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# Tanzania changes tack on Covid-19



By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA is set to take a new direction in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic after President Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday said she was forming a team of experts to brainstorm on the way forward.

Speaking after swearing in newly-appointed top ministerial officials at the State House in Dar es Salaam, she expressed the intention to constitute a committee of experts grouping health sector professionals who will look at the issue and chart out a path for the country.

"On Covid-19, I think I should form a committee of experts to look at it professionally and then advise the government," emphasizing that Tanzania cannot isolate itself as if it was an island, while reiterating that the country can't just accept everything coming from the outside.

"We cannot continue just reading about COVID-19 worldwide and for Tanzania it is all blank," she asserted, describing the situation as incomprehensible," she said.

The president said Tanzania needs to have a clear and understandable position regarding the pandemic so that it can make informed decisions. Tanzania cannot rely on outside reports on the state of the pandemic while it has no such report, she stated.

"We don't have to remain silent. We cannot refuse or agree without doing any scientific research. We need to have our own understanding of where we stand on the issue of Covid-19," she stressed.

The new team will also advise the government on the potential benefits or risks the country faces for opening its borders and tourist destinations at a time when most countries closed their borders due to the pandemic.

Tanzania last released data on COVID-19 in May last year, where it was at that time affirmed that the country had 509 such cases, and since then government privileged the view that the country was largely free of COVID-19, and encouraged herbal remedies such as steam therapy in case of

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**“On Covid-19, I think I should form a committee of experts to look at it professionally and then advise the government”**

## New dawn in media freedom, expression

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday signaled that the government is turning a corner in its stance on media freedom and liberty of expression, with a directive that all banned media outlets be unchained.

Media stakeholders were quick to react to the president's decision saying it was a new beginning and a big step in media freedom in the country

Kajubi Mukajanga, veteran Executive Secretary for the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) said he commended the president

because the matter was tainting the country's image abroad.

"We believe that the ministry shall quickly work on addressing the issues without hesitation. We thank the president for seeing it," he said, noting however that there is need for the president to look at media laws which are harsh on the media.

"One of the issues that led to closure of media houses is existence of repressive laws, so there is a need to look at the laws and change them," he specified.

The acting chairman for the Media Owners Association of Tanzania (MOAT), Samuel Nyala said this was a good beginning to ensure there was positive co-existence between the media and the government.

"The presence of these laws was the core facilitating factor for the bans, therefore we need to ensure that these laws are looked at and reviewed," he said.

Joyce Shebe, the chairperson of the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA), said the decision by the president has brought hope and comfort

## Investment flow more likely with Samia eager for change

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday ordered relevant authorities to take a friendly stance in their engagement with local and foreign investors so as to regain their lost confidence.

In remarks following the swearing in of newly-appointed top government officials at the State House in Dar es Salaam, the president lifted a lid on the negative environment for foreign investments, noting that after she made her first appointments last week, messages were flooding from investors who threw in the towel and now wish to come back.

"They reach out to me through my aides; asking for my assurance that things will be okay so that they can come back," she said.

The president said foreign investors love Tanzania but they were frustrated by unpredictability of policies and generally unfriendly environment of doing business.

She directed authorities in charge of investment, labour and immigration to ensure transparency, openness and ease

of doing business so as to urgently build investor confidence, win back those who left the country and lure new ones.

"We need to bring back investor trust in Tanzania. We must leave behind bureaucratic habits and create a better business environment for foreign and local investors," she declared, underlining that the country's image out there is not pleasing at all.

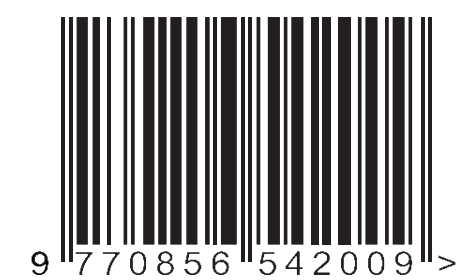
"Please bring back the trust of investors and attract them to come back. They might need us to survive but we need them more than they need us," the president asserted, insisting that the country needs more investments in order to create jobs and increase money circulation.

"Tanzanians are crying all over the country that their pockets are empty. We need healthy investments and trade to fill their pockets," she said.

Starting a business and access to residence permits for foreign investors was another challenge that needs to be addressed as heavy handed methods

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**“I know you were in Dar es Salaam and they transferred you to Mwanza, I have decided to return you to Dar es Salaam so that you go clean the mess as the port. I am giving you six months to do it, after that we will be talking of other things”**



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# New dawn in media freedom, expression

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to the media fraternity which was teetering on the brink of collapse.

Salome Kitomari, the chairperson of the Media Institute for Southern Africa - Tanzania Chapter (MISA-TAN) hailed the president for ushering new hope to the media fraternity which was in a bad state.

"At all times a nation that does not speak is dead. Freedom of the media is not the number of media outlets but how far they help the public authorities to be accountable," she said.

She also highlighted the fact that the sentiments expressed by President Samia have come at the right time, as we only have a few weeks to the World Freedom Day on the third of May.

The Tanzania Editors Forum said in a statement that it has received with joy the decision to unchain all media outlets that were banned.

TEF said it was confident that the decision by the president to direct the Ministry of Information to specifically point out the legal fines and punishments to media houses that go against the laws will increase transparency in the regulatory process.

"This will help, if a media house is not satisfied with the punishment and opts to appeal," said TEF acting chairman Deudatus Balile.

In remarks after swearing-in newly-appointed permanent secretaries, deputy permanent secretaries and heads of key regulatory agencies at the State House in Dar es Salaam, the president said by lifting the curbs on various print and other media outlets, the world will no longer regard Tanzania as a repressive state.

"I am told you revoked licenses of some media outlets, including some online television stations. You should lift the ban but tell them to follow the law and government guidelines," she said.

Regulations governing the media must be open and punishments issued by authorities must be in line with the

specified offence, the president underlined, cautioning that regulatory authorities must not ban just because they have the power to do so

Tanzania has a number of laws that are deemed repressive by media practitioners, illustrated by a rise in banning newspapers during the past few years.

The Media Services Act of 2016 gives officials powers to shut down media organizations that violate draconian terms of their licenses, even by confiscating printing machines.

President Samia's stance is a complete shift from the radical outlook of the late Dr John Magufuli, who is on record as having publicly warned newspapers in 2017.

The statement sent jitters down the spines of independent media outlets, cultivating self-censorship among practitioners.

Mawio, a weekly tabloid specializing in in-depth political reporting, was banned after publishing an article that linked former presidents to controversial mining contracts while Tanzania Daima was banned for what authorities termed as "continuous publication of false information."

Mwanahalisi was banned for two years after it published an article that compared Dr Magufuli with opposition politician, Tundu Lissu while Raia Mwema was banned following the publication of an article titled "Magufuli presidency likely to fail."

On April 16, 2020, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority banned Mwananchi newspaper from publishing online for six months. It was also slapped with a 5m/- fine for allegedly publishing false news.

On June 23, the Information Services Department, which registers print media outlets, announced the revocation of Tanzania Daima's distribution and publication license as of June 24.

The statement accused the publication of breaching the law and professional ethics, and banned its distribution domestically and abroad.



Newly appointed ministerial permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries as well as heads of government institutions take the ethics oath shortly after being sworn in at State House in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan has called on responsible authorities to come up with concrete measures to save the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) from disappearing.

"Ngorongoro is disappearing, we agreed with an area of its kind people and animals to live together, but now people are more than animals," Samia said when speaking shortly after swearing-in permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries at the State House in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

"When we entered into this agreement (a contract for human and animal life using one area) we had 9,000 people and now it is between 90,000 and 100,000, NCA and the ministry are there looking without taking no action," she said.

"We agreed that people and animals should live together, but not this number of people. This is what makes wildlife in the area overwhelmed," she said.

## Samia seeks tangible measures to save Ngorongoro from extinction

In addition, she said Ngorongoro is disappearing due to the invasion of invasive plants that are destroying important plants for grazing.

President Samia said: "If we want Ngorongoro to remain and sell in Tanzania internationally, we must be careful to maintain it and ensure it remains. To relocate people...I do not know what you're going to do."

In another development, President Samia said that the Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (TASAC) held 23 dubious board meetings within one year at a cost of more than 600m/-.

Samia said that she was disappointed by the misuse of public funds at the agency.

"I am very disappointed, nothing has been improved at TASAC yet you

conducted meetings and spent a lot of public funds, I have appointed you as a young man to work, I want to see improvement in this area and contribute to government revenues and not otherwise," said Samia.

She said: "Let me tell you after nominating your name I slept at around 5am reading the social media comments with most of them saying that you cannot perform because you are a new comer."

The head of state told TASAC new director-general Kaimu Mkeyenge: "You were also working in Tasac and you know all the evils that were happening at TASAC but I have decided to promote you now go and work harder in collaboration with other staffs and clean up the mess in the institution."



Hai District Medical Officer Dr Irene Haule (2nd-R) pictured yesterday leading a delegation of officials from NMB Bank Plc headquarters in Dar es Salaam on a tour of Hai district hospital for a first-hand account of the use of the items the bank donated to the facility last year. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Utilise rice by-product to save lives, rivers - MP

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

KILOMBELO MP Abubakar Asenga has urged the government to come up with a special programme to promote productive use of tonnes of rice by-product that end up in rivers annually.

According to the MP, tonnes of rice straws produced annually in Kilombelo sugar cane belt end up in rivers, dumpsites and people's settlements, something which could have negative impacts to people's health and sustainability of rivers while the same can be used in mushroom farming.

In his question posed during yesterday's Parliament session, Asenga sought to know the government plans to attracting

more investors in the country who would grab opportunities in available rice straws by producing mushrooms.

"Production of rice straws has been increasing every year and most of the wastes have been ending up in the Kilombelo River something which causes floods and trouble to the residents in the constituency," Asenga claimed.

Responding, deputy minister, Prime Minister's Office (Investment) William Ole Nasha said that the government has been attracting investment in various sectors including the agriculture and it will continue ensuring that it lure more potential investors for the country's development.

"The government is attracting investments through various

strategies including preparing investment guidelines for regions to identify investment opportunities, organize conferences of domestic and foreign investment as well as strengthening business and investment environment in the country. As a result of the government and private sector's efforts to promote agriculture including mushroom production, Tanzanians have responded well especially in using rice straws," he said.

He acknowledged that mushroom cultivation on these agricultural wastes (rice straws) is essential and can bring transformation in the agriculture sector and farmers' income at large.

The deputy minister said residents in Kilombelo have also been encouraged to engage in mushroom farming using rice straws and they are now reaping big from the work.

"For example, Ifakara Town Council produces approximately 11,125 tonnes of rice straws per year which are used to produce mushrooms, animal feed, burning bricks, pots, creating stoves as well as cooking energy.

He further said the Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organisation (TIRDO) in collaboration with other research bodies are conducting more studies to find more on the best nutritional mushrooms which can be produced by farmers.

## Tanzania changes tack on Covid-19

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infection.

The government had also ruled out procuring vaccines despite the insistence of the World Health Organization (WHO) that the job

was necessary to curb the spread of the virus.

WHO urged Tanzanians to ramp up public health measures against COVID-19, reassuring skeptical opinion in Africa and abroad that vaccines work.

## Investment flow more likely with Samia eager for change

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often end in pressing for bribes for permits to be processed.

Despite establishing a One-Stop Center at the Tanzania Investment Center (TIC), which puts all institutions handling investment application processing under one roof, investors must run up and down numerous times to obtain business certificates and permits.

Investors consider Tanzania an unpredictable country when it comes to doing business due to tax and work permit uncertainties, she emphasised, pointing out that she knows someone who was a long time investor but shifted his investments to another country due to tax complexities.

President Samia reiterated that she will work on finalizing all the major projects that were started by her predecessor, which include the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza and the Nyerere hydropower project, among others.

"All the ongoing projects will be accomplished as scheduled as to us these are an inheritance," she said, noting that an inheritance is something sacred that can't be neglected or abused.

She also raised the matter of the long forgotten export processing zones, saying there is need for the permanent secretaries and ministers to revisit the reasons for the establishment of the zones.

The EPZ authority is expected to facilitate investors in obtaining space to build a factory outside existing commercial parks, taking up the company registration process, administrative procedures in getting tax incentives and obtaining visas and work permits.

She also gave a six-month deadline for the newly-appointed director general of the Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) Erick Hamis to clean up the mess of inefficiency and embezzlement of funds, saying that she had deliberately appointed him because he is familiar with the place and has the ability to do the job.

"I know you were in Dar es Salaam and they transferred you to Mwanza, I have decided to return you to Dar es Salaam so that you go clean the mess as the port. I am giving you six months to do it, after that we will be talking of other things," she said.

The Head of State said she believed in the new appointee because he had no groups, showing confidence in his ability to deliver.

Recently, President Samia suspended the Director General of Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) Deuseddit Kakoko after the institution was adversely mentioned in the report of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG).

This came up when the president was receiving the CAG's audit reports for the financial year 2019/20 at the Chamwino State House.

She said she had seen the massive embezzlement conducted at TPA and ordered the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) to take up the issue as a matter of urgency, just two days after the burial of the late Dr John Magufuli.

The president had similarly noted that Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa formed a committee to probe into the issue and only suspended two senior officials.





Nominated legislator Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa (C) and his fellow MPs head for the morning session of the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

## 5,000 more teachers to be hired, MPs told

THE government is set to hire over 5,000 more teachers to address shortage of educators, the National Assembly heard yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Education, Science and Technology Omary Kipanga told the House here yesterday that last year the government through President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) employed more than 8,000 teachers.

He added that, most of the teachers employed were allocated to the schools with critical shortage of the professionals especially in rural areas.

"The government is still working on the shortage of teachers, there are more than 5,000 teachers

who will be dispatched to various areas in the country as efforts to address the problem and ensure that our children learn smoothly" he said.

Kipanga was responding to a supplementary question by Special Seats MP Husna Sekiboko (CCM) who wanted to know why the government was using the same grading system for schools in rural and urban areas while students in rural areas were facing numerous challenges including shortage of teachers.

Early February, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa told the National Assembly that, in 2020 the government employed 13,000 teachers and 8,000 were assigned to duty stations to address the shortage.

He assured the government commitment to employing teachers to meet public needs and improve service delivery.

The PM said that it was the government's intention that a teacher had a few classes so that he/she had ample time to concentrate on students.

"We will keep on employing teachers depending on demand to ensure that those employed are not overburdened to increase efficiency," he said.

Kipanga said that the grading system used in the country has taken into account the national, regional and international standards.

He said that the government cannot change the grading criteria but it will work on the challenges facing rural schools by allocating more teachers and improve the learning environment.

## Govt taking steps to control weaver birds

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government is finalising procedures for deployment of experts and traps to control destructive weaver birds that are destroying crops in Singida, Dodoma and Manyara regions, the House heard yesterday.

Agriculture deputy minister Hussein Bashe said in the National Assembly yesterday when responding to a question from Singida West MP Elibariki Kingu (CCM).

In his basic question, the lawmaker sought to know the government's plans to eradicate the quelea quelea which have been destroying many hectares of farmers' crops in Singida.

"Farmers in the constituency are now avoiding cultivation of sorghum, maize and sunflowers fearing of the destructive birds, so the government has to ensure us on what measures it is taking to address this challenge," the lawmaker said.

Responding, the deputy minister acknowledged that the majority of farmers in Singida and neighbouring regions have been losing their crops in farms due to the destructive birds known locally as 'Selengwa'.

He said that the government is currently working to get a special permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism so as to install special traps to bar the birds from destroying the farmers' crops.

He assured farmers in Iramba, Singida and Ikungi districts in Singida Region that it will deploy experts within next few months to fight birds which have been destroying crops in almost every season. "In May 2020, we sent experts in Singida so as to identify the areas which are affected by the birds. In the study, the experts identified 12 villages which needed

immediate help and support farmers to conduct their activities freely from the destructive birds," the deputy minister said.

He said that if not barred the birds may destroy more farms and have more negative impacts in the economy.

Bashe said the government will from May to July, this year deploy experts to start destroying the birds.

He however noted Selengwa are among the birds listed special species so they shouldn't be destroyed or killed without having special permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

He said Selengwa is one of the species of small parrots which are present in the country. These birds are legally recognised as species in danger of extinction since 1985.

"These birds are not migratory and they usually eat sunflower, corn, sorghum and some fruits. One bird can eat between 45 - 60 grams per day so one million birds can eat between 45 to 60 tonnes of grain in one day. So, if left unchecked, these birds could have serious economic consequences for farmers," the deputy minister asserted.

The deputy minister noted that since 2004 the number of these birds has been increasing in Bahi (Dodoma), Singida, Iramba, Manyoni (Singida), Meatu as well as in the Serengeti National Park.

"In addition, the growth of agricultural activities to the natural habitat of birds have also contributed to the interaction of the birds and humans. The Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism had sent experts to evaluate and later determine how much 30 per cent of the crops had been destroyed in 2004," he added.

By Guardian Reporter

## Dr Mwinyi faults Masterlife Microfinance over illegality

ZANZIBAR government has withheld a total of 4.79bn/- from the owner of Masterlife Microfinance Company for allegedly running financial business illegally.

Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi announced this yesterday at the State House when speaking to journalists, noting that through that business, the firm has already received 38.5bn/- from 39,000 people.

Dr Mwinyi said: "I'm aware that since March 4, when the government withheld the money it caused mayhem to the public particularly to people who were in that business and some have started receiving loans from this bank. But, I want to make it clear that the company is being accused of not having valid legal permits of collecting money from the public."

President Mwinyi assured the public that their monies were in safe hands and the government was working on the matter.

According to Dr Mwinyi, the company used the registration documents issued in Tanzania mainland by the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) and registered with the Tanzania Revenue Authority in July 2020, where it was placed in the category of small taxpayers and will be involved in animal husbandry business as well as food processing.

He said: "It was shocking to see that

the company did not fulfill its responsibilities in terms of registration, instead it was involved in the business of collecting money from the public."

Dr Mwinyi said after being operational it was found that the Masterlife Company did not have a profitable business, instead, it was circulating the money among its customers.

"Issues like this happens in many countries around the world, including Albania and mainland Tanzania...




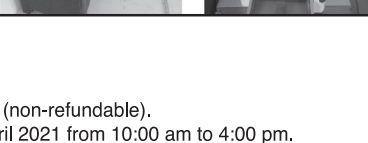
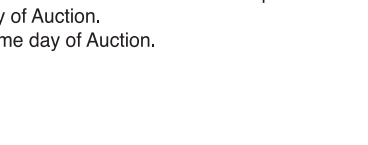
basically this type of business is bankruptcy from the beginning due to debts being larger than the assets in the system," said President Dr Mwinyi.

He explained that the procedure of increasing the number of members due to the desire to get the maximum benefit given to initial investors and eventually reaches a point where the amount required to be paid to first-time customers is greater than the collections generated by new customers.

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S/N	LIST OF ASSETS	ITEMS
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3.	CHAIRS	
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5.	MOTORCYCLE (BOXER)	
6.	PROJECTOR	
7.	FRIDGE	
8.	SOFA SET	
9.	FILE CABINETS	
10.	SCANNER	

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE AUCTION**

- There will be an entrance fee of TZS.20,000 (non-refundable).
- Inspection of items will be on 8th and 9th April 2021 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.
- All payments shall be made on the same day of Auction.
- All items sold have to be collected on the same day of Auction.

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DR. JOHN POMBE JOSEPH MAGUFULI



5<sup>th</sup> President of United Republic of Tanzania

The Board, Management and Staff of ActionAid Tanzania joins all Tanzanians in mourning the tragic loss of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency John Joseph Pombe Magufuli. We offer our condolences to the government, his family and all citizens of Tanzania.

Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli was known for his hardworking, accountability, and patriotism. During his tenure, he worked hard to ensure provision of public services is highly improved, considerable improvements in public servants conduct, and under-privileged are not left unheard. We also acknowledge his efforts to fight corruption and misuse of public resources, within all sectors.

We sympathise with his family, the government of Tanzania and the nation as whole.

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## Minister affirms business relations as force behind economic performance

By Guardian Reporter

Finance and Planning minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba said the ministry will work on ensuring that it retains good relations with the business community especially on tax matters to create a good environment for doing businesses.

Speaking after a ceremony to swear in newly-appointed officials at State House Dar es Salaam, the minister told journalists that new tax reforms will be created to ensure that tax was not paid by a few but also was paid in a friendly manner.

Dr Mpango who was appointed recently to lead the docket said he has met experts at the ministry to meet with their counterparts in Zanzibar on how to address Union economic challenges.

"The problem with our people is that they do not tell us whenever they face problems, but for now we have agreed to meet to address and solve the issues," he said.

On proper management of public funds, the minister said his ministry will work on addressing the matter through systems that have been put in place but also administer tax collection for proper usage.

On Sunday this week, President Samia appointed permanent secretaries and heads of several government institutions including the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) with some being transferred.

In the new restructuring President Samia moved Dotto James to the Ministry of Industry and Trade as a PS from the Ministry of Finance and Planning. She also appointed Emmanuel Tutuba as new Treasury Permanent Secretary.



**The problem with our people is that they do not tell us whenever they face problems, but for now we have agreed to meet to address and solve the issues**



Tour guides with the Moshi-based Kilitwende Company seated at the weekend with the tourist (2nd-R) they were assisting shortly after reaching Uhuru Peak, Mount Kilimanjaro's highest point. They reported seeing a recent rise in tourist arrivals after "serious challenges" due to the outbreak of Covid-19. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

## 'Prisons remain with too many inmates despite control efforts'

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

TANZANIAN prison facilities are still overcrowded by thousands despite various measures by the government to reduce the numbers, the House heard yesterday.

Deputy Minister Home Affairs Khamis Chilo told the National Assembly here that until March 30 this year, there were a total of 33,473 inmates in the country's jails out of which some 16,735 were prisoners and 16,738 remandees while the country's prisons accommodation capacity is 29,902.

This translates into excess population of 3,671 prisoners and remandees.

This is despite various measures to reduce congestion in the country's cells and prisons including constructing more prisons as well as involving criminal justice agencies to fast-track listening of trials and cases.

Chilo said other measures are, review of the Criminal Procedure Act 2009, encourage the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Judiciary, Police and Prisons especially video conference.

The Deputy Minister was responding to a question from Konde MP Khatibu Said Haji (ACT-Wazalendo) who wanted to know measures being taken by the government to ease congestion in the country's prisons.

Chilo said that the government

is aware of overcrowding in prisons and cells and it has been taking various measures to address the problem.

Chilo noted that that review of some sections of the Criminal Procedure Act 2009 has helped a lot to ease congestion in cells and prisons. He mentioned some sections which have been reviewed as 170, 163 and 225 noting that the review of these areas has helped a lot to reduce overcrowding in our prisons.

The deputy minister added that the government has also expanded and constructed new prisons in areas which lacked the service such as Ruangwa and Chato as well as imposing soft bail conditions.

He further said that the establishment of mobile court has helped a lot in delivering ruling on minor offences without talking the criminals in police cells or prisons.

Special Seats MP Sophia Mwakagenda (Chadema) advised the government that, instead of building new prisons or cells, it should empower the office of Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) so that they can speed up the investigation process.

Responding, the deputy minister said that, there are special organs entrusted with the responsibility of conducting investigations such as Police as well as the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB).

## Z'bar VP calls for farmers' compensation to establish more sustainable projects

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Second Vice President Hemed Suleiman Abdulla has assured Zanzibaris and farmers in agricultural projects that the government was serious to compensate for their property to enable the projects benefit them as well as the government and also for more sustainable projects.

Speaking yesterday to residents and farmers of Dodo village in Chambani constituency, Suleiman said after inspecting the huge irrigation farming project, the government Chief Valuer had begun the process to ensure people were compensated.

