camp in Gairo District, which

brought together 60 youths from the district's 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 gain experience in cricket coaching.

The program, Abdallah disclosed, aims at developing young talents and having strong foundation for developing the game.

The training, moreover, 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 the Dar es Salaam's U-15 elite development camp, which took place at Chanika Primary School, with cricket players, Mohamed Omary and Abubakar Selemani, assisting the official.

Yanga veterans thrash Simba veterans in fundraising clash

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Simanjoro

MORE than 500 sports men and women joined for special Christmas bash at the Mirerani Township of Simanjoro, 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 Tanzanite Community Empowerment Organization (TACEO), with an aim of bringing together

orphaned children, physically 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

match. It is being anticipated that, the event will be repeated during the next Christmas in 2020, which will take place at another modern venue.

The Simanjoro District 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.

The Director of Tanza-

nite Community Empowerment Organization (TACEO) of Mirerani, Charles Mnyalu, said they decided to organize the bonanza in order give back to the 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,' at Mirerani Hills to help

boost sporting activities in the area.

The arena is going to accommodate 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

