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# Bishops show hope in President Samia



Easter Mass is just over at the Catholic Church's Msimbazi Centre in Dar es Salaam, where it was held at national level - yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Reporters

RELIGIOUS leaders across the country yesterday stressed the need for Tanzanians to maintain peace and love, saying these values are vital in facilitating development, while expressing confidence and faith in the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Archbishop Isaac Amani of the Arusha Catholic archdiocese expressed concern over environmental destruction in various parts of the country, saying some regions are at risk of turning into semi-desert. He raised alarm over massive tree cutting as it contributes to climate change and food insecurity.

ELCT Northern Diocese Bishop Dr Solomon Massangwa said that closed businesses will re-open under the leadership of President Samia. "God will through our president revive all the dead companies, heal the sick and bring new hopes amidst unemployment challenges."

In their Easter greetings the clerics also urged the public to ally fears on COVID-19 and continue taking precautions against the pandemic which continues to wreak havoc in many parts of the world.

Bishop Beatus Kinyaiya of the Catholic diocese of Dodoma, in a sermon at St Paul of the Cross Parish, urged Tanzanians to continue safeguarding and honoring the prevailing peace for the country's swift socio-economic development.

"Peace is everything when it comes to development. So, don't dare to spoil the country's peace and tranquility," he told the

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## Conservation bodies map plastic pollution hotspots

By Getrude Mbagu

THE International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is working closely with the government and other stakeholders in support of efforts to fight plastic pollution.

To achieve this, the IUCN recently brought together stakeholders in a workshop in Dar es Salaam to evaluate a report titled 'National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting and Shaping Action for Tanzania.'

The guidance aims to provide a methodology for the country to identify plastic leakage 'hotspots,' find their impacts along the entire plastic value chain, to prioritise effective actions to stop the leakage at each hotspot.

Doyi Mazenzele, the IUCN country programme officer, said at the workshop that plastic pollution has a significant social, economic and ecological impact. Marine plastics threaten ocean health, human health, food safety and coastal tourism as well as contributing to climate change.

Jointly developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IUCN,

the guidance outline contributes to filling this gap by providing a methodological framework and practical tools applicable at different geographical scales, he said.

The guidance framework starts with mapping plastic leakage and its impacts across the value chain by collecting and analysing relevant data on plastic production, consumption, waste management and disposal, prioritising hotspots.

It enables governments in collaboration with key stakeholders to identify and implement corresponding interventions and instruments to address the prioritised hotspots, he said.

"Once adopted, we anticipate that the government, industries and other relevant stakeholders will find this guidance useful in shaping national and local strategies to close the plastic tap and improve circularity. Building upon this guidance, UNEP and IUCN are committed to further enhance the harmonisation of methodology at global level jointly with local partners and stakeholders, while simultaneously supporting the collection and sharing of data that addresses national and local priorities," he declared.

During the workshop, IUCN released a report on the state of plastic pollution in Tanzania, showing that

315,000 tonnes of plastic waste were generated in 2018, with around 34 percent of local plastic waste being collected.

"Because there are no sanitary landfill and incineration facilities, there is no

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## VP wants traders to be free, sights TRA

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

VICE President Dr Philip Mpango (pictured) has called on officials of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to stop threatening traders and leave them to conduct business freely.

The VP issued the remarks here in his Easter greetings at St Paul of the Cross Parish in Dodoma after he was invited to give his greetings by Father Onesmo Wisi.

He said TRA officials are supposed to work in accordance with the laws, and not through threats to business people because the government needs tax dues for the country's economic development.

"Leave traders to conduct their businesses freely because I need the tax that will be used to better the lives of poor Tanzanians and develop the country," he asserted.

He similarly put on guard embezzlers of public property and assets, sermonising that "from now on they should rise with Jesus Christ and work ethically."

"Today we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I call upon all public servants, the embezzlers to also resurrect with Christ so that they stop their acts of embezzlement."

"As the Padre has said, only the body



of the late President John Magufuli is no longer around, but his we continue to live with his deeds. Public officials and Tanzanians in general should hold in high esteem all his good deeds," he declared.

Dr Mpango further vowed that the nation belongs to the meek, hence it needs ethical public officials to spur national development and economic growth, as this is what the late Dr Magufuli was doing.

"We have spent 40 days to spiritually prepare ourselves (for Easter) so we should continue with the good deeds

as we were doing during this fasting and praying period so that we can live ethical lives as the scriptures demand," he stated.

He called on Tanzanians to put God at the forefront and pray for him as the task given to him was by no means easy.

"Every time I think, 60 million people look upon me and if you consider that the nation is mainly of the poor, it needs to make development strides. We also ask Tanzanians of all religious denominations to pray for President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the entire government to take the path that divinity wants for the nation of Tanzania," the VP intoned.

"Also pray for me so that I become a trustworthy Vice President who looks into the rights of the poor in our country. Do not leave me alone," he implored the gathering.

He said he understands many Tanzanians prayed for him when he fell sick, and that God wanted him to perform the duties he was now performing.

The VP conveyed President Samia's greetings to Christians and Tanzanians to celebrate Easter in peace and pray for the nation.

"The president said we should

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# Bishops show hope in President Samia

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gathering.

"Today is a holiday but let's make sure we do everything in moderation so that it is not a celebration that makes you do things that can put at risk even your Christianity," said Bishop Kinyaiya

Archbishop Juda Thadaeus Ruwa'ichi of the Dar es Salaam archdiocese urged Tanzanians to build a culture of assisting one another, especially those living in difficult conditions, at the Virgin Mary of Fatima Parish at Msimbazi Center.

Bishop Ruwa'ichi advised Christians to maintain faith and value scripture by sharing the good messages with their fellow Tanzanians.

"It is high time that we remember the needy wherever they are. What we celebrate today means God's mercy to the people. We have been set free, let us continue maintaining peace and have faith," he asserted.

The head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Bishop Dr Frederick Shoo expressed confidence in President Samia, urging Tanzanians to get ready for the development journey.

At his Easter homily at the ELCT Northern Diocese central parish in Moshi Urban, Bishop Dr Shoo was optimistic that President Samia will lead the nation in a way that is underlined by faith.

Father Ludovick Minde of the Christ the King Parish in Moshi said that despite the global COVID-19 pandemic, there was still hope for the future.

He said: "We need to continue praying to Almighty God to be safe. Easter is a special day for us; God has given us another day to live in the presence of COVID-19."

Head of the Anglican Church at the city centre St Alban Parish, Canon John Mlekano stressed the need for Tanzanians to allay fears over the pandemic and being careful in examining proposed vaccines.

"We should stop worrying about the coronavirus. There have been different reports around the globe with people threatening one another. We must continue praying and have faith in God," he said, stressing on the need to continue taking precautions by washing hands with soap and running water or using alcohol-based hand rubs.

In Manyara Region, Peter Konki of the

Elimu Pentecostal Church commended President Samia's recent directives to officials of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) that they should work to encourage businessmen to pay taxes and stop using vicious tax collection methods.

Rev Hosea Stephano of Lake Victoria Diocese - ELCT, urged Tanzanians to make sure they rise up with Christ and do all the good things that scripture sets out, noting that by doing good things, they will be spreading love and peace within families, communities and the country.

The lives of the early Christians are a good example for Tanzanians as under the leadership of the apostles, the early Christians embraced togetherness, loved one another and helped each other out.

Easter is a Christian holiday that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the Jewish week, after his death on the cross late afternoon before the break of dusk to usher in the Sabbath.

Christ was condemned by Jewish authorities who pressed on a skeptical Roman governor of the Galilee province to take note of indirect rule and allow that Jesus be put to death. Most of his disciples expected he would do a sign that eliminates the converging Roman military unit to arrest him and take him to trial by heads of the priesthood but he did not resist. Judas Iscariot, who beckoned Jesus to the military unit expecting him to smother the soldiers, then hanged himself.

Jesus began his ministry at 30 years of age and worked for three years, preaching and doing numerous miracles in the Judea and Samaria area that is currently Israel and 'occupied territories.' The Easter period is preceded by Lent—a 40-day period of fasting and prayer—ending with Holy Week, with various churches having different designations for instance as regarding Holy Thursday (the celebration of Jesus' Last Supper with his 12 disciples), Good Friday (on which Jesus' crucifixion is observed) and Easter Sunday. Although a holiday of high religious significance in the Christian faith, many traditions associated with Easter date back to pre-Christian, pagan times, while in Scripture it is closely related to the slaying of male first born children of Egypt, the last affliction upon which the Pharaoh allowed Israelites to leave enslavement in Egypt.



Archbishop Jude Thadaeus Ruwa'ichi (in mitre, holding crozier) of the Dar es Salaam Archdiocese of the Catholic Church leaves alongside his assistants after Easter Mass held at national level at Msimbazi Centre in the city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## Saudi Arabia joins efforts to reduce global carbon emission

By Correspondent Felix Andrew

THE Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has said it is ready to support African countries in an effort to reduce carbon gas emission and make the planet a safe place to live.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam over the weekend, the Charge de affairs of Saudi Arabia Embassy in Tanzania, Mohammed Alalyani, said that they recognize the challenges facing the planet regarding the gas emission.

He said the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will soon launch two largest reforestation projects in the world which will see billions of trees planted in their country and nearby areas.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognises the importance of protecting the environment, combating climate change and facing environmental challenges in the region which have clearly shown in high temperatures, low rainfall, high dust waves and desertification, creating an economic threat to the region, he said.

He added: "We announce the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative, the two initiatives that are to be launched soon aim to chart a path for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and

the region in protecting the planet, by clearly defining an ambitious road map that rallies the region and significantly contributes to achieving global targets in confronting climate change."

He said the announcement aims to join efforts with Middle Eastern Countries and commence work with the aim of announcing in the fourth quarter of this year detailed plans for initiatives and the mechanisms to achieve them, the effort will result in enhanced public health and will raise the quality of life for citizens and residents in the region.

Explaining, the official said Saudi Green Initiatives an ambitious national initiative aiming to improve the quality of life and protecting future generations, it includes several goals namely increasing the level of vegetation cover, reducing carbon emissions, combating pollution and land degradation and preserving marine life.

The initiative will entail a number of initiatives most notably, planting of 10 billion trees within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reducing carbon emission by more than 4 percent of global contribution. Launching an ambitious renewable energy program that will increase the share of energy

from renewable from 0.3 percent to 50 percent by 2030.

He said also said the Middle East Green Initiative which aims to coordinate efforts and keep abreast with regional and international developments, which the Kingdom launches as a road map for the region, contributing significantly to achieving the global targets to confront climate change, through various initiatives such as enhancing the efficiency of hydrocarbon technologies in the region.

Launching the largest reforestation plan in the world which aims to plant 50 billion trees in the middle East Region, representing 5 percent of global target for planting one trillion trees, and achieving a reduction of 2.5 percent of global carbon rates. "These joint efforts will contribute to achieving a reduction in carbon emission by more than 10 percent of the global contributions. He said the initiative will work in partnership with sister countries in the cooperation council for the Arab Gulf States and Middle Eastern Countries and in cooperation with all international allies we aim to work jointly on achieving the goals of the middle East Green Initiative" he said.

## VP wants traders to be free, targets TRA

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continue with what late Dr Magufuli has left for us, extol peace since that is the foundation

of the Constitution," he said, also laying emphasis on working hard to build the nation.

For his part, Fr. Wisi asked the

VP to convey congratulatory messages to the defense and security organs for their good work during the Easter holidays



China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation project manager Lu Haiqiang (in helmet) shows Works and Transport minister Dr Leonard Chamuriho (2nd-R, foreground) and other government officials the specific areas the Standard Gauge Railway will traverse between Isaka and Mwanza. The minister was leading a delegation on a visit to Simiyu and Mwanza at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

AFRICA needs carefully-calibrated domestic policies and stronger support from the international community to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and return to its path of stronger growth, the head of the IMF and the African Caucus has said.

International monetary fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva and Domitien Ndihekubwayo, chairman of the African Caucus, issued a joint statement after a meeting of the African Consultative Group, which includes senior representatives from 12 African countries.

They said the key priority remained to significantly scale up COVID-19 vaccine production

## IMF, African Caucus chair says much stronger global support needed for Africa

capacity and accelerate vaccine roll-out, but it was also essential to prioritize policies to help protect livelihoods and vulnerable groups. Africa remains gripped by the Covid-19 health emergency which triggered its worst economic shock in decades and saw millions of people fall into poverty.

While oil-rich North Africa was expected to grow faster, the recovery was likely to be much slower in Sub-Saharan Africa, the IMF and African Caucus leaders said, noting that per capita

incomes in many countries were not expected to return to pre-crisis levels before 2025.

They called for transformative policies, including increased investment in digital technologies and climate resilient infrastructure. Strengthening the business climate would spur productivity and attract private investment, they said, as would advancing trade and integration through implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

## Conservation bodies map plastic pollution hotspots

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proper disposal of waste in Tanzania. 95 percent of the plastic waste is mismanaged and can potentially leak to the ocean, rivers and lakes, with 29,000 tonnes of plastic leaking," the report indicated.

The findings cited the city of Dar es Salaam as contributing intensely in plastic pollution.

Plastic pollution produces massive negative effects locally, requiring coordinated efforts to take up the IUCN's programme of work on marine plastics. It has focused principally on seeking solutions to close the plastics tap and tackle plastic pollution at its source, in which case local government authorities need to build plastic waste facilities to facilitate effective and efficient management of plastic wastes.

A regional study showed that since last July for Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa, Tanzania has a low level of plastic wastes related to pollution.

"In Tanzania the quantity of plastic waste generated in 2018 was roughly 315,000 tonnes and the per capita plastic generation is 5.6 kg / year, which is well below the Africa average (14/cap/year) or the world average of 29kg/ year. However, it is crucial that this challenge is addressed before we arrive at a severe level of environmental pollution," said Mazenzele.

Research conducted in urban areas in the Coast and Lake Zones and including Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, and Mwanza by looking at the realities of plastic waste generation, collection, segregation as well as the types and its sources by sectors contributing to plastic waste.

People living in big cities have higher demand and more often use plastic materials, and that is why urban dwellings are the most polluted, he said, noting further that items that are hotspots for plastic wastes include bags, lids, bottles, fishing nets and caps.

The study proposes some priority interventions to address the challenge like reducing littering in urban areas, reducing demand and use of, and plastic single use, especially on-the-go, and reducing open burning of plastic wastes.

The private sector, civil society and government institutions have key roles to play in identifying major sources of plastics and how best to reuse such materials, and provide education to the public to reduce waste disposal. They also need to build waste control infrastructure in cities and other urban areas, he stated.

About 90 per cent of plastic waste is improperly managed (uncollected or improperly disposed), with the collection rate estimated at around 40 per cent, the coordinator affirmed, elaborating that just four per cent of waste collected is recycled, out of 40 percent of total plastic waste that could have been usefully recycled.

Open burning of plastic waste poses significant risks for human health (due to the release of noxious chemical substances such as dioxins and particulate matters) and directly contributes to climate change.

"Collection of waste varies greatly around the country, with the highest rate in Dar es Salaam (58 percent) and the lowest in rural areas where there is no organised waste collection," he

specified.

Dr Hussein Mohamed Omary, a senior environmental officer in the Vice-President's Office, said that in order to succeed in environmental conservation, the three sectors need to work together.

The government should create an enabling environment, where the office of the Vice-President has already begun drafting changes in laws, regulations and guidelines, he affirmed, pointing out that new guidelines will inform the private sector on how to reduce waste production and reuse it.

Romanus Tairo, an environmental management officer with the National Environment Management Council (NEMC), said the council is striving to identify materials that can be used in the manufacture of bags and other products so that by the end of use they bio-degrade, thus not spreading pollution.

He acknowledged that a large portion of the country's waste was not disposed of properly, is left untreated and not recycled.

"Pollution through plastic and solid waste destroys the environment owing to the production, usage and disposal of waste. The council is conducting research to see how we can create bags from raw materials that can decompose," he said.

IUCN says that every year over 300 million tonnes of plastics are produced, around half used for single-use items such as shopping bags, cups and straws. Up to eight million tonnes of plastic ends up in the oceans every year and make up 80 percent of marine debris from surface waters to deep-sea sediments, the global network added.





Residents of Busungu and Kwikerege village in Musoma Rural constituency wait for their turns to draw water at a tap installed during yesterday's launch of a Lake Victoria water project. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

# Govt appeals to TRA to use new tactics in revenue collections

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

Finance and Planning minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba has appealed to the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to change tactics in revenue collections, saying there is need to adopt a friendlier approach.

He said officials from the authority are on record, harassing and threatening tax payers, situation that force some members of the business community to hide money out of the regular systems.

Dr Nchemba said it has reached a point where many traders do not want to keep their money in the banks, fearing that the revenue body can easily confiscate the money.

Speaking while officiating at the opening of a one-day meeting that brought together officials from TRA and the ministry, the minister noted that having new tax base does not mean imposing unnecessary revenue collections on tax payers.

"Much as we strive to increase revenue collections, it completely wrong to unfairly force tax payers to pay what they do not deserve" he said, adding that such measures simply kill the existing businesses.

He likened tax collection to a livestock keeper whose cow has delivered and for him to have a sustainable milking period, has to mind about welfare of the calf. Dr Nchemba said if the farmers milk so much leaving the calf without any milk to suck, it will eventually die and the cow will no longer produce milk.

The minister said the meeting was aimed at reflecting on where the ministry is in terms of implementation of the government policies, what has been achieved and what need to be done as part of the way

forward.

He said it was also meant to reflect on directives issued by President Samia Suluhu Hassan during two events when she received reports from the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) and that of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) as well as her speech during the swearing of new ministers.

Dr Nchemba noted that the president expressed concern on the way TRA officials collect revenue, noting that there are a lot of irregularities which in most cases force investors to flee the country.

He said for the nation to prosper economically, a lot of changes must take place including creating new tax base and protecting the existing ones.

The minister noted that the government consider reviewing tax policies and change those that have made the country not to prosper economically. He explained that many members of Parliament have raised complained about the existing tax regime, calling for review.

Minister Nchemba specifically noted that TRA always been demanding traders and the business community to produce past tax records, dating five to ten years ago and failure leads to to penalty. "The business community is busy focusing on what future hold sand not keeping already cleared records" he said, challenging anyone in the meeting who can produce his or her 2015 salary slip to do so.

He said the government committed to increase tax base professionally without killing the existing enterprises that have helped create jobs and increase revenue collections.

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

## WWF donates 172m/- vehicle to TNRF in war on climate change

WORLD Wildlife Fund (WWF) has donated a vehicle to the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (TNRF) to assist in the implementation of projects against the effects of climate change in the country's various Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

The vehicle, a Toyota Land-cruiser Hardtop valued at 172m/- was handed over in Arusha by Tanzania WWF operation manager Lucason Maiga to TNRF director

Zacharia Fustine.

Speaking during the handing over event, Maiga said the vehicle will assist in the wildlife projects in Wildlife Management Areas including those at Enduimet, Ikoma, Makao, Lake Natron and Mkomazi national Park under TNRF supervisor.

Receiving the vehicle, TNRF

Director Zacharia Faustine said the vehicle will help in reaching the targeted people as well in the fight against wildlife poaching in the areas.

Earlier, explaining the aim of the WWF for the Southern Kenya, Northern Tanzania Transboundary project, the coordinator of the project Rolf Dieter Sprung

said it focuses in assisting the supervision of wildlife protection by incorporating surrounding communities.

He cited the projects that will directly benefit the communities as including drilling of water wells for both humans and livestock, solar power and better livestock keeping.

## Dr Mwinyi urges traders against hiking prices during Ramadhan

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has appealed to business people against hiking prices for various basic commodities during the coming month of Ramadhan.

Dr Mwinyi's appeal was issued at the weekend in his greetings to Muslim followers and the public in general soon after Friday prayers at Amani Mosque in Unguja.

In the greetings Dr Mwinyi said already there are already signs for price hikes in anticipation of reaping huge profits during the Holy month, adding that it was not acceptable.

He pleaded with traders and called on them to understand that during the month of

Ramadhan is the period to reap heavenly rewards by serving the people by reducing the amount of profit they get to enable Muslims to do the fast without much hardships.

He said he also understands that at the moment the world was facing trade challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has created shortages of essential commodities.

He called on traders to consider public interests by reducing their profit margins to enable ordinary get their essential commodities.

He also used the occasion to pray to God all Muslim followers to conduct the fast peacefully.

In regard to recent House and Councillor by-elections in Zanzibar and Pemba, Dr Mwinyi

congratulated the peace and tranquility that had reigned.

He reminded that nothing of importance could be achieved anywhere in the world without peace.

He said the Phase 8 Government which was only four months old will take time to adapt but said efforts were being made to ensure everybody who was given responsibility to perform his duties for the interest of the country.

He said he will continue to oversee that every official was accountable in his/her position.

He also used the occasion to praise the Amani Mosque Committee for giving him the opportunity to give his greetings to Muslims after Friday prayers.



Straton Chilongola (3rd-R, in specs), NMB Bank Plc's southern highlands zone manager, pictured at the weekend symbolically presenting 204 corrugated iron roofing sheets worth 6.1m/- to Kyela district commissioner Claudia Kitta (3rd-L) for use by Kyela district hospital. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

# Congratulation



**Hon. Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba**  
Minister for Finance and Planning

Board of Directors, Management and Staff of TPB Bank Plc joins fellow Tanzanians in congratulating Hon Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba for being sworn in as the new Minister for Finance and Planning of the United Republic of Tanzania.





# Easter Mass as held in Dar, Dodoma, Masasi, Zanzibar



Bishop Dr Dickson Chilongani (R) of the Anglican Church's Diocese of Central has a word with his assistants after Easter Mass in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila



Father John Mchomba of Zanzibar's Saint Joseph's Catholic Church Cathedral inscribes a special message on an Easter Eve candle - on Saturday night. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba



Zanzibar's Saint Joseph's Cathedral choir performs during Easter Eve Mass - on Saturday night. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba



Father John Mchomba of Zanzibar's Saint Joseph's Catholic Church Cathedral holds an Easter Eve candle in readiness for Easter Mass. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba



Easter Mass well under way at one of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) churches in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Easter Mass in progress at an ELCT church in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



A choir performs during Easter Mass - held at national level at the Catholic Church's Msimbazi Centre yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma



Easter mass under way at one of the Anglican Church of Tanzania's churches in the Masasi Diocese in Mtwara Region yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Hamis Nasri





A nursing officer (L) with Dar es Salaam's Mwananyamala referral hospital pictured holding one of the babies born during Easter (yesterday). Photo: Correspondent Idris Magomeni

## Bahi District's elderly women express satisfaction over the govt's efforts to empower less privileged members of society

By Polycarp Machira, Bahi

ACROSS section of elderly women in Bahi district, Dodoma region have expressed satisfaction with the government's efforts to economically empower the less privileged members of the society through the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF).