However, he called on Dodo residents not to hesitate to report on any challenges that arise in regard to the project including those wanting be compensated whilst they are unqualified for such compensation.

Hemed said the government had good intention to improve the lives of Zanzibaris and that is why it came up with major agricultural projects.

He also called top officials

in the Ministry of Agriculture through its engineers to speed up the irrigation project that was supposed to take off since early 2019.

He also called on project's engineers to provide employment opportunities to the youth from villages surrounding the project, for the jobs that do not require expertise.

Speaking to nearby Chokocho villagers engaged in seaweed growing the Second Vice President said they ensure they get the right income for the work they do in developing seaweed growing.

Submitting his report on local government activities in Mkoani Region for the period July 2020 to March this year, Chambani District Commissioner Issa Juma Issa said social services has reached the people by more than 80 per cent.

He however said there were still big challenges including incidents of gender based violence and child abuse as well drop in examination pass marks in secondary schools, even though there have been increase pass marks in increase regard to primary schools.



**Submitting his report on local government activities in Mkoani Region for the period July 2020 to March this year, Chambani District Commissioner Issa Juma Issa said social services has reached the people by more than 80 per cent**



Kishapu legislator Boniphace Butondo the Works and Transport minister a question in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday, wanting to know precisely when the Kolangoto-Kishapu road in Shinyanga Region would be upgraded to tarmac level. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## Provide enough room for public to freely air grievances, President Samia tells LGAs

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday tasked local government authorities to provide enough room for people to freely express their grievances without being intimidated.

President Samia made the directives shortly after swearing-in permanent secretaries and deputy

permanent secretaries at the State House in Dar es Salaam.

She said that when national leaders—president, vice president, or the Prime Minister tour various regions in the country met with people with banners that express various grievances some of which can be solved by the local leaders available.

"And if this happens, one banner risks an executive director or district commissioner to go,"

she said.

President Samia cautioned regional authorities such as District Commissioners who fail to tackle issues at the local level that they risk being sacked as such grievances are supposed to be tackled at regional level and not the central government and therefore called on them to work with the people to understand their complaints and find solutions.

However, she stressed that while they are required to tackle the people's challenges at the local level they should not prevent them from expressing their views.

"We will deal accordingly with anyone who prevents the people from expressing their views on challenges they are facing if it comes to my attention that they are prevented from airing them out," she said.





Residents of Yara village in Mbarali District attend a meeting called at the weekend to discuss various issues, including disputes over land ownership and use. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

## I've great confidence in President Samia, states CCM parents wing chair Mndolwa

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

CCM parents wing chairman Dr Edmund Mndolwa has said he had great confidence in President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, and called on Tanzanians to support her to accomplish all things initiated by her predecessor.

He also called on CCM members to support her during the party's emergency General Conference that would be convened to elect its chairperson.

Dr Mndolwa gave the remarks here yesterday when speaking to reporters and added:

"In Tanzania the late Dr John Magufuli was like our 'Moses' in the Bible and Samia Suluhu

Hassan is now our 'Joshua' in speeding up the country's development, even though God has taken away our 'Moses' He left behind our 'Joshua.'

He said President Samia was the right person to take late Dr Magufuli's position as she was involved in the preparation of the party 2020 Election Manifesto.

He said when preparing the manifesto, President Samia was CCM Elders Deputy's Chairperson to Philip Mangula, adding that sometimes, "when preparing the manifesto she acted as chairman due to Mangula's health, hence she knows a lot of issues of the manifesto."

Dr Mndolwa said in the circumstances CCM members and all Tanzanians should give her full cooperation to

accomplish various issues of the manifesto.

"But also we are supposed to hold the late Dr Magufuli in high esteem by working hard in line with his slogan 'Hapa Kazi Tu' to enable President Samia to maintain the middle level economy reached," he said.

He congratulated the Vice President, Dr Philip Mpango for being appointed and sworn in to the position, saying the parents wing and its members will accord him cooperation in his responsibilities.

He said his call to Tanzanians including various leaders was to continue protecting the Union, to work hard and to support President Samia as she fits to the position provided by the constitution.

## WHO calls on rich nations to share COVID-19 injection doses with most-at-risk populations

By Guardian Reporter

WORLD Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti yesterday called on wealthy countries to share COVID-19 vaccines doses, so that the most-at-risk populations in all countries can be protected, to save lives and speed-up the recovery from the pandemic.

Dr Moeti made the call in her message on the World Health Day—a global health awareness day celebrated every year on 7 April, under the sponsorship of the World Health Organisation.

"Leaders need to work together to address inequities in their own countries and abroad in the spirit of international solidarity. Specifically, on Covid-19 vaccines, we strongly encourage pharmaceutical companies to expand their manufacturing capacities to overcome current supply shortages," she said, adding:

"We also encourage wealthy countries to share Covid-19 vaccines doses, so that the most-at-risk populations in all countries can be protected, to save lives and speed-up the recovery from the pandemic."

"This World Health Day I call on member states, partners, civil society, communities, and other stakeholders to intensify work with WHO to achieve Universal Health Coverage, and to invest in addressing the social and economic determinants of health, to tackle inequities and build a fairer, healthier world.

"As WHO we remain committed to ensuring that all people in Africa, and globally, can realize the right to good health," Dr Moeti stressed.

She however said that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown a light on inequalities between countries. According to her, amid shortages of essential supplies, African countries have been pushed to the back of the queue in accessing Covid-19 test kits, personal protective equipment and now vaccines. Of 548 million Covid-19 vaccine doses administered worldwide, only 11 million or 2 per cent, have been in Africa, whereas the continent accounts for around 17 per cent of the global population.

"There are also inequities within countries. Discrimination based on gender, place of residence, income, educational level, age, ethnicity and disability intersect to disadvantage vulnerable populations. Recent data from 17 African countries show, for example, that a person with the highest economic quintile are five times more likely to deliver their babies in health facilities and have their babies vaccinated with BCG compared to those in the lowest quintile."

To improve this situation, she said: "We need to act on the social and economic determinants of health, by working across sectors to improve living and working conditions, and access to education, particularly for the most marginalized groups. Communities need to be engaged as partners, through their networks and associations, to shape and drive health and development interventions."

"A key challenge in overcoming inequities is that there is limited data showing who is being missed

and why. To address this, national health information systems need to capture age, sex and equity stratified data. This information can then be used to inform decision- and policy-making."

"At WHO, we are working with countries to strengthen capacities to collect, manage and use data, and to enhance monitoring and action to address avoidable inequities."

In the past year WHO disseminated technical guidance on gender, equity and Covid-19 and trained 30 country teams in gender and health equity integrated programming in Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, eSwatini, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe.

Other countries include Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Madagascar, Malawi and Mauritania.

The teams are using skills gained to support equitable health response, including to deal with gender-based violence in the context of Covid-19.

She further said: "Investment is also needed to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage, to protect individuals from financial hardship in accessing needed care and to improve service coverage."

Most African countries have initiated reforms in these areas believing that these reforms will in turn contribute to building more resilient health systems and societies.

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE construction of a 1.15bn/- modern slaughterhouse in Iringa Municipality billed to improve hygiene and supply of quality meat, is now set for completion on August 1, this year.

The construction of the abattoir commenced in 2008/09 fiscal year and has taken almost ten years to completion.

Deputy Minister, the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (health) Festo Dugange told the National Assembly yesterday that by 2018, the construction of the Ngerewela abattoir had spent a total of 929m/- including 550m/- from the Central Government, 108m/- from the Iringa Municipal internal revenue, 101m/- through the country's Agricultural Development Program (ASDP) and 169m/- from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

## Iringa to get modern abattoir by August 1

He was responding to a question of the Iringa Urban MP Jesca Msambatawangu (CCM) who sought to know the government's plans to complete the strategic project to construct modern abattoir of Iringa Ngerewela.

The lawmaker said that lack of modern abattoirs was not only affecting supply of quality meat to people, but it goes further to affect incomes of livestock keepers and traders as they fail to process more meat due to insufficient areas.

Responding, the deputy minister said: "In the financial year 2019/20 the Ngerewela abattoir project was included in Council's Strategic projects which were implemented to enhance collection of revenues in the municipality. Infrastructures that

have so far been built include Oxidation Ponds, pre-slaughter barn, waste disposal facility, administration building, fence, incinerator, laboratory and laundry building."

Dugange said that by constructing more modern abattoirs will further advance the processing capabilities within the relevant industrial value chains.

"The government is implementing several projects to construct modern slaughterhouses in various areas in the country so as to ensure that our communities are supplied with hygienic meat and related products," the deputy minister said while responding to a supplementary question from Nyamagana MP Ladislus Mabula.

**MARYLAND GLOBAL INITIATIVES TANZANIA LIMITED**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ) FOR PRINTING TOOLS (BOOKS)**  
**RFQ No: MGIT/03/03/21**  
**ISSUED DATE: April 7, 2021**

**INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

Maryland Global Initiatives Tanzania (MGIT) is an International Non –Government organization under University of Maryland Baltimore funded by Center for Diseases Control (CDC). MGIT is providing technical assistance to the Regional Health Management Teams (RHMT) under Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender Elderly and Children.

MGIT is requesting for competitive quotes from reputable companies to print and deliver printed tools (books) for National AIDS Control Program (NACP) as per technical and Schedule of requirements below.

**Potential bidders are requested to include the following details in the Response for RFQ;**

- Submission of Company and business registration documents which are: Printing Valid Business license, Tax Identification Number (TIN), Value Added Tax (VAT) and Tax clearance certificate.
- Price schedule (Price quoted in TZS should be inclusive of all taxes and other charges together with all delivery logistics to MGIT office.)

**Other Requirements**

- There are two (2) lots. Bidders can quote for all lots but it is not mandatory that all lots will be awarded to one bidder. Award for every lot will depend on price quoted, delivery time and technical capability after physical visit of the printing factory of proposed vendor(s)
- Validity period of the quote should be not less than 60 days
- Payment terms: 100% payment after delivery, payment will be affected not more than 30 days after delivering all printed tools.

**Evaluation criteria**

Bidders will be evaluated by the following evaluation criteria

- Meeting all set criteria stipulated above
- Total price quoted for each lot
- Delivery time for each lot
- Technical capability after physical verification together with reference/experience

**Quotation Submission Instructions**

- Sealed Envelope with Subject and RFQ number should be address to: The Country Director, Maryland Global Initiatives Tanzania, P. O. Box 75568, Dar es Salaam.
- Quotations submitted in unsealed envelope, via email or beyond set deadline will not be accepted.
- Office Location: 6 Kenyatta Drive, Oysterbay, Dar es Salaam. Tel: +255 22 26666849
- Deadline for submission: **Monday 12th April, 2021 at 12:00 noon.**

**Technical Specifications and Schedule of Requirement Attachment**

Lot	Book description to be printed	Book specifications		Qty
1	<b>Register book (Kitabu cha Regista ya huduma za uchunguzi na upimaji wa VVU, Uhakiki ubora na matumizi ya vitenganishi</b>	Size	61.5 cm x 37 cm	12,808 Books
		Cover	Full color, Top cover be art paper 250gsm glossy and back cover should be 250gsm. Top cover color is in Light blue color and back cover in brown color	
		Inside paper	NCR, Black & white, 50 top papers + 50 bottom papers. Should be with separator (240gsm buff manila)	
		Finishing	Finishing: Cloth binding/Side binding	
2	<b>Monthly summary book (Kitabu cha fomu ya huduma za uchunguzi wa VVU, Upimaji wa VVU, Uhakiki ubora na matumizi ya vitenganishi-Kitabu cha muhitasari wa Taarifa ya mwezi)</b>	Size	A3	4,334 Books
		Cover	Full color, Top cover be art paper 300gsm glossy and back cover should be straw board (hard cover). Should have inside cover (flip)	
		Inside paper	80gsm, Full color, 50 top papers + 50 bottom papers (NCR). Top paper and bottom paper all are full color	
		Finishing	100pages for each book (50 originals + 50 copies) PLUS 4 sheets of A3 size at the end of the book (these sheets are single color, 70gsm MF paper and one-sided print)	
<b>Note: In case you need to see physical the hard copies are available at MGIT offices.</b>				

**Country Director**  
**Maryland Global Initiatives Tanzania**  
**Plot 6, Kenyatta Drive, Oysterbay**  
**P. O. Box 75568,**  
**Dar es Salaam.**



## Wete residents decry court penalties GBV convicts are handed

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

RESIDENTS of Mtambwe Ward (Shehia) in North Wete District, North Pemba Region say continuing by the legal organs to mete out small penalties to suspects of gender based violence (GBV) and child abuse was the main reason for the increase of the incidents in the society.

They were speaking at a meeting of committees that fight GBV and child abuse in Wete District aimed to mobilise the society about the GBV issue that included educating the people on how to make follow ups of GBV and child abuse cases in the legal organs.

Speaking at the meeting coordinated by Tanzania Media Women Organisation (Zanzibar), Othman Haji Kibano said in addition to efforts by the member of the society to report on GBV incidents, the entire legal process and the small punishments to offenders being given discourage them, causing the crime to increase.

"We are always ready to cooperate in reporting GBV and child abuse incidents but when we today refer the culprit to the Police, tomorrow we see him back in the streets. It discourages us a lot," he said.

For his part, Hamad Idd Hamad said: "If it is true that the government want these vile acts to stop in the society, they should not set free the suspects by giving them small punishments because later they continue committing

the same crimes."

Earlier, Wete District Community development officer Haroub Suleiman Hemed said the society was not supposed to be discouraged in reporting GBV incidents as in so doing they encourage the offenders to commit their vile acts without fear.

"Many people think that the correct way to settle a child abuse incident is to settle the issue at home, they do not consider the effects to the victim. I beseech you to stop this habit as we put our children in more danger," he said.

Wete District Crime Officer and head of the gender desk Fakhir Yusuf Mohamed called on the society to provide cooperation by reporting any incident of child abuse in order to launch investigations in time and for the suspect to face the law.

Juma Omar from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in Wete District said the government, through his office has put in place a special strategy in dealing with child abuse cases to ensure they end up in convicting the culprits and get heavy punishment in accordance with the law.

*"We are always ready to cooperate in reporting GBV and child abuse incidents but when we today refer the culprit to the Police, tomorrow we see him back in the streets. It discourages us a lot"*



Banana wholesalers in business at Arusha city's Samunge market but in an environment far from hygienic, as found yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya

## Bukoba residents strengthen river banks as a strategy to tame floods

By Guardian Correspondent,

Bukoba

RESIDENTS of Omukigusha area in Bilele ward, Bukoba Municipality, Kagera Region who have been experiencing floods during every rain season, have now decided to mobilise themselves in strengthening the banks of Kanoni River as well as removing sand from the river bed to allow free flow of water.

Speaking to this paper recently,

they said they have decided to do so by working together with government officials in the ward aimed to stop floods in their areas during every rain season.

The residents teamed up with ward officials by forming a committee to deal with the challenge.

The committee's Secretary, Mwinyi Mohamed said recent floods were more hazardous, but after the formation of the committee that mobilises residents to improve the

environment of the area, the threat has been greatly minimized.

"Many people have been coming forward to work, today for instance 200 people came up and we appeal to the government to find a permanent solution to the problem," Mwinyi said.

For his part, Omukigisha Street Chairman Abdulhakim Idrisa said together they have reached the decision to control flood water from the river that has been destroying their houses and property.

Bilele Ward Councillor Tawfiq Salum said in collaboration with Bukoba Urban Member of Parliament Stephen Byabato, the matter has reached the municipality level for a permanent solution.

"In the FY 2021/2022 Budget we have submitted our proposals for 500m/- to the central government for strengthening the banks of Kanoni River, and we believe the problem will end, the people should remain patient," said Tawfiq.



To the left are women pictured yesterday waiting to serve people heading into Dar es Salaam's Mabibo mixed-goods market, which has turned too muddy for comfort owing to the ongoing sporadic rains. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

By Guardian Correspondent,

Shinyanga

AUTHORITIES in Shinyanga Region have been required to form a committee to probe the construction of the modern abattoir project at Ndembezi in Shinyanga Municipality that has spent 5.1bn/- but is still uncompleted as well as being below standard.

The call was made yesterday by Shinyanga Urban MP, Patrobas Katambi soon after inspecting the project, saying he was not at all satisfied with construction work.

Katambi, who is also Deputy Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth

## Katambi calls for probe of Shinyanga abattoir project

and Employment) said the sum of 5.1bn/- spent should have seen the project in final stages of completion, but so far there was no sign of being completed any time soon, apart from its having many shortcomings.

"In my position as MP for the constituency, I totally reject the abattoir's status, it has many deficiencies compared to the cost involved, it is below standard," Katambi said.

"And in my position as Deputy Minister from PM Office, I am taking this issue to the relevant ministry, it is totally impossible for Shinyanga to continue making history of having uncompleted projects including the meat factory at old Shinyanga," he added.

He said the abattoir, when completed, will provide many employment opportunities to the youth, increase livestock keepers'

incomes and that of the region.

For his part, the Shinyanga Municipality Mayor David Nkulila said the project officially begun in 2018 at a cost of 5.57bn/- and all the funds had been paid to the contractor and was supposed to be completed in 2019 but so far it was yet to be completed.

He said in addition, the government has already signed for another sum of 171m/- to fix various deficiencies.

## Eight farmers suffer 460 million/- loss as TAWA removes them from their rice farms

By Guardian Correspondent, Kisarawe

EIGHT farmers from three villages in Mkumbulu Ward in Kisarawe District, Coast Region have incurred more than 460m/- loss after they were chased away from their 170-acre farms they had planted with rice.

The farmers from Kitonga Chole, Panga la Mwingereza and Mtunani villages were driven away by wardens from Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) after which they were arrested and prosecuted for allegedly farming inside the Julius Nyerere National Park, formerly Selous Game Reserve.

The Secretary of the group of affected farmers Gasper Matovu mentioned the farmers as Mosty Mwasenga, Matata Mlete, Rajabu Jonas, Mashaka Kidaha, Idd Mambosasa, Daudi Kidaha, Mabula Kidaha and Abdallah Said.

Speaking at a meeting called by officials from the villages, Matovu said after they were arrested the farmers were prosecuted in Case 55/2019 at Morogoro Resident Magistrates Court on claims that they were conducting farming activities inside the reserve area. However, from investigations conducted, it was found out that they were farming inside a legal area of the villages and not farm inside a reserve area, the finding that made the government attorney remove the case on July 29 2019.

Mosty Mwasenga, one of the farmers said after they were arrested they also lost two tractors, a plough, seeds and other farm equipment.

He said after the case was removed from the court, they were given back their equipment on February 11 this year, two years after they were impounded while other pieces of the machinery were worn out from the long stay.

"When the case was dropped

from the court, the 170 acres planted with rice were ruined causing them to suffer a loss of 390m/- and another 70m/- as depreciation of the farming equipment," he said.

Mkumbulu Ward Councillor, Siri Gongo confirmed the arrest of the farmers and that already the issue has been referred to ministry officials to finalise the boundary issue pitting the three villages and the government reserve.

When required to comment, Honest Bureta, a TAWA official conversant with the matter said he knew the issue but cannot say anything as had no jurisdiction to do so.



**When the case was dropped from the court, the 170 acres planted with rice were ruined causing them to suffer a loss of 390m/- and another 70m/- as depreciation of the farming equipment**





Open-air supermarket? Far from it. It's just that small traders have 'invaded' both sides of Arusha's Msikiti Road - not far from the city's main market - and effectively made the pavements impassable. Correspondent Getrude Mpezya captured the scene yesterday.

# Kyela's authorities to fix damaged infrastructure

By Guardian Correspondent, Kyela

AUTHORITIES in Kyela District in Mbeya Region have promised to improve flood-damaged infrastructure in two wards of Mababu and Matema which were hardly hit by floods for the past one week.

District Commissioner, Claudia Kitta made the promise yesterday when she visited the flood-hit areas to see the impact of the natural calamities.

The floods that damaged road infrastructure, bridges, human settlements and livestock—cattle,

goats and pigs were caused by heavy rains that showered in Rungwe District.

It is estimated that more than 20 livestock were swept away.

DC Kitta said the government will address all affected areas and rehabilitate them as soon as possible to ensure that people in the areas affected continue with their socio-economic activities.

"We'll sit down with experts to discuss the best way to restore this infrastructure, if possible we will set aside a special budget to build this infrastructure especially roads and bridges, I apologize to

the residents of these areas for this problem," said Kitta.

Mababu ward councilor Rashid Yahya said initially it was raining normally but heavy rains started pounding the area on March 30, this year and led to the disaster.

He appealed to the government to build permanent infrastructure, especially bridges, on the grounds that the district is prone to floods.

Yahya said it is difficult for locals to predict that they may be affected by floods due to the occasional sunrise in their areas.

"As you can see, many of our bridges are not able to withstand a lot of water, we ask that if possible modern bridges should be built," said Yahya.

Chairman of Katumba sub-village, Lwimiko Anyosisye said in 2019 there were severe floods which killed people, destroying various infrastructure including people's houses, roads and schools.

In 2019, five people were killed and more than 2,000 others displaced due to heavy rains in south-western Tanzania's district of Kyela, Mbeya region.

# Chemba residents hail TASAF for upgrading of health services delivery

By Polycarp Machira, Chemba

RESIDENTS of Igunga village in Chemba District, Dodoma Region have hailed the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) for constructing a modern dispensary in the area bringing quality health services closer.

The health facility worth 74m/- serves over 5100 people from the two villages of Igunga (3600) and Jenjeluse (1500) and other neighbouring areas.

Speaking this week when a group of journalists visited the project, former village chairperson and the then chairperson of the project committee, Juma Bakari noted that in the past villagers used to travel over 10 kilometres to access health services at Hoima village. "We are very grateful to the government for introducing TASAF in our district for it has helped save lives and empower people" he said.

He explained that the dispensary does not only help Igunga residents but also villagers from the nearby villages of Mtakya, Lalae and Jenjeluse.

The facility, he said, has improved overall wellbeing of the residents, helping expectant women to have safer births, providing preventives interventions and health education.

Shamsa Shabban, one of the villagers said the facility has brought a lot of relief to the residents of the village, especially women who had to travel several kilometres for delivery.

The mother of four children who delivered her first born at Hoima, ten kilometres away narrated the ordeal she went through compared to the relief she got when delivering the remaining children at their own, Igunga village dispensary.

"Nothing is more worrying

and disturbing than when an expectant woman is not sure of medical services during delivery," she said.

Rehema Daruwesh, medical attendant at the dispensary while speaking to the team said the facility receives an average of ten pregnant women and about 15 normal patients per day.

"The dispensary is of great importance to the villagers and had it not been built here the situation would have worsened," she said.

However, despite having a well-equipped modern facility at place, lack of enough health workers is highly pronounced since it has just one officer, Rehema who serves villagers day and night.

She lives almost a kilometer away from the dispensary and has responded to emergencies even in the middle of the night. The medical attendant has been serving there alone since December 2020 when her colleague left for further studies.

TASAF's Grievances Redress Officer, Makwinja Dismas explained that construction of dispensaries is part of the plan where targeted villages are also supported with targeted infrastructure development projects on health, education and water.

He said it is aimed at reinforcing the conditional cash transfer which states that beneficiaries with children below five years of age has to ensure that the children attend clinic regularly.

Those with school-going children must ensure they attend school regularly, attaining at least a 80 percent of school attendance. "It is not easy for the beneficiaries to meet the conditions of cash transfer demands if such targeted infrastructures are not in place," he said.

# US to approve \$650bn in reserves to help out LDCs in Covid-19 crisis

By Special Correspondent

THE US Congress is set to approve \$650 billion in global reserves or Special Drawing Rights held by the International Monetary Fund.

