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# Samia: Vicious tax collection harmful



By Henry Mwangonde

PRESIDENT Samia Suluhu Hassan yesterday ordered tax authorities to stop frustrating businesses and harassing taxpayers and instead devise strategies to expand the tax base to meet collection targets.

After swearing in newly appointed ministers and those who changed portfolios, an event held at Chamwino State House in Dodoma, the president said tax collectors have been employing enforcement tactics that pushed some traders into closing shop.

In brief but pointed remarks, she said that vicious tax collectors take away tools of work from business people. They close bank accounts and forcefully take money from accounts simply because the law allows them to do so.

"Once this happens, most businesspeople opt to close shop and go to other countries to invest. Use professionalism rather than using force to collect taxes," she declared.

Insisting that accessing traders' accounts and taking their money was unacceptable, the president noted that these business people close shop and go to other countries to invest, in which case the habit must be stopped.

She directed newly appointed Finance and Planning minister Dr Mwigulu Nchemba to devise new strategies of tax collection to reach the two trillion/- monthly target, ditching current methods of tax collection where taxpayers are being harassed.

The prevailing methods undermine taxpayers instead of making the environment conducive for doing business, she further

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**My eyes are wide open although they are weak. I will be monitoring everyone because what I want is work and nothing else. Let me also tell you that your record will follow you wherever you go because there are people who have missed these opportunities owing to their records**

President Samia Suluhu Hassan addresses cabinet ministers at Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday shortly after swearing some of them in. Among other things, she underscored the need for Tanzania to have more conducive conditions for investors, taxpayers and members of the business community generally. Photo: State House

## Tanzania up in graft war, slips in democracy - UN

By Correspondent James Kandoya

TANZANIA has successfully implemented a number of recommendations of the United

Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in areas like the fight against corruption and children's rights but stumbled in democracy and related aspects of human rights observance.

For the past four years, the government has been working on 133 recommendations contained in Tanzania's second UPR issued by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2016 at the UN offices in Geneva.

The report on implementation of the recommendations was compiled by civil society organizations, which unveiled the report in a press briefing in Dar es

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## 'Survey, set out use of land for faster growth'

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

NATIONAL Assembly Speaker Job Ndogai yesterday advised the government to invest more heavily in land surveying and planning to boost its value and increase revenue collection from it.

Addressing legislators after swearing in three newly nominated ones, he said holders of land occupancy titles and the government stand a chance of gaining economically if land is documented.

"If we invest adequately in land



**Members of the public are the ones who approved that we come here, so we have to work to ensure that we address what really disturbs them**

formalization by surveying and land use planning, the incomes from it can even double our annual budget here, so this is an area which needs immediate action," he said, urging the government to invest in competent staff to supervise the process.

The Speaker had earlier said he had received a letter from President Samia Suluhu Hassan, notifying him about the nomination of the three lawmakers.

MPs who took the oath are the former

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Newly appointed Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister Liberata Mulamula (R) takes oath in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday before House Speaker Job Ndugai (2nd-L). Photos: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## Samia: Vicious tax collection harmful

FROM PAGE 1

asserted, urging the ministry's agencies to go out and find ways of expanding the tax base as well as addressing complaints relating to vicious tax collection all over the country.

Commenting on the appointments, the president said she had decided to appoint ministers in relation to their profession, on the basis of expectations that this would increase efficiency.

"I have decided to appoint Ambassador Mulamula because she has matured in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and together with her deputy they will strengthen our relations with other countries," she said.

President Samia tasked Chief Secretary Ambassador Hussein Kattanga to work on coordinating government activities because this was an area that was posing problems, warning against presidential ambitions ahead of the 2025 polls, saying she will be keen in monitoring such expressions.

"My eyes are wide open although they are weak. I will be monitoring everyone because what I want is work and nothing else. Let me also tell you that your record will follow you wherever you go because there are people who have missed these opportunities bowing to their records," she said.

The president affirmed that she was given various names for appointment on the CS position but Kattanga's record impressed her, noting that the former envoy has done a great job in all areas he was tasked with high level government office.

In his remarks, the new CS said he will work on improving coordination in the government to achieve intended goals.

He said he was caught by surprise on his return from Japan as he was told at the airport that he was to go to Dodoma "where everything will be explained on arrival."

On Wednesday, the president made a major shake-up of the cabinet by appointing the Chief Secretary, as well as carting in new people in key ministries like finance, foreign affairs and regional administration.



**I have decided to appoint Ambassador Mulamula because she has matured in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and together with her deputy they will strengthen our relations with other countries**

## 'Survey, set out use of land for faster growth'

FROM PAGE 1

Chief Secretary and CCM Secretary General Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa long-serving diplomat Liberata Mulamula and Mbarouk Mbarouk, linking up at the Foreign Affairs portfolio.

After swearing in the MPs, he congratulated them and pledged his support to the newcomers and any others who may need assistance.

He urged the new legislators, ministers and deputy ministers to work hard and help push the nation's development agenda through addressing people's problems at all levels.

"We should remember that we carry a huge burden of making sure that challenges facing communities in urban and rural areas are addressed. There are a number

of problems to address including water, medicines, education and others," he said.

Speaker Ndugai cautioned those tasked with parliamentary and other responsibilities to be patriotic and work hard to support President Samia and the government attain the country's development goals as per Vision 2025.

The various ministers must

ensure that they work on conducting their duties efficiently, which includes addressing demands raised by wide areas of the public, citing in particular problems facing traders.

"Members of the public are the ones who approved that we come here, so we have to work to ensure that we address what really disturbs them," he emphasised.

## Tanzania up in graft war, slips in democracy - UN

FROM PAGE 1

Salaam yesterday. It shows that the government implemented recommendations on the fight against graft and the protection of children with albinism by 100 per cent. This was seven percent of 133 recommendations agreed by the government since 2016 to improve human rights and stem habitual violations, the presentation noted.

However, recommendations that dwelt on the completion of the constitutional review process, review of the death penalty and the international convention against torture and forced disappearance, amounting to four per cent of the UN recommendations were not implemented at all, the brief affirmed.

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) Executive Director Ana Henga said that the government implemented successfully 89 per cent of recommendations on women's rights, children as well as economic and community rights.

"This indeed shows that the government has taken significant measures to implement the recommendations as per the United Nations Human Rights Council," she said, highlighting that the report was drawn up by LHRC in collaboration with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) and Save the Children, a global NGO.

The report writing process dates from 2016 after the UPR congress was held in Geneva, so local CSOs established an action plan to make follow up on recommendations to which the government had committed itself, the director noted.

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) coordinator, Onesmo Olungurumwa, said the report had been submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 25. About 200 representatives from the CSOs met in Morogoro to set strategies of collecting information on the government's performance, he elaborated.

The meeting was also attended by an official of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRGG) and the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, he said, expressing gratitude to Unio and Zanzibar government institutions for cooperation in this exercise.

UPR involves a review of human rights records of UN member states so as to improve the human rights situation in those countries and addressing human rights violations wherever they occur, he added.

*"This indeed shows that the government has taken significant measures to implement the recommendations as per the United Nations Human Rights Council"*



Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa (R), Chief Secretary until his replacement on Wednesday by President Samia Suluhu Hassan and his subsequent nomination as Member of Parliament, takes oath in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday before House Speaker Job Ndugai (2nd-L).

## Rukwa Basin Authority, schools launch campaign to protect water sources

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

LAKE Rukwa Basin Authority in collaboration with 13 primary and secondary schools in Mbeya city has launched a special environment cleaning campaign around water sources to fight against water shortage due to human activities.

This was revealed here early this week by the Director of Lake Rukwa

Basin Board, Grace Chitanda during an interview with this paper on how they were mobilized to deal with the ongoing destruction of the environment around water sources.

"Our environmental cleanliness campaign at water sources will be done in the Nzovwe valley that transport its waters to Lake Rukwa because as for now the valley has been invaded by human activities including dumping of

trash and dead animals," she said.

She added that the environmental destruction challenge around water sources especially the dumping of plastic bags has significantly contributed to the disappearance of the ecosystem in rivers and other water sources. A Form II student from Utengule Secondary School, Valeria Angumbwike urged the government to empower schools to form environment

clubs to fight environmental destruction at water sources.

Mbeya Regional Medical Officer Salum Manyata said 60 per cent of human diseases are caused by the use of unsafe water that come from rivers.

He called upon the community to support government efforts in the campaign against environmental destruction in order to protect water sources.





Education, Science and Technology minister Prof Joyce Ndalichako (C) cuts ribbon in Dodoma city on Wednesday to launch the distribution of 38 motor vehicles for use at school quality assurance offices in zones and districts across the country. She is with deputy minister Omary Kipanga (2nd-R) as well as the ministry's administration and human resources head Moshi Kabengwe (2nd-L), chief accountant Nicodemus Mallya (L) and schools quality assurance director Euphrasia Buchuma. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Education minister decries misuse of govt resources by school inspection directorate

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

EDUCATION, Science and Technology Minister Prof Joyce Ndalichako has instructed the country's Schools Quality Inspection Director, within one month to submit to her schools' inspection report and what they found.

Speaking on Wednesday at a function to hand over 38 vehicles to the schools' quality inspectors, Prof Ndalichako said she was not satisfied by the current mode of

inspection being carried out that entails bad financial expenditure.

"We are distributing these vehicles to the schools' quality inspectors to enable them reach many schools at a time, but surprisingly you will find the inspector using government fuel visiting a ward with both primary and secondary schools but he will only visit the primary school."

"He then wants another inspector to go to the same ward to inspect the secondary school. This is not right, and a very bad use of government funds and

resources," she added.

She said apart from bad use of government resources the practice also means fewer schools are visited.

Prof Ndalichako said the government will continue to work together with development partners and other stakeholders in improving the country's education sector.

She also used the occasion to thank donors and development partners including the World Bank, SIDA and Dfid for the purchase of the 38 vehicles costing 6bn/-.

She said the vehicles will be used to strengthen the quality control of schools in the country.

"The vehicles will be distributed to 27 local councils that have no vehicles, and 10 to zones while one vehicle will be stationed at the head office for follow up work," she said.

She also said the government will continue to strengthen the quality control system for the schools as it added 400 more inspectors in FY 2019/20, the increase that helped in the follow up of schools and teachers' colleges.

## Home Affairs minister revokes licences of ten driver over regulations

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

HOME Affairs Minister George Simbachawene has revoked licences of ten drivers for three months for allegedly violating traffic rules and regulations which includes speeding.

The minister also directed the police force to take stringent measures against the drivers which includes arraigning them at court.

Speaking to journalists yesterday in Dodoma, Simbachawene named the drivers as Allan Msangi who was driving a passenger bus registered T 605 DJR property of Kapricon Company plying between Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro. Msangi is accused of over speeding-125km per hour.

Hussein Dudu from Kimotco Intertrade Limited, driving a bus registered T 520 CXE plying between Arusha and Musoma in Mara Region was driving at a speed of 126 kilometers per hour. Selemani Selemani (T 313 DSO) owned by Al Saedy Company was driving at a speed of 103 kilometer per hour.

Athumani Mzava driving a passenger bus-T 391 from Dar es Salaam to Arusha was over speeding at 107 kilometers per hour.

Minister Simbachawene said that Juma Simba driving a bus with registration number T 340 DPW property of Baraka Classic Company which operates between Dar es Salaam and Masasi was driving at a speed of 107 kilometers per hour, Salum Salum was driving at a speed of 110 kilometers per hour from Dar es Salaam to Tunduma with a bus

T 121 DEA property of Maning Nice Company.

Frank Masawe was driving at a speed of 95 km per hour from Dar es Salaam to Mtwara with a vehicle with registration number T 694 DRB owned by Machinga Company.

He also identified another driver as Innocent Thomas who drives a vehicle with registration number T 225DTB from Ester Luxury which operates in Dar es Salaam, Moshi Regions and operates at a speed of 107 kilometers per hour.

Nassib Nasoro was driving a vehicle with registration number T 565 BED property of NBS Classic plying between Tabora and Kigoma regions at a speed of 109 km per hour while Maiko Mkindi (T 675 DHY) was driving a passenger bus from Dar es Salaam to Arusha region at a speed of 100 km per hour.

"With the powers I have, I am barring these drivers from driving busses for three months. Bus owners should talk to their drivers and insist them to obey traffic rules and regulations," he noted.

**“With the powers I have, I am barring these drivers from driving busses for three months. Bus owners should talk to their drivers and insist them to obey traffic rules and regulations”**

## FARM AFRICA

### TENDER FOR WAREHOUSE CONSTRUCTION AT MNANG'ANA VILLAGE IN IKUNGI DISTRICT

Farm Africa is a cutting-edge non-governmental organization delivering agriculture, natural resource management, and market system projects across eastern Africa. The organization works with key development actors, including smallholder farmers, pastoralists, communities, governments and the private sector to catalyze rural transformation in Africa. The organization has a deep commitment and long-term presence in the region, with over 25 years' experience of supporting rural communities in Tanzania to lift themselves out of poverty through interventions focused on improving production and productivity of crops, empowering communities to manage their natural resources sustainably, and increasing access to profitable markets.

**OUR MISSION:** We drive agricultural and environmental change to improve lives. Through our three strategic pillars of Agriculture, Market Engagement and Natural Resource Management, Farm Africa's mission is to help rural communities grow more, sell more and sell for more, while protecting the environment for years to come.

Farm Africa has been subcontracted by UN Women to implement a one-year project on "Realizing Gender Equality through Empowering Women and Adolescent Girls project" in Ikungi District of Singida Region.

Farm Africa now invites electronic priced tender from eligible civil contractors within Tanzania to construct a warehouse in at Mnang'ana Village in Ikungi District with capacity of storing 300 metric tonnes.

The detailed architecture design and other tender documents can be found and downloaded from Farm Africa website <https://www.farmafrica.org/tenders/tenders>.

Vendors must submit **electronic copies of their tenders through designated email [tenderstanzania@farmafrica.org](mailto:tenderstanzania@farmafrica.org)** addressed to the Country Director, Farm Africa Tanzania, with **clear email subject "Tender for Warehouse Construction"**.

Deadline for receiving tender document is on Monday 19<sup>th</sup>, April 2021 at 12:00 noon EAT.

## Congratulation

Hon. Dr. Philip Isdor Mpango

Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania



Board of Directors, Management and Staff of TPB Bank Plc joins fellow Tanzanians in congratulating **Dr. Philip Isdor Mpango** for being Sworn In as the new Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

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## Government set to review students' loan repayment regulations - deputy minister

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government is planning to review regulations so as to reduce monthly deductions and loan repayment charges posed to the beneficiaries of loans of the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB).

Deputy Minister for Education, Science and Technology Kipanga Juma Omary told the National Assembly on Wednesday here that the move is aimed to reduce the burden of paying the loans which the beneficiaries carry after completing their studies.

The deputy minister said this while responding to a supplementary question by Special Seats MP, Halima Mdee (Chadema) who claimed that the majority of the beneficiaries of the HESLB loans have been struggling to pay the loans even if they have no income generating activity after completing their studies.

"HESLB beneficiaries have been spending years in the street without getting employment, this has been also affecting them to repay their loans on time but at the end of the day the government punishes them by increasing

their payment amount through unfavorable penalties and interest rates," Mdee claimed.

The Deputy Minister responded that: "We have received a number of complaints on the interest rates and penalties posed to the loans of the HESLB beneficiaries, so we are going to work on this to see how we can reduce or even remove them to provide relief to the Tanzanians students."

In his supplementary question, George Mwenisongole (Mbozi-CCM) sought to know the government's plans to reduce the interest rates and levies posed to the loan beneficiaries so as to reduce burden to the poor students.

The deputy minister clarified that the 15 percent deduction from gross salary is not interest but a loan repayment deduction itself. Clarifying on loans deductions and interest rates, Minister Joyce Ndalichako said the government wasn't posing a 10 percent interest rate as many of the people think but it was posing a value retention fee of six percent.

"The 15 percent deductions do not apply to interest as some stakeholders have stated. These

are the total deductions that a beneficiary deducts from his/her monthly salary which are submitted to HESLB by the employer," said Prof Ndalichako.

In a basic question, Busokelo MP, Atupele Mwakibete sought to know the government's plans to expand services and ensure that more poor students are reached with the loans so as to enable them achieve their high education dreams.

Deputy Minister Omary responded that the government will continue expanding the budget so as to ensure that more students benefit from the loans.

"In the 2021/22, we have proposed a 500bn/- budget for the HESLB loans. I am sure that more eligible students will benefit from these loans," he said.

Early November 2017, the Parliament passed amendments on the HESLB Act of 2004 that initially required employers to deduct the 15 per cent from loan beneficiaries' gross salaries up from the previous eight per cent, the amendments that were later effected from January 2018.

The Act also gives power to the loan board to effectively take

beneficiaries and employers employer who fails to furnish the fines and a jail term of not less to task. In the new changes, an board with the particulars risks than 36 months.



Arusha regional commissioner Idd Kimanta (2nd-L, foreground) participates in a tree planting campaign at Maji ya Chai in Arumeru District yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent Asrajil Mvungi

## State to build fishing port on Indian Ocean, revive TAFICO

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has said that in its 2021/22 budget it plans to improve fishing activities in the Indian

Ocean by building a fishing port that will boost income from fish products.

In addition, it says in the coming budget a total of 50bn/- will be set aside for the construction of the fishing port.

The remarks were given here on Tuesday by the Livestock and Fisheries Permanent Secretary Dr Rashid Tamatamah when submitting his ministry's budget estimates before the Livestock, Agriculture and Water Parliamentary Committee.

He said in the coming budget priority areas include the construction of the fishing port, the process of which were now at drawing stage.

Dr Tamatamah said the government also aims to revive the Tanzania Fishing Company (TAFICO) to deal with issues on fishing.

"We also plan to buy fishing trawlers that would be under the revived company and that by December this year, or January next year we shall have bought a modern fishing trawler," he added.

He further said through sponsorship from the Japanese government, the vessel has started to be built in Sri Lanka and come January it will be in the country.

He said late President John Magufuli had plans for the government to buy eight fishing trawlers for Zanzibar and the Mainland.

He said another priority would be the revamping of fish fingerling production centres in order to mobilise the community to engage in fish farming in their areas.

The Livestock and fisheries Minister Mashimba Ndaki said they have launched a campaign to mobilise the community on fish farming and they expect to establish demonstration farms in every district countrywide.

"But we also expect to conduct feasibility studies in the sea and lake waters to identify areas that we can provide the people needing to conduct fish farming in these areas," Ndaki said.

## New awards lined up for Z'bar's journalists

By Guardian Reporter

THE Zanzibar committee on media freedom will this year introduce awards for journalists in five different categories as part of honoring the good work that journalists are doing.

The deputy chairperson of the committee Dr Mzuri Issa made the remarks at the department of communication of the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) Kilimani, Unguja in Zanzibar.

He said this year's celebration will be different as a way of celebrating the good work that journalists are doing.

Among the awards to be given include the blue economy award, Government of National Unity category which has been named the Maalim Seif award.

According to Dr Mzuri other awards includes gender reporting category which has been named Mariam Mwinjo and the revenue category which has been named ZRB category. Another category will be the corruption and responsibility award which has been named ZAECA award.

Explaining further, she said the awards will base on stories published and aired between January and April this year. "This award is very important because it will help in promoting good governance and we believe that by the end of the day it will help improve journalism in the country," she said.

The chairman of the committee, Farouk Kareem called upon journalists to come up in large numbers to participate in the awards which will be the first to be given in the Isles.

Apart from the awards, he said there will be a special bonanza which will involve journalists aimed at promoting sporting behavior and doing of exercises among journalists.

Every year, 3rd May is a date which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom, to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence, and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.