Speaking during a tour by TASAF officials in the district recently, they noted that life could have been completely difficult without support from TASAF.

TASAF is implementing Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) in which one of its sub components is Cash Transfer (CT), an initiative that helps enrolled poor households to sustain themselves, enabling children to get good nutrition, among others.

The objective is to enable poor households to increase incomes and opportunities while improving consumption. With the vision to empower the poor households, graduate out of poverty and have sustainable social and economic development, it has touched lives thousands of Tanzanians.

Esteria Mwanza, a 101 years old residence of Mwitikila village in Bahi district is of the beneficiaries who argues that without the support she could be living in abject poverty for she no longer have the energy to do any income generating activity.

The mother of five children spent her first payment of Sh 36,000 in 2014 to buy five chicken that later multiplied, enabling her to buy a goat. Due to poultry diseases she was forced to abandoned the enterprise, focusing to focus on goat keeping.

"I thank the government for the initiative that has helped the elderly like me cope with life and my request is for the new president to continue with the same spirit" said Esteria.

Her sentiments were echoed by Joyce Samambe who managed to save some money out of the Sh 45,000 she gets from TASAF after every two months and build a mud walled house.



**I thank the government for the initiative that has helped the elderly like me cope with life and my request is for the new president to continue with the same spirit**

The 75 years old mother of five children said she bought chicken that later reproduced and sold them and bought a pig. She argued that the pig produced piglets which she sold and bought ten iron sheets.

She added more iron sheets and using own labour force, they managed to make mud blocks for the wall and thereafter build a two bedroomed house. "TASAF has bought life in our lives" she noted.

Her husband, Jackson Semamba (82) while talking about the support from TASAF simply said, "I'm glad that when my wife gets the money, we budget together as a family on how to spend it".

Lucy Masira, a residence of Mndemu village in the district said she managed to save money from TASAF that helped her afford school needs for her daughter, currently studying at Korogwe Girls Secondary School in Tanga region.

The 51 years old mother of three children who gets Sh 32,000 after every two months said she managed to save up to Sh 500,000 after she bought chicken that later reproduced, enabling her to buy two pigs.

Currently, she is saving to buy a mattress and thereafter buy a television set. "As a widow I could not have achieved all these without support from TASAF" she said, arguing that she can now face the future without fear.

## Jumaza case against Z'bar Alcohol Control Board for hearing May 14

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE High Court case against Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board filed by the Zanzibar Council of Imams (JUMAZA) is now before Judge Rabia Hussein Mohamed of the Zanzibar High Court.

Judge Rabia has said the case will be heard on May 14 and 19 this year for government attorneys to respond to the petition from the plaintiffs as well as to hear preliminary to be submitted by the government's side.

Judge Rabia said the High Court has agreed to give ample time to government attorneys to respond to the petition from the plaintiffs and to submit preliminary objections to the plaintiff.

In the plaintiff, JUMAZA says Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board violated Section 33(l) of the Zanzibar Alcohol Control Act (No 9 of 2020) after it issued licences to import alcoholic drinks to more than eight firms.

Omar Sheha Omar, the advocate for the plaintiffs said

the Act stipulates that licenses for the import of alcoholic drinks will be given to not more than three importers on laid down conditions, including the importer must be a Zanzibari, must be a tax payer, must have a warehouse and vehicle(s) for distribution.

He said the Board failed to respect Section 28(k) of the Act that has set a condition for bars to be more than 1,000 metres away from areas with basic social services including schools, health



**The Act, No. 9 of 2020 came into operation after it was endorsed by the Zanzibar House of Representatives and signed by the Zanzibar president on May 11 2020**

centres, mosques, churches, madrassas markets or bus stands.

The Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board is represented by attorneys from the office of the Zanzibar Attorney General- Abubakary Omar and Habiba Haji.

The mention was attended by 20 JUMAZA leaders from 11 districts in Unguja and Pemba/

Earlier the Chairman of the Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board Abdulrazaki Abdulkadir said he decided to issue licences to more than three firms to import alcoholic drinks so as to save the government from losing the much needed revenue.

The Act, No. 9 of 2020 came into operation after it was endorsed by the Zanzibar House of Representatives and signed by the Zanzibar president on May 11 2020.

The apparent breach of the Act has created a huge debate in the Isles prayer houses since January this year before JUMAZA decided to file a case against the Board over the law's violation.

By Guardian Reporter

RESIDENTS of Malampaka in Maswa District, Simiyu region have been extolling the benefits of the proposed 349km Phase V of the Standard Gauge railway (SGR) to be constructed from Mwanza to Isaka, including employment opportunities and economic growth

Speaking before Works and Transport minister Dr Leonard Chamuriho, one of the residents, Mzee Juma Saidi said they were prepared to participate in taking care of the equipment to be used in the construction work.

"We have already mobilized ourselves to work, as we have already seen the arrival of part of the equipment, we are ready to work hard to get income, but we shall also involve ourselves in the creation of history through the project," he added.

For his part, Dr Chamuriho said the government is satisfied with the preparations by the contractor

## Simiyu residents excited by Isaka-Mwanza SGR project

as they have already identified camp sites, quarries and other essential locations for the project. "As you can see the contractor is at the construction site as major preparations have been finalized including equipment, what remains is for president Samia Suluhu to come and lay the foundation stone," he added.

Chamuriho said the ministry will continue to closely supervise all sectorial projects to be completed in time and called on the people to use the opportunities to economically develop themselves.

He also praised the Misungwi District Commissioner Juma Sweda to mobilise the people to give room to areas where the railway will pass promising they would be adequately compensated after evaluation exercise was completed.

The Ministry's Deputy Minister Mwita waitara called on the people and Mwanza and Simiyu regions residents who would be employed in the project not to involve themselves in theft of equipment and fuel from the project sites.

For his part, Misungwi district commissioner Juma Sweda thanked the government for implementing the huge national project and promised the minister for its protection.

The 1,219-km Dar es Salaam - Mwanza SGR project has been divided into five phases: Dar-Morogoro; Morogoro-Makutupora; Makutupora-Tabora; Tabora-Isaka and Isaka-Mwanza.

The contractor for the last phase is China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC-CRCC) whose contract was signed in January this year.



## REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

RFQ Title: ACHIEVE Procurement

RFQ number: 2020-A034-03

Date of Solicitation: 5th April 2021

Submission Date and time: 14th & 19th April 2021 11:00am

Closing Date and time: 19th April 2021 11:00am (Dar es salaam, Tanzania)

Estimated Delivery/ Performance Date: 30th June 2021

Pact Inc. is an international non-profit organization with its headquarters in Washington, DC. Pact serves communities challenged by poverty and marginalization because we envision a world where everyone owns their future. To do this, we build systemic solutions in partnership with local organizations, businesses, and government. Our goal is thriving, resilient communities where those we serve are heard, capable, and vibrant.

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 is looking to purchase office furniture, Laptops, Desktops, Printers, Photocopier machines, Motorcycles and Vehicles to support and strengthening the social welfare department at Local Government Authority (LGA) to deliver quality social welfare services.

Pact Tanzania now invites quotes from eligible, registered companies to supply and distribute items as per below lots.

**Lot1:** Office Furniture (Office tables & Chairs)

**Lot2:** ICT equipment (Laptops, Desktops, Printers and Photocopiers)

**Lot3:** Motorcycles (125cc – above)

**Lot4:** Motorvehicles (4WD)

Interested, eligible vendors should request full terms of reference and distribution list through email [procurementTZ@pactworld.org](mailto:procurementTZ@pactworld.org) before 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 with lot interested in the subject line.

**Vendors can apply to one or more lots listed above. Please note, an application to more than one lot requires a separate and complete submission.**

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

**The deadline for lot 3& 4 is 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 11am EAT and for Lot 1 & 2 is 19th April 2021 at 11am EAT.**

PACT will open all bids 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.
10. Pact may choose to award only part of the required items in this solicitation or to issue multiple awards for the same Lot.



## Farmers in central zone regions introduced to better technology

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

FARMERS in central zone regions have been capacitated on modern technologies and uses of the improved seed varieties for the cultivation of strategic crops that are flourishing well in the semi-arid regions.

The drought-resistant food and crop-based raw materials in question include sorghum, millet and finger-millet.

Speaking over the weekend in Ipala ward in Dodoma Region during a special training to impart the farmers with agronomic practices needed for the professional cultivation of the crops, Senior Plant Breeder at the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI), Hombolo Centre, Dr. Lameck Nyaligwa, said the crops have started to attract number of farmers in many regions.

He informed that the centre was in a robust project to research and invent improved and hybrid seed varieties with an eye to trigger for mass production of the crops in question within the country.

Giving more details, Dr. Nyaligwa said the centre has so far invented the best improved seed variety for finger millet, dubbed U-15 and P224, the varieties which are currently used by many farmers from across the country.

"For instance, the improved seed varieties for finger millet are being currently cultivated massively by farmers in Kondoa and Kongwa districts of Dodoma, Serengeti, Singida, Sumbawanga, Kilimanjaro rural and Same," he expressed.

He added that the focus was to ensure the farmers are imparted with helpful awareness on application of the improved varieties as well as relevant agronomic practices for the professional cultivation of the crops. "The improved seed has multiple advantages, firstly, they are drought tolerant but also they

enable farmers to realize bumper harvests," he added.

Despite facing some financial constraints, he said the centre was working tirelessly to motivate the farmers to massively invest into cultivation of the crops targeting both, to increase their individual income and heighten the country's capability to produce food and crop-based raw materials.

"The crops have for years received negative attention and support, but they are rich in nutritionally, they are potential in iron and zinc," he observed.

Following the centre's seed innovations, he informed that there was a great demand for the seeds among farmers from across the country, the development which calls for enough capital to enable for increased production and distribution of the seeds to the farmers. The timely training was organized by TARI as part to observe this year's Farmer's Field Day (FFD) in the region.

Located at least 46km from Dodoma Capital City, the centre is mandated to undertake research on sorghum, millet and ...ranging from agronomy, breeding, protection, post-harvest processing, and value addition.

The centre is also in a contract with Tanzania Breweries Limited (TBL) for researching and producing sorghum hybrid seeds varieties with needed grain tannin for brewing Eagle Beers.

Under the financial patronage from the South African-based AB InBev Company, worth at least t 11,000 USD \$, the robust project has opened a fresh successive agribusiness door to farmers in Dodoma region, and the central zone at large. The key agricultural initiatives has already saw establishment of a vast hectares of preliminary field trial plantation of needed sorghum seed varieties at the state-owned center in Hombolo and in Kibaigwa, in Kongwa district at acreage of at least 10,000 plantation.



Boaz Ambonya, local government chairman for Manyara Street in Mirerani township, has an audience with mining stakeholders at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

## Elders in Moshi urge government to have more staff caring for them

By Correspondent James Lanka,

Moshi

ELDERS residing at an elderly home in Moshi District, Kilimanjaro Region have appealed to the government to consider employing more staff to take care of the senior citizens as they are currently attended by two people.

Speaking on behalf of his fellow elders, James Madido (79) said they are in need of more servants

because most of the elders at the residence are sick.

"Most of us are sick and unable to do anything. We are almost fifteen here, but we have only two workers who cannot manage to take care of us all," said Madido when speaking shortly after the elders received an assistance of different items including commode chairs worth more than 4m/-.

The commode toilet seats are meant for people who are unable to use the toilet the regular way

and need assistance.

The donation was provided by a Good Samaritan from Mwika, Moshi Rural District, in Kilimanjaro Region—James Mmbando who also provided various food items and hand washing soaps.

Marry Masaawe who works at the centre said: "We appeal to the government to allocate more workers here because most of the elders are in need of special assistance."

Meanwhile, Mmbando

asserted that the donation was meant to help the senior citizens especially those unable to manage to use toilets the regular way.

"I used to visit the elders frequently; I decided to mobilize funds from my friends to purchase them the commode chairs and food items. We only target at making their lives better," said Mmbando, mentioning his friends as Martha Urio, Suzan Ngeiyamo and Franziska Aadler from Germany.



Jeff Edwards (L), president of the US-based Energy Control Systems, addresses a press conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday on the importance of installing devices specifically designed to protect sensitive equipment including switchboards, computers and ACs from the effects of voltage fluctuations. With him is marketing officer Samson Oadero. Photo: Correspondent Sabato Kasika

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

MEDIA practitioners in Zanzibar have been urged to maintain and honour the government of national unity (GNU) in the Indian Ocean archipelago with the aim of bringing unity and solidarity to all Zanzibaris.

Director of the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA, Zanzibar) Dr Mzuri Issa made then call over the weekend when speaking at one-day media training to journalists. The training was meant to honor the importance of reconciliation in the country.

Dr Mzuri said the existence of reconciliation in the country is an important factor that also leads the country to make further progress as peace is the most important value for every

## Media practitioners in Z'bar urged to safeguard and honour the GNU

country that needs economic growth. She said journalists have a responsibility to ensure that every citizen of Zanzibar benefits from the presence of a national unity government in one way or another.

"The Government of National Unity is for all journalists. Work to ensure that everyone benefits from the existence of this government regardless of party or ethnicity," she added.

In line with that, she reminded journalists to make sure they maintain balance in their information without hurting anyone as doing so

is against the ethics of the profession.

The facilitator of the training from Internews Alhaj Mwadini said that journalists are important people, hence need to assist the community and the government in general.

Dr Mzuri said if journalists carry out their duties properly it is an important pillar that will bring efficiency and increase accountability to public servants and even society as a whole.

One of the participants, Ally Rashid said it was the right time because Zanzibar is in a national

unity government that needs to be nurtured and embraced.

Rashid said the training helped him realize the importance of reconciliation for the community and its effects.

On July 31, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar held a referendum to decide on the government of national unity so as to end the impasse between the two main political camps, each dominating one of the two islands of Unguja and Pemba. The outcome of the referendum was that the majority of Zanzibaris voted in favour of the government of national unity.

## Experimental therapy for parasitic heart disease may help stop COVID-19 - study

By Special Correspondent

RESEARCHERS at the University of California San Diego found that the chemical inhibitor K777 reduces the coronavirus' ability to infect cell lines by blocking human enzyme cathepsin L. Clinical trials are underway.

James McKerrow, MD, PhD, dean of the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at University of California San Diego, has long studied neglected tropical diseases -- chronic and disabling parasitic infections that primarily affect poor and underserved communities in developing nations.

They're called "neglected" because there is little financial incentive for pharmaceutical companies to develop therapies for them.

One of these neglected diseases is Chagas disease, the leading cause of heart failure in Latin America, which is spread by "kissing bugs" carrying the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*. These parasites produce an enzyme called cruzain that helps them replicate and evade the human immune system. McKerrow's research team looks for inhibitors of cruzain -- small molecules that might form the basis for new anti-parasitic medicines. One particularly effective cruzain inhibitor is called K777.

Then, in the spring of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic began to sweep through the United States. Researchers quickly reported that SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes Covid-19, can't dock on and infect human cells unless a human enzyme called cathepsin L cleaves the virus' spike protein.

And it just so happens that cathepsin L looks and acts a lot like cruzain.

In a study published March 31, 2021, by ACS Chemical Biology, McKerrow and the team show that low concentrations of K777 inhibit cathepsin L can reduce SARS-CoV-2's ability to infect four host cell lines, without harming the cells.

"Since K777 inhibits a human enzyme, not the virus itself, it's our hope that it's less likely the virus will evolve resistance against it," said McKerrow, co-senior author of the study with Thomas Meek, PhD, of Texas A&M University.

K777 wasn't equally effective in all cell lines. That's likely because not all cell lines produced the same amount of cathepsin L or the same amount of ACE2, the host cell receptor that the virus' spike protein uses to latch onto cells after it's cleaved by cathepsin L. The inhibitor was best at preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection in the cells that produced the most cathepsin L and ACE2.

The cell lines tested were derived from African green monkey kidney epithelium, human cervical epithelium and two types of human lung epithelium. While an important research tool, cell lines such as these are not necessarily representative of patients. They are easy to grow and manipulate in research laboratories because they are cancer cells, but that also means their molecular features likely differ from the average person's healthy lung or cervical cells. "We were surprised at just how effective K777 is in blocking viral infection in the lab," McKerrow said. "Yet under usual circumstances, it would be impractical and unlikely that we ourselves would be able to move the compound so quickly into clinical trials. We're fortunate that an 'entrepreneur-in-residence' program here at UC San Diego has helped bridge that gap."



## African Development Bank, WHO enhance Covid-19 case management in South Sudan

JUBA

THE African Development Bank and World Health Organisation (WHO) have delivered essential medical supplies, including intensive care unit (ICU) beds, medicines, lifesaving biomedical equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to South Sudan's Ministry of Health in support of the country's ongoing Covid-19 response.

The supplies include 12 ICU beds, over 5 000 infection prevention and control items, 20 oxygen concentrators, 71 blood pressure monitoring machines and over 250 boxes of various essential medicines to treat Covid-19 patients across 18 prioritized treatment facilities as well as support home isolation intervention.

"Infectious diseases continue to pose a major public health threat in South Sudan", said Dr Richard Lako, Incident Manager at the Ministry of Health. "The African Development Bank's generous contribution will strengthen the response to tackle the negative impacts of Covid-19, including the protection and safety of health workers, an important priority," Dr Lako added.

African Development Bank Country Manager for South Sudan, Benedict Kanu, said the health situation was compounded by the threat of rising food insecurity. "Until a safe, effective and affordable coronavirus vaccine is available, the risk of infection will continue, particularly given South Sudan's high level of vulnerability to the pandemic."

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization had warned that

South Sudan faces a potential famine: "The risk of Covid-19 in South Sudan is rated as high, given the inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Therefore, we cannot over-emphasize the need to strengthen health systems and activate a timely response to cases of Covid-19 and future pandemics."

Since the beginning of the pandemic, WHO and the South Sudanese Health Ministry have trained over 380 health workers on the clinical care of Covid-19 patients at national and sub-national levels across the country.

Besides materials supply, WHO has provided technical support, including the development, adaptation and revision of guidance and standard operating procedures for an effective Covid-19 response to the Health Ministry and partners.

Dr Fabian Ndenzako, WHO representative for South Sudan said the supplies were procured based on prioritized needs to bolster the country's Covid-19 response.

"Pandemics of the magnitude such as Covid-19 and other health emergencies often result in the disruption of health services and greater mortality, largely due to inadequate essential medicines and equipment in the context of an overburdened health care services," Dr Ndenzako said.

"WHO is grateful for the partnership with the AfDB that will help us to support the Ministry of Health in the fight against Covid-19 and support continuity of health as part of mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic", Dr Ndenzako added.



UNITED WE CROSS: With no bridge in place, residents of Kikuba village in Mbeya Region literally join hands in crossing Mwalisi River. Correspondent Nebart Msokwa captured the scene yesterday.

## Late MP Ndesamburo's family establishes special foundation

By Guardian Correspondent, Moshi

THE Family of former Moshi Urban Member of Parliament, the late Dr Philemon Ndesamburo (CHADEMA), has established a special foundation known as 'Philemon Ndesamburo Foundation (PNF)' aimed to assist the society, especially to elevate women and spur development.

PNF Chairman Ndehorio Ndesamburo said the Foundation aims to continue part of the late

MP's deeds in humanitarian work including serving the society by involving other development stakeholders.

"Our first project is to develop the woman; as we women have carried the burden of family upkeep. It is impossible to discuss people's development without discussing how women are a great mobilizing force in development, she said.

During his time, the late Ndesamburo was among the founders of Chama cha

Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) and one of the members of its Board of Trustees. He died May 31 2017 at KCMC Hospital and buried June 6 the same year.

He died from sudden heart complications while in his office at Keys Hotel in Moshi Municipality.

Ndesamburo's contribution to the community during his time include the construction of Pasua Police Station, which serves Pasua ward residents.

He will also be remembered for construction of a ward pre-term babies - before attaining 37 weeks, at St Joseph's Mission Hospital in Moshi Municipality as well as donating an incubator for the babies.

Another Ndesamburo's contribution was the construction of a maternity ward at Pasua Health Centre including an ambulance, as well as revamping the maternity ward at Majengo Healthy Centre also in Moshi Municipality.



Dr Lameck Nyaligwa (R), a senior plant breeder with the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute centre at Hopbollo in Dodoma Region, demonstrates to farmers late last week the implementation of agronomic practices in the cultivation of drought-resistant crops. It was during a Farmers' field day in Ipaia ward. Photo: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

By Special Correspondent

FARM Africa and UN Women are supporting women in the Ikungi district of Tanzania to increase their incomes through sunflower farming.

Female farmers are currently being held back by poor production practices and lack of access to markets. Under UN Women's Realising gender through empowering women and adolescent girls programme, Farm Africa is closing the gender gap in the sector by training sunflower farmers on how to access quality supplies and boost their productivity to meet the growing domestic demand for sunflower oil.

## Sunflower fast empowering female farmers in Tanzania

This year, the project has provided farmers with 1kg of sunflower hybrid seeds valued at 30,000/-. Collectively, the seeds will enable farmers to harvest 117,000kg of sunflower at a value of 93.6m/- of which 50.4m/- will go to 163 female sunflower farmers.

Sunflower farmer Sophia Rajab has benefitted from Farm Africa's support. Through training and access to hybrid seeds, she has cultivated two acres of sunflower

that consist of three varieties. Sophia confirmed that this is her best crop performance to date and she hopes to harvest over 24 bags of sunflower seeds, which will enable her to earn 1.3m/- if sold at the average price of 800tzs/kg.

Alongside training, Farm Africa is working with cooperatives to increase female membership. Although women make up 68% of Tanzania's sunflower sector they only represent 17% of cooperative

members. This will enable female farmers to access quality inputs such as seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, and storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses.

