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'Unity now done deal, next, fixing economy'

■ First 100 days of Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Mwinyi

By Songa wa Songa, recently in Zanzibar



Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi exchanges greetings with, among other people, Haroun Ali Suleiman, Minister of State in the Zanzibar President's Office (Constitution, Public Service and Good Governance), and Zanzibar Chief Justice Omar Othman Makungu shortly after arriving at the venue of Zanzibar Law Day anniversary celebrations yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Mwinyi, who marks his 100th day in office today, says unifying the hitherto politically polarised islands is in his done tray, with the focus now directed to other pressing issues such as fixing the economy.

And with a number of projects already approved for the construction of new ports, modernization of fishing and export of fish and fish products, Dr Mwinyi is upbeat that he will deliver on his promises to Zanzibaris in his first term of office.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with IPP Media reporters in his office recently, Dr Mwinyi said the most important stage was uniting Zanzibaris which has been achieved after the main opposition ACT-Wazalendo agreed to join the Government of National Unity (GNU) in December.

Its national chairman and Dr Mwinyi's main opponent in last year's polls, Seif Sharif Hamad, thus took up the position of First Vice President.

"So far, so good. We delayed a bit but the important thing is that we

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'Recognise the routes freedom fighters used'

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA and South Africa have submitted a special request to the African Union (AU) to officially recognise - for world heritage inclusion - routes used by freedom fighters from Dar es Salaam through various other countries in Southern Africa up to Namibia.

The request was submitted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa during the 34th annual meeting of AU Heads of State and Governments by video conference and supported by Tanzania, with Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi representing President John Magufuli.

Tanzania also requested the AU to recognize Kiswahili as the language used for African liberation when communicating and training of freedom fighters, on the basis of the 'Arts, Culture and Heritage' reference in AU and world heritage procedures.

Closing the two-day conference, the AU chairman, President Felix Tshisekedi of DRC, stressed that unity, solidarity and peace in Africa are the only levers to enable the continent to develop economically by



using the resources it has.

Among other things, the meeting discussed the creation of the new AU Bureau of Assembly for 2021 relating to the theme "Arts, Culture and Heritage in attaining the Africa we want."

Discussion also centred on a report on the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic in the continent, a report on the implementation of AU institutional transformation, along with procedures for the election of the chairman and vice chairman of the AU Commission.

Tanzania used the occasion to explain its readiness to continue working with the AU and other member states in implementing efforts to enable the continent to be self-reliant.

Next Budget set at 36.2trn/-

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE national budget for the 2021/2022 financial year will be higher by four percent at 36.2trn/-, of which 26.03trn/- (equivalent to 72 percent) will be collected from internal sources.

The government expects to mobilise and spend 34.88trn/- during the 2020/2021 financial year.

Presenting the national development plan for 2021/2022 and the third five-year development plan (2021/2022-2025/2026) in the National Assembly yesterday in the place of Finance and Planning Minister Dr Philip Mpango, the Minister for Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Dr Mwigulu Nchemba said that 37 percent of the total budget will be development expenditure (13.26trn/-).

Development partners are expected to contribute 7.9 percent of the total national

“ Tax evasion by some dishonest traders has also been a problem, some products were smuggled into the country through illegal routes

budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year, while tax revenues is slated at 21.46trn/- and non-tax revenues pegged at 4.56trn/-, the minister noted, affirming that the government will also secure loans from internal markets and foreign concessional loans.

In the coming financial year, the government is expected to start implementing development priorities highlighted in the five-year development plan (2021/2022-2025/2026) which reflects the country's development blueprint, Vision 2025 to build a competitive industrial economy and improve the welfare of the people.

In the 2021/2022 financial year, the government intends to finalise implementation of strategic projects promoting industrial growth, ensure a conducive business and investment climate and improvement of infrastructure such as

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Govt hikes high-season national park entry fees

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government will increase entry, camping and concession fees for foreign visitors at four national parks managed by the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) starting July 1, the National Assembly heard yesterday.

The targeted parks are Lake Manyara, Serengeti, Tarangire and Arusha National Park.



The Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Mary Masanja told the House that there was pressure from tourism stakeholders pushing for reduction of entrance fees, but they have not submitted such requests to the government.

Four operators have been complaining of decreasing arrivals of foreign visitors due to the outbreak of COVID-19, but there are no figures showing the number of foreign tourists cancelling travel bookings to Tanzania.

"The outbreak of COVID-19 should not be used as a factor to reduce park entry

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'Unity now done deal, next, fixing economy'

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have united our people and we can now focus on bringing them development," he asserted.

"Peace was atop my priority list. With GNU in place, the hatred is gone; this is a huge achievement."

The president said he now has his eyes on expansion of existing ports and building new ones, attract more investors to the blue economy, crosscutting various sectors and finally creating much-needed jobs especially for young Zanzibaris.

"We promised to deliver 300,000 jobs in the first five years; we are on course to achieving that because construction of ports alone will create a lot of direct and indirect job opportunities," he said.

Last month, Zanzibar and Oman signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the construction of Mangapwani multipurpose port in Unguja North.

The project inked between the government of Zanzibar and the Oman Investment Authority will involve the construction of berths for liquid bulk goods, containers, fishing vessels, natural gas offshore services as well as backup infrastructure for rehabilitation of marine vessels.

And early this month, Zanzibar government and Spanish company Tange & Intertorco Group sealed a pact for carrying out a feasibility study and construction of a joint fishing port at Mpigaduni in Unguja and another port at Mkoani in Pemba.

The president says this is a good sign that investors have faith in Zanzibar and more projects are expected which will expand the size of the economy, improve revenue collection and strengthen service delivery.

Small tax rates

As for revenue collection, Dr Mwinyi indicated that his government will not increase current tax rates but will seek to expand the tax base.

"I am not a believer in big taxes but small ones that are collected from as many payers as possible," he said.

"I am for a friendly tax regime so that everybody pays."

With friendly taxes, the authorities will not have to hunt down tax payers since many will volunteer to pay, he pointed out.

No bail for sex offenders

Although business people may start to cheer the new president for his policy on taxes, criminals should convert or prepare for worse. For instance, people accused of sex offences in Zanzibar will in the near future have to stay behind bars until their cases are heard and determined.

This is if determination by the new scholar president to change the law materializes.

"We are going to the House of Representatives to change the

laws; there will be no bail for sex offenders," he declared.

The president defended the intention by referring to various surveys that indicate that sexual offences are commonplace in Zanzibar with victims being women and children but with the current legal system not helping much.

"We are also starting a special division in our courts to deal with sexual offences to speed up the delivery of justice," he said.

President Mwinyi called upon activists and religious organizations not to relent in their efforts to help uncover sex offences which would otherwise go unnoticed.

He challenged the police, the office of Director of Criminal Investigations to pull up their socks and serve justice because justice delayed is justice denied.

Zanzibar Insurance Fund

There is no public health insurance scheme in Zanzibar and this troubles the new president. He wants to establish one that will have to be funded by tax payers.

"We will have to start by taxing workers in the formal sector for us to be able to establish the Zanzibar Health Insurance Fund," he said.

But Dr Mwinyi noted that the embezzlement of resources in the health sector is a big problem that must be brought to an end.

"Procurement flaws allow unscrupulous staff to plunder financial resources, thus medicines and medical equipment meant for public health delivery end up in private facilities. We must bring all this to an end," he vowed.

Skills for youth

For Zanzibar youth to be able to grab employment and self-employment opportunities presented by available and anticipated massive investments, the government is prepared to train youths at home and abroad so that they don't become onlookers but active participants.

"We will skill our youth so that they actively get involved in the blue economy which includes beach tourism, modern fishing and fish processing plus oil and gas among others," he said.

The president asserted that he will deliver on his promise to provide those engaged in fishing for a livelihood with modern gears to enable them turn from shallow sea fishing to deep sea fishing so as to lift people out of poverty.

"We will provide them with modern storage facilities to end losses due to rotten catch; we have already secured some markets for export and are continuing to look for other export markets," the president stated.

Economic zones will be set up in various parts of Unguja and Pemba depending on dominant economic activity to boost processing of produce and spur industrialization, he added.



Zanzibar Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdallah (in blue track suit) leads a Zanzibar Law Day commemoration march at the weekend. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Govt hikes high-season national park entry fees

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and concession fees. Let us not use the pandemic to deny the government rightful revenues," she said, underlining that such revenues are crucial for economic growth.

Despite calls by stakeholders for the government to keep the fees low, tour operators were secretly charging higher rates compared to those set by the government, she asserted.

The proposed entry fee per person at Serengeti National Park will be \$70 from the current \$60, seasonal and special camping fee will be \$60 instead of \$50 and concession fee raised to \$60 from

\$50.

The entry fee for Lake Manyara National Park will be \$50, while tourists will pay a camping fee of \$60 from \$50 and a \$40 concession fee.

At the Tarangire and Arusha national parks, the entry fee per person will be \$50 compared to the current \$45, with camping fees per person increased to \$60 from \$50 while concession fee remain at \$40.

The proposed new park fees are still low compared to the higher rates that tour operators have been charging tourists, the deputy minister noted, highlighting that tour operators charge \$2,500 per

tourist for a five-day tourist package that includes visiting Arusha, Manyara, Serengeti and Ngorongoro national parks.

This amount is too high compared to rates set by TANAPA, which asks for \$172 per person, she stated, pointing out that at some instances, tour operators charge up to \$5,000 for a package per tourist, "but yet TANAPA gets just \$172 per person."

The deputy minister was responding to a question from Arusha MP, Mrisho Gambo who suggested that the government halts its plans to increase park entrance fees taking into consideration that the sector has already been affected by the

outbreak of COVID-19.

The MP expressed concern that some neighboring countries would lower their park entry fees to attract more tourists especially as the pandemic still rages.

The Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Damas Ndumbaro explained further that the new park entry fees will be applicable during high seasons as some national parks including Ngorongoro Crater attract a good number of tourists.

The number of vehicles entering the parks reaches 400 per day compared to 70 vehicles during the low season, thus posing significant ecological risks, he added.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa talks with legislators Stanslaus Nyongo (Maswa East, C) and Agnes Marwa (Special Seats) outside Parliament in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: PMO

'National debt well within time frame' Next Budget set at 36.2trn/-

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE national debt had reached 59trn/- in December 2020 with the government insisting it is within the time frame.

The amount is higher compared to 54.8trn/- reached in the same period in December 2019, an increase of 7.6 per cent. Of the amount, the internal debt is 16.2trn/- and external debt 42.8trn/-.

According to the government the debt increment was due to loans for financing of various development projects.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Budget Committee, Sillo Baran said despite the fact that the debt is within limits, the lawmakers want the government to assess the debt using revenue collection indicators.

Baran was presenting in the National Assembly, a report on the implementation of the five-year development plan-2021/22-2025/2026 and suggestions for implementation of the third five-year development plan-2021/2022-2025/2026 and guidelines for preparation of the

coming financial year.

"It is important to assess the debt because the money will be paid using internal revenue collections. We also advise the government to fast track procedures for the country to complete required processes for credit rating to facilitate availability of soft loans," said Baran.

He suggested for the government to reduce borrowing money from internal markets to fill budget gaps, instead put more efforts in improving credit guarantee schemes and lease finance.

In his presentation on behalf of Finance and Planning Minister, Dr Philip Mpango, Legal and Constitutional Affairs minister, Mwigulu Nchemba said the debt increase was due to loans obtained to finance implementation of development projects which included construction of infrastructure such as roads, railways, electricity and marine transport.

"The debt is within limits as per international economic indicators," said the minister.

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railways, roads, marine and aviation services, he stated.

Efforts will also be directed to improvement of processing factories for agricultural and livestock products and several other projects that are likely to boost economic growth such as the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project for 2,115MW of power, construction of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), the Uganda/Tanzania crude oil pipeline and construction of interchanges at the Kigongo - Busisi bridge in Mwanza, plus Tanzanite and Kamata interchanges in Dar es Salaam.

Dr Nchemba, for the Treasury, informed the House that implementation of the 2020/2021 national budget faced various challenges following the outbreak of COVID-19 as well as destruction of infrastructures such as roads and bridges during heavy rains.

"Tax evasion by some dishonest traders has also been a problem, some products were smuggled into the

country through illegal routes," he said, noting that tax evasion was conducted through transfer pricing as well as avoiding to use electronic fiscal devices (EFD) to issue receipts.

In dealing with the challenges, the government has been working to repair the destroyed infrastructures and make close follow up on COVID-19 updates. Policy measures are being taken to revive intensely affected businesses and enhance revenue collection systems, he further noted.

Parliamentary Budget Committee chairman, Sillo Baran advised the government to continue looking for alternative energy sources including geothermal, wind and solar power to ensure electricity services to most rural dwellers.

He also appealed for timely importation and distribution of agricultural inputs especially quality certified seeds for food and cash crops, also urging deliberate efforts to improve cultivation of cashew nut and processing its products.

In the 2021/2022 financial year, the

government will not receive funding through the General Budget Support (GBS) arrangement, he pointed out.

"The money will now be directed to specific development projects. We advise the government to meet with development partners and discuss an alternative way to channel the money instead of directing them to the projects," the MP intoned, insisting that the government must be given the funds to decide on where to channel them on the basis of its priorities.

He underscored the need to continue investing in small processing industries for value addition, construction of new factories and revival of dormant industries. He said there should be an arrangement to ensure agricultural produce reaches factories and processed as most countries in the world have made development progress through agro-processing.

The 2021/2022 development plan should focus on finding solutions to challenges not solved in the 2020/2021 financial year, he added.



Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister Mwigulu Nchemba (L) and Finance and Planning deputy minister Mwanaidi Ali Khamis take notes in the National Assembly in Dodoma yesterday on legislators' remarks on the draft National Development Programme for 2021/2022 to 2025/2026. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Dr Mwinyi stresses the need to establish anti-corruption court

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Mwinyi has said there is need to fast-track the establishment of anti-corruption court to bring discipline on public expenditure and control embezzlement. Dr Mwinyi made the remarks during an event to mark the climax of the Law Day which took place at Shelkh Idris Abdul Wakil Hall Kikwajuni in Zanzibar. The president called upon all institutions involved including the House of Representatives to come up with laws that will ensure the court performs its duties according to the law. He said the 8th phase government will not tolerate misuse of public funds and graft. He said since coming into power, his government had already demonstrated what it stands for by taking actions for those who were implicated by a report from the Zanzibar Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Authority (ZAECA). "The 8th government among its priorities includes to fight against corruption and corrupt officials and we intend to bring

discipline into the use of government funds," he said. Dr Mwinyi called upon the judiciary to pull up socks in the handling of various cases to provide justice timely. He gave an example of Kadhi courts where he said there is a pile up of cases involving divorce, children and family issues. "Delay in timely provision of justice has an impact on the society where families are separated and scattered leaving behind hatred," he added. For his part, Zanzibar Chief Justice Omar Othman Makungu called upon institutions involved in provision of justice to ensure they follow ethics in conducting their activities. The Zanzibar CJ urged the police to conduct investigations because lack of the same was the main cause of piling of cases in courts which ends in releasing of suspects for lack of evidence. The commemorations of the law day marks the beginning of the judicial calendar with the CJ promising that his team was prepared to begin the year with a new morale to address challenges.

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

Extend free transport to all patients suffering from 'mysterious' disease, directs Mbeya RC

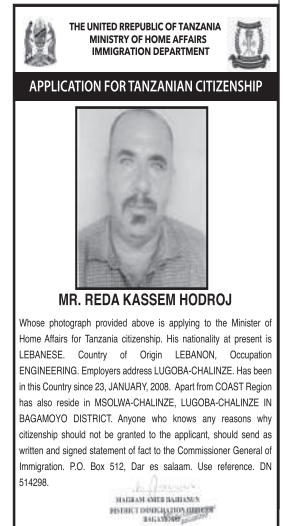
AUTHORITIES in Mbeya Region have instructed the regional medical officer (RMO) to transport free of charge all the people said to suffer from a 'mysterious' disease in Ifumbo Ward in Chunya District to Mbeya zonal referral hospital for examination and treatment. Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila issued the directive at the weekend during his visit to Ifumbo District accompanied by a team of health experts to satisfy himself over the existence of the disease in the ward. Some of ward residents who were allowed to speak at the public rally said the disease exists and has caused great grief to ward residents. Ifumbo village retired chairman Elias Waya said the first outbreak of the time the disease


in the ward was 1996 and even though they reported to the government, the issue was never dealt with. He said during the entire period the disease had killed 10 people from April to December. "The disease was erupting sporadically and killed 10 people in our village including three women and seven men one of them was a secondary school teacher," said Waya. He added that since the outbreak in 1996 more than 34 had died and up to now there are more than 22 people suffering from it. After receiving this report, RC Chalamila said the 34 people who died could not be

identified or enter in government records as they died outside the health system, and added that in the remote areas they hardly have appropriate time and facilities for diagnostic examination. However, he said for those who were currently suffering from the disease, he instructed the Mbeya Regional Medical Officer to transport free of charge to Mbeya zonal referral hospital for medical examination and treatment. He also called on the RMO that if there was anyone who has died from the diseases, his body sample should be taken for examination to find out the actual cause of the death.

Lupa Member of Parliament Masache Kasaka said already he has referred the matter to the health ministry to provide a team of health experts for on the spot examination to find out the kind of the disease that has been causing deaths in the area. Reports on the existence of the disease in Ifumbo Ward were disclosed at the weekend by district councillors and went viral in the social media. However, the Health minister Dr Doroth Gwajima refuted the reports while condemning some media organs for reporting misleading news and ordered for

the suspension of the Chunya District medical officer.





Jumuiko la Mallasili Tanzania
Tanzania Natural Resource Forum

INVITATION TO TENDER

TENDER No. TNRF/BMZ/ 1/02/2021

1. Background
The Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (TNRF) is a network organization registered in 2006 as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), with the aim of promoting the improvement of natural resource governance to achieve more sustainable rural livelihoods and better conservation outcomes. TNRF works for improved natural resources governance by helping bridge the gap between:

- a) People's local natural resource management needs and practices, and
- b) National natural resource management priorities, policies, laws and programs

TNRF has received funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Tanzania Country Office to implement some of activities within Climate change adaptation support for community managed areas (CBNRM) project aiming at supporting Protection of key ecosystems, increased resilience and adaptation for sustainable use by local communities. Enduimet, Makao, Lake Natron and Ikona WMAs have intact woodlands which are rich in blossom, bee keeping and has for many years been a traditional livelihood support activity. However, honey production to a commercial level has been hampered by the traditional approaches employed by communities including use of poor hives and destructive honey harvesting methods such as use of fires which sometimes cause wild fires and destroy the grasslands and vegetation for livestock and wildlife. This project thus will buy 800 beehives to be distributed in each WMA and will employ modern technology in bee keeping including procurement of 400 beehives and their accessories its supporting equipment i.e. (Honey harvesting kit, Solar wax extractor, Candle making machine and Honey extractor) to be used as bee hives fences to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts.

TNRF thus invites bidders to supply the following:

Lot 1: Supply of 200 beehives with its supporting equipment i.e. (Honey harvesting kit, solar wax extractor, Candle making machine and Honey extractor) to IKONA, and 200 beehives in MAKAO WMA

Lot 2: Supply of 200 beehives with its supporting equipment i.e. (Honey harvesting kit, solar wax extractor, Candle making machine and Honey extractor) to Enduimet WMA and 200 beehives Lake Natron.

Interested suppliers/firms may purchase tendering documents from TNRF offices, Plot # 10, Corridor Area, Arusha or via email: info@tnrf.org upon presentation of a request letter duly stating the company name and original bank slip/scanned for Tzs 100,000 (One Hundred Thousand Tanzanian shillings only) for each of the Lots mentioned above being a non-refundable fee. See our bank accounts details below:


Accounts Name: Tanzania Natural Resource Forum
Account No: 002 – 4002411.
Bank Name: Absa Bank (T) Ltd, Arusha Branch

All tenders in one original and one copy, properly filled and enclosed in plain sealed envelopes (Not indicating bidder's name) stating clearly TENDER FOR GOODS, SERVICE AND WORKS should be addressed to:

Procurement Tender Committee
Tanzania Natural Resource Forum
P.O BOX 15605,
Tel: +255747158888
ARUSHA-Tanzania

TENDER No. TNRF/BMZ/01/02/2021

Deposited at the reception of Tanzania Natural Resource Forum Offices, Plot # 10, Corridor Area, Arusha.
Tender validity period is two weeks, ending 16th Feb, 2021 at 5.30pm



Jumuiko la Mallasili Tanzania
Tanzania Natural Resource Forum

INVITATION TO TENDER

TENDER No. TNRF/BMZ/ 2-6/02/2021

CONSTRUCTION WMAs OFFICES, RANGER POST, RENOVATION OF TOURIST HOSTEL AND INFORMATION CENTRE

1. Background
The Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (TNRF) is a network organization registered in 2006 as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), with the aim of promoting the improvement of natural resource governance to achieve more sustainable rural livelihoods and better conservation outcomes. TNRF works for improved natural resources governance by helping to bridge the gap between:

- a) People's local natural resource management needs and practices, and
- b) National natural resource management priorities, policies, laws and programs

TNRF has received funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Tanzania Country Office to implement some of activities within Climate change adaptation support for community managed areas (CBNRM) project aiming at supporting Protection of key ecosystems, increased resilience and adaptation for sustainable use by local communities. To strategically support operations of both Enduimet and MAKAO WMAs, improved infrastructure is very key to address the challenges they are facing like human wildlife conflicts, poaching and diminished income flow to sustain the operations of the WMAs in the light of COVID 19 and climate changes challenges.

TNRF thus invite interested bidders for the following:

Lot 1: Tender Code TNRF/BMZ/2/02/2021 Construction of office block for MAKAO WMA at Mwangudo, Meatu district

Lot 2: Tender Code TNRF/BMZ/3/02/2021 Construction of two observation towers/ranger posts for MAKAO WMA; one at SAPA and second at Shugushi site, Meatu district

Lot 3: Tender Code TNRF/BMZ/4/02/2021 Construction of office block for Enduimet WMA at Tingatinga, Longido District.

Lot 4: Tender Code TNRF/BMZ/5/02/2021 Construction of information center for Enduimet WMA at Tingatinga, Longido District

Lot 5: Tender Code TNRF/BMZ/6/02/2021 Renovation of tourist hostel for Enduimet WMA at Olmolog, Longido district

Interested suppliers/firms may purchase tendering documents from TNRF offices, Plot # 10, Corridor Area, Arusha or via email: info@tnrf.org upon presentation of a request letter duly stating the company name and original bank slip/scanned for Tzs 100,000 (One Hundred Thousand Tanzanian shillings only) for each of the Lots mentioned above being a non-refundable fee. See our bank accounts details below:

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Procurement Tender Committee
Tanzania Natural Resource Forum
P.O BOX 15605,
Tel: +255747158888
ARUSHA-Tanzania

TENDER No. TNRF/BMZ/2/02/2021

Deposited at the reception of Tanzania Natural Resource Forum Offices, Plot # 10, Corridor Area, Arusha.
Deadline for application is 22nd February, 2021 at 05:30pm

Headline inflation rose from 3.2 per cent in Dec 2020 to 3.5 pct in Jan

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE annual headline inflation for January, 2021 has increased from 3.2 percent that was recorded in December 2020, to 3.5 per cent, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said yesterday.

Releasing the statistics yesterday, the Acting Director of Population Census and Social Statistics, Ruth Davison said, "The increase of the headline inflation explains that, the speed of price change for commodities for the year ended January, 2021 has increased compared to the speed that was recorded for the year ended December, 2020."

She noted that there is a relatively stable price movement from January, 2020 to January, 2021, adding that annual headline inflation rates over the same period have shown a stable trend that range between 3.0 per cent in November, 2020 and 3.7 per cent recorded in January and February, 2020.

According to the acting director, the overall index went up from 98.07 recorded in January, 2020 to 101.53 in January, 2021.

She added that food and non-alcoholic beverages inflation rate has decreased from 3.0 per cent in December, 2020 to 2.8 per cent in January, 2021.

Annual inflation rate for unprocessed food stands at 1.4 percent in January, 2021 while inflation rate for all items without unprocessed food stands at 3.7 per cent.

Minja noted that the national

consumer price index has increased by 0.8 per cent between December, 2020 and January, 2021.