Mheshimiwa Dkt. Philip Isdor Mpango  
Makamu wa Rais wa Jamhuri ya Muungano wa  
Tanzania

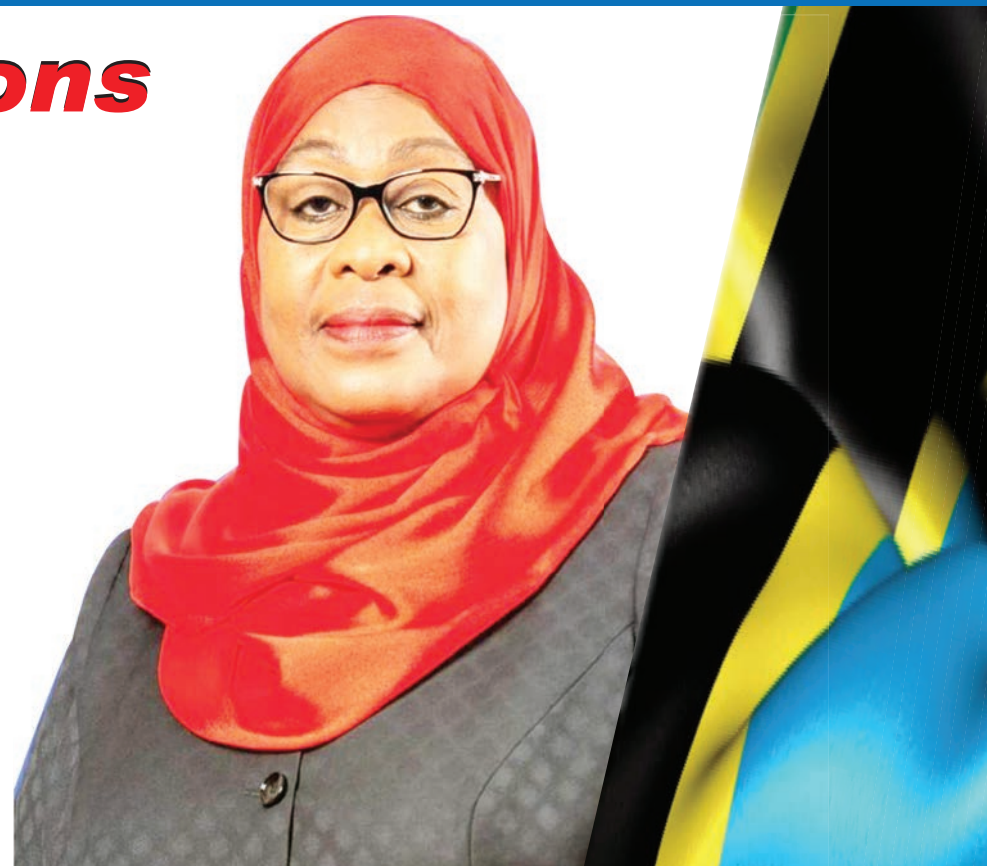


Kamati ya Taifa ya Uongozi, Menejimenti na wafanyakazi wa Mfuko wa Maendeleo ya Jamii - TASAF wanatoa salaam za pongezi kwa Mheshimiwa Dkt. Philip Isdor Mpango kwa kuteuliwa na kuapishwa kuwa Makamu wa Rais wa Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania. TASAF itaendelea kuunga mkono juhudi za Serikali katika kukuza uchumi wa nchi na kupunguza umaskini.



## Congratulations

As you embark upon your new responsibilities, the management and staff of WWF Tanzania Country Office wish to congratulate you and wish you well in your role as the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. We express our sincere commitment to support you and your government for the betterment of our country.



H.E. SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN  
6TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA





Coast regional commissioner Evarist Ndikilo pictured at Kibaha yesterday test-riding one of the motorcycles Kibaha District Council has bought and issued to entrepreneurs as loans. Photo: Correspondent Julieth Mkireri

## Government out to establish agricultural financing model

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government is working to come up with a unique model for agricultural financing, a move which would control service providers in the country from posing high interest rates to farmers' loans.

Deputy Minister for agriculture Hussein Bashe told the National Assembly on Wednesday here that the move is aimed to rescue farmers from falling into evil loans which later end up affecting their farming incomes.

Responding to a supplementary question from Nkasi North MP Aidah Kenani (Chadema), Bashe acknowledged that there were some dishonest lenders of farming inputs who have been reaping big from the business by posing high interest rates to farmers through loans.

In her basic question, the lawmaker claimed that the current system of lending tractors to farmers was not good and was causing losses to the farmers due to high interest rates posed to them.

She wanted the government to come up with a new system which would be more favourable to the farmers and enable them benefiting from the farming business instead of spending their incomes to service caustic loans.

Responding, Bashe said the government has started identifying all service providers who issue loans to farmers in the country so as to limit caustic loans which eventually affects farmers.

"We have seen this challenge and we are working on it to ensure that our farmers benefit from what they are doing instead of working to feed others with high profit," he said.

To enable fair and timely supply of farming inputs, the government has established a bulk procurement system so as to enable farmers get the inputs on

time and at a fair price, the deputy minister noted.

He also said the government said that it was working to implement more measures to enable the country to utilize fully crop market opportunities in various countries including China and Europe.

Bashe said that the government has signed the Phytosanitary Protocol with people of the United Republic of China, the bilateral business development which apart from green lighted local companies to trade with China; it also opened market access for various crops including soya beans from Tanzania.

The move will enable more farmers from Tanzania to sell their produce easily in the Asian market.

"Last month we have witnessed consignment of 140 tonnes of soybeans transported to China, this a good step and an encouraging measure for farmers in the country," Bashe said while responding to a supplementary question from an MP, Humphrey Polepole.

In his question, Polepole sought to know the government's plans to utilize market opportunities of soya beans available in China.

The deputy minister further said that in order to ensure that there is steady production of quality crops in the country, the government has directed the Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI) and the Agriculture Seed Agency (ASA) to increase production of quality seeds so as to stimulate production of quality crops which will meet national and international standards.

*"We have seen this challenge and we are working on it to ensure that our farmers benefit from what they are doing instead of working to feed others with high profit"*

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

## Farmers call on govt to set indicative prices for wheat

WHEAT farmers in Mbeya Region have appealed to the government to set indicative prices for the crop to rescue them from being defrauded by middlemen.

They made the appeal here mid this week at a meeting to mobilise for the cultivation of wheat organised by the Uyole Centre of Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI-Uyole).

They said they were being forced to sell the crop at between 8,000/- and 15,000/- per a 20-litre plastic container.

One of the farmers, Michael Mbugu asked the government to find ways to help them from being

defrauded by the middlemen, as they have been toiling in the production of the crop, hence the price they end up with does not benefit them at all.

Mbeya District Commissioner William Ntinika said there was a problem of extension officers not visiting farmers to listen to their complaints and directed that they should go to them to solve their problems.

"Mbeya region has ample fertile land for farming but the

problem is on the agricultural officers not visiting farmers to educate them on better farming practices including how to reduce production costs, hence I now issue an order for the officers to visit all farmers where they are to solve their problems," the DC said.

In regard to the wheat price issue, Ntinika urged farmers to abide by guidelines from experts to cultivate high quality crops that would compete in the markets

and fetch good prices.

TARI wheat researcher Dr Rose Mongi said they have produced adequate seeds and hence they expect to distribute them to more than 400 farmers including training them on better farming of the crop.

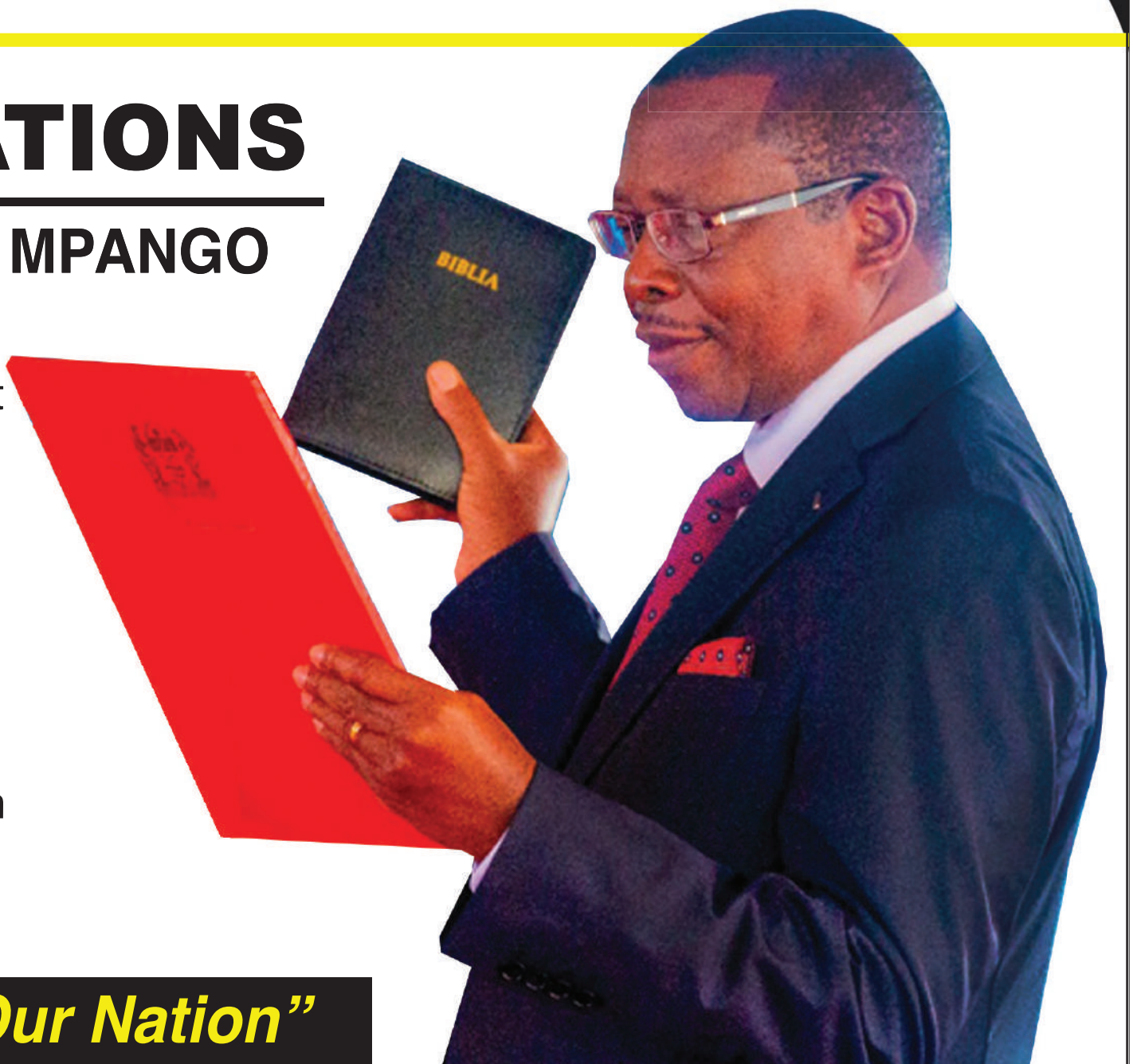
He said wheat production without adhering to professional expertise and use of quality seeds was the main reason for farmers ending up in little harvests.



## CONGRATULATIONS

### H.E. DR. PHILIP ISDOR MPANGO

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), congratulate you, H.E. Dr. Philip Isdor Mpango for being sworn in as the Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania. We wish you all the best in your duties for the development of our Nation.



**"Together We Build Our Nation"**



## FORVAC to offer 100m/- to seven entrepreneurs groups in Mbinga

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbinga

FOREST and Value Chains Development Programme (FORVAC) is set to provide 100m/- to seven entrepreneurs groups in Mbinga District in this Financial Year.

Implemented in five districts in Ruvuma Region, FORVAC is aimed at empowering residents with skills necessary for protecting forest resources and improved forest sector value chains.

The four-year programme (2018-2022) funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, is implemented in Songea, Mbinga, Nyasa, Namtumbo and Tunduru districts.

FORVAC is also implemented in Amanimakoro ward where it empowers individuals to add value to forest resources thus improve their welfare.

According to FORVAC Coordinator in Ruvuma Region, Marcel Mtunda the monies will be used to prepare beehives and other equipment needed by entrepreneurs to collect mushrooms, beekeeping and hunting activities.

Amanimakoro Ward Councilor, Ambrosi Nchimbi said that the two villages (Amanimakoro and Kiwumbi) which are participating in the programme are practicing beekeeping activities at Liyuni forest hills.

"We have finalised land formalisation process and planning, we have also provided training to forest officers in the specific villages," said Nchimbi adding they have also completed preparations for establishment of a mushroom collecting project to be run by a group of women.

He said that previously the mushrooms were left unattended in the forest, but now women will generate income by collecting and selling the processed mushroom. He said the collected mushroom will be dried and safely preserved to be consumed during dry seasons.

One of the Amanimakoro village residents, Grace Hyera said: "We have benefitted with the wild edible mushroom collecting project because we can generate a good income to take care of our children and families."

Hyera added that when collecting mushrooms in the forest they normally look for certain types of mushrooms such as ulelema, Ulundi, uinda, ngaukau, ungala, unodo, kisanga, ukufu, mndyelesa and lukolombi.

"We normally sell dried mushrooms which are sold at 10,000 per kilogramme," she said.

Mary Kapinga is one of the programme beneficiaries from Amanimakoro village, she said despite recorded successes, they are facing challenges while collecting mushrooms in

the forest. She said one of the challenges are snakes which have been attacking them frequently.

Hilda Joseph said that FORVAC has promised to assist them with needed working gears including special shoes as well as quality certified seeds for cultivation of mushrooms. She said the seeds would help them do away with the wild edible mushrooms which its availability is not guaranteed.

"This business has enabled me to take my children to school, I can also provide for my family," she noted adding that mushroom collection starts in December to April.

"We are all aware of the edible wild mushrooms, we cannot make mistakes when collecting it from the bush," she added.

FORVAC Forest Value Chain Advisor in Mbinga District, Jackson Boimanda said they have also provided training to women on how to improve their mushroom business.

He said FORVAC will in near future allocate budget for entrepreneurs to enable them improve their businesses as well as purchase modern equipment for increased productivity.

"We are also working to ensure them with reliable and coordinated markets within and outside Tanzania. We have already consulted some institutions including the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) which have agreed to buy thousand tonnes of the dried mushrooms," said Boimanda.

FORVAC programme is implemented in three clusters namely Tanga cluster (Handeni and Kilindi districts), Lindi cluster (Liwale, Ruangwa and Nachingwea districts), and Ruvuma cluster (Namtumbo, Songea, Mbinga and Nyasa districts.)

The FORVAC initiative is also supported by the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCCG), MJUMITA, Mpingo Conservation Development Initiative (MCDI), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).



**We have benefitted with the wild edible mushroom collecting project because we can generate a good income to take care of our children and families**

## High Court sentences five to death for murder of woman

By Guardian Reporter, Njombe

FIVE people accused of the murder of Alice Mtokoma (56), resident of Usalule village in Njombe Region have been sentenced to death.

Earlier, reading the charges facing the accused, State Attorneys Andrew Mandwa and Matiko Nyangelo told the High Court session presided by Judge Firmin Matogolo that on May 13 2012 the accused murdered Alice Mtokoma using a sharp instrument, contravening sections 196 and 197 of the Penal Code (cap 16) as amended in 2019.

State Attorney Matiko Nyangelo said on the material day the accused followed the deceased to her home telling her they needed to go somewhere with her, to where they allegedly killed her.

He said the accused condemned to death were James Msumule, Emmanuel Ngailo, Izack Ngailo, Anitha Mbwilu and Upendo Mligo.

He said the reason that made

them kill Alice was that Upendo Mligo's husband, who is the son of Anitha Mbwilu died, but the two went to a witchdoctor to find out what had caused his death.

He said the witchdoctor allegedly told them the killer of their son was Alice Mtokoma who was the co-wife of Anitha Mbwilu, one of the accused.

"After the witchdoctor allegedly told them who the killer of their son was, the two - Anitha and Upendo conspired to find people to kill Alice Mtokoma in revenge," said state Attorney Matiko.

He said Upendo Mligo and Anitha Mbwilu looked for other three people James Msumule, Emmanuel Ngailo and Izack Ngailo and gave them 300,000/- to kill Alice.

Judge Firmini Matogolo sentenced the five to death by hanging under Section 197 of the Penal Code (Cap 16) as read together with Section 322 (1)(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code (cap 20) as amended in 2019.



Kahama district commissioner Anamringi Macha (2nd-L) pictured yesterday symbolically presenting 50 bags of cement to Kabale Primary School head teacher Elias Kihamba (R). It was a donation to the school by Nyati Cement Company handed over by the firm's marketing officer, Fadhili Yustasi (2nd-R). Photo: Correspondent Shabani Njia

## Government to allocate 11bn/- to revamp 21 district hospitals

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) says in the coming Financial Year 2021/22 it has been requested to allocate 11bn/- for refurbishing 21 out of 43 district hospitals countrywide.

Deputy Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local

Government) Dr Festo Dugange was responding to a question posed by Arumeru West Member of Parliament Lembelis Mollel (CCM).

In his question the MP wanted to know when would the government revamp Olturmet Hospital in Arusha district by providing it with an OPD building, wards for patients, an X-ray building as well as x-ray

equipment to provide better service to the people.

Answering the question, Dr Dugange said the government was aware of the 43 aged hospitals in the country's various districts including Olturmet Hospital.

He said the hospitals needs revamping and expansion of their infrastructures to go in tandem with present needs in health

service delivery.

"The government has begun implementing the plan to refurbish 43 aged hospitals in FY 2021/22, and the ministry will ask the government to set aside 11bn/- to start refurbishing 21 of the hospitals," he said.

He elaborated that the plan will be implemented in phases until all dilapidated hospitals in the country were refurbished.



Simanjiro district executive director sensitises residents of Mirerani township yesterday on the importance of complying with tax payment regulations. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

By Guardian Correspondent, Kyela

RESIDENTS of Mababu and Matema wards in Kyela District, Mbeya Region have been engulfed in floods that swept away the bridge connecting the two wards.

The floods also swept away 20 livestock including cattle, goats, and pigs as well as destroying farm crops.

Katumba Village Chairman Adamson Mwaikinda said the bridge breaks down during every rain season since 2015 it was built and no remedial steps were taken to revamp the infrastructures in

## Floods cuts road communication between two Kyela District wards

He said the bridge was a vital link for Katumba residents travelling to other areas for basic social services including schools and health centres.

Katumba Village Chairman Adamson Mwaikinda said the bridge breaks down during every rain season since 2015 it was built and no remedial steps were taken to revamp the infrastructures in

the area to overcome floods.

He said up to now students have not gone to schools due to bridge's collapse and flooded roads.

Mababu Village Chairman Yona Mwakalendile said the main fear is in children being swept away by floods from ongoing heavy rains.

He said their present need is robust bridge infrastructure as well as repairing roads that have

been damaged so as to continue with their production activities.

Mababu Ward Councillor Rashid Yahya said since March rains have been pounding the area but the one on April 30 was heavy.

He said people need permanent infrastructures to enable them to conduct their economic activities for their own wellbeing.



## Govt's move to equip youth with business skills pays off in Bahi

By Polycarp Machira, Bahi

THE government's effort to empower adolescent girls and young women in Bahi District in Dodoma Region is paying off as the beneficiaries have shown steady progress.

Under the programme they are trained on entrepreneurship skills, how to keep financial records, and are thereafter encouraged to come up with their own business ideas which get funding to implement.

The Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW)'s programme being implemented under the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF)'s Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) is aimed at improving the quality of life of vulnerable young girls and women.

Speaking during a tour in the districts, a cross section of beneficiaries of the programme expressed hope that they can now face the future without any worries, thanking the government for such an important initiative.

Lucy Johnson, a resident of Mwitikira village in Bahi District who completed Form Four secondary education in 2013 and a beneficiary of the programme noted that she went through hardship before enrolment into the empowerment plan.

The 26 years old girl whose both parents are physically handicapped is the caretaker of the family providing everything. She also struggles to pay for all the school needs for her three siblings in primary school.

She got training sponsored by TASAF and later given 150,000/- being the initial funding for her project, which she used to buy chicken. Upon realizing challenges in the poultry project, she opted for a small retail shop after getting another 200,000/-.

"With this business, I am able to provide for all the family needs and it is my desire to expand the business to another level," she said, adding that without the support they could still be living in abject poverty.

Paulina Maire, a resident of Mndemu village in Bahi district expressed a similar sentiment saying after attending the training got 160,000/- that she invested in rice business.

She said she used to buy rice in bulk and then sell to neighbors in credit with the hope to get some profit but bad repayment habits by buyers discouraged her and she switched to another idea.

Paulina who used to do odd jobs including digging farms for small payment before the programme, therefore, teamed up with colleagues and formed a small catering group.

With a business plan of 400,000/-, she expressed hope that she can now stand on her own, with the ability to provide catering services to at least 30

people at a go.

She said upon completion of secondary school in 2013, she could not proceed with education after her mother passed on, leaving her with her seven months old sibling and ailing grandmother.

"As time goes, I will be able to have my own group, employ other young girls from vulnerable families just like me," she said adding that through the initiative, TASAF has opened her eyes for a brighter future.

She is currently able to take care of her grandmother who is sick in bed for quite a long time now and her five years old sibling in primary school.

Had it not been for the programme, Jackline Zephania, a 20-year-old secondary school dropout could be facing many difficulties in life.

After dropping out of school in Form Two when her parents died, she moved to Dodoma city from Mndemu village in Bahi and acquired tailoring training.