Building on the experience of Flourishing Futures, a project that supported 10,000 farmers to establish sunflower businesses, Farm Africa is linking cooperatives with suppliers and viable markets to provide women with the capital to expand their businesses.

## Crippling debt keeps developing countries mired in poverty - UN

By Lisa Schlein

A NEW study warns developing countries will have difficulty recovering from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic without relief from crushing debt burdens keeping them mired in poverty. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is releasing the study ahead of next week's World Bank-International Monetary Fund meetings.

The study finds 120 low- and middle-income economies will owe more than \$1 trillion in debt service payments this year. It reports 72 countries, classified as vulnerable, are responsible for more than half that accumulated debt.

UNDP administrator Achim Steiner says these 72 countries are facing sovereignty or liquidity challenges that will crowd out important socioeconomic expenditures crucial for the well-being of their people.

"We need bold new mechanisms. These are urgently needed to help low- and middle-income countries address crippling debt, which has been sharply worsened by Covid-19 and which will prevent vital investments to tackle poverty and climate change for years to come. Investments that we are seeing in a number of wealthier countries now playing out and unfolding. ... The service of public debt crowds out room for these investment in developing countries," he said.

Steiner said most of the advanced economies are looking forward to a rapid recovery from the pandemic this year. However, the same cannot be said for the poorer countries. He said they are facing increasing poverty as Covid-19 continues to wreak havoc with the physical and economic health of their societies. Steiner said a number of wealthier countries are investing

significant amounts of money in stimulus packages to tackle the pandemic and boost their economies.

He said similar investments are needed in developing countries, adding they would be transformative.

For example, he said, funding in Africa could help the continent recover from the pandemic based on green energy technology.

"There are, as of this year, still 600 million people on the African continent that have no access to electricity. Nothing would be simpler than to drive their recovery and an energy transition with a significant investment in renewable energy infrastructure - helping to both accelerate development on the continent and accelerate the transition towards clean energy infrastructure for what will soon be 2 billion people on the African continent by the middle of the century," Steiner said.

UNDP economists say debt distress and vulnerability do not just threaten the poorest countries. They say middle-income countries and small island states also are buckling under heavy debt burdens.

They urge delegates attending next week's World Bank-IMF meeting to agree to provide liquidity support to all seriously indebted countries. Given the magnitude of the crisis, they say a combination of debt restructuring, additional financing and reforms are needed.

UNDP economists say debt distress and vulnerability do not just threaten the poorest countries. They say middle-income countries and small island states also are buckling under heavy debt burdens



## CSOs' report on Geneva human rights commitments opportune

A REPORT prepared by local civil society organizations says that the government has over the past few years shone in fighting graft and slipped in the sphere of democracy and associated human rights issues. Within media circles this wasn't altogether a new observation as former Foreign Minister Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi had occasion to dwell on those issues in the past few months actually. One point that he raised was that in 2015 and earlier the crucial criticism of the government was corruption, and after this issue was resolved, international observers are picking on other issues, which he saw as flimsy.

That was until quite recently the most authoritative posture on the issue, as Tanzania's position had adopted a traditional eastern bloc outlook on prioritizing social and economic rights, and seeing other spheres as basically an assertion as the right to criticize the government, even by sowing disunity, which the government predictably disavowed. But the report is timely a different way, in that there is a change in tonality and in expectations from public administrators where for instance punitive and even vicious tax collections methods have been scolded and rejected by President Samia Suluhu Hassan. It's a different set of values as elevating economic interests of the private sector is concomitant with media freedom, etc.

That means repeating this assessment at present is a reminder of what needs to be done so that the laudable record of the government in relation to uplifting the image of the country with zero tolerance of corruption is compensated or balanced by

greater regard for other spheres of social and economic rights. For one thing, given the change in tonality at the highest levels of government, it will not be the task of CSOs to see to bring these spheres to being noticed or advanced as part of government work. Those who are in charge in those areas will be in a position to act more favorably, and assertively, on the issues raised; in any case the CSOs refer to commitments made by the government at the UN Geneva platform.

Making a briefing on the report, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) Executive Director Ana Henga said that the government implemented successfully 89 per cent of recommendations on women's rights, children as well as economic and community rights. She affirmed that the government has taken significant measures to implement the recommendations as per the United Nations Human Rights Council, highlighting that the report was drawn up by LHRC in collaboration with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) and Save the Children, a global NGO. It is locally sourced, mostly.

Noticeably, the report writing process is said to date from 2016 after the UPR congress was held in Geneva, so local CSOs established an action plan to make a follow up on recommendations to which the government had committed itself. A colleague of Henga, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) coordinator, Onesmo Olungurumwa, said the report had been submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 25. About 200 representatives from the CSOs met in Morogoro to set strategies of collecting information on the government's performance.

## Energy can generate growth in Tanzania's rural economy

A NEW study shows that lack of robust energy services in Africa's agriculture sector is a major obstacle to the sector's growth. Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a \$1 trillion industry in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, and access to sustainable energy should be at the top of the agenda for the sector's transformation.

The November 2020 study by Factor[e] Ventures titled, "The Opportunity at the Nexus of Energy and Agriculture" reveals existing gaps in designing solar-powered irrigation, agro-processing, dairy farming, and cold storage projects in Uganda, Nigeria, and Kenya, lessons learned, and five agriculture-energy opportunities that can attract commercial investors.

With limited energy and technology to grow, harvest and process crops, profits are lower, restricting the potential income for farmers and frustrating the growth of rural communities and the agricultural sector, the report notes.

According to the report, agricultural systems in sub-Saharan Africa are underpowered. Energy is an essential service for modern agricultural economies enabling farmers to irrigate, work the land, refrigerate, dry, heat, process, and transport crops.

The lack of robust energy services in rural areas is a fundamental obstacle to development. With limited energy and technology to grow, harvest, and process crops, profits are lower, restricting the potential income for farmers and frustrating the growth of rural

communities and the agricultural sector.

Growing agribusinesses and smallholder farmers need modern energy to thrive, but lack the technical knowledge, financing, and project development and management capacity to access energy services. Rural energy enterprises, in turn, need reliable energy consumers anchoring demand for their services.

"Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is underpowered. Growing agribusinesses and smallholder farmers need modern energy to thrive, but generally lack the technical knowledge, financing, and project development and management capacity to access energy services. Rural energy enterprises, in turn, need reliable energy consumers anchoring demand for their services. Agriculture should be a key market for rural energy providers.

To power Africa's agricultural economies, we need a stronger foundation of agricultural businesses and farmer-aligned intermediaries, a deeper pool of quality innovative enterprises and relevant technology innovations, matchmaking to pull agricultural actors, energy providers, and technology innovation together, and partnership from governments, developments finance institutions, and philanthropies to absorb risk and drive scale," Silverman added.

True energy is an essential service for modern agricultural economies, enabling farmers to irrigate, work the land, refrigerate, dry, heat, process, and transport crops. Engines supply only 10 per cent of farm power in Africa. Only 4 per cent of agricultural land in Africa is irrigated.

## The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO  
Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO

## Newsdesk

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

## Advertising

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



## Congo-Kinshasa: From Leopold to Tshisekedi with blood

By Okello Oculi

PRESIDENT Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo must lead Africa against all forms of victimisation and terrorism. King Leopold ruled Belgium carved out by Europe's barbaric 1810-1848 tribal and religious wars. His extermination of 15 million people in the Congo River basin was a familiar use of power. President Dwight Eisenhower earned military honours from slaughter fields of Europe's barbarism during the 1938-1945 War. His instructions to American officials to murder Patrice Lumumba, Congo's charismatic prime minister, was a habitual reflex. That the decision would turn Congo into a cauldron of civil wars and mass deaths was irrelevant.

Belgian military officers incited a mutiny which led to Joseph Desire Mobutu emerging as the local tool for the overthrow and death of Lumumba. Belgian officials had between 1959 and 1960, sprouted scores of political parties with ethnic loyalties to counter Patrice Lumumba's countrywide appeal.

Mobutu used his attendance of a military school to read Belgian newspaper; probably enabling him to be a better schemer than Lumumba when faced with a shattered one-week old independence.

In 1965, he decreed the single "Movement for the Popular Revolution (MPR)" which created

branches into rural areas. Like Belgian colonial rule, local officials were appointed and not elected by local communities. Mobutu sent money which military and civilian officials shared down the chain of power.

Military officials at the village level seized yam tubers, chicken, beans, salt and smoked fish and "bushmeat" from traders and women on market days. Mobutu's machine ensured loyalty, while leaving those with suspicious political ambitions vulnerable to being dismissed for stealing salaries of lower officials.

Mobutu was also accused of inciting attacks against Tutsi immigrants -the "Banyamulenge" when their kin were massacred in Rwanda. He crushed students when they criticised his political and cultural engineering, including: the use of only ethnic names and banning Euro-American pop music. "Congolese Music" seized Africa's skies from Mombasa to Bamako. The name of the country was changed from "Congo" to "Zaire".

These aspects of Mobutu's cultural rebirth or "Authenticity" were easy diet for Laurent Kabila's revolutionary appetite. Reinstating foreign religious names won him support from the Catholic Church. Descendants of the KONGO kingdom were happy to see Mobutu's spiteful "ZAIRE" drowned in the Congo river.

His war against Mobutu came along with armies from Uganda and Rwanda with rapacious appetites for the country's natural

resources. Conquering armies ransack and loot property and peoples they defeat. Armies of Rwanda and Uganda were fascinated by the prospect of repeating Congo's colonisation by tiny Belgium; their small countries ruling a vast African territory. Kabila's subsequent assassination was blamed on Rwanda's agents furious with his turning against 'hands that gave birth to his power'.

A zone of ethnic massacres, rape, forced recruitment of children to kill with guns, pillage of property and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people has replaced the social trust, social peace, and sense of national citizenship which Mobutu invested a lot of personal charisma into building. South Kivu, North Kivu and north-eastern Congo remain soaked in blood and death in the way King Leopold had tortured them.

Mobutu renamed himself as "Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Zabanga". Tshisekedi competes well with his "Felix-Antoine Tshikedi Tshilombo". The Catholic clergy, however, opposed his election, awarding 60 per cent of votes in 2018 election to wealthy Martin Fayulu. Joseph Kabila inherited Mobutu's use of state money to feed political patronage but competed in an election populated by 599 political parties, most of them ethnic followers of a leader with money. NGOs numbering 5000 "rarely act for common social benefit".

In 2016 Kabila extended social welfare with "a daily allowance for

women during maternity leave". The 86 per cent of the population in the "informal sector" and subsistence agriculture are excluded.

Leopold killed to loot Congo's resources. In 2000, a United Nations Committee accused 83 multinational corporations of arming killers who help them to loot. Even the richest 10 per cent of Congolese own a mere 32 per cent, while the poorest 10 per cent take a wretched two per cent of Congo's GDP. War is a tool for looting the Congo.

Tshisekedi is chairing the African Union when 75 million Americans furiously reject President Biden's election; pushing Congress to vote trillions of dollars for eroding poverty by using a 'New Capitalism driven by American IDEALS'. Africa must demand UBUNTU in Biden's African relations with Africa.

Rebel Scientists are warning on Social Media against the use of anti-COVID-19 vaccines to commit genocide globally. Terroristic governance is herding people into taking these vaccines.

President Tshisekedi must protect African immunities developed over centuries; resist racist dismissals of preventive and curative power in plants, vegetables, mushrooms and wild fruits. German racists decimated the Herero nation. Fleeing into the Sahara Desert saved Libyans from genocidal Italian colonisers. COVID-19 must not be King Leopold inside mutating vaccines.

## Small space, big problems in the Suez Canal and the Atlantic seaboard

By Haji Mohamed Dawjee

BUT then, one day, somehow, after many, many years of hard work and big dreams your ship comes in and you buy a place on the Atlantic Seaboard that is not the size of a small box.

The title of this piece, as I think of it while writing, is the perfect one to introduce the much-discussed issue of the ship that somehow got trapped in the Suez Canal recently as though the captain who was steering it was a bad driver in Sea Point.

But alas, my knowledge of ships extends as far as the movie The Titanic. Which is a heart-warming love story with an unforgettable Celine Dion ballad, a massive ship that sinks because of an iceberg and a door used as a float that isn't big enough for two lovers. Other than that, I know nothing about ships and so I will not attempt to write about this meme-flooded incident. However, a big problem in a small space - which is exactly how one can summarise the great

incident - is something I am very, very well versed in.

Finding the perfect apartment on the Atlantic Seaboard is easy only under these very important conditions:

You and your family have lived there for generations and it has been passed down to you. You spend your time on the top floor of an Art Deco building with large rooms, big windows and gorgeous views while sliding from end to end in your socks on well-maintained parquet floors.

Your parents live elsewhere but they are very, very wealthy and along with your Mini Cooper with tasteless personalised plates, they have also purchased a gorgeous apartment for you and have offered to furnish it and break down any unsightly popcorn walls as well as renovate everything else to your liking while you pretend to use all those extra bedrooms as office space for your very important job which probably has a very cool made-up title like: talent scout for underwater goat wrestlers, aspiring actor and

influencer to The Promenade athleisure community.

You are from Europe. The property here is very cheap, comparatively. You have paid for it in cash, in full, and you are now using it once every three to four years.

For the rest of us, our idea of perfection is merely having the privilege of being able to smell the sea air from our front doors and whine about the dust constantly letting itself in from Lion's head while we sleep in little boxes on the aisle of the Atlantic.

But then, one day, somehow, after many, many years of hard work and big dreams your ship comes in and you buy a place on the Atlantic Seaboard that is not the size of a small box. It is the size of a small box plus a shoe box. So in normal-people speak - and by this I mean anyone who does not fit into the above three categories, your flat is huge. And to us, it was.

In fact, we were so intimidated by the extra 2.36 square metres (I exaggerate), that we spent the first month in our new place just

in our bedroom. An assigned space for a living area? A separate bathroom? Two bedrooms? (Okay, the second one is kind of tiny after a very clever renovation), but still, two? And when you wake up in the morning and roll out of bed you don't land in the kitchen? What grand magic this is. What grand magic it was... until we got ahead of ourselves and constantly started having family from that place they call Pretoria come to visit and stay with us.

It is so lovely to return the gesture of a warm, beautiful, comfortable place for someone you love who is visiting to sleep in when they visit. Especially because they're always offering their homes to us when we visit. And finally, when we got our perfect apartment, we could return the favour. But here's the thing. A two-bedroom in Gauteng is not the same as a two-bedroom in Sea Point, and we never anticipated that the place we once thought of as so spacious would turn out to be a small space with big problems.



## A president Africa deserves

Ignatius Nat Muotoh writes a moving tribute to celebrate the life and times of the late President John Magufuli of Tanzania

THE death of the Tanzanian President Dr John Pombe Magufuli on Wednesday 17th March, 2021 has brought to an end one of the best African presidencies. Certainly, the best President to come from the continent of Africa in recent times. Prior to becoming the President of Tanzania at the age of 55, the average age of an African President as at 2016, oscillates around 83 years. Going by this average age for an African President in 2016, one must appreciate the unique achievements of Magufuli at the age of 61 years.

Dr John Pombe Magufuli popularly known as the Bulldozer, passed away after a terminal heart failure which according to rumours by the opposition party in his country Tanzania; was directly linked to the COVID-19 complications. He was undoubtedly a known sceptic of the Coronavirus pandemic, with critics blaming him for his own death and that of other Tanzanians. A mere mortal of course, hence an unpopular sceptic of the Coronavirus pandemic, he was by an exceptional standard, a really down to earth man who left his nation far much better than he met it.

Magufuli defied all odds to rise from being a secondary school teacher with only a Diploma in Education; majoring in Mathematics and Chemistry, to earn a Doctorate degree in Chemistry. He represents a true son of Africa who despite a very tough background, worked so hard to make an exemplary success in his chosen field. He ventured into politics, and would later go on to become an MP at the young age of 35.

As the President of Tanzania under The Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, which in Swahili means "The Party of The Revolution" at the age of 55, the CCM party became the dominant ruling party in Tanzania;



and the second longest-ruling party in Africa, only after the True Whig Party of Liberia.

Despite being a president for only five years which is not in tandem with a typical African president's quest for a 2nd, 3rd or even a 4th term ambitions; Magufuli achieved unprecedented successes for his country Tanzania during his first five years. His tremendous successes are considered impossible by many for a typical African president.

Though Tanzanians are mourning a great statesman; they take solace in the loss of a leader who has accomplished tenfolds in a short period of five years, that which hadn't been achieved in the past 50 years.

Looking at the litany of his successes, one wonders if he really was first an African, and secondly if he really was a president of an African nation.

Within his first five years in office, the Bulldozer, sacked over 13 ministers and over 19,000 civil servants for corrupt practices and inefficiencies. Within the same period also, he built 96 district hospitals, and over four hundred 400 health centres in Tanzania.

Again under his presidency within the first five years of his administration, over 90% of the whole country were connected to the national electric grid, an unprecedented record for an African president. This was up from 20% national electrification at the time his predecessor, Mr Ja-

kaya Kikwete left office in 2015.

It is anticipated that by the end of this year 2021, Tanzania will be the first African nation to electrify the whole country thus achieving a 100% electrification of the entire nation.

Of course, this is a rare feat for an African nation. During the same period, Magufuli built a water project similar to that of the late President Gaddafi of Libya. He tunnelled and channelled water from Lake Victoria 500kms away to Tanzanian cities.

His administration, controlled the mining and selling of tanzanite thereby ending the monopoly India and Kenya had as the leading sellers of tanzanite in the world market. As an ardent believer in Africa, President Magufuli never left the continent of Africa, and only visited two African countries of Kenya and Rwanda before his demise. Amongst his other achievements, is his most ambitious project which is the construction of the most modern and longest railway in Africa- the Tanzania Standard Gauge Railway (TSGR).

The Tanzania Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) is a railway system currently under construction, linking his nation to the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Uganda; and through these two countries, to Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is a part of East African Railway Master Plan, with a total length of 1,800 km (1,100 miles). When completed, it will

be operated by the (TRC) Tanzania Railway Corporation; and will be powered by a 25kv 50 Hz AC electrified overhead catenary.

This project is expected to be completed and operational by the third quarter of 2021.

Again, under President Magufuli, Tanzania in collaboration with Egypt, is currently building the largest Power Dam in the whole of Africa at River Rufiji which is approximately 220 kilometres South-west of Dar es Salaam. It is expected that this dam will generate 2GW of electricity when completed. That's not the end of the list of his achievements.

Magufuli succeeded in modernising most of the infrastructures in Dar es Salaam, making it the fastest growing city in Africa. In addition to these, he negotiated an oil pipeline project with Uganda that will earn his country billions of dollars in revenue for the next 30 years. Again, under his government, Tanzania was able to nationalise the mining sector, bringing all the mines under the effective control of his government.

Discipline and a zero tolerance for corruption was his mantra. And he was able to pass such mindsets to the Tanzanian civil service. It is said that no civil servant despises another in any government office, since one could unwittingly be despising an undercover cop at his own peril.

Under his education policy, he completely reorganised and refurbished the nation's educa-

tional institutions with the result that Dar es Salaam University, currently has the largest library in the East and Central Africa. He promoted Kiswahili as the official language for all government businesses within Tanzania. Kiswahili language is now used in all court proceedings running up to the Supreme Court. The Bulldozer as he was popularly called, went as far as defying the Western imperialists nations from forcing his country to support same sex marriages. While these policies attracted some backlash from some Western nations, they were found very favourable and popular by the people of Tanzania.

Did I forget his other achievements within the same five years period in office as the president?

Yes I did.

He constructed the largest Children Cancer Centre in the entire East African sub-region at Muhimbili Dar es Salaam.

Finally, Dr. John Pombe Magufuli was truly a nationalist in the real sense of the word and a man who truly lived for, and died for his country.

May the soul of this unsung hero of Africa, a President par excellence, Rest in Perfect peace.

### QUOTE

**Within his first five years in office, the Bulldozer, sacked over 13 ministers and over 19,000 civil servants for corrupt practices and inefficiencies. Within the same period also, he built 96 district hospitals, and over four hundred 400 health centres in Tanzania. Again under his presidency within the first five years of his administration, over 90% of the whole country were connected to the national electric grid, an unprecedented record for an African president. This was up from 20% national electrification at the time his predecessor, Mr Jakaya Kikwete left office in 2015**

## Brazil, Zambia and echoes of \$1.5bn Nigerian repair

BY AZU ISHIEKWENE

IT would take more than one more repair to cover the developing scandal that Nigeria's refineries have become.

... all of this is proceeding with a sickening and confusing haste. Tecnimont, the Italian consultant/contractor that estimated the cost of repair at \$290 million nine years ago, revised the cost to \$1.78 billion in its fresh bid. The government has neither publicly disclosed details of the first technical report in 2012 nor details of the current one.

Brazil has proved a disaster in the management of COVID-19, but there are other areas where we can use their examples.

Like what to do about failing refineries. This hot-button topic returned to the front burner after the Nigerian government recently announced plans to repair the Port Harcourt Refinery.

That refinery and the ones in Warri and Kaduna have a combined refining capacity of 410,000 bpd, an output far less than the local daily demand, but which all three refineries have only struggled to meet since they were installed.

According to a recent report in The Guardian, Nigeria has spent \$26.5 billion in fake maintenance in the last three decades or so. Yet, the decision by the government of President Muhammadu to shell out another \$1.5 billion to flog the dying refinery horse indicates that Abuja is clearly not in the mood to curtail corruption or rein in its appetite for waste.

It's not money the government has. The government is cash-strapped and had, in fact, listed the Port Harcourt refinery among other assets for sale. In a dramatic U-turn, however, the government seems happy to compound its current debt misery of nearly \$86 billion, by borrowing more to keep an asset it no longer needs.

Government's main argument is that if the refineries are sold in their current state, they'll be flung for less than their scrap value. Officials are also saying that with Dangote's refinery (650,000 bpd) coming on stream soon, exiting now would leave petrol supply completely in the hands of the private sector.

There's no need to wonder why this discovery is coming after the fact. Chaos is the gift of Buhari's government, except that sometimes, this gift is in oversupply. Or how else can anyone explain why these concerns did not come up during due diligence, supposed to precede the listing?