The funds will provide temporary financial relief to low-income countries, especially in Africa, hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Africa urgently needs an economic relief package that includes loan restructuring, debt relief and a reallocation of SDRs from rich countries to navigate the challenge of a health and economic crisis.

Under the Special Drawing Rights Act, Congress has authorised the Secretary of the Treasury to support an SDR allocation without additional legislation where the amount allocated to the US does not exceed the current US quota in the IMF in the applicable five-year period.

Based on the \$650 billion allocation, the US with 16.5 percent of the votes, will receive about \$113 billion in SDRs.

Countries need access to global reserves at the IMF to boost their depleted international reserves that have drastically come under attack due to pandemic containment related expenses.

Many countries remain constrained in their ability to issue debt in international markets, either to replenish reserves or to finance fiscal spending.

The pandemic has also significantly reduced foreign investment, demand for key exports and hit hard the tourism sectors which generate most of foreign exchange inflows.

Yet countries in the region remain net importers of

capital goods due to limited manufacturing capacity.

The IMF estimates that low-income countries will need to deploy around \$200 billion over the next five years just to fight the pandemic and an additional \$250 billion to return to the path of catching up with advanced economies.

Currently the majority of African countries are choking on debt accumulated before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving countries cash strapped while others do not have sufficient foreign currency reserves. The US Treasury notified Congress of its support for \$650 billion in IMF global reserves to assist developing countries struggling with the coronavirus crisis.

"...Treasury is working with IMF management and other members toward a \$650 billion general allocation of SDRs to IMF member countries. Addressing the long-term global need for reserve assets would help support the global recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. A strong global recovery would also increase demand for US exports of goods and services—creating US jobs and supporting US firms," the US Treasury said in a press release issued on April 1.

US law requires a 90-day advance alert to Congress before the US votes for SDRs with the IMF board. A decision by the US congress is required as it is the largest shareholder of the IMF with 16.51 percent of the votes. Under the Trump administration, the US made reservations delaying the decision.

Once the allocation is approved, approximately \$224 billion will immediately go to developing low-income and middle-income countries in the creation of \$650 billion SDRs.



ITV/Radio One journalist Farouk Karim poses a question to Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi at a press conference at Zanzibar State House yesterday. Photo: Zanzibar State House

By Special Correspondent

AFRICA will need about 12 billion US dollars to both procure and distribute sufficient numbers of COVID-19 vaccines to attain adequate protection against the virus that would see an end to the compounded devastating effects of the pandemic on the continent, according to an estimate based on a report by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The report argues for a further extension of the Group of 20's debt service moratorium through to the year's end - noting in particular, the continued high liquidity needs of developing countries and their deteriorating debt sustainability outlooks.

In addition, it states that the estimated financial sum the

# Africa needs \$12bn for vaccines to arrest COVID-19 spread - WB

African continent will need to curb coronavirus transmission is about the same as the total amount of official debt service payments already deferred by 45 of the most economically challenged nations participating in the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI).

Nevertheless, according to the World Bank's latest biannual economic analysis for Sub-Saharan Africa, economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to have contracted by 2.0% in 2020 - closer to the lower bound of the forecast in April 2020.

The analysis also finds that prospects for recovery are strengthening amid actions to contain new waves of the pandemic and speed up vaccine rollouts.

The document also shows that African countries are not wasting the opportunity from the COVID-19 crisis as they are increasingly adopting digital technologies to boost productivity in current jobs and increase employment opportunities -- particularly for women and youth.

To unlock the full benefits of

a digital economy, the report recommends policies that accompany investments in digital infrastructure - such as a regulatory framework that fosters competition and innovation in telecommunications, provision of reliable and affordable electricity, investment in education and upgrading the skills of informal workers

The report also predicts that the COVID-19-induced recession is less severe than earlier anticipated. However, economic recovery will vary significantly across countries and sub-regions



WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL 2021

Taking A New Look  
At The News  
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

## Well done, President Samia, for restoring media freedom

SIGHS of relief and near-unanimous expressions of support were being heard most of yesterday for the new orientation by President Samia Suluhu Hassan towards restoring media freedom and "discharging from prison" banned newspapers and online media outlets.

The new measures were largely expected, as they follow in the same direction as remarks by the president late last week after she had sworn in cabinet ministers and deputy ministers who were appointed for the first time or had changed portfolios.

The vehement derision of strong-arm ways of revenue collection that the president expressed was a sigh of relief for the private sector, and most of the media are part of the private sector as well and were suffering from hefty fines and draconian closures of outlets.

After the president declared that she was Tanzania's sixth president, some people may not have clearly understood the inner significance of that assertion - but the message is now surely beginning to sink in.

While relentlessly pursuing the cause of devoted service to the public, especially zero tolerance for bribes and embezzlement, the president is moving to correct drawbacks in that stance where righting wrongs in the government takes centre-stage. The two are by no means opposed, as regulators appeared to believe.

It is also apparent that what was being done to the media was largely the same as what was happening to investors. As President Samia emphasized, negative attitudes putting away investors have grossly disrupted industrial and service sector growth, and thus the provision of jobs.

During what is now known as the fourth industrial revolution, jobs are created mainly in the services sector, where the profit margins are minimal as the competition is rife given the duplication of facilities and survival by 'social distancing' that enables stylistic competition. The media are also service providers and can only flourish in liberty.

This sentiment pervading the media sector was already being expressed at the weekend during Easter, where bishops issued message upon message clearly showing how intensely hope was spreading on the Samia government, brimming with confidence in the new leadership.

True, there was the customary emphasis on the need for Tanzanians to maintain peace, unity and love, as clerics underlined that these values are decisive in facilitating development.

The clerics' confidence and faith in the leadership vision shown by President Samia was abundantly an expression of the spirit of Easter, which points to rebirth or resurrection.

For instance, Archbishop Isaac Amani of the Arusha Catholic archdiocese expressed intense concerns over environmental destruction in various parts of the country.

He noted that some regions are at risk of turning into semi-desert, adding that massive tree cutting was contributing to climate change and food insecurity.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Northern Diocese Bishop Dr Solomon Massangwa was as emphatic, literally assuring the congregation that closed businesses would re-open under the leadership of

President Samia.

He further hoped and prayed that divinity would, through President Samia, "revive all the dead companies, heal the sick and bring new hopes amidst unemployment challenge". This expectation is building up in the minds of countless individuals - and very understandably so.

In other aspects of Easter greetings, there were reflections on a number of things, notably Covid-19 fears. The overall focus was, however, on peace and harmony and inspiring appeals by the president and the vice president about the need to foster good work ethics and not harming key stakeholders in the economy.

Returning to a more traditional theme, Archbishop Jude Thaddaeus Ruwa'ichi of the Dar es Salaam archdiocese meanwhile urged Tanzanians to build a culture of assisting one another, the target of assistance being especially those living in difficult conditions.

He also underscored the importance of worshippers maintaining the faith and valuing scripture by remembering the needy wherever they are.

"What we celebrate today means God's mercy to the people. We have been set free, so let us continue maintaining peace and have faith," declared the archbishop, uniting peace and charity themes.

For his part, ELCT head Bishop Dr Frederick Shoo expressed confidence in President Samia, urging Tanzanians to "get ready for the development journey".

In his Easter homily at the ELCT Northern Diocese central parish in Moshi Urban, he expressed optimism that President Samia would lead the nation in a way underlined and cemented by faith.

Some clerics returned to the Covid-19 theme in their sermons - with Father Ludovick Minde of the Christ the King Parish in Moshi, saying that despite the global pandemic, there was still hope for the future of humankind.

But perhaps it was the head of the Anglican Church of Tanzania at St Alban Parish in downtown Dar es Salaam, Canon John Mlekano, who laid the most intense emphasis on the pandemic in reported messages.

He stressed the need for Tanzanians to disabuse themselves of fears over the pandemic and to be especially careful in examining proposed vaccines.

The cleric stuck with the prayer thrust and having faith in God, while stressing the need to continue taking precautions by washing hands with soap and running water or using alcohol-based hand rubs - more commonly known as sanitisers.

The more prominent ethical motif in most of the Easter messages was the hope raised countrywide after the Tanzania Revenue Authority was directed - by no lesser an authority than President Samia herself - to change its ways and offer truly quality service and generally do the nation proud.

This was an underlying current of public discomfort, brought out at last, and it thus has the capacity to create a new dynamic in public expectations, fortifying trust in institutions.

In a word, then, this was an especially rewarding Easter season for Tanzanians - with remarks and interventions by President Samia lifting their spirits enough to make them see every need to join her, and join hands, in making Tanzania the truly great and proud nation it ought to be.

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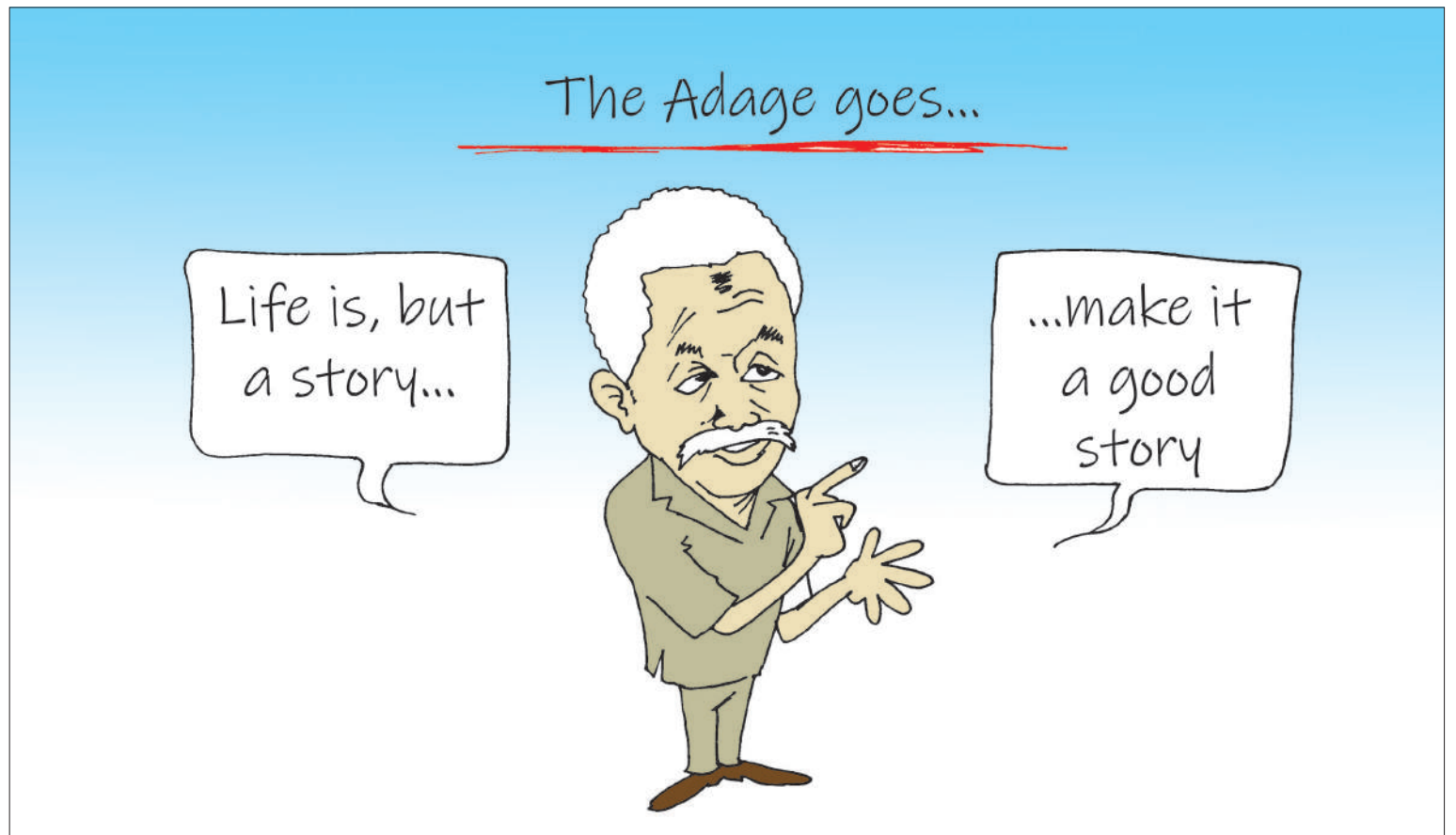
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By Sasha Planting

INVESTMENT manager Morgan Housel explores the strange and different ways people think about

money and in doing so helps people make better sense of one of life's most important topics - money. He does this through storytelling in his book *The Psychology of Money: Timeless Lessons on Wealth, Greed, and Happiness*. Doing well with money isn't necessarily about what you know, he says, it's about how you behave.

I recently had insight into how I treat money when I was kicking myself for not investing (disposable cash that I don't have) in bitcoin. A good friend of mine recently quadrupled a sizable sum of money by investing in bitcoin and ethereum and at the time (early February) advised that I invest too. I didn't. But I stopped being so hard on myself when I realised that if I had the chance again I probably still wouldn't - I'm too risk-averse. My strategy is slow and steady wins the race. Boring, I know.

Investors like Housel have been applying human behaviour to investing for decades and the practice has a certain following. At a recent behavioural summit hosted by Nedbank, a presentation on behavioural science in investing caught my attention. I've always wondered how it was that some investment managers have consistently avoided fallen angels like Tongaat, EOH and Steinhoff. After all, they are looking at the same numbers and company reports as everyone else.

Listening to William Patisson, cofounder of and portfolio manager at UK investment firm Ardevora, I realised there is other valuable data out there for the observant - human behaviour, particularly that of the CEO.

Patisson and the other Ardevora cofounder, Jeremy Lang, have developed a methodology for picking stocks that requires an understanding of how three groups of people interact: CEOs, financial analysts and investors. CEOs, says Patisson, are prone to overconfidence, while sell-side analysts (who make buy, hold and sell recommendations) are prone to under-reaction, being overconfident about their forecasting ability and resistant to information that contradicts their views. And investors - large and small - are prone to over-reaction, drawing black-and-white conclusions from a narrow range of information. The stock market crash in March 2020 is an obvious example - and provided a massive buying opportunity for those who saw through the fear.

Most people obsess about the opportunity before they look

## The strange and wonderful ways people think about money issues

at the risk. This can lead to one becoming emotionally "invested" in the opportunity and thus unable to quantify the risks. At Ardevora the partners look at the risk first. If it looks risky they don't even think about the reward.

This reminds me of an investment manager I know who won't invest in Naspers or Prosus because of the Chinese regulatory risk around Tencent. The risk makes him willing to forgo the reward.

### Risky business

CEOs by their nature are prone to risky behaviour. That's because the type of person who runs a large listed company is self-confident and doesn't like being told they are wrong. Asher Bohbot, Peter Staude, Markus Jooste? While these characteristics may be useful in getting to the top, once there the characteristics that make a good CEO include being able to listen, accepting you can be wrong and be able to change.

If the natural tendency of a CEO is to take risks, compounded by a remuneration system that is focused on short-term payoffs and driven by a licence to go for growth from shareholders, then it is not surprising that Ardevora's portfolios are constructed by rejecting stocks rather than by choosing them.

But I couldn't help wondering, then, how one finds growth opportunities when risk is removed from the equation. Watch out for companies where management has lost credibility and so shareholders won't allow risky decision-taking, says Patisson. Or look for companies where growth is unusually easy (the pharmaceutical companies in the 1960s and 1970s, or chocolate in the 2020s), or the growth runway is unusually long. Sometimes the obvious is not obvious and some companies can surprise analysts for a long time.

An example is French company Hermès, a 200-year-old firm with its roots in saddlery. Today it's a powerful business, controlled by a family with a long-term view, deep and complicated supply chains and effective marketing machinery.

Combine that with aspirational products and growing global affluence and you have a company with an unusually long runway that has been overlooked by many analysts, he says.

### Will fortune favour the brave?

It goes without saying that there are not a lot of these companies out there. What there are, particularly now, are

companies that are recovering in value. Patisson asks whether you are brave enough to buy other people's anxiety. The trauma of the Covid-19 crisis has devastated stocks. Will this trauma remain? When you are in the depths of a traumatic event it is very hard to gauge objectively where the balance of risk and reward is.

Changing management behaviour is worth watching too. While giant companies like Marriott will survive by virtue of deep pockets, the companies that have faced their challenges and adjusted their strategies are interesting. Take French car company Renault, which has lurched from one bailout to the next for years and is unloved by investors. It has a new CEO, has sharpened its strategy and is focused on cutting debt.

Which reminds me why I love the investment world. It's not just shares, companies and investments that fascinate me - it's the people.

### Sarah Simon

In the same vein, Sarah Simon writes: Do we equate financial wealth with wisdom? The "richest" people we see every day in the media don't seem to be the most wise. But in the recession that many are anticipating as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis, we could all use a little financial wisdom.

This article is not a "how to." I do not tell you "to get rich by doing rich people things." Rich people don't interest me here. Rich people don't necessarily interest anyone else, either, considering the inverse relationships found between perceived power and empathy. And if we assume that money has a direct relationship with perceived power, that means more money, less empathy.

"What we're finding is power diminishes all varieties of empathy."

"As a person's levels of wealth increase, their feelings of compassion and empathy go down, and their feelings of entitlement, of deservingness, and their ideology of self-interest increases."

"I have found that ideological partisans with power construe their dispute in more stereotypical, polarized fashion, that elevated social status leads to disinhibited social behavior, and that power, whether derived from group status or experimental manipulation, relates to the experience of increased positive emotion and reduced negative emotion."

"Power causes brain damage."

Although the conclusions from these quotes seem pretty dire, they don't have to be, and can instead serve as reminders: "It takes just a bit of coaching to get people in power to regain their empathy and compassion, thanks to a growing field of research."

But if the rich don't care about you, why should you care about them? What we should all care about, however, is human psychology, and how the mind can think about the same concept differently, given personal traits and experiences.

I'm no expert, but I am a human being with a BA in psychology, who has lived in societies where the money concepts seem so distinct - namely between Uruguay, the US, and Ecuador. Societal factors should always be brought into account, which I mention below.

So again, no expert - these are just Sarah observations. But I would like to formally study this one day. As author Zora Neale Hurston said,

Save it all, and leave others wondering what exactly your finances are in the same way that you wonder why the hell you haven't shat in fifteen days.

Retention would be the word. You don't have a concrete understanding of your money plans: how much you have, how much you plan to spend, etc., so your answer is just to spend as little as possible and hope for the best. This Sarah observation could link to social psychologist Paul Piff's studies: People who make less are more generous on small and large scales.

The study: Piff brought rich and poor members of the community into his lab, and gave each participant the equivalent of \$10. They were told they could keep the money for themselves, or share a portion with a stranger.

The results: The participants who made under \$25,000, and even sometimes \$15,000, gave 44 per cent more to the stranger than those making \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year.

### What?!

How is it that the stuffy old white man making \$200,000 a year lends a smaller percentage of money than someone making not even half, not even a quarter, not even 10 per cent of what he makes?

Maybe his brain is wanting of empathy. Maybe he doesn't have as good of a grip on his finances as a poorer person, since he's got more than he probably needs. Maybe he's perpetually clogged up there, too.



# What happens when women run the economy? We're about to find out

WASHINGTON

**W**OMEN now hold many of the jobs controlling the world's largest economy - and they're trying to fix it.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and trade czar Katherine Tai hold top jobs in U.S. President Joe Biden's administration and many of his economic advisers also are women, as are nearly 48% of his confirmed cabinet-level officials.

This sea change may already be affecting economic policy - a new \$2.3 trillion spending plan introduced by Biden last week includes \$400 billion to fund the "care economy," supporting home- and community-based jobs taking care of kids and seniors, work normally done by women that has mostly gone unacknowledged in years past.

The plan also has hundreds of billions of dollars more to fix racial and rural-urban inequalities that were created in part by past economic, trade and labor policies.

Yellen says the focus on "human infrastructure," and the earlier \$1.9 trillion rescue bill should result in significant improvements for women, whose share of the workforce had hit 40-year lows even before the crisis, and for everyone else as well.

"In the end, it might be that this bill makes 80 years of history: it begins to fix the structural problems that have plagued our economy for the past four decades," she wrote on Twitter, adding, "This is just the start for us."

Women leaders can bring fresh perspective to economic policy, experts say.

"When you're different from the rest of the group, you often see things differently," said Rebecca Henderson, a professor at Harvard Business School and author of "Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire."

"You tend to be more open to different solutions," she said, and that is what the situation demands. "We're in a moment of enormous crisis. We need new ways of thinking."

## EMPATHY, STABILITY

Over the past half-century, 57 women have been president or prime minister of their countries, but institutions that make economic decisions have largely been controlled by men until recently.

Outside the United States, there's Christine Lagarde at the helm of the European Central Bank with its 2.4 trillion euro balance sheet, Kristalina Georgieva at the International Monetary Fund with its \$1 trillion in lending power, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the World Trade Organization - all jobs held by men a decade

ago.

Overall, there are women running finance ministries in 16 countries, and 14 of the world's central banks, according to an annual report prepared by OMFIF, a think tank for central banking and economic policy.

The limited measures available suggest women have a better track record of managing complicated institutions through crisis.

"When women are involved, the evidence is very clear: communities are better, economies are better, the world is better," Georgieva said in January, citing research compiled by the IMF and other institutions.

"Women make great leaders because we show empathy and speak up for the most vulnerable people. Women are decisive ... and women can be more willing to find a compromise."

A study by the American Psychological Association showed that U.S. states with female governors had fewer COVID-19 deaths than those led by men, and Harvard Business Review reported that women got significantly better ratings in 360-degree assessments of 60,000 leaders between March to June 2020.

Women account for less than 2% of CEOs at financial institutions and less than 20% of executive board members, but the institutions they do run show greater financial resilience and stability, IMF research shows.

Eric LeCompte, a UN adviser and executive director of a non-profit that advocates for debt relief, said he noticed a clear difference during a meeting with Yellen and the leaders of Christian and Jewish faith groups last month.

"I've been meeting with Treasury secretaries for 20 years, and their talking points have been entirely different," he said. "In every area we discussed, Yellen put an emphasis on empathy, and the



World Trade Organization Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

impact of policies on vulnerable communities."

Her male predecessors had a "brass tacks" approach that focused first on "numbers not people" and never mentioned words like "vulnerable," he said.

## THE GLOBAL SHE-SESSION

The stakes are high.

The global recession related to the coronavirus pandemic is actually a "she-session," many economists say, because of how hard it has hit women.

Women comprise 39% of the global workforce but account for 54% of overall job losses, McKinsey

found in a recent study. In the United States, women accounted for more than half the 10 million jobs lost during the COVID-10 crisis here, and over 2 million women have left the labor force altogether.

Bringing these women back to work could boost gross domestic product by 5% in the United States, 9% in Japan, 12% in the United Arab Emirates and an astounding 27% in India, the world's largest democracy, the IMF estimates.

The rise of female leaders should lead to "a more inclusive - in the true sense of the word - response to the many, many challenges that are the legacy of COVID," Carmen Reinhart, the World Bank's chief economist, told Reuters.

Tai, the first woman of color to lead the U.S. Trade Representative's office, has told her staff to think "outside the box", embrace diversity and talk to communities long ignored.

Okonjo-Iweala, also the first African to head the World Trade Organization, which oversaw trade flows of nearly \$19 trillion in 2019, said addressing the needs of women will mark an important step toward rebuilding deeply eroded faith in government and global institutions.

"The lesson for us is (to) make sure ... that we don't sink into business as usual," said Okonjo-Iweala, who was also Nigeria's first female finance minister. "It's about people. It's about inclusivity. It's about decent work for ordinary people," she told Reuters.