But just having the skills was not enough as she moved back to the village. She got the same entrepreneurship and life skill training and submitted a business plan to buy a tailoring machine and start her own income-generating activity.

She was later given 235,000/- and she topped up 50,000/- to buy the machine at 285,000/-, saying that since she started the business in July 2020 she has managed to get customers.

"I am working hard in an effort to attract more customers and face the future with a lot of hope of doing bigger things," she said, thanking the government for the support.

Speaking about the AGYW programme, Bahi district TASAF Monitoring Officer (TMO), Christian Amani, observed that the goal of the programme is to develop and improve the quality of life of vulnerable adolescent girls and facilitate them to achieve greater economic and social empowerment.

"We want to improve the quality of life of adolescent girls and young women, especially vulnerable girls through financial empowerment," he said, adding the programme targets adolescent girls and young women from vulnerable families who are the caretakers.



**I am working hard in an effort to attract more customers and face the future with a lot of hope of doing bigger things**

## African Union calls for urgent action on Mozambique attack

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Union Commission chairperson has condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region and particularly the recent violence in and around the Palma town.

In a statement, Moussa Faki Mahamat expressed his utmost concern at the presence of international terrorist groups operating in the southern part of Africa, and called for urgent and coordinated regional and international action to address this new threat to our common security.

An armed militant group believed to be affiliated with the Daesh/ISIS terror group attacked the town near the border with Tanzania last week, killing dozens and injuring scores of

others. Several people are still unaccounted for.

The March 25 attack was specifically aimed at undermining the \$23 billion game-changing Mozambique liquefied natural gas project led by Total, according to the Mozambican Oil and Gas Chamber.

The armed group, locally known as al-Shabaab but with no established links to the armed militant group in Somalia, has wreaked havoc in northern Mozambique since late 2017, killing hundreds, displacing communities, and capturing towns.

"The African Union Commission through its relevant organs, stands ready to support the region and its mechanisms to jointly address this urgent threat to regional and continental peace and security," read the statement.



Tabora regional commissioner Dr Philemon Sengati addresses general meeting of the Western Zone Tobacco Growers Cooperative Union in Tabora municipality yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Vincent Tiganya

## TGNP urges Dar City Council to prepare a gender-based budget

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

DAR ES SALAAM City Council has been called upon to prepare a gender-based budget in order to reduce various inconveniences facing women and girls in social services delivery.

The call was made on Wednesday by the facilitator from Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) Gemma Akilimali at a training seminar that focused on the understanding of importance of gender-based budget for the City Council's heads of department.

The facilitator aimed at the FY 2021/2022 budget and said it should focus on gender, else it would cause inconveniences in social services delivery including health, water and many others.

She said in the social services, women's needs were many more than men's and that if the budget would cater for the many, it would reduce inconveniences facing women.

"For example, in schools, girl students need adequate pit latrines, but also special rooms for privacy, sanitary pads as well as an adequate supply of water,"

she said.

She explained that all these social services needed a budget that is gender-based to reduce these inconveniences.

Acting Dar es salaam City Council Planning Officer Beata Ezekia said they will take into consideration the training seminar in the 2022/2023 budget, claiming that this year's budget had already been prepared since last September which is now in the deliberation stage before endorsement.

She said the city council has 13 departments and each one

focuses on its priorities that aim to solve various challenges facing the people.

Doreen Massawe from the City Council's Education Department told the seminar participants that they have been making efforts to ensure girl students get their essential requirements whilst in school.

The city engineer John Magori said they will make efforts to improve various infrastructures, including roads and installation of solar-powered street lights, but unfortunately some people stole the solar.



Farouk Karim (L), chairman of the committee coordinating upcoming Zanzibar Media Day celebrations, briefs journalists yesterday on preparations for the event. With him are other Zanzibar-based media practitioners. May 3 is marked internationally each year as World Press Freedom Day. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

### UNITED NATIONS

AFRICA and China have an 'unprecedented' opportunity for collaboration through the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, the AfCFTA chief has said.

Calling China 'a strong partner to Africa,' Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat Wamkele Mene said that China has provided Africa with 'significant development support and investment support' over the past decade.

"We are now in a position to offer China, as a partner, an investment destination that is based on the free trade area," he noted, adding that the scope for cooperation could be in intellectual property

## AfCFTA chief underscores 'unprecedented' opportunity for Africa-China collaboration

rights, manufacturing, and the services sector.

"This AfCFTA provides the framework for us to continue that collaboration with China," said Mene, adding that with the establishment of the AfCFTA framework, Africa has "overcome the market fragmentation that was there before."

"If you're an investor, you have now a seamless market of 1.2 billion people," he said.

Trading under the AfCFTA began Jan.1, making it the world's largest free trade area in terms of participating member states after the formation of the World Trade

Organisation.

Data from the World Bank shows that the trade bloc will create a collective gross domestic product of US\$3.4 trillion and has a potential of lifting up to 30 million Africans out of extreme poverty.

Talking about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mene said that the virus has had a negative impact on Africa's economy.

"In general, our export capacity reduced by up to 35 percent just this year alone," he said.

The services sector, which contributes significantly to Africa's combined GDP, experienced

significant losses, he said. "Forty-two out of 55 countries last year were either in a full or partial lockdown, which meant that there were no goods that were transmitting through borders."

"The impact was very, very significant. That is why we have been saying that in order for Africa to expedite the recovery, we have to implement this agreement quite aggressively," he said.

Boosting intra-Africa trade "becomes the driver for Africa's recovery," said Mene. "This is the only path that we see for Africa's collective recovery post COVID-19."



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FRIDAY 2 APRIL 2021

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

## New Cabinet line-up paints positive image

**T**HERE was tremendous excitement at midweek as President Samia Suluhu Hassan unveiled her cabinet line-up with noticeable changes but avoiding an overhaul by starting all over again as suggested by some pressure groups.

Expectations raised by the revamped line-up buttress an overly optimistic atmosphere following the nomination and approval by Parliament of new Vice President Dr Philip Isidor Mpango. It has been a hectic week in the national capital (Dodoma) and around the country - and for good measure.

In the changes, the president lifted spirits by an innovation not quite dissimilar to that of her predecessor, Dr John Magufuli, who took a number of notable members of the University of Dar es Salaam faculty to be close advisers with key responsibilities.

President Samia picked individuals from the diplomatic service, with retired Ambassador Liberata Mulamula being appointed to the legislature and taking over as Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister.

Mulamula thus became the second lady to be appointed to the position since Ambassador Dr Asha-Rose Migiro in early 2006 - to be later picked United Nations Deputy Secretary General.

Plenty of satisfaction was similarly evident as the president named Dr Mwigulu Nchemba to the Treasury, replacing newly installed Vice President Dr Mpango, and shifted international agreements negotiator Prof Palamagamba Kabudi back to the Constitutional and Legal Affairs ministry.

Equally significant was the swapping of roles by a number of

ministers, with Umyy Mwalimu coming in as Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments). She swapped places with Selemani Jafo, who was lately having the torch trained on him with regard to laxity in local government financial control.

Prof Kitila Mkumbo was transferred from Investments to take over as Trade and Industry minister, changing places with Godfrey Mwambe. The president meanwhile declared that the Investments ministry was now falling under the Prime Minister's Office instead of the President's Office.

What many people may not have grasped was the forceful instruction that the portfolio's occupant would have to take measures to properly set up the ministry - or the president would scrap it.

Indeed, this was not a familiar item with most observers and even the public at large. It is an item many will be keen to make a follow-up on, as investments do not constitute a minor preoccupation for planners.

Quite a few commentators on the changes have generally focused on the manner in which professionalism and training orientation have been considered in deciding how the ministers and the Chief Secretary were appointed.

This outlook is consistent with the stance of media exploration of political events in the past few years, a situation that may be on the way to change. It is thus fitting to note a new tone in approach to certain issues, such as in relation to foreign affairs and the sort of image the new national leadership intends to build for the country.

## Yes, PCCB should focus more on corruption instead of debts

**V**ARIOUS interest groups in the country had their talking points on what President Samia Suluhu Hassan said earlier this week while receiving the annual reports of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB).

The president noted that while the country was still in a state of mourning, public activities must go on - and, the two reports must be received ahead of the Budget debate in the National Assembly.

Doing so will provide a clear background on accountability in most areas of the public sector and what the government is doing about it. In the circumstances, it couldn't have waited any further.

Among the points that the president raised with PCCB was on the specific observation Director General Brig Gen John Mbungu had made before the audience - that the bureau was helping to solve cases where public organisations were not being paid their dues.

This was especially the case when the debtor is another public organisation, as private firms can more easily be dealt with if a public agency appeals to court.

President Samia urged the organisation to focus on issues involving bribes and miscarriage of justice, or loss of public resources or funds by that kind of transaction, not helping to solve particular organisations' debt problems.

The president was pointing out an obvious anomaly in the conduct of PCCB activities, as that comes to imputing motives for

not paying a debt and then acting on the hunch.

Still, this PCCB innovation could be grasped in a certain light, in the sense that taking a public agency to court over money owed to another public agency may not help much.

In the first place, only a person in his or her private capacity is taken to court on criminal charges, in which case the claimant organisation needs an external agency to conduct the prosecution, thus seeking to apply economic sabotage prosecution to such issues.

The president did not actually direct the matter to the Finance and Planning ministry, but it is important for the Treasury to take note of all debts public organisations owe one another.

Where the normal consulting machinery is still in operation, it can be left at that point. However, where it is a non-starter, some other corrective action is possible - such as swapping debts or absorbing them into the Budget, or deducting the respective amounts from subsequent estimates. PCCB has simply no such capacity.

There are also cases of the government disowning debts, as applied to TANESCO bills in respect of which former president Dr John Magufuli allowed the state-owned monopoly to disconnect electricity wherever there was evidence of drawn-out failure or refusal to pay up.

So, indeed, PCCB should continue with the good work it is doing by ensuring living up to its name as a public watchdog agency charged with preventing and combating corruption.

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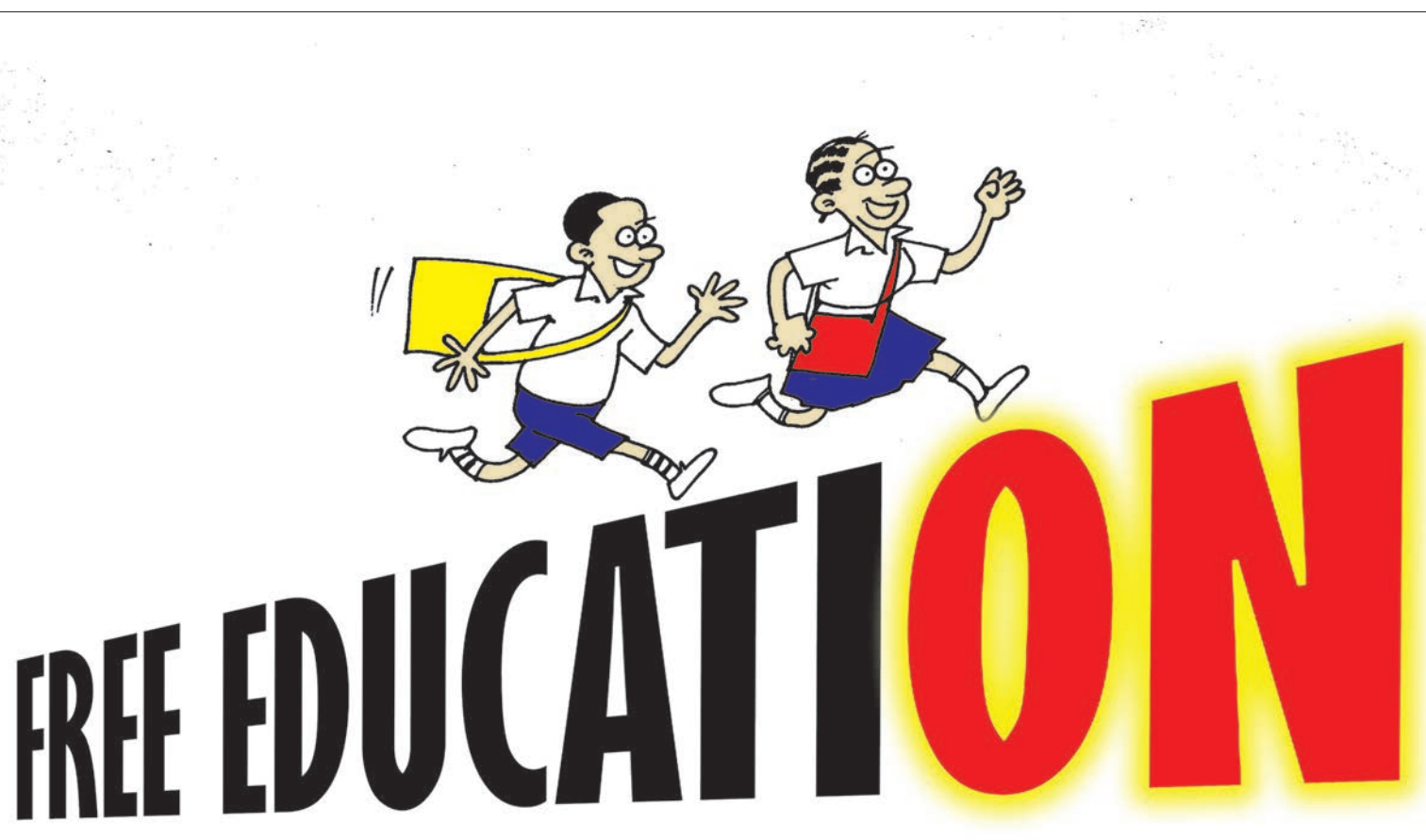
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By David Thomlinson

**I**N March 2019, tropical Cyclone Idai made landfall near Mozambique's port city of Beira, ravaging the coastline and inland communities.

The United Nations estimated that the cyclone Idai and the flooding that followed it killed more than 600 people, injured an estimated 1,600 and affected more than 1.8 million.

After more than US\$773 million of damage to buildings, infrastructure and crops, there were disastrous economic ramifications, with GDP growth cut to 2.3 per cent from a forecast 6.6 per cent.

Elsewhere on the continent, climate change and shifting weather patterns are exacting a heavy toll. Lake Chad has shrunk by 90 per cent since the 1960s and Lake Victoria, home to the world's largest tropical freshwater ecosystem, could all but vanish in the next 500 years.

Despite contributing just 4 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, African countries are amongst the hardest hit by the impacts of climate change, where temperatures have risen on average by 1°C more than other parts of the world.

And in the worst-case scenario, GDP could decline by 12.2 per cent by the end of the century owing to global warming.

This has been met with a robust response. The governments on the continent are spending between 2 and 9 per cent of GDP on climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

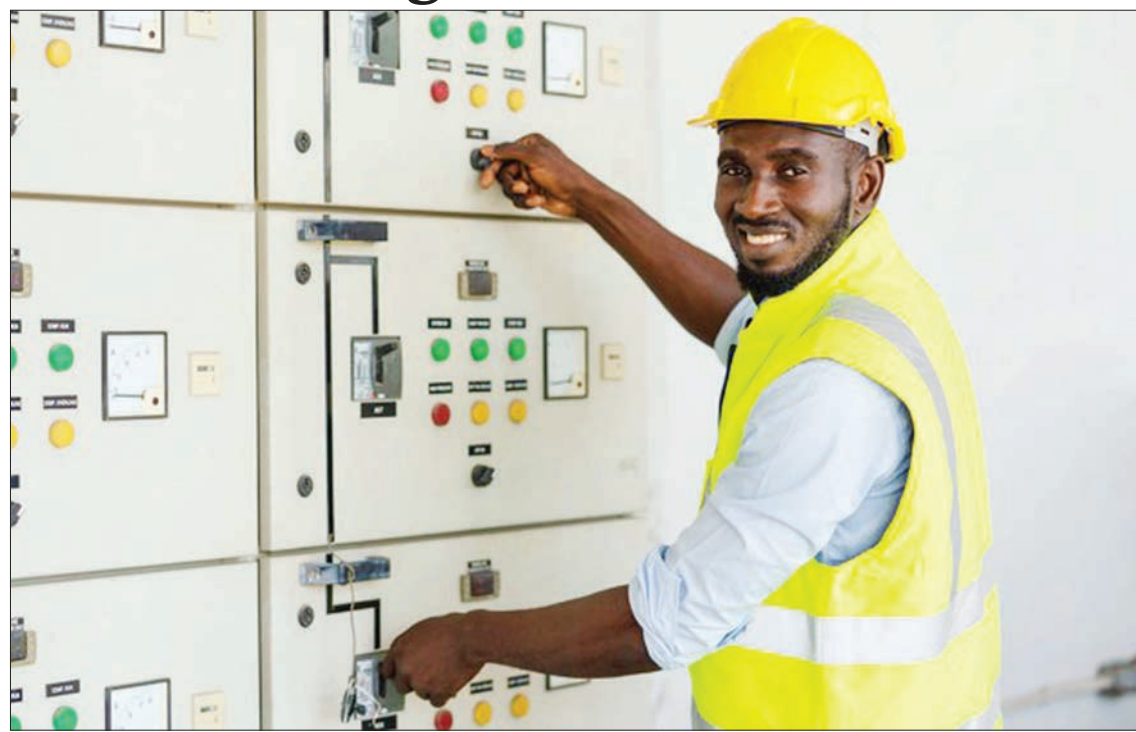
Well-trained engineers are essential to maximising the impact of this important work, especially during a continental recession. Innovation in response to societal challenges is at an all-time high, providing access to sustainable solutions that can help people adapt to climate change and simultaneously address energy deficiencies.

Engineers can help to provide life-saving support to the communities hardest hit by extreme weather patterns, such as floods or droughts, by improving infrastructure or developing technologies to assist in emergency response, such as drones, monitoring and transportation.

For off-grid communities that are subject to frequent power outages, engineers can install energy alternatives that improve their livelihoods and help to build more sustainable societies.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are exacerbating climate-induced problems across communities, impacting local economies and aggravating existing instabilities. This is evident across Africa's largest profession - agriculture - where

## Investing in Africa's engineers vital in addressing world's climate crisis



over half of the working-age population employ their trade.

The development of technology that enables climate-smart cultivation is helping to build resilience in these fragile livelihoods.

By increasing agricultural output, people can build their financial independence and help feed a growing continent. This is particularly important when the proportion of the population experiencing undernourishment has grown by 45 per cent in drought-prone areas since 2012, as a consequence of climate change.

Another critical area engineers are addressing is access to energy. Households that are off the electricity grid or have only intermittent power can save 8 per cent of their income by using renewable electricity. Innovation in this space is essential to long-term development.

South African-based Sun Exchange, a unique business model, provides access to commercial and industrial solar by allowing anyone - anywhere in the world - to own and earn income from solar cells leased to power schools, clinics and businesses.

Solar cell owners receive income in crypto or fiat currencies for the energy that is generated, while the organisations where the solar is installed get access to affordable clean energy.

Ugandan start-up Innovex, which has been shortlisted for the Royal Academy of Engineering's Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, developed Remot - a system that enables users to monitor their solar photovoltaic panel installations, reducing the need for maintenance and preventing power outages.

Africa have no access to electricity, and off-grid solar power offers a rapidly scalable option to provide communities with income-generating opportunities and devices that increase productivity and help to protect livelihoods. Necessity has spurred innovation in addressing the climate challenge, but tasks like designing personalised or tailor-made solar power installations require engineering expertise across a continent facing a chronic shortage of skills in key areas.

It is estimated that Africa needs an additional 2.5 million engineers to meet the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals.

According to UNESCO's Engineering Report for year 2010, Uganda has one engineer for every 19,800 people in the country, while in the UK that ratio is one to 1,100. Despite this, there is still unemployment amongst graduates, most of whom are not fully equipped to take up professional roles.

Addressing the shortfall demands a holistic approach to build experience, enhance skills and promote diversity. By fostering partnerships between academia and industry on the African continent and in the UK, the Royal Academy of Engineering's Higher Education Partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa (HEP SSA) programme provides practical learning opportunities aligned to local industry requirements.

For example, students at the University of Namibia are bottling desalinated water from the Atlantic Ocean, powered by solar energy, in a demonstration of what technology can achieve. By part-funding such projects, HEP SSA widens the entrepreneurial horizons of young engineers.

As the project in Namibia

shows, climate change mitigation strategies need to be approached from all angles, especially in anticipation of a development boom across Africa.

As the continent closes its annual infrastructure spending shortfall - placed as high as US\$170 billion - the construction sector is expected to grow by 6.7 per cent annually. This makes it imperative that such development is carried out as sustainably as possible.