The same increase was recorded between November and December, 2020. "The overall index has increased from 100.73 in December, 2020 to 101.53 in January, 2021", she said

According to the director, the increase of the overall index is mainly attributed to the price increase for some non-food items.

She named some of the non-food items that contributed to such increase as clothing materials by 4.7 per cent, garments for men by 2.0 per cent rents for private households by 3.8 per cent, materials for minor maintenance of households such as tiles by 12.4 per cent and household utensils by 12.7 per cent.

In comparison with other East African countries of Kenya and Uganda, she said the annual inflation rate in Kenya for the year ended January, 2021 has increased to 5.69 percent from 5.62 percent for the year ended December, 2020.

For Uganda the annual headline inflation rate for the year ended January, 2021 has also increased to 3.7 per cent from 3.6 per cent recorded for the year ended December, 2020.

"The overall index has increased from 100.73 in December, 2020 to 101.53 in January, 2021"



Martha Machibya (2nd-L, facing camera), a beekeeping expert with the Tanzania Forest Services Agency in Kahama District, conducts training yesterday for Shinyanga Region residents with impaired hearing. Left is sign language interpreter Zawadi Masoudi. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

Heavy rain destroys roofs and classrooms in Tunduru District

By Guardian Correspondent,

Tunduru

HEAVY rains with driving winds in Mbesa Ward in Tunduru District, Ruvuma Region has blown away roofs from five classrooms and teachers' offices at Liwawa primary school that left students without places to study in.

The one-hour rain that last Thursday also uprooted large trees that fell into people's houses including various structures, including three wards at Mbesa

mission hospital.

Reports also say the rain also blew way roofs from about 30 houses in villages of Mbesa Ward.

Mbesa Ward Councillor Daniel Mlanda said after the rain, families of the victims were sheltered in neighbours' homes while steps to assist them were going on with the help of the youth studying at Nazareth technical School in the area.

Mbesa Ward executive Abdalah Zuberi Mgwila said after the incident his office reported the


Director to see how the victims could be assisted, including repairs to the classrooms and hospital's wards,

Mgwila said the village meeting proposed the shifting of Std IV and VII students to a nearby schools at the airport and Mbesa villages to continue with their lessons.

Tunduru District Development Director Gasper Balyomi said already he has dispatched experts from the building department to assess the situation to enable the allocation of funds for repairs of the damaged infrastructure as quickly as possible.



Reports also say the rain also blew way roofs from about 30 houses in villages of Mbesa Ward




Advertisement

BULYANHULU GOLD MINE LIMITED

Requests the submission of Expressions of Interest from qualifying parties wanting to participate in the below services at Bulyanhulu Gold Mine

Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Limited (BGML) is a fully owned subsidiary of Twiga Minerals Corporation. Bulyanhulu Gold Mine Site is located 45km south of Lake Victoria, in the Kahama District of Shinyanga Region, northern Tanzania. There are road accesses to the mine from Mwanza, 127km to the northeast and from the town of Kahama, 84km to the south.

BGML, therefore, invites "Expressions of Interest" from reputable, experienced and certified companies interested in pre-qualifying for inclusion in a tender process for the provision of the below goods/service packages.

No.	Reference no.	Description of services to be procured	Pre-Qualification Criteria
1	BUL-21-01-01	Contracting civil, mechanical and general manpower supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of current or previous clients as reference Meet the availability of required skill requirement Compliance of employment and labour relations CRB Classification – Class 1 Provide safety record Appropriate licenses Evidence to undertake and successfully render the required service
2	BUL-21-01-02	Multi-stream Slurry Sampler and XRF Analyzer System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist XRF analyser company with site support, min 3 years Quality Lead time Cost Guarantee and warranty time frames


The above Services/goods are intended to be awarded through a competitive tendering process in which a restricted number of suitable pre-qualified and experienced contractors shall be invited to receive the tender documents. Please submit an "Expression of Interest" on your company's letterhead if your company qualify as per the pre-qualification criteria together with the following additional information and/or documentation:

- Full company profile;
- Company registration documents i.e. Certificate of incorporation, business licence, TIN, VRN, Tax Clearance Certificate etc.;
- BRELA – Register of Companies detailed information certificate
- Applicable certification, accreditation and affiliated registration
- Years' service and experience of key personnel to be assigned to project
- Required equipment availability to perform the specific work
- Indicate the above Reference number and description on your Expression of Interest submission.

Kindly send your response by email to bulytender@barrick.com by latest close of business on the 12 February 2021. Any responses received after this date shall not be considered. Please quote reference number in the subject line of your email.

Pre-qualification of any company submitting an "Expression of Interest" shall be at the sole discretion of **BGML**.

For and on behalf of **BULYANHULU GOLD MINE LIMITED**



REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

RFQ Title: **ACHIEVE Procurement**
 RFQ number: **2020-A034-02**
 Date of Solicitation: **8th February 2021**
 Submission Date and time: **19th February 2021 11:00am**
 Questions and Clarifications Due by: **16th February 2021**
 Estimated Delivery/ Performance Date: **12th April 2021**

Pact Inc. is an international non-profit organization with its headquarters in Washington, DC. Our mission is to build local capacity to enable systematic solutions that allow those who are poor and marginalized to earn a dignified living, be healthy and enjoy the benefit nature provides.

Pact Tanzania is looking to purchase case file cabinets for ACHIEVE a 5-year USAID-funded award. The Adolescents and Children, HIV Incidence Reduction, Empowerment, and Virus Elimination (ACHIEVE) project is a five-year, USAID-funded global project to reach and sustain HIV epidemic control among pregnant and breastfeeding women, adolescents, infants, and children. ACHIEVE is implemented by Pact, in partnership with Jhpiego, Palladium, No Means No Worldwide, and WI-HER. The overall is to improve access to HIV-inclusive services to improve the health and well-being of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The project is working to support and strengthen the capacity of the national and community-level social services workforce, systems, and structures to ensure quality services for OVC, at-risk AGYW, and people living with HIV (PLHIV) at National and across all regions of Tanzania.

Pact Tanzania under ACHIEVE project will procure Case file cabinets to support Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and wards in implementation of Integrated Case Management Systems (NICMS) including data collection, reporting and proper storage of case files in confidentiality manner.

Pact Tanzania now invites quotes from eligible, registered furniture suppliers to supply case file cabinets with the following specifications:

Cabinets Description/ Type of item and Specifications	Quantity/ Number of items	Distribution points
TYPE: Steel filling cabinets for case management files 4 tier double door steel filling CABINET SIZE: 1850*905*460 COLOUR: GRAY	953	These will be distributed up to the ward in each council as specified in the terms of reference
	80	Cabinets will be distributed to 80 LGAs as specified in the terms of reference
TOTAL	1033	

Interested, eligible vendors should request full terms of reference and distribution list through email procurementTZ@pactworld.org before 16th February 2021:

Interested, eligible vendor should deliver their quotation to:

Pact Tanzania
 Plot No.74, Uporoto Street
 Victoria Ursino South
 P.O. Box 6348
 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

All quotes must be in Tanzanian shillings and enclosed in a plan sealed envelope. **The deadline is 11am EAT Friday 19th February 2021.**

PACT will open all bids on **Friday 19th February 2021 at 11.30am** in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend. The Bidders' representatives who are present shall sign a register evidencing their attendance

Please note:

1. Late or incomplete bids will not be accepted.
2. The quote that complies with all the specifications/requirements and offers value for money, shall be considered for the competition.
3. Pact may cancel solicitation and not award.
4. Pact may reject any or all responses received.
5. Issuance of request for quotes does not constitute a contract commitment by Pact.
6. Pact reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow the solicitation instructions.
7. Pact reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.
8. Pact will be contacting all offerors to confirm contact person, address and that the proposal was submitted for this solicitation.
9. Pact will not compensate Vendors for their response to the solicitation.

Traditional Chinese Medicine Methods in Preventing and Treating COVID-19

In China, with great experience in the prevention and treatment of SARS by traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in 2003, TCM has been exploited in the fight against COVID-19 at the very beginning of its outbreak. The integrated treatment of TCM and western medicine proves effective. TCM helps reduce the possibility of mild disease progressing to severe disease and recover with less sequelae; TCM medication significantly shortens the time of turning to negative test with severe cases, and reduces life risk of severe and critical cases by over 80%.

I. The long history of TCM treating the epidemics

TCM is a holistic medicine that integrates prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Such TCM classics as Sun Simiao's *Qian Jinfang*, Zhang Zhongjing's *Treatise on Febrile and Miscellaneous Diseases*, Wu Youke's *Treatise on Pestilence and Wu Jutong's Item Differentiation of Warm Febrile Diseases* systematically summarized the basic theories, clinical practice, classical formulas and technical methods of TCM in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. Those classics are the united wisdom of ancient Chinese in continuously exploring, cogitating and summarizing the laws of preventing and treating epidemic diseases. Researcher Tu Youyou was inspired by Ge Hong's *Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies* and discovered artemisinin, which has saved millions of lives worldwide, and she thus was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

TCM has also been effective in treating viral infections. In recent years, viral respiratory infections have been prevalent. TCM has also achieved significant results in the treatment of SARS, H1N1 and other diseases, and has accumulated rich experience in treating newly emerging infectious diseases. Studies have confirmed that TCM can improve the overall balance and immunity of the human body, while also inhibiting and killing viruses.

II. Treatment experience of TCM for COVID-19

When looking back at the chaotic situation in Wuhan at the beginning of 2020, there are much experience that can be referred to.

What needs to be put first is that TCM and Western medicine are obviously different in their treatment modes. From the angle of Western medicine, most chemical drugs are single-targeted, while TCM are more multi-targeted. In other words, TCM works more like a team. In this sense, the treatment modes are different. But as far as the disease is concerned, there are a few points that can be intervened in. Taking COVID-19 as an example, the virus causes inflammation and immunity disorders, further doing hard to organ functions and lesions in lung, heart and other organs. That is to say, organ lesions caused by virus, inflammation and immunity dysfunction are all targets for drugs. A Western medicine is a chemical, which is often targeted at a certain target, while a TCM drug may be a multi-targeted treatment, such as to virus replication, balancing between inflammation and immunity, subsequent organ lesions, blood coagulation.

In order to promote the technological research and treatment of COVID-19, observations on the clinical efficacy of TCM drugs and formulas included in the 5th, 6th and 7th Diagnosis and Treatment Protocol were carried out.

Three drugs and three formulas proved effective, i.e. Jinhua Qinggan Granule, Lianhua Qingwen Capsule, Xuebijing Injection, Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction, Dampness Resolving and Detoxifying Decoction, and Lung Ventilating and Detoxifying Decoction. They are recommended by the academicians and experts. In the updated Diagnosis and Treatment Protocol for COVID-19 (Trial Version 7), Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction is included as best in TCM therapies.

1. Xuebijing Injection

Xuebijing Injection is a TCM injection that has been relatively well studied in recent years. In a study of its chemical composition by Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, Chinese Academy of Sciences, at least six active ingredients have been proven. Moreover, in vitro experiments have also



Image of the 4th national TCM team (Shanghai) assisting Wuhan during the outbreak of COVID-19 at the very beginning of 2020

demonstrated that Xuebijing Injection can actually inhibit the replication of the novel coronavirus. In related animal experiments, it has also been noticed that Xuebijing Injection has an inhibiting effect on cytokine storm, as well as on coagulation dysfunction. Therefore, TCM injection was selected to treat severe and critical COVID-19 patients, because Xuebijing Injection proved quite effective for severe cases in the earlier clinical trials.

Before COVID-19, the injection has achieved well-recognized results in the previous treatment of severe pneumonia and sepsis. For example, the study by Prof. Bai Chunxue of Fudan University, and the randomized controlled trials of "Xuebijing and placebo for severe pneumonia" by 33 hospitals, show that Xuebijing, combined with conventional treatment, can significantly reduce the fatality of patients with severe pneumonia in 28 days, by 8.8%. It can also significantly fasten the inflammation resolution, shorten mechanical ventilation, and shorten hospital stay. In an unblinding research on sepsis, Xuebijing Injection has also proven to reduce the case fatality rate. It was because Xuebijing had been seen efficacy in the early study of severe pneumonia and sepsis. As a multi-targeted treatment drug, Xuebijing is used in the treatment of severe and critical cases of COVID-19.

As to its safety, in fact, in the safety study after Xuebijing Injection came in the market, it was noted that the adverse effect rate was no higher than 1% in the clinical use. So it is safe, generally speaking.

2. Jinhua Qinggan Capsule

Jinhua Qinggan Granule is a new drug for influenza developed during the H1N1 epidemic in 2009, and was put into the market then. The formula of the Granule is the combination of Maxing Shigan Decoction in *Treatise on Cold Damage and Miscellaneous Diseases* and Yinqiao San Decoction in *Systematized Identification of Warm Diseases*. Maxing Shigan Decoction has a history of 1800 years, and Systematized Identification of Warm Diseases also has a history of nearly 300 years. The two formulas have stood the test of long history and are effective. The main effect of the Granule is to relieve wind, to diffuse the Lung, to clear heat and to detoxify. During the development, Wang Chen, an academician, did a RCT study, and published the result in *Annals of Internal Medicine* of US. It proves similar efficacy as Tamiflu for flu H1N1, but with less adverse effects and lower cost.

Another clinical control study of 102 cases was carried out in the first-line of Wuhan. The results showed that compared with the control group, Jinhua Qinggan Granule reduced the proportion of progression from mild and moderate cases to severe by 2/3 and shorten the febrile period by 1.5 days. And the counts of leukocyte, neutrophil granulocyte and lymphocyte, reflecting immune functions, were significantly improved. The results show that Jinhua Qinggan Granule is effective. Besides improving clinical symptoms, especially reducing the rate of progression to severe cases, it is also effective to immunological indicators.

3. Lianhua Qingwen Capsule

Lianhua Qingwen Capsule is a formula developed during the SARS epidemic by Wu Yiling, an academician. Its main effect is also to clear pestilence, to detoxify, to diffuse the Lung and to

reduce fever. It is effective for mild and moderate cases of COVID-19.

A RCT study jointly led by Zhong Nanshan, Li Lanjuan, and Zhang Boli, three academicians, in 23 hospitals of 9 provinces and cities across the country, included a total of 284 COVID-19 patients. The results showed that the main clinical symptoms disappeared in more patients in the treatment group than the control group, and symptom duration were shorter. The improved pulmonary imaging was observed by 83.8%, compared with 64.1% in the control group. The Capsule offered a cure for COVID-19 in 78.9% of cases, compared with 66.2% in the control group. The outcome of the treatment group was obviously better. In terms of mild cases, the rate progressing to severe cases was 50% lower than compared with the control group.

At the same time, an in vitro experiment showed that Lianhua Qingwen Capsule has an inhibiting effect on COVID-19.

4. Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction

It came from the combination of Maxing Shigan Decoction, Shegan Mahuang Decoction, Xiaochaihu Decoction and Wuling San Decoction. It is generally suitable for mild, moderate, severe and critical cases.

In the observation of 1,263 cases in 66 designated hospitals of 10 provinces (without Hubei) in China, 1,214 cases, 96.12% of the total, were cured and discharged. In the clinical observation of 57 severe cases treated with integrated TCM and western medicine and given Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction, 42 cases, 73.7%, were cured and discharged. The lung imaging results showed that after two courses (6 days) of Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction, the lung lesions of 53 patients (93%) showed reduction and resolution in different degrees.

According to data from clinical studies, Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction has played a positive role in preventing mild and moderate cases progressing to severe and critical. It blocked the deterioration of the disease, reduced the case fatality rate, hence mitigate the damage caused by the epidemic.

5. Lung Diffusing and Detoxifying Decoction

It came from the combination and selection of the classical formulas, including Maxing Shigan Decoction, Maxing Yigan Decoction, Tingli Dazao Xiefei Decoction, Qianjin Weijing Decoction.

A control study on Lung Diffusing and Detoxifying Decoction group (70 cases) and the control group (50 cases) was conducted in Wuhan TCM Hospital and Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine. The results showed that Lung Diffusing and Detoxifying Decoction is effective in inflammation control and lymphocyte count increase. Compared with the control group, recovery of lymphocyte was increased by 17%, and the clinical cure rate was increased by 22%.

The First Hospital of Henan University of Chinese Medicine adopted the formula during the treatment of COVID-19, and 40 mild and moderate cases were given the Decoction. It took a median of 9.66 days for the cases to turn to negative with the virus. No one progressed to severe or critical case. The CT scans of 85% cases showed improvement.

A cohort study of 500 patients was conducted in Wuhan TCM Hospital, Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, and



Lianhua Qingwen Capsule



Dried mugwort leaves

Jiangxia Makeshift Hospital. All the patients were given the Decoction. The observation showed that the symptoms of mild and moderate cases, such as fever, cough, and fatigue were significantly relieved. The CT scan also showed a significant improvement, and no one progressed to severe case.

6. Dampness Resolving and Detoxifying Decoction

The formula was modified by the medical team of the Chinese Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in Jinyintan Hospital, on the basis of the local context and the relative formula recommended in the Diagnosis and Treatment Protocol for COVID-19.

The clinical observations were conducted with the severe, moderate and mild cases in Jinyintan Hospital, Dongxihu Makeshift Hospital and Jiangjunlu Street Hospital. In the clinical controlled trial conducted in Jinyintan Hospital, the pulmonary inflammation in CT imaging and clinical symptoms of all the 75 severe cases were significantly improved. The time for the patients to turn to negative with the virus and the hospital stay were shortened by 3 days on average. 124 moderate cases were observed in Jiangjunlu Street Hospital, and 894 mild and moderate cases in a randomized controlled way (among them, 452 given the Decoction) in Dongxihu Makeshift Hospital. It proved the effectiveness of the formula. In the follow-up test for the liver and kidney functions, no adverse effect was reported. In terms of experiments, the virus load of a 30% reduction was found in a mouse model of evaluation for its effectiveness on the novel coronavirus.

III Aromatic Chinese herbs in preventing and treating epidemics

Among various TCM therapies (for instance, moxibustion, Chinese herbs and traditional Chinese exercises) used in daily life in prevention and clinical treatment for COVID-19, a special therapy has attracted the attention and been welcomed by the public- the aromatic Chinese herbs, a group of Chinese herbs with strong aroma.

They have been used with a large range in both aromatherapy and sachet-wearing for prevention and oral-taking herbal formulas prescribed by TCM experts who worked in the first line of the epidemic. These practices have made aromatic Chinese herbs stressed by the public gradually.

Because of strong fragrant aroma, aromatic Chinese herbs are also called "fragrant medicinals". Since ancient time, this kind of medicinals has been used in treating and preventing the pestilence. History of Epidemic Disease in China recorded that, there were about 320 large epidemics happened over the past 2000 years in China, from the period of the Western Han Dynasty. In pestilence spreading process, aromatic Chinese herbs were commonly used in preventing its transmission by lighting the incense or wearing sachet.

People started to use aromatic Chinese herbs since Han Dynasty. Till the Ming and Qing dynasties, theories guiding the use of aromatic herbs in preventing pestilence were already well developed, and more using methods could be selected, such as incense lighting, sachet wearing, bathing with flavoring medicinals and medicine in-taking. These methods were widely applied and many are still used nowadays. Here are introductions of some methods applied in family to prevent the epidemic.

1. Wearing a sachet made with aromatic

Chinese herbs

Since ancient time, Chinese people have the habit of wearing aromatic sachets. Because of the convenience, they are widely used during the outbreak of the epidemics, and also taken as a beautiful personal decoration. In modern time, it is also recommended to hang the aromatic medicinal decorations such as aromatic sachet, mixed herbal tablet, mixed herbal bracelet and Chinese pills at home, in car or carrying them all the time. These articles not only act as a decoration, but most importantly, can clean the air in the indoor environment and improve the air quality in the surroundings of the body, thus, reaching the aim of keeping the pestilence away.

The first Chinese formula recorded in *Elaborating the Pestilence* by Songfeng was Chuhui Jingwen Pill (Filth Removing and Pestilence Expelling Pill) created by the writer Liu Songfeng. This formula contains 35 kinds of Chinese material medicines, including Cangzhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma), Chuanxiang (Ligustici Chuanxiang Rhizoma) and Dahuang (Rhei Rhizoma et Radix), etc. After grinding the medicine into powder and enclosed in a small sachet, people can wear it with its smell preventing infection of pestilence.

Igniting incense made of aromatic Chinese herbs

When talking about incense, many people may think about those used in the temple or in sacrifice activity. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, people are now realizing that there is special incense made of aromatic Chinese herbs used by many hospitals in China. Burning the incense can prevent the spread of COVID-19. The use of moxibustion is just one case. The Mugwort leaf, or the moxa, is often used for indoor fumigation with its warm property to prevent pestilence and common cold, expel cold and remove dampness, warm and sooth meridians and collaterals, harmonize qi and blood.

2. Igniting incense--moxibustion

In *Elaborating the Pestilence* by Songfeng, it also collected many formulas used for epidemics by incense burning, such as Cangzhu and Jiangxiang Resuscitating Incense. It is worth mentioning that Cangzhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma) is the most commonly used medicinal in a total of 65 formulas for the prevention of the epidemics recorded in this book. Modern pharmacological research indicates that Cangzhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma) is an effective air disinfectant with the main component of volatile oil and has the antiviral function and the effect of sterilization. Many patients with COVID-19 have gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea, vomiting and poor appetite, and Cangzhu (Atractylodis Rhizoma) can deal with these problems by invigorating the Spleen (Note: the organs mentioned in this article are concepts all different from those in Western medicine. For example, the Spleen here is one of the zang-fu organs in TCM, the function and location of which differ from those of the spleen in Western medicine), harmonizing the Stomach and eliminating dampness.

3. Bathing with aromatic Chinese herbs

During the Warring States period (475- 221 BC), "Mulan Bathing water" was recorded in a lyric poem, Li Sao, written by Chinese poet Qu Yuan. In the Ming dynasty, herbal monumental work, *Compendium of Materia Medica*, also recorded that, boiling bathing water with Baimaoao, Maocao, Lancao together had the effect of keeping away from the epidemics". *Elaborating the Pestilence* by Songfeng also has the records on epidemic prevention methods with medicinal bathing. Bathing with the aromatic medicine water can keep people away from the epidemics by eliminating pathogens.



A sachet made with aromatic Chinese herbs



A sachet made with aromatic Chinese herbs



Igniting incense--moxibustion



Over 1,450,000 poor households to benefit during second stage of third phase of TASAF

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

AT LEAST 1,450,000 poor households in the country are set to benefit from the second stage of the third phase of Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), it has been revealed.

Some 1,200,000 of those registered in the Production Social Safety Net (PSSN) will be engaged in several projects. The statement was made here by TASAF's director of Community Support, Amadeus Kamagenge, adding that at least 2.3 trl/- has been budgeted for the programme in the next four years. He said aim of PSSN is to empowering poor households increase income and access to social services such as food, education and health among others.

The director added that many people whose lives have changed for the better are scheduled to leave the programme.

Speaking during a visit to one of the beneficiaries at Mwaja ward in the city, Kamagenge said some 30,000 projects will be implemented nationwide by the beneficiaries of the programme.

"The projects are aimed at uplifting economic situations of the beneficiaries, being part of the plan to have them form saving groups" he said, adding that through such groups, beneficiaries have saved over 5.9 bn/-, revolving within their groups.

The director explained that until the end of the first phase that ended in 2019, there were a total of 23,000 groups with 31,000 members that contributed the sh 5.9bn/- that they were loaning each other.

He said there are households whose members will benefit directly by working at projects like digging dams, construction of road infrastructure.

One of the TASAF beneficiaries, Winfrida Mbago who was visited

by a team of officers from TASAF expressed joy, saying through the programme she has managed to do a lot of things.

She said since joining the programme in 2014, she started getting Sh 20,000 after every two months and used to save Sh 10,000 every time she received the money. After raising Sh 70,000, she bought six chickens which later produced reaching 25 chickens.

Mbago told the delegates that she sold the chicken, raising Sh 250,000 that she later used to buy three pigs which reproduced further and she kept selling some to get money for other activities.

"I have managed to build a house, connect water into my compound and do several other things from the money that I get from TASAF" she said.

TASAF (III) was launched in 2012 for ten years' implementation to 2023 in two terms of five years each in effort to reduce poverty in the country.

The second phase of it is aimed at strengthening success realized and reaching the unconnected 30 percent villages in the country. It ran from 2005 to 2013 during which a total of 12,347 social projects worth Sh430 billion were implemented in areas under 126 local authorities in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, benefiting 18,682,208 Tanzanians.