Agencies

# Tibet's Nyingchi dives deep in eco-tourism, embraces prosperous development

BY SHEN LIN, XU YUYAO,

DEKYE Wangmo is a 35-year-old woman born in Tonpa village of Mainling County, Nyingchi, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Having been yearning for urban life since being a child, she worked in cities for years after she entered adulthood.

However, her hometown became a place that she never wants to leave again when she returned there a couple of years ago.

What attracts her is the prosperous development there. Tonpa village, sitting by the clear and green water rolling in the Yarlung Tsangpo River, is a perfect observation point for the snow-covered Mount Namjagbarwa, the highest mountain in Nyingchi. Thanks to the village's altitude, which is relatively low in Nyingchi, as well as its rich and splendid natural resources, flocks of tourists are swarming in it for sightseeing.

Under the support of the village committee and the Party committee of the village, Dekye Wangmo es-

tablished a tourism cooperative in 2016, and her fellow villagers joined it as shareholders. In July, 2019, a B&B hotel of the cooperative was completed and put into operation, bringing in a revenue of 1.86 million yuan (\$286,158) in the same year. Though impacted by COVID-19, the net income of the B&B still hit 1.3 million yuan last year.

The story of Tonpa village isn't one-and-only in Nyingchi. Over the past 5 years, the city has worked vigorously to build itself into a demonstration city for the promotion of ecological progress, as well as a demonstration holistic tourism destination, receiving over 32 million visits and generating tourism revenue of more than 24 billion yuan. The lucid waters and lush mountains in Nyingchi have been turned into invaluable assets for its residents.

Lulang was once a forest farm in Nyingchi's Bayi District. As lumbering was completely banned in Tibet since the end of the 20th century, Lulang accelerated the process of industrial transition, focusing more

on ecological tourism. Under the pair assistance offered by south China's Guangdong Province, the Lulang International Tourism Town was opened in 2017.

The B&B of Tashi Phuntsog, a villager from Tashigang village, Lulang Township is a hot destination among tourists. "Lulang has become a well-known tourist site, attracting huge numbers of tourists," said Tashi Phuntsog. There are also many hotels of higher levels in the township which can satisfy tourists at higher consumption levels, he added.

Myidoi village of Pome County spent 1.5 million yuan last year on restoring a batch of traditional architectures. Last June, a tourism company was established in the village, funded by 163 residents from 53 households. The village also collected 250 horses from villagers and designated an area where tourists can enjoy the sceneries on the back of the horses.

Horse riding can protect local environment and offer unique experience for tourists, said villager Tashi Tsewang, adding that the industry has increased income for all the villagers.

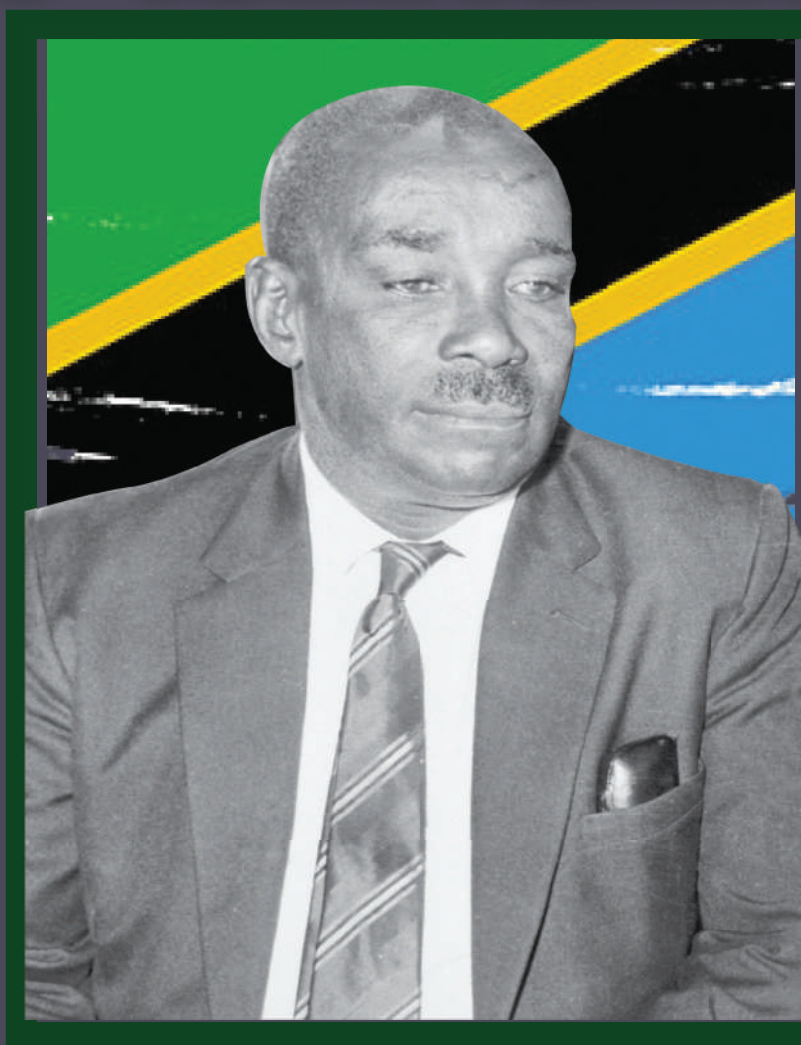
"Sound ecology leads to prosperity," remarked Liu Guangming, executive vice mayor of Nyingchi, and also head of the ninth team of a pairing-up aid program dispatched by Guangdong to Tibet. Nyingchi will rely on its eco-tourism advantages and advance the construction of tourism facilities such as smart hotels and B&Bs, so as to promote industrial upgrade of the tourism sector and constantly improve its development, he said.

People's Daily



Photo shows Lulang Township, Nyingchi, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. (File photo)

## 49<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



### SHEIKH ABEDI AMANI KARUME

Board of Directors, Management and Staff of TPB Bank Plc join HE. Samia Suluhu Hassan and Hon. Dr Hussein Ally Mwinyi and all Tanzanians to commemorate the 49<sup>th</sup> memorial Anniversary of SHEIKH ABEDI AMANI KARUME





# The world's billionaires are going absolutely bunkers

BY JESSICA WILDFIRE

**I**N 1893, George Pullman was one of the richest men in the world during one of the worst financial depressions in history. Now he lies in a steel vault eight feet underground, in a coffin sealed with lead.

He was buried at night, in secret, to keep his employees from desecrating his corpse. I guess that's what happens when you pay starvation wages, and overcharge your workers for rent in a private city you built with no government.

The world's billionaires aren't waiting for death any more before locking themselves up in vaults. They're building bunkers around the world to protect themselves from the consequences of their actions. Even Bill Gates has a bunker, and he's the most likable one.

Meanwhile, we've got Elon Musk marketing armoured vehicles with bulletproof windows, and teasing specs for futuristic fortresses to house them.

We've got entire industries carving out mountainsides and turning cold war missile silos into mansions. All this raises an interesting question about our thought leaders. Sure, they all say they want to save the planet at any cost, but what future do they really envision? It makes you wonder...

## The rich have a plan, but it doesn't include you

There's a handful of companies around the world that build bunkers for the super-rich. According to them, demand has shot up anywhere from 300 to 700 per cent over the last few years.

They attribute the spike to climate change and social unrest, sometimes just straight-up paranoia. Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal, has said more than half the billionaires he knows own post-apocalyptic hideouts in places like New Zealand. It sends a bleak message.

The world's elite might claim to see a bright future for humanity. In reality, they're hedging their bets. After all, they're not stupid. Just like us, they see a world marked by increasing competition for resources.

They see mass shootings on the news practically every week. They see fires and floods engulfing entire cities, turning skies blood red, and transforming parts of the world into dead zones. They're having casual conversations about it with their families, over dinner. They ask each other: "Who wants to live in all this?" The simple answer - nobody.

The difference between us and the super-rich is that they have an escape plan, and they're not even trying that hard to keep it a secret. Some of them even brag about it. They like showing off their bunkers.

The irony is that the ones building bunkers are also the ones creating the need for those bunkers in the first place. They're not just making money through benevo-



lent entrepreneurship.

They've spent decades draining resources from public schools in order to build a private education network. They're committing fraud to grab seats at prestigious universities. They're lobbying our politicians to disenfranchise us.

They're leveraging every advantage to ensure that they don't have to live in the world they're ruining. They're not doing this haphazardly, even if they're not always that coordinated. They have a vision for civilisation. It just doesn't include us.

## We're talking about luxury bunkers

We think of bunkers as shabby little bomb-shelters where, at best, you could keep a couple of crates of food and some bunk beds. Not

these...

They're basically underground mansions. A luxury bunker can cost millions. They're bigger than your house. They come with all kinds of amenities. They come with swimming pools and movie theatres. They come with underground gardens and artificial sunlight.

They come with gyms and game rooms, and water purification systems. They come with large food pantries and sports car garages. You can bet they come with gates and security cameras, and arsenals.

You could live in one of these things for a year, probably longer if you had a Tesla cybertruck to go on supply runs. It's the perfect place to wait out an apocalypse, freeing up real estate for when you emerge to restart civilisation.

Millionaires and billionaires have already siphoned up so much real estate in New Zealand that the country had to pass a law barring foreigners from buying property there. Now they're just trying to build fortresses in remote locations pretty much anywhere they can. It's a great plan...

## Bunkers belie billionaire optimism

Some people will call you pessimistic for being honest about the state of our society. They'll say you're the problem. They'll ask why you have to be so negative all the time. Well, all you have to do is look at these bunkers to figure out what's really going on.

The world's richest, most powerful people most certainly are planning for the end of the world as we know it, even as they bring it about.

They're just not being very honest. They're telling everyone that everything's going to be fine. If that were true, they wouldn't be building homes inspired by post-apocalyptic cinema. Would they?

The immediate past US president was a self-proclaimed billionaire. When things got rough, he lied to the public. He told everyone that there was a little flu going around, and that there was no need to panic. In private, he basically told his rich buddies to sell off all their stocks and go hide in caves. That's exactly what they did.

## Everyone wants a bunker these days

All my friends want private luxury bunkers. It comes up every time we talk about climate change or politics. If not that, then we want a homestead somewhere in the middle of nowhere.

This is the new American dream, a dwelling of some kind that's somewhat sheltered from all the world's impending chaos and uncertainty. It's a selfish fantasy.

In truth, opting out isn't the answer. That will only speed things up. What we need is more cooperation, not less. Still, we can dream.

We can fantasize about how nice it must feel to have a few million in liquid cash, plus a secret bunker tucked into a remote mountainside. It would be a huge relief to know that if our attempts to slow down the environment's destruction failed, at least we would be okay. We'd all sleep better if we had that.

Alas, we don't. We're stuck with each other. It's in our interest to figure out a way to live with each other and get along.

## You can't run a society inside bunkers

This time last year, I was talking with my family about barring the windows and buying a gas-powered generator. We didn't do that, mainly because we couldn't afford to, and for that I'm grateful.

We were scared last year. Everyone was buying up

all the toilet paper and assault rifles they could get their hands on. Then we calmed down and remembered something important: we all live next to each other.

Society depends on the idea of proximity. The sight and sound of other people nearby remind us that we can't go around doing whatever we want. Our actions have consequences. It's easy to forget this when you live off by yourself. It's one of the main reasons rural communities remain so conservative, and urban centres lean liberal. You don't care about people as much when you don't have to interact with them on a daily basis.

We've seen how empathy drops after a certain income threshold. Once you make a certain amount of money, you don't care as much about anyone who doesn't. You can shield yourself.

I imagine that empathy drops even lower when you isolate yourself from civilisation, engaging with it merely through the periscope of press events and fundraisers. Now, think about what happens when you add a bunker.

## Everything will be fine, at least for them

Some people get defensive when they read articles like this. Their instinct is to defend the super-rich and accuse their critics of blasting society without offering a solution. Well, the solution is simple from where I'm standing, and we've been saying it for a while.

It includes taxing the rich, regulating corporations, and limiting the amount of money they can use to sway elections in their favour and rein in corporate lobbyists.

It also includes closing all of the loopholes allowing the super-rich to opt out of their responsibilities, and actually punishing bankers and hedge fund managers when they commit crimes like fraud - by sending them to a real prison.

# 'If you don't work on user needs, you won't succeed'

BY BRIAN VESELING

**S**CHIBSTED-OWNED news publisher VG occupies the dominant position in Norway's media landscape. Established as a print newspaper in 1945, the brand has grown to become the country's No. 1 digital platform with 3 million unique visitors every day across devices.

That's nearly 60 per cent of Norway's total population (5.4 million) and makes them even bigger than Facebook within the country.

Listening to Ola Stenberg, VG's Chief Product Manager during WAN-IFRA's (World Association of News Publishers) recent Digital Media India virtual conference, it quickly became clear that while the Norwegian brand might well be proud of its top spot, the company is intensely focused on growing its business by meeting the needs of both its current and future users.

While noting that the brand has grown and developed along with its current user base, (VG launched its website in 1995, for example), they know that their future depends on appealing to younger users, those between the ages of 15 and 24.

Stenberg said VG attracts an average of 200,000 younger users daily, adding however that they realise that the potential is much bigger.

"This is really important for us, both because we want to have young readers but also because it's important for us to really understand the next generation," he said.

## Balancing needs of different generations

The average VG user today is a male, 47 years old, whose lifetime has been very much in sync with the shifts and developments that VG has made in terms of moving into the digital age - also a signature of the Nordic digital savviness.

As far as this average user is concerned, what VG has done is great, or at least "good enough" to keep them satisfied, Stenberg said.

He added, though, that it's not even close to good enough when it comes to the next generation, such as a modern 20-year-old female who has grown up with Facebook, YouTube, the iPhone, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and the many other platforms and devices that have launched and evolved during her lifetime.

"There is a really big difference between these two users. We have a lot of the male, 47, but we need a lot more of the younger people," he said.

"Things are changing, and they are changing really fast, but we can't just switch everything because the average user, the 47-year-old male, is happy. But the young people will demand a whole different set of things from us, and this is really difficult," he added.

Ultimately though, VG is still selling newspapers, Stenberg said, adding: "I always say that I can talk as much as I want about product strategy, but our most important product is our journalism. It always will be. That is not changing," he said.



## Moving away from silos

One major challenge in trying to adjust for the future is the need to move away from the silos that have developed in recent years as more and more products have developed.

Stenberg elaborates: "We are doing a lot of different things on our digital platforms. We have our front page. We have our VG Live service for sports results. We have a TV operation.

"We have sports. We have a news studio. We're doing niches, podcasts. And one problem is that our readers don't think of these as silos; rather, they only think of all of this as VG. I saw it on VG."

"For us, it has been a fact for years that we have been working in silos... we're too silo-driven and that's important to talk about right now because we need to gather internally to make a product that fits the users. And then we need to meet the digital expectations of beyond 'man, 47' because he is not the solution for our future."

## Understanding the needs of users

Stenberg said that along with increasing expectations from users, there is an increasing amount of touch points. And this, he added, is where things can get complicated because the world is evolving.

"The problem has been that we have been too full of ideas - internal ideas - from people like me, from editors, from other people in management. But it's not up to us to define what we should do; it's up to the users. Before

you come along with great ideas, you should get together with users and understand what their needs are."

Specifically, he said, a number of questions need to be asked and answered before developing any new product - including: What problem are you solving? What's the job to be done? (Value proposition). Who does it solve a problem for? (Target group). How many do we solve a problem for? What is the potential?

Some other questions: What are the alternatives for this problem? (Competitors, etc.) Why do we have to solve this? Why now? (The right timing). How is this solution going to be exposed and get users? What is success? (Metrics, business model). What are the most critical prerequisites to succeed?

Stenberg said that these questions, and how they are answered, will help to open up more creativity around user needs and you will end up with more outcome noting: "And outcome is really important because you need outcome, not output."

## Desirability, feasibility and viability

In addition, he said, there are a few things that are crucial to making something happen. "The first is desirability. Desirability is about needs. What are the user needs? If you don't work on user needs, you won't succeed," he said.

"We also talk a lot about feasibility, which is the technical part of it," he said, adding: "Is it technically possible to do? If your editor has a great idea, but your tech people tell you it will take seven months to solve, maybe it's not

that good of an idea."

And then there's viability: "Can we make money on this?" He also stressed the importance of the cultural part of product development, elaborating: "It's so important to have everyone around the same table. If we are to solve a problem around news, we need to have editorial at the table.

"We need to have product there and tech there. We need to have developers in order to understand the technical possibilities. And we have to have UX: we need to have the product designers around the table to understand the user needs."

You also have to check to see if you should do more research or if you need more data, Stenberg said, adding that all of this should in turn be supported by KPIs (key performance indicators), or OKRs (objectives and key results), or whatever you like to work with.

## Looking ahead: Relevance

"If you ask me what is the next big thing for VG for the next 10 years, it's about relevance: It's about being more relevant to the user," Stenberg noted.

He added: "If we do things that are more relevant for every user, we will create more value over time. We will succeed with loyalty, and that in the end will lead us to customer satisfaction."

He further argued that getting everyone on the same page was crucial for success, noting: "This is something we talk a lot about at VG. Starting with empathizing with the users and defining the problems with that insight.

"When you have done that you can start generating ideas together. And when you have done that, you can prototype it and then you take the prototype back to the user to check it again. And then you can start to build your first version of the product. This is something you have to do, and if you don't do it, you will waste time."

## Mission Teams

For the past few months, VG has been trying something it calls "Mission Teams".

Anyone can propose a "mission," Stenberg said, but they have to answer the following questions first: What is the problem we're solving and for whom? Why is it critical to solve it right now? How will this contribute to our OKRs? When do we succeed, and how will we measure it?

"If you cannot answer these questions, we will not work on it because this is helping us to reduce the amount of time we waste," he said.

He added that this process is working really well for them (VG) so far because now they can see much earlier both what will work and what will not work.

Something else they are doing is sharing insights. "Once a month we meet up across all teams and divisions in VG to share what we've learned. To be able to move effectively in the same direction, we have to have a shared understanding of our insights."



# Just what is driving tilapia in Lake Jipe to near extinction?

By Janet Murikira

IN 2015 Nile Tilapine fingerlings were introduced on the Kenyan side of Lake Jipe.

The introduction of non-endemic fish species has left fishermen and researchers worried that this will increase competition in the Lake, further severing populations of the critically endangered Jipe Tilapia.

There is a 50 per cent likelihood that Jipe Tilapia, will become extinct within 20 years.

Steven Omondi does not miss his old fishing days. The 30 year old lives in Nghonji village along the shores of Lake Jipe, a shallow interterritorial lake shared by Kenya and Tanzania in the Taita Taveta and Kilimanjaro regions.

Omondi started fishing in Lake Jipe in 2009; three years after the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listed the Jipe Tilapia, the Lake's native fish species as critically endangered. This means there is 50 per cent likelihood that the fish will become extinct within 20 years.

His fortunes would soon change in 2015 after Nile Tilapine fingerlings were introduced on the Kenyan side in an effort to save the near collapsing fishing industry that was threatening his livelihood and that of fellow fishermen.

On the day, he was interviewed by Baraka FM, Omondi had caught nine kilogram of Nile Tilapia which even though was in its juveniles and post fingerling stage, Omondi considers it a relief from his Jipe Tilapia fishing days.

"If one wants to trap the Jipe Tilapia or Asilia as we call it, one must try his luck near the mouth of the Ruvu River. Though that's not even an assurance," Omondi says.

Before the fish was introduced in the Lake in 2015, it had made its way into the lake after a pilot project went wrong on the Tanzanian side.

This is according to Dr. Johnson Grayson Mshana, a Marine sciences lecturer at the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania.

"Some cages of the Nile Tilapia piloted project by the Tanzanian fish farmers disappeared and after a few months, fishermen started spotting the Nile Tilapia which is endemic to Lake Victoria in Lake Jipe," Dr Mshana says.

The Nile Tilapia became the second non endemic Tilapine fish species to be introduced to Lake Jipe after the Singida Tilapia which was first spotted in the Lake in 1983.

With some researchers indicating that the Singida Tilapia swam into the Lake through the Lumi river after heavy rains swept away fish ponds in Taveta Sub-county in the 1970's, a 1988 paper published on the Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society and National Museum indicates that the fish made its way to Lake Jipe and Lake Chala, yet another interterritorial lake from the Tanzanian side.

"We have no doubt that Oreochromis esculentus (Singida Tilapia), Tilapia rendalli (Redbreast Tilapia) and O.p.pangani (Pangani Tilapia) were introduced to these lakes from the Tanzania side, either deliberately or in the case of Lake Jipe by migration up the Ruvu River," the paper indicates.

The current introduction of non-endemic fish species has left some fishermen and researchers worried that this will increase competition in the Lake, further severing populations of the critically endangered Jipe Tilapia.

"In most cases, the introduced species tend to become more superior to the native species. In previous years, one of the factors that have contributed to the decline of the Jipe Tilapia is the introduction of a new species which is the Singida Tilapia," Dr Mshana says.

Though Dr Mshana says he cannot ascertain the impact of introducing the Nile Tilapia to the Lake, statistics and local fishermen tell a different tale.

According to John Odhiambo, a Kenyan fisherman, the introduction of the Nile Tilapia in the Lake has further driven the Jipe Tilapia into near extinction.

Odhiambo says that he last caught the endangered Tilapia on his net three years ago.

"Catching the Jipe Tilapia has become very rare unlike before the introduction of the Nile Tilapia. Fishermen trap them but very rarely and one has to fish on the mouth of the Ruvu River in order to increase your chances," Odhiambo says.

According to Dr. Paul Orina, a scientist with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, intra species competition between the two Tilapine species could have pushed the Jipe Tilapia to migrate to where there is less competition.

"When a fellow species comes in and they are feeding on the same level, they will now compete for the limited resources ie food and breeding grounds and if the one that has come in like Nile Tilapia becomes more aggressive it will outcompete the Jipe Tilapia and eventually in a few years to come, the Jipe Tilapia will be gone for good," Dr Orina says.

Dr Orina further says that between the months of April, May and June 2020, out of the 15.7 tonnes of fish caught in the lake, Jipe Tilapia made only



5% of the catches with the Nile Tilapia being the dominant catch.

However, this is a drop compared to 2016, a year after the introduction of the Nile Tilapia where data from the Kenya Fisheries Service indicates that 26.3 metric tonnes of fish were caught in the lake in the same period.

In the same year, the Lake contributed less than 1 per cent - 0.085% - of the fish caught in Kenya with the majority of the fish caught coming from Lake Victoria.

However, even ascertaining the full extent of the disappearing Jipe Tilapia is an uphill task for authorities both on the Kenyan and Tanzanian side as fishermen on the two sides do not keep proper records of their catches and in some cases, Tanzanian fishermen land and sell their fish on the Kenyan side where the demand is higher.

In March, the Taita Taveta county government in Kenya, started training fishermen on how to keep records of their fish catches.

This is according to the Taita Taveta County Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries CEC Davis Mwangoma who says it is difficult to obtain data on fish that have landed on the site.

"We have a Beach Management Unit in Lake Jipe which has 106 members so the training for the 106 members is ongoing so that appropriate data can be kept," Mwangoma says.

### Destructive fishing nets

Other than poor record keeping, destructive fishing nets are to be blamed on the dwindling populations of the Jipe Tilapia.

A spot check by Baraka FM shows that illegal gillnets of 1.5-2 mm are still being used to fish rampantly along the lake.

This is despite the nets being outlawed alongside monofilament nets or any net with a mesh size of less than two and half inches as per the Kenyan Fisheries Management and Development act of 2016.

Dr Orina says this has further driven the populations of the Jipe Tilapia to near extinction.