The Academy's GCRF Africa Catalyst programme is working in partnership with the UK government's Global Challenges Research Fund to build the capacity of engineering organisations across the continent, particularly in the infrastructure sector, to share best practice and help to drive sustainable development.

Meanwhile, at the University of Rwanda, engineers are developing a toolkit to help churn out environment professionals to measure and reduce the country's embodied carbon.

Africa is disproportionately exposed to the impacts of global warming and is already confronting issues that other regions will not experience for some time. Being on the frontline of climate adaptation techniques will provide unique insights that could help the rest of the world to prepare and plan ahead.

Amplifying African-based engineering expertise is therefore critical to improving the wider world's defences against the increasing threat of climate change.

David Thomlinson is the chair of the Royal Academy of Engineering GCRF Africa Catalyst Steering Committee and Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (FRENG).



# Small wins across various areas can have a big impact

By Mai-Youssef in Dubai

Adapting to new working practices presents an incredible opportunity to assess and adjust our approach to sustainability.

Changes don't have to be extreme; they can include a range of small but effective actions such as embracing recycling and reusable materials, switching to modes of manufacturing and reviewing transport or packaging best practice that are more friendly to the environment. Small wins across a wide range of areas can have a big impact.

From separating the paper, plastic and cardboard used in the office to reducing the use of disposable cutlery, sustainability initiatives often start with the little details first.

One of those details needs to be equipment and technology decisions. The reason is obvious: technology - such as PCs, laptops and smartphones - represented just 1 per cent of the world's carbon footprint in 2007. Today, that's already tripled and is on its way to exceeding 14 per cent by 2040.

While technology is indeed intrinsic to the modern business, there are still small - yet hugely beneficial - changes



that organisations can make to address one of the most serious problems for the environment.

For example, keeping a business phone for three years instead of two or a laptop for six years instead of five can make an impact on a company's use of materials.

If enterprises are doing this on a national scale, there will be less demand to create as many new devices each year, reducing the overall amount of raw materials mined to match this demand.

When companies need new products, they can opt for remanufactured or refurbished equipment. As well as being better for the environment, companies can save 30-50 per cent of the selling price on average compared to the same equipment that has been made new.

Furthermore, thanks to ratings programmes and awards schemes, customers have greater visibility of brands and products that are less harmful to the environment. Greener ways of commuting to work

each day - or not commuting at all - can also be beneficial. The average co-working space, for instance a communal office closer to home, can help generate carbon emission savings of 118 tonnes annually between now and 2029.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, a select number of companies had introduced more flexible working policies - allowing people to work from home or cultivate a co-working space in an agile environment. Now, many companies support a mixture of re-

mote and office working - reducing carbon emissions while improving staff wellbeing.

Technology is making all this possible. With the right solutions and printing capabilities, workers can seamlessly transition between the office and their remote working environment.

For example, before 2020, video conferencing had already become a staple in workplace communication, connecting colleagues around the world. However, under pandemic working conditions, its usage increased dramati-

cally to facilitate everyday meetings that could not be held face-to-face.

With so many opportunities to meet sustainability goals through incremental steps, it's important to remember why they will remain so valuable over the next decade.

A report published in 2020 found that 80 per cent of Europeans think that big companies and industry are not doing enough to help the environment - suggesting that businesses striving to make a positive difference can attract customers, while those who

don't may lose them.

Taking action on sustainability can also increase the chances of attracting and retaining talent. Some 26 per cent of UK workers said they would accept a lower salary to work for a sustainable organisation, while half of those surveyed said they would consider declining a job offer from a company with harmful practices.

A 2020 survey on the opinions of millennials across 43 countries found that the proportion who thought 'reducing its impact on the environment' is some-

thing their employer is doing well (61 per cent) was 22 per cent higher among those intending to stay in their jobs for five or more years compared than those expecting to move on fairly soon.

Sustainability for businesses today is less about 'if' and more about 'how'. The good news is that by working on the details and making small changes, businesses can make a significant impact. All it takes is the first step forward.

• Agencies

## 'Global wind power growth must triple over next decade to achieve Net Zero'

BRUSSELS

LAST year - 2020 - was the best in history for the global wind industry with 93 GW of new capacity installed - a 53 per cent year-on-year increase.

However, a new report published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) warns that this growth is not sufficient to ensure that the world achieves net zero by 2050.

According to the Global Wind Report 2021, GWEC's 16th annual flagship report, the world needs to be installing wind power three times faster over the next decade in order to stay on a net zero pathway and avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Through technology innovations and economies of scale, the global wind power market has nearly quadrupled in size over the past decade and established itself as one of the most cost-competitive and resilient power sources across the world.

Last year saw record growth driven by a surge of installations in China and the US - the world's two largest wind power markets - who together installed 75 per cent of the new installations and account for over half of the world's total wind power capacity.

Today, there is now 743 GW of wind power capac-

ity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide globally - equivalent to South America's annual carbon emissions.

Yet, as the clean energy technology with the most decarbonisation potential per MW, the report shows that the current rate of wind power deployment will not be enough to achieve carbon neutrality by the middle of this century.

It says policymakers must take urgent action now to scale up wind power at the necessary pace.

According to the scenarios established by international energy bodies such as IRENA and the IEA, the world needs to be installing a minimum of 180 GW of new wind energy every year to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

It will need to install up to 280 GW annually to maintain a pathway compliant with meeting net zero by 2050. This means that the industry and policymakers need to work collaboratively and act fast to accelerate deployment.

GWEC has, accordingly called on policymakers to take a true 'climate emergency' approach to allow a faster ramp up.

The approach would include eliminating red tape and reforming administrative structures in order to



speed up and streamline licensing and permitting for projects; carrying out a massive increase in investments in grid, ports and other infrastructure needed to allow the ramp up in installations; and revamping energy markets to ensure that they account for the true social costs of polluting fossil fuels and facilitate a rapid transition to a system based on renew-

able energy.

GWEC chief executive officer Ben Backwell said: "People and governments around the world are realising that we have a limited window to head off dangerous climate change.

He elaborated: "While many major economies have announced long-term net zero targets, we need to make sure that urgent and meaningful

actions are taken now to make sure this ambition is matched with fast growing investment and installations of renewable power on the ground and in the water.

"It is really encouraging to see record growth in China and US last year, but now we need the rest of the world to step up to get us where we need to be," he added.

Backwell further explained: "Our current market forecasts show that 469 GW of new wind power capacity will be installed over the next five years.

"But we need to be installing at least 180 GW of new capacity every year through 2025 to ensure we remain on the right path to limit global warming well below 2°C - meaning that we are currently on-track

to be 86 GW short on average each year.

"And these installation levels will need to scale up to 280 GW beyond 2030 to deliver carbon neutrality by mid-century. Every year we fall short, the mountain to climb in the years ahead gets higher."

Feng Zhao, Head of Market Intelligence and Strategy at GWEC, meanwhile commented: "The wind

industry must work together with governments, communities as well as other sectors such as solar, storage and oil & gas to find solutions to accelerate the energy transition as efficiently as possible.

"Wind power both onshore and offshore will play a crucial role in decarbonising not only electrons but also molecules by driving the commercialisation of cost-competitive Power-to-X solutions.

"This will be a key element in achieving net zero in harder to abate sectors such as heavy industry and long-distance transport and enable the full decarbonisation of our society."

According to Feng Zhao: "In every major institutional scenario for energy system transformation analysed in this report, the wind market must rapidly expand over the next decade.

"The wind industry must be clear that this growth will not happen spontaneously, and urgent policy interventions are required worldwide. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we saw how governments can quickly react to address a global crisis - this same urgency must now be applied to the climate crisis."

\* Related report on Page 13.

Agencies



# Canada and AfDB sign \$11.3 million gender lens Climate Fund for Africa

ABIDJAN

CANADA and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have signed an agreement formalising the Canada-African Development Bank Climate Fund (CACF).

This is a transformative special fund aimed at providing concessional loans to climate change-related projects with a strong gender-responsive component. It will be administered by the bank.

The fund will be capitalised through a combination of a \$104.8 million repayable contribution meant to provide concessional loans for both sovereign and non-sovereign operations plus a \$8.5 million grant contribution for complementary technical assistance.

Speaking at a virtual signing ceremony to conclude the agreement, held 17 March on the sidelines of the Canada-Africa Clean Growth Symposium, Canadian International Development minister Karina Gould said the investment, with its strong gender footprint, recognized "the critical role that women need to play in climate action, and supports their efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate

change".

She added: "Climate change is one of the most important challenges of our time...And, although we are all affected by it, we in Canada know that not everyone is affected equally...that means that vulnerable and marginalised people are bearing the brunt of this crisis."

As a concessional facility, CACF will deploy its resources in innovative low-carbon technologies, renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry, water management, and climate-resilience projects.

The fund will finance climate change related projects in AfDB's regional member countries, including those that demonstrate a strong gender equality focus. The empowerment of women and girls will be an objective across all concessional financing by the CACF, aiming at direct, measurable gender equality outcomes.

"In building back Africa, climate resilience is very important... This is why I'm delighted and thrilled with the Canada-African Development Bank Climate Fund that we are launching today," AfDB President Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina said in remarks after the



announcement.

He thanked Canada for its "tremendous" support to the bank in terms of general capital increases, temporary callable capital, and the support that the country has given to Africa through the bank.

Adesina noted further:

"These resources that you are making available, it's very unique, in helping us with adaptation. First, it is long-term financing. It will provide long-term capital to the private sector and to the public sector.

"It also provides it at affordable levels for coun-

tries...What I like most about it is that it looks at multi-sectoral use of this financing...all these things are very important to support Africa in climate adaptation and mitigation," Adesina said.

"Canada has always been there for Africa...

Canada is a great friend of Africa," he said.

AfDB's financing for climate has increased fourfold from 9 per cent of its total portfolio in 2016 to 36 per cent by 2019, and is on track to achieve its target of 40 per cent of total portfolio by the end of this

year. The bank has committed to providing \$25 billion in climate financing by 2025.

The Canada-Africa Clean Growth Symposium, co-hosted by Canada, Ethiopia and Senegal, brings together economic and business leaders from the

public and private sectors from Canada and sub-Saharan Africa to explore innovative ways to grow their economies, while reducing emissions and building resilience to climate change.

The sessions focused on a blueprint for a green economy, incorporating social and economic development, while ensuring sustainable management of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and following climate-resilient and low-carbon development pathways. The symposium also included trade policy talks on environmental considerations in international trade and the promotion of rules-based trade.

Canada, one of the AfDB's key non-regional members, has participated in all the Group's capital increases. This includes its 7th General Capital Increase, the replenishments of the African Development Fund, including the 15th replenishment of the Fund (ADF-15), with a 7.5 per cent increase in African Development Bank Units of Account (UA) terms.

It has also contributed to numerous trust funds and initiatives managed by the Bank Group.

# How Stat survived, and thrived, during craziest year in health reporting history

By Luke Winkie

LAST year - 2020 - was one of the grimmest years for the media business on record. As the Covid-19 pandemic became a reality, and society came to grips with a global quarantine and an unprecedented collapse in consumer demand, no newsroom was safe.

Every day brought more bad news; furloughs or layoffs transformed into permanent discharges, advertisers disappeared and didn't return, freelance budgets dried up, and a community of workers, already on precarious grounds, found it difficult to believe that the contraction would ever reverse itself.

We each looked into failsafes and backup plans, wondering aloud if 2020 would go down in history as the year the news apparatus finally broke.

And yet in the midst of the carnage, Stat is thriving. The health and life sciences publication, launched by The Boston Globe in 2015, obliterated all of its traffic records during the pandemic.

As of December, the site had 50 employees, up just a bit from the end of 2019 and around the same number as when it launched, but it plans to hire around 20 new staffers by the end of this year.

Long ago, when Covid wasn't in any of our vocabularies, Stat oriented

towards a fairly niche audience: Medical professionals who had a vested interest in the ebbs and flows of pharmaceutical development and public health policy.

The articles were approachably written and analysable by casual observers, but the emphasis was directed on those who would be curious about therapeutics even when there wasn't a pandemic raging outside.

Stat's chief revenue officer, Angus Macaulay, said the site averaged a respectable 1.5 million unique visitors per month in 2019, and it likely would have stayed that way, if not for the menacing virus - the novel coronavirus - that tore its way through China, South Korea and Italy in that febrile winter of 2020.

As headlines grew dire and Americans everywhere sought out any substantive information they could find about the virus, many of them landed on the Stat homepage for the first time in their lives. Overnight, the website's core clientele expanded to include the entire human population.

Last February, the site tripled its metrics to 4.7 million monthly unique visitors. By March, as it proved clear that the pandemic would be the only news story that mattered for quite some time, that number ballooned to a mind-boggling 23 million. Advertisement sales



remained "really strong" throughout the year, said Macaulay, adding that June was the company's "biggest month in the history of the brand". The days of insularity - when Stat sought to reach primarily people who already knew what AstraZeneca was long before the clinical trials - are extinct. It's a media triumph, in the middle of a generation-altering event.

"Stat has changed forever after last year," said executive editor Rick Berke, noting that the website's monthly visitors have plateaued to around seven million and adding: "As a media company, we were on a good trajectory before the pandemic. But there's no going back to the pre-pandemic reach that we had."

"Our Chartbeat dial went past the maximum. It went all the way around again. That's when we realized that we were in a new world," said managing editor Gideon Gil.

I count myself as one of Stat's new, medically illiterate loyal readers. My coronavirus panic started to spike at the end of January 2020, at a moment where there seemed to be a shocking absence of information about the burgeoning pandemic.

Other news organisations, some with a massive footprint, initially relegated the pathogen to the B or C pegs. But Stat was equipped with both the sourcing bona fides and epidemiological comprehension to recognize a crisis in the making.

The crisis was front-page news on the website from its inception. Like those other 23 million unique visitors, I found its Aesculapian fluency to be a balm on my brain - even when the reporting itself was dark as hell.

"This is our bread and butter focus. It made sense that we would be in that position," says Berke.

Part of that success, notes Berke, is attributable to infectious disease reporter Helen Branswell (a 2011 Nieman Fellow) who has become something of a Twitter celebrity thanks to her salty experience and deft ability to parse wonky data points into plain English.

Branswell has been on the frontlines of every pandemic in living memory:

SARS, H1N1, MERS, Zika, Ebola and now Covid-19. She first sounded the alarm on Covid on New Year's Eve in 2019.

"(Hopefully this is nothing out of the ordinary. But a @ProMED mail posting about 'unexplained pneumonias' in China is giving me #SARS flashbacks.)"

Berke remembers introducing people to Branswell in the office in the Before Times, where they would joke that if a seismic pandemic ever took hold in America, Stat clearly had the woman to cover it.

(In February, Branswell won the George Polk Award for Public Service Journalism for her Covid-19 coverage.)

"Never did I imagine that it would happen to this scale," he says, adding: "We were fortunate to have the person who knows this stuff better than any other reporter. She took it so seriously. She saw what we all lived through. She saw the potential of what could happen. And she lived with that fear and concern."

In the early part of 2020, Berke orbited towards Branswell's desk every day to take stock of her Twitter followers, as a tide of nervous people turned to her feed for some clarity during an increasingly anxious moment. At the beginning of February, it sat at around 43,000 people. By the end of the year, Branswell touched north of 200,000.

"They were jumping by the second. It was surreal,"

says Berke.

Of course, in a matter of days, both Berke and Branswell would be stuck in a year-long quarantine. Those physical check-ins were impossible, even as the numbers kept going up.

That's the strange paradox of Stat. Everyone I spoke to at the publication is thrilled about the growth, but there is no escaping the trauma of Covid-19.

Covering a slow-motion catastrophe, day-in and day-out, is exhausting, and watching the media sector get decimated is disorienting - no matter how impressive your own personal metrics may look.

"It's surreal to marvel at the numbers. We're grateful for that, but there's no joy here," noted Berke.

"When we have staff meetings where I've talked about how the site is doing, and the positive things we're doing, I try to preface it by reminding everyone how lucky we are," he continued.

He elaborated: "We all have friends in the media getting laid off. We're seeing advertising tank - that is, suffer rapid decline. We're seeing the rugs get pulled out from under live events. It's an odd position to be in."

"We're writing about the most tragic stories of our time. People are dying. Our industry has been upended. Our lives have been upended. And yet, people are coming to us for our work. I guess all I can say is that

we should try to never lose sight of the larger context, and never for a moment forget the toll this has taken on all of us."

As vaccination rates increase, Stat may get a taste of normalcy soon. Managing editor Gil is finally allowing himself to think about life after the plague - where Covid-19 will no longer be an all-hands-on-deck operation for his newsroom.

On March 29, eight of Stat's top ten most popular stories still had to do with Covid-19. "But there's so much more going on in science. We need to rebalance a little bit," he says, adding: "We won't lessen the attention we're giving the pandemic, but it's important for us to get back to writing about cancer, neuroscience and genomics."

Stat's management remains confident that in the years ahead, when Covid-19 and its accumulated baggage no longer haunt us on a daily basis, the site will retain a significant portion of its new audience.

When you multiply a readership by double digits, there's no chance that all of it will atrophy away. But I don't think any of them will be disappointed if Stat never approaches its March 2020 heights again. All of us, especially the media's public health reporters, could use a break.

**Luke Winkie is a journalist and former pizza maker in New York City.**



## Many countries look to satellite technology to ease food insecurity

By Special Correspondent

SCIENCE, technology and innovation solutions hope to boost food security in developing countries as they seek ways to bounce back from Covid-19.

Food security is at a critical juncture. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted food production, trade, logistics and value chains.

Pandemic-induced lockdowns, travel bans and physical distancing measures have worsened the risk of food insecurity globally.

These restrictions are being felt particularly strongly by low-income households and those working in the informal economy in developing countries, partly due to their loss of livelihoods and inability to access markets.

While Covid-19 has reduced incomes and disrupted supply chains, chronic and acute hunger was on the rise even prior to the pandemic due to factors such as conflict, poor socio-economic conditions, natural hazards, climate change and pests.

Amid these pre-existing and new conditions, 14 developing countries are benefitting from a partnership forged in 2020 to harness satellite technology in tackling food insecurity.

On 22 March, 25 participants from Afghanistan, Algeria, Kenya, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Malawi, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Africa, Syria, Thailand, Turkey and Zambia kick-started the initiative with a virtual meeting.

They learned more about the initiative ahead of a two-month online course on how to harness the potential of satellite technology, which runs until the end of May.

The new initiative is part of an ongoing partnership launched in July 2020, in line with a memorandum of understanding signed under the auspices of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), for which UNCTAD serves as the secretariat.

"The partnership is expected to lead to meaningful transfer of technology to the participating countries," said Shamika Sirimanne, UNCTAD's director of technology and logistics.

"We know that science, technology and innovation play a central role in the achievement of the SDGs and this programme will contribute directly to achieving SDG (sustainable development goal) 2 on ending hunger and achieving food security, using satellite technologies," she added.

"Our expectation is that this project will enable participating countries to build their

know-how and technical capabilities in crop monitoring, which can increase their resilience to future shocks in food production systems," Sirimanne said.

The CropWatch Innovation Cooperation Programme aims to enhance capacities for food security early warning using the Earth observation satellite system for crop monitoring, CropWatch.

Cropwatch uses satellite data to monitor crop conditions, integrating it with other climate-related data on drought, pests and diseases for better farm management.

The programme's partners include UNCTAD-UNCSTD, the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) and the Aerospace Information Research Institute (AIR) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

"We believe that earth observation system has an important role to play in solving food security issues and achieving sustainable development goals," said Jie Liu, Director of International Cooperation Division at AIR/CAS.

"This training will provide useful insights to the system and strengthen the agricultural capacity of participating countries," she added.

Participating countries also welcomed the expected benefits of the project at the kick-off meeting.

"What we are expecting from this programme is to learn about the ways to increase food production for farmers through crop monitoring and drought assessments," said the Nosiseko Nombedesho Mashiya, South African National Space Agency remote sensing scientist.

"We are looking forward to learning how remote sensing can assist in achieving this objective," she added.

Another participant also highlighted the role of the project in helping countries to be more climate resilient.

"By participating in this programme, we expect to become more climate-resilient through better preparedness by adopting innovative technologies and being more equipped to achieve our ultimate aim of food security, in line with SDG 2," said Arty Gungoosingh Bunwaree, a senior research scientist at the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute in Mauritius.

The programme enables participating countries to independently monitor their crops in real and near real-time and provide an infrastructure platform to synthesize data to promote national food security.

The system can also be customized to meet countries' and regions' specific needs and foster the implementation of the SDGs.