Let's leave that for a moment and examine how Brazil, famous for state-controlled refineries, is dealing with a similar problem. Petrobras, which manages the refineries for the state, recently decided to sell off Landulpho Alves refinery (RLAM), among other state-owned assets. Brazil could have made the lazy baby-and-bath-water argument, the trope for the Nigerian authorities.

But the writing on the wall is clear. Faced with a tightening global oil market and an increasing number of nimble producers in many parts of the world, Petrobras, Brazil's



equivalent of Nigeria's NNPC, decided that the smart thing to do was to sell off the asset and cut its loss.

In a competitive global bid, Mubadala, Abu Dhabi's state-owned investment fund recently offered to buy the 333,000 bpd RLAM for \$1.65 billion, a value higher than what the Nigerian government intends to invest in a repair guaranteed to produce a worse outcome.

Petrobras is planning to sell seven other refineries by the end of this year. According to some reports, the company could realise about \$25 billion-\$35 billion from the sale of its non-core assets in the next four years. Which means, by re-evaluating its assets, Brazil could get, in four years, what Nigeria used in 30 to fix its own rickety assets.

The lazy, worn-out arguments for the catastrophic reversal over a decade ago, have not changed: Why sell cheap when you can fix and manage cheaply to reduce petrol imports? Why divest from the refineries and leave such a vital national resource in the hands of the private sector?

We've been here before, and didn't need a lesson from Brazil at the time.

The same argument that government is making for hugging the refineries could have been made to prevent the sale of the Eleme Petrochemical Company in 2006, for example.

Just like the refineries, the company was sinking in the mire of corruption and producing far less than its installed capacity of 1.2 million metric tons of polymer-based products.

The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo sold 80 per cent of the government's stake, held by NNPC, to Indorama at \$250 million - the sort of money that managers of today's NNPC would consider less than scrap value.

Within two years of the sale, Indorama was in profit and sending dividend to NNPC. It still does, not only to NNPC, but also to the Onne Community where it is located and the Rivers State government, who are also part owners.

The company has expanded its production capacity to 2 million metric tons of polymer, built a fertiliser plant for export and also expanded the Onne Port, which had almost collapsed into a narrow wedge

on government's watch.

About 500 staff members were on payroll, most them leeching off the system, while Abuja fat cats were milking the company in the name of "preserving our collective patrimony."

Today, there are 1,500 employees in Indorama Eleme, doing valuable work and earning wages they could only have dreamed off under government management.

It was a lesson which the Obasanjo government almost replicated with the refineries in 2007, before vested interests, who use the refineries as private "oil blocks", regardless of their pretentious nationalism, decided to subvert the sale of the Port Harcourt and Kaduna refineries to Blue Star, with labour goading them on.

The lazy, worn-out arguments for the catastrophic reversal over a decade ago, have not changed: Why sell cheap when you can fix and manage cheaply to reduce petrol imports? Why divest from the refineries and leave such a vital national resource in the hands of the private sector? Why, in short, throw away the baby with the bath water?

Well, this baby has been thrashed and abused by a derelict parent that seems determined to drown it in the bath water. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warned last week that, "The plans to repair and relaunch the country's three existing refineries that have not been operating in recent years are unlikely to materialise."

The government is not listening. Or, to put it more correctly, it is listening to itself and instead of using best examples from elsewhere, and even from its own past, it is behaving like effigies from Chibuba's Zambia.

If the government is prepared to spend three times what it would have earned from the sale to repair it, your guess is as good as mine what the current market value of the refinery would be today. But it would be worse by the time government finishes the \$1.5 billion window-dressing.

It's a story worth repeating - that of Zambia's copper mines. At their peak, Zambia's copper mines produced 12 per cent of the world's copper. They were the pride of Zambia and the glory of southern Africa.

And then it happened. A combination of steep crashes in commodity prices, coupled with corruption, global politics, internal incompetence and mismanagement - all present in today's Nigerian refineries - put the future of the mines in grave danger.

In response to the economic crisis facing Zambia at the time, President Frederick Chiluba listed 287 state companies for sale and managed to sell 251. The jewel in the crown, also listed, was Konkola Copper Mines (KCM), the country's largest.

Zambia was offered \$165 million but Chiluba, like his cousins in Nigeria's government today, said the offer was insultingly low. He haggled for nine years. When the price of copper finally collapsed in 2000, the best he could get for KCM was \$90 million, the true and deserving scrap value.

It's 14 years since President Umaru Yar'Adua's government reversed the sale of the Port Harcourt Refinery for \$500 million to Blue Star set up by Aliko Dangote and Femi Otedola.

If the government is prepared to spend three times what it would have earned from the sale to repair it, your guess is as good as mine what the current market value of the refinery would be today. But it would be worse by the time government finishes the \$1.5 billion window-dressing.

And all of this is proceeding with a sickening and confusing haste. Tecnimont, the Italian consultant/contractor that estimated the cost of repair at \$290 million nine years ago, revised the cost to \$1.78 billion in its fresh bid.



# 'What this generation wants': African authors publishing direct to the web

BY DERICK MATSENGARWODZI

SOUTHERN African writers are publishing books through Facebook and Whatsapp that speak directly to readers' lives. Is this the future or a fad? As a young teenage bookworm, Lizzie Muchenje would buy novels from bookshops, borrow from libraries and exchange literature with her friends. But in 2018, her reading life changed. A friend added her to a WhatsApp group on which readers and writers share online books in English and Shona. Some require a nominal fee to access but many are free, meaning Muchenje could suddenly access an almost unlimited array of new literature for a dollar's worth of data.

"Since that day, I am addicted to novels," says the now 16-year-old. She spends her leisure time in Zimbabwe reading stories on her mobile phone, with new chapters or series shared almost daily.

Muchenje is far from the only satisfied customer. Across countries in Southern Africa, a trend has emerged of readers turning to books by local authors that are uploaded directly to Facebook pages, Whatsapp groups or shared online as pdfs. The genres span everything from fantasy to crime and self-help. They are often in local languages and some even use emoji to depict action. Many readers find them not only more affordable and accessible, but more relatable.

"Online books are free and entertaining, and are based on true stories affecting us," says Theresa Mwandu, another keen reader. "The names and places are real, and one feels attached to the setting. It feels real and interesting to read a thriller by a local author in vernacular, rather than a book written by the thriller author John Grisham who is far away from me."

The lockdowns imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic have only accelerated this trend. "I am an avid reader but with many libraries closed and expensive printed books, online books are serving me well," says Muchenje.

## A novel trend

This new phenomenon began in earnest around five years ago as more writers in the region - particularly in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe - began trying to circumvent the traditional publishing industry.

For some, such as South African novelist Sanele Shongwe, it started as an experiment. "I started writing on Facebook, using a pen name afraid that people would label me a failure who write stories on Facebook, but the support I got gave me the courage to reveal myself," he says.

He is now proud to put his name to his works and this January started a new Facebook group called Ka-Shongwe Stories. On the page, which already has 1,500 readers, he publishes novels in Zulu for free, one page at

a time. "My readers appreciate and like my writing a lot, and send positive comments," he says.

Morgan Tatenda set up his page Dr TM Stories five years ago as a way to reach his audience more quickly and directly. It now has nearly 50,000 followers, who keenly await updates of his detective and love stories. "I write novels in Shona but normally I mix Shona and English because I am trying to attract today's generation," he says. "Nowadays, our generation mix vernacular and English in their conversations. That's what this generation wants."

Tatenda has now published over 27 books online. He provides a few chapters for free and invites readers to pay a fee to read the rest. He says he sells about 500 pdfs of his books each month.

Pride Mawdzere, 24, writes at Suwani Stories, which has nearly 25,000 fans. Like Tatenda, he publishes sections of his writing for free after which readers can buy the complete pdfs for a fee. The Zimbabwean author says he turned to direct online publishing to ensure he received maximum profits and ownership of his work.

"I use my smartphone to type and I take a month to finish a book," he says. "After writing, I give it to a proofreader, then to my editor. It is then designed for typesetting and registered." He explains that he pays these individuals a flat fee, but after that, any income is his.

"There are a lot of disadvantages with publishers," he says. "For instance, the publisher will get the copyrights for your work unlike with self-publishing where you get 100% of the profits."

## Fad or future?

The response to this new trend in the traditional publishing industry has been mixed. Some, such as Zimbabwean author Ignatius Mabasa, 50, welcome it. In his decades long career, he has published sev-



eral books through the traditional publishing industry but has tried to find ways to innovate. Mabasa was one of the first Zimbabwean writers to publish e-books and, in 2012, established Bhabhu Books to support books written in local languages.

"Reading books or stories on a phone is cheaper, easy, accessible and not intimidating," he says. "The more online stories we have, the better our reading culture becomes... If you want your work to have a market, then go to where the people are."

Mabasa has followed the phenomenon with interest and suggests new online authors are now beginning to compete with more established writers by circumventing the "gatekeeping and bureaucracy" of the traditional publishing industry. "The competition with bookshops is there because online books are creating a new culture which is quick and accessible and flexible,"

he says. "There is also an interesting aspect: the ability to directly interact with the author can create a new way of co-authored works, or works that gratify readers better."

Others, however, are more sceptical about the impact of online publishing and see it more as a passing phase.

"I don't think it is the future of the publishing industry, but when the economy is down something takes over," says Bridget Impey, publishing director at the South African publishers Jacana Media. "As publishers, we don't see online publishers affecting us, but the competition is from self-publishing authors. It is hard to measure the impact of online authors."

She also points out that publishing online brings with it its own financial risks such as piracy, which can make it less lucrative for writers. This issue was echoed by some online authors. Impey is nonetheless open to hear from writers who have cut their teeth in unconventional ways.

"I think it is a fascinating and developing trend of flash fiction, but we might be slow off the mark. If the writers tell us what they can do, we will consider their writings. They have followers already," she says.

For some online writers, this is a welcome invitation. "I have never sent my books to a publisher for consideration... I don't know how book publishers operate,"

says Shongwe. "It's every person's dream to have a career out of a passion, so I am willing to have that opportunity if there is a chance."

For others, the traditional publishing industry is of no interest. For them, publishing directly online is not merely convenient but an active choice.

"I condemned traditional publishing; to me, it is out fashioned," says Tatenda. "I have to follow what this generation is doing and whether you are in a taxi or a bus or even walking down the streets, you will see everyone glued to their phones... Some of the media houses are now doing everything online. Even radio stations are doing the same. So why not us as authors?"

Derick Matsengarwodzi is a content creator with experience in the media, public relations, advertising and marketing industries, including NGOs. He contributes to regional and international publications.

## Keep your promises: End water poverty

BY DUMEBI ODUAH

WHAT does water mean to you? This was the question asked on March 22nd as the world celebrated World Water Day. The International water day aimed to draw attention to the global water situation, the need for effective water management as global water systems/aquifers continue to shrink and the stress faced by marginalised communities who lack access to water.

It is a great step that the day was celebrated in Nigeria to create awareness on the lack of clean water in rural communities, but it should not stop at picture posting or story-telling, something must be done about the issue. Creating awareness alone on the lack of access to clean water in rural communities once a year isn't enough to drive the sustainable change that will bring about the realisation of SDG 6 in Nigeria. Stronger and intentional political action is needed to bridge the widening gap between the entire population and the number that have access to clean water. Without actions being taken of what use is the knowledge. According to J.W. Von Goethe, "knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough, we must do". And no truer words have been spoken, the knowledge is simply not enough it must be applied.

The importance of water in our lives cannot be over-emphasised. Water is life, it is more than just a basic need it is a fundamental human right. We need water just as much as we need the air we breathe. The sacrosanct nature of water is heightened when issues bordering around hygiene and sanitation are put in perspective.

It's really a thing of concern how persons in marginalised communities survive with little access to clean water. Their daily struggle to access water which in many cases is unclean and contaminated predisposes them to a lot of dangers and hazards. For many women and girls; they are exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, their menstrual hygiene is threatened and productive time is lost. For school children; they lose productive school time simply because they have to go in search of water. In general, many rural communities are vulnerable to disease outbreak that are water related such as cholera and these also contribute to money lost to emergency aid provided by government thereby impacting the GDP of the nation.

In Nigeria, poor access to clean water and sanitation has been a developmental issue plaguing numerous communities around the country. Lack of access to clean water seemed more or less a rural area problem but slowly this problem has started creeping its way into some peri-urban and urban areas. According to UNICEF, "seventy-three percent of the diarrheal disease burden is associated with poor access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and children from



poorer homes are largely affected by this". These WASH related illnesses sometimes lead to poor performance in school and even malnutrition in children. Some other studies show that poor access to water and sanitation leads to open defecation. It is quite evident that poor access to water has a domino effect in our society. Issues pertaining to water can never be isolated, because in its absence it creates more problems and hinders our progress.

Nuhu Joseph a community leader in Rije community of Kuje Area Council, spoke with HipCity Innovation Centre (HipCity Hub) on the lack of clean water in his community. He said, to them water is more of a luxury than a necessity, most of the boreholes in his community are either nonfunctional or inadequate to cater for the residents of the community. They have resorted to getting their water from a stream close by as they lack

the funds to repair the damaged boreholes and help from the government is not forthcoming.

The source of water Joseph spoke of was clearly unfit for drinking and other domestic uses, but this is reality for the residents of Rije community and several other suburbs in the Federal Capital Territory.

The UN Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water put the figure of Nigerians who do not have access to safe drinking water at 67 million while 42 per cent of households do not have access to clean water. This number is alarming and bodes ill for the public health and safety of citizens.

It is the duty of the State through its appendage Water Boards and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RUWASSA) to provide safe and clean drinking water for all citizens. For efficiency and greater output, they are expected to work with local governments in their various

states to ensure each local community is adequately catered for.

There is an obvious need for the government to re-strategise and double their efforts in ensuring the provision of clean and safe water for all Nigerians.

With proper monitoring and evaluation; progress can easily be tracked and areas that are still lacking or in need of maintenance can effectively be given the attention they require. It is not enough to just create awareness on water challenges, the government must keep their promises and be held accountable because they owe the people this duty.

Joining the global commemoration of March 22 shouldn't just end at government making political statement it must be matched with strong political will and commitment to rescue over 60 million Nigerians facing water poverty.



## Africa digs for coal to meet energy demands amid climate concerns

By Special Correspondent

AFRICA'S energy needs are growing. This has led some governments to turn to coal-powered plants. Critics say that's not a smart move in times of climate change and point to the continent's renewable energy resources.

In South Africa, power outages are not the exception but the rule. In the past, those power cuts often occurred in the cold winter, but today the lights also suddenly go out in the summer. The country's power grid and power plants are outdated, and energy demand has increased.

Like South Africa – where around 90% of energy comes from coal – other African countries have embarked on mining this raw material. Botswana, Tanzania, and Mozambique are among the leading countries.

Energy poverty 'key concern'

"Energy poverty is a key concern when it comes to many developing countries," says NJ Ayuk, executive chairman of the African Energy Chamber – an organization that brings together mostly private companies in the energy sector.

According to Ayuk, decisions to reduce the supply deficit entail significant investments in the coal sector. "Coal – in some countries that have it – is in abundance, efficient, and convenient," Ayuk said, adding that the logistics are already in place compared to most countries that lack infrastructure for renewables.

Help and support with coal energy in Africa come from China, Russia, and France. "These countries often supply the finance and technology, and it makes sense for them to tap into resources that already exist and build the economy," Ayuk said.

"In comparison, G8 or G20 countries provide contracts and lessons. Many African countries feel that these developed nations are not really talking to them," he added.

For Ayuk, there is an alternative to coal. "Gas is cleaner than coal and could be used for power plants as we prepare to use renewable energy." Africa boasts of substantial gas reserves. For example, Mozambique, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal have recently discovered gas deposits.

Impact of coal energy

What impact on the climate would additional coal-fired power plants have in Africa? According to Stephen Karekezi, chairman of the non-governmental organization Africa Energy Policy Research in Kenya, they wouldn't play a big role.

Many plans for new coal-fired power plants have not even been implemented yet, Karekezi said. "Even if they were realized, the impact on global



climate change will not be noticeable," he added.

Africa's one billion people contribute only between 1 and 1.5% of global greenhouse emissions, Karekezi said.

About 34 coal-fired power plants currently produce roughly 53 gigawatts, supplying one-third of the continent's electricity needs. 19 of these power plants are located in South Africa.

According to the Global Coal Plant Tracker website, Africa plans to establish 25 new coal power plants. The organization Energy

for Growth Hub, which has examined the projects in more detail, found that only one small plant in Niger with a capacity of around 100 megawatts is to be completed soon. Nine other projects could come online in the future, but construction has not yet begun.

Low green energy costs

The remaining 14 plants have either already been canceled or are unlikely to be completed. Among them is the planned coal-fired power plant near the Kenyan coastal town of Lamu, a UNESCO World

Heritage Site. The Chinese-backed project has had its license revoked after environmentalists sued.

For the environmental group Greenpeace, there is no reason why African countries should invest in coal-fired power plants.

"The impact is immense. We feel it in South Africa. Burning coal produces toxic substances like carbon dioxide, and acid rain changes our groundwater – all dangers for the environment and health," Nhlanhla Sibisi, a climate and energy expert, said.

He said the continent has diverse

potential for renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal. "The cost of solar can no longer count as a factor because it has dropped a lot."

For example, Kenya gets 25% of its electricity needs from renewable sources, and African countries can increase this approach. "Governments need to make a shift towards renewables through better implementation of relevant policies and legislation," Sibisi said, adding that this is the only way to prevent a climate crisis.

## East Africa deploys huge volumes of 'highly hazardous' pesticides against locust plague

By Leopold Salzenstein

SWARMS of locusts tens of kilometers wide have threatened to devastate crops in East Africa since late 2019, putting some 32 million people at risk of going hungry.

The desert locust infestation, described by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2020 as a "scourge of biblical proportions," is the worst the region has seen in decades, according to humanitarian groups. In Ethiopia, the triple threat of locusts, floods and Covid-19 threatened to tip the region into a humanitarian crisis.

To combat the emergency, governments have resorted to spraying large tracts of land with some 2 million liters of insecticides over almost

2 million hectares (5 million acres), since the beginning of the outbreak in December 2019, prompting concerns over the potential health and environmental impacts.

A new analysis of FAO pesticide purchase data can reveal that the concerns may be well-founded, as 95.8% of the pesticides delivered to East African nations over this period are scientifically proven to cause serious harm to humans and non-target organisms such as birds, fish and bees.

Though none of the six pesticides used in East Africa are classed as "highly hazardous" by the World Health Organization, chlorpyrifos and fenitrothion are considered "moderately hazardous" and malathion "slightly hazardous." The

Pesticide Action Network (PAN), a campaigning group, lists all three compounds as "highly hazardous." They are considered acutely toxic, a cholinesterase inhibitor, a carcinogen, a groundwater pollutant or reproductive or developmental toxicant.

According to a report by EcoTrac, an environmental consultancy, three are highly toxic to fish and mammals and two are highly toxic to birds.

FAO said it takes precautions to limit the risk of pesticides causing harm to humans and the environment. If these toxins are to be used at all, people are advised to vacate the area for several days while spraying takes place, according to the FAO. The pesticides should be

sprayed at ultra low volume, with a buffer zone of 1,500 meters (nearly a mile) from ecologically sensitive areas when sprayed by plane, and 100 meters (330 feet) when sprayed on foot. Locust control staff should wear personal protective equipment, and wells and beehives should be covered during spraying.

However, according to Silke Bollmohr, an environmental consultant at EcoTrac, safety measures are not always followed in East Africa. "Conservancies up in the north [of Kenya] were reporting that the sprayers didn't inform the communities. There was no information about what pesticide had been used and not always a timely warning to protect water [sources], beehives and livestock," she said.

In Ethiopia, two spraying planes and one helicopter have crashed since October 2020, raising further concerns about the risk of large amounts of toxic pesticides being released.

Most of the pesticides used in East Africa are organophosphates, a type of chemical developed by German chemical conglomerate IG Farben for the Nazis during World War Two that includes sarin gas. "[They] suppress an enzyme, called Cholinesterase (AChE), which regulates brain impulses, like nerve impulses, throughout the body," Patti Goldman, an attorney at Earthjustice, a US-based environmental litigation group, said.

Organophosphates kill locusts by attacking their nervous sys-

tem, but they do not distinguish between pests and other species. While cases of acute poisoning are rare when used at ultra-low volumes, organophosphates have recently come under heightened scrutiny due to their potential long-term impacts on human health.

Studies by Columbia University, Mont Sinai School of Medicine and the University of California, among others, have connected organophosphates with brain damage in children and fetuses. Studies have identified statistically significant reductions in IQ, loss of working memory, autism, attention deficit disorder, and motor coordination problems associated with exposure.

## Meet the African women who are giving their all to protect our wildlife from extinction

By Special Correspondent

THEY'RE bold, changing the game and paving the way for women to stand alongside men at the forefront of conservation, but they need allies.

On World Female Ranger Day, taking place on June 23, this is the first time female wildlife rangers will be recognised collectively on a global interactive and fundraising-focused platform, to tell their stories, have access to peer support, offer and receive advice, and share knowledge.

Nyaradzo Hoto is a ranger from the Akashinga anti-poaching unit in Zimbabwe who was forced to drop out of school and ended up in an abusive marriage. She joined Akashinga in 2017, thanks to her grit and tenacity. She is currently studying wildlife ecology and conservation at the Chinhoyi University of Technology.

Leitah Mkhabela is a ranger from the Black Mamba anti-poaching unit in South Africa and Sithabile Munenge is a community scout (ranger) for National Park Rescue in Zimbabwe. Sithabile used to sell tomatoes on a dusty roadside to make money to feed her children.

As champions of wildlife conservation, as role models, as educators and as beacons of hope, these women are not only transforming attitudes towards the role of women in Africa and beyond but are also showing the capabilities and success of females in traditionally male roles.

Less than 1% of the global wildlife ranger workforce is female. With women being natural communicators, protectors and investing their earned income in their families, bringing gender equality into the workforce

enhances conservation efforts and relationships within communities.

Over the last 12 months, Covid-19 has crippled tourism and funding for conservation projects within Africa and globally.

The lack of tourists visiting national parks has led to many rangers losing their jobs or having significant salary cuts. The knock-on effect of this is huge, as one ranger alone may support up to 16 family members.