"The Juvenile catches are not going to make Lake Jipe recover in terms of fisheries anytime soon. There is a need to ensure that if it's the month when fishing should not be allowed this should be respected by both the political side and the implementers like the county government" Dr Orina says.

### Shrinking Lake

But even if destructive fishing nets and alien fish species were to be regulated in the Lake

would that help improve the dwindling populations of the Jipe Tilapia?

Scientists and a section of local environment activists think that solving the above problems is just a tip of the iceberg.

"The collapse of the fishery is due to changes in water quality (increase in salinity and turbidity reported by riparian communities), breeding and nursery environments, increase in siltation due to increased human activities in the catchments," the Global Nature Fund which was implementing a project along the Tanzanian side of the lake said in a statement in 2016.

According to 70-year-old Damian Mwaka, a Kenyan farmer and environment activist from the area, poor land use brought about by the surge in industrial farms and ranches in the semi-arid area has seen farmers divert water from Lake Jipe's main inflow, the River Lumi, leaving the Lake to rely on underground rivers inflowing from the nearby Lake Chala and the River Mvulani which flows in through the Tanzanian side.

"This coupled with soil erosion has blocked the river's mouth. River Lumi is now draining into Lake Jipe's main outflow, the Ruvu River which flows to the Nyumba ya Mungu dam in Tanzania," Damian says.

Earlier in the year, the Taita Taveta county government embarked on an ambitious plan to desilt the blocked river mouth.

However, the intervention may have come a bit late for the already shrinking lake.

According to the United Nations Development Program's, Small Grants Program the lake has already lost more than 50% of its water.

"The lake is of global importance and the only place in the world where the fish Oreochromis jipe is found, and which is on the verge of extinction," the Project said.

Researchers further claim that overgrazing, deforestation and invasion of the mathenge weed (Prosopis juliflora) has further contributed to soil erosion whose end result is the increased siltation of the Lake.

"There is heavy infestation of the invasive species Prosopis juliflora which has aggressively colonized grazing land and blocked irrigation canals," a 2015 report by the Deft University of Technology says.

Taveta sub county, where the lake is located, is one of the counties whose vegetation is made up of the invasive weed which was ironically introduced to curb soil erosion in the 1960's.

The siltation in the Lake has further been blamed for fuelling the growth of the southern

cattail (Typha Domogenis) an invasive weed which the IUCN estimates has covered up to 60 per cent of the water surface in the lake.

"Efforts to control the Typha invasion will fail unless the conditions that facilitate its growth (shallow, nutrient-rich waters) are addressed" the IUCN says.

Shared Lake but Unshared Responsibility  
As the community grapples to come to terms with the near extinct population of the Jipe Tilapia, conservationists have warned that implementing different conservation strategies on the two sides is further hampering efforts to save the shrinking lake. This according to Dr. Mshana.

"This is the biggest challenge facing the management of the lake because we do not have a unified platform. This is a shared water body and thus the conservation of the Lake will depend on at least having a platform that will bring a common agenda. We need joint effort to manage the Lake; one country cannot do it on her own," Dr Mshana said.

In 2013, Kenya and Tanzanian authorities signed an MOU that would see a joint cooperation framework established to help conserve the Lake, just like in the instance of Lake Victoria.

More than seven years later, the joint cooperation framework is yet to be finalized.

Dr. Mshana who ran an awareness campaign along the lake in 2015, says the delayed Joint Cooperation Framework has further pushed donors to shy away from financing conservation projects along the Lake.

"One of the donors said that they could not fund a strategy that works on the Tanzanian side in a transboundary lake. They said we cannot provide money unless you provide us with a proposal that considers both Kenya and Tanzania sides," Dr. Mshana added.

However, the dwindling population of fish along the lake has left a community of fish filleters whose wages are pegged to the size of fish they have filleted, grappling with low income. This is according to Mary Shafarani, a 70-year-old fish filleter from the area.

"When the fish were large and abundant, I could make up to sh 300 a day which was enough to sustain my family. Nowadays the fish that comes from the Lake is juvenile and the much I can make in a day is sh 100," Shafarani said.

"What am I to do with an income of sh 100 with four grand children and a daughter living with a disability?" she asked.

# Scale of acute hunger in DR Congo 'staggering', FAO and WFP warn

KINSHASA/ROME

IN the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the food security situation remains dire with one in three people - a record high - suffering from acute hunger, two United Nations agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warned yesterday.

The number of people affected by high acute food insecurity in the DRC is estimated at 27.3 million or one in three people, including nearly seven million people grappling with emergency levels of acute hunger (IPC 4), according to the latest Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis.

This makes the central African country home to the highest number of people in urgent need of food security assistance in the world.

"For the first time ever we were able to analyse the vast majority of the population, and this has helped us to come closer to the true picture of the staggering scale of food insecurity in the DRC," said Peter Musoko, WFP's representative in DRC.

"This country should be able to feed its population and export a surplus. We cannot have children going to bed hungry and families skipping meals for an entire day."

Conflict remains a key cause of hunger with large swathes of the conflict-affected eastern provinces of Ituri, North and South Kivu and Tanganyika, as well as the central region of the Kasais, the scene of recent conflict, the worst hit. Other key factors compounding this crisis include the slump in DRC's economy and the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

"The recurring conflicts in eastern DRC and the suffering they bring remain of great concern. Social and political stability is essential to strengthen food security and boost the resilience of vulnerable populations. We need to urgently focus on growing food where it is needed most, and on keeping people's sustenance-giving animals alive. The main agricultural season is around the corner and there is no time to waste," said Aristide Ongone Obame, FAO Representative in DRC.



Behind the numbers are the stories of parents deprived of access to their land, or forced to flee for their lives, watching their children fall sick for lack of food. WFP staff have met families who have returned to their village to find their home burnt to the ground and their crops entirely looted. Some

have been surviving by eating only taro, a root that grows wild, or only cassava leaves boiled in water.

The most affected populations are mainly the displaced, refugees, returnees, host families and those affected by natural disasters (floods, landslides, fires) as well as female-headed households. Added

to this are the poorest populations in urban and peri-urban areas and those living in landlocked areas with low purchasing power and access to food through markets.

FAO and WFP call for urgent intervention to scale up support to Congolese in crisis areas. FAO is focusing on increasing

households' access to tools and seeds; providing quality livestock, which plays a key role in improving nutrition; supporting food processes and storage; and helping small farmers in the fight against animal and plant diseases. This year, FAO aims to provide life-saving livelihood assistance to 1.1 million people in areas affected by high acute food insecurity.

As part of its famine prevention work, WFP is providing life-saving food to 8.7 million people in DRC. In addition, WFP needs notably to be able to continue its work in the prevention and treatment of malnutrition, which affects 3.3 million children in DRC. Malnutrition in early childhood affects children for the rest of their lives, impairing their ability to realise their full potential and contribute to their communities.

In a move towards a longer-term solution, FAO and WFP are investing in resilience building projects that support community farming to boost yields, reduce losses and spur access to markets. These projects help communities build their lives and create a pathway to peace.



# Disability discrimination at the World Bank: Is it immunity or impunity?

UNITED NATIONS

**T**HE 15,900-strong World Bank, which has funded over 12,000 development projects worldwide since 1947, is an international institution with a superlative reputation for its sustained efforts to end poverty in the developing world—with loans, interest-free credit and outright grants.

But it has come under heavy fire for its blatant violations of disability rights—an area where no US labour laws are applicable because the Washington-based institution enjoys diplomatic immunity.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a spokesperson for the Disability Support Group at the World Bank told IPS the Bank has been hiding behind its diplomatic immunity for decades to cover up abuse of staff ranging from sexual harassment to institutional discrimination against its most vulnerable disabled staff.

“There is absolutely no national or international accountability framework that the World Bank can be held accountable to – neither the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities nor the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).”

“We have cases and irrefutable evidence of serious and consistent disability abuse and harassment of staff, conflict of interest, lack of transparency and accountability – the very values and conditionality for World Bank projects.”

Andre Hovaguimian, a former Director of the International Finance Corporation, Middle East & North Africa, a sister organization of the World Bank, told IPS: “The World Bank’s treatment of staff injured in the line of duty has been and continues to be deplorable.”

“Staff injured in the line of duty, taking risks to do the Bank’s business, should be treated with care and respect. The Bank’s diplomatic immunity should no longer be used to abuse the disabled,” said Hovaguimian.

Currently more than one billion people worldwide – including an estimated 800 million in developing countries – experience some form of disability, according to the World Report on Disability authored jointly by the World Bank (WB) and World Health Organization (WHO).

“Persons with disabilities face stigma, discrimination, and exclu-



sion from accessing jobs and services, such as education and health care, and they consistently fare less well than their non-disabled peers in development gains,” said the study.

The charges of discrimination have come up at a time when the World Bank is holding its annual 2021 Spring Meetings in Washington DC. The meetings, which began April 5 will continue through April 11.

Two disabled former staff members told IPS they could speak only on condition of anonymity due to fears of retaliation and losing their medical coverage as disabled persons.

“When I was denied worker’s compensation against the findings from five reputable doctors, I was told that “As an international organization established under its Articles of Agreement, the World Bank Group has been granted certain privileges and immunities under U.S. laws.”

“I feel discouraged, bullied and abused. It is a case of David against Goliath, with the most vulnerable and handicapped having to fight a disability program that has no proper Governance, Accountability or Transparency. There is no justice for the disabled at the World Bank”, he complained.

“The World Bank is evading accountability and oversight of its disability program by saying it is not subject of either UN Conventions or US disability laws while keeping its own Executive Board in the dark”

The other former staff member who has previously been disabled confirmed: “I was harassed to the point of breakdown. The disability program is managed completely arbitrarily with secret procedures not shared with staff but used

against them”.

“I am really sick of this hypocrisy where the World Bank lectures developing countries on disability inclusion while it discriminates shamelessly against its own disabled. While an independent grievance mechanism is mandatory for all projects, the WB refuses to allow its disabled staff the same opportunity,” he declared.

Asked for an official reaction, a World Bank spokesperson told IPS: “The World Bank Group is committed to ensuring the health and safety of our staff and their families. Our benefits, policies and track record over the years demonstrate this commitment”.

“Our self-insured insurance programs include disability and worker’s compensation programs, which provide comprehensive benefits to staff injured in the line of duty, or those that are unable to work due to a disabling condition occurring outside of the work environment”.

“Given the global footprint of the organization, as well as its presence in a number of high-risk environments, the Bank Group made the decision many years ago to self-insure these benefits. This was necessary to ensure all staff are covered, regardless of duty station, as some carriers may not support or be present in many of the markets in which the Bank Group operates, which are amongst the poorest nations in the world.”

“We regularly review our benefits and processes to ensure we meet the needs of staff and their families, taking input from plan beneficiaries and stakeholders,” the spokesperson added.

“The World Bank integrates disability issues into its operations around the world across a wide range of sectors, including promoting ac-

cess to infrastructure facilities and social services, rehabilitation, skills development, creating economic opportunities, and working with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. This is at the core of the World Bank’s work to build sustainable, inclusive communities, aligned with the institution’s goals to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity,” the Bank’s spokesperson declared.

Providing more specifics, S. Gonzalez Flavell, a former Special Assistant (retired) to the Director General of Evaluation and Senior Counsel WBG Legal Department told IPS:

“I was a disabled staff member under the World Bank’s self-funded disability program for over eighteen months. The experience was significantly demeaning and disturbing, my status carried stigma and it was made clear to me by numerous Bank Senior Management staff that my career and professional reputation would be adversely affected.

The program lacks clarity in requirements and transparency in application, and I repeatedly had to require procedures to be correctly followed, actions were taken by the Disability Administrator that would have been unlawful had any of the US protective laws for disabled persons applied and a copy of the operating guidelines applying to the program was denied to me despite reasonable request.

The disability administrator did not act in accordance with known disclosed program requirements and instead made arbitrary decisions capriciously without respect for my health or concern for me, my treating physicians treatment plan or my recovery and return to work.

The Bank’s HR team, which should have overseen the Disability Administrator’s actions, acted throughout as if my health and disability could be ignored, intrusively asking me to attend work meetings, attempting to have me present for interviews (at a time I could not work) incorrectly applied its own benefits rules (erroneously denying me 30% benefits which I had to fight through the justice system before they corrected) and leave rules and even allowed my job to be affected and declared my position redundant while

I was on disability (again disallowed under US law). Despite my health issues I had to take on HR to prevent financial benefits and career and leave abuse significantly affecting my health wellness and recovery.

On return to work I, as I knew had happened to many other returning disabled staff, faced hostility and retaliation every effort was made to exclude me and deny any right to reintegration with the work force.

Having discussed and now researched several disability programs, including those of other international organisations, including with disabled persons, the World Bank’s disability program remains the most lacking in integrity, compassion or equitable treatment and that it continues to exist in its current form is a failure to care adequately for staff from whom it demands so much, a failure to understand sound management and the hard realities faced by disabled staff and, without recourse to an independent grievance redress system, is an abuse of human rights,” he declared.

Meanwhile, the World Bank Group has raised USD 82 billion for IDA19 (International Development Association, member of the WBG) to support the world’s poorest and most vulnerable countries with a particular focus on disability

The Disability Support Group said IDA19 will do more to expand equitable opportunities for people with disabilities.” Disability is therefore a major focus of this IDA19 replenishment, with World Bank seeking funding from donor countries because “investing in people, and especially in people with disabilities who are often poor, is also critical to [sustainable development goals] progress” (<https://ida.worldbank.org/replenishments/ida19>)

## A healthy Indian Ocean feeds, protects and connects all South Asians

COLOMBO,

**I**T is the oceans that engendered life. The lives of humans remain connected to the seas, making the good health of the seas and the efficient management of sea-based activity essential elements for the wellbeing of people and nations.

The Indian Ocean offers tremendous opportunities and some challenges for the island, coastal, and inland nations of South Asia and beyond.

Regional cooperation is an excellent platform for leveraging opportunities and transforming challenges to promote the health of, and harmony in, this ocean space of common heritage, for common good.

Take the problem of plastic waste. Up to 15 million tons of plastic makes its way into the Indian Ocean each year, contaminating it with a trillion pieces of plastic and making it the world’s second most polluted ocean after the North Pacific.

South Asian countries have developed isolated projects to manage the ocean’s plastic waste. Fishermen in India’s southern state of Kerala were paid to recycle the plastic bags, straws, flip-flops, and other plastic detritus caught in their nets.

Once shredded, the plastic was sold to construction companies that used it to strengthen asphalt roads. With regional cooperation, lessons learned by the Kerala fishermen could benefit other countries.

The formal basis for such cooperation is being laid. All eight nations of South Asia are now coming together through a new regional project, supported by the World Bank and its partners to fund innovative ways to prevent, collect, and upcycle plastic waste into global supply chains.

The project also supports research and innovation grants to find and support alternatives to plastic. The Plastic-free Rivers and Seas for South Asia project aims to help build a circular economy for plastic that will stop plastic waste from leaking into the environment.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association, whose two dozen member states stretch from Australia to South Africa and north to Iran and the United Arab Emirates, are watching the project and may expand it across the Indian Ocean.

Some of the busiest sea lanes in the world cross the



Indian Ocean and its rich marine life. Under its surface lie state-of-the-art global communications technology.

As the world’s economic growth engine pivots toward the Indo-Pacific, activity in the Indian Ocean increases. This growth must be managed in harmony with nature and in tranquility, to ensure optimism and shared benefits, and prosperity for all.

For this purpose, it is essential for South Asian nations to work toward evolving a system where all communities that use the Indian Ocean pursue their aspirations and competing claims in accordance with international law, regional conventions, and age-old traditions.

A system with greater cooperation among states, and with differential treatment for resource and technical capacity asymmetries is needed for tackling natural disasters, promoting maritime security, and keeping sea lanes open and safe.

This system should also enhance economic connectivity within South Asia and facilitate access to markets in the region and beyond, delivering goods and services at faster speeds, greater volumes, and lower costs.

Without doubt, the Indian Ocean needs better overall management which, among other measures, requires:

- Protecting the marine en-

vironment and pollution control;

- Managing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing;
- Protecting fish and other resources in exclusive economic zones claimed by governments in coastal waters;
- Combating trafficking of humans, drugs, and arms;
- Combating piracy and marine terrorism;
- Safeguarding energy supply chains at maritime choke points;
- Managing port security and ensuring secure cargo loading;
- Promoting ocean-based tourism and leisure activities with a connected regulatory framework for safety in territorial waters and the high seas;
- Ensuring that Indian Ocean sea lanes, which carry much of the world’s cargo, including petroleum, are safe and secure; and
- Ensuring the safety of fiber optic cables on the ocean floor that transmit internet traffic, including

financial transactions, e-mail, and phone calls.

Working in partnership with countries and sharing information, expertise, and best practices is essential as no single country can meet these maritime challenges on its own.

Disputes must be settled within a rules-based system that follows international norms and transparent practices.

South Asian nations can work together, with other major maritime nations beyond the region, and with multilateral institutions to promote health and harmony in the Indian Ocean. The results will benefit South Asia now and the generations to come.



## AFFILIATION

## CTI expert supports President Samia on Tasac bureaucracy

By Francis Kajubi

BUREAUCRACY in cargo clearance by state owned Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (Tasac) has been a major bottleneck facing manufacturers as clearance of raw materials took much longer hence impacting on productivity.

The Confederation of Tanzania Industries Policy Specialist for Trade, Frank Daffa, has applauded President Samia Suluhu Hassan's bold stance against bureaucratic red tape

in government institutions including those under Ministry of Finance and Planning such as Tasac which frustrate investors.

"Our members decry Tasac's mode of operations that discourages investments in the manufacturing sector. In the days of private clearing agencies it took two to four days for imports to be cleared but with Tasac its taking between 8 to 10 days due to bureaucracy which hikes production costs for manufacturers," Daffa said.



Confederation of Tanzania Industries' Policy Specialist for Trade, Frank Daffa

He said CTI members have been complaining against Tasac's monopoly and attitude towards manufacturers but nothing was done by the previous administration to address the challenge hence commended President Samia for ordering the new Director

General to urgently address the issue.

Daffa said with legal monopoly to clear all imported industrial raw materials, Tasac has very little capacity to meet demand hence causing unnecessary delays that prompt manufacturers to incur extra

operational costs.

"When private clearing agents were handling such consignments, a 20 feet container was cleared at a cost of 145,000/- but immediate after Tasac took over, manufacturers now pay up to 347,846/- and the amount doubles for a 40

feet container," he lamented while urging the president to allow competition in the area against the state agency.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday while swearing in Permanent Secretaries and their Deputies who she appointed this week, President Samia urged Tasac's new Director General, Kaimu Mkeyenge and to clean up the mess at the agency and check against unnecessary expenditure.

"One aspect which has annoyed me a lot is spending over 600m/- on meetings, this is outrageous," she said while also new Treasury Permanent Secretary, Emmanuel Tutuba to address the issue of bureaucracy and misuse of resources.

The president directed Mkeyenge to go and observe restore sanity and hard-work at Tasac ending feuds and divisions within its rank and file while boosting government revenue through better service to the private sector. "I know all the negligence that has been going on at Tasac and have appointed you so that you go and clean up all that. You sat 23 board meeting in the past 12 months contrary to normal timetable spending over 600m/-," she charged.

## BREAKTHROUGH

## MTN Nigeria airtime sales resume as tensions with banks simmer

LAGOS

MTN Nigeria resumed airtime sales on banking channels Sunday after banks lifted a ban on the telecommunications operator following an intervention by the government. Nigerian banks on Friday barred the Johannesburg-based firm from using their USSD platform to conduct business as both sides scuffled over airtime sales fees.

The three-day-long feud started after MTN, which has the biggest share of Nigeria's telecoms market, reduced the rate it pays banks for each transaction from 4.5% to 2.5%. The lenders removed the telecoms giant from their platforms, disallowing MTN users from accessing their bank accounts to recharge their phones.

As subscribers expressed their frustration, MTN ad-

vised them to seek alternative ways of recharging. On Saturday, the firm announced alternative channels for its airtime sales, including a host of fintech platforms led by Flutterwave.

Service resumed on Sunday afternoon after MTN agreed to revert to "status quo" at the request of the Nigerian Communications Commission and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) while a permanent solution was worked out.

Intervention "The CBN governor's intervention is in line with our core values. We acceded to his request and that of our minister. We will continue to live our values that 'everyone deserves the benefits of a modern connected life,'" MTN Nigeria CEO Carl Toriola said on Sunday.

The operator said its pursuit has always found motiva-

tion in leveraging business to the fullest in the interest of customers and the Nigerian market. "MTN's intention has always been geared towards business optimisation to the benefit of our customers and indeed the country," Toriola said.

"This is evidenced by the fact that through the USSD imbroglio, we never denied access to our customers. In the current case, customers have been denied access to services by the banks despite having monies in their accounts to purchase those services. MTN will naturally do all it can to minimise customer pain. It is not just about revenue for us. The good of our customers influences every decision we take." Banks said earlier they were responding to check MTN's "excesses."

"The truth is that if MTN gets away with this, banks



MTN Nigeria CEO Carl Toriola.

should expect further reductions if not checked. Over 60% of airtime vending by telcos today are done electronically through the banks," a source said. They argued that the percentage MTN pays is lower than that of other operators, but MTN insiders, who also requested to speak anonymously, defended the network's decision.

"We did a commission optimisation which saw the banks commission reducing from an average of 3.5% to 2.5%. This reduction is standard because the volumes compensate for the reduction," one source said.

"We reviewed our commissions downwards. Most of the banks are not connected to us directly but through a third party - our conveni-

ence channel partners and aggregators. "Communication was shared with the partners, who in turn wrote to the banks (the banks here are agents to the partner). Our contract with the partners allows us to do this.

"The channels were blocked yesterday, midnight, leaving our customers stranded. It is interesting that the bank MDs met and quickly took a decision. This references our conversation around the NCC standing in the gap for the industry. Subscribers to telecommunications are being denied services by the banks even when they have money in their accounts.

### 'Commission uplift'

"Zenith Bank is connected directly to MTN - their earnings is at 2.7%. They are happy and have not blocked us. Banks on 'MTN On Demand'

had an uplift in their commission from 2% to 2.75%, yet have blocked services. Banks with direct connection to us through 'MTN On Demand' got a commission uplift." The CBN and the NCC on 15 March intervened to resolve a similar standoff between banks and operators over USSD fees. The USSD allows subscribers to use their mobile phones to access financial services daily.

The Association of Licensed Telecommunication Operators of Nigeria (Alton) had said banks owed its members 42-billion and threatened to suspend service. From 16 March, subscribers paid 6.98 each time they used the USSD for banking transactions. That arrangement has angered customers and alarmed advocates of financial inclusion.

## SETBACK

## Joe Biden's team to review Kenya-Trump trade talks

NAIROBI

THE Biden administration will review bilateral trade negotiations and targets that ex-President Donald Trump regime made with Kenya last year over a potential free trading deal.

The new US administration wants to make sure that the negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement and talks objectives are consistent with Biden's \$4 trillion revamp of the American economy that focuses on a muscular industrial policy with an eye on fighting climate change. This means that the start of the trade talks could be delayed and the objectives of the bilateral pact recast to recognise Biden's agenda with some of the aims of the negotiations set by the Trump administration likely to

be dropped.

Newly appointed US trade Chief, Katherine Tai, said on Friday that the negotiations over a bilateral trade pact with Kenya must reflect the priorities of the new administration - which is pushing for procurement of America-made goods both in the US and outside.

"Ambassador Tai highlighted her ongoing review of the negotiations to ensure that any agreement aligns with the Biden-Harris administration's Build Back Better agenda," said a statement from the US government after a virtual meeting between Ms Tai and Kenya's trade Cabinet Secretary Betty Maina.