The first stage of the third phase is expected to end this year, and will pave the way for the second stage which is scheduled to end in 2023.

A total of Sh 4,109 trillion has so far been spent in implementing social projects, including construction of classrooms, rural roads, health centres, teachers' house, irrigation systems and water reservoirs, benefiting residents in areas under 40 local councils in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar.



Arusha regional Labour officer Emmanuel Mweta (R, gesturing) briefs former employees of Naura Springs and Impala hotels on a High Court ruling that the hotels' property be auctioned to compensate them. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Sabuni

Govt set to train head teachers on quality control

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

THE government has started implementing a special training programme which is expected to reach 16,300 head teachers in the country with prerequisite skills on quality control so as to facilitate provision of quality education.

Speaking during the three-day training for head teachers from Geita Region, Venant Fundi, the manager of the Agency for the Development of Educational Management (ADEM)-Mwanza zone said that in the first phase it will involve 8,000 head teachers.

According to him, the quality

control training was important towards improving performance of schools in examinations as well as adding more skills in leadership and administration.

"We expect that in the first phase, we will reach 8000 head teachers and in the second phase at least 8300 teachers will be reached with the essential skills to improve their daily leadership duties and decisions," he said.

Fundi wanted the teachers to supervise ethics and quality education in their schools which include controlling unethical teachers who do not conduct lesson plans and preparations before entering classrooms.

"There are also some teachers who spends much of their time

in social media or chatting while they are in classes, this should be controlled," he said

Felician Mwijage, chief quality controller for primary schools in Geita Region wanted the participants to ensure that they fulfill their duties by supervising quality control of education.

Mwijage noted that quality education highly depends on the preparations that teachers do before entering in classes.

"Head teachers should closely monitor teachers if they adhere to the teaching guidelines, this includes inspecting if they are teachers what is in the curriculums. So make sure that you make good use of the skills which will be obtained during

the three days of training to go and transform education provision in your respective schools," he said.

Regina Chrisostom, a head teacher at Kanyala Primary School cited overcrowding of pupils in classrooms as one of major challenges thwarting provision of quality education in the country.

"Having a classroom with 180 to 400 pupils is normal in most schools, this poses a great challenge whenever we think on transforming education provision in our schools, the situation also makes it hard for teachers to teach smoothly but also for children to concentrate in the class," she asserted.



Dr Angelina Mabula (L), Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development deputy minister, listens as Petit Worldwide company representative Patricia Charles makes remarks at the inauguration of a land tax payment campaign in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

DC outlines plans to improve education in Pangani District

By Guardian Correspondent, Pangani

THE government in Pangani District, Tanga Region has come up with a strategy for boosting education in the next five years by constructing dormitories in its all seven secondary schools including other infrastructures.

This was revealed here at the weekend by Pangani District Commissioner, Zainabu Abdallah at the Councillor's meeting led by its chairman Akida Bahorera and Executive Director Isaya Mbenje.

Zainabu said within the next five years, dormitories will be built in the seven secondary schools for students as many live far from school.

She said the district has also plans in the coming five years to build Form V and VI secondary schools as at the moment there are only two such schools.

She said in the coming five years they have mobilized to revamp infrastructures for both primary and secondary schools including revamping pit latrines, classrooms, teachers' offices and teachers' quarters.

She said the level of passing in examination for secondary schools in the district has gone up substantially but the challenge still remains in regard to primary schools, many students failed in their Std VII examinations and more efforts are needed to arrest the situation, as the district came up the third from bottom.

She said as for now they have built a VETA college for students who complete Form IV and who do not pass to study in various skills.

She said in the next five years the construction of a tarmac road

from Tanga to Pangani, Saadani up to Bagamoyo will be in full swing as already 50 km stretch has been completed, and added that they have already received funds to compensate land owners where the road will pass.

In regard to water projects, in the next five years there will be one big project that will distribute water from Pangani River to Pangani town, Muheza, Korogwe and Handeni districts.

The DC also said they have a strategic plan to revive sisal, cashew nut crops including strategic farming for various other crops to ensure people of Pangani develop economically.

In regard to fishing, the DC said at present they are constructing a fish market in Pangani town as well as an international market for selling sardines (dagaa) in Kipumbwi Ward in the district, as well as promising to improve tourism.

In regard to the health sector, she said in the next five years they will construct more health centres, beginning with two and will ensure medicines will be available at all times.

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbarali

OCD orders Mbarali residents to form vigilantes to curb crime, livestock theft

POLICE in Mbarali District, Mbeya Region has called on residents to form vigilantes popularly known as 'Sungusungu' to curb crime including livestock theft in the area.

District Commanding Officer (OCD) Janeth Masangano made the call here over the weekend when speaking at the Rujewa Town Council meeting.

The OCD said in the district, there has been an increasing wave of gangs breaking into people's houses and looting property especially at night and day when people are on their farms.

"There are some people who have been stealing livestock, slaughtering in the nearby bushes, and leaving with meat while abandoning some of the organs, now this matter requires high-level cooperation from the residents so as to end this crime," said Masangano.

She also pointed fingers at some village leaders, claiming that they're colluding with the criminals to carry out the hooliganism and urged them to

immediately stop the practice on the grounds that they will face the hand of the state.

The district police chief said: "We're continuing with our day and night operations in response to the issue of livestock theft and vandalism. I also urge officials to continue with the clearing of bushes around people's settlements, which acts as a hiding place for criminals."

"Let us work together to put an end to such acts, we need

our district to be safe because we welcome all kinds of visitors, there are crop traders and farmers who need to do their business in a safe environment," said Masangano.

Chairman of the Rujewa Town Council, Chameta Godigodi, called on local government leaders at the village level to stop the habit of embracing criminals and instead report them to a law enforcement agencies to put an end to such acts.



She said as for now they have built a VETA college for students who complete Form IV and who do not pass to study in various skills



Expansion of Matosa bridge at Kimara in Ubungu District, Dar es Salaam, well under way – as found at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

‘Assist govt to ease compensation burden to wildlife attack victims’

By Guardian Correspondent, Namtumbo

RESIDENTS of Namtumbo District in Ruvuma Region have been called upon to reduce harms afflicted to them from wild animals in wildlife reserve areas including wildlife corridors thereof to reduce the burden from government in paying them compensation.

The call was made recently by the District’s Administrative Secretary, Aden Nchimbi when launching a programme for educating the residents on how to protect wildlife in reserve area.

The education programme is being conducted by PAMS Foundation, an NGO that deals in sustaining and conserving biodiversity, wilderness, habitats and ecological processes with actions.

Speaking at the launching, Nchimbi said the education will help people living in wildlife corridor areas that connects various reserve areas including, Selous Game Reserve, Julius Nyerere National Park to allow the wildlife to pass without botheration. He said the education will also help to reduce the burden on the government in the entire issue of paying compensation to

people attacked by the wildlife.

He praised PAMS for seeing the importance on the provision of the education that would make humans and wildlife co-exist peacefully, to avoid uncalled for conflicts by allowing the animals move freely in their habitats.

For his part, PAMS Conservation Manager Maximilian Jenes said the institution plans to go to villages, especially those in or near wildlife corridors.

He said PAMS has been able to reduce poaching incidents to a large extent by working together with communities living in the areas, including Mbarangandu, Kimbanda and Kisungule.

Dar firm donates assorted items valued at 1.8m/- to three orphanages in Songea

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

A DAR ES SALAAM-based firm, Mohamed Enterprises Tanzania Limited (METL) has provided foodstuffs and soap valued at 1.8m/- to three orphanages in Songea Municipality, Ruvuma Region.

Speaking after handing over the items, Angel Samasuba, the firm’s representative mentioned the orphanages that benefitted from the assistance as SWACCO in Mwingemshindo Ward, St Anton in Mfaranyaki and

Mchungaji Mwema Centre in Mjimwema.

Samasuba said METL in all three orphanages has provided 120 litres of cooking oil valued at 516,000/- and 300 kgs of maize flour valued at 234,000/-.

Other assistance provided included 12 cartons of bar soap valued at 120,000/-, 30 cartons of juice valued at 195,000/-, and six goats valued at 600,000/-.

“It has been our custom in METL to provide assistance to special groups in the society including orphanages aimed to support

government efforts in assisting vulnerable groups,” he said.

Speaking after receiving the assistance, the representative of Mchungaji orphanage Sr Maria Veronica thanked METL for the assistance which she said will help 39 children at the centre.

Ruvuma Acting Community Development Officer Vinsent Ndumbaro, speaking on behalf of the government thanked METL for supporting government efforts in helping the needy and called on other stakeholders to emulate them.



Residents of Goba on the outskirts Dar es Salaam witness evidence of the danger that the erosion the Mbezi River banks poses to houses in the neighbourhood. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

By Guardian Reporter

Three Tanzanian firms win JICA’s top Africa innovative ideas contest

THREE Tanzanian companies have been selected from 90 applicants, which won the opportunity by having top innovative ideas, the challenge that has been organised by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

According to a statement issued yesterday, in response to COVID-19 global pandemic, since 2020, JICA has been examining more than 2,700 new business enterprises from 19 African countries including Tanzania to encourage digital innovation in the continent.

Among those winners include Agrinfo—a Tanzanian Agrotech company, who are going to compete in the next step in the African continental level.

On February 26, this year, JICA and Nikkei, the largest economic daily newspaper in Japan, are going to host an online pitch event focusing on new technology businesses in Africa.

In the event, 10 African entrepreneurs including Agrinfo from Tanzania will have presentations in front of thousands of web audiences mainly from Japanese companies and investors.

Several Japanese companies will offer new partnerships or investments in excellent “startups”. If any Tanzanian companies are interested in having investments and/or business alliances with Japanese

companies, that could be an excellent opportunity for them to learn more about Japanese companies/investors’ passion for Africa.

In Africa, JICA intends to collaborate with various stakeholders to develop entrepreneurship, identify issues experienced by entrepreneurs, make policy recommendations, promote collaboration among enterprises across industries, match up with Japanese companies, promote investment, contribute to ‘industrialization’ and thereby strengthen ties between African countries and Japan.

Mwanza workers urged to use complaints desk

By Correspondent Wilhelm Mulinda, Mwanza

WORKERS in Mwanza Region have been advised to use the desk to handle complaints with regard to labour and social security funds so that their challenges can be solved before they terminate jobs.

That remarks were made here yesterday by Labour Officer In-Charge in the Region, Oddo Hekela when speaking to ‘The Guardian’ on the implementation of the plan to handle complaints of workers.

Hekela said that the aim of the plan is to strengthen the implementation of laws of the funds and relationship between

workers and employers at work places as well as cementing cooperation with different institutions in combating the challenges arising at work.

Also the plan aims at raising awareness on labour laws at work places and identifying areas with more challenges for mitigation among other things, he said.

He noted that desk to handle complaints of workers is led by labour department in collaboration with Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), Workers Compensation Fund (WCF) and Public Service Social Security Fund (PSSSF).

In that regard workers should use the desk for enforcement

while they are still serving and not wait until when they are terminated or expelled from jobs, he said. He said the desk deals only with workers who are still at work and those who have terminated jobs should go to Commission for Mediation and Arbitration (CMA) to lodge their complaints.

According to him, they are now also working in collaboration with all institutions responsible for the management of social security funds that accompany labour officers to conduct inspections at work places.

He said that move is geared to solve disputes between workers and employers at work places significantly and therefore promote performance for development of the nation.



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
DAR ES SALAAM WATER SUPPLY AND
SANITATION AUTHORITY
INVITATION FOR BIDS



COUNTRY: TANZANIA
NAME OF PROJECT: SECOND WATER SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT
CREDIT NO.: IDA/59490, IDA/59500
CONTRACT TITLE: SUPPLY OF ADDITIONAL PIPES FOR NETWORK REHABILITATION

REFERENCE NO.: TZ-DAWASA-191351-GO-RFB

1. The United Republic of Tanzania has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Second Water Sector Support Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Supply of Additional Pipes for network rehabilitation.
2. The Dar es Salaam Water Supply and Sanitation Authority now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Supply of Various Pipes for Network Rehabilitation. Delivery location is Dar es Salaam and delivery period is within three (3) months after signing the Contract.
3. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank’s Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, dated January 2011, revised in July 2014 (“Procurement Guidelines”), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Dar es Salaam Water Supply and Sanitation Authority, Procurement Management Unit, and inspect the bidding document during office hours i.e., 0800 to 1600 hours, Monday to Fridays inclusive, except on public holidays at the address given below.
5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of TZS 100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Tanzania Shillings) or its equivalent amount in freely convertible currency. The method of payment will be by Direct Deposit or Telegraphic Transfer made to; Name of Bank: CRDB BANK; Account Name: DAWASA; Account Number: 01J1042996201; SWIFT code: CORUTZ TZ. Pay in slip should be submitted to be able to collect the bidding document from the Secretary; DAWASA Tender Board; DAWASA Building; Dunga/Malanga Street, Opposite Mwananyamala Hospital; Dar es Salaam. The bidding document may also be delivered to interested bidders as a digital version (PDF) through e-mail upon payment of the aforementioned fee.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10th March, 2021, 14:00 hours local time. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on 10th March, 2021, 14:00 hours local time.
7. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of TZS 50,000,000 or any equivalent amount in freely convertible currency in form of irrevocable Bank Guarantee.
8. The address referred to above is: Secretary, DAWASA Tender Board, Dar es Salaam Water Supply and Sanitation Authority, DAWASA Building, Dunga/Malanga Street Opposite Mwananyamala Hospital, P.O. Box 1573 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Telephone: +255222760006/+255222760015. Fax: +255222762480

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DAR ES SALAAM WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION AUTHORITY

TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2021

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

Modern industry knocking, but not with that many jobs

HERE'S something new in town, as an Egyptian firm readies plans for the building of a 100bn/- electrical equipment plant in Dar es Salaam's Kigamboni suburb.

The facility, which will be producing transformer tanks and other tools, is billed to be the first of its kind in the East Africa region.

What is novel about this investment is that the company, Elsewedy Electric, has expressed intention to bring along artificial intelligence (AI) technology for use in its activities. That is obviously a step towards enhanced modernisation, complete with its pluses and minuses.

Ibrahim Qamar, the firm's regional director for East Africa, made this affirmation while with officials of the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) visiting the construction site.

The ultramodern plant will cater for the entire East Africa sub-region, with Dar es Salaam as the hub of its activities, offloading 1,500 tonnes of cables and 300 transformer tanks monthly. Production is expected to begin this mid-June.

Qamar noted, with the world endlessly changing, there are new technologies coming and the firm opted for AI - including the use of robots - right from the start of its operations. What this means, in part, is that the level of employment will be modest for a firm taking up such a large amount of capital, as it expects to line up anything between 250 and 400 local staff to start with.

The firm is also establishing a vocational training school within its factory's premises for its internal capacity build-up as it widens its plans, among them post-sales customer care.

TIC officials have found the plans impressive, just as have other stakeholders in the electrical

goods industry, optimistic that the company will offer jobs to Tanzanians and fill the local market with locally made products.

The use of robots certainly promises to make the goods cheaper in the market although, if the difference is distinctive, there will be pressures to protect some industries - as noticed in the cement industry. Competitive price margins make life easier but also put some investments at the exit door.

The idea that robot technology is coming to town is something worth talking about, and the idea that the first such investment isn't a European or US firm is something else.

It is that globalisation is an issue of who puts up venture capital to do what project - and where. It isn't a matter of cash coming from a country as such since companies have access to finance from any zone, and banks financing such a project in Egypt are likely to have exposure in high-end capital markets far afield. So we are drawn closer to those markets.

Chroniclers may one day identify this event as one that stamped the proper entrance of Tanzania and East Africa as a whole into the fourth industrial revolution globally.

With robot technology, just about everything is made possible, and manufacturing tools here implies that such investment can broaden to manufacture even the components of technology for manufacturing tools.

It reminds us of our own Basic Industries Strategy of 1975, taking over from import substitution outlooks earlier.

Granted, we didn't get far, but this time is different in that at that time we were trying to use savings from crop exports to build industry, and now we are integrated with finance and technology circuits.

Must it take whole ministers to sense problems with agencies under them?

A familiar scene was visible at the weekend with the Energy minister announcing the suspension of managers and chief engineers at several Dar es Salaam power substations.

The intervention sought to allow for investigations relating to suspicions of dereliction of duty by the experts singled out.

This has been happening for a while of late, and it is clear that the cabinet is being proactive against those not working in the nation's interest.

The minister, who was on an inspection tour of the substations, later gave the authorities 14 days to investigate the managers and chief engineers.

What led to the suspension orders was the discovery of what the minister treated as negligence at the substations, including absence from work stations and not being accountable in discharging set responsibilities.

That is how the matter could be roughly put, though formally it isn't supposed to be the case, as there are controls all the way up to the top management.

Ordinarily, then, such issues often don't reach the board of directors - that someone was cautioned for three days' absence, etc. But for a whole minister to have to take issues up in person implies that these controls aren't functioning well enough.

Looking at the run of story as narrated by the Energy minister, it is an investigative report from elsewhere which the minister may have requested, and he explained the reasons - namely,

the frequency of power outages of late.

On the basis of what he said, the matter would easily be explained in a technical manner by the TANESCO authorities, though that line of explanation may not satisfy more inquisitive authorities.

So the minister ruled that it was unacceptable for both the manager and chief engineer to be absent from work stations without valid cause, and that all plants were being repaired simultaneously.

When the minister says that such a situation is unacceptable and amounts to gross negligence, what can rapidly be gleaned from that assessment is that the outages were being purposefully created.

There was a time in the past when "repairs" at a power station would be a sufficient explanation to the public, and there is a spirit of tolerating that kind of situation in the management and in the board.

However, without an acutely proactive cabinet, all this goes unnoticed - and the company seeks more subsidies.

The minister decided to overwork himself. He demanded that the TANESCO board ensure that an expert in connecting the device for boosting power that broke down at one of the substations do the job within three days so that the substitution resumed normal functions.

This tells many stories and sub-stories which, the good minister rightly elected to listen to and act on - and the magic seems to work. We only hope there are useful lessons here worth learning from.

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By Lehlohonolo Mofokeng

NOTWITHSTANDING multiple barriers that impede learner academic achievement, chief among them is that we are hardly ever held accountable as teachers. And I know of young teachers who have lost their flair and drive because of poor influence caused by toxic work environments.

This year, 2021, marks five years since I joined the teaching profession on a full-time basis. When you enter the profession, you do so, like any ambitious young person would, with high hopes and sky-high energy levels. The thought of transforming the lives of young people keeps your nails polished like a Miss Universe pageant contender.

As the years progress, knee-high motivation levels replace sky-high optimism levels. Because of often toxic and anti-progress organisational cultures in some of our schools, these young teachers see fitting in, thereby succumbing to pressure, as the only way they will be treated well by their colleagues.

I know of young teachers who have lost their flair and drive because of poor influence caused by toxic work environments. After all, every human being wants to feel like they belong and this is possible if we get along with every colleague around us, regardless of the consequences.

While emphasising the value of building relations, a fellow young teacher asked me these challenging questions to which I could hardly provide convincing answers: "I hear you, but how do you belong to a group of colleagues

Five years, counting: My experiences as a township teacher in South Africa

whose career aspirations and values are incongruent with yours? How do you remain committed to your call of duty while the dominant culture in your school is that of gossip, sabotage and hopelessness?"

Well, it's possible to blend well with such people, but you have to have a strong character and stable convictions about your aspirations.

So, what has five years in teaching taught me? First on the list is that you are in charge of your professional growth. The school may have a committee responsible for teacher professional development, but it serves no purpose if teachers do not see value in exposing themselves to the latest novel trends in education.

Because of perceived limited career growth, prospects in teaching and the "I have arrived" syndrome, continuous teacher-initiated development is still a rarity.

Available research clearly shows that teachers who prize continuous professional development tend to do better in terms of improving their classroom practice and inevitably learner achievement outcomes.

I also take issue with how we account for our academic performances as teachers. Since my arrival at my current school, teachers, especially those teaching the lower grades, hardly ever account for their classroom performance in a manner akin to those teaching matric. Perhaps more worrying

is that supervisors hardly follow up on the commitments we make to improve our results. Instead, in most cases where I have witnessed this, your records only come out when there is a visit by departmental officials - at which stage it is often too late to salvage anything.

One thing I have noticed about teachers is that once we know that supervisors, including principals, hardly ever follow up on anything we say regarding our classroom practice, we discard from our memory whatever was discussed in these "accountability" sessions.

Notwithstanding multiple barriers that impede learner academic achievement, chief among them is that we are hardly ever held accountable as teachers. "Only when they know you mean what you say and say what you mean will they take what you say seriously," said one friend when I shared this observation.

We have sufficient empirical evidence pointing to our country's dismal academic achievement in the lower grades, but there is limited political will to rectify this. Adding insult to injury are the secondary school principals whose schools also have Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners. Some will blatantly tell you they will deal with whatever educational deficiencies are caused in the lower grades when these kids get to matric.

I mean, how can you straighten your building when the problem is your foundation? I know of schools where it is okay for a teacher to miss a Grade 8 class

but not Grade 12. Seemingly more qualified teachers are assigned grade 12 classes while seemingly less qualified, or "unready" ones, are assigned the lower grades.

The past five years has also taught me that most of our parents are prepared to play an active role in their children's education. They are waiting for us to show them leadership. The trick with this is that it drains more energy than we may be prepared for as teachers. Teaching under the Covid-19 pandemic was a testing experience for all teachers, but mine was made greatly rewarding because of the kind of support my learners' parents afforded me.

Yes, we need serious intervention in terms of teacher classroom practice, but it's lazy to attribute learners' poor academic performance solely to teachers. It's not enough to have a quality teacher in front of learners. You also need the support of your learners and their parents. Otherwise, that teacher will only be good on paper.

Because of my preparedness to engage the parents on their children's education, albeit tiring at times, I could deal with most of the disciplinary incidents that I had in my classes. Because of our collaborative efforts, I no longer had challenges with learners not doing homework. Close ties with the parents meant I suddenly had learners reminding me to give them homework - a rare tradition in most of our township schools.

Indeed, we are stronger together than any single brilliant individual.

Creating a viable innovative ecosystem in Nigeria

By Inyene Ibang

BY the time more state governments undertake deliberate actions to foster accessible platforms for tech enthusiasts and innovators, Nigeria may truly be on course to increasing the number of young IT professionals with the requisite skills to drive sustainable growth in her digital economy.

Digital technology is the most powerful force driving change and efficiency across the global economy today. The transformative nature of digital innovations cuts across every facet of human activity and the environment we operate in. Its impact on lives and the way we do things are enormous and pervasive, because its power transcends physical borders and distance.

The disruptive impact of

digital technologies is most evident in agriculture, health, education, transportation, trade and commerce, the banking and security sectors. These crucial areas encompass the art and science of humans living in harmony with the physical environment.

In fact, society remains in an unending race to catch up with the rapid evolution of digital technology. As society is learning to use the latest digital technology, newer and more innovative ones are being introduced.

Emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), 3D Printing and Robotics are creating significant social and economic effects in most countries of the world.

These emerging technologies are facilitating rapid growth, efficiency, the effective exchange

of knowledge, as well as easier communication among individuals, businesses and nations.

With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (also referred to as 4IR or 4.0), the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological spheres are fast disappearing and would become non-existent sooner than later. While most advanced and developing countries have adopted the digital mode as the new and enduring enabler of their national economies, others are yet to transit from the conventional economy to the digital one.

Presently, Nigeria is developing a digital-led growth strategy to accelerate growth and upgrade the national economy through the "Smart Nigeria Digital Economy Project", for the sustainable diversification of the economy.

This involves a gradual repositioning of the nation's

economy into one driven by technology and innovation to improve security, check corruption and harness the unlimited opportunities in both the continental and global markets.

A case in point was the recent Jigawa Innovative Summit tagged "Creating Viable Innovative Ecosystem for National Development", organised by the Jigawa state government in collaboration with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and an NGO, Youth Coalition for Development (YCD).

With the ongoing implementation of the digital economy, more Nigerian youths are becoming actively engaged in technological and economic activities. Digital technology has opened up a new vista for them to explore and expand their imagination and creativity.