Additionally, reduced vigilance in tourist hotspots has left wildlife even more vulnerable to poaching. The work of rangers is paramount right now.

As recently as March 25, Africa's elephant species have been reported to be at an increased risk of extinction due to being poached for their ivory tusks and losing their natural habitats due to human activity. The forest elephant is now listed as critically endangered, and savanna elephants are listed as endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list of threatened species.

This further proves the need for the presence of anti-poaching rangers in Africa's wilderness areas.

Co-founder of World Female Ranger Day (WFRD), (and founder of HME), Holly Budge, said having spent time on the front line with multiple all-female anti-poaching units in Africa it's evident why the female ranger movement is picking up such momentum.

"These women are proving to be highly successful as they ease local tension and strengthen relationships within their communities. WFRD will celebrate these women but will also highlight the significant gender imbalance in environmental conservation.



Through the WFRD initiative, HME aims to collate gender-specific data about female anti-poaching rangers. This will enable us to identify their needs, find tangible solutions and help build effective

policies to contribute towards positive outcomes for female rangers and conservation as a whole," she said.

In dedication to supporting female anti-poaching rangers, How Many El-

ephants has established this important awareness day and the accompanying online platform - [www.worldfemale-ranger-day.org](http://www.worldfemale-ranger-day.org) - which will go live in May.



# Ethiopia's Tigray war: A deadly, dangerous stalemate

**B**OTH federal and resistance forces are digging in for a lengthy battle in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Conditions for civilians are dire, with famine a growing danger. Outside powers should urge Addis Ababa to let more aid into the war zone, while maintaining pressure for talks.

What's new? War rages on in Ethiopia's Tigray region - with civilians bearing the brunt of a brutal conflict marked by atrocities. Under international pressure, Addis Ababa has offered concessions on aid access and pledged that Eritrean troops will withdraw. But prospects of a negotiated settlement appear dim.

Why does it matter? An entrenched Tigrayan resistance combined with Ethiopian and Eritrean authorities' determination to keep Tigray's fugitive leaders from power mean that the conflict could evolve into a protracted war. That would further devastate Tigray and greatly harm Ethiopia, the linchpin state in the Horn of Africa.

What should be done? With a decisive battlefield win for either side a remote prospect, parties should consider a cessation of hostilities that allows for expanded humanitarian aid access. This practical first step would reduce civilian suffering and ideally pave the way for a return to dialogue down the road.

## I. Overview

Though Ethiopia's federal government claimed the war in the country's Tigray region was over in November, fighting continues - at great cost to a stricken population trapped in a multi-sided conflict. Tigray's ousted leadership appears to have consolidated its position in rural areas and its resistance commands support from a Tigrayan population that values the region's autonomy. As part of the federal war effort, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed enlisted forces from Eritrea and also from Ethiopia's Amhara region.

This move added to Tigrayans' sense of injustice and broadened backing for the rebellion, particularly as Eritrean and Amhara combatants stand accused of atrocities against civilians. While mounting evidence of abuses and international pressure have forced concessions from Addis Ababa, including an announcement that Eritrean forces will withdraw, the war looks set to continue. Led by the U.S., European Union, African Union and UN, external actors should press for a pause in the fighting as an urgent priority so as to allow increased aid delivery - and keep demanding that the parties pursue a negotiated settlement.

All sides in the conflict in Ethiopia's northernmost region appear to be girding for a protracted battle. The Tigrayan leadership, though driven from power in Mekelle, the region's capital, has rallied under the banner of the Tigray Defence Forces, an armed resistance group. It is led by the removed Tigrayan leaders and commanded by former high-ranking Ethiopian National Defence Force officers.

It currently operates primarily from rural areas in central and southern Tigray, while federal troops control the main roads and urban areas. Eritrean soldiers have their heaviest presence in northern Tigray and Amhara forces patrol western Tigray and the far south. All sides are fixated on securing a military victory.

None appears capable of achieving one in the near term. The Tigrayan resistance appears to enjoy broad support in the region, while federal authorities and their allies are determined to capture its leaders and put them on trial. The parties' positioning means that the conflict could well last for months, or even years, an outcome that would be even more disastrous for Tigray and the rest of the country.

Urgent measures are needed to stem the tragedy. Direct talks between the parties appear a distant prospect at present, given that Prime Minister Abiy rejects the notion of engaging Tigray leaders he portrays as traitors. For now, the U.S., EU, AU, UN Security Council

and other actors should press for more limited but critical gains. Notably, they should demand a cessation of hostilities that at least allows for rapidly expanded aid delivery.

To stave off the risk of mass starvation it is critical that ploughing and planting take place as Tigray's rainy season arrives in the next few months. Addis Ababa should also tacitly allow aid groups to negotiate access to Tigray-held areas. Getting Eritrean forces out may not be easy, given Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki's apparent determination to crush the Tigrayan leadership, but Ethiopia's foreign partners should hold Abiy to his pledge that these forces will leave. First steps along these lines could - if all goes well - eventually usher in talks between the federal government and Tigrayan representatives.

## II. An Entrenched Resistance

The war in Tigray has become a grinding stalemate. Neither side appears poised to achieve a definitive victory, despite the federal government's success in pushing Tigray's leadership out of Mekelle. The presence of Eritrean and Amhara forces fighting alongside federal soldiers has galvanised Tigrayan resistance to the intervention. On 26 March, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced that Eritrean troops would withdraw "effective immediately".

These were welcome words, though it remains to be seen whether the soldiers will in fact depart. Nor is it clear that Eritrean forces can withdraw without giving a boost to the Tigrayan forces. Addis Ababa is set on defeating. Amid international outcry, authorities have increased media and humanitarian aid access, while promising to probe atrocities. But outside parties' key demand - the withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara forces - will not be easy to achieve, given that one of the political imperatives that drew both these actors into the conflict, namely the elimination of Tigray's former ruling party as a political force, remains unmet.

After fleeing to rural areas, Tigray's fugitive leaders have dug in. Their campaign commands popular support, meaning that it will most likely endure. Meanwhile, the federal government has signalled its intent to keep pursuing a military victory. A drawn-out conflict would lead to even greater suffering for civilians, potentially subjecting those in inaccessible areas to mass starvation. It would also threaten Ethiopia's stability and potentially that of the Horn of Africa, given the country's pivotal position in the region.

The rival combatants' fortunes have waxed and waned over the past few months. In the early weeks of fighting, federal forces and their allies made rapid territorial advances, culminating when they ousted Tigray's government and took control of Mekelle on 28 November, just over three weeks after war broke out.

In December, the removed Tigrayan leadership went into survival mode, retreating to far-flung rural areas in the face of a drone-led aerial campaign that killed some leaders and destroyed military hardware commandeered from the federal army. To avoid detection, they shut down all external telecommunica-



tions and went to ground. Since December, however, their resistance has hardened. The Tigray Defence Forces appear to have established a foothold in rural central Tigray. Tigrayan media regularly report what they describe as victories by these forces over either the Ethiopian or Eritrean armies. These claims are hard to verify due to an internet blackout and access restrictions.

Broadly speaking, Tigray's territory is now a battleground for four different forces fighting on two sides. The Tigray Defence Forces are on one side. They hold territory in rural parts of Central Tigray Zone, as well as some areas of Eastern, South-eastern and Southern Tigray Zones.

Those forces are pitted against the Ethiopian military, which occupies towns and cities; Amhara regional forces, both regular and irregular, which patrol most of western Tigray and parts of southern Tigray; and the Eritrean army, which is present mostly in the northern sections of North-western, Central and Eastern Tigray Zones. In early 2021, the Eritreans have also fought further south, according to, among others, the UN.

Most of the combat over the past few months has occurred in central Tigray, where Tigrayan leaders fled from Mekelle, and increasingly in the two southern zones. For example, battles erupted in Samre district in South-eastern Zone on 14 February, and again in March, as well as further south in several locations (Tigrayan claims of the latter received rare corroboration from non-Tigrayan media on 14 March). From 9 to 12 February, a major clash broke out between Tigrayan and Eritrean forces to the north in the Werie Leke district of Central Tigray Zone.

February fighting between, on one side, Tigrayan forces and, on the other, Ethio-

pian and Eritrean forces also clustered around Abiy Adiy town, whose roads the UN says are inaccessible due to insecurity. More recently, the Ofla and Endamehoni districts in southern Tigray experienced heavy fighting, with Tigray forces' victory claims over Ethiopian and Eritrean troops contradicted by media that support the federal intervention. Tigrayan forces also staged a deadly attack inside Amhara region on 18 March.

International pressure appears to have contributed to a shift in Addis Ababa's public positioning on the presence of Eritrean troops. In the third week of March, U.S. President Joe Biden dispatched Senator Chris Coons to deliver a message to Prime Minister Abiy. A Democrat from Biden's home state of Delaware, Coons is close to the president and sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Shortly after the senator's visit, Abiy publicly acknowledged the Eritrean role for the first time. After making a trip of his own to Asmara on 26 March, the Ethiopian premier said Eritrean troops would withdraw.

The presence of Eritrean soldiers - and their reported role in atrocities in the course of the war - has inflamed Tigrayan popular sentiment. While getting the Eritreans out is critical, their exit could bring its own complications. It would give some respite to civilians who seem to have borne the brunt of Eritrean forces' violence and may win some political space for the interim administration, which has demanded that the Eritreans pull out.

But it could also relieve pressure on Tigray's forces and allow its emboldened leaders to claim they had forced the withdrawal, thus intensifying the conflict as they next seek to force a federal retreat. The Eritreans' continued presence, however, particularly if more atrocities ensue, would also strengthen Tigrayan resolve to fight on.

The incursion of Amhara combatants into Tigray has not helped, either. Amhara regional leaders say they have reclaimed territory that they contend the rebels-turned-rulers from the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) snatched from Amhara hands as they consolidated their power in the early 1990s.

Even though the western areas are relatively quiet at present in terms of fighting, sustained Amhara control - or formal inclusion of the territory in Amhara region - could trigger years of instability as many Tigrayans, including top officials from the federally appointed interim Tigray government, strongly reject Amhara administration.

The Tigrayan armed resistance seems to have grown in strength, although it has still at times been under considerable pressure, even surrounded. Its commanders include former Chief of Staff General Tsadkan Gebretensae, who led the Ethiopian military into war with Eritrea from 1998-2000, and another, more recently retired former senior officer, Lieutenant General Tadesse Werede.

The Tigrayans appear to have held mostly central rural areas and claim to have been able to stand up to federal and Eritrean forces. The war began with Tigray's leaders capturing tanks, missiles and rocket launchers from the federal military, but that equipment was destroyed or discarded in the face of the aerial campaign. Now, Tigrayan forces are more mobile and lightly armed. While it is unclear how many fighters are involved, Tigrayan ranks are said to be swelling due to popular anger at the intervention, in particular at the atrocities allegedly committed against civilians.

Hundreds of Tigray's fugitive political and military leaders are still at large (including ousted Tigray President and TPLF chair Debretsion Gebremichael), with only around a third of those sought in custody. The Ethiopian government did not report having detained or killed any of the wanted leaders in February or March, again suggesting that the TPLF leadership has steadied its position.

Tigray's commanders claim they routinely capture and kill enemy combatants, and seize trucks, rifles and ammunition to sustain their rebellion. From the outset, senior TPLF figures said they do not need an external supply line (though they would like one), because the supportive population will provide food - even amid the shortages - and they can grab more materiel from their foes.

Federal authorities offer a strikingly different assessment of battlefield dynamics, however. In a 23 March address to parliament, Abiy cast the TPLF as an all-but-defeated force. "What I would like to tell the people of Tigray, the friends of Tigray and the honourable parliament is that the TPLF has now become like grain powder that has been dispersed by the wind. We can't collect it again and make it edible powder".

But in addition to the factors noted above that are fuelling the rebellion, there are other considerations suggesting that the war will continue. For one, a sizeable number of Tigrayans oppose the Eritrean and Amhara forces' presence and are outraged at the atrocities both are reported to have committed against civilians. The fury runs so deep that even the interim Tigray administration, appointed by the federal government, has expressed it. Still, that interim administration enjoys little support. Most Tigrayans back the ousted regional leadership.

Eritrean withdrawal would perhaps ease opposition to the interim administration, but it would be unlikely to dilute anger at the federal overthrow of Tigray's government or at the Amhara irredentism. Even more worryingly for long-term stability in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, many Tigrayans now voice support for secession from the Ethiopian federation. A sustained bid for independence would inflame the Amhara-Tigray territorial dispute and might destabilise Eritrea, causing many years of strife.

With the conflict still in the balance, it remains to be seen whether the federal military will seek to calm the situation somewhat by jettisoning its Eritrean and Amhara allies, thereby risking boosting Tigray's resistance. Even if it wishes to do so, Addis Ababa might find it challenging to move in this direction.





## AFFILIATION

## Wentworth Resources to work together with UN's Global Compact Network

By Guardian Reporter

IN a bid to ensure that it aligns its business activities, Wentworth Resources Plc has joined the United Nations Global Compact Network, a voluntary initiative to promote the development, implementation and disclosure of responsible business practices.

In a statement, the Mnazi Bay gas plant owning company which partners with France based Maurel & Prom, said the UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, with more than 12,000 companies based in over 160 countries, and 70 local networks.

Established in 2000, the initiative calls upon companies to operate responsibly by aligning their strategies and operations with the UN's Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and to take strategic action to support the 17 global Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs).

Wentworth CEO, Katherine Roe said, "As a leading domestic natural producer that is contributing 50% of all the natural gas that powers the Tanzanian grid, working hand-in-hand with hydropower to ensure reliable and affordable access and displacing the need for HFO and diesel, we are playing a pivotal role in shaping Tanzania's sustainable future."

She said as a leading domestic natural gas producer in Tanzania, Wentworth plays a critical role in ensuring low carbon, affordable and reliable energy access to the people of Tanzania. Energy access rates are currently at 37 percent and with a 2030 universal energy access target set by the Government of Tanzania and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Wentworth has an important role to play in scaling up access during the next decade, the company said in its statement.

Wentworth recognises the impor-



Wentworth Resources Plc CEO Katherine Roe speaks at a past event.

tance in adopting a responsible approach to its investment in Tanzania and is committed to working collaboratively with its partners in-country to maximise the impact from its operations to create shared value amongst all its stakeholders.

"Joining the UN Global Compact underlines our existing commitment to deliver these outcomes responsibly and collaboratively with all of our stake-

holders, from employees and communities to Government, to capture the most impact for local stakeholders and to support Tanzania's ongoing socio-economic growth," she added.

"Throughout the last year, a priority for our business has been to bolster our ESG performance and disclosure. Joining the UN Global Compact is an important milestone in this journey to ensure we uphold interna-

tional best practice in our values and behaviour and we look forward to working collaboratively with other network members to accelerate responsible business action to create a more sustainable world," the Wentworth CEO noted.

Commenting on the development, Executive Director of UN Global Compact Network UK, Steve Kenzie said, "The core of the United Nations Global

Compact's mission is to support companies doing business responsibly by aligning their strategies and operations with ten universal principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption." "We also support businesses taking action to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. We are delighted and encouraged by Wentworth Resources' endorsement of our initiative," Kenzie added.

## RECOGNITION

## Five startups from Africa compete for \$500,000 in world's largest competition

GENEVA

SEEDSTARS is a Swiss-based investment holding with a mission to impact people's lives in emerging markets. The Seedstars World Competition is held annually to scout for the most promising startups from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America.

Africa's finalists are: Flamingo Foods (Tanzania) is using cutting edge technology and their trained staff to mill rice collected from trusted farmers within the Rukwa Rift Valley; Also in agritech, CAPTURE Solutions (Ivory Coast) provides B2B ICT applications to companies and

organisations in need of re-organising and streamlining their working processes; Ladda (Nigeria), a one-stop investment platform; Sparco Inc. (Zambia), a startup providing a Pan-African payment infrastructure that unifies all payments market players on the continent; and Health-Tech startup Rohobot Home from Ethiopia that provides the home-based healthcare service for chronically ill and aged people at affordable prices.

The startups will now face off in the African regional finals to be aired on 16 April. The regional winner will be selected based on their start-up strength and scalability

and will go on to represent Africa and compete for the US\$ 500 000 grand prize in equity investment.

All regional finals can be followed here. Viewers can also watch the Ecosystem Insights presentation, and listen to the panel discussions where speakers from UN Women, International Finance Corporation, the World Bank Group and CAF Development Bank and other organisations will be discussing women empowerment and gender equality.

Growing through the challenges

Founded in 2013, Seedstars' projects cover over 90 emerging ecosystems



Flamingo Foods CEO Leonard Lusaganya.

through a variety of initiatives such as the online Seedstars World Competition, acceleration programmes, physical hubs called Seed-space, venture capital investments and company building activities.

Eugenia Shevchenko, the competition's lead, said: "I can't wait for the regional finals! Considering how hard 2020 was for each of us, it's been really amazing to see our finalists grow through the competition while going through the Online Seedstars Academy as well as the month-long Investment Readiness Program." The global finale is expected to be held later this month.

## BAILOUT

## Kenya joins appeals to IMF to print cash for poor countries

NAIROBI

KENYA has joined calls for an enhanced International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout for poor countries that would see the multilateral lender increase special drawing rights (SDRs) limits that would ease the balance of payments for Covid-19 hit economies. Rich countries have been printing trillions of dollars to support businesses and give residents under lockdown stimulus cheques, but poorer countries have been wary of similar moves on fears that their currencies will depreciate.

However, the Bretton Woods institution allows countries to settle their trade dues with other na-

tions using the SDR-denominated instruments, therefore, increasing the limits will allow poor countries to more settle external payments without severely impairing their forex reserves. Negotiations are ongoing over whether countries can use part of the SDR reallocation to pay interest on their international bonds, which would allow them to protect their fiscal positions without defaulting.

"We propose the enhancement of the limits of access to IMF facilities through reallocation of existing SDRs and allocating new SDRs, including strengthening the quick disbursement of the IMF through Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) and (Rapid Financing In-



National Treasury Cabinet Secretary (minister) Ukur Yatani.

strument (RFI) and short-term liquidity lines," said Treasury Cabinet secretary Ukur Yatani during a conference of African finance, planning and development ministers on Monday.

Last year, IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva had proposed the enhancement of the SDR allocation that could provide hundreds of billions of dollars in urgently needed foreign exchange reserves for all of the IMF's 189 members.

The move was, however, opposed by the Donald Trump administration in the US, which said under the current framework that allocated SDR according to the size of member economies rich countries would get 70 per cent of the printed money, which they did not need. Only three per cent would go to poor countries.

America said it would be better for advanced economies to contribute to other IMF facilities to help poorer countries, including loans and grants through the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust. African ministers are pushing the move under the new President Joe Biden administration but it is unlikely that Washington, the IMF's dominant shareholder, will change its stance. The US concerns surround the defence of the dollar as the world reserve currency since the IMF's official unit of exchange-SDRs are based on dollars, euro, yen, sterling and yuan.

Printing them would challenge the dominance of the dollar. The IMF last approved a \$250-billion new allocation of SDRs in 2009, boosting liquidity for cash-strapped countries during the last financial crisis.

## CONCERN

## A fifth of food output growth has been lost to climate change

ROME

CLIMATE change has been holding back food production for decades, with a new study showing that about 21% of growth for agricultural output was lost since the 1960s.

That's equal to losing the last seven years of productivity growth, according to research led by Cornell University and published in the journal Nature Climate Change. The

study was funded by a unit of the US Department of Agriculture. The revelation comes as the United Nations' World Food Programme warns of a "looming catastrophe" with about 34 million people globally on the brink of famine. The group has cited climate change as a major factor contributing to the sharp increase in hunger around the world. Food inflation is also on the rise as farmers deal with the impact of extreme weather at a time

of robust demand.

This is the first study to look at how climate change has historically affected agricultural production on a global scale, using econometrics and climate models to figure out how much of the sector's total productivity has been affected, across crops and livestock.

The loss of productivity comes even as billions has been poured into improving agricultural production through the development of new seeds,

sophisticated farm machinery and other technological advances.

"Even though globally agriculture is more productive, that greater productivity on average doesn't translate into more climate resilience," said Ariel Ortiz-Bobea, an author of the paper and associate professor at Cornell's Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management.

The damages to productivity growth aren't evenly spread across regions. Warmer areas – es-

pecially those in the tropics – are more detrimentally affected. Ortiz-Bobea said that coincides with many countries where agriculture makes up a bigger share of the economy.

He was also warned that current research into improving production may not enough consider the pace of climate change. "I worry that we're breeding or preparing ourselves for the climate we're in now, not what is coming up in the next couple of decades."



## COUNSEL

## Public advised on how to request for assistance from NMB Bank Plc

By Guardian Reporter

ANY member of the public including pupils and students can write a letter to an NMB Bank Plc Branch Manager to request for support and not let such a responsibility to school or community officials only.

The bank's Corporate Social Responsibility officer, Aloyce Kikois said in Same last week while handing over desks, chairs and tables to several public schools that if an institution or community needs NMB support then it should approach any branch manager to be considered.

"It's necessarily a district commissioner or head of school who should write such a letter but anyone who is concerned including students," Kikois said while adding that the Dar es Salaam lender allocated one percent of its net profit annually to invest in community projects.

"We work on any request that comes to our attention and quickly present the needed material if possible especially in areas of education, health and disaster relief aide," he noted saying communities have responsibility to ensure that such donated materials are well used.

In a vote of thanks, Kwakoko Secondary School Headmaster, Naiman Kavumo thanks NMB's leadership saying the donation will ease shortages of tables and chairs at the school which totalled between 65 and 100 pieces.

"These 50 chairs and tables donated by NMB will help reduce the challenge in shortage of desks," Kavumo said while noting that such donations also help students improve their performance because the learning environment is better.

He also requested the bank's officials to consider donating office furniture for teachers staff room



Form Four students at Kwakoko Secondary School in Same District, Kilimanjaro Region, sample chairs and tables donated by NMB Bank Plc after a handing-over ceremony held at the school last week. Photo courtesy of NMB

because there is a serious shortage of chairs, desks and cupboards. "NMB has been our bet partner in improving school environments hence we request that you look at our teachers as well," Kavumo noted.