"They also discussed the bilateral trade negotiations conducted under the previous administration." A trade agreement with



Kenya's Industrialisation, Trade and Enterprise Development CS, Betty Maina.

Kenya, which would be the first US free trade deal in sub-Saharan Africa, comes amid a growing concern about China's investments across Africa.

The Biden administration is seeking to cut China's share of the global trade. Kenya and the US formally launched negotiations in July last year for a bilateral trade pact that the two economies hope could serve as a model for additional agreements across Africa.

Kenya wants to do a deal with Washington before the expiry of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), which allows sub-Saharan states to export thousands of products to the US without tariffs or quotas until 2025. Two-way goods trade between the US and Kenya totalled Sh118 billion in 2019, up 4.9 percent from 2018.

The bilateral talks paused in the wake of American presidential elections last November. Mr Joe Biden was sworn in as US President on January 20, ending the tumultuous four-year presidency of his predecessor Trump. A change of guard at the White House raised uncertainty over the FTA deal, with Mr Biden embarking on the reversal of many policies that had been rolled out by the Trump administration.

Ms Tai on Friday expressed US commitment to the Kenya deal. Biden's "Build Back Better" blueprint aims to revive the US economy from the ravages of Covid-19 through a sweeping use of government power to reshape the world's largest economy and counter China's rise. His policy mix includes increasing corporate taxes to fund innovation and buy American products to expand jobs; tax incentives and penalties to encourage US firms to keep and create jobs in the US as well as \$2 trillion investment in clean energy.

## COMPETITION

## China's DiDi Chuxing set to take on Uber and Bolt in South Africa

BEIJING

CHINA'S ride-hailing company, DiDi Chuxing, has launched in South Africa, signalling the company's first entry into Africa. This new expansion follows the successful pilot launch of its operation in Gqeberha, South Africa, in March.

DiDi now offers ride hailing services in more than 400 cities in China and 14 countries outside of China, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Chile,

Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica, Panama, Russia, the Dominican Republic, and Argentina. DiDi has also announced plans to launch its service in Ecuador in April.

Founded as DiDi Dache by Cheng Wei in 2012 as a taxi-hailing app, DiDi Chuxing as it is now known, now has multiple services including Taxi, Express, Premier, Luxe, Bus, Designated Driving, Enterprise Solutions, Bike Sharing, E-bike Sharing, Car Rental and sharing, and food delivery.

In less than a month, more than 2,000

drivers in the city are already connected to DiDi's app, helping more than 20,000 local residents who have already signed up with DiDi to get where they are going safely and affordably. "South Africa has been hit particularly hard by this pandemic that has upended all of our lives - so as this beautiful country looks to recover and rebuild, we would like to do our part, to be a partner in building back better by providing better earning opportunities for drivers as well as safer and more affordable mobility options

for everyone," said Stephen Zhu, Senior Vice President and Head of DiDi's International Business.

DiDi will have to contend with incumbents Uber and Bolt in the South African market. Uber launched in South Africa in 2013 while Bolt launched in 2016 and they have rapidly introduced other services to solidify their presence in the country. For instance, Uber launched its food delivery service, Uber Eats in 2016 while Bolt Food launched its service in 2020. Backed by Softbank, DiDi has deep

pockets having raised a lot of funds in recent past. In 2017, the company raised \$4 billion for international expansion and it completed a fundraising round of over \$500 million for its autonomous driving subsidiary that was led by SoftBank Group's Vision Fund 2.

Related to access to funds, DiDi Chuxing is eyeing the US for its initial public offering, targeting at least a \$100 billion valuation to capitalize on the post-pandemic rebound. If the US listing is successful, the company is also open to a second listing in Hong Kong.



## REMUNERATION

## US-based Clean Air Corp paying tree farmers for sequestration of carbon

By Guardian Reporter

THOUSANDS of farmers in Iringa, Njombe and Morogoro are earning at least US\$8 (about 18,556/-) per tree for carbon sequestering from US based Clean Air Action Corporation which sells the offsets to polluting companies and other institutions globally.

In its report, CAAC said through its small groups tree planting project which involves over 100,000 farmers in India, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, over 20 million trees have been planted. Through its US based subsidiary, Grow Clean Air, the company which was founded in 1999 by Ben and Vanesse Henneke, said the TIST Project sells carbon offsets to corporations and institutions globally.

The company which also mobilises donations on its website where carbon offsets are sold at US\$20 (over 46,391/-) per tonne, said: "Planting trees with Grow Clean Air and the TIST Program ensures the benefits are spread between you, local sub-

sistence farmers and the environment. Each tree planted for \$1 provides \$8 of economic benefit to the farmer." Grow Clean Air was created by Clean Air Action Corporation to offer the unique carbon value generated by the TIST Program and make it available to individuals, organizations and businesses.

The report further noted that with focus on action-based means of cleaning the air including the TIST Program, an unprecedented model for effective afforestation in developing world locations is being undertaken.

"Clean Air Action Corporation (CAAC) is a lean corporate structure that cooperates with The Institute for Environmental Innovation (I4EI) to assist and enable the TIST Program to operate," the company stated.

TIST is a comprehensive sustainable development program for developing world locations.

It is the result of teamwork between subsistence farmers in Africa + India and Clean Air Ac-



A TIST Programme farmer at work in Njombe Region. Website photo.

tion Corporation. TIST is a breakthrough model for afforestation that provides participating members a way to create a long term and green

source of income and help the planet by planting trees.

"TIST generates the carbon credits by planting trees and Grow Clean Air

packages both the credits and trees for consumers, businesses, not-for-profits and private individuals who want to have a measurable effect in the world,"

the report added.

The carbon credits are the planet's first dual-validated, dual-verified carbon project with Verified Carbon Standard since 2011 and Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards also received in 2011.

Through Grow Clean Air and the TIST Project, institutions, corporations and individuals can plant trees as tax-deductible donations, the CAAC report stated.

Commenting on the unique project, TIST Co-founder, Ben Henneke said, "The real credit for the outstanding results of this program belongs to the local subsistence farmers who collect indigenous seeds, make nurseries, plant seedlings, and keep them alive through droughts, floods, cattle and goat raids and rogue elephants."

"TIST farmers are proud of the benefits their trees are having on their lives and on the global environment," Henneke added while noting that apart from earning cash, the farmers also get fruits, fodder, fuel, windbreaks and shade from the trees.

## HOARDING

## AFA accuses maize millers of engineering artificial grain shortage

NAIROBI

THE Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) has accused millers and traders of claiming an artificial maize shortage in the country to arm-twist the State agency to lift importation ban.

AFA imposed the maize importation ban for grains from Tanzania and Uganda on March 5 claiming most of the grains from the two markets were infected with aflatoxin. The ban escalated the bilateral trade standoff between Kenya and Tanzania.

Currently, several Kenyan trucks loaded with more than 300 bags of maize grains each are held at Namanga border to the chagrin of traders. In a crisis meeting held on Wednesday at Namanga custom offices between AFA officers, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) officers, traders and other stakeholders under East Africa Business Council (EABC), AFA head of crop inspectorate Mr Calistus Efulkho reiterated government commitment to ensure aflatoxin free cereal importation.

Mr Efulkho said all maize traders must be registered and issued with certificate of conformity and certificate of origin to safe guard Kenyans from contaminated cereals. He said Tanzania are unable to get the cer-



Workers inside a maize milling factory in Nairobi.

tificate of conformity because they collect their grains from small scale farmers hampering AFA efforts to trace maize flour to the source.

"We would like to assure Kenyans that the country is not facing a maize shortage that can push up maize prices as purported by few millers and traders.

Earlier collected samples at border entries indicated the cereals contained aflatoxin," said Mr Efulkho.

He also downplayed reports that the Authority was interfering with free trade within East Africa member states in favour of importing maize from non member countries.

"Kenyan has not imported maize this year and there is no such plan. We have enough maize grains in South Rift that can ensure Kenyans their staple food (ugali) up to June 2021. Our ban is not about business but about Kenyans health," he added.

He said talks are underway to

determine the fate of maize consignment held at border point. However, Kenya international freight and warehousing Association want the government to compensate Kenyan traders who continue to incur losses as their maize consignment continue to be held at Namanga.

## EXPANSION

## Africa Data Centres to build 10MW Lagos facility

LAGOS

AFRICA Data Centres, the carrier-neutral data centre company in the Liquid Intelligent Technologies stable, has announced plans to build a 10MW facility in Nigeria's largest city, Lagos.

The company, which already operates data centres in South Africa and Kenya, said construction on the new facility has already started. The Nigerian data centre will form Africa Data Centres' West African hub, the company said on Tuesday. It will add to its network of data centres in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Nairobi, Harare and Kigali.

CEO Stephane Duproz said its clients, including the so-called "hyperscale" cloud computing providers, have expressed their interest in utilising a data centre facility in Nigeria. News of Africa Data Centres' Nigerian plans comes after the company last year acquired Standard Bank's data centre in Samrand, north Johannesburg. It is also expanding its nearby facility in Midrand.

Duproz said the Lagos build will help spur the Nigerian economy. "The stimulus effect to the economy of digitisation is well documented and Nigeria is ready for this technology boon. Furthermore, our construction policy is to uplift the community as far as possible, employing local contractors and creating work opportunities within the communities we enter - so the job creation opportunities are realised at both grass-roots and hi-tech levels."

Africa Data Centres will use grey (non-potable) water for cooling in the Lagos data centre. It will also use solar energy to offset its reliance on the grid.



**Duproz said the Lagos build will help spur the Nigerian economy. "The stimulus effect to the economy of digitisation is well documented and Nigeria is ready for this technology boon. Furthermore, our construction policy is to uplift the community**

## COMPETITIVENESS

## Rwanda to the world: Now Zipline enters Japan market

KIGALI

ZIPLINE, arguably the world's largest drone delivery service for medical supplies which was founded in Rwanda has announced a partnership with Toyota Tsusho Corporation, a member of the Toyota Group.

This will see the Zipline model rolled out in Japan, delivering medical supplies to even remote parts of the country. While the firm is owned by American investors, the concept was first tested in Rwanda before being rolled out in other countries.

The firm which covers about 260 health centres in Rwanda with an aim to reach 700 made a name and caught international headlines by becoming the first firm to deliver critical medical supplies on demand using drones. In recent years, the model has been replicated in countries like Ghana and is in demand in many other countries including the United States.

The partnership with Toyota Tsusho will begin by looking at delivery options of pharmaceutical supplies and other critical medical supplies to remote areas, including islands - with an eye to eventually expanding



One of the Zipline drones drops supplies.

to other use-case scenarios.

Toyota Tsusho had previously made investments in Zipline. Masato Yamanami, CEO for Automotive Division of Toyota Tsusho said that they first invested in Zipline in 2018 out of the belief of their technology and impact in healthcare.

"We first invested in Zipline three years ago because we strongly believe their technology has the power to reimagine how health systems deliver care to people around the world. Zipline's model has proven systematic impact, and we are thrilled to bring that same innovation to support the communities of Japan," he said. Com-

menting on the development Keller Rinaudo, co-founder and CEO of Zipline said that the partnership with Toyota Tsusho is the first step towards delivering to more than 120 million people in Japan.

"Our mission at Zipline is to provide every human on earth with instant access to vital medical supplies. This partnership with Toyota Tsusho is the first step in delivering on that promise for the more than 120 million people in Japan. We live in a time where equal access to medicine has never been more urgent and imperative, and our two teams share a commitment to finding new ways to help solve the problem," he said. This will be different from Zipline's previous ventures with Toyota Tsusho to run the operation and distribution center, using Zipline's aircraft and system.

This partnership follows Toyota Tsusho's investment in Zipline in June 2018 and is part of the company's NEXT Technology strategy intended to support new innovation in mobility. Toyota Tsusho was founded in 1948 and is the trading company of the Toyota group. It operates in more than 120 countries.



WARNING

World economy risks 'dangerously diverging' even as growth booms

WASHINGTON

THE world economy is on course for its fastest growth in more than a half century this year, yet differences and deficiencies could hold it back from attaining its pre-pandemic heights any time soon.

The US is leading the charge into this week's semi-annual virtual meeting of the International Monetary Fund, pumping out trillions of dollars of budgetary stimulus and resuming its role as guardian of the global economy following President Joe Biden's defeat of "America First" President Donald Trump. Friday brought news of the biggest month for hiring since August.

China is doing its part too, building on its success in countering the coronavirus last year even as it starts to pull back on some of its economic aid. Yet unlike in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the recovery looks lopsided, in part because the rollout of vaccines and fiscal support differ across borders. Among the laggards are most emerging markets and the euro area, where France and Italy have extended restrictions on activity to contain the virus.

"While the outlook has improved overall, prospects are diverging dangerously," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said last week. "Vaccines are not yet available to everyone and everywhere. Too many people continue to face job losses and rising poverty. Too many countries are falling behind."

The result: It could take years for swathes of the world to join the U.S. and China in fully recovering from the pandemic. By 2024 world output will still be 3% lower than was projected before the pandemic, with countries reliant on tourism and services suffering the most, according to the IMF.

The disparity is captured by Bloomberg Economics' new set of nowcasts which shows global growth of around 1.3% quarter on quarter in the first three months of 2021. But while the US is bouncing, France, Germany, Italy, the UK and Japan are contracting. In the emerging markets, Brazil, Russia and India are all being clearly outpaced by China.

For the year as whole, Bloomberg Economics forecasts



IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva

growth of 6.9%, the quickest in records dating back to the 1960s. Behind the buoyant outlook: a shrinking virus threat, expanding US stimulus, and trillions of dollars in pent-up savings. Much will depend on how fast countries can inoculate their populations with the risk that the longer it takes the greater the chance the virus remains an international threat especially if new variants develop.

Bloomberg's Vaccine Tracker shows while the US has administered doses equivalent to almost a quarter of its people, the European

Union has yet to hit 10%, while rates in Mexico, Russia and Brazil are below 6%. In Japan the figure is less than 1%.

"The lesson here is there is no trade-off between growth and containment," said Mansoor Mohi-uddin, chief economist at the Bank of Singapore Ltd. Former Federal Reserve official Nathan Sheets said he expects the US to use this week's virtual meetings of the IMF and World Bank to argue that now is not the time for countries to pull back on assisting their economies.

It's an argument that will be mostly directed at Europe, particularly Germany, with its long history of fiscal stringency. The EU's 750 billion-euro (\$885 billion) joint recovery fund won't start until the second half of the year. The US will have two things going for it in making its case, Sheets said: A strengthening domestic economy and an internationally respected leader of its delegation in Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, no stranger to IMF meetings from her time as Fed Chair.

But the world's largest economy could find itself on the defensive when it comes to vaccine distribution after accumulating massive supplies for itself. "We will hear a hue and cry emerge during these meetings for more equal access to vaccinations," said Sheets, who is now the head of global economic research at PGIM Fixed Income.

And while America's booming economy will undoubtedly act as a driver for the rest of the world by sucking in imports, there could also be some grumbling about the higher market borrowing costs that the rapid growth brings, especially from economies which aren't as healthy.

"The Biden stimulus is a two edged sword," said former IMF chief economist Maury Obstfeld, who is a now senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

Rising US long-term interest rates "tighten global financial conditions. That has implications for debt sustainability for countries that went

deeper into debt to fight the pandemic."

JPMorgan Chase & Co. chief economist Bruce Kasman said he hasn't seen such a wide gap in 20 to 25 years in the expected out-performance of the US and other developed countries when compared with the emerging markets. That's in part due to differences in distribution of the vaccine. But it's also down to the economic policy choices various countries are making.

Having mostly slashed interest rates and started asset-purchase programs last year, central banks are splitting with some in emerging markets beginning to hike interest rates either because of accelerating inflation or to prevent capital from flowing out. Turkey, Russia and Brazil all raised borrowing costs last month, while the Fed and European Central Bank say they won't be doing so for a long time yet.

Rob Subbaraman, head of global markets research at Nomura Holdings Inc. in Singapore, reckons Brazil, Colombia, Hungary, India, Mexico, Poland, the Philippines and South Africa all risk running overly-loose policies.

"With major developed market central banks experimenting on how hot they can run economies before inflation becomes a problem, emerging market central banks will need to be extra careful to not fall behind the curve, and will likely need to lead, rather than follow, their developed market counterparts in the next rate hiking cycle," said Subbaraman.

MILESTONE

Valneva to start final testing on alternative Covid vaccine

PARIS

VALNEVA SE plans to start final-phase clinical trials on its Covid-19 vaccine candidate this month, a step forward for a French drugmaker's low-tech shot that's being backed by the UK government. The Lyon-based company said yesterday a phase 1/2 test gave positive results for a high dose. Valneva shares rose as much as 8.4% in early Paris trading.

The vaccine uses a sample of the virus that has been killed to stimulate an immune response without causing the disease. The approach has been used for decades with inoculations for polio and hepatitis A.

Valneva has said the well-established safety profile of inactivated jabs may allow a successful shot to be used in a broader group of people than newer technologies from other drugmakers. The results "provide renewed hope that a vaccine using a whole inactivated virus might provide strong protection against variants," UK Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zawahi said in the statement. If the final phase data are positive and the vaccine gets UK regulatory approval, "this will be another powerful weapon in our arsenal to beat this pandemic."

The UK has signed a deal worth as much as 1.4 billion pounds (\$1.9 billion) to receive as many as 190 million doses of the shot between 2021 and 2025. The British government is also investing in the biotech's Scottish manufacturing plant, where the vaccine will be created.

The company is studying how to adapt its vaccine to variants, and because of that, now Valneva expects the delivery of the first 60 million doses to extend into the first quarter of 2022.

The vaccine contains an adjuvant supplied by Dynavax Technologies Corp. Adjuvants are substances used to generate a more robust immune response to a vaccine.



UK Vaccines minister, Nadhim Zawahi.

ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM. Includes a grid of TV PGM SCHEDULE for SATURDAY 3 April, THURSDAY 8 April, SUNDAY 11 April, FRIDAY 9 April, and SATURDAY 10 April, listing various programs and their start times.



## WORLD

# Global COVID-19 death toll surpasses 3 million amid new infections resurgence

CORONAVIRUS-RELATED deaths worldwide crossed 3 million yesterday, according to a Reuters tally, as the latest global resurgence of COVID-19 infections is challenging vaccination efforts across the globe.

Worldwide COVID-19 deaths are rising once again, especially in Brazil and India. Health officials blame more infectious variants that were first detected in the United Kingdom and South Africa, along with public fatigue with lockdowns and other restrictions.

According to a Reuters tally, it took more than a year for the global coronavirus death toll to reach 2 million. The next 1 million deaths were added in about three months.

Brazil is leading the world in the daily average number of new deaths reported and accounts for one in every four deaths worldwide each day, according

to a Reuters analysis.

The World Health Organization acknowledged the nation's dire condition due to coronavirus, saying the country is in a very critical condition with an overwhelmed healthcare system.

"Indeed there is a very serious situation going on in Brazil right now, where we have a number of states in critical condition," WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove told a briefing last Thursday, adding that many hospital intensive care units are more than 90% full.

India reported a record rise in COVID-19 infections on Monday, becoming the second nation after the United States to post more than 100,000 new cases in a day.

India's worst-affected state, Maharashtra on Monday began shutting shopping malls, cinemas, bars, restaurants, and places of worship, as hospitals are being



overrun by patients.

The European region, which includes 51 countries, has the highest total number of deaths at nearly 1.1 million.

Five European countries including the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Italy and Germany constitute about 60% of Europe's total coronavirus-related deaths.

The United States has the highest number of deaths of any country at the world at 555,000 and accounts for about 19% of all deaths due to COVID-19 in the world. Cases have risen for the last three weeks but health officials believe the nation's rapid

vaccination campaign may prevent a rise in deaths. A third of the population has received at least one dose of a vaccine.

At least 370.3 million people or nearly 4.75% of the global population have received a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine by Sunday, according to latest figures from research and data provider firm Our World in Data.

However, the World Health Organization is urging countries to donate more doses of approved COVID-19 vaccines to help meet vaccination targets for the most vulnerable in poorer countries.

Agencies

## World Bank chief expects G20 to extend debt relief until end-2021

WASHINGTON

WORLD Bank President David Malpass said on Monday he expects China, the United States and other Group of 20 major economies to extend a freeze in bilateral debt service payments through the end of 2021 when they meet this week.



The G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) has already helped countries defer some US\$5.7 billion in payments through the end of 2020, with another US\$7.3 billion in deferred payments expected through June, according to World Bank data.

Extending the debt payment freeze through year-end would save even more money that countries could use to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and support their economies, Malpass told reporters, but gave no specific estimate.

He said G20 members would probably stipulate that such an extension would be the "last or final" one offered.

Doing so would incentivize countries to move toward more "permanent solutions to their debt situations," including through the G20 Common Framework for debt treatments, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund said in a joint paper prepared for their spring meetings this week.

While the temporary freeze in debt payments would help, Malpass said "actual debt relief" would be needed in the longer term to allow the poorest countries to reduce their unsustainable debt burdens to a more moderate level. The IMF-World Bank paper said low-income countries were still building their understanding of and confidence in the Common Framework, which could limit its initial utilization.

It said extending the DSSI debt freeze would give time for the framework process to become fully operational, but it might also delay "difficult-but-necessary restructuring decisions" for some countries.

So far, it said, only three countries - Zambia, Ethiopia and Chad - had requested a debt treatment under the common framework agreed by G20 members and the Paris Club of official bilateral creditors, but 35 countries were now assessed to be "at high risk of debt distress or in debt distress."

Malpass said China - the world's largest official bilateral creditor, by far - had shown receptivity to international engagement on the need for greater transparency, as seen in G20 discussions on the issue in 2020, but more work was needed. "We're making some progress, but I think much more needs to be made," Malpass said during a roundtable at the start of the spring meetings.

Malpass said the World Bank's top priority was replenishing the resources of the International Development Association, its arm for assisting the poorest countries, which it aims to achieve by December.

There could also be scope for a selective capital increase to address specific needs resulting from the pandemic, he said. Separately, the IMF said its executive board had approved a third tranche of grants for its 28 poorest member countries under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) to cover all eligible debt service falling due to the IMF.

Agencies

## White paper traces China's poverty alleviation journey

BEIJING

CHINA has secured a complete victory in the battle against extreme poverty, eliminating overall and extreme poverty for the first time in its history of thousands of years, according to a white paper released yesterday by China's State Council Information Office.

Titled "Poverty Alleviation: China's Experience and Contribution", the white paper was issued to record the course of the Chinese people's great fight in eliminating extreme poverty, introduce China's approach, and share its experience and actions in poverty alleviation.

According to the white paper, China is home to nearly one fifth of the world's population and its complete eradication of extreme poverty is a milestone

in the history of the Chinese nation and the history of humankind.

Besides the preface and conclusion, the white paper consists of five parts: "The Solemn Commitment of the CPC," "Final Victory in the Fight against Extreme Poverty," "The Strategy of Targeted Poverty Alleviation," "Exploring a New Path of Poverty Alleviation" and "A Global Community of Shared Future Free from Poverty."

Noting that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the white paper said the Party has united and led the Chinese people in the battle against poverty with unwavering faith and will over the past century.

China's experience in poverty alleviation indicates that courage, vision, sense of re-

sponsibility, and the eagerness to take on challenges are the most essential, according to the white paper.

According to the paper, the strategy of targeted poverty alleviation is China's strongest "weapon" in its final battle to secure victory against poverty, and a major innovation in the theory and practice of poverty reduction.

The paper stresses people-centered philosophy. "Only with this philosophy, can a country identify those who are poor, adopt concrete measures and deliver genuine outcomes; only with this philosophy, can it draw on inexhaustible motivation, set a clear direction, and find the right approach," reads the document.