## New hope as Songea Airport fixes, handles bigger planes

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THE refurbishment of Songea airport in Ruvuma Region which includes expansion of the runway has brought new hope to people in the southern part of the country, as the facility is now able to handle bigger planes as compared to the past.

Operated by Tanzania Airports Authority (TAA), the facility is located seven kilometers west of Songea Municipality and now has the capacity to handle six "Bombardier" types of planes at one time.

Songea Airport Manager, Jordan Mchami said rehabilitation of the airport includes expansion of the runway from the current 1,625mt to 1,740mt to enable it handles big planes. He said previously the airport was able to handle small planes carrying not more than 13 passengers.

"The Songea airport was established in 1950, owned by an individual who later on in 1963 returned it to the government. When the government took over the airport its runway was not at tarmac level, the government decided to start

repairing it in 2017," said the manager.

Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) Manager in Ruvuma Region, Eng Lasack Alinanuswe said that construction works are done by a Chinese contractor—CHICCO under the supervision of TANROADS.

According to Eng Alinanuswe, the Songea airport uplifting project would cost 37bn/- until completion. He said repair includes the construction of the plane's stop way measuring 60mt at each side of the airport. He said they are also constructing parking lots for small planes and another one with the capacity to park six big planes.

He added that the construction of the new passengers' lounge which will accommodate 150 passengers at one time has also been completed. He said the previous passenger's lounge was able to accommodate 75 passengers only.

The TANROADS Manager said once completed, the airport will offer business opportunities to Songea residents because it will have business parks where people can open shops, restaurants, and hotels.

He said there will be an opportunity for taxi drivers to carry passengers from

the airport to different destinations across the region.

He said since Air Tanzania Company Limited (ATCL) resumed the Dar es Salaam-Songea routes in February this year, a good number of people have started using the services instead of buses.

He said more people prefer travelling with ATCL because it offers better fares of 250,000/- per trip compared to the previous fare of 500,000 charged by small planes carrying 13 passengers.

According to him, the arrival of Bombardier serves residents of Ruvuma Region as they would now pay 400,000/- Songea-Dar return journey.

He said the new building for the passengers' lounge will hold 150 passengers at one time has also been completed.

Songea Regional Commissioner, Christina Mndeme said that completion of the Songea airport was a rare resource that can boost Songea's economic growth and the entire Ruvuma Region, especially in the tourism sector, following the launch of a strategic plan to spur tourism in the region.

Songea airport was built between 1974

and 1980 and its runway at tarmac level will enable it to handle planes during all seasons.

Ruvuma region is located in the southwestern part of Tanzania between latitude 9-12 degrees and longitudes 34-39 degrees and is the sixth-largest region of Tanzania and covers an area of 63,498 km2 of which about 5% is cultivated.

The region is composed of four districts: Songea urban, Songea rural, Mbinga, and Tunduru, Songea town, the capital, is located in Songea urban district.

Agriculture accounts for a major part of the region's economy, providing over 90% of regional production and employment. Agriculture is predominantly carried out by smallholders, cultivating about 2-5 acres. Maize is by far the most important food and cash crop in the region. Dominant cash crops include coffee, tobacco, and cashew nuts.

Ruvuma is supplied with fish mainly from Lake Nyasa, situated in the southwest of the region. Over 90% of fish production from Lake Nyasa, which is 20,000 to 30,000 mt of fish, are landed in Ruvuma Region

## Destruction of tropical forests sees sharp increase in 2020

By Special Correspondent

An area of pristine rainforest the size of the Netherlands was burned or hacked down last year, as the destruction of the planet's tropical forests accelerated despite a global economic slowdown, according to research Wednesday.

The worst losses were in Brazil, three times higher than the next highest country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to a report from Global Forest Watch based on satellite data.

Across the tropics, the study registered the destruction in 2020 of 4.2 million hectares (10.4 million acres) of primary forest - 12 per cent higher than the year before.

Ecosystems straddling the equator shelter abundant biodiversity and store vast amounts of carbon.

In total, the tropics lost 12.2 million hectares of tree cover - including forests and plantations - last year, driven largely by agriculture.

But researchers said extreme heat and drought also stoked huge fires that consumed swathes of forest across Australia, Siberia and deep into the Amazon.

These losses are a "climate emergency. They're a biodiversity crisis, a humanitarian disaster, and a loss of economic opportunity," said Frances Seymour of the World Resources Institute, which is behind the report.



The study found some evidence that COVID-19 restrictions may have had an effect around the world - with an increase in illegal harvesting because forests were left less protected or the return of large numbers of people to rural areas.

But researchers said there was little sign that the pandemic had changed the trajectory of forest destruction and warned that the worst could be still to come if countries slash protections in an attempt to ramp up economic growth.

But Seymour said the most "ominous signal" from the 2020 data is the instances of forests themselves falling victim to climate change.

"I mean, wetlands are burning," she said in a press briefing.

"Nature has been whispering this risk to us for a long time. But now she is shouting."

Plants - especially in the tropics - and soil comprise an enormous carbon sink, sucking up roughly a third of all the carbon pollution humans produce annually.

Yet tropical forests continue to disappear rapidly, threatening irreparable losses to Earth's crucial biodiversity.

Researchers said the destruction of tropical primary forests in 2020 released 2.64 billion tonnes of CO2 in 2020, equal to the annual emissions of India or 570 million cars, more than double the number on the road in the United States.

"The longer we wait to stop deforestation, and get other sectors on to net zero trajectories, the more likely it is that our natural carbon sinks will go up in smoke," Seymour said.

'Heartbreaking' Brazil, where far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has

cut funding for environmental programs and pushed to open protected Amazon lands to agribusiness and mining, lost 1.7 million hectares of primary forest in 2020, an increase of 25 per cent from 2019, the report said.

"Brazil, having achieved a huge reduction in deforestation in the Amazon, is now seeing an unraveling of that success, and it's heartbreaking," said Seymour.

Much of the loss was in the Amazon, including new areas that were deliberately cleared. But dry conditions also meant fires lit on previously deforested land spread to once humid forests, burning out of control.

Fires also devastated the Pantanal wetlands, a paradise of biodiversity that extends from Brazil into Bolivia - the country with the third highest level of forest loss in 2020.

Almost a third of the Pantanal was scorched, including indigenous lands and jaguar habitats and researchers said it could be decades before the region recovers.

Appetite for destruction One bright area was in Indonesia, which reduced its rate of forest loss by 17 per cent from 2019 and dropped out of the global top three for the first time in the 20 years of Global Forest Watch monitoring.

Forest destruction has slowed for four years in a row in Indonesia and researchers said government policies - helped last year by wetter weather - appeared to be having "a long-term effect on reducing primary forest loss."

Forests cover more than 30 per cent of Earth's land surface, and tropical forests are home to between 50% and 90 per cent of all terrestrial species.

Recent research has shown that, beyond a certain threshold, deforestation in the Amazon basin could tip the region into a new climate regime, turning tropical forests into savannah.

In January, two top Brazilian indigenous leaders asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Bolsonaro for "crimes against humanity," accusing him of unprecedented environmental damage, killings and persecution.

On Monday, a study published in Nature Ecology and Evolution estimated that rising demand in wealthy countries for commodities



# African Energy Chamber, API sign natural gas and oil industry contract

JOHANNESBURG

THE African Energy Chamber (AEC) and the American Petroleum Institute (API) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on capacity building initiatives and standardisation to enhance safety, environmental protection and sustainability in African countries producing natural gas and oil.

"API is pleased to collaborate with the AEC to expand use of our world-class standards and programmes to help enhance the safety, transparency and sustainability of natural gas and oil operations across the African continent," API Segment Standards and Services vice president Alexa Burr said.

"This is our first partnership with an African based organization, and we look forward to supporting AEC's efforts to drive industry-wide technical knowledge," added Burr.

The number of petroleum-producing countries in Africa has risen substantially, coinciding with a movement across the continent to enact robust, equitable and imminently more transparent policies.

This continent-wide pursuit to increase the technical capacity of local organisations is of paramount importance in these natural gas and oil economies.

It will be vital for public and private representatives of African host economies to work with the international petroleum industry and help ensure that the developmental needs of the local markets are met.

It will meanwhile also be crucial in maintaining policies that allow for oil sector investment in these economies and accelerating the adoption of industry practices that enhance safety and environmental protection.

The MoU will facilitate collaboration between API and AEC members in several areas, including development of training programmes and seminars.

It will also support the coordination, collaboration and sharing of the natural gas and oil industry's good practices for environmental, health, safety, security and sustainability.

The "package" will also include the organisation of joint forums, conferences, roundtables and workshops about energy issues and the continued multifaceted uses of natural gas and in the world's energy future.

"Our association with API is a milestone for the work we do, and we are confident we will see American ingenuity - a key component of the partnership between African producing nations and IOCs - at its best," US-Africa com-



mittee Chair of the AEC Jude Kearney said.

Kearney elaborated: "America has a tried, true and tested tradition of developing and deploying best-in-class standards

and industrial ingenuity to safely develop natural resources in America and around the globe.

"We also have a proud history of partnering with the earliest oil produc-

ing countries in Africa to create stable petroleum sectors and sustained economic contributions.

Our goal is to work with the API to further support African nations and busi-

nesses to build technical capacity, harmonise standards and attract investment to help Africans monetise their resources and combat energy poverty while growing their economies

while prioritising safety and the environment."

Given the economic and transformative potential which Africa's natural gas and oil industry holds - including the focus on hu-

man capital growth, supply chain development and local and international partnerships for talent and infrastructure development - the AEC is determined to place this collaboration at the forefront of its mission.

API represents all segments of America's natural gas and oil industry, which supports more than ten million US jobs and is backed by a growing grassroots movement of millions of Americans.

API's 600 members produce, process and distribute the majority of the nation's energy while also participating in API Energy Excellence which is accelerating environmental and safety progress by fostering new technologies and transparent reporting.

API was formed in 1919 as a standards-setting organisation and has developed more than 700 standards to enhance operational and environmental safety, efficiency and sustainability.

AECF was meanwhile established in 2018 to promote sustainable investments and best practice in the African Energy Industry. It brings together stakeholders from multiple African and global jurisdictions who are interested in energy matters across the entire energy value chain.

• **AEC**

# Hints for spotting misinformation in science reporting

By Marc Zimmer

I'm a professor of chemistry, have a PhD and conduct my own scientific research, yet when consuming the media, even I frequently need to ask myself: "Is this science or is it fiction?"

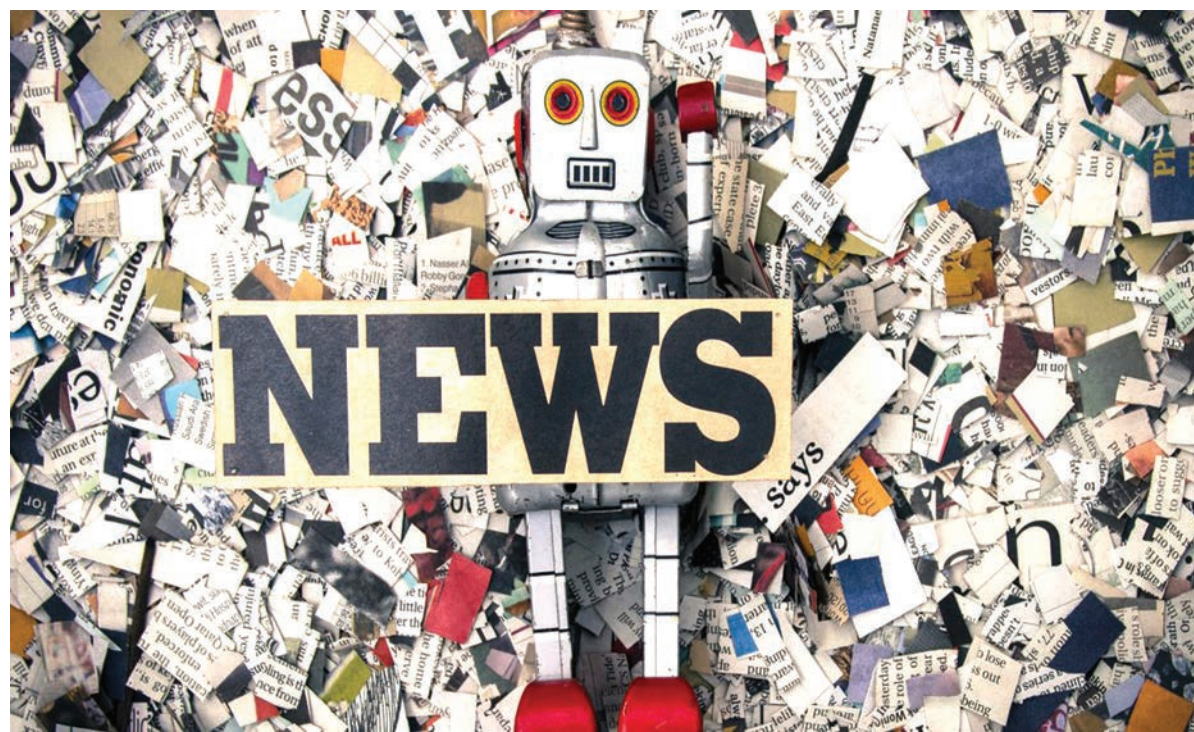
There are plenty of reasons a science story might not be sound. Quacks and charlatans take advantage of the complexity of science, some content providers can't tell bad science from good and some politicians peddle fake science to support their positions.

If the science sounds too good to be true or too wacky to be real, or very conveniently supports a contentious cause, then you might want to check its veracity.

Here are six tips to help you detect fake science, one relating to the need to underscore the importance of seeking the peer review seal of approval.

Scientists rely on journal papers to share their scientific results. They let the world see what research has been done - and how.

Once researchers are confident of their results, they write up a manuscript and send it to a jour-



nal. Editors forward the submitted manuscripts to at least two external referees who have expertise in the topic. These reviewers can suggest the manuscript be rejected, published as is, or sent back to the scientists for more experiments. That process is called "peer review."

Research published in peer-reviewed journals has undergone rigorous quality control by experts. Each year, about 2,800 peer-reviewed journals publish roughly 1.8 mil-

lion scientific papers. The body of scientific knowledge is constantly evolving and updating, but you can trust that the science these journals describe is sound. Retraction policies help correct the record if mistakes are discovered post-publication.

Peer review takes months. To get the word out faster, scientists sometimes post research papers on what's called a preprint server. These often have "RXiv" - pronounced "archive" - in their name: Me-

dxRxiv, BioRxiv and so on. These articles have not been peer-reviewed and so are not validated by other scientists. Preprints provide an opportunity for other scientists to evaluate and use the research as building blocks in their own work sooner.

How long has this work been on the preprint server? If it's been months and it hasn't yet been published in the peer-reviewed literature, be very skeptical. Are the scientists who submitted the

preprint from a reputable institution?

During the Covid-19 crisis, with researchers scrambling to understand a dangerous new virus and rushing to develop lifesaving treatments, preprint servers have been littered with immature and unproven science. Fastidious research standards have been sacrificed for speed.

A last warning: Be on the alert for research published in what are called predatory journals. They don't peer-review manu-

scripts, and they charge authors a fee to publish. Papers from any of the thousands of known predatory journals should be treated with strong skepticism.

**Tip 2: Look for your own blind spots**

Beware of biases in your own thinking that might predispose you to fall for a particular piece of fake science news. People give their own memories and experiences more credence than they deserve, making it hard to accept new ideas and theories.

Psychologists call this quirk the availability bias. It's a useful built-in shortcut when you need to make quick decisions and don't have time to critically analyse lots of data, but it messes with your fact-checking skills.

In the fight for attention, sensational statements beat out unexciting, but more probable, facts. The tendency to overestimate the likelihood of vivid occurrences is called the salience bias. It leads people to mistakenly believe overhyped findings and trust confident politicians in place of cautious scientists.

A confirmation bias can be at work as well. People tend to give credence to news that fits their existing beliefs. This tendency helps climate change deniers and anti-vaccine advocates believe in their causes in spite of the scientific consensus against them.

Purveyors of fake news know the weaknesses of human minds and try to take advantage of these natural biases. Training can help you recognize and overcome your own

cognitive biases.

**Tip 3: Correlation is not causation**

Just because you can see a relationship between two things doesn't necessarily mean that one causes the other.

Even if surveys find that people who live longer drink more red wine, it doesn't mean a daily glug will extend your life span. It could just be that red-wine drinkers are wealthier and have better health care, for instance. Look out for this error in nutrition news.

**Tip 4: Who were the study's subjects?**

If a study used human subjects, check to see whether it was placebo-controlled. That means some participants are randomly assigned to get the treatment - like a new vaccine - and others get a fake version that they believe is real, the placebo. That way researchers can tell whether any effect they see is from the drug being tested.

The best trials are also double blind: To remove any bias or preconceived ideas, neither the researchers nor the volunteers know who is getting the active medication or the placebo.

The size of the trial is important too. When more patients are enrolled, researchers can identify safety issues and beneficial effects sooner, and any differences between subgroups are more obvious.

Clinical trials can have thousands of subjects, but some scientific studies involving people are much smaller; they should address how they have achieved the statistical

confidence they claim to have.

Check that any health research was actually done on people. Just because a certain drug works in rats or mice does not mean it will work for you.

**Tip 5: Science doesn't need 'sides'**

Although a political debate requires two opposing sides, a scientific consensus does not. When the media interpret objectivity to mean equal time, it undermines science.

**Tip 6: Clear, honest reporting might not be the goal**

To get their audience's attention, morning shows and talk shows need something exciting and new; accuracy may be less of a priority.

Many science journalists are doing their best to accurately cover new research and discoveries, but plenty of science media are better classified as entertaining rather than educational. Dr. Oz, Dr. Phil and Dr. Drew should not be your go-to medical sources.

Beware of medical products and procedures that sound too good to be true. Be skeptical of testimonials. Think about the key players' motivations and who stands to make a buck.

If you're still suspicious of something in the media, make sure the news being reported reflects what the research actually found by reading the journal article itself.

• **This article is republished from The Conversation. Marc Zimmer is a Professor of Chemistry at Connecticut College in the US.**



# BREWER SENDS OUT APPEAL TO MOTORISTS TO 'DRINK RESPONSIBLY' DURING EASTER SEASON

By Property Watch Reporter

AS Christians in the world celebrate Easter holidays to mark the end of 40 days of fasting, motorists and pedestrians have been counselled to be responsible when taking alcoholic drinks.

Serengeti Breweries Limited's Corporate Relations Director, John Wanyancha said in Dar es Salaam earlier this week that excessive alcohol consumers is not only dangerous for one's health but also dangerous when people drink and drive vehicles. "It might seem odd, even ironic, for an alcohol producer to lobby for moderate drinking. On the contrary, though, SBL believes that alcohol consumption can be a part of a balanced lifestyle," Wanyancha said.

He pointed out that SBL has been engaging the public including motor-bicycle taxi riders popularly known as 'Bodabodas' on the importance of avoiding alcohol when driving cars and motorcycles to avoid

accidents. "The company urges people to drink moderately, not more, knowing very well that it is for the common good of the society to drink responsibly," he added while noting that for many years, SBL has been conducting a 'Don't drink and drive' campaign in collaboration with traffic police force. According to authorities, the campaign has significantly contributed towards reducing road accidents by 26 percent between July 2019 and March 2020.

SBL has taken the campaign online by targeting hundreds of thousands of road and alcohol users through its DRINKiQ e-learning tool which is part of 'Don't drink and drive' campaign - a global initiative and a brainchild of Diageo, a global beverage conglomerate and SBL's holding company.

"The 'Don't drink and drive' crusade has spread to more than ten regions in the country," the SBL Director noted while stressing that experience has shown that during festive seasons of the year when many people



These motorcycle taxi operators, popularly known as 'bodaboda', were recently sensitised by SBL through a campaign its 'Don't drink and drive' campaign held Moshi municipality of Kilimanjaro Region. Photo courtesy of SBL

countrywide drive cars to visit families and friends, accidents soar.

"Typically, we could associate the holiday season in December with sensitization about the menace of drinking while driving," he stated while saying that holidays also see many people countrywide drive cars to visit families and friends. Wanyancha added, "Responsible drinking means

more than just limiting yourself to a certain number of drinks because it also means not getting drunk and not letting alcohol control your life or your relationships."

Being a brewer of alcohol, SBL has made itself responsible to the whole community and employees by creating a caretaker business model with the rationale of taking critical steps to extol the importance of

drinking responsibly, especially during Easter holidays.

Moreover, in their study to investigate alcohol prevention, Chamberlain and Solomon in 2002 said that, "Alcohol consumption negatively affects steering wheel control and braking behaviour. In other words, there is unequivocal evidence that alcohol significantly impairs driving performance, as demonstrated

through laboratory, simulator, and driving studies."