Post-coup Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi and the way forward

KATHMANDU

THE 1 February 2021 coup d'état by Myanmar's military (Tatmadaw), has been widely condemned by all the world's democratic leaders, human rights activists and genuine friends of the people of Myanmar around the globe. In an unusual manner for the world's top diplomat, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has gone so far as to urge the world community to make sure that Myanmar's military coup fails.

Like many other world leaders, he urged the military leadership to respect the will of the people of Myanmar as expressed in the 8 November 2020 general elections that gave Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) Party a resounding 83% of the popular vote. Guterres called the reversal of those elections "absolutely unacceptable".

Notwithstanding the Secretary-General's strong call, the most powerful organ of the UN, the Security Council, issued a mild statement that failed to condemn the coup because of strong objection by China, a veto-wielding member of the Council with significant economic interests in Myanmar. Reflecting the Beijing government's views, China's state news agency Xinhua referred to the military coup simply as a "major Cabinet reshuffle".

Given the potential veto by China and Russia (both permanent members of the Security Council that sell huge quantities of arms to Tatmadaw), it is unlikely that the Council will muster the courage or the unanimity needed to intervene or impose stern sanctions against the military junta.

However, even an indirect condemnation of the coup and a call for restoration of democratic institutions and respect for people's human rights sends a clear signal of solidarity of the international community to the people of Myanmar to fight for their rights.

Donald Trump's impact

The ostensible reason for the Tatmadaw's putsch is their objection to apparent electoral irregularities in the November 2020 elections in which the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) suffered a humiliating defeat.

Coincidentally, the Tatmadaw's charges of massive electoral fraud in Myanmar sound very similar to those of the former US President Donald Trump's discredited claims of similar electoral fraud in the US presidential election. Indeed, the Trump administration's cuddling of authoritarian regimes may have given some encouragement to the Burmese junta.

The junta was certainly aware that its power grab would be condemned by the new Biden administration in the US, the European Union and other democratic governments, and human rights groups around the world. But knowing it can count on strong support of China and Russia,

and tacit approval or acquiescence of its ASEAN neighbors and India too, seems to have given it the confidence that it can afford to withstand the opprobrium by the rest of the world.

The fact that Aung San Suu Kyi's international stature has greatly diminished in recent years was probably another factor in the military's calculation to dare to overthrow her.

However, it is difficult to fathom what Tatmadaw's long-term calculations and strategy are. For an army that is despised by a large majority of the people of Myanmar, because of its decades of oppression and corruption that has gravely retarded the country's development, it already enjoys a very favorable position under the current power-sharing arrangement with Suu Kyi.

It can appoint 25 percent of the members of parliament. It controls three of the most powerful government ministries in charge of national security. It is allowed to carry out very lucrative business ventures that has made many army generals among the richest people in the country.

The current power-sharing arrangement is such that if the elected government fails, the blame would go largely to its leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but if it succeeds the Tatmadaw too could claim some credit and brag that the Myanmar model of power-sharing works!

It is, therefore, baffling to figure out why the military would give up such a sweet-heart deal in pursuit of an uncertain future knowing that the putsch would push the country into the ranks of a pariah regime once again.

The speculation is that either the Tatmadaw leadership was fearful of the NLD government clipping its current prerogatives by attempting to amend the army-imposed constitution or more likely the top General Min Aung Hlaing's inflated personal ambitions led him to make this pre-emptive strike.



Outfoxing each other

A decade ago, Tatmadaw and Aung San Suu Kyi negotiated a power-sharing deal. After Suu Kyi's NLD Party scored a sweeping victory in the 2015 elections, Myanmar became the democratic darling of the world. It heralded the end of Myanmar's international isolation, the blossoming of a relatively free media, as well as an explosion of social media.

Young Burmese flocked to the Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, followed by their elders soon afterwards. Tourism started flourishing. Foreign investment, particularly from neighboring ASEAN countries, and especially, China boomed.

International media and NGOs, banned during the military regime, flocked to Myanmar. And UN agencies severely constrained by highly restricted mandate and shortage of funding because of sanctions against the military regime by Western donors got a new lease of life and expanded their operations.

But the euphoria of Myanmar's transition away from military rule to a seemingly liberal democracy was premature and exaggerated. It was more wishful and hopeful than the ground realities justified.

In the power-sharing deal she entered with Tatmadaw in 2011, Suu Kyi tentatively accepted the 2008 Constitution drafted by the military with a view to perpetuating its dominance on all key issues of "national security" under the garb of a pro-forma electoral democracy.

With her confidence in securing overwhelming election victory, Suu Kyi's calculation was that she will be able to outfox the Tatmadaw and amend the constitution to weaken or eliminate the military's power, and strengthen genuine democracy.

But it appears that the Tatmadaw actually outfoxed Suu Kyi. It even got her, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to condone the military's ethnic cleansing and genocidal oppression of the Rohingya Muslims and to cuddle Burman Buddhist xenophobia.

To the consternation of the international community, but continuing adulation of the ethnic Burman population, it turned out that as a politician Suu Kyi and Tatmadaw shared many common Bamar ethno-nationalist sentiments and deeply held prejudices against most non-Bamar ethnic communities,

particularly the Rohingya Muslims, questioning their status as equal and patriotic citizens of Myanmar.

Forming and Spurning the Kofi Annan Commission

Stung by international criticism of Tatmadaw's brutal oppression of the Rohingyas, and as a face-saving gesture, in 2016 Suu Kyi formed an international Advisory Commission on Rakhine State headed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to propose measures to ensure the social and economic well-being of both the Buddhist, the Muslim and other ethnic communities in Myanmar's conflict-ravaged regions.

In my view, this Commission came up with the best possible recommendations and a roadmap for not only Rakhine state but to ensure a sustainable, democratic, prosperous and equitable multi-ethnic future for all of Myanmar. But Suu Kyi essentially cold-shouldered Annan's recommendations, perhaps fearing that the military would never accept them.

Inspired and disappointed by Suu Kyi

As a senior UNICEF official in the 1990s and 2000s, I had the opportunity to meet and interact with Suu Kyi as well as several senior Burmese military leaders, including the seemingly progressive General Thein Sein when he was the powerful Secretary-I of the State Peace and Development Committee (SPDC) who later became Prime Minister and the first "elected" "civilian" President of Myanmar. He was the one who negotiated the power sharing deal with Suu Kyi in 2010.

I recall Suu Kyi, being an articulate and inspiring personality. Very strong-minded and stubborn at times, she presented herself as a staunch defender of democracy and human rights in Myanmar and globally. Her advocacy of a Gandhian non-violent civil disobedience and her reputation as a Mandela-like prisoner of conscience over a prolonged period, led to her winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

But like many of her previous admirers, including her fellow Nobel Prize laureates, I became deeply disappointed by her politically-calculated alliance with the military when she defended the indefensible ethnic cleansing of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim community at the International

Court of Justice in the Hague.

Although Suu Kyi's international stature as an icon of democracy and human rights has suffered irredeemably, she continues to be immensely popular domestically. If anybody can potentially tame Myanmar's powerful Tatmadaw, it still continues to be Aung San Suu Kyi, given both her undiminished domestic popularity and her father General Aung San's nationalist credentials and legacy.

Thus, despite all her flaws, I believe the international community has no choice but to support the restoration of democratic process in Myanmar led, in the near-term, by Suu Kyi and her NLD party.

The possible ways forward

However, in the longer term, both the people of Myanmar and the international community ought to internalize three important lessons from the Burmese conundrum of the past six decades: a) not to rely on the leadership of one individual, no matter how charismatic, b) the necessity of delegitimizing the privileged political role of Myanmar's military, and c) looking beyond the necessary restoration of electoral democracy to a laser-like focus on tackling a range of issues that have perpetuated poverty, inequality and violent conflicts in this immensely resource-rich country that remains one of the poorest in the region.

Nobody believes the military's promise that it will organize new elections in a year's time and hand-over power to a newly-elected government. If free and fair elections are held, the military and its puppet party, the USDP, are likely to fare even worse than in the November 2020 general elections.

The junta may be able to prolong its rule in the short-term by organizing sham elections and increased repression, but the durability of such a regime is questionable. We are already beginning to see the sprouting of a courageous campaign of civil disobedience in various forms, which is only likely to accelerate over time.

We can expect Tatmadaw to unleash harsh repression using all the tools and tricks in the authoritarians' toolbox, starting with shutting down the internet and the social media. But there is no conceivable scenario under which the Tatmadaw can solve Myanmar's entrenched problems and endear itself to a restive population.

In this day and age, harsh repression alone cannot ensure political stability. Even the military regime's backers like China and most of the ASEAN countries that treasure political stability over democratic norms, are likely to abandon their active or tacit support of the junta, once they realize that a regime deeply despised by the populace and incapable of delivering sustainable development cannot ensure lasting stability and tranquility.

It is clear that the military has grossly misjudged the mood of the Burmese youth. Having tasted democracy and an open society during the past decade, Myanmar's digitally savvy youth, like those of many other countries, are now so well-connected with their counterparts around the world, so well aware of their rights and their potential, so determined to pursue a prosperous future, that they will find many creative ways to outfox the military's shenanigans.

Among the best proposals for a way forward is a solemn appeal by a wise and thoughtful religious leader, Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference, and a Co-President of Religions for Peace International.

He made a strong case for "demilitarizing Myanmar", warning even before the latest coup: "History teaches us, diplomats and peace-makers know, that there is never going to be a military solution to a political conflict. Pursuing military solutions leads only to endless war and endless misery".

Following the coup, the Cardinal issued an urgent message addressed to the people of Myanmar; its civilian leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi; to the Myanmar military, and the international community.

The message calls for the people to stay calm, avoid violence, but pursue their goals peacefully.

The Bishop chastises the military for its empty promises and urges the junta to respect people's rights as expressed through their elected representatives, writers, activists, and especially Myanmar's youth. He urges Suu Kyi and the NLD leaders to continue dialogue and with Tatmadaw to overcome the new challenges created by the latest coup.

To the International community, the Bishop cautions how sanctions in the past brought few results, and to avoid measures that risk collapsing the economy and throwing millions into poverty.

I tend to agree with the Bishop that general sanctions are a blunt instrument that hurt ordinary people while the rich and the powerful find many ways to evade them. However, I believe there is room and need for tough but very specifically and narrowly targeted sanctions against the key perpetrators and enforcers of the military putsch and their business interests, while meticulously sparing the ordinary people.

The international community would be wise to follow the Burmese historian Thant Myint-U's advice to avoid a narrow focus on political change and help ensure the protection of ordinary people's lives and livelihoods as part of any international action to thwart the military coup.

"Myanmar needs a fresh path to democracy" he says, "Free and fair elections (and respect for the results) are essential. But also essential is the transformation of a society shaped by decades of dictatorship, international isolation, brutal armed conflict, racial and religious discrimination, extreme poverty and widening inequality".

In a world struggling to recover from the ravages of the COVID pandemic, and many other epochal crises, the plight of the people of Myanmar may not get the full attention it deserves. But let us hope that the sentiments of global solidarity will inspire them to regain their inalienable human rights and dignity.

IPS

Biden shows clear intention of moving away from Trump era

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden's first weeks in office foreshadow what his priorities will be, and where he will stand on the pandemic, the economy, immigration, foreign policy and other pressing issues, experts said.

"His goal is to reverse his predecessor's policies and move the country in a very different direction," Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Darrell West told Xinhua.

PANDEMIC CONTROL

Biden has signed several orders including improving supply chains for the pandemic, and expanding treatment for COVID-19. Most importantly, he has tweaked former President Donald Trump's vaccine distribution plan by providing better coordination.

The former administration's vaccine distribution plan was blasted as leaving it up to county and city administrators, who have zero experience with vaccine distribution plans, especially not one of this magnitude.

The spread of more infectious variants of the coronavirus has increased concern over a new surge across the country and heightened the urgency of vaccination.

Experts noted that the first three months of Biden's presidency will be dominated by the effort to jab 100 million people in 100 days.

Biden has also signed an executive order that urged Americans to wear masks, and made it a requirement on federal property.

Billed the "100-day masking challenge," the order requires people to wear masks and practice social distancing in federal buildings and on all federal land, as well as on airplanes and trains.

Increasing mask-wearing across the United States by just 10 percent would significantly curb the transmission of the coronavirus, according to a study published on Jan. 19 in The Lancet Digital Health.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Biden will have to deal with an economy that has been ravaged by lockdowns amid the pandemic, and his first major economic challenge is to pass a massive relief bill.

Biden has unveiled a 1.9-trillion-U.S.-dollar COVID-19 relief proposal, which has drawn opposition from congressional Republicans.



White House economic adviser Brian Deese has urged Congress to approve the bill, warning that the nation could otherwise fall into a "very serious economic hole."

But some experts blasted the bill. Desmond Lachman, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, said the stimulus "threatens to keep the U.S. budget very high and the public debt rising for a long time," noting that it would come on top of a few trillion U.S. dollars worth of previous stimulus funds.

Biden is also taking flak for an

executive order that blocks the Keystone XL Pipeline. Republicans are blasting the president for making a move they said will kill jobs amid the worst recession in decades.

FOREIGN POLICY

Biden is re-joining a number of global organizations, out of which his predecessor had withdrawn. Those include the World Health Organization and the Paris Agreement on climate change. He has also had phone calls with half a dozen allies.

While critics said Trump's America First policy isolated the United States from allies and global organizations, Biden wants to strengthen those ties.

Biden was part of the administration that inked the Iran nuclear deal, which the Trump administration later scrapped. Experts said the current president is likely to return to the agreement.

However, the administration may not simply snap back to the deal, which fell short of addressing issues

including terrorism, missiles and militias, experts said.

"Biden has done the predictable things, almost all of them good in my mind," Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Michael O'Hanlon told Xinhua.

"But the hardest tasks clearly still remain - starting with building a new strategy towards China," O'Hanlon said.

IMMIGRATION CHANGE

Biden has issued six executive orders on immigration in his first ten days of office. Those include counting unauthorized immigrants in the Census, which determines the number of representatives each state has in Congress; ending travel bans from certain countries; and ordering a pause on the construction of Trump's southern border wall. Jessica Bolter, a policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, told Xinhua that Biden is "taking a very active approach to immigration. He is not wasting any time ending some of the most well-known policies of President Trump's administration."

"Biden has set out an incredibly ambitious framework for an immigration bill," Bolter said.

The framework includes a program to legalize the vast majority of the 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States, the scholar noted.

"This would be a broader legalization than the United States has ever seen before," Bolter said.

Xinhua

What recovery? Clothes retailers cut orders while factories fight to survive

By Victoria Walderssee, Ruma Paul, LISBON/DHAKA

CLOTHES retailers in Europe and America sit on excess inventory and cut back on spring orders. Sourcing agents face late payments. Garment factories in Bangladesh are on the rack.

The global apparel industry, reeling from a punishing 2020, is seeing its hopes of recovery punctured by a new wave of COVID-19 lockdowns and patchy national vaccine rollouts.

Some major retailers are still nursing last year's clothes, which would have been sold off in clearance sales in normal times. British chain Primark, for example, told Reuters it was housing around 150 million pounds (\$205 million) worth of 2020 spring/summer stock and 200 million pounds from autumn/winter.

In an indication of the scale of the backlog, consultancy McKinsey says the value of unsold clothing worldwide, in stores and warehouses, ranges from 140-160 billion euros (\$168-192 billion) - more than double normal levels.

Britain's Marks & Spencer and Germany's Hugo Boss said they had placed smaller orders than usual for this year's spring collection.

Retailers are keeping volumes small and lead times tight, according to Ron Frasch, former president at Saks Fifth Avenue who is now operating partner at private equity firm Castanea Partners, which works with a number of apparel brands.

"Most of the brands now are pretty tight on shipping and the factors are very tight. I think everyone was very conservative with their purchasing," he said. "I know many have been slow paying. That is for sure."

Indeed, Hong Kong-based sourcing agent Li & Fung, which manages more than 10,000 factories in 50 countries for retailers including global players, told Reuters that some retailers had requested later payment terms, but declined to provide specifics.

FACTORIES FEEL THE PAIN

The pain is consequently flowing to major garment manufacturing centres like Bangladesh, whose economies rely on textile exports. Factories are struggling to stay open.

Fifty factories surveyed by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said they had received 30% fewer orders than usual this season, as pre-Christmas lockdowns in much of Europe followed by another clampdown in January hit their businesses hard.

"Orders usually arrive three months in advance. But there are no orders for March," said Dhaka-based factory owner Shahidullah Azim, whose clients include North American and European retailers.

"We are operating at 25% of capacity. I have some orders to run the factory till February. After that, I don't know what future holds for us. It's difficult to say how we will survive."

Miran Ali, who represents the Star Network, an alliance of manufacturers in six Asian countries, and himself owns four factories in Bangladesh, faces similar problems.

"At this point in time, I should have been entirely full until March at least, and looking at a healthy quantity for autumn/winter coming in already. Across the board, that is coming slow," he told Reuters from the capital Dhaka.

"Brands are buying less from fewer people." Asif Ashraf, another factory owner in Dhaka who makes clothes for global retailers, said it was tough to adjust. "We've produced the fabric and we're ready to stitch the garments, but then they say the order is on hold."

'PUBLIC WEARING PJs AGAIN'

With store closures threatening to carry into summer, some retailers are attempting to sell off as much of their excess stock as possible before placing new orders, textile recycling firm Parker Lane Group told Reuters.



CEO Raffy Kassardjian said his business went from processing an average of 1.5 million items of excess apparel per month to over 4 million in January, its busiest month ever.

Last year was dire for the clothing industry, which saw sales slide by about 17% versus 2019, according to

Euromonitor. And the future is uncertain.

Estimates for 2021 range from pessimistic forecasts of a 15% sales drop from McKinsey, to an 11% recovery from Euromonitor.

So are there bright spots? Well, a lockdown pyjama boom is offering

some minor relief.

"If you want to know what the Great British public is doing - it's wearing pyjamas again," Marks & Spencer CEO Steve Rowe said last month, while Hugo Boss alluded to the same phenomenon, saying it had "streamlined our range of classic business clothing

and expanded the range of casual wear".

But that's cold comfort for some factory owners.

"Demand for pyjamas is at a life-time high," Ali in Dhaka acknowledged. "But not everyone can make pyjamas!" **Agencies**



China walks its talk in global vaccine cooperation

BEIJING

NEARLY 10 days have passed after global COVID-19 cases surpassed 100 million. While the number is still climbing and new strains of the coronavirus are running wild, China has been busy creating a global safety net through solid vaccine cooperation.

As a strong supporter of the World Health Organization (WHO)'s appeal to make COVID-19 vaccines a public good, China decided on Feb. 3 to provide vaccine doses to COVAX, the WHO-led initiative for equitable global access to coronavirus vaccines, to meet the urgent vaccination needs of developing countries.

VACCINATIONS ON TRACK

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen said on Friday that an inoculation drive against COVID-19 will start from Feb. 10 after the first batch of China-donated Sinopharm vaccines is due to arrive in the kingdom on Sunday.

The Southeast Asian country officially approved the emergency use of China's Sinopharm vaccine on Feb. 4.

Pakistan formally started the drive to administer the Sinopharm vaccine doses to its frontline healthcare workers on Wednesday, the Pakistani National Command and Operation Center said.

Zimbabwe will be among the first African countries to receive the COVID-19 vaccine from China, said Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe Guo Shaochun on Feb. 2.

Though on track now, to some extent, COVID-19 vaccination in many developing countries was far from easy only a month ago.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus once said that global vaccine sharing was a "catastrophic moral failure", referring to a huge gap between the amount of shots administered in developed countries and that in the developing world.



A medical worker shows a dose of China's COVID-19 vaccine in Hyderabad Pakistan, Feb 3, 2021. (Photo Xinhua)

In January, the comparison between administered doses in higher-income countries and one of the lowest-income countries had been 39 million versus 25, said the WHO chief in an executive board session. "Not 25 million, not 25,000, just 25."

With its willingness to make a difference in vaccination disparity on a global scale, China is providing COVID-19

vaccines to developing countries including Brunei, Nepal, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Palestine, Belarus, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea, said Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin at a press conference on Feb. 1.

ACTIONS BUILD TRUST

China officially joined COVAX in October 2020 and maintained close communication with the WHO, vowing to make joint efforts to turn COVID-19 vaccines into global public goods.

"We hope that capable countries in the international community can play an active role and take concrete actions to support COVAX as well as the WHO's work, so as to help developing countries receive vaccines in time and contribute to the global defeat of the pandemic at an early date," said Wang.

Thanks to its commitment and actions to make COVID-19 vaccines more accessible and affordable, China has gained trust in the global combat against the virus, especially in vaccine cooperation.

In a livestream, Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Jan. 13 received his first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Chinese company Sinovac Biotech, kicking off the nation's mass inoculation campaign.

On Jan. 19, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte also expressed willingness to receive the Chinese-made vaccine shots through his spokesperson, saying the Chinese vaccines are "safe, sure, and secure."

When China's Sinopharm coronavirus vaccines arrived at the Belgrade Airport in mid-January, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic was there to welcome the shipment. "As an ordinary person and the president of Serbia, I am convinced of the quality of the Chinese vaccine," he said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said last Tuesday that coronavirus vaccines from China and Russia could be approved for use in the European Union (EU) once they pass the EU tests, AFP reported.

If Chinese producers "show all the data... then they could get... a conditional market authorization like the other ones," von der Leyen told EU lawmakers at a meeting.

Xinhua

FAO, AFD launch sustainable wildlife management project

By Jean Marie Takouleu

THE French Development Agency (AFD) has joined forces with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to launch a project for the sustainable management of wildlife in the Kavango-Zambezi Transboundary Conservation Area (Kaza). The two partners are funding this project to the tune of €3.5 million.

In Southern Africa, the Kavango-Zambezi (Kaza) Transboundary Conservation Area is the focus of a project on sustainable wildlife management. Within the framework of this project recently launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the French Development Agency (AFD), 3.5 million euros will be mobilized to eliminate the threats arising from the "unsustainable hunting" that takes place in certain

places in this biodiversity conservation area covering parts of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The AFD and FAO initiative will be implemented in partnership with the governments of Botswana and Namibia as part of the Sustainable Wildlife Management Program.

The long-term objective is to reduce the closure and fragmentation of dwellings, which prevents animals from accessing the resources on which

their survival depends.

The project also aims to combat the poaching and killing of animals due to antagonism between human populations and wildlife.

The issue of human-wildlife conflict is very pressing in southern Africa, particularly in the Okavango basin where water stress is gradually taking hold, causing the two sides to meet frequently.

"The project should benefit the wildlife and ecosystems of

the transboundary conservation area, while strengthening the resilience of the local populations whose food and income depend at least in part on it," explains Mette Wilkie, Director of the Forestry Division at the FAO. The project will also receive technical support from Wild Entrust Africa, as well as from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which will work in Namibia, in the Khaudum-Ngamiland Wildlife Dispersal Area (Botswana) and

in the community conservation reserves in the Zambezi region and around Khaudum National Park (Namibia).

The technical support of these two partners will be crucial for the establishment of new community conservation reserves. According to the FAO, Namibia already has a network of 86 community conservation reserves, which occupy 20% of the territory and are home to almost 230,000 people.

For Gilles Kleitz, Director of

AFD's Ecological Transition and Natural Resource Management Department in Namibia in 2018, conservation reserves have provided their beneficiaries with various benefits (income, salaries and benefits in kind such as meat) worth over 10 million dollars. Their overall economic contribution exceeded \$62 million, enabling the creation of more than 5,300 jobs in activities or enterprises related to the conservation reserves.

Relief as new horticulture project to ease thousands of Z'bar farmers out of poverty

By Guardian Reporter

THOUSANDS of horticulture farmers in Zanzibar are set to benefit from a €4 million project aimed at addressing challenges including access to markets.

Horticulture farmers have long complained of lack of expertise in the production, handling and transportation of produce from the farm. Horticulture has traditionally been grown for subsistence use but recently has been turned into cash crops.

Farmers believe the coming up of a joint project, dubbed 'Value Web Horticulture and Income Growth' or Viungo Project which is a collaboration between government and civil society organizations, will end the problems.

"This project has come to liberate organic vegetable and fruit growers, we believe now we will prosper," said Haji Ramadhani Issa chairman of the Zanzibar Vegetable and Fruit Growers Association (UWAMWIMA).

The association was established with the aim to help fruit and vegetable growers, who have long complained on the access to market and expertise in agriculture.