According to the white paper, poverty-stricken areas have seen notable improvements

in their economic structure as do China's ethnic minority areas. China prioritizes the basic rights of subsistence and development of the disadvantaged groups among women, children, the elderly, and the disabled while fighting poverty.

According to the white paper, China has greatly accelerated global poverty alleviation and is ready to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with other countries on poverty reduction.

Separately on Tuesday, Wang Zhengpu, head of the national administration for rural vitalization, said at a press conference that China will roll out more than 30 policies to ensure the resources leveraged for intensive poverty elimination be redirected toward an extensive drive for rural vitalization.

Xia Gengsheng, deputy head of the national administration

for rural vitalization, said some 89.62 million people were identified as poor in 2014 with fresh related census conducted in 2015 and 2016. Beginning 2017, adjustments have been made every year to improve the accuracy of the identification process.



**According to the paper, the strategy of targeted poverty alleviation is China's strongest "weapon" in its final battle to secure victory against poverty**

## More prosecution witnesses to testify in trial of former police officer who knelt on George Floyd's neck

MINNEAPOLIS

PROSECUTORS in Derek Chauvin's murder trial were expected to call more expert witnesses yesterday to testify against the former Minneapolis police officer whose deadly arrest of George Floyd sparked global protests last year.

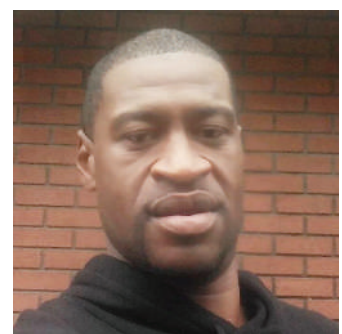
Chauvin, who is white, has argued he followed police training when he kept his knee pushed into Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes as the handcuffed 46-year-old Black man fell limp and stopped breathing.

"I vehemently disagree that

that was appropriate use of force for that situation on May 25," Chauvin's former boss, Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo, testified on Monday.

Arradondo told the jury that Chauvin's training required him to stop the restraint and provide first-aid treatment while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Chauvin has pleaded not guilty to murder and manslaughter charges for Floyd's arrest, which happened on suspicion that Floyd used a fake \$20 bill to buy cigarettes on May 25,



2020.

His lawyers have subpoenaed a man who was in the car with Floyd when police arrived, telling the jury he would testify that Floyd took opioid pills before the arrest and appeared to

fall into a deep sleep at some point.

The man, Morries Hall, has asked Hennepin County District Judge Peter Cahill to quash the subpoena, saying he would invoke his constitutional right against self-incrimination if he had to appear in the witness stand.

Before the jury is brought in on Tuesday, Hall was due to attend a hearing on his request via a video link from the county jail, where he is being held on unrelated charges of domestic abuse, according to court and county jail records.

The county medical examiner ruled Floyd's death a homicide at the hands of the police, and noted Floyd had also taken the fentanyl and methamphetamine before his death. Chauvin's lawyers argue that Floyd's death was really a drug overdose. Prosecutors from the Minnesota Attorney General's office said medical evidence would contradict that.

Floyd's girlfriend, Courteney Ross, testified last week that she and Floyd struggled with opioid addiction, and that she thought Hall sometimes illegally sold pills to Floyd. **Agencies**

## Decision on improving Hong Kong's electoral system marks new chapter for the development of Hong Kong

THE recently-concluded fourth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, passed a decision on improving the electoral system of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

As another major step taken by China's central government to improve the governance efficacy of the HKSAR since the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR was adopted in June 2020, the decision represents a milestone in China's practice of "one country, two systems".

By improving the electoral system of the HKSAR, China aims to ensure that those who are patriotic and love Hong Kong administer

and govern the region, so as to provide a solid institutional guarantee for the sound and sustained implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy in the HKSAR, said Zhang Xiaoming, deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council of China, at a press conference held by the State Council Information Office on March 12.

It is necessary to take measures to modify and improve the electoral system in Hong Kong, as anti-China forces have exploited the loopholes and deficiencies in Hong Kong's current electoral system to endanger China's national sovereignty, security, and development interests and undermine Hong

Kong's constitutional order and effective governance, said Zhang Yong, deputy head of the Commission for Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee, at the press conference.

The NPC has both the power and the responsibility to improve Hong Kong's electoral system, said Zhang Yong, who noted that the decision on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR has a firm constitutional basis.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the HKSAR Basic Law together constitute the constitutional basis of the HKSAR under "one country, two systems", and relevant systems and mechanisms shall be amended and im-

proved if they are not in conformity with the constitutional basis or breach or even damage the constitutional basis, he explained.

The decision of the NPC has sufficient legal ground as the Constitution authorizes the NPC to determine the establishment of a special administrative region and its systems, Zhang pointed out.

The electoral system of the HKSAR is the essence of the region's political system, and the central authorities have the power of decision on systems involving HKSAR, he said, stressing that the NPC decision also has unchallengeable legal force.

Be it the implementation of the Law on Safeguarding National Se-

curity in the HKSAR, the improvement of the electoral system of the HKSAR, or future efforts, all these steps are intended to improve the institutional framework of "one country, two systems" and allow for its effective execution and implementation, said Zhang Xiaoming.

"There is absolutely no such thing as changing the 'one country, two systems' policy," he said.

By stressing the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong", the central authorities of China are not trying to enforce uniformity in Hong Kong's social and political life, the official said, noting that different voices will still be heard at the Legislative Council of Hong

Kong, including criticism of the government.

Anti-China and destabilizing elements cannot be simply equated with the opposition camp, especially the pan-democratic candidates, Zhang pointed out, adding that there are also patriots among the pan-democrats and they can still participate in elections and be elected in accordance with laws.

A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Research Association shows that around 70 percent of the respondents support the NPC decision, which is the most proper and forceful response to the unfounded slander abroad, according to Zhang.

People's Daily



## Interval between doses of Sputnik V may be up to two months

MOSCOW

THE interval between the administration of the first and the second dose of the Sputnik V vaccine against the coronavirus may be up to two months, Alexander Gintsburg, Director of the Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Russian Healthcare Ministry that developed the vaccine, said in a joint interview with TASS and the Kazinform news agency.

"According to the manual, [the interval should be] three weeks. Yet, based on research data and observations, if the interval for some reason has been increased to two months, this won't be crucial in terms of effectiveness," he said.

In response to a question whether a person should repeat both shots if he got sick after receiving the first dose of the preparation, the scientist said that one shouldn't get inoculated all over again.

"Yet again, it is necessary to determine the individual's titer of protective antibodies and decide, depending on this, whether to inoculate him with the second component or not," he explained.

Earlier, the scientist said that a person can get infected with the novel coronavirus during a period between the administration of the first and the second dose of the vaccine against the coronavirus, since the immunity on average is developed on Day 21 after the first injection, and the stable immunity is developed three weeks after the second dose.

Agencies

## UK PM faces political fight over COVID-19 passports plan

By Bloomberg



BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson is on course for a battle with members of Parliament over plans to introduce vaccine passports as part of opening up services after lockdown.

So-called COVID-status certificates - based on proof of a vaccine, a negative test or immunity for those who have recovered from the virus - could eventually eliminate the need for testing of audiences at live events and passengers heading on international trips, under government plans.

But Conservative members of Parliament are unhappy, and the opposition Labour Party has hinted it could vote against the policy. If all those MPs who have said they have concerns were to vote against the proposals in the House of Commons, the government would risk potential defeat on the issue.

Former Tory minister Mark Harper said COVID certificates would create a "two-tier Britain" and demanded MPs be given a vote on the plan. "Trying to introduce these domestic vaccine passports by the back door by linking them to removing social-distancing rules just won't be acceptable," he said.

Agencies

## Huawei reaffirms commitment to creating greater value for customers and society in the face of adversity

SHENZHEN

HUAWEI yesterday released its 2020 Annual Report. Growth slowed, but the company's business performance was largely in line with forecast. Huawei's sales revenue in 2020 rounded off at CNY891.4 billion, up 3.8% year-on-year, and its net profit reached CNY64.6 billion, up 3.2% year-on-year.

Despite operational difficulties brought about by US sanctions in 2019 and 2020, Huawei has continued to invite KPMG to independently and objectively audit our financial statements. The document produced by KPMG is a standard unmodified audit opinion. No matter the circumstances, we will continue to embrace transparency by disclosing operational data to governments, customers, suppliers, employees, and partners.

In 2020, Huawei's carrier business continued to ensure the stable operations of more than 1,500 networks across more than 170 countries and regions, which helped support telework, online learning, and online shopping throughout COVID-19 lockdowns. Working together with carriers around the world, the company helped provide a superior connected experience and moved forward with more than 3,000 5G innovation projects in over 20 industries like coal mining, steel production, ports, and manufacturing.

Over the past year, Huawei's enterprise business stepped up efforts to develop innovative scenario-based solutions for different industries and create a digital ecosystem that thrives on joint creation and shared success. During the pandemic, Huawei provided technical expertise and solutions that were vital in the fight against the virus. One example is an AI-assisted diagnostic solution based on HUAWEI CLOUD that helped hospitals the world over reduce the burden on their medical infrastructure. Huawei also worked with partners to launch cloud-based online learning platforms for more than 50 million primary and secondary school students.

With the rollout of HarmonyOS and the Huawei Mobile Services (HMS) ecosystem, Huawei's consumer business moved forward with its Seamless AI Life strategy ("1 + 8 + N") to provide consumers with an intelligent experience across all devices and scenarios, focusing on smart office, fitness & health, smart home, easy travel, and entertainment.

"Over the past year we've held strong in the face of adversity," said Ken Hu, Huawei's Rotating Chairman. "We've kept innovating to create value for our customers, to help fight the pandemic, and to support both economic recovery and social progress around the world. We also took this opportunity to further enhance our operations, leading to a performance that was largely in line with forecast."

"We will continue to work closely with our customers and partners to support social progress, economic growth, and sustainable development."

# Ill-intentioned US interference in Hong Kong affairs leads to nowhere

HONG KONG

BY alleging that Hong Kong's elections "will not produce meaningful democratic results" on April Fool's Day, U.S. consul-general Hanscom Smith actually made a fool of himself.

With Hong Kong as a special administrative region of China, it is the people living here that have the final say on the results of elections. There is no room for the United States to meddle in Hong Kong affairs, let alone a politician of its agency that should have focused on providing visas and consular services to its citizens.

The adoption of legislative changes by China's top legislature on improving Hong Kong's electoral system is within its constitutional power and in line with global rules, which is also required for the enduring success of the implementation of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong.

## U.S. interference with sinister intentions will lead to nowhere.

Smith claimed that Hong Kong's elections "will be neither inclusive nor credible representations of the will of people in Hong Kong," which, coming as the latest slander of the "patriots administering Hong Kong" principle, exposed the U.S. sense of frustration that it can no longer appoint agents in Hong Kong by exploiting the electoral loopholes.

Here are some questions for Mr. Smith: does the United States allow "non-patriots" to become its president, congressmen, judges and civil servants? Did you take an oath of allegiance to the country or the Constitution of the United States when you took office as a diplomat? Can those colluding with foreign forces to create chaos assume positions of power in the United States?

## The answers are obvious.

Some U.S. politicians are good at preaching freedom, democracy and human rights and hyping up legal cases of Jimmy Lai Chee-ying and other instigators of Hong Kong riots. But they have neither expressed concern for the Hong Kong people who suffered injuries and even died in unrest nor showed indignation over the vandalism and violence by rioters and over the defiance of the rule of law.

In their view, Hong Kong rioters were "peaceful protesters" but U.S. anti-government protesters were "terrorists." Police brutality only occurs in Hong Kong and U.S. police just use proper force. They labelled Hong Kong's



Photo shows a view by the Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong, south China, June 20, 2020. (Xinhua)

independent legal trials as "white terror" but ruthlessly chased down protesters storming the Capitol Hill.

## Such open hypocrisy and double standards are shameful.

During the 46th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, 71 countries including Belarus voiced their support for China's righteous stance and measures over Hong Kong affairs, while representatives from 116 countries and international organizations reviewed the human rights situation in the United States and made 347 recommendations on improving its human rights.

What on earth does the improved electoral system mean for Hong Kong? Common people have already given their answer: more than 2.38 million signatures collected in support

of the improvement and a survey showing that some 70 percent residents believe the improved electoral system brightens Hong Kong's prospects.

Dismissing the voice of Hong Kong people, some U.S. politicians threatened to adopt "all available options," which showed how arrogant and overbearing they could be and revealed their evil intentions of destabilizing Hong Kong and containing China's development.

The interference in Hong Kong affairs, which are part of China's internal affairs, is based on power politics and hegemonism and will encounter a strong backlash from the Chinese people, including Hong Kong patriots; it is thus doomed to failure.

Xinhua

## The Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds a briefing on the China-WHO joint study of the origins of the novel Coronavirus

ON March 12, 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a briefing to European envoys on the joint scientific research on the origins of the novel coronavirus conducted by China and the WHO.

The briefing was chaired by Director-General of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences of the Foreign Ministry Yang Tao. Team leader from the Chinese side of the China-WHO joint expert team Professor Liang Wannian provided relevant information about the study and answered questions.

Over 40 European envoys and diplomats from 29 European countries and the European Union attended the briefing.

Liang Wannian provided detailed information about the background, process, findings and suggestions about future research of the China-WHO joint study.

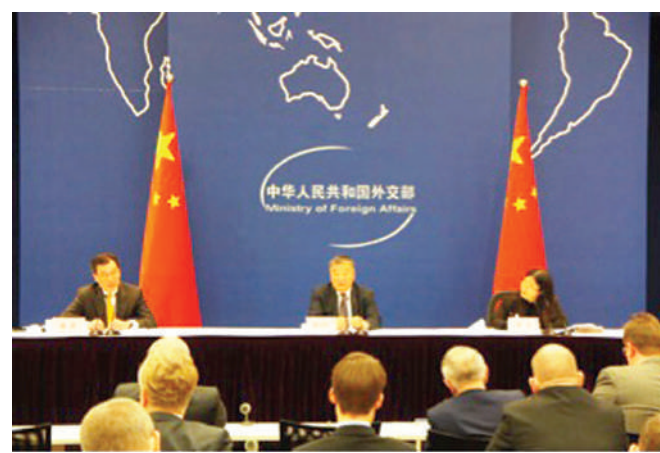
He said that after relevant resolutions were approved at the 73rd World Health Assembly, China overcame the pressure of epidemic prevention and control within its borders and took the lead to carry out a joint study on the origins of the novel coronavirus with the WHO.

In July 2020, China invited WHO experts to come to China and both sides agreed on the WHO-convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2: Terms of References for the China Part.

According to the agreed terms of references (ToR), China set up a joint expert team with international experts from the WHO, and conducted a 28-day joint study from January 14 to February 10 this year in Wuhan.

During the visit in Wuhan, experts from both sides visited 9 places, including Jinyintan Hospital, Huanan Seafood Market, and the Wuhan Institute of Virology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The team also visited and talked with local medical workers, lab researchers, scientists, market managers, business owners, community workers, recovered patients, and families of medical workers losing their lives in the epidemic.



Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

A number of meetings, consultations and discussions were held to accumulate scientific consensus on the origins of the novel coronavirus. And sound working relations were built between experts of both sides through in-depth and candid exchanges.

Liang Wannian said that the joint study has achieved positive outcomes and reached some findings and conclusions, thanks to efforts from the two sides: First, coronaviruses with high similarity to SARS-CoV-2 in gene sequences in bats and pangolins were found by the joint expert team. But the similarity is still not enough to make it a direct ancestor of SARS-CoV-2. Other species all could be potential natural hosts. Second, the first case in Wuhan got sick on December 8, 2019.

The Huanan Seafood Market could be an outbreak site and amplifier of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Third, environmental sampling in the Huanan Seafood Market from right at the point of its closing revealed widespread contamination of surfaces with the virus, especially in its aquatic product stalls.

The coronavirus at the market might have been introduced through infected people or contaminated cold-chain products, animals, and animal products.

After scientific assessment, the joint expert team believes the SARS-CoV-2 virus is "most likely" to be introduced through an intermediary host species, "likely" to be introduced through direct transmission or cold-chain food, and "extremely unlikely" to be introduced through a laboratory incident.

Liang Wannian pointed out that the joint expert team puts forward four suggestions in terms of future study. First, expand globally unified database, including molecule, gene sequence, clinic, epidemiology, animal monitoring and environmental monitoring data.

Second, continue to look for more possible early cases in a wider range around the globe. Third, scientists around the world should search animal species that may become virus hosts in many countries and places, not limited to bats. Fourth, further understand the role of cold chain and frozen food in virus transmission.

People's Daily

## Netanyahu gets official nod to form next Israeli government

JERUSALEM



ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu got a new lease on his political life yesterday, receiving a mandate from Israel's president to form a new government after an inconclusive election.

Israel's longest-serving leader, in power consecutively since 2009, now faces the tough task of breaking an unprecedented political stalemate and enlisting enough allies for a governing coalition.

Under law, Netanyahu will have 28 days to do so, with the possibility of a two-week extension before President Reuven Rivlin picks another candidate or asks parliament to choose one.

Israel's election on March 23, its fourth in two years, ended with neither a Netanyahu-led right-wing and religious bloc nor a prospective alliance of his opponents winning a parliamentary majority.

But in consultations Rivlin held with political parties on Monday on granting the coalition-building mandate, Netanyahu received more endorsements than his challengers, leading to the president's televised announcement giving him the nod.

Netanyahu received the recommendations of 52 lawmakers in the 120-member Knesset. Centrist politician and ex-Finance Minister Yair Lapid of the Yesh Atid party gleaned 45 endorsements and former Defense Minister Naftali Bennett of the far-right Yamina party got seven.

Three parties, with a total of 16 parliamentary seats, declined in their meetings with Rivlin to nominate any candidate.

Netanyahu has urged Bennett and another former ally, Gideon Saar, who founded the right-wing New Horizon party after leaving the prime minister's conservative Likud, to join him to break the deadlock.

Bennett has been non-committal about teaming up again with Netanyahu, with whom he has had a rocky relationship.

Saar has said he would not serve under Netanyahu, citing the prime minister's corruption trial - which opened on Monday - but stopped short of endorsing Lapid.

Netanyahu, who has denied any criminal wrongdoing, attended part of the court session and later repeated accusations that the prosecution's case was "an attempted coup" aimed at ousting a "strong, right-wing prime minister".

With Rivlin's decision pending, Lapid said on Monday he had proposed a coalition deal to Bennett. Under the arrangement, Bennett would serve first as prime minister and then Lapid would take over.

"The Israeli public needs to see that its leaders can work together," Lapid said in a televised address.

Bennett made no immediate comment about Lapid's offer. Political commentators said such a deal might also pave the way for right-winger Saar to join Lapid, with the prospect of Bennett, a fellow conservative, at the helm.

**A number of meetings, consultations and discussions were held to accumulate scientific consensus on the origins of the novel coronavirus. And sound working relations were built between experts of both sides through in-depth and candid exchanges**



# SPORT



Japhet Kaseba

## Kaseba delighted with overseeing Simba Queens' fitness training

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIAN professional boxer, Japhet Kaseba, who was recently hired by Simba Queens to oversee the outfit's players' fitness training, has disclosed he will see to it the latter excel.

Kaseba, a boxer with a record of his own in both boxing and kickboxing, has decided to turn to the other side of the coin, starting with new responsibility of training the football players.

He disclosed that with the ability he has in fitness training, he believes he will help the girls become even better.

He noted: "My job is just one of boosting the players' fitness, and that's what I started today, but in the short time I've spent I'm very happy to see these girls understand and recognize their responsibility."

He disclosed: "I knew they could either refuse or get bored because I started with only 25 minutes training, but they have

shown a high level of discipline."

He noted: "I love them and I congratulate them very much."

Kaseba pointed out that he knew it would not be an easy task for him to fulfill the new responsibility.

Simba Queens' technical bench, headed by tactician Mussa Hassan, is confident of seeing the club commands back-to-back triumph in the Mainland Women Premier League.

Hassan noted the remaining teams in the women top flight do not pose threat to his side.

Simba Queens are the league's defending champions and they are currently leading the rest of the pack with 39 points after playing 15 games.

The club has notched victory in 12 matches, draw in three fixtures whilst boasting of an unbeaten spell.

Second-placed Yanga Princesses have registered 38 points, winning 12 matches, notching two draws and losing one.

## Mwanza Regional Commissioner set to open May Day Games

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

MWANZA Regional Commissioner, John Mongella, will be the guest of honour at the launch of this year's May Day Games, which will take place at the CCM Kirumba Stadium in the region.

The Games' organizing committee's secretary, Mosi Makuka, said in Dar es Salaam that the Games will start on April 16, but the official launch will take place on April 18 at the same venue.

He said that so far apart from the Foreign Affairs Ministry's team, other teams that have already confirmed their participation in the Games include Ministry of Transport, Tanesco, TANAPA, TRA and Audit.

Makuka urged other teams to confirm their participation as soon as possible, including listing the Games they will participate in so that the organizers can set up venues for the Games.

He said this year's Games are expected to end on April 30.

He called on the teams that emerged winners in various sports disciplines at last year's Games

to return the trophies soon, given the trophies will be handed over to winners of the coming edition.

"All teams which won trophies in last year's Games should return them early so that they can be presented to this year's winners," he said.

He said that some teams have verbally confirmed participation, but are required to submit such proof in writing as well as mentioning the disciplines they will be participating in.

He mentioned the disciplines that will be played this year as soccer, cycling, netball, cards, draught, tug-of-war and scoring.

He urged employers to give permission to their employees, as the Games are very important.

The event, he noted, improves the participants' health.

They further enable employees of various institutions to get to know each other and smoothen operations.

He called on the teams to continue training in preparation for the Games, in which winners will be presented with trophies during the May Day summit.



MWANZA Regional Commissioner, John Mongella,

## SPORTS

# We did not fluke against Al Ahly, Simba SC roars to all and sundry

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

AN emphatic 4-1 win by Tanzania's CAF Champions League contenders Simba Sports Club against AS Vita of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was a phenomenal and yet not totally unexpected result in view of results at the group level for a whole stretch of matches.

What can be said that the margin was above expectations but not entirely surprising as the Msimbazi Street side has beaten top sides like Egypt's Al Ahly on their own turf, drawing one match in the group and winning four others.

Pundits say Al Ahly need to win their last match against Simba so as to reach something like 11 points overall.

That means Simba not only topped the group but had one match at hand, and ordinarily that is clear demonstration of dominance, the way Uganda had already qualified for African Nations Cup finals with 13 points under the belt like Simba.

It thus allowed itself to lose 3-0 against Tanzania's Taifa Stars though we did not report or acclaim the game in that manner, that Uganda had nothing to lose so it didn't play at its level best, and we could thus see Simba play that way against Al Ahly.

The reason is simply that they have nothing to lose as with whatever result they are top of the group and advantageously meet a weaker side in terms of the grouping hierarchy, in the quarterfinals.

While we don't have the cup yet it is close to that.

By comparison at the group stage, the Msimbazi Street side has done much better than the defending champions, not from another group but grouped against the same side.

First there were complaints that the Tanzanian champions were being unfairly boosted by the presence of thousands of fans in the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in the city, and when the side went to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and won, as well as the other side coming to Dar es Salaam and losing without fans being present, the writing was on the wall.

Top African club sides grudgingly started to admit that Simba might well be the team to beat, and will now be sharpening their claws, fangs..

There were of course signs that



Tanzania's Simba SC's midfielder, Bernard Morrison (C), challenges Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club player when the two sides locked horns in this season's CAF Champions League's Group A match, which took place in Dar es Salaam last Saturday. Simba SC won 4-1. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

this might happen in the future as the club has been steadily reaching the group stage in the championship, but little of this sort of prowess could be figured out even by the most ardent of club fans.