Therefore, as you dine and dance during this Easter season, the tips should constantly motivate you to keep your holiday happy and safe. Make concrete plans to drive safely if you consume alcohol to avoid yourself waking up in a coma or face any other fatalities, Wanyancha counselled.

## KWS closes picnic sites in lockdown counties in bid to slow down Covid

NAIROBI

The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has closed picnics sites in all National parks, Reserves and Sanctuaries in Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu, and Nakuru counties in a fresh bid to curb a spike in coronavirus infections.

KWS said Wednesday that the new directive will also see National Parks, Reserves and Sanctuaries which used to close at 6pm open from 6am to 5pm. National Parks, reserves and sanctuaries in all the other counties where movement of people is not restricted will, however remain open but must observe strict Covid -19 guidelines.

"Visitors are reminded that it is mandatory to wear masks, keep social distance, wash hand with soap and running water, or using a sanitiser at all our facilities," said KWS in a notice yesterday. President Uhuru Kenyatta last Friday banned movement into and out of the five counties in to curb spread of coronavirus infections.

While directing the cessation of movement in to and out of the five counties, he described them as "disease-infected areas" that are accounting for over 70 per cent of the new infections and deaths. The tough measures come as daily positivity rates average 20 per cent from an average of 3.1 per cent in January.

The new KWS development also comes barely a year after the Service reviewed its park entry fee downwards by 50 per cent for Kenyans and international visitors in a move that was aimed at resuscitating the struggling tourism sector. The new charges that took effect in July 1, 2020 for a period of one year.

Under the revised tariff, at Nairobi National Park which is frequented by visitors within the city, adult Kenyan citizens and residents have been paying Sh400 down from Sh430. Non-residents will pay \$35 (Sh3, 829) from \$43 (Sh4, 704) to visit Nairobi National Park. At Tsavo East and Tsavo West, adult citizens pay Sh500 up from Sh515. Non-residents will pay \$30 (Sh3, 282) from \$52 (Sh5, 689).

# Wind energy needs to triple to reach net zero by 2050

ABU DHABI

With 93GW - a 53% year-on-year increase - of new capacity installed, 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry, but a new report published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) warns that this growth is not sufficient to ensure the world achieves net zero by 2050.

Through technology innovations and economies of scale, the global wind power market has nearly quadrupled in size over the past decade and established itself as one of the most cost-competitive and resilient power sources across the world. In 2020, record growth was driven by a surge of installations in China and the US - the world's two largest wind power markets - who together installed 75% of the new installations in 2020 and account for over half of the world's total wind power capacity.

Today, there is now 743GW of wind power capacity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1-billion tonnes of CO2 globally - equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of South America. Yet, as the clean energy technology with the most decarbonisation potential per MW, the report shows that the current rate of wind power deployment will not be enough to achieve car-



A wind turbine at work.

bon neutrality by the middle of this century, and urgent action must be taken by policymakers now to scale up wind power at the necessary pace.

According to the scenarios that have been established by international energy bodies such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena) and the International Energy Agency (IEA), the world needs to be installing a minimum of 180GW of new wind energy eve-

ry year to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and will need to install up to 280GW annually to maintain a pathway compliant with meeting net zero by 2050. This means that the industry and policymakers need to work collaboratively and act fast to accelerate deployment

### Climate emergency approach

GWEC is calling on policymakers to take a true 'climate emergency' ap-

proach to allow a faster ramp up including: Eliminating red tape and reforming administrative structures in order to speed up and streamline licensing and permitting for projects; Carry out a massive increase in investments in grid, ports and other infrastructure needed to allow the ramp up in installations; and Re-vamp energy markets to ensure that they account for the true social costs of polluting fossil fuels and facilitate a rapid transition to a system based

on renewable energy.

"People and governments around the world are realising that we have a limited window to head off dangerous climate change. While many major economies have announced long-term net zero targets, we need to make sure that urgent and meaningful actions are taken now to make sure this ambition is matched with fast growing investment and installations of renewable power on the ground and in the water. It is really encouraging to see record growth in China and US last year, but now we need the rest of the world to step up to get us where we need to be.

"Our current market forecasts show that 469GW of new wind power capacity will be installed over the next five years. But we need to be installing at least 180GW of new capacity every year through 2025 to ensure we remain on the right path to limit global warming well below 2°C - meaning we are currently on-track to be 86GW short on average each year. And these installation levels will need to scale up to 280GW beyond 2030 to deliver carbon neutrality by mid-century. Every year we fall short, the mountain to climb in the years ahead gets higher," Ben Backwell, CEO at GWEC says.

# Absa adds another R1.43bn to Harbour Arch development

CAPE TOWN

In one of its largest deals in recent years, the Absa Commercial Property Finance division has provided a loan of R1,43bn, in addition to an existing facility of R210m, to develop the first tower of the Harbour Arch project on the Foreshore in Cape Town.

Harbour Arch Tower One

- which includes parking, street level retail, an 8th floor lifestyle podium with coffee shops, pavement cafes, and restaurants, and 432 luxury apartments - is already underway and is expected to be completed in April 2023.

"The entire Harbour Arch development represents a private equity investment of R15bn into the City of Cape Town, with a further

investment in public infrastructure upgrades and a pipeline of municipal rates and utility revenues in perpetuity. Moreover, the project will create in the region of 20,000 job opportunities for those in the building sector now and, over the longer-term, many more employment opportunities via the precincts retail, hotel and hospitality sectors," says

Amdec Group CEO, James Wilson.

Harbour Arch will be the first large-scale mixed-use precinct in the Cape Town CBD. "It will encapsulate all the principles of new urban living, and offer a safe, convenient, sustainable and enjoyable community-focused environment where Capetonians from all walks of life can live, work,

and play within an iconic landmark setting," he says. "Considering the economic downturn currently being experienced, we are thrilled to be associated with a significant development of this kind, one that augurs well for the future of Cape Town.

### Proven track record

"A fundamental principle

of Absa's business is supporting developers and investors with proven track records in their chosen fields of expertise. The Amdec Group has an outstanding reputation within the industry, and based on the quality and commercial success of their existing developments, we are comfortable to extend significant funding for the

Harbour Arch project," says Mike Mortimer, head: SA coverage, Absa Commercial Property Finance.

Amdec has partnered with Absa on a number of the Group's other projects, including The Yacht Club in Cape Town, Westbrook in Port Elizabeth, the recently completed Melrose Square at Melrose Arch, and several Evergreen Lifestyle villages.



By Francis Kajubi

## SOMA SEEKING SOCIETY'S CHANGE OF MINDSET ON GIRLS EDUCATION

**R**EADERSHIP for Learning and Development (SOMA) Institute in Dar es Salaam through its 'Hadithizetu' programme has picked Gwantwa Lucas to undergo a project on challenges facing young girls in pursuing education to levels of their dreams.

Funded by Women Fund Tanzania (WFT) the programme targets at ending silenced voices of young girls especially from rural areas by exposing challenges they face in pursuing education that is portrayed in the form of poems, animations, radio drama, paintings and story writing so as to bring about mindset changes in communities.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam mid this week, SOMA Executive Director, Demere Kitunga said youth girls go through a lot of discouragements from the families and communities in pursuing education hence denying them their fundamental right.

"Though there is progress made in realizing young girls' rights, but still a lot of effort needs to be done by bringing more stories to the mainstream media on new challenges arising in the society that set impediments on

young girls' prosperity," Kitunga said.

"In uprooting the mindset of female discrimination, creativity for transmitting feminist stories from the grass level is of crucial importance," she added while noting that last August SOMA invited young female artists for a competition of which they were required to chip-in ideas on today's major setbacks on young girls in the process of pursuing their education. After going through the entries, 12 artists were shortlisted of which five were picked to undergo training and implement their ideas.

"The appointed judges have gone through all pilot projects and have decided that her project be implemented," she said noting that all five projects were qualified but Gwantwa Lucas' entry seem to have easy access to the general public with a special focus on decision makers.

The SOMA Executive Director further added that visual arts and literature are a living tool in the fight against



Gwantwa Lucas presents her script idea for a pilot project on girls' rights to education before a panel of judges in Dar es Salaam mid this week. Photo courtesy of SOMA

discrimination towards young girls and women in rural areas hence through the funded programme, decision makers will be made to understand new challenges facing the group in the digitized world.

"Lucas will now be funded to make her project on

families' mindset towards girls. New narratives are required especially for the silenced and victimized ones so as to bring awareness of what is still going on in our homes and the society," she affirmed.

Commenting after being announced as winner,

Gwantwa, who currently works with Seasoning Palet as an accountant, said that her pilot project was called Fatuma, a play that explains the mindset of some families in intimidating girls into getting married.

"Fatuma is a play about a young woman who has

graduated but wants to pursue her further studies but needs to be married first before she proceeds with higher education," she said adding that in the play, Fatuma's parents believe that she can't make it on her own without being married first.

**John Deere to expand construction brand into 18 new countries across Africa**

CAIRO

John Deere is expanding its construction brand into 18 new countries across southern and western Africa, including South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Angola, Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Egypt, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and Sudan.

The expansion, which will include the availability of backhoe loaders, excavators, wheel loaders, motor graders, and crawler dozers, will be sold and supported by independent, newly appointed John Deere dealers, to be announced.

"This expansion provides an opportunity for us to increase our global footprint in the construction industry as we build upon our existing presence in Africa and deliver our product portfolio under the John Deere brand for the first time to these key markets," said Jaco Beyers, managing director for John Deere Africa Middle East.

In addition to the products, customers in these markets will also have access to product support through the John Deere dealer network. John Deere construction equipment will be supported and serviced by certified equipment technicians who are in turn supported by a network of regional parts distribution centres.

“

"This expansion provides an opportunity for us to increase our global footprint in the construction industry as we build upon our existing presence in Africa and deliver our product portfolio under the John Deere brand for the first time to these key markets," said Jaco Beyers, managing director for John Deere Africa Middle East.

## Kenya gives Tullow ultimatum over Turkana oil fields

NAIROBI

Kenya has set a December deadline for British firm Tullow Oil to present a comprehensive investment plan for oil production in Turkana County or risk losing concession on two exploration fields in the area.

Tullow, which struck oil in the Lokichar basin of Turkana nine years ago, is yet to develop the field for commercial production amid growing frustrations for Kenya over delayed petroleum wealth benefits. The delay has been attributed to several factors, including unfavourable global oil prices, approval delays for land and water rights, a tax dispute and Covid-19 disruptions, according to Tullow.

Petroleum and Mining Principal Secretary Andrew Kamau said yesterday the December deadline would be enforced. "Conditions are always there in the PSC (Production Sharing Contract)," he said in reference to the ultimatum.

Tullow said it was in a race to submit an investment plan by the June deadline to avert possible loss of exploration licences on blocks IOBB and I3T. "Tullow and its joint venture partners expect to complete a revised assessment



Tullow Oil tanks at its Turkana field in February 2020.

of the project by the second quarter of 2021," the British firm said.

"One of the conditions requires the Group to submit a technically and

commercially compliant Field Development Plan (FDP) with the Govern-

ment of Kenya by December 31, 2021. If the FDP is not submitted by Decem-

ber 31, 2021, the extension period will expire on December 31, 2021." The investment plan would dictate Kenya's final decision on whether to allow Tullow and its partners to proceed with the development of the Kenyan oil project next year.

When a firm first wins an oil licence, it is typically given a number of years of exclusive rights to explore. If it is successful and finds oil, its exploration permit usually entitles it to subsequently receive a production authorisation for the area, which could last up to 30 years. Tullow and its partners in the project Africa Oil and Total had initially planned to reach a final investment decision in 2019 and production of first oil between this year and next year.

Tullow in 2020 received an extension to its exploration licences in Kenya to the end of 2021 in the wake of a three-months freeze attributed to disruptions from Covid-19. Kenya agreed to extend Tullow's licences after intense negotiations between May and August 2020.

The licence deal saw the explorer lift the Force Majeure it had declared on the Turkana oil project in May last year while the government agreed to exempt the supplies brought in by British oil exploration firm from value-added tax (VAT). The Treasury had removed the VAT exemption on taxable supplies.

## MoU boosts welding sector's technology credentials

JOHANNESBURG

A new technology and data sharing collaboration between the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) will develop the role of welding in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), and boost the contribution of this scarce skill to rebuilding the South African economy.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) aims to merge CSIR development work within the 4IR technology sphere with the welding expertise and reach of the SAIW. The collaboration will see the SAIW feed the

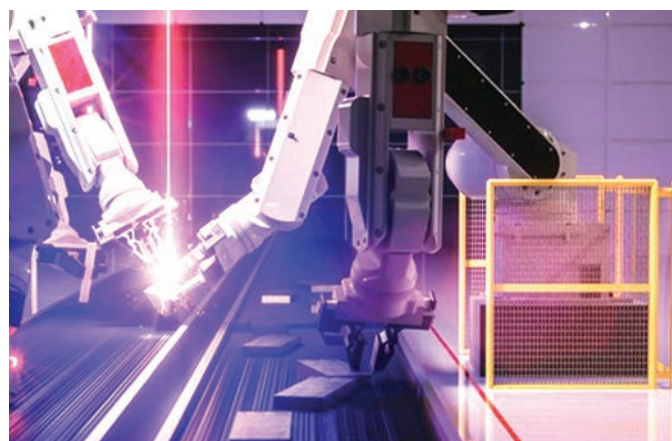
wealth of its welding-related knowledge and data into CSIR technologies to drive ongoing improvements.

"As the world is propelled forward by technological innovation, the agreement is designed to scope the current and future landscape of our sector and utilise technology pilot projects to educate, support and ultimately advance welding for the future," says SAIW executive director, John Tarboton.

Hands-on learning "Working with training institutions such as the SAIW, we aim to introduce 4IR technologies in a simple yet inclusive manner, and clearly illustrate the scope of

innovation and growth in a range of manufacturing and fabrication sectors in which welding plays a crucial role," says Dr Ajith Gopal, acting cluster executive manager, CSIR future production: manufacturing.

"We are currently establishing a Learning Factory platform at the CSIR, designed to expose attendees to 4IR technologies and learnings that will open their minds to the potential of these technologies in their fields of study or places of work. The MoU will allow SAIW students to visit the Learning Factory and experience these 4IR technologies first hand," he adds.



Modern welding machines in action.

Data mining Elaborating on the importance of the knowledge and expertise that the SAIW

brings to the table, Tarboton describes data as the "new gold standard". For example, one of the projects that could form

part of this new collaboration is the development of a specially designed app that will utilise 4IR technology to scan welds and provide useful feedback to students and fabricators in terms of their quality and areas of improvement.

"Overall we see our MoU with the CSIR as the start of a process of pinpointing knowledge and innovation touchpoints that will provide an opportunity for broader industrial skills development as well as showcase technology-based training techniques already developed and in use, such as the SAIW's current robotic welding facilitation," he says.

Robotic welding "We are currently spearheading our new look robotic welding course, which will start in April 2021, and has been specially designed to equip students with the necessary skills to manage all aspects of a robotic welding operation by giving them the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge of this particular welding technology.

The course offers a broader career path for students by serving as a stepping stone to more advanced robotic welder training through its technology partners and is the perfect example of innovation being very much part of the institute's DNA," Tarboton says.



## CONSTRUCTION

## NEW YORK

**M**ore than 110 of Apple's manufacturing partners worldwide will be fully powered by renewable energy, helping the iPhone maker advance its goals to cut emissions.

This transition will generate almost eight gigawatts of clean energy over the months, the world's second-largest smartphone maker said in a statement on Thursday. The move will help reduce over 15 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually, equivalent to taking more than 3.4 million cars off the road each year.

"We are firmly committed to helping our suppliers become carbon neutral by 2030... [we] are thrilled that companies who have joined us span industries and countries around the world, including Germany, China, the US, India and France," Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president for environment, policy and social initiatives, said.

Apple, which said the

# APPLE'S GLOBAL MANUFACTURING PARTNERS FOR WHOLESALE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY



An aerial view of the new Apple Park campus that is built in the shape of a spaceship.

bulk of its emissions rise from its product manufacturing, unveiled a plan last year to become carbon neutral across its entire business,

manufacturing supply chain and product life cycle by 2030. This means that every Apple device sold will have net zero

climate impact in the next 10 years.

The company also said it is constructing one of the largest battery projects

in the US, California Flats. It can house up to 240 megawatt-hours of energy, enough to power over 7,000 homes for

one day and will allow the company to store excess energy generated during the day to use when required. The project was approved by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors last year and it will consist of Tesla's 85 lithium-ion 'megapack' batteries.

Megapack is a massive battery that could substitute power plants that supply power when an electrical grid gets overloaded. The Cupertino-based company has invested \$2.8 billion it raised through green bonds to fund 17 renewable energy projects last year.

Apple has so far raised a total of \$4.7 billion through three green bond deals that raise money for renewable energy, climate and environmental projects. In February 2016, the company issued

its first \$1.5bn green bond, followed by its \$1bn deal in June 2017 and \$2.2bn in November 2019.

It is also financing green energy projects to cover a portion of upstream emissions, the company said. Upstream emissions are the release of greenhouse gases before the raw material for the fuel enters a processing plant.

"In a year like no other, Apple continued to work with a global network of colleagues, companies and advocates to help make our environmental efforts and everything we do a force for good in people's lives... and to work alongside the communities most impacted by climate change," said Ms Jackson.

The company's carbon footprint has decreased by 40 per cent and it has avoided more than 15 million metric tonnes of emissions through green initiatives. Apple said it is also introducing its suppliers to resources and training materials to facilitate a smooth transition to renewables. It also connects them with project developers to buy renewable energy directly from them.

## Accor opens internationally branded hotel in Bridgwater

## LONDON

Accor has opened one of the largest internationally-branded hotels in the Somerset town of Bridgwater; the 144-room ibis hotel to feature a new Plaza-design throughout. Operated by Cycas Hospitality as part of a management agreement with Zeal Hotels and Sandgate Investors, the new-build property is the first ibis hotel in the UK to showcase the brand's new Plaza-design throughout.

The new ibis Bridgwater becomes the first UK ibis hotel to feature a Keepers Kitchen and Bar; an all-day dining restaurant and bar whose locally-sourced menus champion the regional produce and support a wide range of nearby suppliers.

Set within Woodlands Court Business Park, just 13 miles from Hinkley Point C, the hotel's initial guests include key workers helping build the UK's first new nuclear power station in over 20 years. Thanks to its location by Junction 23 of the M5, ibis Bridgwater is also well placed to cater for British holidaymakers poised to explore Somerset, Devon and Cornwall once domestic travel restrictions ease.

Other facilities at the new hotel include two meeting rooms seating up to 40 people, and extensive on-site parking for 81 cars, plus free coach parking. Each of the hotel's 40 twin, 96 double and eight accessible/interconnected rooms are soundproofed and incorporate the brand's Sweet Bed concept for unparalleled comfort, plus a Smart TV with Chromecast.

Cristina de Oliveira-Frewen, SVP



Keepers Kitchen and Bar.

franchise operations, Accor Northern Europe, said: "ibis Bridgwater is the first UK hotel to feature the brand's new Plaza-design concept. It's an exciting transformation for ibis and we're enormously proud to see the design come to life in this hotel, bringing urban modernity to the interior design."

"The addition of our Keepers Bar and Restaurant makes this an exciting, modern and affordable hotel for

business and leisure guests. Together with Cycas, we have created a fantastic hotel and we look forward to developing our partnership further in the future." Wayne Andrioliakos, Cycas Hospitality's chief operating officer, said: "We're delighted that Cycas's first hotel in the South West of England also marks the opening of our first Accor property in the UK."

"We are excited to welcome the

renowned ibis brand to the Cycas family and, with an exceptional team in place, look forward to capitalising on the growing demand for contemporary accommodation for both business and leisure travellers visiting the Bridgwater area." The hotel becomes the third property opened by Cycas Hospitality in the UK this year, following the opening of the dual-brand Moxie and Residence Inn Slough in February.

## Naspers hires Airbnb, Amazon veteran to lead global classified advert business

## NEW YORK

Africa's largest company, Naspers Ltd, has hired a top Airbnb and former Amazon executive to lead its global online classifieds business, it said on Thursday, as the technology investor looks to shore up contributions from core businesses.

The company's online classifieds business, clubbed under OLX Group, contributes 5% to overall revenues and is the biggest among an array of businesses such as payments and fintech, food delivery and education technology.

However, its size is largely overshadowed by Naspers' blockbuster investment in Chinese tech giant Tencent Holdings, which owns China's biggest messaging app, WeChat, and accounts for more than three-fourths of its revenues.