Currently, the association has more than 90 members operating from the agriculture industry which employ more than 90 percent of the Zanzibar population.

He said there are many other problems to be addressed including isolation from the international markets which makes farmers rely on domestic mar-

kets only which are however uncertain.

The association members including women produce a number of fruits and vegetables like avocados, passion fruits, bell pepper, chili pepper, tomatoes and vanilla.

"The problem is affecting many fruit and vegetable growers," said Haji adding that lack of a reliable market for their farm produce was also a big challenge.

The Research and Monitoring Manager, Ali Mbarouk, the project is jointly implemented by the People Development Forum (PDF), Community Pemba Forest (CPF) and Tanzania Media Women Association (Tamura-Zanzibar) targeting 21,000 farm growers from 50 shehias of Unguja and Pemba Islands.

He said the project main objective is to bring together almost all stakeholders involved in the farm production as well as increase the quality of production, nutrition and food security.

"Our partners, the Canada-based Community International Forest (CFI), have pledged to support us in finding markets for our farm produce," he said, adding,

Nahla Abdulhalim Mohamed, Crosscutting Issues Officer at North 'B' Unguja Town Council, said that the project will be helpful for the district's fruit and vegetable farmers.

Makame Kitwana Makame, Assistant Director (Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment) at Unguja Central District, said that if the project was properly implemented farmers would get many benefits.



One of the farmers, Semeni Hamada Simai from Mtende village in Unguja South district anticipated the project will change the lives of many villagers.

Mwanaidi Mussa from CPF said the project targets women, youth and men in which "53% of the beneficiaries will be women, 33percent are youth and the remaining are men," she said.

"After the implementation of the four-year project, we expect that there will be major reforms in the agricultural and export sectors," she said.

She added there was need to ensure that exporters meet the demand, and called for continuous efforts to sustain quality produce.

Anti-poaching ranger mauled to death by a lion

By Jamie Pyatt

A DEDICATED anti-poaching ranger was viciously mauled to death after being ambushed by a starving lion in a South African safari park.

Kobus Marais, 46, was on patrol protecting rhinos on Saturday morning when he fell victim to the desperate predator which had been lying in wait for him.

Described as a 'wildlife warrior' by his distraught colleagues, the experienced game ranger was found dead with horrific wounds by his fellow patrollers who heard his screams for help.

The ranger was ambushed

by the rogue lion while patrolling the Pilanesberg National Park near Johannesburg with his dog Heily and two of his fellow patrollers.

Kobus's colleagues, who had driven ahead to lay a training scent for the patrol dog, were unaware that the man was being stalked by the wild beast.

When they heard his screams for help, they raced back through the bush and found the man-eater on top of the ranger. They opened fire and killed it with several shots.

They rushed to help the stricken ranger - who was armed but is believed not

to have seen the lion as his weapon was not fired - who had been horrifically injured.

Kobus, who had been mauled and repeatedly bitten by the lion, was bleeding heavily before succumbing to his wounds.

His Belgian Malinois patrol dog was found nearby uninjured but clearly fearful.

A spokesman for the Pilanesberg National Park said: "Kobus was a true wildlife warrior and was loved by all his fellow patrollers and all our staff."

"He was out with his K9 on patrol with two rhino protection officers who were laying a track for his dog when the attack happened in the east of

the park by a fence.

"Unbeknown to Marais a very thin and poor condition lion was probably lying in wait.

"He was armed but for whatever reason the gun was not fired in the attack.

"Marais tragically succumbed to his wounds and the emaciated lion was shot dead during the incident and then taken to the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute for a post mortem.

"The rhinos here at Pilanesberg have lost a true friend and conservation has lost a true wildlife warrior. To Lottie Marais, his wife, we express our most heartfelt con-

lences.

"Kobus, you have left a void in so many lives and you will be greatly missed. Thank you for your contribution. We are so, so sorry. You paid the highest price," said the spokesman.

A spokesman for the Rhino 911 conservation group said: "Kobus was a gentle and kind soul and a true conservation warrior and the rhinos have lost a brave and dedicated guardian."

Ecotourism graduate student Lauren L'Ange, 27, who photographed Kobus with his latest K9 dog Heily said: "He was dedicated to what he did and was an excellent game

ranger.

"He spent so much time out protecting rhinos and also taking Heily out into schools and to meet the public to teach them about the conservation of rhinos and the work he did.

"His wife Charlotte is the representative here of Copenhagen Zoo and they sponsored and trained Heily for Kobus when his last K9 Dexter unexpectedly passed away in 2016.

"Kobus was such a dedicated ranger and lived for his rhinos and his work. It is a totally tragic way for him to lose his life. Lottie will be so devastated to lose him," she said.

A South African wildlife

expert said: "When males become too old to be the dominant member of the pride they are forced out of the pride by the younger stronger males.

"Unable to hunt for themselves properly they become emaciated and begin to starve and then they take risks to try and feed themselves with ordinarily they would never take.

"That is what probably happened here in that an elderly lion no longer able to catch its own prey realised that its very survival depended on making a kill on a human being.

"It is extremely unusual but you have to remember lions

PASS Trust credit guarantee scheme benefits 1.5million agri-entrepreneurs

By Guardian Reporter

OVER 1.5 million agribusiness entrepreneurs in the agricultural value chain have benefited from the PASS Trust credit guarantee scheme that has enabled them access funds from commercial banks and thus expand their businesses.

Implemented by the Private Agricultural Sector Support (PASS) Trust, the scheme also receives support from various financial institutions in the country.

Acting managing director Anna Shanalingigwa said in a statement yesterday that since its inception in 2000, PASS has been assisting Tanzanians in developing solid and bankable investment project write ups as well as facilitating access to finance through credit guarantee scheme with commercial banks.

She said that through its Credit Guarantee Scheme, PASS has enabled the creation of at least 1.5 million jobs through support to an estimated 42,000 agricultural projects that have benefited a total of 1.593 agribusiness entrepreneurs in Tanzania whereby 45 percent of these beneficiaries according to PASS Trust are women engaged in agribusiness.

"Our contribution in the agricultural sector Financing is immense because without our credit guarantee, many entrepreneurs will not access financing and loans from banks and therefore will not be able to increase and improve their production. So, PASS ensures that we play our role as a link with financial institutions and ensure they secure funds for agricultural development," she said.

According to her, working with various financial institutions in the country, PASS has continued to significantly contribute towards the growth of the agricultural sector in Tanzania by providing credit guarantee to agribusiness entrepreneurs who otherwise would not get credit.

She further said: "PASS Trust under the management of the acting managing director Anna Shanalingigwa has for the last two years consecutively been recognized and awarded for its role in agricultural empowerment by making it possible for agribusiness entrepreneurs' access credit for agricultural activities."

"We are giving up to 80 percent credit guarantee to women and youths so that we encourage them to venture into agribusiness," Shanalingigwa said.



PASS acting managing director Anna Shanalingigwa (L) receives an award on behalf of PASS Trust from Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa during the 2019 NEEC Exhibition held in Dodoma. File Photo

She said in the entire agricultural value chain, PASS beneficiaries are drawn from farmer groups, SACCOS, cooperatives, farmers' associations, companies, individuals and women groups involved in agribusiness activities. The subsectors targeted in-

clude crop production, agricultural input trading, irrigation, farm mechanization, agro-processing, transportation, horticulture, fish farming and livestock among others in the value chain.

"In the two previous consecutive years,

PASS has been recognised and feted for its role in supporting the government's industrialization as well as job creation agendas through its support.

Shanalingigwa further said the Trust has also established 'PASS Leasing Company' that will enable agricultural entrepreneurs access farm machineries and equipment for agricultural mechanization, industrial agro processing and irrigation equipment.

The new Leasing Company that is fully owned by PASS will soon be launched with a main objective of making it easier for farmers to own agricultural machinery. The company will also support the agricultural sector through provision of competitively priced lease financing with the aim of ensuring that producers reach their maximum potential through leasing Financial Services.

Shanalingigwa also said that PASS Trust is also participating in the 4th edition of the national economic empowerment council exhibitions so as to showcase its support and role played in supporting the agricultural sector in Tanzania. The exhibitions are today officially expected to be opened by the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa.

The politics of cultural defiance – exhumations and rural reburials in Covid times

By Leslie Bank and Aneza Madini

THE next day, the National Funeral Practitioners Association of South Africa (Nafupa SA) met with the departments of health and home affairs and then released a notice to members stating that the new ruling meant that “we are returning to the normal way of conducting funerals” and that this would “allow families to observe their cultural beliefs”.

The association told funeral parlours there was no longer any need to triple-bag bodies in plastic or prevent family and mourners from viewing and even touching the body, as it posed no significant health threat if appropriate precautions were taken. Association members were also told that they no longer needed to deposit bodies at gravesites but could now deliver them to the family home or churches. Coffins no longer needed to be cling-wrapped and quite elaborate PPE and cleaning routines which had been being performed at the place of burial could now also be abandoned.

The new dispensation amounts to a massive and unexpected reversal in policy with far-reaching implications for rural communities whose dissatisfaction with the previous policies moved from despondency, disbelief and anger during the first wave of the pandemic in mid-2020, to open defiance of government policy as plasticised Covid-19 bodies were illegally exhumed and reburied.

Closing the gate (ukuvala isan-go)

This reversal in the rules governing burial practice clearly did not come easily to the bio-medical team advising President Cyril Ramaphosa. The World Health Organisation (WHO) had already stated that there was no evidence suggesting that Covid-19 corpses were infectious after death as long ago as March 2020. This position was restated in a September 2020 WHO communique. But the Ministerial Advisory Committee and the South African government were unmoved at the time and remained committed to a position which stressed the danger of Covid-19 cadavers.

The legacy and consequences of this decision have been traumatic and catastrophic for many rural African families who bury their dead at homesteads or nearby cemeteries.

For these families, as well as others in the cities, the key to a successful burial is “fetching the spirit” from the place of death and safely returning it home. This requires constant communication with the spirit of the deceased. This process needs to be continuous and ongoing until the body is put in the ground. There is great danger in death for the living which must be offset through communication with and care for the body.

At home in the rural areas the body would traditionally be viewed, engaged, washed and clothed by close relatives in the homestead overnight and then buried the following day. The funeral service and burial rituals would usually last many hours, allowing religious leaders, family members, neighbours and traditional leaders to pay their respects and commune as they put the spirit to rest.

By comforting and calming the spirit in this way, the family would release it into the afterlife to commune with the ancestors. However, the regulations introduced around bagging the body and delivering it directly to the gravesite; cling-wrapping coffins; and fumigating houses and gravesites created enormous spiritual anxiety and popular anger which traditional leaders largely ignored during the first wave as they strongly supported the Covid-19 regulations published under the Disaster Management Act.

The metaphor used in rural communities across the Eastern Cape to describe the government’s approach was ukuvala isango (in isiXhosa) or “closing the gate”, which referred to a process of rural people being shut out by the government, even from their own cultural practices.

Exhuming bodies

As the year progressed, fewer and fewer people attended funerals in rural areas in many parts of the country because they had been persuaded by the official (bio-medical) discourse that Covid-19 cadavers could infect and kill people. Whenever President Cyril Ramaphosa mentioned traditional funerals, he almost always emphasised that they were lethal, super-spreader events. The police crackdown on customary practices and non-compliant funerals in rural areas was meant to reinforce this message and came as a stern warning to the residents of rural areas.

Meanwhile, the thinning crowds



at rural funerals were in large part a product of the perceived inadequacy of modified burial rites to do their cultural and spiritual work. People were not motivated to attend funerals where the deceased was suffocating beneath three layers of plastic inside a shrink-wrapped coffin at a gravesite where men hovered in Hazmat suits, spraying gas and quickly dropping the body into the grave before leaving. How could the spirit be reached and engaged when it was so far away from the home, so trapped and enclosed? And, what would happen after the grave was sealed by the gravediggers? Would the spirit be able to escape its plastic prison and join the ancestors, or remain locked in sweaty captivity?

As families reflected on the spiritual consequences of the new rules and received messages from the ancestors in their dreams warning of the wetness and entrapment of the spirit, many felt an increasing desire to defy the government and secretly exhume the body, remove the plastics and free the spirit. These feelings intensified as the year drew to an end, and urban migrants returned to the villages over Christmas. From early December, there were reports from across the Eastern Cape of secret exhumations and reburials.

In the Chris Hani District in the north-western part of the former Transkei, a number of cases of reburials were made public in December, including that of Thembisile Faleni, a taxi driver from Nkwenkwa-

na village in the Engcobo area who died of Covid-19 complications in July 2020. Nulusapho, Thembisile’s widow, said that within weeks of the funeral, family members started to see Thembisile appearing in their dreams complaining of suffocation caused by the plastic wraps around his body.

At the end of the year, when the family returned to the village, a meeting was held and it was decided to employ 10 men to help exhume the body at night and release the spirit by removing the plastic and reburying the corpse. This practice of liberating the spirit had become so common in the region by the end of December that a special parliamentary committee was convened to discuss the issue of illegal exhumations in the second week of January.

Traditional leaders were now also more supportive of peoples’ concerns, especially after renowned traditional expert, diviner and head of the Icamagu Heritage Institute Dr Nokuzola Mndende stated that “in our tradition, there is still life even after death and so those who have passed away must be laid to rest in a respectful way”. She emphasised that the Covid-19 measures had made the “spirits of dead people unhappy”, which would, in the long run, have dire consequences for the well-being of the living.

Secret burials

Some traditional healers and leaders had anticipated the ensuing spiritual crisis associated with Covid-19

body bags and burials, and had recommended to their people that they employ the strategy of temporary “secret burials” used by Xhosa people in times of war. In special circumstances or times of crisis when a dignified burial was not possible, it was permitted, they reminded people, for families to bury their loved ones temporarily, often just in a blanket, without notifying the community. Subsequently, a few months later, the body could be exhumed and a proper family burial performed. Although the practice left the family spiritually exposed, it was not a problem if the reburial happened soon.

Under Covid-19 conditions, some families opted for this strategy, thinking that the pandemic would be over in a few months. But when it lingered, spiritual concerns and insecurity mounted.

In one case, a family from a chiefly lineage opted for this strategy in the knowledge that they would ideally need to invite over 100 guests for a respectful burial when the government regulations only allowed for 50. They also worried about the plastic wrapping. So, they performed a secret burial, as permitted by custom.

However, members of the family soon dreamt that the spirit was unsettled, so they moved to organise a reburial in July, despite the Covid-19 restrictions. The reburial was duly performed but proved unsuccessful because the spirit returned to the

dreams of the mother, complaining about being cold because he had not been dressed at the home before burial, and being wet with sweat in the plastic bag from which he could not escape.

The family is now planning to conduct a third burial, at which the corpse will be dressed in appropriate clothing and freed of all plastic wrappings.

Coming home

Exhuming bodies has been quite a common occurrence in Xhosa culture, in large part as a result of a long history of displacement and migration in the Eastern Cape which meant that many people died in faraway places, and were buried in mines, by roadsides and in urban graveyards. When this has happened, the family often hopes that it will be possible for the body to be brought home at some point to lay the spirit to rest. By grounding the spirit at the homestead, the family may enjoy the benevolence and goodwill of the ancestors. Such efforts to fetch the spirit tend to be made when times are bad.

In this context, many families in rural areas of the Eastern Cape are either planning or implementing plans to fetch missing bodies. For example, in the Chris Hani District in December, there were two cases in which people who had been buried away from home during the apartheid era were being exhumed and reburied close to the family. In both instances, it was explained that the danger of misfortune under Covid-19 had encouraged the family to take action now to resolve what had been a nagging concern for many years. This practice was noted in other villages too, where it was also described as a necessary measure in troubled times.

In the meantime, although the “return to normal burials” that “allow families to express their cultural rights” will be welcome in rural areas, it will not resolve the spiritual insecurity and crisis of those who remain unsettled as a result of the Covid-19 provisions. Families will continue to rebury their dead with or without the permission of the government.

As the socioeconomic crisis produced by the pandemic and the concomitant lockdown measures deepens, they will feel the need to travel further afield to fetch those whose spirits have not yet been brought home. **DM**

Alashankou port in Xinjiang explores digital system, improves clearance efficiency

By Li Yanan

LAST year, Alashankou port, north-west China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, cleared 15 million tons of import and export cargos, up 12 percent from the previous year. The port witnessed a total of 5,027 inbound and outbound China-Europe (Central Asia) freight train trips in 2020, a year-on-year increase of 40.1 percent.

The surge in business didn’t slow down the clearance of cargos at the port, as it has taken multiple measures to improve efficiency and guarantee freight trains loaded with goods pass through the port smoothly.

On July 1, 2020, the Alashankou port adopted a digital system that allows information about cargos on China-Europe (Central Asia) freight trains to be input into the system at their departure stations.

Thanks to the system, Dou Shanshan, a staff member of the Alashankou port, no longer needs to manually input information about the cargos before releasing the freight trains and could simply verify relevant information already recorded in the system, thus greatly saving the time of clearance.

“In the past, we could only permit through seven or eight trains a day at most, while now at least ten trains pass through the port per day, with the number reaching 14 or 15 during the peak periods,” Dou noted.

After she finished checking information about the goods via the system, Dou would send a message to freight forwarders, informing them that the goods they declared are ready to be cleared.

Freight forwarders then send one person to collate documents for the clearance of cargos at the railway international intermodal transport building of Alashankou



Photo taken on Sept. 29, 2020, shows staff members reloading containers at a railway reloading warehouse at Alashankou port, Bortala Mongol autonomous prefecture, northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

port when they had to send several people for the procedures in the past, according to Dou.

Although more trains are cleared at the port, less people are seen waiting in queues at the hall of the railway international intermodal transport building of Alashankou port, Dou noted.

“Our export volume has increased, and yet it takes less time to pass through customs. The job that used to take three or

four people over an hour can now be finished by me alone in less than 10 minutes,” said Zhang Qian, an employee of an international freight forwarder in Xinjiang.

“I can now handle customs clearance procedures for at least two trains a day,” Zhang added.

In 2020, Dou alone handled 34,604 waybills. Outbound freight trains have kept running during the epidemic prevention and control period, according to Dou, who

disclosed that she has seen as many as four trains arrive at the port at the same time.

“I feel so proud that so many goods are checked by me and then transported to various areas around the world every day. In particular, when we were faced with COVID-19 outbreak at home, we were still able to send large amounts of cargos, including articles of daily use, electronic equipment, and anti-epidemic supplies, to foreign countries, which gave me great

sense of achievement,” Dou noted.

To minimize the time China-Europe (Central Asia) freight trains have to stay at the port, Alashankou port has also set up a dedicated window for China-Europe (Central Asia) freight trains, giving priority to them in inspection and clearance and offering 24/7 services to these trains.

“We have truly provided year-round services,” said Arikemujiang Keranmu, a staff member of the customs at Alashankou port, explaining that if they don’t work at night, they will still have to clear the backlog of work the next day.

All the personnel working at the port have been trying to reduce the time trains need to stay at the port, Keranmu said, adding that basically all the procedures freight trains need to go through at the port, including formalities at the customs, railway department, as well as border inspection station, can now be finished in less than twenty hours.

The Alashankou port launched cross-border e-commerce business on Jan. 21, 2020, and has since seen explosive growth in the number of cross-border e-commerce export packages, with the daily number of export packages exceeding 12,500 pieces and the annual figure in 2020 reaching 38.4 million.

“There is a very high demand for our goods in foreign countries. We handled 1 million export orders in the first six days of 2021. The total number of export orders is expected to reach 50 million this year,” said Zhang Xiaodong, a customs officer at Alashankou port.

E-commerce packages have high requirement for timely delivery, Zhang said, stressing that they will try to provide better services so as to meet the demand of China-Europe (Central Asia) freight trains for all-weather customs clearance.

People’s Daily



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Black Rock markets Mahenge graphite, lures POSCO Group from Korea

By Smart Money Reporter

In a bid to secure funding to finance its Mahenge Graphite Mine, Black Rock Mining Limited has lured investors to put their money in the vibrant project targeting global electric car battery manufacturers including South Korea's POSCO Plantec Group.

In a presentation to a Mining Investment Africa virtual conference last week, Black Rock CEO and Managing Director, John de Vries described the graphite at Mahenge as of superior quality assuring investors of maxim returns for their money.

"The partnership with POSCO validates the credibility of Black Rock's Mahenge Graphite deposit. It's real. POSCO has a clear view on electric vehicle battery demand with a significant growth ambition of 20 percent global share of the battery materials sector," de Vries said in his presentation.

He explained that POSCO's alignment to Black Rock's modular growth strategy will enable the ability to secure a best-in-class financing package.

De Vries further noted that Mahenge graphite with entry size of less than 85 kilo tons per annum is limited enough to allow product market integration but signifi-



Blackrock Mining CEO and managing director, John de Vries.

cant enough to deliver meaningful returns.

"Coarse distribution of Mahenge enables an effective dual project with approximately 60 percent coarse flake for premium large flake markets of limited competition and demanding product of approximately 40 percent medium and fine flake for traditional graphite markets and EV battery usage," the Blackrock CEO cum MD argued.

On global market trends for graphite, de Vries said about 4.5 million tons of graphite is needed to be produced annually by 2050, or a cumulative of 68 million tons hence demonstrating the critical role graphite plays in the clean energy transition, being used in Li-ion batteries, the most widely projected deployed battery technology.

"Electrification of transport to accelerate graphite demand EV battery pack price per kilowatt hour has dropped from US\$295 in 2016 to US\$137

in 2020; projected to fall to US\$94 by 2024 and US\$62 by 2030," he argued adding that global graphite demand is forecast to exceed supply by 2023.

Explaining more on Mahenge Graphite and why investors should choose the project, de Vries said Mahenge's 212 metric tons resource makes it the 4th largest graphite resource in the world and with low deleterious impurities and favourable metallurgy, it means that the mine is able to produce up to 99 percent TGC concentrate purity, solely with conventional flotation processing.

"Access to key infrastructure, grid power, rail, airstrip, water and tailings disposal and logistics advantages with processing through Dar es Salaam high volume container port," he added while pointing out that the project is backed by substantial pilot plant operations of 110 tons. Blackrock is listed on Australian Stock Exchange.

Value of card payments down Sh6.4 billion

NAIROBI

THE value of payments made through cards last year dropped for the first time in six years amidst the lockdown measures and continued preference for mobile money services.

Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data shows the value of payments through point of sale (POS) machines dropped by 3.8 percent in 2020 to Sh157.72 billion from Sh164.09 billion in 2019. This drop was a reverse from the 33.3 percent and 22.12 percent growth recorded in 2019 and 2018 respectively.

Despite the drop in absolute value, the number of transactions through POS machines increased by 1.49 million or 4.5 percent to 34.71 million in the year. The banking industry regulator is attributing low usage of cards to the poor network of POS terminals nationally and mobile payment becoming a substitute for card payments.

"The usage of cards in Kenya is still relatively low. This may be due to the poor network of POS terminals nationally, resulting from the high cost of POS terminals and cost of acceptance for the merchant, negative perception of consumers due to incidents of fraud

and poor stability of card payment systems," the CBK says in its draft Kenya National Payments System Vision and Strategy 2021-2025.

"It may also be the case that mobile money transactions - particularly as a means of making payment to a merchant - have become a substitute for card payments." Similarly, the value of transactions through ATMs recorded by the slowest pace since 2015 at 1.5 percent to Sh650.41 billion from Sh641.14 billion in 2019.

However, the number of transactions dropped by 15.3 percent or 12.06 million to 66.51 million. The fall in card volumes is expected to hit the non-funded income line of banks, which have in recent years relied on it to cover for lower interest income caused by lower interest rates and slow growth in private sector credit.

The reduction in value of card transactions last year was, however, out of banks' hands due to restrictions imposed to combat the Covid-19 virus, which resulted in reduced footfall in shopping malls and retail stores, as well as reduced business activity.

Many people also opted to pay using mobile money, which unlike cash

and card payments does not involve any physical contact between buyer and seller. The government's Covid containment measures that included closure of bars and restaurants in the second quarter of the year also cut off a key avenue from usage of payment cards.

Although the bars and restaurants were reopened later in the year, activity remained subdued as operating hours were cut by curfew protocols. Similarly, massive job cuts and unpaid leave for workers led to a decline in consumer spending.

At the same time, the government actively promoted the use of mobile money payments as a way of avoiding the coronavirus, bringing in several measures to push this option. These included raising the ceiling for mobile money wallets and doubling of the daily transaction limits to Sh300,000.