Kibacha Secondary School also in Same District received 50 chairs and tables in addition to laboratory equipment for both schools. A form four student at Kibacha, Nasra Selemani said the donation will encourage them to work harder and excel in national examinations. "We were facing serious challenge on where to sit during classes, at time we were forced to sit on bricks which soiled our clothes," Selemani said.

She urged other corporate entities to emulate the bank's example and help public schools in the country because many are facing shortage of essential equipment such as desks, chairs and tables.

## REGULATION

## KRA unmasks hides and skins export racket

NAIROBI

A hides and skins exporter has been charged with tax evasion after the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) unearthed a syndicate in which traders export the goods without paying duty, denying the taxman Sh1.7 million in revenue.

KRA says unscrupulous traders export locally sourced hides and skins as transit cargo originating from South Sudan. Onywa Caleb Orwa was arraigned on Wednesday for false declaration of goods at the Port of Mombasa leading to loss of revenue amounting to Sh1.7 million.

Mr Orwa is accused, jointly with others still at large, of falsely declaring 6,000 pieces of dried hides and skins to have been in transit from South Sudan with the intention of evading paying the correct export duty.

The trader, who appeared before Mombasa Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweni, denied the accusation. The taxman claimed that the suspect, being a representative of the exporter, knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of payment of duty contrary to the law.

He is alleged to have committed the offence on September 11, last year, within the country. The suspect was remanded in custody after the court was informed that he had jumped bail in another criminal case, where he is facing a similar offence. "Police have been looking for the suspect after he failed to attend court where he is also facing a



Hides and skins impounded at the Mombasa Port in the past.

similar criminal offence," said State prosecutor Vallerie Ongeti. But, Mr Orwa claimed to have been in isolation for 21 days after a Covid-19 diagnosis.

"I did not jump bail. I tested positive for coronavirus and was placed in a mandatory isolation centre here in Mombasa. I could therefore not attend court as this would mean

I would have broken the Ministry of Health protocols meant to curb the spread of the disease," he said.

However, the prosecutor dismissed the Covid-19 claim, noting that records show the suspect had on two occasions, within the 21 days he claimed to have been in isolation, visited KRA offices over the tax evasion case. The taxman

said that on September 21, 2020, its investigation and enforcement officers seized a 40-foot container with hides and skins declared as transit cargo for export to Nigeria. Its probe further revealed that the goods never originated from South Sudan, but were instead obtained locally.

"It is worth noting that exportation

of hides and skins is a restricted export that attracts export duty and by misdeclaring the country of origin, the exporter is perpetuating tax evasion," KRA said. The taxman further noted that the exporter of the goods is liable to violation of the East African Community Customs Management Act. The consignment is lying at the Kilindini Port police.

## INVESTMENT

## World-leading beer producer opens brewery in Mozambique

LISBON

ANHEUSER-BUSCH InBev (ABINBEV), the world's largest beer producer, has opened a new \$180 million brewery in Mozambique, the firm said on Thursday.

The new site has a capacity of 2.4 million hectolitres per year, with potential to expand that to 6.7 million. Located in Marracuene, 30 km north of the capital Maputo, it represents the biggest investment in the sector in Mozambique.

The Heineken group began producing beer in Mozambique in 2019 at a \$100 million factory, also in Marracuene, with a production capacity of 800 000 hectolitres per year. The new ABInBev facility was built from scratch. It employed more than two thousand Mozambicans during the construction phase, and currently employs over 200 people on a permanent basis.

It will be operated by its subsidiary, the Mozambican brewery Cervejas de Mocambique (CDM). Tomaz Salomao, President of CDM, called it "the biggest and (most) modern factory in the country and in Africa", adding that it aimed to supply markets throughout the region.

The new facility will produce 80 000 bottles per hour, Salomao said. He also announced that the ABInBev subsidiary would donate \$1 million for the country to buy Covid-19 vaccines. ABInBev paid around \$100 billion in 2016 to acquire rival group SABMiller. It now produces two of the most popular beer brands in Mozambique - 2M and Laurentina.

## WINDFALL

## How Bralirwa's profits soared above 600pc despite pandemic

KIGALI

ANNUAL profits for local beverages manufacturer Bralirwa increased by 655% (after tax) in 2020 to Rwf9 billion from Rwf1.2 billion in 2019 largely driven by reduction in operating expenses. In 2019, profits had dropped sharply to Rwf1.2bn from Rwf7.2 billion in 2018 with an increase in operating expenses explained as the cause for the drop.

However, in 2020, despite lack of activity on the events scene and with bars closed, largely owing to Covid-19, the volumes of beer sold increased by 7.2 per cent with vending outlets including shops, supermarkets and a few restaurants. Soft drink sales however dropped by 19.1 per cent, according to the brewer's audited financials released Wednesday.

With that, the brewer sold 1,894,000 hectoliters in the year compared to 1,886 000 hectoliters in 2019. However, revenue dropped to by 0.2 per cent to Rwf 100.5Bn from Rwf 100.6Bn in the previous year.

The brewer, however, managed to cut most of the expenses including the cost of sales by 2.3 per cent to Rwf 64.3Bn, selling and distribution



Merid Demissie, Managing Director of Bralirwa.

expenses by 59 per cent to Rwf3.1Bn while administrative expenses dropped by 18.9 per cent to just above Rwf 10Bn. Rwanda Revenue Authority earned Rwf 3.98Bn from the brewer compared to about Rwf1.7Bn taxes that were paid by the company in the previous year. Merid Demissie, the Managing Director of Bralirwa said that revenue management and cost-saving initiatives had driven the performance.

Bralirwa, a listed company on Rwanda Stock Exchange, reported to making investments in the brewer expansion

and fermentation as well as storage tanks bringing the capital expenditure to Rwf14.6bn.

An impairment on the loan to Bramin was recorded in 2020 as the project is yet to become profitable. Bramin mechanised and Irrigated Maize farm is a joint venture between Bralirwa and Minimex, a local milling company.

Debt-wise, the total debt position of Bralirwa rose slightly to Rwf 42.6B due to bank overdrafts. However, Bralirwa paid of some of its USD denominated long-term IFC loan to bring it down to Rwf 9.2B from Rwf14.6 billion

in the previous year. Going forward, the firm cited uncertainties resulting volatility in the global economy are expected to continue to impact African economies in the coming year.

"Our initial plan for 2021 was further top line, profit and margin growth in the context of continued outperformance of the Rwandan economy relative to the broader African region driven by new product introductions, cost management and further debt reduction," the company said in the financial statement.

The performance will see shareholders earn a cash dividend of Rwf8.75 per share compared to Rwf1 in 2019. Shareholders are expected to approve the payout in May this year during an Annual General Meeting with payments to be made in June.

The news of the firm's profit excited social media with most users finding it interesting that the brewer made profits amid a pandemic when bars were closed country wide while others joking that beer had probably been a coping mechanism for many.



**The Heineken group began producing beer in Mozambique in 2019 at a \$100 million factory, also in Marracuene, with a production capacity of 800 000 hectolitres per year. The new ABInBev facility was built from scratch. It employed more than two thousand Mozambicans during the construction phase, and currently employs over 200 people on a permanent basis.**







## WORLD

## US puts J&J in charge of plant that botched COVID vaccine and removes AstraZeneca

THE United States has put Johnson and Johnson in charge of a plant that ruined 15 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine and has stopped British drugmaker AstraZeneca Plc from using the facility, a senior health official said on Saturday.

J&J said it was "assuming full responsibility" of the Emergent BioSolutions facility in Baltimore, reiterating that it will deliver 100 million doses to the government by the end of May.

The Department of Health & Human Services facilitated the move, the health official said in an email, asking not to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

AstraZeneca, whose vaccine has not been approved in the United States, said it will work with President Joe Biden's administration to find an alternative site to produce its vaccine.

White House officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



A vial with the AstraZeneca's coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine is pictured in Berlin, Germany, March 16, 2021. (File photo)

The development, first reported by the New York Times, further hampers AstraZeneca's efforts in the United States. The government has criticized the drugmaker for using outdated data in the results of its vaccine trial. It later revised its study.

Workers at the Emergent BioSolutions plant several weeks ago conflated ingredients for the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines, the Times said earlier in the week. J&J said at the time the ruined batch had not advanced to the fill-and-finish stage.

The government's move to have the

facility make only the J&J single-dose vaccine is meant to avoid future mix-ups, the Times said, citing two senior federal health officials.

The top U.S. infectious disease doctor told Reuters on Thursday the country may not need AstraZeneca's vaccine even if it wins approval.

The United States has loan deals to send Mexico and Canada roughly 4 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, made at its U.S. facility.

Agencies

## Lam: Improved electoral system to bring a more prosperous HK

HONG KONG

WITH legislative changes on improving Hong Kong's electoral system adopted by China's top legislature, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), expects a more peaceful and prosperous Hong Kong under "one country, two systems."

She also expects stronger confidence among people at home and abroad in the prospects of the global financial hub.

During her first exclusive interview after the amendments at the state level, Lam (pictured) explained to Xinhua her work agenda ranging from local electoral legislation to tackling deep-seated social problems.

### For a better Hong Kong

The National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee on Tuesday adopted the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law of the HKSAR, which concerns the method for the selection of the HKSAR chief executive and the method for the formation of the HKSAR Legislative Council (LegCo) and its voting procedures, respectively.

"It marks an important step forward in improving the electoral system of Hong Kong,"

Lam told Xinhua.

As Hong Kong has embarked on the relevant local legislation, Lam and the HKSAR government will have a busy schedule in the next 12 months, including revising local laws and holding elections of the Election Committee, the LegCo and the HKSAR chief executive.

Lam met with LegCo President Andrew Leung Kwanyuen to discuss the work ahead on Tuesday, shortly after the passage of the amended annexes to the Basic Law at the session of the NPC Standing Committee.

The LegCo had been plunged into chaos and could hardly perform its constitutional functions in its first three years since 2016. The legislature has now resumed normal operation after the exit of LegCo members engaged in repeated filibusters and legislative violence.

But it does not mean the LegCo will become an echo chamber. "They (lawmakers) can criticize us and oppose what we put forward," Lam said, adding that the "one country, two systems" principle and national security must be respected and protected.

With the improved electoral system, she believed more capable and responsible talents, who might have been frustrated by the political disorder



in the past, will present themselves in the future.

Looking ahead, Lam promised intensified efforts to improve education, media, and the training and management of civil servants. "With these work being done, people will have more confidence in 'one country, two systems,' no matter they are local residents, people from the mainland or foreigners."

### 'Putting people first'

With the improved electoral system, Lam believed it is high time for the global financial hub to refocus on the economy, raise people's living standards, and tackle entrenched social problems.

The HKSAR government will place more emphasis on "putting people first" and more earnestly tend to grassroots issues, Lam said. "We will certainly do more to reach out to the people, understand their concerns and respond directly and positively."

The chief executive stressed in particular the shortage of housing.

The government has made providing affordable housing to Hong Kong people a top policy priority, Lam said. "Housing is not just a commodity but a pillar to social stability... (making) people have a sense of belonging to a place."

An array of favorable policies have been carried out for residents from different walks of life, and the share of new land used for public housing has been significantly increased to 70 percent. Lam highlighted land reclamation as the major solution to the undersupply of land.

The chief executive proposed a land reclamation project to build a large artificial island in 2018 but waited for one year and a half for the LegCo to approve the funding on related studies. "How many 'year and a half' does Hong Kong have to waste? If it takes 18 months for the LegCo to pass a study and seven months to elect a (committee) chair, I would be very pessimistic about Hong Kong's development."

But Lam sees hopes now. "In the future, we will definitely make more efforts in land development," she said.

Another task high on Lam's work agenda is the vaccination campaign against COVID-19.

"Getting the vaccine is the most important and effective means (to control the epidemic).

While there is a lack of vaccine doses elsewhere, Hong Kong is very lucky to have a sufficient and stable supply thanks to the central authorities' support," Lam said.

As the vaccination ratio was still comparatively low, she promised more efforts to encourage the public to receive the jabs and pointed out that a 70-percent ratio will lead to a herd immunity and facilitate the resumption of cross-border travel.

### 'Not intimidated by sanctions'

"Having been a chief executive for almost four years, especially in the past two years, I have first-hand experience of how overseas governments and politicians have exploited Hong Kong to achieve their agenda," Lam said.

She said the free and diverse society of Hong Kong without a national security law in place gave anti-China forces the room to step in, including appointing their agents to go into Hong Kong's political structure, disrupting the Hong Kong-mainland relationship and using Hong Kong to attack the People's Republic of China.

Lam said three words and phrases would perfectly describe the external interference in Hong Kong affairs over the past years: "double standards," "hypocrisy," and "lies."

Xinhua

## COVID-19: France sees biggest jump in ICU patients in months

WASHINGTON / AMSTERDAM

FRANCE reported on Friday that 5,254 people were in intensive care units with COVID-19, an increase of 145 people in one day and the highest daily increase in five months.

The risk of emergency wards being unable to cope was one of the main reasons for President Emmanuel Macron to order a third nationwide lockdown this

week, after unsuccessfully trying for months to contain the epidemic with a curfew and regional lockdowns.

From next week, France starts a third lockdown, with schools and non-essential businesses closed nationwide for four weeks.

Announcing the lockdown on Wednesday, Macron said the number of ICU beds will be raised from 7,000 to over

10,000.

At the peak of the first lockdown in spring 2020, France saw a high of 7,148 COVID-19 patients in ICUs, but that fell back to a few hundred in August following the strict first lockdown.

During November's less restrictive lockdown, ICU numbers peaked at just under 5,000, but since then they have only briefly dipped below 3,000 in December.

With new infections rising sharply, doctors expect the third wave of the virus will peak in the coming two weeks, with a further increase in ICU numbers.

On Friday, new confirmed cases jumped by the highest week-on-week rate since the end of November, when France was in its second nationwide lockdown.

The ministry reported 46,677

new cases, 6.2 percent more than a week ago, taking the total to 4.74 million cases.

France favors a COVID-19 tracing app rather than health passes for entry into restaurants, museums or other public places once lockdown restrictions are eased, Junior Tourism Minister Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne said Friday on France Info radio.

Agencies

## In Myanmar, Easter eggs become symbol of defiance for anti-coup protesters

OPPONENTS of military rule in Myanmar inscribed messages of protest on Easter eggs yesterday, while others were back on the streets, facing off with security forces after a night of candle-lit vigils for hundreds killed since a Feb. 1 coup.

In the latest in a series of impromptu shows of defiance, messages including "We must win", "Spring Revolution" and "Get out MAH" were seen on eggs in photographs on social media, the latter referring to junta leader Min Aung Hlaing. Easter is not widely observed in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), an activist group monitoring casualties and arrests since the military overthrew the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, said the toll of dead had risen to 557, as of late Saturday.

"People across Burma continued striking for the end of dictatorship, for democracy and human rights," the group said, using another name for the Southeast Asian country.

Despite the killings, protesters continue to turn out every day in towns big and small to reject the return of military rule after a decade of tentative steps towards democracy. Numerous candle-lit vigils took place on Saturday night.

Early yesterday, hundreds of people protested in the country's second city of Mandalay, some on foot, others on motor-bikes, according to images on social media, before police and soldiers moved in to disperse them.

Protesters also gathered in several other towns.

There were no immediate reports of violence.

Police and a spokesman for the junta did not answer telephone calls seeking comment.

### BROADBAND CUT

Opponents of military rule have also mounted a civil disobedience campaign of strikes and they arrange often creative shows of defiance, which on Easter Sunday extended to eggs.

The AAPP said 2,658 people were in detention, including four women and a man who spoke to a visiting CNN news crew in interviews on the streets of the main city of Yangon last week.

A spokesman for CNN said it was aware of reports of detentions following the team's visit.

"We are pressing the authorities for information on this, and for the safe release of any detainees," the spokesman said.

The military is waging its own campaign to control information and stifle dissent.

It ordered internet providers to cut wireless broadband from Friday, depriving most customers of access, though some messages and pictures were still being posted and shared.

Authorities have also issued arrest warrants for nearly 40 celebrities known for opposing military rule, including social media influencers, singers and models, under a law against inciting dissent in the armed forces.

The charge, announced on the main evening news bulletins broadcast by state media on Friday and Saturday, can carry a prison term of three years.

One of those charged, blogger Thurein Hlaing Win, told Reuters he was shocked to see himself branded a criminal on television and had gone into hiding.

"I didn't do anything bad or evil. I stood on the side of truth. I followed the path I believe in. Between good and evil, I chose good," he said by telephone from an undisclosed location.

"If I get punished for that, my conscience is clear. My beliefs will not change. Everyone knows the truth." **Agencies**

## Moscow to respond to any EU's hostile actions, says Lavrov

MOSCOW

RUSSIA will respond to any hostile actions from the EU, and the response will not necessarily be symmetrical, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview Thursday.

"We have always warned that we are ready to respond. We will respond to any hostile actions against us - not necessarily in a symmetrical manner," the Minister said.

Commenting on a journalist's remark that Europe probably simply forgot about Moscow's ability to respond to the pressure, Lavrov noted: "What you're saying, figuratively, is that they have either not read or, more likely, have forgotten the tale of Ilya of Murom, who slept on the stove and nobody noticed?"

The Minister underscored that "this is not a threat," adding that Russia reacts to restrictions in a manner, similar to that of China.

"Mind you, China did not respond with severance of economic activity. It simply sanctioned persons and companies that spoke from anti-Chinese positions too loudly. We act somewhat similarly," Lavrov said.

Agencies

## Artificial intelligence improves parking efficiency in Chinese cities

THANKS to the application of an artificial intelligence (AI)-empowered roadside electronic toll collection (ETC) system, China's capital city Beijing has seen significant improvement in the efficiency of parking fee collection, turnover of roadside parking spots, order in roadside parking, as well as traffic congestion.

As the city further deepens its roadside parking reform, the ETC system has almost covered all the roadside parking spaces in the city, with the proportion of vehicles parked on roads using the system exceeding 90 percent.

With the AI-empowered system, drivers can park their vehicles at the parking spots on the roadside, and

then pay the parking charge via their mobile phones after they drive away.

"This road used to be full of cars, and even the normal lanes were occupied. You could hardly move a bit during the morning and evening commute time," recalled a citizen surnamed Wang, who lives in Chaoyang district of Beijing.

"Since the summer of 2019, roadside ETC devices have been installed here. With all the cars being parked in designated parking spots on the roadside, the road now seems brighter and wider," Wang said.

The smart roadside ETC system "Alpark Sky Eye" adopted by Beijing is developed, operated, and maintained by Alpark, a Beijing-based

leading smart parking solution provider.

The company's intelligent system has brought into full play the advantages of AI technologies and effectively addressed the shortage of parking spaces and the problem of irregular parking in cities.

The system has therefore been listed among the country's innovation projects that integrate AI deeply into the real economy in 2018 by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).

Traditional parking management equipment and monitoring devices have failed to meet the actual needs of cities due to limited application scenarios and technical capacity.

There are many deficiencies in traditional parking systems. For example, magnetic devices cannot identify detailed information about vehicles; each video monitoring pile can only cover one parking spot; and manual collection of parking fees costs too much.

Such problems don't exist in smart machines. The "Alpark Sky Eye" system boasts strong stability and high recognition rate. Besides, it can resist the interference of extreme weather conditions like rain, snow, and fog, and form complete graphic evidence based on wheel path of vehicles.

Each set of cameras of the "Alpark Sky Eye" system can monitor mul-

tiple parking spots at the same time for 24 hours a day. The data collected by front-end cameras are processed using multi-dimensional deep learning algorithm before they are uploaded on to an AI computing cloud platform for data enrichment. The platform then distributes identification results to transport authorities.

The most distinctive innovation in the technological package of the system is precision brought about by high-mounted parking system cameras, according to Xiang Yanping, senior vice president of Alpark, noting that the cameras can recognize more complex static and dynamic reality scenes.

"For example, the equipment can

accurately identify irregular parking behaviors and state such as double parking and frequent maneuvers, precisely recognize detailed information including plate number and vehicle color, and make good judgment on the behaviors of drivers and pedestrians," Xiang said.

Once the high-mounted parking system cameras are installed, they can help with many aspects of integrated urban governance, which represents another advantage of the "Alpark Sky Eye" system.

Besides managing parking fee collection, high-mounted camera system can also provide data for traffic improvements.

People's Daily



## China sees remarkable progress of wildlife observation

LAST month, several wildlife photographers captured rare pictures of a great hornbill, a state-protected wild animal species, sealing up a nest cavity on a tree in Yingjiang County, southwest China's Yunnan Province.

These pictures are of extremely high value in China, compared with text descriptions on how this type of birds seal a tree hole to build a nest.

Yingjiang County is a major habitat of hornbills in China, a species with bright feathers and huge wingspan. When great hornbills fly, the powerful strokes produce a rhythmic thrumming.

The county is home to 710 bird species, where hornbill activities can be observed regularly. A well-organized team is now recording the activities, which consists of journalists, bird-watchers, ornithologists and staff members of local nature reserves. Local farmers have been helping them locate the birds, and offering assistance in logistics.

Yin Yihu is the photographer who recorded how the great hornbill sealed its nest. On March 4, the man, who works for a local media center in Yingjiang, also captured pictures of wreathed hornbill, another family of hornbills under the national second-class protection in China.

Later, together with local wildlife photographers, Yin captured images of three rufous-necked hornbills deep in a forest with an altitude of over 2,000 meters, including two males and one female.

On March 8, Yugong forest farm in Jiyuan, central China's Henan Province

announced that since 2015, Taihang Mountain Macaque National Nature Reserve has captured over a hundred images and footages of leopards, a species under the national first-class protection in China, with infrared cameras. It suggested that the range of the big cats has been expanded. When the cameras were freshly set up in the mountain, only 10 of them captured images of the animal, while the number now is 30. A total of six leopards have been discovered, up from three at the beginning.

Nowadays, more and more observation results and cases of protection for wildlife species are being presented to the public. It is result of the joint efforts made by the general public and professionals. For instance, most of the villagers in Yingjiang County know the ABCs of bird protection, and are aware of its importance. It is because of the common efforts made by the society that China's ecology has embraced constant improvement with more diverse animal and plant population.

March 3 this year marked the 8th World Wildlife Day (WWD), and in China, the theme of the WWD was "facilitating green development and working for harmony between mankind and nature."