Romain Voog, who was the vice president for worldwide sales operation and geographies at Airbnb, has joined Prosus NV from April 1 as the chief executive officer of OLX Group, it said in a statement. Prosus is a Naspers subsidiary that houses all of its overseas assets including Tencent and online classifieds business, which is spread across 30 countries.

Voog was the president of Amazon's operations in France before his stint at Airbnb. He takes over from Martin Scheepbouwer, who led OLX Group for nine years, the company said. "His (Voog's) experience inside customer-centric organisations such as Amazon and Airbnb will be an asset to OLX Group as we drive customer-centric innovation in the world of classifieds," said Bob van Dijk, CEO of Prosus and Naspers, in an emailed response to Reuters.

## UAE owners of British rental properties may face higher tax bills

## LONDON

UAE owners of second homes in the UK may have to pay full business rates if their property does not meet tighter tax rules for holiday lets, according to the British government.

In a bid to clamp down on owners pretending their homes are holiday letting companies, second property owners can only register for business rates if their properties "are genuine holiday lets", the Treasury said on Tuesday.

In England, many holiday lets are liable to pay business rates, rather

than council tax, when an owner declares that they intend to let their property in the next year, the Treasury said. These owners can also claim relief of up to 100 per cent.

"The change announced today will ensure owners of properties that are not genuine businesses are not able to reduce their tax liability by declaring that a property is available for let, but make little or no realistic effort to actually let it out," the Treasury said in a statement.

In parts of the country with a high proportion of second homes,

councils and local MPs have campaigned for years to get the loophole closed and ensure that second homeowners pay appropriate tax rates.

The previous system let unscrupulous owners make no contribution towards local services in the areas where they own properties. In Cornwall, for example, media reports estimate the county loses as much as £10 million (\$13.8m) a year because of holiday homes not paying business rates or council tax.

North Cornwall MP Scott Mann welcomed the

government's clamp down and said it was "wrong" that second homeowners pay no business rates and are exempt from council tax through the loophole.

"Addressing this issue of fairness in the taxation system will be especially welcome in communities such as Padstow, Rock and Boscastle," he said. The move was among 30 tax updates, consultations and documents published by the Treasury in its 'Tax policies and consultation update', dubbed Taxation Day, on Tuesday, just weeks after the budget.

The government is

looking to strengthen tax policymaking and modernise the system as part of a 10-year plan to build a "trusted, modern tax system." Other changes saw the government's Air Passenger Duty consultation published, which aims to cut the cost of domestic flights across the UK.

The consultation is also looking for input on supporting the UK's pledge to hit net-zero emissions by 2050 by boosting the number of international distance bands, where those that travel the furthest pay the most duty

- a move reinforcing the principle that the "polluter pays."

However, Rain Newton-Smith, chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry, said while the tax day announcements included some mention of how the tax system can support the UK in reaching net zero, "it's nowhere near enough." "More work will be needed to 'green' the UK's tax system," she said.

Another significant move by the Treasury was the decision to cut inheritance tax form-filling for estates that fall

below the main threshold for the levy, which can be up to £1m for the surviving partner in a couple. The decision could benefit more than 200,000 estates every year. Financial secretary to the Treasury Jesse Norman said the tax updates are part of the government's pledge to increase the transparency, discipline and accessibility of tax policymaking.

"These measures will help us to upgrade and digitise the UK tax system, tackle tax avoidance and fraud, among other things," he said. Separately,

UK finance minister Rishi Sunak said on Tuesday that an international deal to agree new rules on corporate taxation is within reach, a move that could offer fresh clarity for businesses operating digitally across borders.

"Digitalisation has brought enormous benefits to consumers and businesses, but it's also highlighted that the current international tax framework just isn't fit for purpose," Mr Sunak told a Bloomberg event on Tuesday. "That solution is within our grasp and I think that is positive."



## WORLD

## Myanmar protesters burn military's constitution as UN envoy warns of 'imminent bloodbath'

MYANMAR activists burned copies of a military-framed constitution yesterday two months after the junta seized power, as a U.N. special envoy warned of the risk of a bloodbath because of an intensified crackdown on anti-coup protesters.

Myanmar has been rocked by protests since the army overthrew the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1 citing unsubstantiated claims of fraud in a November election.

Suu Kyi and other members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) have been detained.

The junta has accused her of several minor crimes including illegally importing six handheld radios and breaching coronavirus protocols but a domestic media outlet reported on Wednesday she could be charged with treason, which can be punishable by death.

But one of her lawyers, Min Min Soe, said no new charges were announced at a hearing in her case on Thursday.

Her lawyers have said the charges she faces were trumped up.

The U.N. envoy's warning of a bloodbath follows a flare-up in fighting between the army and ethnic minority insurgents in frontier regions.

At least 20 soldiers were killed and four military trucks destroyed in clashes with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), one of Myanmar's most powerful rebel groups, DVB news reported.

Reuters could not immediately verify the reports and a junta spokesman did not answer calls seeking comment.

Myanmar military aircraft have started bombing positions of another group, the Karen National Union (KNU), for the first time in more than 20 years and thousands of villagers have fled from their homes, many into Thailand.

In cities across Myanmar there were candle-lit protests overnight and marches at dawn on Thursday, according to media and photographs on social media.

Protests gathered in several places on Thursday and two people were wounded when police opened fire in the central town of Monywa, according to witnesses posts on social media.

The coup has led to new calls for unity among those opposed to military rule, in particular city-based democracy campaigners and ethnic minority forces battling in frontier regions.

Ousted members of parliament, mostly from Suu Kyi's party, have vowed to set up



Anti-coup protesters burn constitution books at Tarmwe township in Yangon, Myanmar yesterday. (AP)

a federal democracy in a bid to address a long-standing demand from minority groups for autonomy.

They also announced the scrapping of a 2008 constitution drawn up by the military that enshrines its control over politics. The military has long rejected the idea of a federal system, seeing itself as the central power vital to holding the fractious country together.

Social media posts showed copies of the constitution, real and symbolic, being burned at rallies and in homes during what one activist called a "constitution bonfire ceremony".

"The new day begin here!" Dr Sasa, the international envoy for the ousted parliamentarians said on Twitter, referring to what for now is a largely symbolic move.

### SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTER IN CHINA

The U.N. special envoy on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgene, told the 15-member U.N. Security Council that the military was not capable of managing the country, and warned the situation on the ground would worsen.

The council must consider "potentially significant action" to reverse the course of events as "a bloodbath is imminent",

she said.

The council has expressed concern and condemned violence against protesters, but dropped language calling the takeover a coup and threatening possible further action due to opposition by China, Russia, India and Vietnam.

At least 536 civilians have been killed in protests, 141 of them on Saturday, the bloodiest day of the unrest, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

The United States on Wednesday urged China, which has significant economic and strategic interests in Myanmar, to use its influence to hold to account those responsible for the coup.

While Western countries have condemned the coup, China has been more cautious and the government's top diplomat Wang Yi called for stability during a meeting with his Singaporean counterpart on Wednesday.

Wang said China welcomed and supported a long-standing principle of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) of not interfering in each other's internal affairs, even though there have been signs in recent weeks that adherence to the principle is wearing thin.

Agencies

## Global study on COVID-19 origins finds lab origin 'extremely unlikely'

BEIJING

THE WHO-convened global study of the origins of COVID-19 found that introduction through a laboratory incident is "extremely unlikely," according to Chinese experts participating in the study.

Experts from the WHO and China jointly conducted the research in China and made an assessment of the likelihood of possible pathways, said Liang Wannian (pictured), team leader of the Chinese side of the WHO-China joint team studying the COVID-19 origins, at a press briefing on Wednesday.

According to a report on the China Part of the study, COVID-19 introduction through an intermediate host is "likely to very likely," introduction through cold/food chain products is "possible," and introduction through a laboratory

incident is "extremely unlikely," Liang noted.

The coronaviruses most highly related to SARS-CoV-2 are found in bats and pangolins, however, neither of the viruses identified so far from these mammalian species is sufficiently similar to SARS-CoV-2 to serve as its direct progenitor, Liang said.

In addition to these findings, minks and cats are found highly susceptible to the COVID-19 virus.

### REPORT STANDS TEST OF HISTORY

The report is based on existing data and evidence and can stand the test of history, Liang said.

China is the first country to conduct a joint study on the origins of COVID-19 with the WHO.

Liang said the history of in-



fectious diseases tells us that it generally takes a long time to identify the origin of a new infectious disease and have the findings accepted worldwide, noting that the place a virus is first reported is not necessarily the originating point of the virus.

He added that further tracing of COVID-19 origins will be carried out around the globe, based on the findings of the

study in China.

Liang pointed out that the assumption that China did not provide original data for the study of the origins of the novel coronavirus does not hold water.

Chinese and foreign experts have been carrying out continuous research and analysis together in Wuhan, and there is no difference between the information possessed by Chinese experts and foreign experts, he said.

Chinese and foreign experts have been working quite closely during their research, he stressed. "According to Chinese law, some data cannot be taken away or photographed."

### PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Chinese experts participating in the study have suggested efforts to expand a

global database for COVID-19 and the scope of the search for early cases worldwide.

Liang said that after serious discussions with their WHO peers, the experts recommended expanding a unified global database that includes molecular, genome sequence, clinical, epidemiological, zoonotic and environment monitoring information and findings regarding the disease.

The experts also called for continuous efforts to search for potential early cases of the disease in a wider range of locations around the world.

They suggested scientists worldwide conduct more diversified research in different countries and regions on animal virus hosts, and enhance their study of the role of cold chains and relevant products in the transmission of the virus.

Xinhua

## Suez blockage may lead to large reinsurance claims, broker Willis Re says

LONDON

THE blockage of the Suez Canal is likely to lead to large reinsurance claims, adding to upward pressure on marine reinsurance rates, James Vickers, chair of reinsurance broker Willis Re International, told Reuters.

Formal investigations began this week into how the giant container ship Ever Given ran aground in the canal, shutting down shipping in the major

global waterway for almost a week.

The incident and its impact on hundreds of ships delayed in the canal would be a "large loss" for insurance market Lloyd's of London, its chairman Bruce Carnegie-Brown said this week, while Fitch Ratings said global reinsurers were likely to face hundreds of millions of euros of claims.

Vickers also said reinsurance losses were "not going to be a

small amount of money". The blockage was the latest in a growing number of man-made disasters leading to reinsurance losses, on top of a list of natural catastrophes in the past year, he said.

Reinsurers help insurers cover claims for major events such as hurricanes, in return for part of the premium. Reinsurers typically raise rates after they experience large losses.

Even before the Suez inci-

dent, the marine market "didn't need much encouragement to keep going in an upward direction", Vickers said.

Global marine reinsurance rates were generally seeing "high single digit" percentage point increases, Willis Re said in its April reinsurance renewals report on Thursday.

Marine reinsurance premiums have been rising for the past few years after several years of falling rates, as Lloyd's

of London and other firms have cut back on loss-making lines, reducing competition. The COVID-19 pandemic has also put upward pressure on reinsurance rates across the board.

Elsewhere, the U.S. property reinsurance market has been hit by a number of catastrophes including Winter Storm Uri in the United States in February, with rates up by as much as 25% in April, the report showed.

Agencies

## South Korea looking at registering Russian Sputnik V vaccine

SEOUL

SOUTH Korea is looking at registering the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, with all necessary documents being handed over to the South Korean side at the beginning of the year, the Russian embassy in Seoul said on its Facebook account on Tuesday.

"The issue of the registration of Russian anti-coronavirus medicines, including Sputnik V, is being considered by the South Korean authorities. All documents that are needed for the Russian vaccine registration were referred to South Korea's authorized agencies at the beginning of the current year," it said.

The embassy recalled that mass vaccination, including foreigners, was to kick off in South Korea in the third quarter.

South Korea's Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said in January that the country did not rule out possible purchase of the Russian vaccine. This position was repeated by chief of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency Jung Eun-kyeong in February.

In November 2020, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) signed an agreement with South Korea's GL Rapha on the production of more than 150 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine a year in South Korea.

The first batch of South Korea-manufactured vaccines was delivered to Moscow in late December 2020. **Agencies**

## Stranded Australians file UN legal action against govt

CANBERRA

AUSTRALIANS stranded overseas amid the coronavirus pandemic have filed legal action against the federal government with the United Nations (UN).

A group, called "StrandedAussies.org", said in documents lodged with the UN Human Rights Committee that Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government has "arbitrarily breached their right to return to the land of their birth or citizenship."

The National Cabinet - which is composed of Morrison and state and territory leaders - introduced a cap on international arrivals to Australia in July 2020 to prevent the hotel quarantine system from being overwhelmed.

The stranded Australian group said the cap has prevented them from returning home with airlines cutting flights to Australia and significantly increasing prices.

"International law recognizes the strong bond between individuals and their homeland and no respectable government would impose travel caps to prevent, for over a year, its citizens from returning if they are prepared to do quarantine," Geoffrey Robertson, a lawyer advising the group, said on Wednesday.

"Both our political parties have, in the past, done what they can to help Australians overseas but Mr Morrison is behaving as if in a moral vacuum - he does not seem to care very much about the suffering caused to fellow Australians."

Morrison in September promised to bring "as many people home if not all by Christmas".

At the time 24,000 citizens or residents overseas had registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to return to Australia.

However, as of late March the figure had risen to 36,206 - more than 4,000 of whom were considered vulnerable.

Deborah Tellis, a spokesperson for "StrandedAussies.org", said they were "a group of ordinary Aussies who have been left high and dry by an unfeeling government."

"The government is responsible for quarantine and has a duty to allow its citizens to return and enter into it - it should force the states to admit us and provide for them to increase their quarantine facilities. What it must not do is to breach international law," she said.

"The damage it is doing to many stranded Australians is terrible - they are unable to get back to see dying parents or sick relatives, unable to return to take up jobs or start university courses. By going to the UN, we hope to highlight what an unfeeling government Mr Morrison heads."

Agencies



**Both our political parties have, in the past, done what they can to help Australians overseas but Mr Morrison is behaving as if in a moral vacuum - he does not seem to care very much about**

## China has administered nearly 65 million COVID-19 vaccine doses

AS of March 14, China had administered 64.98 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the public, said Li Bin, deputy director of the National Health Commission (NHC) at a press conference recently.

The groups at high risk of infection are prioritized in the vaccination program, followed by the elderly and people with underlying health condition, Li said, adding that those who do not belong to the prior two groups but still wish to be inoculated are also covered.

According to him, the groups at high risk of infection include essential workers in key sectors, as well as people working in border regions and labor-intensive industries.

Relevant departments enhanced efforts to coordinate the demand and supply ends, and standardized vaccine storage and transport to improve delivery efficiency and guarantee supply, Li said. Local authorities also established enough vaccination sites in accordance with situations, he added.

The country also established a nationwide tracking platform to strictly implement the control measures for the whole vaccine process, Li introduced. Disease control departments and vaccination sites are also monitoring and recording the temperature of vaccines in storage and transportation to ensure their safety.

Massive production of the four

conditionally approved COVID-19 vaccines has started, and the vaccination demand is well satisfied, said Yulong, chief engineer at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).

China has received positive response for its vaccine aid and export to other countries. Right now, China's vaccine manufacturers are constantly expanding, Tian said, adding that their production capacity is being continuously released and their output will gradually increase.

"We are confident that output and production capacity of vaccines in every phase on the year could meet demand," he remarked.

China also can ensure the smooth

and systematic operation of the entire supply chain for vaccine production, including supplying the necessary raw materials, cold-chain logistics and equipment for administering the shots.

Tian added the safety of vaccines, from production to transportation to inoculation, will be the top priority.

While expanding production capacity, China is also ensuring the safety of vaccines on every link of the production chain. According to Tian, the MIIT and medical products administration departments are jointly working to guarantee inspection periods of every batch of vaccines.

Yuan Lin, an official with the National Medical Products Administration introduced that after years of efforts, China has established a relatively comprehensive supervision system, a complete legal system, and a system of quality standards for vaccines.

Yuan noted that medical products administration departments organized inspections of relevant vaccine workshops to ensure that they were licensed, and arranged for expert inspectors from national and local drug regulatory authorities to carry out inspections and spot checks regularly or periodically. A team of at least two inspectors is stationed in each of the man-

ufacturers to supervise different aspects using various measures, to supervise and guide companies to improve their management system, he added.

All COVID-19 vaccines used in China have gone through clinical studies according to relevant standards, and been approved by the National Medical Products Administration, Li said, adding that they were put into use after strict examination.

Li said all vaccines must be monitored and have their temperatures recorded at regular intervals to ensure that they meet the requirements regarding temperature environment and transportation.

People's Daily



## Foreign ministry: 'Genocide in Xinjiang' another US lie

CHINA called the "genocide in Xinjiang", fabricated in a new United States report, a "preposterous lie", saying on Wednesday that its conspiracy to disrupt China from the inside will not work.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that the allegations against the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region made in the US State Department's 2020 human rights report were false, insulted the Chinese people and trampled on international law and basic norms governing international relations.

A genocide finding must be the product of an authoritative legal procedure and must survive strict scrutiny of the facts and withstand the test of time, Hua said at a daily news conference.

No state, organization or individual is qualified and entitled to arbitrarily determine that another state has committed genocide, she said, and "no country should use this crime as a political label to conduct malicious manipulation".

The investigation reports the US keeps citing and hyping up are disinformation fabricated by anti-China sources like Adrian Zenz, and the few so-called witnesses are actors trained by the US, while the media concerned act as the microphone to spread the rumors, Hua said.

Their clumsy performance has been revealed and refuted by Xinjiang as well as many foreigners, including those from the US, she said.

Hua said that the "genocide" claim slandered China's ethnic policies



and Xinjiang's development achievements.

The label only exposes the hypocrisy of the US, which boasts about championing the rule of law, and it serves as further evidence that the US strategic conspiracy is attempting to create the so-called Xinjiang issue to contain China's development, she said.

"We can say that China's policies regarding ethnic minorities are much better and more equal than those of the US. Ethnic minorities in China enjoy much greater happiness, equality, and dignity than those in the US."

The vicious and wanton accusations and insults that the US hurls at Xinjiang are a reflection of its own crimes and sins committed in the past, Hua said, citing evidence including the genocide of Native Americans, military invasions of other countries, and inhumane treatment of illegal immigrants at the US-Mexico border.

"The US has no right to criticize China on human rights issues, ... and it is time for US politicians to wake up," she said.

Xinhua

## Clinical trial evaluating Moderna's COVID-19 variant vaccine starts in US

WASHINGTON

A NEW Phase 1 clinical trial has started in the United States to evaluate Moderna's investigational vaccine which is designed to protect against the B.1.351 coronavirus variant, the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced on Wednesday.

The trial, led and funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the NIH, will evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine, known as mRNA-1273.351, in adult volunteers.

The trial will enroll approximately 210 healthy adult volunteers at four clinical research sites in the United States, according to the NIH.

"The B.1.351 SARS-CoV-2 variant, first identified in the Republic of South Africa, has been detected in at least nine states in the United States," said NIAID Director Anthony Fauci.

"Preliminary data show that the COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States should provide an adequate degree of protection against SARS-CoV-2 variants. However, out of an abundance of caution, NIAID has continued its partnership with Moderna to evaluate this variant vaccine candidate should there be a need for an updated vaccine," Fauci said.

The variant vaccine candidate differs from the currently-authorized Moderna vaccine in that it delivers instructions for making the SARS-CoV-2 spike that incorporates key mutations in the B.1.351 virus variant, according to the NIH.

In addition to the Phase 1 clinical trial, investigators at NIAID's Vaccine Research Center are collaborating with Moderna to evaluate mRNA-1273.351 in animal models.

Xinhua



Health care worker prepares a dose of COVID-19 vaccine at a new vaccination site in the California Polytechnic State University in Pomona, Los Angeles County, California. (Xinhua)

## President Macron orders schools closure, nationwide partial lockdown to rein in COVID-19 resurgence

PARIS

TO slow down the coronavirus spread and pave the way for a gradual return to normalcy by mid-May, schools in France will be closed for three weeks and restriction on people's movement, already in force in many regions, will be extended to the whole territory, President Emmanuel Macron announced on Wednesday evening.

Starting from Monday, students, except the children of medics, will move to remote learning for one week before going on two-week holiday.

Thereafter, the country's nurseries and primary schools will reopen from April 26, while middle and high schools will be allowed to return to the classroom from May 3. University students will be allowed to go in for only one day a week.

"It is the best solution to slow down the virus while preserving education and the future of our children," Macron said in his televised address to the nation. "School is non-negotiable."