The charges on money transfers below Sh1,000 were also scrapped to discourage the use of hard cash and help contain the virus, and as a result the volume and value of transactions below this threshold increased by 114 percent and 200 percent between February and October 2020, accord-



An agent swipes a card.

ing to the CBK.

Charges for moving cash between mobile wallets and bank accounts were also removed, encouraging people to use mobile money. Mobile money services also carry the advantage

of having multiple utility, including payment of bills and is more widely available than POS points.

These regulations saw customers reduce their usage of debit cards, credit cards and

prepaid charge cards during the pandemic.

Latest data shows Kenyans moved Sh5.21 trillion through their phones last year, a 20 percent rise from Sh4.34 trillion the previous year.

Nigerian central bank orders closure of accounts related to cryptocurrency transactions

ABUJA

THE Nigerian central bank has directed that all deposit money banks (DMBs), non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), and other financial institutions (OFIs) should close accounts related to cryptocurrency transactions or exchanges. The apex bank sent this directive via a circular issued today to all financial institutions.

It reminded the financial institutions of the circular dated January 12, 2017 that cautioned the financial institutions and the public of the risk associated with transactions in cryptocurrency. The circular stated that virtual currencies such as Bitcoins, Monero, Ripples, Litecoin, Dogecoin, Onecoin, etc and other similar products were not legal tender in Nigeria, thus any bank or institution that transacts in such businesses did so at its own risk.

According to the apex bank in this new circular, Further to earlier regulatory directives on the subject, the Bank hereby wishes to remind regulated institutions that dealing in cryptocurrencies or facilitating payments for cryptocurrency exchanges is prohibited.

"Accordingly, all DMBs, NBFIs and



Bitcoin remains the world's most popular cryptocurrency.

OFIs are directed to identify persons and/or entities transacting in or operating cryptocurrency exchanges within their systems and ensure that such accounts are closed immediately." There has been a lot of activity in cryptocurrency space in Nigeria and globally with Fintechs springing up nearly everyday dealing in the virtual currency.

In the last five years, Nigeria has traded 60,215 bitcoins, valued at more than \$566 million which, apart from the US, is the largest volume worldwide on Paxful, a leading peer-to-peer bitcoin marketplace. Chainalysis' 2020 Cryptocurrency Geography Report also revealed that Nigeria ranked eighth in terms of crypto adoption and usage rate among 154 countries included in the study.

The EndSARS protest last year proved the power of cryptocurrency when local payment platforms were banned from receiving donations and people switched to crypto currency.

It is reported that Bitcoin accounted for about 40% of the

total amount received.

It was recently reported that PiggyVest, Cowrywise, OPay, Bitsika and PalmPay may be activating forex and crypto trading features soon, based on a partnership with Nigerian API fintech, Mono. Just as crypto is gaining ground as a medium of exchange, some governments are still not comfortable with it as they have not created regulatory guidelines concerning the transactions.

Some days ago, it was reported that the Indian government was planning to introduce a law "prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India," but allow "for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology [blockchain] of cryptocurrency and its uses."

One thing is for sure. The Central Bank of Nigeria is wary of the possible fraud inherent in cryptocurrency transactions and it has not been able to introduce safety measures to mitigate against possible fraud. So it might just want to understand and develop the relevant controls before allowing the transactions.

NIC chief out seeking public mobilisation to insure against risks

By Correspondent Theresia Victor

THERE is need for more public mobilisation by insurance experts and regulators to ensure that more people cover themselves and their property against risks.

National Insurance Corporation's Managing Director, Dr Elirehema Doriye said in Dar es Salaam this week during the launch of 'Bima flex' that although there has been some progress in adoption of insurance by the public in recent years, a lot remains to be done.

"This new product allows clients in the country to easily insure their property, especially motor vehicles against any risk from anywhere," said Dr Doriye who noted that sensitization and innovation will speed up penetration of insurance in the local market.

He in an effort to reach many consumers in the market, NIC has started imparting knowledge to students at primary and secondary school level so that they can be aware of the importance of insurance as they grow up.

Dr Doriye further added that in an interval of 10 years from now, NIC will make sure that 50 percent of people in the country have some insurance coverage because the state owned insurer will focus on challenges hindering consumers from being insured.

"We still see a lot of opportunity to tap in the market because of the growing public demand for insurance services and products hence we will work very hard to sensitize consumers and also create affordable products that meet market needs," he added.

Commenting on the new innovative product launched, NIC Claims Manager, Catherine Nangali said the new motor insurance



National Insurance Corporation managing director Dr Elirehema Doriye.

cover offers many benefits to consumers which includes being able to pay in instalments in seven days but also being paid transport while their vehicle which has been involved in an accident, is undergoing repairs.

"Under this scheme, the client will not contribute anything because the bill is footed by NIC completely, it's a product of its own character in the local market," Nangali said while urging consumers to get the unique product.

She pointed out that the coming of 'Bima flex' in the market make it easier and affordable for many consumers while assuring them of enhanced trust and confidence as the state insurer remains the most powerful and dominant.

"We only urge consumers to apply and get themselves a 'Bima flex' insurance cover and they will never regret because they will get the best return if need arises," she assured while Ndege Insurance Brokers' Managing Director, Dr Sebastian Ndege backed her as selling the best product in the market.

"We at Ndege Insurance call upon any client who wants a break from the usual insurance covers, to come for 'Bima flex' and they will never leave the new product," Dr Ndege argued saying consumers should consider insurance as a necessity and not a luxury service.



Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa MD Velaphi Ratshefola.

Workers to own 20 percent of Coca-Cola as part of BEE deal

JOHANNESBURG

EIGHT thousand black workers at Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) are set to own 20% of the beverage company in a new black economic empowerment (BEE) share scheme. Workers currently hold about 5% of Coca-Cola equity.

The deal is part of the conditions of Coca-Cola's 2016 merger with former partner SABMiller, now part of brewer Anheuser-Busch InBev. The Competition Tribunal on Thursday said the deal can go ahead subject to several conditions, including increased worker ownership in the beverages company as well as obligations relating to localisation and procurement. Workers who participate in the scheme will also be able to nominate two non-executive directors to the board of Coca-Cola Fortune (CCF), the sole shareholder of CCBSA.

At a media briefing on Friday, CCBSA MD Velaphi Ratshefola declined to reveal the value of the scheme "because CCBSA is not listed." "From day one when we make

profits on [a] quarterly basis, as dividends get declared, they [workers] will [get paid]," Ratshefola said.

CCBSA has also struck a deal with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) that includes an R80 million investment over three years towards localisation initiatives. CCBSA will also collaborate with its sugar suppliers in South Africa to increase the volume of sugar procured by CCBSA from black sugarcane farmers.

The move to increase procurement from black sugarcane farmers will see CCBSA and other industrial retailers and users of sugar procure at least 80% of their sugar needs from local sugar millers in 2021. This amount is expected to increase to 95% by 2023, according to Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel.

"The commitment from CCBSA to increase the level of worker ownership in the company, deepen the level of transformation in the sugar value chain and support the broader localisation drive in the economy, are important steps in our efforts to create a more inclusive economy in South Africa," said Patel.

Zambia is done for now with taking over mining companies

LUSAKA

ZAMBIA isn't looking to take over more mining companies, nor is the government planning to nationalise the industry, according to Finance Minister Bwalya Ng'andu.

The government has acquired Glencore Plc's and Vedanta Ltd's local operations in the past two years. Remarks by President Edgar Lungu in December that Africa's second-biggest copper producer wanted to take "significant stakes" in unspecified mines led to fears of a fresh wave of nationalisation.

"We are at this point in time not looking at any other specific mining operations that we want to go into a relationship with," Ng'andu said in an interview on Thursday in Lusaka, the capital. "In some quarters the president's statement was misunderstood to mean that Zambia is contemplating taking over other mining firms by force or nationalizing mining companies. We are not in that business at all."

The minister's comments may ease concerns among investors in companies including First Quantum Minerals Ltd and Barrick Gold Corp., which operate the southern African nation's biggest copper mines. It also follows a series of clashes between mining companies and government over taxes, retrenchments and electricity pricing.

Zambia last century had a painful experience with mine nationalisation, which bled the treasury and saw production plummet, ultimately leading to the state reversing the policy in the 1990s. Output more than tripled after the operations were privatised. Copper prices that dropped during nationalization and rose after mines were sold also played a role, according to economists including Grieve Chelwa at the Institute on Race and Political Economy at The New School in New York.

The country has learned lessons, Ng'andu said. The government can also use examples from other nations including Chile, where the state plays a significant role in copper mining, he said. "We have to make sure we run these as proper businesses without interference in their operations," Ng'andu said. Zambia will also get a better understanding of mining taxation and royalties from running operations like those previously owned by Glencore. "We never seem to get it right," he said. "We feel we are not getting sufficient return from the exploitation of our resources."



Zambian Finance minister Bwalya Ng'andu.

Cameroon govt says cryptocurrencies being routinely used to fund terrorism

YAOUNDEY

AUTHORITIES in Cameroon believe cryptocurrencies are being used to finance acts of terrorism in the country.

According to a recently published report sourced from Cameroon's Ministry of Finance, the National Risk Assessment for Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, based on intelligence agencies, between 2014 and 2018, at least 160 billion francs CFA was illegally circulated into the country to finance terrorism. The amount is not exhaustive as cryptocurrency operations are encrypted.

The report indicates that the funds were channelled to rebels in the restive English-speaking regions, where an armed separatist conflict is raging, as well as in the Far North region; where the Islamist militant group Boko Haram is waging an insurgency.

It added that the risk associated with cryptocurrency use arise from, among others, the lack of a legal framework on the digital currency, anonymity of users, the inability to fully trace transactions, and the decentralised nature of the platform.

Authorities have designated the risk associated with cryptocurrency as "high." According to the report, Bitcoin is the most used cryptocurrency in the country and there exist many local platforms for exchange as well as many networks of users.

Bitcoin is seconded by AmbaCoin, a cryptocurrency created in 2018 by Anglophone separatists to fund their war efforts. As at 5 February 2021, 852,551 Amba crypto bonds had been sold (1 AmbaCoin = \$0.25). Minister of Finance Louis Paul Motaze said the government will work with relevant stakeholders to address the situation.

Financial expert Eric Stephane Ngambi said such illicit financial flows through cryptocurrencies can weaken the economy. The Bank of Central African States (BEAC), the sole central bank within the membership-based Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), has yet to implement any regulation or adopt guidelines on the use of cryptocurrencies within its monetary zone.

Water Mission's 300m/- project to supply water to thousands in Dodoma



The Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Water, Engineer Nadhifa Kemikimba (R), with Water Mission Tanzania's country director, Benjamin Filskov (C), when cutting a tape to commission a clean and safe water supply project at Ikombo Village in Chamwino District, Dodoma Region, recently.

By Smart Money Reporter

FOR Asha Turuka, the Sunday of January 24 shall always remain an important date in her life. The 34 year old mother of three, joined thousands of Ikombo community members in Chamwino District to witness a handing over ceremony of a clean and safe water project to villagers by Water Mission Tanzania and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency.

"It's a dream come true for us and many thanks should go to the government and its donor partner. Water supply was a major challenge which we have faced for decades, often scrambling for the commodity at natural wells and rivers with livestock," said Turuka while cuddling her six months old daughter called Zainabu.

She said Zainabu has a better future compared to her sister, Neema, who as a young girl, was forced to accompany her mother for up to five kilometres to fetch natural spring water. "I am happy for her because she will now attend school without going through the hard times experienced by Neema," she said while extending a friendly grin.

Indeed the 300m/- Water Mission Tanzania project is a big relief to over 4,000 Ikombo community members who are now sure of reliable clean

water supply for many years to come. "This project is a big relief to all of us at Ikombo but also neighbouring villages because everyone will come to fetch water here," said Mzee Lazaro Laipot who is a pastoralist.

Mzee Laipot said water was not only unavailable in the area but also that the very little that was there was inadequate and unsafe. "Shortage of clean tap water has made some of our peers blind, so this project is new dawn for us," the 62 year old pastoralist said beaming with relief and new hope.

He said pastoralists who were forced to walk dozens of kilometres in search of water and pasture can now heave a sigh of relief because the water supply project solves such challenges. "We thank the government and Water Mission Tanzania for solving this decades long challenge facing our community," he added.

Commenting about the project after officially commissioning it, Deputy Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Water, Engineer Nadhifa Kemikimba said the project is one of many others currently being implemented in different parts of the country as government seeks to ensure that every citizen gets clean and safe water.

Eng Kemikimba commended Water Mission Tanzania for the project which demonstrates steady progress towards attaining the 2025 strategic plan of ensuring that at least 95 percent of the population has access to clean safe water in their neighbourhoods.

"The goal is to have water depots after every 400 meters in rural areas so that people should be able to get the commodity within half an hour," she said while adding that the government and development partners such as Water Mission Tanzania are doing everything to attain the 95 percent mark.

The project which was implemented jointly between Water Mission Tanzania and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA), will supply Ikombo

community's 97 percent of clean and safe water. "We thank Water Mission for their support in getting the project financed and as government, we pledge to ensure that this project is sustainable," Eng Kemikimba assured.

In remarks during the event, Water Mission Country Director, Benjamin Filskov said one of the beautiful elements that led to the project's success was cooperation among the ministry, RUWASA and the community.

Filskov said such partnership will enhance that the water project will be financially sustainable on an indefinite timeline hence benefiting the community. "Our goal is to collaborate, create consensus, and help communities in accessing safe clean water project which is what we are witnessing today," he said adding that Chamwino residents are now done with shortage of water.

He also paid tribute to RUWASA and Ministry of Water for ensuring that government's efforts to provide rural populations with safe water is materialising. The safe water which comes from boreholes is distributed through a gravity-fed system to the entire community of 684 households in Ikombo Village which has population of 4,172 residents.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Global air cargo demand drops by 10.6pc in 2020

GENEVA



ACCORDING to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) latest data for global air freight markets, demand for air cargo decreased by 10.6% in 2020, compared to 2019. This was the largest drop in year-on-year demand since IATA started to monitor cargo performance in 1990, outpacing the 6% fall in global trade in goods.

Global demand in 2020, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres, was 10.6% below 2019 levels (-11.8% for international operations), while the global capacity, which is measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres, shrunk by 23.3% in 2020 (24.1% for international operations) compared to 2019. This was more than double the contraction in demand.

Due to the lack of available capacity, cargo load factors rose by 7.7% in 2020; this contributed to increased yields and revenues, providing support to airlines and some long-haul passenger services in the face of collapsed passenger revenues.

Improvements towards year-end were demonstrated in December when global demand was 0.5% below previous-year levels (-2.3% for international operations). Global capacity was 17.7% below previous-year levels (-20.6% for international operations), which is much deeper than the contraction in demand, indicating the continuing and severe capacity crunch. With the stalling of the recovery in passenger markets, there is no end in sight for the capacity crunch.

Economic conditions have picked up into 2021. The new export orders component of the manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is in growth territory in both developed and emerging markets. And global industrial production has also recovered.

"Air cargo is surviving the crisis in better shape than the passenger side of the business. For many airlines, 2020 saw air cargo become a vital source of revenues, despite weakened demand. But with much of the passenger fleet grounded, meeting demand without belly capacity continues to be an enormous challenge.

"As countries strengthen travel restrictions in the face of new coronavirus variants, it is difficult to see improvements in passenger demand or the capacity crunch. 2021 will be another tough year," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's director general and CEO.

Regional performance

Strong variations were evident in the regional performance of air cargo in 2020.

North American and African carriers reported an annual gain in demand in 2020 (+1.1% and +1.0%, respectively), while all other regions remained in negative territory compared to 2019. International demand fell in all regions with the exception of Africa which posted a 1.9% increase in 2020 compared to the previous year.

Asia-Pacific airlines reported a decline in demand of 15.2% in 2020 compared to 2019 (-13.2% for international operations) and a fall in capacity of 27.4% (-26.2% for international operations). In December airlines in the region posted a 3.9% decrease in international demand compared to the previous year. After a pause in recovery in Q3, demand has improved, driven by a rebound in manufacturing activity and export orders from China and South Korea. International capacity remained constrained in December, down 25.1%.

North American carriers posted a 1.1% increase in demand in 2020 compared to 2019 (-5.2% for international operations) and a fall in capacity of 15.9% (-19.7% for international operations). In December carriers in the region posted an increase of 3.1% in international demand. This was the strongest monthly performance since late 2018. Strong traffic on the Asia-North America routes, which was up 2.1% in 2020, contributed to the performance, driven by strong demand from North American consumers for goods manufactured in Asia. Capacity remained constrained, down 14.1% in December.

European carriers reported a 16.0% drop in demand in 2020 compared to 2019 (-16.2% for international operations) and a fall in capacity of 27.1% (-27.1% for international operations). In December airlines posted a decrease in international demand of 5.6% compared to the previous year. After a pause in recovery in November, seasonally adjusted demand grew 7% month-on-month in December, the largest rise of all regions. However, new lockdowns and adverse economic conditions in the region risk the recovery. Lack of capacity remains a challenge, as international capacity decreased 19.4% in December.

West African consumer sentiment presents more positive picture - Nielsen

ACCRA

AGAINST the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the NielsenIQ Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) for West Africa has presented a more positive picture in quarter four of 2020, with Nigeria's CCI at 114, reflecting a slow but steady return to levels above 120 seen during 2019, while Ghana continues to show an improvement to its current CCI of 123.

NielsenIQ West Africa MD Ged Nooy comments: "As the largest economy on the continent, Nigeria has managed to keep its Covid-19 infection rate relatively low in proportion to its 206 million population, however, its macroeconomic prospects have been dampened by lower oil prices, increased food prices and rising inflation, together with a 50% VAT increase in 2020. Despite these challenges, Nigerian consumers remain upbeat about their prospects."

This has seen improved confidence around job prospects, with 58% of consumers saying they will be good or excellent in the next 12 months - a three-point increase from the previous quarter. In terms of the state of their finances over the next 12 months, 78% say they will be excellent or good, showing a substantial 11 point increase from the previous quarter.

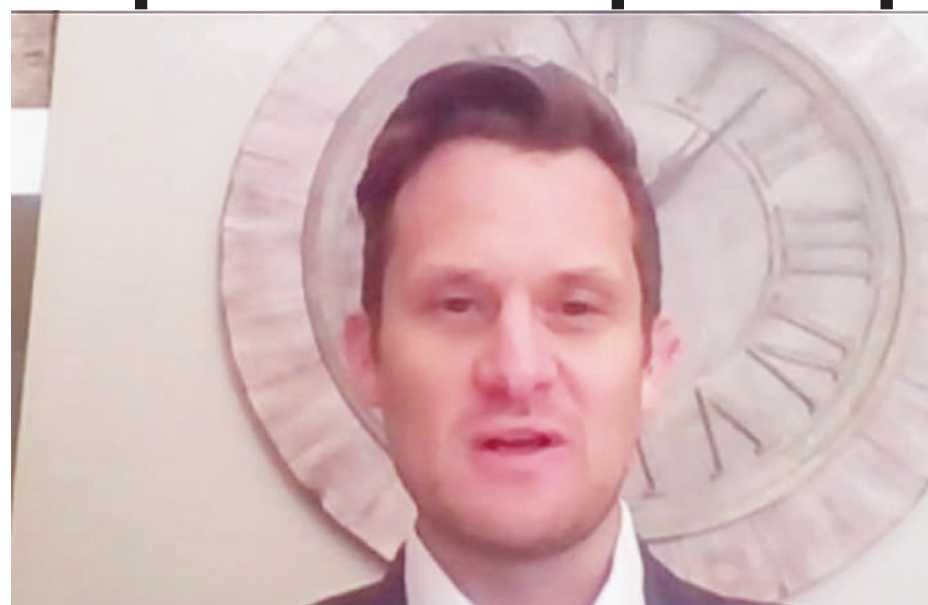
Nigerians' propensity to purchase has unfortunately seen a 13-point decrease to just 27% of Nigerians who think now is a good or excellent time to purchase what they want or need.

In terms of whether they have spare cash left after paying for essentials, 26% of Nigerians say yes, down seven points from the previous quarter. Once they meet their essential living expenses, however, the highest number of consumers (78%) put their spare cash into savings, followed by 73% who spend it on home improvements and 61% who invest in stocks and mutual funds.

Squeezed wallets

Despite their more positive medium to long term outlook, their wallets remain tight with 80% of Nigerians saying they have changed their spending to save on household expenses compared to this time last year. To reduce expenses, the highest number of consumers (73%) said they have deferred the replacement of major household items, 63% are spending less on out-of-home entertainment and 56% less on at-home entertainment.

Looking ahead, the top Nigerian consumer concern over the next 12 months is their children's education and welfare at 22%, increasing food prices (16%) and the economy at 11%. Within this context, these



NielsenIQ West Africa MD Ged Nooy.

drops reflect consumers' confidence in the macro picture in terms of food inflation and overall economic performance.

A subdued outlook

Looking at Ghana's performance, increased consumer confidence during the last two quarters has seen its overall index rise to 123. Fortunately, Ghanaians are still fairly optimistic in terms of their job prospects with 67% saying they will be good or excellent in the next year. In terms of the state of their finances over the next 12 months, 74% say they will be excellent or good - Ghanaians' propensity to purchase has also seen a considerable decrease, half think now is a good or excellent time to purchase what they want or need.

Only 46% of Ghanaians say they have spare cash and once they meet their essential living expenses, the highest

number of consumers (68%) put their spare cash into savings. This is followed by 57% who say they invest in shares and mutual funds and 56% on home improvements

Curtailed spending

When asked whether they had changed their spending to save on household expenses compared to this time last year, 73% of Ghanaians said yes. To reduce expenses, the highest number (49%) said delaying the replacement of major household items followed by 48% spending less on new clothes and 47% less on out of home entertainment.

When looking at the real-life factors that are affecting their outlook, the top consumer concern over the next 12 months is work/life balance (12%), followed by increasing food prices, job security and tolerance towards other religions - all at 11%.

Looking at the future outlook for Ghana, Nooy comments: "Ghana is likely to outperform the regional economic growth average in 2021, which bodes well for increased domestic demand and consumption levels. To benefit from these improved circumstances retailers will need to meet radically altered consumer demands, needs and behaviours that will impact where they shop, what they buy, why they buy and how much they are willing to spend."

WORLD

South Africa halts AstraZeneca rollout on fears it doesn't stop mild illness

LONDON

SOUTH Africa halted yesterday's planned rollout of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccinations after data showed it gave minimal protection against mild infection from one variant, stoking fears of a much longer cat-and-mouse battle with the pathogen.

The coronavirus has killed 2.3 million people and turned normal life upside down for billions but new variants have raised fears that vaccines will need to be tweaked and people may have to have booster shots.

Researchers from the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Oxford said in a prior-to-peer analysis that the AstraZeneca vaccine provided minimal protection against mild or moderate infection from the so-called South African variant among young people.

"This study confirms that the pandemic coronavirus will find ways to continue to spread in vaccinated populations, as expected," said Andrew Pollard, chief investigator on the Oxford vaccine trial.

"But, taken with the promising results from other studies in South Africa using a similar viral vector, vaccines may continue to ease the toll on health care systems by preventing severe disease."

South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said on Sunday the rollout would be put on hold and that the government would await

advice from scientists on how best to proceed.

The AstraZeneca vaccine was the big hope for Africa as it is cheap and easier to store and transport than the Pfizer shot, making South Africa's move a major blow, with implications for other regions.

An analysis of infections by the South African variant showed there was only a 22% lower risk of developing mild-to-moderate COVID-19 versus those given a placebo.

If vaccines do not work as effectively as hoped against new and emerging variants, then the world could be facing a much longer and more expensive battle than previously thought.

Protection against moderate-severe disease, hospitalisation or death could not be assessed in the study as the target population were at such low risk, the researchers said.

While thousands of individual changes have arisen as the virus mutates on replication and evolves into new variants, only a tiny minority are likely to be important or change the virus in an appreciable way, according to the British Medical Journal.

VACCINE SHOCK

While the lead investigator on the trial said that recent data indicated that protection against severe disease was likely from the vaccine, the study raised the prospect of repeated vaccination against a changing virus.



Professor Shabir Madhi, lead investigator on the AstraZeneca trial in South Africa, said the vaccine's similarity to another produced by Johnson & Johnson, which reduced severe disease by 89%, suggested it would still prevent serious illness or death.