In recent years, China has continuously improved the legal system and management of wildlife protection, further enhanced international cooperation on wildlife protection, vigorously promoted the protection of wildlife habitats, and launched massive in-situ and ex-situ conservation activities for wild plants. **People's Daily**

## US lifts Trump's sanctions on ICC prosecutor, court official

WASHINGTON

THE United States on Friday lifted sanctions on International Criminal Court prosecutor Fatou Bensouda that drew international criticism after they were imposed by the administration of former President Donald Trump.

The move, announced by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, lifts the sanctions imposed on Bensouda over her investigation into whether American forces committed war crimes in Afghanistan.

It also removes Phakiso Mochochoko, head of the ICC's Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation Division, from the Specially Designated Nationals list.

In a statement, Blinken said the State Department had also terminated a separate 2019 policy on visa restrictions on certain ICC personnel and added: "These decisions reflect our assessment that the measures adopted were inappropriate and ineffective."

Blinken said Washington was taking the step even though it continued "to disagree strongly with the ICC's actions relating to the Afghanistan and Palestinian situations" and to object to ICC "efforts to assert jurisdiction over personnel of non-States Parties such as the United States and Israel."

"We believe, however, that our concerns about these cases would be better addressed through engagement with all stakeholders in the ICC process rather than through the imposition of sanctions," his statement said.

A spokesman for the ICC said the court and its governing body of the member states welcomed the US move.

Blinken said Washington was encouraged that a broad range of reforms were being considered to help the ICC "prioritize its resources and to achieve its core mission of serving as a court of last resort in punishing and deterring atrocity crimes."

A spokesman for the ICC said the court and its governing body of the member states welcomed the US move.

In his formal announcement terminating the sanctions, dated Thursday, Biden said that while they were neither "effective or appropriate," the United States would "vigorously protect current and former United States personnel" from any ICC attempts to exercise jurisdiction over them.

The Trump administration last year accused the Hague-based ICC of infringing on US national sovereignty when it authorized an investigation into war crimes committed by Afghan forces, the Taliban or US troops.

It targeted court staff, including Bensouda, in September with asset freezes and travel bans for investigating American citizens without US consent. The United States is not a member of the court.

Blinken said Washington was encouraged that a broad range of reforms were being considered to help the ICC "prioritize its resources and to achieve its core mission of serving as a court of last resort in punishing and deterring atrocity crimes."

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## Xinjiang's achievements impress visiting envoys

FOREIGN diplomats think highly of Xinjiang's development after touring around the region, and have called for more global cooperation rather than defamation, unilateralism and hegemonism.

Amid the attacks from some Western countries on claimed human rights grounds, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regional government held talks in Urumqi on Friday with more than 30 foreign diplomats on the region's development.

"Xinjiang, as well as the rest of China, plays a significant role in the security and stability of SCO and its member countries," Shanghai Cooperation Organization Secretary-General Vladimir Norov said on Friday after touring around Xinjiang, adding that Xinjiang has done a good job combating extremism and terrorism.

"I believe Xinjiang will make greater achievements in its social and economic development."

Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque said he has witnessed the religious freedom of the people in Xinjiang on the field trip, and the region's developments in transportation and agriculture left a deep impression on him.

"Human beings are facing many challenges and what we need is cooperation, not defamation, unilateralism or hegemonism," he said.



Children have fun on Dove Lane in Hotan city, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, May 27, 2020. (XINHUA)

Shohrat Zakir, chairman of the Xinjiang regional government, said he would welcome the arrival of more people visiting the region in order to see the real Xinjiang.

The overall situation in Xinjiang is stable and it continues to improve steadily, he told the diplomats, adding that "residents in the region are enjoying stable and better lives in recent years, with an increasingly strong sense of fulfillment, security and happiness".

Thanks to the joint efforts of the central and regional authorities and the effective measures taken, there have been no terrorist attacks in Xinjiang in the past four years, he said.

Xinjiang, in northwestern China, is the largest province-level administrative region in China, with over 25 million people from ethnic groups such as Han, Uygur and Hui.

"Xinjiang is enjoying the best time for development in its history," he said.

He told the envoys of the advances in the local economy as well as in poverty alleviation and religious policies. From 2010 to 2018, the Uygur population in Xinjiang rose from 10.17 million to 12.72 million, an increase of 25.04 percent, the regional chief said.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on Friday that Xinjiang is an open place and foreigners are welcome to visit.

What the diplomats have seen proves that there are no human rights violation, religious discrimination, forced labor or genocide in the region, Hua said, adding that the intention behind such accusations is to create chaos in Xinjiang so as to contain China's development.

During their visit, the diplomats felt that Xinjiang now enjoys social stability, economic development and ethnic solidarity, she added.

Bakri Sopur, a Uygur who grows cotton on 13.3 hectares in Xinjiang's Aksu prefecture, makes around 200,000 yuan (US\$30,487) a year.

"When I heard the rumor about the forced labor, I was shocked. It is total nonsense," he told the envoys.

Xinhua

## New law will help migrants staying in Russia legalize their status - Interior Ministry

MOSCOW

THE Interior Ministry is developing a bill that will allow foreigners and persons without citizenship to legalize their stay in Russia, despite the existing violations, the ministry's press service told TASS.

"The bill will determine the procedure and conditions for the stay of foreign citizens and per-

sons without citizenship who find themselves in special circumstances," the ministry's spokesman said.

The initiative implies that all persons, who stay in Russia with violations of established rules for migrants on the date the new federal law comes into force will be given an opportunity to settle their legal status within a certain period of time, the ministry's official ex-

plained.

He added that administrative measures will not be applied to these citizens, and the measures taken earlier will be canceled.

The Interior Ministry reported that the development of the draft law is being carried out as part of a large-scale work on reforming the migration legislation of the Russian Federation in accordance

with the implementation of the Concept of State Migration Policy. The concept of the bill has been approved by the government.

The ministry noted that now the so-called "migration amnesty", which allows any state agency or official to make a decision on the legal status of foreigners, is absent at the legislative level in Russia.

Agencies

## Jordanian military warns king's half-brother to stop actions undermining stability

AMMAN

JORDAN'S military has told King Abdullah's half-brother Prince Hamza bin Hussein to halt actions targeting "security and stability" in what people familiar with the matter said could be related to a plot to destabilise the country.

In a statement published by the state news agency, the military said the warning to Prince Hamza was part of a broader, ongoing security investigation in which a former minister, a junior member of the royal family and unnamed others were detained.

Prince Hamza said in a video recording he was under house arrest and had been told to stay at home and not contact anyone.

Speaking in English in the video, passed by his lawyer to the BBC, he said he was not part of any foreign conspiracy and denounced the ruling system as corrupt.

"(Jordanians) well being has been put second by a ruling system that has decided that its personal interests, financial interests, that its corruption is more important than the lives and dignity and future of the ten million people who live here," he said.

Earlier, army chief Yusef Huneity denied reports the prince had been arrested but said he was told to "stop activities that are being exploited to target Jordan's security and stability".

Two people familiar with the situation told Reuters security forces had arrived at his small palace and begun an investigation. King Abdullah dismissed Prince Hamza as heir



Jordan's Prince Hamzah Bin Al-Hussein

to the throne in 2004 in a move that consolidated his power.

The Washington Post said Jordanian authorities detained the former crown prince and arrested nearly 20 other people after what officials called a "threat to the country's stability".

A former U.S. official with knowledge of events in Jordan said the plot, which he described as credible and broadbased but not imminent, did not involve a "physical coup." Rather, he said, those involved were planning to push for protests that would appear to be a "popular uprising with masses on the street" with tribal support.

Jordan would investigate whether there was a foreign hand in the plot, said the former U.S. official.

### POWERFUL TRIBES

Prince Hamza is not seen as a major threat to Jordan's monarchy and has been marginalised

for years, but the move against him represents the first such incident involving a close member of the royal family since King Abdullah came to the throne.

The authorities have become increasingly concerned with his efforts to build ties with disgruntled figures within powerful tribes.

These people known as the Herak have in recent weeks called for protests against corruption in a country hit hard by the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, pushing unemployment to record levels and deepening poverty. The authorities had cracked down on several demonstrations, detaining dozens.

Tribes who dominate the security forces form the bedrock of support for the kingdom's Hashemite monarchy.

The state news agency said Bassem Awadallah, a U.S.-educated long-time confidant of the

king who later became minister of finance and also adviser to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Sharif Hassan Ben Zaid, a member of the royal family, were detained along with other unnamed figures.

It gave no details. "The U.S. administration knows that Bassam Awadallah works for MBS (Mohammed bin Salman). Any astute observer will say if someone this close to MBS is involved he would have to know," said the former U.S. official.

The Saudi royal court voiced its "full support" for King Abdullah and all decisions taken by him to maintain security and stability. Egypt, Lebanon, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar also stood by him. The U.S. State Department said the king was a "key partner" and had its full backing.

Government officials were not immediately available for comment.

Arrests of top officials and royal family members are rare in Jordan, seen as one of the Arab world's most stable countries.

Prince Hamza, who had been groomed by his mother Queen Noor to succeed his late father King Hussein, has been pushed into the political wilderness since he was sacked as crown prince.

Some opposition figures have rallied around him, a move that has displeased the king, officials familiar with the situation said.

Agencies

## Global sports community calls for more solidarity

INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said on March 11 that the Chinese Olympic Committee will provide additional vaccines to participants of both Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Expressing his gratitude, he said the offer is "in the true Olympic spirit of solidarity."

Bach said that the IOC

will pay for these additional doses.

After being re-elected for an additional four-year term as the IOC President, Bach suggested to add "together" into the Olympic slogan of "faster, higher, stronger."

His suggestion is reasonable. During the past year, the global sports community needed solidarity more than any time in history, especially when it was facing the lockouts of major sports

events, the difficult situation of sports organizations, and the loss of income of a number of athletes. None of the above challenges can be dealt with by any single party. They need to be addressed with solidarity.

The power of solidarity comes from within the global sports community. Given the lack of income of athletes, sports organizations including the World Athletics tried their best to resume games. Facing the

shortage of available training facilities and sites, many athletes shared resources with each other. During the pandemic, the IOC, the International Federation of Association Football, and other organizations also provided financial aid to member societies and athletes, lending a hand to the organizations and individuals in difficult situations, so as to help them get around difficulties and continue their Olympic dreams.

Today, sports events are gradually recovering around the globe, which is inalienable to the support shown by all sectors of the society. Many events adopted "bio-secure bubble" concept, and received huge support from health, transport and logistics sectors.

Meanwhile, the sports community is also giving back to the society in its own ways. During the past year, stay-at-home sports activities became trendy.

Many athletes, through social media, guided the public to stay fit and healthy at home with their expertise. Such sound interaction between the sports world and the public is also driving continuous progress of athletes.

The power of solidarity is gradually taking the sports community back to the right track, and this power is also inseparable from the future development of sports. As the cause of

sports develops, it will see increasingly frequent internal exchanges, as well as an urgent demand for solidarity.

"Unity in diversity" - the slogan used by Bach when he ran for IOC presidency, is also an expectation and target of today's sports world. Only with solidarity and joint efforts, can the motto "faster, higher, stronger" be better practiced, no matter in the games or in life.

People's Daily



# SPORT



Adam Omary

## JKT Tanzania striker out to lift VPL top scorer prize

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIAN forward, Adam Omary, who plays for Premier League side, JKT Tanzania, is one of local strikers with the most goals in this season's domestic top flight.

He has so far scored seven goals, a situation which gives him the motivation to fight to ensure he this season leaves a mark that will make him a performer the sport's fans will remember.

In a recent interview, Omary revealed that he is at a good level within three consecutive seasons, a situation that has enabled him to reach 27 goals with different teams.

The player promised to work hard, so he can build good reputation, as it is the case for Simba Sports Club's skipper John Bocco.

"If you mention a local striker who has the most goals, Bocco, that's a big thing for him in football. I wish I had something to show for my presence in soccer when I retire," he stated.

The striker opened up a lot about his career including how his selection for Tanzania's national team 'Taifa Stars' made him a respected player on the streets.

He disclosed the Taifa Stars' call-up further taught him to be a player of different perspectives at work.

Omary said after he was called up to Taifa Stars, which was then under the sacked coach Etienne Ndayiragije, it built his reputation on the streets.

He noted he initially seemed insignificant to some people and he was once frustrated by a section of people that he would never get anywhere in football.

He stated: "Apart from respect, I have learned how to live as a player, psychologically prepare before and after the match, play competitive football, how to speak in front of the community watching my work and my life in general, being a role model for others who come after me to showcase football is also a job to be considered."

He disclosed life in 'Taifa Stars' camp was different from the way he used to live with team mates in his club, something that has stuck in his head and he believes it will bear fruit.

"First you meet the players of different teams, some are most successful and some are on their first national team call-up and it was a great comfort to me, so I could see some of them how they are dedicated to football and I garnered a lot everyday from the senior ones," he noted.

In the 2018/19 season, on May 28, Omary broke his arm after helping Tanzania Prisons stay in the Mainland Premier League.

He netted two goals in his outfit's 3-0 win over Lipuli FC, now playing in the First

Division League after being relegated last season.

He noted: "When I went to score I collided with Lipuli FC goalkeeper on the 85th minute, I fell to the ground and my right arm was twisted, I remember I did not get up again, I was taken to Keizi Hospital in Mafyati, Mbeya, where I underwent surgery and stayed straight."

He disclosed: "Although I was injured at the end of the season, it was something I will never forget in minutes, dates, days and years. In fact, before I had the operation, I used to look at my hand until I was scared, but in that season I ended up with 11 goals, 10 goals for Prisons, one for African Lyon where I played for six months before joining Tanzania Prisons."

The following 2019/20 season, Omary joined JKT Tanzania and he finished with nine goals.

He disclosed that he nevertheless did not play more than 10 matches due to injuries and he this season has already scored seven.

"Within three consecutive seasons my level has been good, I think that's what contributed to me being called to the national team, although many think it was because of the hat-trick I scored against Mwadui FC in a game that my team won 6-1, but I also scored two goals against Namungo FC earlier this season," he noted.

Omary disclosed although Azam FC defender Aggrey Morris is the toughest defender he faces when they meet in a match, he will not stop admitting that the latter is one the best defenders of all time in the Mainland Premier League for the period he has been playing.

He stated: "Morris is a defender who gives me a lot of trouble when I know we are going to play against Azam FC and I always think on how to outsmart him, if you approach him he will step on you until there are times I want to ask him what is he out to do to me, but he is a very good defender, I accept his level on the field."

During the five years he played in the Mainland Premier League, Omary remembers his first big money move amounted to 4m/-.

He received the amount from Ruvuma club, Majimaji FC, as part of signing-on fee which he invested in development.

"I invest all the money I earn in football in development even though I can't make it clear, including what I earned when we went to play the CHAN (a tournament for local African players) when I was selected for Taifa Stars," he disclosed.

Omary did not want to open up about his trials in Turkey, although he admits that he did go.

He pointed out that a person that has the authority to talk about it happens to be his agent who lives abroad.

"As far as I know everything will be clear in April, but I can't say how, but I also learned a lot in Turkey during the two weeks I stayed there, like recognizing myself and living the right football life, my vision being broader than failing with weak things," he said.

## SPORTS

## How Simba SC players rated against AS Vita Club

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TANZANIA'S Simba SC outclassed Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club with a 4-1 win in a CAF Champions League's Group A clash, with a brace for Clatous Chama and two volleys from Rally Bwalya and Luis Miquissone, to book a place in the tournament's quarterfinals.

The clash was played at the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Saturday.

The Guardian rates the individual performances of Simba SC players, following their third victory in a row in the premier continental club tournament.

**Aishi Manula: 7**

In his fourth game, Aishi Manula has finally conceded a CAF Champions League group stage goal. It was an easy afternoon for the goalkeeper, who as well plays for senior national football team, Taifa Stars.

He made two saves and took few chances with his distribution. A vocal and reassuring presence in the goal.

**Shomari Kapombe: 7**

The Tanzanian full back had a comfortable afternoon. He managed to add numbers going forward and hardly put a foot wrong defensively.

Kapombe did well to find some space before he placed the ball onto Miquissone's path and the Mozambican was able to produce a cross high enough for Mugalulu to head but his effort went over the bar.

**Mohamed Hussein: 7.3**

He was very neat and tidy on the ball as Simba tried to play out from the back. He had some good runs and gave support to the attack when needed.

**Serge Wawa: 6.9**

Solid for most of the time but had his nervous moments. His diagonal pass found Morrison, who was unable to strike but squared the ball for Chama who moved the ball from his right foot to the left one and scored at the stroke of halftime break.

**Joash Onyango: 6.9**

A shaky start defensively, he was beaten at the edge of the box on the 12th minute by AS Vita Club's attacker, Fiston Mayeye, but luckily Manula managed to produce a reflex save on time.

**He recovered well as the game progressed and finished strongly.**



Tanzania's Simba SC's players jubilate shortly after registering a goal against AS Vita Club of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in this season's CAF Champions League's Group A match, which took place in Dar es Salaam on Saturday. Simba SC won 4-1. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

**Bernard Morrison: 7**

Bernard Morrison enjoyed himself before kickoff. There is never a dull moment with the Ghanaian attacking midfielder. He was fantastic in the first half but ran out of gas. He was a menace. He gave the visitors defence plenty to think about and should have scored before the break.

Morrison was cautioned on the 50th minute as an argument ensued between him and AS Vita Club's Ousmane Ouattara after tussling for a ball down the left-wing. He was substituted at the hour mark after fading out of the game.

**Taddeo Lwanga: 7**

The Ugandan was not a standout performance or anything but his presence makes such a difference. Kept the midfield under control.

He was always in the right place to make tackles and interceptions and start attacks. He was effective in winning possession and using it to drive his team forward.

**Jonas Mkude: 6**

The Tanzanian defensive midfielder tried his best to make some impact on the game but he was not at his usual best. He was sloppy in possession but made some good interceptions.

He picked up the first booking of the game for a foul, he was replaced by Erasto Nyoni with 12 minutes to play.

**Luis Miquissone: 9**

Luis Miquissone has now scored in three consecutive home games in CAF Champions League group stage. He pressed really well, kept running and broke the deadlock.

His technique, tricks, passing and also his ability to read the game was spot on, exactly what Simba fans have come to expect from Miquissone and he delivered once again at this stage.

**Clatous Chama: 9**

There are still moments when the 29-year-old seems

too relaxed on the ball his fake shots and body feints are just breathtaking. He took his two goals beautifully and opened up space for the rest of the attack throughout the match.

**Chris Mugalulu: 6**

The Congolese movement was excellent but his shooting was off beam. He missed a number of chances that would have put the game beyond AS Vita Club before the hour mark. He was subsequently replaced a minute later by Meddie Kagere.

**Meddie Kagere: 6**

The Rwandan striker joined the game just before the hour mark.

**Erasto Nyoni: 6.7**

Introduced on the 78th minute. The veteran utility player was better than Mkude, who he replaced, but that was not hard. He did not influence the match.

**Rally Bwalya: 7.5**

The Zambian midfielder provided an injection of energy when he replaced Morrison with 30 minutes to go. Bwalya struck the third goal for the Msimbazi Street-based giants.

## TBF reminds clubs to speed up preparations for Africa Zone V Championship

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA Basketball Federation (TBF) has reminded the country's representatives at this year's FIBA Afrobasket Zone V Championship to speed up their preparations ahead of the event, slated for May.

The envoys are Oilers Club of Dar es Salaam and Don Bosco Panthers of Dodoma.

The annual FIBA Afrobasket Zone V Championship brings together top region men's and women's outfits.

The men's showpiece scheduled for early next month in Nairobi, Kenya, while women's competition is scheduled for October this year.

According to TBF Secretary General, Michael Mwita, only a month is left before the tournament tips off.

Mwita insisted that it is the federation's responsibility to ensure the teams are well prepared.

"Dear leaders of Oilers and Don Bosco clubs, I would again like to remind you about the preparations for the Zone V Championship's games to be held in Nairobi in May 2021. Time is not friendly," he said.

Mwita stressed that they understand the coronavirus crisis has halted sports activities in Kenya, but that should not interrupt preparations.

"Despite the Kenyan government suspending the sports due to the third coronavirus wave, International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has said they still hope the games will be held based on a system of testing and use of prevention equipment," the TBF leader added.

The FIBA and the USA's NBA have been working closely together to develop protocols to address the health and safety of all players, coaches and



Tanzania Basketball Federation (TBF) Secretary General, Michael Mwita.

officials for the Basketball Africa League (BAL) first finals to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in May.

It is, for that matter, likely to be the same in the Kenya showpiece.

Oilers Club made it to the showdown after finishing second at the 2020 National Basketball League (NBL) held in Dodoma.

They finished second behind the eventual champions, Kurasini Heat.

Oilers started the NBL final impressively to take a 35-34 lead at halftime.

They though could not hold their nerves later as they went down 23-13 in the third quarter before Kurasini Heat closed with 19-11 lead in the last quarter to seal a 76-59 victory.

Don Bosco Panthers finished third with 80-77 victory over Dar es Salaam giants, Vijana Club 'City Bulls', to as well book a ticket for the Nairobi event.

Mwita said Kurasini Heat who won the title that Tanzania at the BAL qualification set to be staged in Kigali, Rwanda in October.

Rwanda will host the maiden Basketball Africa League (BAL) tournament, an official confirmed in Johannesburg last week.

The first edition of the 12-club event was scheduled for last year, but it had to be postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Kurasini Heat will battle for the continental prize against GSP (Algeria), Petro Luanda (Angola), FAP (Cameroon), Zamalek (Egypt), GN (Madagascar),

Police (Mali), Sale (Morocco), Ferroviario Maputo (Mozambique), Rivers Hoopers (Nigeria), Patriots (Rwanda), Douanes (Senegal) and Monastir (Tunisia) in Kigali.

The tournament will tip off with three four-club groups and each side plays their opponents once.

Section winners and runners-up and the best two third-placed teams advance to the quarterfinals.

"We are thrilled that the inaugural season will take place at the world-class Kigali Arena," the BAL president, Amadou Fall, said in a statement.

He added: "Through the BAL, we will provide a platform for elite players from across the continent to showcase their talent and inspire fans of all ages."

He noted: "Basketball can be used as an economic growth engine across Africa, and shine a light on the vibrant sporting culture of the continent."