Despite that football has its ups and downs, it would be somewhat out of place at the moment for Simba SC fans to imagine the side going to Kinshasa for instance and losing 5-0 against AS Vita, or going to Lubumbashi and losing 5-0 against TP Mazembe.

The local champions have shown they have what it takes not just to withstand but smother these other regular high flyers of continental soccer.

While the Msimbazi Street side isn't as yet playing England Premier League football, it is on the way to being fairly comfortable when they have the ball, in the sense of being able to find one another with relative ease, and build the pace from behind, methodically.

All this is just at the beginning in a sense, as definitely the local champions weren't playing this kind of football earlier, or at best there were flashes of being able to scheme attacks that way.

On the whole it was the 'run and hit' kind of football they were using, and now there is a head coach who works to improve attack to diminish dangers of injury, errors.

This unexpected success of the local champions will definitely be a fillip for their across the city rivals to brush up their act and get organised, not only finding a good coach but one with plans and abilities to take the Jangwani Street outfit to upper reaches of continental competition like Simba has done.

While the Taifa Stars run in continental competition has remained the same despite the qualification to AFCON finals with head coach Emmanuel Amunike several years ago, its limited ability to get an excellent coach and set out long term plans suggests that the national side will remain amateurish for some years yet.

Only providence seems to be working miracles where the sourcing of Taifa Stars players will be improved.

Taifa Stars, left to TFF efforts, would remain amateurish until higher levels of organization come up with something.

But the current run of the club champions and the biting inferiority complex creeping up across the street at Jangwani Street clubhouse may help push matters in a way that could scarcely have been thought possible until now.

If Jangwani Street outfit also adopts professional ways of coaching and team organization to stand a better chance against Simba, it will be a 'Kalumekenge' sort of trigger where the city rivals and others too, starting with Azam FC, make keen efforts to 'keep up with the Joneses,' altering play habits.

In that case, one year from now or two years, top clubs will be playing much better, and so will Taifa Stars.

## Coach Didier Gomes advises Ame to work hard

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

SIMBA SC's head coach, Didier Gomes, has advised the squad's central defender Ibrahim Ame to step up his performance so he can successfully compete for a place in the squad's starting line up.

Ame is lately regularly restricted to the bench, given fellow defenders Kenyan Joash Onyango and Ivorian Paschal Wawa are the regulars in the first team.

Gomes noted that Ame is required to double his efforts and the latter should moreover love what he is doing.

Ame is a new entry into Simba, who last weekend sailed through to this season's CAF Champions League last eight with one game in hand.

He joined Simba from Coastal Union of Tanga and he has played 10 matches at Simba, amounting to 665 minutes.

He was in the club's starting line up in seven matches, while the remaining three saw him serve as substitute.

He played 90 minutes in a Premier League clash against Kagera Sugar, he went on to feature for 22 minutes in the clash against Coastal Union.

In Simba's Premier League clash against Polisi Tanzania, Ame again featured for 90 minutes.

In his side's league game against Mbeya City FC, the defender featured for 90 minutes, he was also shown a yellow card in the fixture.

He moreover featured for 71 minutes in Simba's match against Ihefu FC and he graced the pitch for 90 minutes when Simba locked horns with Azam FC.

In Simba's Federation Cup tournament's matches against Ruvuma's Majimaji FC and African Lyon, he took part in the fixtures for 90 minutes.

He further spent 32 minutes in his club's two CAF Champions League



Simba's central defender Ibrahim Ame.

matches against Plateau United of Nigeria.

The player has scored one goal for Simba in the Federation Cup's clash against Majimaji FC, heading in Larry Bwallya's assist.

Gomes stated in order for Ame to regularly feature in

Simba's starting line up, he must work hard, given there is stiff competition for a place in the first team.



## Haaland deal 'very difficult' for Barca, say sources

BARCELONA

BARCELONA will continue to pursue the signing of Erling Haaland after meeting with his representatives last week, but several sources at the club have told ESPN it will be "very difficult" to do a deal for the Borussia Dortmund striker.

New Barca president Joan Laporta met with Haaland's agent Mino Raiola and his father, Alf-Inge Haaland, in the Catalan city on Thursday to discuss a transfer. Raiola and Haaland Sr. also met with Real Madrid representatives later in the day.

Sources have told ESPN that Laporta left the meeting committed to trying to sign the Norway international, but there's also an acknowledgment that Barca's financial situation is likely to impede a potential deal.

Barca's gross debt has risen to nearly €1.2 billion and the club need to reduce their wage bill. Laporta said in his inauguration speech that he will have to make big decisions and Barca would have to sell several players for sizeable fees to even consider Haaland -- who has a €75 million release clause that can be triggered in 2022 -- this summer.

Last summer saw Barca focus on reducing the wage bill, with several big earners, such as Ivan Rakitic, Arturo Vidal and Luis Suarez, allowed to leave for nominal fees. One source told ESPN that given the financial climate Barca are in, a similar transfer window is expected this time around.

However, Laporta is planning for all eventualities. He met with Ronald Koeman during the in-

ternational break to start planning for next season. The Barca coach wants a striker added to the squad, with Haaland's name at the top of the list of targets.

ESPN reported in March that Dortmund would want €180m for Haaland this summer, while reports in Spain this weekend suggested Raiola and Alf-Inge Haaland would each want €20m in commission in addition to a €30m net salary for Erling Haaland.

Raiola knocked those reports back on Twitter on Sunday, calling them "fake news."

Several Premier League clubs have also been credited with an interest in Haaland, although Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola said last week that "with these prices, we are not going to buy any striker. It is impossible, we cannot afford it."

Meanwhile, Koeman is still insisting on signing Memphis Depay from Lyon. He is out of contract in the summer and could therefore arrive for free. Barca tried and failed to sign him last October.

Several sources at the club have told ESPN they believe Koeman -- who has turned Barca's season around with an 18-game unbeaten run in La Liga, moving them to within four points of leaders Atletico Madrid with a game in hand -- will end up getting his way.

Talks are also at an advanced stage to sign Manchester City defender Eric Garcia on a free. The Spain international is out of contract in the summer and Barca are finalising the terms of the agreement with his agent, Ivan de la Pena.

(Agencies)

## Time for Tuchel to take tough decisions at Chelsea

LONDON

THOMAS Tuchel's serene start as Chelsea manager came to a crashing halt as lowly West Bromwich Albion became the first visiting side to score five goals at Stamford Bridge in 10 years on Saturday.

Thiago Silva's early red card played a large part in a shocking 5-2 defeat that ended Tuchel's 14-match unbeaten run since replacing the sacked Frank Lampard in January.

The German coach now has to show he can deal with his first taste of adversity with the west London club. "It's a wake-up call. We will get the right response," said Tuchel.

"It's important we digest it. I did not see it coming, now we have to take our responsibilities - me included - and shake it off."

"We can't, after 15 or 14 matches, lose our head. We can't take away the trust that we have in these players."

His call for calm fell on deaf ears among some of his squad with reports of a training ground clash on Sunday between Antonio Rudiger and Kepa Arrizabalaga.

A swift response is needed in Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final first leg against Porto in the first of two clashes between the sides in Seville due to coronavirus restrictions on travel between Portugal and England.

Despite the Portuguese giants' heroics in dumping out Juventus in the last 16, anything other than progression to Chelsea's first Champions League semi-final since 2014 will be seen as a huge disappointment.

- Misfiring Werner -

An impressive run of results have covered over some of the cracks that led to Lampard's departure and remain to be solved.

Hakim Ziyech, Timo Werner and Kai Havertz combined for the majority of a £220 million (\$304 million) spending spree in the transfer market last summer, but all three are still to live up to their hefty price tags.

Tuchel has made the most of Chelsea's strength in depth to consistently rotate, particularly in attacking areas.

But a lack of goals has been a per-

sistent problem, with the Blues scoring just 13 times in their last 11 Premier League games.

Werner's lack of form is a major factor.

The German international has scored just once in his last 18 games for club and country and his fragile confidence took another hit when his stunning miss helped North Macedonia claim a shock win in last week's World Cup qualifier.

The time has come for Tuchel to make some big decisions if he is to go one better than last season when he guided Paris Saint-Germain to the Champions League final.

Not for the first time in his Chelsea career, Olivier Giroud may be brought in from the cold by a manager in need.

Giroud's overhead kick was the difference in the first leg of Chelsea's last 16 tie against Atletico Madrid, but the Frenchman has not played a minute of Premier League or Champions League action since February.

It is at the back Tuchel's impact has been felt most, with a run of seven clean-sheets prior to Saturday's collapse.

The use of a back three and Rudiger's return, after he was frozen out by Lampard for most of the first half of the season, have made Chelsea far harder to break down.

Rudiger's presence was badly missed as he was left out against West Brom to allow Silva to make his comeback after two months out with a hamstring injury.

The Brazilian's return lasted just 29 minutes before his red card and Tuchel is expected to restore Rudiger in place of the 36-year-old despite his bust up with Kepa.

Mason Mount and N'Golo Kante would also return as their importance was underlined when rested from the start at the weekend.

But that could leave space for just one of Werner, Havertz and Ziyech in attack.

Tuchel is spoiled for choice, but will be quickly judged on whether he makes the right calls.

AFP

## Can PSG avenge Champions League final loss against Bayern?

PARIS

PARIS Saint-Germain are seeking revenge for their defeat in last season's final when they renew acquaintances with Bayern Munich in the Champions League last night this week, but the French giants appear to have gone backwards since then despite the arrival of Mauricio Pochettino as coach.

News of Robert Lewandowski's absence for the quarter-final first leg at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday has understandably been met with some delight in Paris, especially with Neymar recovering fitness following his latest lay-off.

Nevertheless, PSG did not need Neymar when they delivered their signature performance of the campaign so far to beat Barcelona 4-1 away in the last round.

Marco Verratti did play then, and the Italian playmaker's absence in Munich following a positive Covid-19 test could be a major problem for Pochettino.

The Argentine, a former PSG captain, was appointed by the Qatar-owned club in January with the difficult brief of doing better than his sacked predecessor, Thomas Tuchel.

Under Tuchel, the Parisians won every domestic trophy in France last season before reaching the Champions League final for the first time.

In some ways there is more pressure on PSG now than there was for that 1-0 loss to Bayern in Lisbon last August.

Getting to the final of Europe's elite club competition was a big step forwards, but going out in the quarter-finals now would be a major setback for PSG and Pochettino, especially as they are trailing in Ligue 1.

The former Tottenham Hotspur



Will Neymar and Kylian Mbappe find their best form when PSG take on Bayern Munich in a repeat of last season's Champions League final? (Agencies)

coach told AFP in an interview last month that he would need time to make his mark at the Parc des Princes and that he would be unable to make the changes he wants until the next pre-season.

The 49-year-old, who oversaw a 7-2 home defeat by Bayern in one of his last games with Spurs, sought to emphasise the point last weekend, telling Le Parisien: "You can judge me from next season."

In the meantime, he added: "If we win the Champions League, or the French Cup, or Ligue 1, our influence will have been minimal. As will be the case if we win nothing. It will mainly be down to the players."

Of the team that started last season's final, only captain Thiago Silva has departed, while Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting, who came off the bench, has since switched to the Bayern ranks.

Yet he was replaced by Moise Kean, and the Italian international

is an upgrade having contributed 15 goals, including three in the Champions League.

Meanwhile, left-back Juan Bernat has missed almost the entire season due to injury, and PSG have problems in both full-back positions.

### - 'Highs and lows' -

What Pochettino really needs is for Neymar to rediscover his best form and for Kylian Mbappe to deliver -- PSG's best performances under Pochettino have come with Mbappe starring, from his hat-trick in Barcelona to a double in a 4-2 win in Lyon.

However Mbappe has sometimes flattered to deceive and performances have regularly been disappointing, under Tuchel and Pochettino.

They have lost 10 times this season, including three defeats in their last six league games.

Saturday's 1-0 home loss to title

rivals Lille -- in which Neymar was sent off -- left them three points behind the Ligue 1 leaders with seven matches remaining.

Never mind potentially missing out on winning the French title, PSG could miss out on Champions League qualification altogether by failing to finish in the top three in Ligue 1.

That would be embarrassing for a club of the standing of PSG, who lost 3-1 on their last visit to Bayern for a group-stage match under Unai Emery in 2017.

"We have had lots of highs and lows, so we need to be more consistent like in previous seasons," captain Marquinhos told Canal Plus after the Lille game.

"We can still achieve great things so we need to focus on the positives and look at what we can improve. The next game is one of our biggest of the season."

AFP

## Rohr still searching for respect despite AFCON qualification

LONDON

FOR the third time on the bounce, Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr masterminded qualification for a major tournament with at least one game to spare; this time, the Super Eagles achieved their target with two games in hand but still the German is in the market for respect from Nigerian football fans, media, and pundits.

Nigeria legend Henry Nwosu, who helped the Super Eagles to their first Africa Cup of Nations title in 1980, grudgingly accepts that Rohr has done a good job but says there is only one way the coach can earn the respect of Nigerians.

"Rohr has done well but I will not see him as one of the best coaches in Africa just because he qualified Nigeria for AFCON," Nwosu said.

"Let him go on and win the Africa Cup of Nations. After winning the Nations Cup, that is when we can now rate him. The wish of every Nigerian is for Rohr to win the Nations Cup. I will want Nigeria to win the Africa Cup of Nations title and do well at the World Cup and even win it. That is the target for the coach in charge whether he is a Nigerian or not."

Nwosu's sentiment is shared by many across the Nigerian football spectrum, with the major criticism of the German being his in-game decision-making, supposed lack of tactical ability, and poor or ill-timed substitutions.

This criticism prompted Nigeria Football Federation president Amaju Pinnick to suggest, when handing the 67-year-old a new contract, that he would be sent for "refresher courses".

On the face of it, the criticisms would appear to be unjustified. In this most recent qualifying series, Rohr hit some really impressive numbers -- especially in comparison to previous years.

The Super Eagles finished the qualifying campaign as one of only four unbeaten sides, chalking up 14 points -- only Tunisia, with 16 points, did better -- and it is their best points tally in the final group phase of quali-



Gernot Rohr

fying since the 2008 series, when Berti Vogts team hit 15 points from five wins and one loss.

It is also the second consecutive major tournament qualifying series, after the 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign, in which Rohr's team has been unbeaten on the field.

Indeed his only defeat in a qualifying series came in the campaign to reach the 2019 African Cup of Nations, when the Super Eagles lost 2-0 at home to South Africa in Rohr's early days as Super Eagles coach; beset by injuries, Rohr started a young, inexperienced team against South Africa, and his naive bunch suffered a humiliating defeat.

The 67-year-old has since overseen 17 qualification games without a single loss.

From a goals standpoint, Rohr's team also stacks up creditably against his predecessors in the job, and his contemporaries around the continent. For the first time since group phase qualifying was intro-

duced, Nigeria produced the qualifying top scorer in Odion Ighalo, and followed up this time with Victor Osimhen.

As if that was not enough, Nigeria also ranked among the scoring leaders, with their 14 goals this time equal second with Tunisia; only AFCON champions Algeria, with 19 goals, scored more. Nigeria also scored 14 in the 2019 qualifiers, second to Egypt with 16.

Accomplishments such as these, over three qualification series, should have been enough to earn a coach excited plaudits, especially with a team that has missed three of the past five Afcon tournaments.

But not for Rohr.

Some of the criticism may be over the top, but it is not entirely without basis -- starting from the Super Eagles' final group game of the 2018 World Cup when Argentina were there for the taking and the team bottled it.

Perhaps some of the critics would have been silenced if the Sierra Leone debacle had not happened last November, when the 4-4 draw after leading 4-0 demonstrated all sorts of shortcomings in the squad.

He continues to maintain that his team is a young team but few critics are willing to accept that any more, whether as a reason or excuse; many of his players have been playing for him since 2016 and, irrespective of age, should be considered "mature".

By August, Rohr will have spent

five years on the job and all but become Nigeria's longest-serving coach. By the same stage, Clemens Westerhof had won silver, bronze and gold medals, and Stephen Keshi won the Afcon title the first time of asking less than two years after his appointment.

World Cup qualifying begins in two months' time, and the Afcon itself rolls around soon after. Nothing short of gold in Cameroon will be good enough for the critics, and Rohr will need to make some changes going forward.

To start with, he has to restore the Super Eagles' swashbuckling swagger; indeed, the lack of that flair might be the biggest reason why he does not get respect from his critics. Nigeria have traditionally gone into games with an arrogant superiority about them, especially against small teams.

During qualifying in 1994, the Super Eagles played South Africa. When the teams lined up in the tunnel, Nigeria skipper Keshi looked at the Bafana Bafana players and asked "Are these the ball boys?". The South Africans were instantly psyched out.

That swagger appears to have gone from the team, amid Rohr's insistence on the team being "humble".

Rohr also has big decisions to make on the field, starting with selection. Osimhen may be the lead striker, but Paul Onuachu has shown he can be more than the support cast.

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

**Can PSG avenge Champions League final loss against Bayern?**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Yanga players take part in training session in Dar es Salaam recently to prepare for the 2020/21 Vodacom Premier League. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

## Yanga step up preps for Premier League

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

VODACOM Premier League giants Yanga say they are preparing well for their top flight clash against Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC, which will take place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on April 10.

Yanga will this weekend relaunch their campaign at the familiar Benjamin Mkapa Stadium and their spokesperson, Antonio Nugaz, noted the team have intensified their preparations for the encounter.

"We are preparing well for the game, our aim is to collect maximum points, the good thing is that morale in the camp is very high," he said.

He said he is confident that his side will do well following the recovery of some of its players who were nursing injuries.

"Before the league recess, we had some players nursing injuries, but now the good thing is that many of our players who were injured have recovered and they are all back," he said.

The side's interim head coach Juma Mwambusi recently told the media that his side has covered almost all aspects of the team.

The coach said they need to prepare well as the league has reached a crucial level where every match and every team are very difficult.

"During training sessions, I think we did a lot, we have covered more in terms of depth of the team and the team are now in good shape, for us to collect points we need to work hard, we need to do more," he said.

Yanga are enjoying the Premier League's driver's seat after notching 54 points while KMC FC sits fifth with 35 points.

The Kinondoni Municipal Council-owned outfit is doing well in the ongoing league.

“

*Before the league recess, we had some players nursing injuries, but now the good thing is that many of our players who were injured have recovered and they are all back*

## Gwambina FC coach impressed by players' performance

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

GWAMBINA FC head coach Mohammed Badru is delighted with his players' performance, saying they will put good showing upon this season's Vodacom Premier League resumption.

He was adamant soccer supporters will, in particular be impressed by the players when the club comes up against the domestic top flight's powerhouses, Simba SC and Yanga.

Gwambina FC, now placed 11th in Vodacom Premier League's standing with 27 points, will face Coastal Union after the domestic top flight's resumption on April 10.

The Premier League and the rest of sporting activities are lately not taking place given the country is observing 21 days of national mourning following the death of former President, John Magufuli.

After the game, Gwambina FC will travel to Dar es Salaam to play Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC on April 16.

Gwambina FC will four days later lock horns with Yanga in the city.

After the two fixtures Gwambina FC will entertain Simba SC at the former's home venue, Gwambina Stadium, in Misungwi on April 24.

Badru said their strategy is to make sure they reap seven out of 12 points in those games.

"This is a difficult month that we should take as an opportunity to show our quality, both at home and even outside Mwanza," he said.

He stated: "Personally, I have always loved the pressure of big games, the most important thing is making sure our players are physically and mentally fit."

He insisted: "How can they be right? It is by making sure we do well in the next two games, that will keep us in good spirits to face anyone, be it Simba or Yanga without any fear."

With the way the Misungwi District-based team are preparing, Badru said it is possible they will surpass the goal of reaping seven points in those games.

He noted: "It requires a high level of discipline to play against Simba and Yanga due to the quality of the latter's players, that is what we can show in our next two games against Coastal Union and KMC FC."

## Simba SC jets off to Egypt for CAF Champions League fixture



Simba SC players participate in training in Dar es Salaam early this week to shape up for the Vodacom Premier League and CAF Champions League fixtures. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA'S representatives in this season's CAF Champions League, Simba SC, departed for Egypt yesterday for their Group A clash against Al Ahly.

Simba SC is leading the Group A with 13 points and the coming clash, slated for April 9, is a mere formality the club and hosts Al Ahly are assured of participation in the continental showpiece's quarterfinals.

The Tanzanian outfit will have a short rest in Dubai before proceeding to Egypt.

Simba will know their quarterfinal opponents at the end of this month after the CAF draw.

Didier Gomes, Simba SC head

coach, said they are ready for the Egyptian giants.

He pointed out this weekend results are good for them as they will boost morale of the team in both CAF Champions League and local fixtures.

"We have already qualified for the quarterfinals, but we will come out flat as the results will boost morale of the team ahead of our CAF Champions League games and Vodacom Premier League games," he said.

During the first meeting in Dar es Salaam, Simba beat Al Ahly 1-0 courtesy of midfielder Luis Miquissone's goal.

Simba stand proudly as the only team in Group A that conceded a single goal in all five matches they have played in CAF Champions League's group stage.

The feat has not been achieved by any other team in the CECAFA bloc this season.

The statistics are proof that Simba have made good use of home ground advantage.

Coach Gomes said Simba did well at their home fixtures, which took place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam, mainly due to support from the team's supporters, dedication of players and full support from the club executive.

## Azam FC ready for Mtibwa Sugar clash

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

VODACOM Premier League side Azam FC's officials say their club is geared up for Friday's league encounter against Morogoro's Mtibwa Sugar at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam.

The league resumes this weekend after three weeks of suspension, given the country is observing 21 days of national mourning following the death of former President, John Magufuli.

The suspension was further necessitated by Tanzania's senior national football squad 'Taifa Stars' participation in Africa Cup of Nations Qualifiers.

Thabit Zacharia, Azam FC information officer, disclosed they are geared for the league restart and he called upon the outfit's followers to attend the game.

He noted: "Our preparations are on track and we are satisfied with the fitness of the players."

"The coaches want to continue from where they left off, I'm calling on our supporters to come in their large numbers to cheer and motivate the team," he said.

Azam FC, now placed third in the

Vodacom Premier League's table, has

notched 44 points from 24 games.

Mtibwa Sugar are placed 12th in the table with 24 points from 22 games.

Zakaria said his team are in good shape after recovery of injured players and others who were with their respective national teams.

"Our aim remains the same, clinching this season's Vodacom Premier League's title, we are eager to fulfill our mission and the good thing is that almost all of our players are back in the squad," he said.

Azam FC has been boosted by the coming in of Prince Dube who has re-

covered from his knee injury.

The Zimbabwean attacker has notched eight Premier League goals this season.

Mtibwa Sugar's information officer, Thobias Kifaru, is reported to have said they are prepared to fight so as to win all of their remaining matches.

"We performed badly in some of our games, but now we are focusing on winning our remaining Premier League games."

"It will not be easy, but with determination everything is possible, we want to start collecting points now," he said.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

A PHD IS JUST AS GOOD AS AN MD. WE ARE BOTH DOCTORS



**TONIGHT @ 7:00**

**EATV WEDNESDAY**

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 Weekend Movie (r)  
13:30 Kaili Za Wana  
14:00 Planet Bongo (r)  
14:30 Bongo Hits  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Nirvana (r)  
16:00 Skonga (r)  
16:30 #HASHTAG  
17:00 5SELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Music/Soap  
19:00 EATV SAA 1  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 Kiblashara Zaidi

**EATV SAA 1**  
Coverage of the days current events accompanied by interviews with prominent people on diverse topics ranging from national to social interests.

**eastafrica RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast  
10:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
20:00 Kipenga  
21:00 The Cruise

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