"There's still some hope that the AstraZeneca vaccine might well perform as well as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in a different age group demographic that I address of severe disease," he told BBC radio.

Sarah Gilbert, professor of vaccinology at the University of Oxford, said efforts were under way to develop a new generation of booster shot vaccines that will allow protection against emerging variants.

"This is the same issue that is faced by all of the vaccine developers, and we will continue to monitor the emergence of new variants that arise in readiness for a future strain change," she said.

UK IS 'CONFIDENT'

The AstraZeneca vaccine prevents death and serious illness

and is effective against the main variants of the virus in the United Kingdom, though people may have to have a booster shot as it mutates, a junior health minister said on Monday.

"There is no evidence that this vaccine is not effective in preventing hospitalisation and severe illness and death, which ultimately is what we're seeking with these vaccines today," junior health minister Edward Argar told Sky.

"The dominant strains in this country are not the South African strain, there are a small number of cases of that, the dominant strains here are the historic one we've had, and then the Kent variant, against which this vaccine is highly effective."

Argar said just 147 people had been known to have been infected with the South African variant in Britain, though he allowed that booster shots - such as against the common flu - might be needed in future.

"It would just be normal, in a sense, as we did with the flu vaccine, to update it to catch anything the virus is trying to do to keep ahead of it." **Agencies**

Envoy: Politicizing virus origin-tracing against humanitarianism

WASHINGTON

IT is against the spirit of humanitarianism to politicize the origin-tracing of COVID-19 as the world is still under the threat of the pandemic, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai has said.

"I think when people make accusations, they have to prove these accusations. And to say these things at the time when we're still faced with the pandemic is against the spirit of humanitarianism," Cui said when Fareed Zakaria, anchor of CNN's GPS, raised a question in an interview aired Sunday on allegations that the virus was leaked from the Wuhan virology institute lab.

"I think people have to be careful not to make groundless accusations," said Cui, adding that now an expert group from the World Health Organization (WHO) is working in Wuhan with their Chinese counterpart.

"They are working very hard. They are trying to look at all the facts. We are very supportive to their work," he said.

Cui said he has also par-

ticipated in some conferences between Chinese and foreign experts.

"They are real scientists. They are looking at the whole pandemic from the point of view of scientists, not any politicians," he said.

The ambassador said there's a certain need for more tracing to be done all over the world in order to really trace down the origin of the virus as there have been a number of media reports about early cases in other countries.

"So the human race could be better prepared when we are faced with another virus again. So please do not politicize the whole issue. Please let the scientists do their professional job," he said.

China-US Relations

Cui also discussed China-US relations in the same interview and said that, without external involvement, it will be "easier and more possible" for Asian neighbors to solve their issues.

"But Fareed, please look at the map. All the issues you mentioned and some other issues,



Chinese Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai

they are either part of Chinese territory or in places very close to China," said Cui responding to a question on the so-called "much more assertive" foreign policy by China.

"So who is on the offensive, who is on the defensive, you just have a look at the map. They are all far away from the United States," he said.

The ambassador said China have been very consistent in its foreign policy. "It's an independent policy of peace. Of course,

gotiate with them, and in the meantime, maintain stability and tranquility in the areas," he said. "Without external involvement, it will be easier and more possible for the neighbors to solve the issues between themselves."

The fact is, whenever there is more involvement by the United States, there is "greater instability, anywhere in the world. Look at the Middle East, look at some other places like Latin America. It's so obvious that when you are 'rebalancing', or 'pivoting', whatever the word might be, then there's more instability in that region."

Cui said there is "a clear need for good sense of mutual respect" in putting US-China ties back on "a stable and constructive track".

"You don't have an effective foreign policy just by talking tough or playing tough. This is not the right way of doing diplomacy. I think there is a clear need for good sense of mutual respect. People have to show good will and good faith," Cui said.

WHO expert team 'granted full access in Wuhan'

BEIJING

A MEMBER of the World Health Organization (WHO) expert team tracing the origin of the novel coronavirus has said that the Chinese side granted full access to all sites and personnel as requested - a level of openness beyond expectation.

British zoologist Peter Daszak said on Friday that the team had submitted a deeply considered list of places and people to be included in their origin-tracing work and no objections were raised from the Chinese side, according to The Associated Press.

"We were asked where we wanted to go. We gave our

hosts a list... and you can see from where we've been, we've been to all the key places," Daszak said.

Daszak said that during the visit to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, they were met with a level of openness even he had not anticipated, and that suspicion surrounding it had been "politicized on a global

scale".

The team was also given wide access when visiting hospitals that "treated patients in the initial outbreak at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020," the report said.

It was incredible "to meet the first clinicians" who treated COVID-19 patients and ask them questions, Daszak said.

The same level of access was also given at the Huanan seafood market that linked to an early cluster of cases, allowing the team to meet vendors and market managers.

"So this is an in-depth, deep understanding of the sites and the people who were involved," Daszak said.

Xinhua

WASHINGTON / DUBAI

US President Joe Biden said the United States would not lift sanctions against Iran unless Tehran stops enriching uranium, according to an interview broadcasted on Sunday.

Asked if the United States will lift sanctions first to get Iran back to the negotiating table, Biden said "no" in a Friday interview with CBS News.

Biden also gave an affirmative nod when asked if Iran had to stop enriching uranium first.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that Tehran's "final and irreversible" decision was to return to compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal only if Washington lifts sanctions on the Islamic Republic, Iranian state TV reported.

Biden says US not to lift sanctions on Iran first

"Iran has fulfilled all its obligations under the deal, not the United States and the three European countries ... If they want Iran to return to its commitments, the United States must in practice ... lift all sanctions," state TV quoted Khamenei as saying during a meeting with Air Force commanders.

"Then, after verifying whether all sanctions have been lifted correctly, we will return to full compliance ... It is the irreversible and final decision and all Iranian officials have consensus over it."

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Saturday that Iran is losing patience with the new US administration's "recent signals to retain illegal sanctions" on the



Islamic Republic, Press TV reported. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had noted that Washington would only return

to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal, once Tehran meets its commitments, warning of a long road ahead.

The JCPOA was reached in 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, Britain, Russia, France, China, plus Germany) and the European Union. Iran is allowed to enrich uranium within certain limits under the deal.

A senior US official later said Biden meant Iran had to stop enriching beyond the deal's limits, not that it had to stop enriching entirely before the two sides might talk.

"They have to stop enriching beyond the

Kremlin says Russia interested in reviving relations with EU considering mutual interests

MOSCOW

RUSSIA is interested in reviving relations with the EU considering interests of both sides and without applying double standards, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists commenting on the statement of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell that the results of his trip to Russia demonstrate that Moscow is not interested in improving relations with the EU.

"Russia was and is interested in reviving relations between Moscow and Brussels. We weren't the initiators of curtailing these relations. We proceed from the necessity of considering each other's interests, we are adamantly opposed to meddling in each other's interests and applying double standards," the Kremlin representative said.

The spokesman added that in this respect Moscow intends "to act very decisively and here nobody should have any doubts."

"Yet this doesn't mean that we somehow want to grow distant or make worse the already scarce relations between Moscow and Brussels. Quite the opposite, we are interested in developing them," he concluded.

On February 7, Borrell in his blog expressed an opinion that the results of his trip to Russia indicate Moscow's disinterest in improving relations with the EU.

He also reported that the European Union may introduce new sanctions against Russia due to situation around blogger Alexey Navalny, engaging a new mechanism that stipulates restrictions for violation of human rights.

Borrell visited Russia from February 4 through 6. On February 5, he met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Then Borrell noted that the EU and Russia conducted an open and honest dialogue on all issues of bilateral relations, including the fight against the pandemic, the global climate change, the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program, disagreements over Ukraine, Brussels' support for blogger Alexey Navalny and deportation from Russia of Western diplomats who participated in unauthorized protest rallies. **Agencies**

British boy wakes from nearly year-long coma unaware of COVID pandemic

NOTTINGHAM

A BRITISH teenager is slowly emerging from a coma nearly a year after being hit by a car, and he has no knowledge of the coronavirus pandemic even though he has caught the virus twice.

Joseph Flavill, 19, suffered a traumatic brain injury when he was hit by the car in the central English town of Burton-on-Trent on March 1 last year, about three weeks before a first national lockdown was imposed to curb the spread of the virus.

During that time his family has been largely unable to be near him and hold his hand due to coronavirus restrictions, mostly trying to communicate with him via video link. "Recently Joseph has started to show small signs of recovery, which we are thrilled about... We know now he can hear us, he responds to small commands," his aunt, Sally Flavill, told Reuters.

"When we say to him 'Joseph, we can't be with you, but you are safe, this is not going to be forever', he understands, he hears you, he just can't communicate," she said, adding that he now signalled 'yes' with a blink and 'no' with two blinks.

Since Joseph's accident, Britain has registered nearly four million COVID-19 cases, including more than 110,000 deaths, in a pandemic that has turned life upside down worldwide, shuttering schools, universities, shops and many other places. "I don't know how Joseph will ever understand our stories of this lockdown," his aunt said, adding that he was still very ill and faced a "very, very long journey" back to some kind of normal life.

Joseph, who before the accident was a keen sportsman, is now receiving treatment at a care centre in Stoke-on-Trent, central England, and his family has started a fund-raising campaign www.josephsjourney.co.uk to help support his long-term recovery. **Agencies**



limits of the JCPOA," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "There is nothing changed in the US position. The United States wants Iran to come back into (compliance with) its JCPOA commitments and if it does, the United States will do the same."

Iran said last month that it was starting to produce 20 percent enriched uranium, as part of Iran's Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions which was approved by the parliament in December 2020.

Relations between Washington and Tehran have deteriorated since May 2018 when former President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the Iran nuclear deal and re-imposed harsh sanctions against Iran. In response, Tehran has gradually dropped some of its JCPOA commitments since May 2019. **Agencies**

Reset China-US relations through dialogue, respect despite differences

BEIJING

IT takes vision, courage and wisdom to restore normalcy to one of the world's most important bilateral relations which now stand at a key moment.

Just like any bilateral relationship between countries, it is natural for China and the United States to have some differences.

The best solution for both sides is to take a rational, positive and constructive approach, focusing on cooperation and managing differences to promote the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations. By cooperating with each other, China and the United States can accomplish many great things that benefit both countries and the world at large.

Senior Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi on Saturday held a phone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, during which both said bilateral relations are very important to the two countries and the world, and they are willing to develop stable and constructive bilateral relations.

Dialogues are necessary. But whether China-U.S. relations could return on track hinges on whether the new U.S. administration would respect the red lines in bi-

lateral relations.

The development of China-U.S. relations has brought great benefits to the people of the two countries and also promoted world peace and prosperity. However, the last four years have seen too much anti-China rhetoric and even hatred from certain U.S. politicians.

People like Mike Pompeo, who used to be America's top diplomat, have failed to show any zeal in helping solve the world's real problems. On the contrary, he along with other political arsonists in Washington, staged one political farce after another on the world stage and dug as many holes as possible for future China-U.S. relations.

As the new year has begun and a new U.S. administration has been sworn in, it is imperative to steer China-U.S. ties back to the right course. The United States should work with China to uphold the spirit of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, focus on cooperation and manage differences, so as to push forward the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations.

China's policy toward the United States has always maintained a high degree of stability and continuity.



The common interests of China and the United States far outweigh the differences. But it has to be noted that there are certain red lines in bilateral relations. The Taiwan question, the most important and sensitive core issue in China-U.S. relations, bears on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As Blinken reiterated, the U.S. side will continue to pursue the one-China policy and abide by the three China-U.S. joint communiques, and this policy stance has not changed.

Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet-related affairs are also China's internal affairs and allow no interference by external forces. Any attempts to slander and smear China are doomed to fail.

Also, China is committed to the path of peaceful development and a win-win strategy of opening-up. It has stated repeatedly that it has no intention to challenge the post-war order or to replace the United States. What China keeps challenging is itself. It follows the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. China's prosperity will only bring more op-

portunities to the world.

As two major countries, China and the United States share broad common interests and shoulder important responsibilities for world peace and development. They enjoyed successful cooperation in the past including anti-terrorism cooperation, tackling the global financial crisis in 2008, combating Ebola in 2014, and collaborating on the Paris Agreement in 2016.

Now they should seize fresh opportunities to cooperate in fields such as the battle against climate change, COVID-19 response and economic recovery.

Such cooperation can start from interaction as the two sides did on Saturday when the phone call was made. The growth of China-U.S. relations is the result of decades of commitment and dedication by Chinese and Americans from all sectors. Strategic miscalculation and doubts can be drastically reduced when the two sides sit down and engage in a comprehensive, frank and in-depth dialogue to make their respective strategic intentions clear and rebuild mutual trust.

Xinhua

Russian embassy slams Lithuanian PM's words about Sputnik V as disinformation

VILNIUS

RUSSIA'S embassy in Lithuania has slammed Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte's tweet about the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine as her participation in the disinformation campaign.

"Despite the wave of disinformation and such biased statements at all the stages of the vaccine development and use, Sputnik V efficacy, which has been recognized internationally, speaks for itself," the embassy wrote on its Twitter account of Sunday.

The embassy stressed that what matters most is the fact that "mass vaccination campaign is already underway in Russia," whereas Lithuania's authorities have not even said when such a campaign is to start in their country.

Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte wrote on her Twitter account that Russia offers its Sputnik V vaccine "to the world as another hybrid weapon to divide and rule."

Commenting on these words, chairman of the Russian State Duma (lower parliament house) international committee Leonid Slutsky said this was "Russophobic slanders revealing pure frustration and envy."

On August 11, 2020, Russia registered the world's first vaccine against the novel coronavirus. The vaccine, dubbed Sputnik V, was developed by the Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Russian Health Ministry. It is a vector vaccine based on the human adenovirus. Mass production of the vaccine was launched on August 15, 2020.

Agencies

Netanyahu pleads not guilty to corruption as trial resumes

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pleaded not guilty yesterday to corruption charges at the resumption of his trial, six weeks before voters again head to the polls to pass judgment on his leadership.

"I confirm the written answer submitted in my name," Netanyahu said, standing before the three-judge panel in the heavily guarded Jerusalem District Court.

He was referring to a document his lawyers gave the court last month in which they argued that Netanyahu, 71, was not guilty of

charges of bribery, breach of trust and fraud.

Wearing a coronavirus mask, Netanyahu, the first serving Israeli leader to be charged with a crime, seemed intent on projecting an air of business as usual, thanking the court and leaving without explanation some 20 minutes into the session.

Netanyahu was indicted in 2019 in long-running cases involving gifts from millionaire friends and for allegedly seeking regulatory favours for media tycoons in return for favourable coverage.

On entering the courtroom, Netanyahu sat in a corner with



his lawyers, his back to cameras. The session itself was not broadcast but reporters could monitor a closed-circuit feed elsewhere in the building.

His quick departure from the court building seemed aimed at showing the public that he would not allow the trial to interfere with government business as Israel be-

gins to emerge from a month-long coronavirus lockdown.

At the session, Netanyahu sat, arms crossed, and coughed occasionally into his mask, before taking it off to sip water.

Last May, at the opening of his trial, Netanyahu put on a display of defiance that opponents condemned as a challenge to the rule of law.

Before that session got underway, Netanyahu delivered a speech from a podium in the corridor, condemning his prosecution as a left-wing witch hunt aimed at ousting a right-wing prime minister as a phalanx of cabinet officials

stood at his side.

This time, he issued a public appeal to supporters to stay away, citing high contagion numbers in the coronavirus pandemic.

They largely heeded his call, while dozens of opponents, some holding signs reading "crime minister", demanded his resignation at a protest they held near the court building.

Israel will hold its fourth parliamentary election in two years on March 23, with Netanyahu's handling of the health crisis and his alleged corruption the main issues stoking weekly protests against him.

Agencies

Biden's govt moves to rejoin UN Human Rights Council



This photo shows delegates attending the 44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council at the UN's European headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 30, 2020.

WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden's administration will reengage with the United Nations Human Rights Council, three years after former president Donald Trump withdrew over what his administration called bias against Israel and a lack of reform.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken will announce on Monday that the United States will return to the Geneva-based

council as an observer, a senior State Department official said on Sunday.

"We intend to do so knowing that the most effective way to reform and improve the Council is to engage with it in a principled fashion," the official said. "We know that the Council has the potential to be an important forum for those fighting tyranny and injustice around the world."

By being present at the table, we seek to reform it and ensure

it can live up to that potential," the official said.

The plan was first reported by the Associated Press.

Trump, a Republican whose "America First" agenda contributed to his decisions to withdraw from multiple international organizations and agreements, quit the Human Rights Council in 2018 - half-way through its three year term - over what it called chronic bias against Israel and a lack of reform.

The 193-member UN General Assembly is due to elect new members to the council later this year. Members are elected for three years and cannot serve more than two consecutive terms.

Candidates are elected by secret ballot in geographical groups to ensure even representation. The next session of the 47-member Geneva-based council is due to start later this month.

Agencies

China plans to expand free trade network, accelerate FTA talks

CHINA has planned to expand its network of free trade and is willing to sign more free trade agreements (FTAs) with its trade partners to jointly promote free and convenient trade and investment, Gao Feng, spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce said at a regular press briefing on Thursday.

The country will boost China-Japan-South Korea FTA talks and free trade talks with Gulf Cooperation Council, Israel and Norway, while actively considering joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Gao said.

"Meanwhile, we will step up efforts to enhance the levels of present FTAs by actively exploring free trade rules that are integrated into international common rules while in line with our own need for reform and development," he said. He pointed out that the country will further improve the proportion of goods for zero tariffs, further relax market access into the country's services trade and investment sectors, and actively talks on new rules such as digital economy and environmental protection. Gao said that



Photo taken on November 30, 2020 shows the China-Japan-Rok Consumption Zone E-commerce Experience Center in Qingdao, East China's Shandong Province.

MOFCOM will strengthen promotion and training relating to FTAs already signed, to ensure the deals will benefit more enterprises and individuals.

He said last week that the country's process of ratifying the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, beginning in December 2020, is moving along as expected, and the government aims to complete it within a six-month period.

Relevant government departments have issued duty lists in keeping to the RCEP lines so that all the opening moves and rule-based obligations could be fully acted

upon, Gao said, noting that training related to the trade deal will be organized to help local governments, companies and intermediary organizations learn the RCEP rules.

Global Times

The country will boost China-Japan-South Korea FTA talks and free trade talks with Gulf Cooperation Council

Somalia's opposition calls for new national council

MOGADISHU

AN alliance of Somali opposition parties proposed the creation of a national council of lawmakers, opposition leaders and civil society to govern the war-ravaged Horn of Africa nation after the president's term expired yesterday with no clear plan for succession.

The power vacuum and divisions between political leaders was a boost to the al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab insurgency, a Somali security analyst warned, citing a spate of recent attacks in a relatively peaceful part of the country.

The opposition alliance said they would reject any attempt to extend

the term of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed and suggested the council could elect a transitional leader to govern until a new president can be chosen by lawmakers.

"We are against time extension, suppression, violence and further delay to the election," the alliance said in a statement. "An election schedule should immediately without delay be displayed with agreed upon specified time."

There was no immediate comment from the president. Aides had previously

privately floated the idea of extending his term.

Somalia was initially planning to hold its first direct election since civil war erupted in 1991, but delays in preparations and continuous attacks by al Shabaab forced Somalia to plan another indirect vote.

Clan elders should have chosen lawmakers in December and the lawmakers were due to choose a president yesterday.

But selection of lawmakers was delayed after the opposition accused President Mohamed - who was



President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed

seeking a second term - of packing regional and national electoral boards with his allies.

Leaders in two of Somalia's five federal states, Puntland and Jubbaland, have

said they will no longer recognise President Mohamed.

On Sunday night at midnight, the capital Mogadishu lit up with gunfire and drums as residents said they were celebrating the end of

the president's term.

"We are firing into the sky to say goodbye to the dictator Farmajo, he has burnt Somalia these four years," said a soldier Aden Ali, using President Mohamed's common nickname.

Hussein Sheikh Ali, Somalia's former national security advisor and founder of the Mogadishu-based Hiraal think-tank, said al Shabaab had already taken advantage of the security vacuum to launch attacks in portions of central Somalia that had been relatively peaceful for around a decade.

"They (al Shabaab) are laughing out loud," he said. "This is a failure by the president, Somalia's political elite and the international community. They didn't have a plan B to move forward."

On Sunday, 12 security agents were killed by a roadside bomb outside the town of Dhusamareb in central Somalia where political leaders were meeting to try to resolve disagreements over the presidential selection process. Al Shabaab also launched repeated mortar attacks on the town.

The attack came a week after four al Shabaab suicide attackers killed five people at a hotel in Mogadishu.

SPORT



France soccer club Cambounet FC's player (squatting), hands over an assortment of equipment to Moshi's Neville School's pupils in Kilimanjaro recently. The outfit had handed over the assistance in an effort to back efforts to improve learning environment for the institution. PHOTO: COURTESY OF CAMBOUNET FC

French soccer club seeks to boost education in Kilimanjaro schools

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

AFTER a successful mission of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro last month and taking a silverware they won in a tournament in their home country back 2019 with them to the mountain's summit, a group of French footballers making a club, Cambounet FC, are still in Tanzania on a project aiming at making a better place for schools in need in Moshi.

Beyond the challenge, the winners decided to create a motto, 'Let's Go Cambou', and partner with two French associations to contribute to youths' education development project for Neville and Mbokomu primary schools, situated at Mbokomu Village, Moshi Rural District in Kilimanjaro.

The soccer side's players include Chabbert Mathieu (38 years) and his wife Axelle Lacroux (29 years), Trantoul Pierre (28 years) and their mutual friend Beck Lola (28 years).

They arrived in the country with a project, which seeks to bring as many donations and sports equipment as possible to the schools in need in Moshi Municipality.

The football team from Cambounet sur le Sor Village in southern France, which has 900 inhabitants, won the Tarn Cup tournament's silverware in 2019 and decided to parade it in four continents.

Mount Kilimanjaro was chosen as a single spot for Africa and the club's last destination.

The project, the players noted, has been in preparation for one year with donations being put to place since they arrived at Neville School in Moshi.

Well-wishers across the world donated after seeing the need for the backing through videos that the outfit had been posting on social networks under their formed group on various media platforms, known as 'Let's Go Cambou.'

Cambounet FC has been calling for 50 Euros donation for a single orphan, ranging from seven years old to 12 years, at the school in order to make better learning environment for them.

Through their project, they have had success in their mission and they raised more than 1000 Euros donation for the school which will help to renovate the institution's infrastructures.

They have also provided the school with football jerseys, footballs, rugby balls and other necessary sports equipment.

The French club moreover provided learning materials for pupils and teachers including computer equipment (printer, scanner, video projector), among other learning devices.

The adventure, according to the players, is being followed, filmed and reported by Nathalie Gros, a journalist from the CAPA agency, who is currently reporting on TFI's French National Television Channel, on a program known as 'Grand Reportage'.

Mathieu, a Cambounet FC senior player, stated: "The teachers and the headmistress

liked our mission a lot and were impressed by how we are devoted into bringing happiness and making a better place for children here in Moshi."

"We helped to renovate the buildings and we are preparing an exterior decoration project," he disclosed.

"We have an office, partnering with education authority in Kilimanjaro run by Gabriel and Sarah Marchand, to improve Neville School," he noted.

He added: "Our axis unfortunately depends on our small means and we want to prove to the world that with nothing we can do a lot."

With the team climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, they have once again, given mileage to Tanzania's tourism sector.

Cambounet FC has been the subject of numerous reports in recent months following an exciting bet.

During a trip to Budapest, one of the outfit's members had to return home, not by plane as planned, but by his own means of transport after losing a bet.

The club lifted the Tarn Cup competition's trophy in 2019 and embarked on a new adventure to take a tour with the trophy.

In December last year, the club's players headed to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with the trophy and they moreover carried gifts and hot meals on Christmas Day to children of the Favelas, a low-income informal settlement.

Commenting on the team's decision to launch the project in Tanzania, Mathieu disclosed: "Our story is a bit crazy, two years ago, four of us went to Budapest in Hungary to taste the wine of Tokaj. During the tasting we had a bet, the loser was required to make his way back home via his own means and Pierre Tran, who lost the bet, had to cross Europe in five days."