The BAL is being supported by the International Basketball Federation and the USA's National Basketball Association (NBA) League.



## Ahly salvage last-gasp draw, Kaizer Chiefs win with nine men

JOHANNESBURG

DEFENDERS Badr Benoun and Yassir Ibrahim scored to spare the blushes of title-holders Al Ahly of Egypt Saturday, and Kaizer Chiefs of South Africa won with nine men on a dramatic CAF Champions League matchday 5.

Ibrahim equalised four minutes into added time after Benoun converted a penalty as Ahly snatched a 2-2 Group A draw away to bottom club Al Merrikh of Sudan in Omdurman to seal a quarter-finals place.

Ahly will advance to the knockout stage as runners-up, though, after Simba of Tanzania trounced V Club of the Democratic Republic of Congo 4-1 in Dar es Salaam to seal first place.

Chiefs edged understrength Wydad Casablanca of Morocco 1-0 in Soweto despite having Nigerian goalkeeper Daniel Akpeyi sent off on 40 minutes and Serb forward Samir Nurkovic dismissed one minute from time.

The South African outfit can crown a first group appearance by reaching the quarter-finals from Group C if they win or force a score draw away to Horoya of Guinea next Saturday.

While Chiefs were defying the odds against Wydad, a second-minute Sekou Camara goal earned Horoya a 1-0 win over Petro Luanda in Angola.

Already-qualified Esperance of Tunisia surprisingly fell 2-1 to Teungueth of Senegal in Group D with Baye Diop scoring the 72nd-minute winner in Thies.

Previously winless Zamalek of Egypt upset second-place Mouloudia Alger of Algeria 2-0 in the same section through first-half goals from Youssef 'Obama' Ibrahim and Shikabala in Algiers.

Zamalek, runners-up to Ahly last season, will squeeze into the last eight if they win at home to Teungueth next Saturday and Mouloudia lose away to Esperance.

In Sudan, recently hired English coach Lee Clark watched his Merrikh side take a two-goal lead

by half-time against record nine-time African champions Ahly.

Mosimane tongue lashing - Ramadan Agab scored his first Champions League goal of the season and Saifeldin Malik his sixth to leave Ahly staring at a second away loss in the section.

A half-time tongue lashing from South African coach Pitso Mosimane rejuvenated Ahly and Moroccan Benoun restored hope with his 81st-minute penalty before Ibrahim became the unlikely saviour with a header.

Clatous Chama starred for Simba, the surprise side of this Champions League, by scoring twice and setting up a goal for fellow Zambian Larry Bwalya before a crowd restricted to 10,000 because of the coronavirus.

Before Chama scored his first goal on the stroke of half-time, Mozambican Luis Miquissone had given Simba a lead that was shortlived as Zemanga Soze levelled within two minutes.

In Soweto, Akpeyi needlessly handled outside the box and was sent off with former South Africa international Itumeleng Khune taking his place.

Chiefs shrugged off the blow and a 48th-minute header from Bernard Parker broke the deadlock as the South African side avenged a four-goal hiding from Wydad two months ago.

Having secured a quarter-finals place in matchday 4, Wydad brought a virtual B team to South Africa so stars like leading scorer Ayoub el Kaabi would not have to quarantine when they returned to Morocco.

Veteran Faouzi Benzarti, the most successful African coach in CAF club competitions with five titles, did not travel either, putting assistant Mohamed Benchrifa in charge.

Chiefs were reduced to nine men on 89 minutes when Nurkovic was shown a red card after a second caution, and he and Akpeyi are automatically suspended for the crunch clash with Horoya in Conakry.

AFP

## Real Madrid see off Eibar ahead of Liverpool and Barca tests

MADRID

A PATCHED-UP Real Madrid began a crucial week by beating Eibar 2-0 on Saturday to increase the pressure on Atletico Madrid at the top of La Liga.

With Liverpool to come in the Champions League on Tuesday and a Clasico against Barcelona next weekend, Madrid welcomed a comfortable win thanks to goals from Marco Asensio and Karim Benzema.

Victory means Atletico's advantage over Zinedine Zidane's side is reduced to three points before they play away at Sevilla on Sunday night.

Barcelona, who are four points off the top, host Real Valladolid on Monday.

Zidane picked a makeshift starting line-up but not by choice, with Raphael Varane and Toni Kroos both on the bench, the latter after returning early from international duty due to a muscle problem.

Sergio Ramos, Dani Carvajal, Eden Hazard and Fede Valverde were all injured and left out completely.

None of that quartet are expected to return against Liverpool in midweek although Zidane insisted he remains hopeful on Hazard and Valverde. "We have to wait. I hope they can be with us," he said.

A hesitant Eibar performance also offered him the chance to take off the likes of Luka Modric, Benzema and Asensio in the second half.

"We had to make changes today and we haven't suffered," said Zidane. "Now we have to recover ahead of an important week."

Benzema will be essential to Madrid's hopes of reaching the Champions League semi-finals, and of beating Barcelona too, after the Frenchman

made it 11 goals in his last 10 games.

The 33-year-old looked refreshed after the international break, his exclusion from the national team continuing to be of benefit to Real Madrid.

But Asensio was arguably the star of the show, his lively display in the front three likely to earn him a starting spot in the trio of crunch games now to come. "I'm happy for him, this will give him confidence and energy," said Zidane.

Eibar, who stay 19th, would have suffered a heavier defeat were it not for three goals being chalked off for offside.

Benzema twice went close early on but was denied by Marko Dmitrovic after latching onto Alejandro Pozo's backpass and then was the first to be ruled offside, having headed in Marcelo's cross.

The excellent Asensio hit the crossbar with a free-kick from out wide and then flicked in Isco's shot, only for the flag to go up again.

Madrid though kept coming, and so did Asensio. Casemiro intercepted Pape Diop's pass in midfield and steered a superb ball through to Asensio, whose cushioned touch took him away from Anaitz Arbilla and left him with a simple finish.

Modric and Asensio went off after the hour as torrential rain added to the sense Real Madrid needed a second, with Thibaut Courtois scrambling back just in time after misjudging a back pass.

Casemiro curled in from the edge of the area but again, the goal was ruled out, until Benzema headed in to make the victory secure, capitalising on an impressive run down the left from Vinicius Junior.

## Jota, Fabinho remind Liverpool what they've been missing

LONDON

THEY are not the absentees most often rued during a season Liverpool find themselves needing to rescue, but Diogo Jota and Fabinho provided a useful reminder on Saturday of what Jürgen Klopp's side have been missing.

The Reds were utterly dominant in easing to a 3-0 win over a dreadfully poor Arsenal side, but only after Jota added potency to a performance Fabinho set the tempo for. This was Liverpool's best collective display since routing Crystal Palace 7-0 in December and one that must have felt somewhat cathartic after their recent travails.

Klopp's side move to within two points of fourth-placed Chelsea and can embark upon a Champions League quarterfinal against Real Madrid in addition to the Premier League run-in with renewed optimism after rediscovering the authority that made them champions. Troublingly for Arsenal, this was a throwback to their old selves, too, but more of that later.

"It was a very important statement for us," Klopp said after the match. "We need to show that we fight for it, we cannot talk about it, we have to show it on the pitch. In our situation, it is clear. All the things that have happened to us in the past in this season brought us to a position where we don't have it in our hands. We have to win our games and somebody else has to lose. We have to make pressure on them and that's what we did tonight. We have to fight and we will fight."

The Gunners were only level after more than an hour because of Liverpool's inability to make their superiority count, an affliction that goes a long way to explaining why the visitors are now scrambling to finish in the top four. Despite controlling the game with Fabinho and Thiago pulling the strings in midfield, the game was goalless on the hour mark when Klopp introduced Jota for Andrew Robertson and switched James Milner to left-back. Milner had wasted the visitors' best chance to that point, side-footing wide when found by Trent Alexander-Arnold on the edge of the box.

The sense of reminding others what they were missing extended to Alexander-Arnold, who responded to his surprise omission from Gareth Southgate's latest England squad with a focused display brimming with quality, exemplified by his stunning pinpoint cross for Liverpool's opener.



Arsenal's Nicolas Pepe, right, falls over Liverpool's Andrew Robertson during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Liverpool at the Emirates Stadium in London, England, Saturday, April 3, 2021. (AP)

Jota met his whipped delivery from the right with a header Bernd Leno could not keep out, and from there they threatened to run riot.

Fabinho released Mohamed Salah, who evaded Gabriel's weak challenge to bear down on goal from a tight angle. He aimed for the only part of the goal he could really see -- between Leno's legs -- and steered a cute shot through the gap to double their advantage.

Arsenal wilted badly. Gabriel appeared shell-shocked, gifting possession for Liverpool to make it three in a decisive and costly turnover that Jota finished smartly.

Jota now has 18 goals for Liverpool and Portugal this season, a return made all the more impressive given this is his first season at the club following a £41 million transfer from Wolverhampton Wanderers and he missed a big chunk of the season between Dec. 10 to March 4. This was also only Fabinho's sixth outing since Jan. 24, yet he made more tackles (six) than anyone else on the pitch with Thiago (92%) the only outfield Liverpool player to register a higher pass completion rate than his 89%. It feels almost criminal on nights like this to think he has had to fill in at centre-back.

"We are slightly used to [not scoring early on]. It is our year, if you like; we have not scored with our first chances," Klopp told Sky Sports. "[Milner] didn't score with a sitter pretty much. He thought the same! We have to work hard and try more often and all these kinds of things. Obviously we brought on Diogo [Jota], who is in very good

shape. He stretched things. He played lots for Portugal, that is why he didn't start."

Arsenal simply could not compete. They had only lost one of their four meetings with Liverpool under Mikel Arteta, and the Spaniard had suggested before this that he wanted his team to win through a more assertive, expansive style than the contain-and-counter approach that yielded past success. What followed instead was a brutal lesson in just how far from that goal they are.

"I don't know if it was the worst [performance of my tenure] but probably one of the worst and the one that really shocked me," Arteta said. "It leaves us in a position that we have to apologise for what we have done on the pitch today. I don't care who is missing, that is excuses. The international [break] is excuses and I hate excuses."

"They were much better than us in every single department. And they fully deserved to win the match by a bigger margin. I am fully responsible for that. The rest, about one player [missing], two players, three players, is just excuses."

The strong suspicion remains that Granit Xhaka is not good enough for a team aspiring to be Champions League regulars, yet they missed his range of passing in central midfield. With David Luiz also unavailable -- Arteta revealing after the match that the club is evaluating whether surgery will be necessary for the 33-year-old's knee injury -- the Gunners did not

possess a player able to pick an early long pass to help beat Liverpool's relentless press. Instead, they simply turned over possession cheaply, exemplified by Gabriel's wastefulness for Liverpool's third goal. He gave the ball away 19 times, a number matches by Calum Chambers.

Losing Kieran Tierney to injury on the stroke of half-time following a clash with Milner was unfortunate, and it felt significant that the first two goals came down the channel the Scotland international had been patrolling. It was also telling that Arteta withdrew captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang when Arsenal were losing for the second game running. The task here did not suit him, it must be said, being asked to do so much defensive work out on the left flank, but he cannot remain on the periphery for too much longer given what is at stake this month.

Arsenal's season now hinges on their Europa League quarterfinal tie with Slavia Prague, the first leg of which takes place at Emirates Stadium on Thursday. Fresh energy will be required with Bukayo Saka and Emile Smith Rowe likely candidates to return. Arsenal need both the exuberance and quality of their youth.

Liverpool still have an active fight on two fronts despite an appalling recent record at home and the ongoing absence of key defenders including Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez. And the signs suggest they are starting to regain enough squad depth to make both challenges competitive at the very least.

ESPN

## Man City need Haaland or Kane to get even better

LEICESTER, England

THE day before Manchester City moved three points closer to the Premier League title with a 2-0 win at Leicester, Pep Guardiola had the rest of football breathing a sigh of relief when he said that his club cannot afford to sign a world-class striker as replacement for the departing Sergio Agüero.

Frankly, if Erling Haaland or Harry Kane are not wearing a City shirt next season, the rest might still have a chance. Time will tell if Guardiola gave a genuine reflection of reluctance to break the bank for the likes of Borussia Dortmund's or Tottenham's star striker, or whether the comments were tactical and designed to distract their rivals in the transfer market.

But whatever Guardiola's intentions, the general sense of supporters around the world would have been: "Who are you trying to kid?" Make no mistake, it would be a gamble on City's part if they have not signed a proven goal scorer by the time next season comes around. And that is whether or not they are able to lure Lionel Messi to Manchester.

If Haaland or Kane become available, it will almost certainly take bids in excess of £150 million for either of them before their current clubs would even consider a deal, so the City manager's insistence that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has put them out of the running may be rooted in cold reality.

Although victory at the King Power Stadium moved the champions-elect 17 points clear of second-place Manchester United (who have two games in hand) and within four victories of sealing the title, another reality was highlighted: While City might not be able to afford Haaland or Kane, they really cannot afford not to sign a striker of such calibre.

Former United forward Romelu Lukaku, now scoring regularly at Inter, and Eintracht Frankfurt's Andre Silva, whose game-winning header boosted his side's Champions League hopes at Dortmund's expense on Saturday, have also been linked with a move to the Etihad Stadium, perhaps as less expensive options than A-listers such as Haaland and Kane.

Guardiola made the valid point on Friday that his team is contending for four major trophies, despite Agüero being unavailable for large parts of

the campaign due to injury and a period recovering from COVID-19. City have played with a false nine on several occasions and Gabriel Jesus has often been overlooked, even when Agüero has been out of action.

Agüero is City's record scorer with 257 goals, but the 32-year-old's injury problems mean he cannot be considered as prolific as he once was. Jesus, meanwhile, is simply not an elite striker. The Brazilian international is industrious and quick, but does not score enough goals, especially in a team that creates so many chances.

Despite the lack of a reliable striker, City have dispelled the old convention of needing a 20-goal striker to win a title -- Agüero has played the role most seasons since his arrival from Atletico Madrid in 2011, but has just one in the league this season, while Jesus' tally at Leicester was his eighth -- and have blown away the competition in England to close in

on a fifth title in 10 seasons.

But while Ilkay Gundogan is the leading league scorer with 12, can City win with the same formula next season, without a focal point to their attack? Perhaps, but just imagine how formidable they would be if they added a Kane or a Haaland to the team.

Saturday's win was set up by another unlikely source, as a second-half goal from left-back Benjamin Mendy opened the scoring -- Jesus made the points safe on 74 minutes -- and it has become a trend for Guardiola's defenders or midfielders, rather than forwards, to make the breakthrough in recent weeks.

Not since a 1-0 win at Arsenal in February has an attacking player -- Raheem Sterling on that occasion -- scored the decisive goal. Instead, it has been a season when City's match-winners have been the likes of Gundogan, Kevin De Bruyne and

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

**Jota, Fabinho remind Liverpool  
what they've been missing**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

## Yanga's Fredrick Mwakalebela challenges TFF punishment

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

YANGA's vice-chairman, Fredrick Mwakalebela, has hit back at the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF)'s Disciplinary Committee for handing him a five-year ban.

Mwakalebela (pictured) was called to defend himself before the five-year ban takes effect, which will see him being prevented from associating himself with football.

He noted: "I feel justice was not served and I had seen it from how the hearings were conducted. For sure, I knew I was going to be banned."

He stated: "I had warned even our chairman [Mshindo Msolla] that I was going to be banned and that is because I was sceptical about how the committee ran the hearing process."

Mwakalebela moreover claimed his ban was unfair as the cases he raised at the tribunal before were never heard or decided.

Among the issues Yanga protested at the tribunal is Ghanaian midfielder Bernard Morrison's controversial switch to Simba SC in December 2020.

The case is yet to be fully determined although the TFF's Players' Status Committee had stated the Ghanaian was not bound by any Yanga contract and he was a free agent at the time.

The Yanga leader added: "I tabled all our complaints but we were never given a chance to be heard conclusively."

He pointed out: "Yanga bestowed on me great honour to help run their club and I have never shied away from defending them. I do defend them for the better of the club."

He noted: "I was banned on a number of actions and one of them is that I made inciting remarks against the referees. But I have raised a number of issues including how our letters of complaints and demands are never attended to."

He disclosed: "That is the reason I was banned and fined. I also made a demand that Morrison's case is heard and determined before the incitement case was heard."

The long serving Tanzanian football administrator also sarcastically claimed the ban means he should not even read news updates on sports.

"I have been asked not to engage in matters of football and that means I should not even read sports sections in the newspapers," he concluded.

He noted: "That means even the TVs must be switched off whenever I am in a room because I have been banned from sports activities."

The federation, apart from banning the official, slapped a fine on him and further issued a warning.

"Tanzania Football Federation Disciplinary Committee has banned Yanga's vice-chairman Mwakalebela from football activities for five years," the TFF judgement read.

The TFF noted: "Mwakalebela has also been fined 5,000,000/- after he was found guilty of inciteful statements for the Yanga fans, the members against football administration bodies in the country."

"The judgement has been delivered pursuant to Article 73(4) of TFF Regulations of 2013," the TFF disclosed.

It is not yet clear whether the Yanga official will appeal against the judgement rendered by the committee on Friday.

Mwakalebela is the second high-profile figure at Yanga to be sanctioned after the club's information officer Hassan Bumbuli was banned for three years. The punishment was a few weeks later lifted.



Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club head coach, Florent Ibenge.

## Ibenge: Competent professionals boost Simba SC in CAF Champions League

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

DEMOCRATIC Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club's head coach Florent Ibenge has claimed Tanzania's Simba SC's good run in this season's CAF Champions League is a result of having money to buy more quality players than his team can afford.

The DR Congo tactician showered praises on the Msimbazi Street-based side after the latter hammered AS Vita Club 4-1 in the showpiece's tie, which took place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Saturday.

The Msimbazi Street giants, consequently, continued with their fine run in Group A of the competition.

They have maintained their unbeaten run and also reached the last eight for the second time in recent years.

Mozambican winger Luis Miquissone, Zambian midfielders midfielder Clatous Chama (two goals) and Larry Bwalya (one goal) scored for Simba in the clash.

The AS Vita Club's midfielder, Zemanga Soze, scored his outfit's only goal in the match.

It turned out to be the first goal Simba have conceded in the showpiece's group stage, they have however retained their top spot in Group A ahead of Egypt's Al Ahly.

Ibenge heaped praises on Simba after the last weekend game, insisting the Tanzanian giants are currently among the best teams in Africa.

According to the Congolese tactician, Simba deserved to progress to the quarterfinals of the competition. Ibenge moreover stated Tanzanian clubs have money to buy quality players and hence they can scale great heights.

"Because you see now football needs money, I think at the moment Tanzanian teams have more money than the Congolese teams so the former can afford to have better players than our players in Kinshasa," Ibenge noted after the game.

He added: "If you see a lot of players [especially our better players], they are coming all the way from Kinshasa and other parts of our country to play in Tanzania so the reason they [Simba] have a better team than we can have."

He stated: "For the moment we have this problem, we have less money than Tanzanian and other teams in Africa so our teams are suffering to get good results because of that." The 4-1 loss ended AS Vita Club's slim hopes of making it to the quarterfinals of the show-down.

The DR Congo tactician said: "I simply don't have much to say, we have lost to one of the best teams in Africa at the moment, they were the better side, they were better than us in all the key departments and they deserve to progress to the quarter-finals."

He noted: "It is normal that they [Simba] won the game, we tried to do our best but they have some players who are really good, very good in quality and I tell you congratulation to them and I wish them good luck for the next game and next round."

In the group's other game, CAF Champions League defending champions Egypt's Al Ahly came from two goals down to secure a 2-2 draw away to Sudan's Al Merreikh also on Saturday.

## Gomes pleased with patience exhibited in Simba SC's victory over AS Vita Club



Tanzania's Simba SC's players jubilate shortly after registering a goal against AS Vita Club of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in this season's CAF Champions League's Group A match, which took place in Dar es Salaam on Saturday. Simba SC won 4-1. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

TANZANIA'S Simba SC head coach Didier Gomes da Rosa was pleased with how his side showed patience in the face of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club's attacking tactics, as the former comfortably won 4-1 in their CAF Champions League's Group A clash in Dar es Salaam on Saturday afternoon.

Goals from Clatous Chama, Rally Bwalya and Luis Miquissone were enough for a comfortable afternoon for Simba SC at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium.

Simba SC, for that matter, booked a quarterfinal ticket outright as Group A leaders with one game left to play.

The victory is Simba's third in a row against the DR Congo side.

Whilst AS Vita Club showed early intention to do damage in the Saturday tie's first half, Simba's coach had

told his player to stick to tactical instructions.

Speaking at a post-match conference, Gomes said: "We are very happy because not only have we qualified but we've played a good match. Of course we could have scored more goals because we dominated the match in the two halves. We are very satisfied this evening, it is the first step, we've reached the quarter final. We finish top of the group."

He continued, stating: "We can be very proud of our players and we can thank them. They have done a lot. They understood me very well. We needed to be very patient because we knew very well that AS Vita would press us and allow us space to score. It was a very interesting match."

He added: "I don't know yet but it would be interesting to play with our best team against Al Ahly in Cairo."

He disclosed: "We are a big, big team in Africa and we must prove what we can do even against Al Ahly. We are now among the best eight teams in Africa, enjoy this time."

Simba SC's final group stage game will pit the side against the showpiece's defending champions, Egypt's Al Ahly, in Cairo on April 9.

The CAF Champions League's defending champions came from two goals down to secure a 2-2 draw away to Al Merreikh of Sudan in Khartoum on Saturday.

Al Ahly have eight points and have already qualified as runners-up.

Gomes, nevertheless, believes Simba have a point to prove against Al Ahly despite winning 1-0 when the clubs locked horns in the first leg in Dar es Salaam.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko



**TONIGHT @ 9:30**

**EATV MONDAY**

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)  
14:30 Bongo Hits  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Copa Coca-Cola (r)  
16:00 Akili & Me (r)  
16:30 #HASHTAG  
17:00 S5ELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Music/Soap  
19:00 EATV SAA 1  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 UJENZI  
21:30 5SPORTS LIVE  
22:30 Bongo Hits

**5Sports**  
The week's local and international sporting events as well as indepth analysis of the biggest sporting highlights of the week are covered on 5sports.

**eastafrika 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

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