Mathieu stated: "On his arrival in Cambounet sur le Sor Village, journalists were present and asked him, 'what are you going to do now that is crazier than that?'"

He said: "At that time our squad played the quarterfinals of the Tarn Cup, so, we said that if we win the cup, we would bring it to several places in the four continents of the world, which include Brazil's Christ Redeemer in South America, and the Great Wall of China in Asia."

"We also said we will dive with it with sharks on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and finally at Mount Kilimanjaro's summit and we would add a humanitarian action every time."

The top honour has already made trips to Spain, Czech Republic and Guadeloupe, which is an archipelago, and an overseas department and region of France in the Caribbean.

Mathieu also noted: "The success of our mission is complete as we managed to climb to Mount Kilimanjaro's top with the silverware and on top of that we managed to help the children of Moshi, Kilimanjaro."

Cambounet FC's future project, he stated, is to take the Tarn Cup tournament's top honour to Peru and Argentina to meet professional players and especially pay tribute to the late Diego Maradona's tomb by placing the silverware in front of the great Diego Armando Maradona's grave with a big heart.

SPORTS

Opportunities abound in sports media

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

EVER since the domestic media industry was liberalized, we have witnessed the steady mushrooming of all manner of media entities that inhabit the various mediums of mass communications like the print media, electronic media and, most latterly, cyberspace.

Indeed, this flowering within the media sector has significantly paved the way for divergent views on various pressing matters to be expressed, which was a feature of our body politic that was tellingly non-existent during the many years of state-controlled media.

Over the years, we have also seen the budding growth of print media outlets expressly tailored to only provide sports news, sports features and sports commentary and nothing more.

Admirably, we have also seen the meteoric ascent of a local media entity, which presently runs an exciting 24 hour sports television broadcasting channel.

However, that notwithstanding, I still feel that the rich potential in domestic sports media has yet to be fully exploited and exhaustively tapped.

For example, would it not be a sound investment in our sports-obsessed homeland if a radio station was set up solely to provide sports news, sports interviews, and sports programming with naturally the engaging accompaniment of the latest chart-topping Bongo Flava hit songs?

And, in the interests of ferocious competition which of course rewards the targeted beneficiaries, we, the audience, with sterling content, how about a group of affluent investors pooling their financial resources together in order to set up another 24-hours sports TV channel that broadcasts top-rate sports programs about our ever-bustling domestic sports patch, with a few programs on



Dar es Salaam's karate players demonstrate the game's skills at a recent event which took place in the city.

global sports chipped in as well?

Would that not go down well with my countrymen and my countrywomen? These are just ideas of course but I find it rather strange that corporate Tanzania has been moving at a snail's pace to seize advantage of the money-minting opportunities that readily abound in solely sports media. Hopefully, that will change in the foreseeable future.

Moving on, as oft expressed in this humble corner of The Guardian's sports pages, these are indeed grim times that we are presently living through.

With joblessness a serious challenge confronting the fabric of our society, we have heard severally exhortations from prominent figures calling upon the youth to display an entrepreneurial spirit in a bid to robustly get to grips with the weighty hindrance of unemployment, which, as we know, results in broken dreams and ruthlessly dashed hopes as well as curtailed long-nurtured aspirations.

Now, I'm no business guru but I have often found it unfathomable that in spite of the seemingly ceaseless football aficionados in our country, those blessed with an artistic bent of mind, have been exceedingly slow to paint breathtaking portraits of the likes of Mbwana Samatta, Abdallah eKingi Kibadeni or Edibily Lunyamila, with the aim of making a living from their artistic labors.

I have also found it mind-boggling that despite having some of the finest photographers in the region, arguably none of them have been swift to discern that they could actually compile their most captivating images of Mainland Premier League icons into a book of gorgeous colour photographs and sell them!

In sum, I do apologize for being perhaps a tad too reflective in this commentary.

Who knows, in my next piece, Dear Reader, you may very well come across a flawless, cast-iron panacea to all of the world's ills, troubles, sufferings, sorrows and afflictions!

Premier League Board's Chairman counsels club leaders



Yanga's Secretary General, Hajji Mfikirwa (R) and Azam FC's Chief Executive Officer, Abdulkarim Amin 'Popat', participate in a one-day seminar bringing together Mainland Premier League's clubs' officials, organized by the Tanzania Premier League Board (TPLB) at a hotel in Dar es Salaam last week. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA Premier League Board (TPLB)'s Chairman, Stephen Mguto, has challenged secretary generals of various football clubs in Tanzania's top flight to make sure they properly use budgets as recommended.

"Some clubs let their chairmen control everything in terms of all operations, a situation which is not encouraged because we need to have one person we can directly face in case of any problem which may emerge," Mguto noted.

The TPLB hosted a seminar, which brought together the Premier League clubs' secretary generals and Chief Executive Officers, in Dar es Salaam last week.

Mguto disclosed: "The knowledge we imparted during the seminar in such fields like finance, law, and media are very important for clubs' secretary generals to understand so as to simplify their works."

The Premier League Board has also warmly welcomed the support the body has been getting from the government.

Mguto disclosed the good relationship between the TPLB and government has to a large extent propelled for the success in running football leagues.

"Government is doing a great job to uplift sports in the country especially football hence, we cherish our achievements," the TPLB's Chief Executive Officer, Almas Kasongo, noted.

"The roles played by the state cannot go without appreciation," he stated.

Meanwhile, the TPLB was annoyed some club officials failed to attend the seminar.

The seminar, which discussed a number of ranging issues affecting the day to day running of the Mainland Premier League and the smooth running of the clubs, saw a number of officials from clubs skip it altogether.

Mguto openly claimed the TPLB was annoyed some club officials opted

against attending the meeting terming the situation as unwelcoming and unacceptable.

The TPLB Chairman stated it was unfortunate some top officials opted against attending the meeting held in Dar es Salaam.

He further revealed only six secretary generals out of the invited 20 attended the seminar.

It should be known that secretary generals are the ones directly involved in day to day operation of clubs," Mguto noted.

He disclosed: "In other words, they are the ones answerable when things are not right in their clubs."

He stated: "They are accounting officers of their clubs such that no amount of cash from the club can be released without their knowledge. No trips a club can make without their consent that is why we invited them based on key roles they do in their respective clubs."

Tuchel confident Werner goals will come as Chelsea maintain momentum

LONDON

CHELSEA manager Thomas Tuchel hailed Timo Werner's contribution to a 2-1 win at bottom-of-the-table Sheffield United despite the German international's Premier League goal drought extending to 11 games.

Werner set up Mason Mount's opener and won the decisive penalty, converted by Jorginho, as Chelsea closed to within a point of the top four with a third win in Tuchel's four games in charge.

"When he plays like this we are very happy," said Tuchel. "This was a big step forward. The first goal was an amazing run and amazing assist. The goals will come."

Werner was left on the bench for Frank Lampard's final two league games before the former England international was sacked last month.

One of Tuchel's targets is to get the 24-year-old producing the prolific numbers he did for Leipzig in the Bundesliga.

But despite the lack of goals, there were signs of Werner's confidence coming back against the Blades.

"For myself, again no goal but it is good to see I can help the team with other things," said Werner.

"I am happy when we win and with two assists but as a striker you want to score. It has been a long time and I have not had this long without in my career."

Chelsea are now breathing down Liverpool's necks for a place in next season's Champions League after the defending champions were thrashed 4-1 at home by Manchester City earlier on Sunday.

Tuchel has benefited from a kind run of fixtures to bed himself into English football, but the former Paris Saint-Germain manager has quickly implemented his ideas.

Any suggestion Mount, who shot to prominence under Lam-

pard, would be a casualty of the change of management have proven unfounded as the England international was again Chelsea's most dangerous player.

Mount rounded off a brilliant team move, also involving Ben Chilwell and Werner, to give Chelsea the half-time lead their dominance deserved at Bramall Lane.

Tuchel's men had barely even faced a shot at goal in their previous three games against Wolves, Burnley and Tottenham, but finally conceded thanks to a self-inflicted blow.

Antonio Rudiger is one of those to have benefited from Lampard's departure after being frozen out for much of the season.

But the German defender did his new boss little favours as his attempted back pass beat the onrushing Edouard Mendy and rolled into his own net.

"Still no goal from the opponents, but we did it ourselves," said Tuchel.

Luckily for Rudiger, the Blades offered up a gift of their own within four minutes when Werner pounced on Jayden Bogle's short back pass and the German international was brought down by Aaron Ramsdale as he tried to round the goalkeeper.

Jorginho did not use his trademark stutter-step in scoring the winner at Spurs from the spot in midweek, but used it to good effect to send Ramsdale the wrong way.

The young goalkeeper then looked like he may become the first concussion substitution in the Premier League for the blow he took to the head in upending Werner, but was allowed to complete the match after a medical assessment.

At the other end, Mendy had to make a big save deep into stoppage time to turn Billy Sharp's acrobatic effort to safety and maintain Tuchel's early momentum.

AFP

'Winning is in our DNA': Bayern eye Club World Cup

DOHA

BAYERN Munich shrugged off their nightmare flight to Qatar on Sunday to set their sights on winning the Club World Cup to prove beyond doubt that "winning is in the club's DNA".

The German giants tackle Egypt's Al Ahly on Monday in the semi-finals with a final clash against Tigres of Mexico the reward.

"We have the very clear objective of bringing the Club World Cup back to Munich. Six trophies in the same year, so far only FC Barcelona have done it," said Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Bayern have already won the German league and cup, Champions League as well as the German and European Super Cups in 2020.

They came close to a sweep of all six in 2013 when only the German Super Cup slipped through their fingers to great rivals Borussia Dortmund.

"Always wanting to win everything has long been part of the DNA of this club," said Rummenigge.

Late last year when there were fears the tournament could be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, coach Hansi Flick and a delegation of senior players even came to Rummenigge to ask him to convince FIFA chief Gianni Infantino to save the tournament.

Rummenigge said he was impressed by this determination.

"They won everything in 2020, they have a hellish schedule to manage, but they always want more," he explained.

"We absolutely wanted to play this tournament," said Flick on Sunday. "We know it's extra fatigue, but we come in motivated."

The fatigue was caused by the entire squad having to spend Friday night and early Saturday morning stranded at Berlin airport due to heavy snow.

"Of course it was not optimal and unfortunately we lost most of the day on Saturday," said Bayern star Joshua Kimmich.

"We arrived late afternoon, the plan was to train which was not possible any more. Nonetheless I think that we will be able to win the match."

"The trip didn't go that well but we did have the possibility to lay down in the plane."

Flick, too, was angry over the seven-hour hold-up in snow-bound Germany.

"I was not very happy. We were on time, on the plane, ready to take off. It was not very pleasant," he said.

AFP



Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge

Champions-elect Man City make emphatic statement at Liverpool

LIVERPOOL, England

THE Premier League trophy still sits on display in Liverpool's club museum at Anfield, but they can start to take off the red ribbons and label it for a return to previous owner after Manchester City's rampant 4-1 victory on Sunday made this season's title race a formality and ended the defending champions' hopes of retaining their crown.

To suggest that City's win signalled a changing of the guard would be over-playing things somewhat, considering that Pep Guardiola's team had won back-to-back titles prior to Liverpool's first in 30 years last season.

For City, they will believe their victory – a first at Anfield since 2003 and for Guardiola as a manager – was merely a sign of normal service being resumed. This, though, was much more; it was a statement to the rest of the Premier League that they are, by some distance, the best team in the country.

"We have done brilliantly, so I can't deny how happy we are," Guardiola said. "To come here and finally win is very important. It is an important win, but in February, nobody is champions. I cannot predict the future, but all I can predict is work and work. Tomorrow, we look to the next game."

Guardiola is right to be pragmatic, but it would be foolish to underestimate the manner of his team's latest victory, because they tore Liverpool apart.

City dominated the game, exposed the defensive shortcomings of Liverpool full-backs Andy Robertson and Trent Alexander-Arnold and embarrassed goalkeeper Alisson Becker by clinically punishing the Brazilian international by scoring twice from his second-half mistakes.



Alisson Becker

Meanwhile, an outstanding performance by Phil Foden, who made City's second goal and superbly scored the fourth, highlighted just why the 20-year-old is regarded as the jewel of the club's youth academy. Raheem Sterling, Ilkay Gundogan and Bernardo Silva were also unstoppable in midfield.

Having lost their last two home games, against Burnley and Brighton, Liverpool's confidence going into this fixture was clearly deflated, but they ended it not only having been beaten again, but with their opponents making them look ordinary.

Less than a year after Jurgen Klopp's team were hailed as one of the best – if not the best – teams of the Premier League era, their defence of the title has crumbled after just half a season and the objective now is simply to secure qualification for the Champions League.

Liverpool are 10 points behind leaders City, having played one game more than Guardiola's men, so they can forget about the title. Keeping West Ham, Everton and Chelsea at bay in the battle for fourth is the priority and that is not a foregone conclusion for a

team that lacks energy and ideas and will be without their best defender, Virgil van Dijk, until next season.

"It's very difficult to explain that we lost 4-1," Klopp said. "We scored our goal and in that moment, the game can go in two directions, but Alisson made two massive mistakes, gave two goals and then there was a genius situation from Phil Foden."

"But we just have to carry on," Klopp continued. "It's not the best moment of our lives and we will try everything [for the top four]. There are enough games to secure that, but we have to win them."

City have no such concerns. Manchester United might still harbour faint hopes of challenging for the title, but this result moved their neighbours five points clear of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team and City still have a game in hand, so there is little hope for the chasing pack.

Guardiola's team are simply playing too well to be caught, despite the ongoing absence of Kevin De Bruyne and Sergio Aguero.

They have won 14 consecutive games in all competitions and could even afford to miss another penalty

before sealing this latest victory. Gundogan's first-half miss from the spot was the third penalty City have missed against Liverpool in their last four league games, but it didn't matter in the end.

It was City's control of the ball, movement in the attacking third and determination to target Alexander-Arnold and Robertson that made them so devastating. Liverpool had no response and looked one-paced and predictable, even though Mohamed Salah gave them hope of a victory by scoring from the penalty spot on 63 minutes to cancel out Gundogan's opener, scored just after half-time.

Salah's goal was Liverpool's first in the league at Anfield for 411 minutes, which tells you everything about their form slump over the past two months. Klopp's men could not build momentum after equalising, though, and City quickly regained the upper hand.

John Stones had a goal ruled out for offside, but two minutes later Gundogan made it 2-1 after Alisson's clearance had fallen to Foden, who dribbled into the box before teeing up the German to net from close range.

Sterling quickly made it 3-1, heading in Bernardo's cross at the far post after another Alisson mistake, before Foden, in front of the watching England manager Gareth Southgate, struck an unstoppable fourth on 83 minutes.

The celebrations on the City bench were testament to the importance of Foden's goal and the victory that it confirmed. This was a game that could have halted their form surge, six days before a tricky home clash with Tottenham, but instead they breezed through and consigned Liverpool to the role of outgoing champions.

ESPN

Morocco defeat Mali to become first back-to-back CHAN champions

YAOUNDE

MOROCCO became the first back-to-back winners of the African Nations Championship (CHAN) when they scored twice after corners to defeat Mali 2-0 in the final in Yaounde Sunday.

Soufiane Bouffini broke the deadlock on 69 minutes and captain Ayoub el Kaabi doubled the lead 10 minutes later to create history after Morocco hosted and won the previous edition three years ago.

It was the second CHAN final loss for Mali, after 2016, and they are still seeking a first Confederation of African Football (CAF) senior national team success.

Morocco won five of six matches at a tournament reserved for home-based players, scored 15 goals and conceded three.

The north Africans went into the title decider as favourites having scored 12 goals against Uganda, Zambia and hosts Cameroon in their previous three matches.

Mali had managed just one goal in their last three outings, eliminating Congo Brazzaville and Guinea in penalty shootouts after goalless quarter-final and semi-final stalemates.

Moroccan Soufiane Rahimi began the final as the leading scorer with five goals and Malian Issaka Samake was yellow carded after only six minutes for hacking down the Golden Boot chart-topper.

When Rahimi was fouled a third time, just outside the box, Morocco nearly went ahead from the resultant free-kick, which goalkeeper Djigui Diarra parried and the loose ball was hastily cleared.

- Fluffed great chance -

Moussa Kone fluffed a great chance to put Mali in front midway through the opening half when one-on-one with goalkeeper Anas Zniti, one of two survivors from the 2018 winning team.

Zniti blocked a shot with his right foot and then grasped the ball to the relief of his defenders, who had been caught cold by a quick lofted pass.

Kone came close again when his header flew narrowly wide at the 40,000-capacity Stade Ahmadou Ahidjo, where the crowd was restricted to 10,000 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The first half ended 0-0 and Mali coach Nouhoum Diane would have been happier than Moroccan counterpart Houcine Ammouta as the



Morocco winners of 2021 African Nations Championship during the 2021 Chan football final match between Guinea and Cameroon at Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium, Cameroon on 07 February 2021. (Agencies)

west Africans had largely nullified the threat of Rahimi.

A long VAR delay 10 minutes into the second half ended with Moroccan appeals for a penalty being denied and almost immediately Malian Sadio Kanoute nodded just wide following a

free-kick.

Kone had another chance to break the deadlock midway through the second half but fired straight at Zniti.

In a tight, physical clash it took a defender to break the deadlock with Bouffini putting Morocco in front by

heading a corner wide of Diarra.

El Kaabi put the issue beyond doubt with a brave close-range header and Mali were reduced to 10 men in stoppage time when Samake was sent off after a second yellow card.

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

**Champions-elect Man City
make emphatic statement at Liverpool**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Women team's Mwanaidi Ibrahim show-cased scintillating displays with the bat when the team faced Caravans B squad in this year's Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Cup T20 tournament's Division B tie, which took place in the city on Sunday.

Caravans B cricketers thrash TCA Women team in DC Cup T20 Division B

By Guardian Reporter

CARAVANS B team notched six-wicket victory over Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Women outfit in this year's Dar es Salaam Cricket (DC) Cup T20 tournament's Division B match, which took place in the city on Sunday.

Much as Caravans B cricketers had the last laugh, the TCA Women outfit deserved praise for putting spirited showing against the former.

The TCA Women outfit's players went in to bat first, posting 114 runs for six wickets in 20 overs of the tie, which took place at University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) venue.

Experienced batter, Mwanaidi Ibrahim, slotted in as an opener, had an impressive innings, posting 50 runs not out which included two fours.

Mwanaidi's displays were instrumental in the TCA Women's squad's ability to register the convincing total.

Tanzania's female golfers set for Entebbe Ladies Open Championship

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S female golfers have been invited to take part in this year's Entebbe Ladies Golf Open Championship in Uganda early next month. The annual Entebbe Ladies Golf Open is scheduled to tee off on March 5 and climax on March 6 at the par 71 lake side Entebbe Golf Club course.

The two-day tournament is expected to bring together top players from Uganda and also invited golfers from the East African region.

The national tournament aims at promoting the game and exchanging skills among the golfers.

Tanzania Ladies Golf Union (TLGU)'s Honorary Secretary Madina Iddi confirmed recently of the invitation from Uganda Ladies Golf Union (ULGU).

Madina said they have received the invitation and they have already informed TLGU's members countrywide.

She said: "This is an individual tournament that players can arrange and participate."

"It is one of the important tournaments for one to get experience and test other top golfers of the region," she revealed.

Madina rose to fame in golf when she won the overall title during the 2013 edition of the Entebbe Ladies Golf Open Championship.

The tournament's top title contenders include the defending champion, Ugandan Irene Nakalembe, also a six-time winner.

However, this time she will face a stiff challenge from well-established Tanzanian golfers, including Angel Eaton, Vicky Elias, Hawa Wanyeché, Neema Olomi and Madina, if all goes well.

Female golfers will battle it out in the group A eligible for golfers with handicap from 0 to 16- Silver division, group B for those with handicap from 17 to 25- Bronze while Group C is for those with handicap from 26 to 36.

She said the ladies are kind enough to also invite men who will play in the subsidiary category.

There will be group A for those with handicap from 0 to 9, group B for those who play off from handicap from 10 to 18 and group C for players with handicap from 19 to 28.

Madina said entry fee for female golfers in silver and bronze divisions will be Uganda Shillings 80,000 while subsidiary is Uganda Shillings 50,000.

Kaze: Yanga ready for Mbeya City FC in VPL



Yanga. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

CEDRIC Kaze, Yanga's head coach, has said his players are ready for their Vodacom Premier League (VPL) match against Mbeya City FC set for February 13 at Sokoine Stadium in Mbeya.

Kaze said that every league game is, to them, a final and they are aware that their opponents are determined to win, a situation which nevertheless does not bother him.

He noted: "Every player knows his responsibilities on the pitch, I believe my players are doing well on the pitch so it's important for us to win."

"The good thing is that no one knows what will happen tomorrow."

"We are looking at our preparations with great energy in the quest

for victory within 90 minutes."

"We respect Mbeya City FC is a good team, it is clear, but it will not make us enter the field with either little or no confidence, everything will be fine on the field and the fans will support us," he said.

Kaze also said that it is possible for him to field midfielders Carlos Fernandes and Said Ntibazonkiza in a match, depending on the type of opponents his squad will face.

Fernandes, nicknamed 'Carlinhos', and Ntibazonkiza, popularly known as 'Saïdo', have never played together for the outfit in any league game due to injuries sustained by Carlinhos, forcing him to be out of action while Saïdo was playing.

Kaze said that it is possible to use the players together depending on the type of game involved as he believes they have high standards due to their ability to score as well as create space.

He said: "Carlinhos and Saïdo are good players with great ability to score goals and create opportunities as well."

"It all depends on the type of opponents we will face, you can't field both in some of the matches, you will have to use one and the other will wait, basically now I'm happy to see they are all healthy," the tactician said.

Yanga are enjoying the driver's seat in the VPL, having played a total of 18 matches without losing and they have collected a total of 44 points.

She confidently put good knocks to show and made up for fellow opener Nasra Hamza's brief spell, with the latter posting two runs.

Nasra, a promising player for the squad and senior national women team, was caught by Caravans B's Vinod Vijayan from Vivek Acharya's delivery as the TCA Women squad's opener went for a big shot.

The remaining batters did not quite live up to expectations, leaving the crease in quick succession.

The team's other experienced batter, Monica Paschal, somewhat showcases her resilience for a couple of overs to end one run short of double digit figure.

She moreover had the audacity to put her resilience to show, blasting two fours.

Irene Kasembe chipped in with eight runs, which consisted of a boundary.

Nuru Omary, who scored nine runs not out, closed the innings with Mwanaidi. Vivek Goyal had most wickets during Caravans B squad's turn with the ball, given he recorded two wickets.

He gave away 15 runs in three overs, a spell which saw him post an economy rate of 5.00.

Much as they worked hard during Caravans B side's chase, the TCA Women failed to defend their score.

Caravans B outfit's cricketers, in response, posted 115 runs, dropping four wickets in 17.3 overs to emerge victorious.

They experienced a scare early on in the chase, as their opening batsmen, Vivek Goyal and Dhaneesh Dharmajan, had frustrating outing.

Goyal failed to replicate his stellar bowling showing, when he took the crease, exiting the crease with one run to his name.

Fellow opener Dharmajan could only notch two runs. He was caught by TCA Women team's Monica from Nasra's delivery.

Vinod Vijayan managed to stay for a few overs, posting 10 runs, Prabhu Subramani significantly boosted the score, posting 41 runs not out which included four fours.

Subramani formed solid partnership with Acharya, who recorded 31 runs which included four fours, to catapult Caravans B team to victory.

Top order batsman Jobin Joseph made his presence felt, posting 25 runs which included two fours.

Happy George, Mwanaidi, Monica and Nasra recorded one wicket each in what turned out to be futile attempt to defend their score.

The event, hosted by the regional cricket body, DC, under the auspices of TCA, gears towards boosting efforts to develop the game at the domestic level.

EATV
TUESDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 MPYA
12:30 Msosi Kitaani (r)
13:00 Wanawake Live (r)
13:30 Kali Za Wana
14:00 DK 10 za Maangamizi
14:30 Bball Kings Highlights (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 5SPORTS (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 5SELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)

**TONIGHT
@ 9:00**



Nirvana explores the hottest trends in fashion, beauty, art and lifestyle as well as interviews with notable people from the entertainment, art and fashion industries.

**eastafrica
RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

**88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM**

Flexibles by David Chikoko