From Saturday, shops not selling basic goods will have to close, people must stay at home, work remotely and sign a document if they plan to



President Emmanuel Macron

travel to over 10 km from their homes. Inter-city travel is banned for at least one month.

The French government had already introduced similar rules in 19 departments, including Paris and its surrounding areas, and the effects "remain too limited as the epidemic accelerates," Macron said.

"We are experiencing an acceleration of the epidemic because of the variant which risks making us lose control," he added. "We will lose control if we do not move now."

On Wednesday, France reported 59,038 new coronavirus infections, up from 30,702 registered a day before, bringing the country's cumulative number of COVID-19 cases to 4,644,423, of whom 95,667 died, a jump of 303 in the past 24 hours.

A total of 5,053 patients were in intensive care units, filling up the country's 5,100 resuscitation beds.

France went into a nearly two-month strict lockdown last spring to cope with the first wave of the epidemic. The government ordered the closure of schools, universities and non-essential shops. People's move-

ment was banned except necessary travels to buy basic food, medical emergency and to work if it cannot be done remotely.

A less stringent lockdown was imposed again at the end of October last year, with schools remaining open.

Since the beginning of March, the French hospital system came under severe strain due to a sharp spike in the number of infections, triggering calls for a new lockdown.

Macron said that it was vital "to vaccinate as quickly as possible, and the most fragile," calling vaccination "the key to reconnect with life, the key to reopen our country."

He hoped that terraces of cafes and restaurants could receive people and some cultural venues may resume activities "under strict rules" from mid-May. Xinhua

## Russia to provide adequate response to Australian sanctions, says Foreign Ministry

MOSCOW

RUSSIA will provide an adequate response to sanctions, imposed by Australia against four Russian companies and one person over the construction of the Kerch (Crimean) Bridge, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Wednesday.

"Displaying an obvious lack of

independence in foreign policy and unwillingness to objectively assess the situation in Crimea, Australia supports all anti-Russian outbursts of the US and its satellites, however ridic-



ulous they may look. Naturally, unfriendly steps of the Australian ruling circles will not be left without an adequate response from our side," she noted.

The commentary underscores that "the official Canberra, adhering to the principle of notorious Western solidarity," embarked on a course towards the degradation of Russian-Australi-

an relations.

On Tuesday, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne stated that Canberra imposed financial sanctions and entry ban against one Russian person and four Russian companies, involved in the construction and operation of the Kerch Strait Bridge.

Agencies

## Teen who took Floyd arrest video cries on stand

WASHINGTON

THE Minneapolis teenager who took cellphone video of the arrest of George Floyd cried on Tuesday as she was shown an image from the recording at the trial of a former police officer charged with his murder.

Over the first two days of witness testimony, prosecutors have shown the jury video taken from multiple angles, including the young woman's video of then-Minneapolis Police Department officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, pressing his knee into the neck of a dying Floyd, a handcuffed 46-year-old black man, for about nine minutes on May 25, 2020, in Minnesota's largest city.

Darnella Frazier, 18, said she was walking with her 9-year-old cousin to buy some snacks at a Cup Foods store, where a worker had moments before accused Floyd of using a fake US\$20 bill, when she saw police arresting Floyd on the road outside.

The footage led to the largest protests in the United States in decades, with daily marches against police brutality inflicted on African Americans.

The heightened national tensions following Floyd's death unfolded in a country already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic.

Witness Darnella Frazier's voice quavered when prosecutors brought up a still from her video, showing the moment when then-Minneapolis Police Department officer Derek Chauvin, his knee on Floyd's neck, appears to look directly into Frazier's camera lens. She said Chauvin had "this cold look, heartless"



In this image from video, defense lawyer Eric Nelson (left) and former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin (right) listen as Assistant Minnesota Attorney General Matthew Frank, questions witness Donald Williams on Tuesday at the Hennepin County Courthouse in Minneapolis. AP

### Terrified and scared

Frazier told the jury that in Floyd, she saw "a man terrified, scared, begging for his life", so she ensured her cousin was safely inside the store and out of sight before taking out her cellphone.

Frazier's voice quavered when prosecutors brought up a still from her video, showing the moment when Chauvin, his knee on Floyd's neck, appears to look directly into Frazier's camera lens. She said Chauvin had "this cold look, heartless".

Chauvin's lawyer, Eric Nelson, claimed in court documents Floyd was likely to have died from the fentanyl he consumed, or a combination of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and underlying health conditions. Not the result of the knee pressing down on his neck, he said.

Chauvin's lawyers have also said he was distracted from "the care" of Floyd by the taunting bystanders who had joined Frazier on the sidewalk.

Frazier said Chauvin continued to kneel on Floyd while then-fellow police officer Tou Thao held the crowd of about 15 back, even when one of the onlookers identified herself as a firefighter.

Genevieve Hansen, 27, a Minneapolis firefighter and emergency medical technician, testified that she pleaded with officers to take Floyd's pulse. She also called the emergency police helpline, the third witness to do so.

Donald Williams, a professional mixed martial arts fighter, can be heard on the videos of the arrest of Floyd screaming insults at Chauvin and demanding police check Floyd's

pulse.

He told jurors that Chauvin was using his knee in a "blood choke" on Floyd, a wrestling move to knock an opponent unconscious, and a "shimmy" move to tighten pressure on Floyd's neck.

"You can see that he's trying to gasp for air," Williams, 33, said of Floyd.

Williams testified he called the emergency number after paramedics took Floyd away, "because I believed I witnessed a murder", he said.

"I felt I needed to call the police on the police."

Frazier told the jury that in Floyd, she saw "a man terrified, scared, begging for his life", so she ensured her cousin was safely inside the store and out of sight before taking out her cellphone.

Agencies

## Britain-EU row over vaccine likely to continue amid supply shortages

LONDON

TENSIONS remain unabated between Britain and the European Union (EU) as a spat over COVID-19 vaccines is likely to go on due to continued shortage of supplies.

### WAR OF WORDS

The European Commission recently unveiled a revised version of its export transparency mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines, highlighting reciprocity and proportionality for assessing whether

these vaccines can be exported to non-EU countries.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, while accusing the British-based AstraZeneca of failing to honor its EU contract, has warned that the bloc might restrict vaccine exports to countries which have higher vaccination rates, clearly referring to Britain.

In a more dramatic development, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said reciprocity and proportionality for assessing whether

Europe would not let itself be subjected to "a kind of blackmail" by Britain over supplies of COVID-19 vaccines.

Meanwhile, the British government has strongly opposed any blockade of vaccine exports from the EU.

"I don't think that blockades, of either vaccines or medicines or ingredients for vaccines, are sensible and I think that the long-term damage done by blockades can be very big," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told lawmakers recently, implying

that future investments might be stalled in "countries where arbitrary blockades are imposed."

Asked directly if he would rule out taking retaliatory action should a blockade be imposed, Johnson said: "Our priority is to continue the vaccine rollout to vaccinate the British people. We'll do everything necessary that we can to ensure that happens."

Only 12.3 percent of all adults in the EU have received the first dose of COVID vaccine, according to the lat-

est figures published by the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

Meanwhile, in Britain, more than half of all adults have received the first dose. The government insisted the country is "on course" to meet its target of offering a first dose to the top nine priority groups, including the over-50s, by April 15 and all adults by the end of July.

Sarah Schiffling, an expert on supply chain management at Liverpool John Moores University, told Xinhua that

both sides could be harmed if a block of vaccine supply is implemented.

"I don't think it is very helpful to have these sort of terms of a vaccine war, blackmail, selfishness ... we have to acknowledge that this has been a global issue," said Schiffling.

"It's not really in anybody's interest to make this a battle of retaliation. You have these very complex international supply chains and there's just no way to disentangle those and to completely cut each other off. That will harm both

parties very significantly," she said.

### POST BREXIT TIES

The battle of the vaccine came just months after Britain officially abandoned its status as an EU member after the Brexit transition period ended at the end of last year.

"This comes at a very crucial point in time after the UK has left the EU and now we've got disagreements about exports between the UK and the EU," Schiffling noted.

Agencies



## Tanzanian boxer's ABU Super Welterweight bout rescheduled

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

THE African Boxing Union (ABU) Super Welterweight title bout between Tanzanian pugilist Hassan Mwakinyo and Zimbabwean Brendon Denes will now take place at the Next Door Arena in Dar es Salaam on May 28.

The bout was earlier scheduled for March 26 at the same venue, but, due to the 21 days of national mourning for the late Tanzania President John Magufuli, the organisers postponed it to the new date.

Jackson Group Sports Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kelvin Twissa said all boxers, set to fight in the day's fights, have been informed about the changes due to the current situation in the country.

He noted: "As we continue to come to terms with the current reality, it is with great consideration that we have decided to move the date of the 'Rumble-in-Dar Second Edition' from March 26 to May 28."

This is a difficult time for nation and the people of Tanzania, it is only right that we take time to mourn the passing of our late president," said Twissa.

Twissa said their commitment to the 'Rumble-in-Dar Second Edition' remains unchanged along with their partners, Global Boxing Stars and Epic Sports and Entertainment.

He said they are looking forward to bringing professional, world class boxing in the country as they have done for the past two events held late last year and January this year.

"We thank all our partners being KCB Bank, Tanzania Tourist Board, Onomo Hotel, M-Bet and local broadcast partners, Plus Networks Limited and DStv Multi-Choice Tanzania for their commitment in seeing 'Rumble In Dar' Second Edition is a true game changer for boxing fans, as well as international and local boxers whom will be fighting that night," he said.

He explained that the event aims to bring together different industries and ensure combined efforts in promoting boxing in Tanzania.

As per new date, the arrival of the foreign boxers and officials has been revised accordingly and all professional boxing stakeholders would be informed.

The bout has been organised to enable Mwakinyo to be listed in the World Boxing Council (WBC) records.

All boxers are now continuing with training ahead of the day's fights, for which general seats are on sale for 50,000/- each, VIP seats cost 200,000/- each.

The tickets are available through nilipe and ontapp services. According to Twissa, they expect to have a tough fight, taking into account the status of each of the boxers.

There will be undercards in the day, whereby domestic boxer Jongo Jongo will fight for the ABU Cruiserweight belt against Olanrewaju Durudora from Nigeria, while the other domestic pugilist Ibrahim Mgendera will take on Evans Takunda Husayihwevhu from Zimbabwe.



Mwanahamisi Omary

## Mwanahamisi opens up on poor start to professional spell in Morocco

BY CORRESPONDENT ISMAIL

TANO

TANZANIAN female soccer player, Mwanahamisi Omary, who is lately plying her trade in Morocco, says her new side, Chabab Atlas Khénifra, will work hard to post good results after experiencing a humiliating loss in a recent Moroccan Women's Championship Division One game.

The winger had previously been turning out for Tanzania's Simba Queens, the Mainland Women Premier League's defending champions. Mwanahamisi's outfit Chabab Atlas Khénifra conceded 6-0 loss to Moroccan Women's Championship Division One leaders, Association Sportive des Forces Armées Royales (AS FAR) in a tie held at Centre Sportif des FAR venue on Sunday.

The Tanzanian winger pointed out it is a disappointing outcome, insisting she and her team mates will work on their weaknesses.

The clash was her first action in the Chabab Atlas Khénifra's kits.

Mwanahamisi, who played all 90 minutes for her club in the match, said an early dismissal of Chabab

Atlas Khénifra's first choice keeper, Chaimae Chawni, was one of reasons for the loss.

Chaimae was sent off early on in the clash and the opponents further won two penalties, which were converted.

Mwanahamisi was tasked with playing as a main striker alongside team mates, Rania Kostani and Nouhaila Oubail, with Chabab Atlas Khénifra using a 4-3-3 approach, which is as well deployed by Simba Queens.

The winger pointed out: "Soccer has three results, winning, draw and loss, so we conceded defeat. I'm thankful I was trusted and I played for the first time, I can see how difficult the league is here."

"Our number one goalkeeper was shown a red card early, a situation which upset us and our opponents got two quick penalties," she stated.

Mwanahamisi joined Chabab Atlas Khénifra, insisting she moved to the outfit in an effort to seek new challenges and more success.

"I have played in my home country's women top flight for a long time, it is time for me to look for new challenges and garner more experi-

ence in another country," she disclosed.

She noted: "I thank God and officials of my former outfit Simba Queens, I'm very happy, I'm looking for success and prosperous life."

Meanwhile, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club head coach Florent Ibenge believes they can get good results when they lock horns with Tanzania's Simba SC in this season's CAF Champions League's Group A tie, which will take place in Dar es Salaam tomorrow.

Former Simba's coach, Abdallah Kibadeni, has nevertheless stated the match is tough for the hosts and they should deploy discipline.

Simba will play AS Vita Club in a tie that will see the hosts pursue one point so they can book a place in the showpiece's last eight.

In the two teams' first encounter in the competition, which took place in Kinshasa, Simba cruised to 1-0 win over AS Vita Club.

Ibenge stated Simba were the better squad in the previous match and that is what helped them get good results away.

The tactician pointed out that he believes his outfit

can turn tables on Simba on Saturday.

While Ibenge made the statement, Kibadeni warned his former side that tomorrow's tie is tough for them.

He disclosed: "The main thing for Simba is they should respect AS Vita Club, although they won the previous match, the latter are an outfit with a lot of experience at the international level."

Kibadeni stated: "Of course AS Vita Club will come to our country with the intention of revenging for the defeat, if Simba were able to keep AS Vita Club at bay at the latter's backyard, they will be out to do the same to Simba."

"Simba should play with respect and fight really hard to get good results in the match," he noted.

Should Simba come out victorious, they will notch 13 points and eventually qualify for the last eight, regardless of the outcome of their final Group A match against Al Ahly in Egypt.

Simba lead Group A with 10 points, followed by Al Ahly with seven points, AS Vita Club is placed third with four points and Al Merreikh of Sudan are placed last with one point.



Hassan Mwakinyo

## Yanga should not put Migne under pressure - Mogella

BY CORRESPONDENT NASSIR NCHIMBI

FORMER Simba SC forward Zamoyoni Mogella has explained why new Yanga head coach Sebastien Migne should be given ample time when he arrives to take charge of the Mainland Tanzania Premier League record champions.

The French tactician is understood to be in advanced talks to take over at Jangwani Street-based outfits after the team had offloaded coach Cedric Kaze.

Migne, former Kenya's national side 'Harabee Stars' head coach, is expected to take charge of Yanga when the season will resume after a 21-day break.

Yanga, before the season went into a break to honour former President, the late John Pombe Magufuli, were leading the top flight with 50 points.

However, Mogella, who also played for Yanga, stated that the Frenchman should not be put under intense pressure especially this season.

"He needs magic or a miracle in order to ensure he does a great job because the remaining time of the season is not enough for him to have a complete overhaul of the club," the retired forward said.

He stated: "He would need time and so he should not be judged for what he will do within a short period and seen as one who cannot handle the club."

Mogella insisted: "Migne is the right coach but Yanga fans should not put him under so much pressure to deliver so much this season."

With technological advancement it is easy to say Migne has been busy analysing Yanga players through Premier League matches' videos provided, as well as those on the club's YouTube channel.

The new head coach is expected to land in Dar es Salaam this week and he will be assisted by coaches from five different countries.

Initially, Migne reportedly wanted to influence a choice for assistant coach position but the club insisted Juma Mwambusi will be maintained.

Razak Siwa is Yanga's new goalkeepers' coach, who has been working with the club for the last two days.

The former Kenya's Bandari keepers' tactician has been asked to ensure Yanga keepers will be different and very fit in the next three months.

Physiotherapist Ghanaian Edem Mortotsi will be working under Siwa after he was retained when the club made technical changes that saw Kaze leave the team.

The Ghanaian expert was brought to the club by Kaze but Yanga were satisfied he was not to blame for the poor results, which is why he was not shown the door when the reshuffle was done.

Nahumu Muganda has been appointed from Ifehu FC as Yanga's another doctor and he is coming to replace Sheky Mngazija, who asked to leave his post.

Hafidh Saleh will remain as the team manager while Mohamed Omar will work as the kit manager.

Should Migne arrive to take charge of the Dar es Salaam club, he would be the third coach to oversee them this season.

In the beginning, Zlatko Krmpotic was appointed but the former Zesco United tactician lasted for only 37 days.

Kaze was later appointed but a string of draws and a 2-1 loss to Coastal Union at the beginning of March sealed his fate as the head coach.

## Simba SC eager to progress to 2020/21 CAF Champions League last eight



Simba Sports Club. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBAS C

BY CORRESPONDENT JOSEPH MCHEKADONA

TANZANIA'S Simba SC players are determined to reach the quarterfinals of this season's CAF Champions League by seeing off Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s AS Vita Club in a Group A tie at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam tomorrow.

Simba are within touching distance of reaching the premier continental club tournament's last eight, as they only need a draw to make it to the stage.

The outfit leads Group

A with 10 points, having notched victory in three outings and draw in one game.

The tournament's defending champions, Egypt's Al Ahly, are placed second, followed by AS Vita Club and Al Merreikh of Sudan in the third and last positions respectively.

Simba SC's head coach Didier Gomes said they are doing all they can to see the team reach the last eight stage.

He said they will fight every inch of the way in a quest for a place in the quarterfinal stage of CAF Champions League.

He noted: "We beat them at their backyard in the previous match, they will come flat out to win, it won't be easy. We know it will be tough and our approach will be the key factor."

"We'll have to remain focused throughout the match," the French coach added.

The coach said the good thing is that Simba players, supporters, executives and stakeholders are all working in the same direction.

"The players who are currently in camp are determined to play the game of their lives. We know our op-

ponents are a tough side, but we are working on how to defeat them," he said.

Florent Ibenge, AS Vita Club's head coach, is said to have lamented lack of enough preparation for his outfit.

Ibenge, who is as well the DRC senior national football side's head coach, nevertheless, pointed out they are prepared to win tomorrow's clash. He noted: "Our side is in Tanzania with on purpose, that is qualifying for CAF Champions League's last eight, reaching that stage is still in our hands and we still have to fight hard."



## North Macedonia shock Germany as France, England grind out wins

LONDON

GERMANY suffered a stunning 2-1 home loss to North Macedonia in World Cup qualifying on Wednesday, while defending champions France edged Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0 and England beat a Poland side missing the injured Robert Lewandowski.

Napoli midfielder Elif Elmas secured a famous victory for North Macedonia in Duisburg, scoring five minutes from time to give his country a second win from three Group J matches.

Veteran striker Goran Pandev, 37, put the visitors in front just before half-time but Ilkay Gundogan levelled from the spot after Leroy Sane was fouled in the area.

Timo Werner missed a glorious chance after coming off the bench, and Elmas condemned the four-time world champions to a first defeat in qualifying for the global showpiece since 2001 when he steered in a cut-back from Arijan Ademi.

"I don't know how to explain it. It's not easy to do. We knew that we couldn't underestimate the opponent and I don't think we did that. We just weren't good enough," said Gundogan.

"It's not quite sunk in yet. This is a victory for the whole nation," said North Macedonia coach Igor Angelovski, whose side will make their European Championship debut this summer.

Germany are level alongside North Macedonia in a section led surprisingly by Armenia, who won for the third time in as many games thanks to two late goals in a 3-2 victory over Romania.

Antoine Griezmann scored the only goal of the game in Sarajevo as France recorded a second away win in four days over Bosnia following their 2-0 success in Kazakhstan at the weekend.

After being held 1-1 at home by Ukraine in their opening game on the road to the 2022 finals in Qatar, France are now in a strong position at the top of Group D.

Manchester United defender Harry Maguire struck a late winner for England as the 2018 World Cup semi-finalists overcame Poland 2-1 at Wembley.

Harry Kane put England ahead

with a first-half penalty after a foul on Raheem Sterling, but a mistake by John Stones allowed Poland to level through Jakub Moder.

England regained the lead with five minutes left when Maguire smashed home after central defensive partner Stones headed a corner back across goal.

"It is a big win. We are playing to play at a World Cup," Maguire told ITV.

"John (Stones) has been brilliant this year. Defenders make mistakes and when we do we get scrutinised. He made up for it with a great header at the back post."

The nervy win means England top Group I with nine points after wins earlier in the international window against San Marino and Albania.

- Wins for Spain and Italy -

Goals from Dani Olmo, Ferran Torres and second-half substitute Gerard Moreno lifted Spain to a 3-1 victory over Kosovo and top of Group B.

However the qualifier in Seville was overshadowed by a pre-match diplomatic dispute, stemming from the description of Kosovo as a "territory" by the Spanish Football Federation when it published Spain's group fixtures.

Stefano Sensi scored just after his introduction as a half-time substitute to help Italy, who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, register a third successive win in Group C.

Roberto Mancini's team defeated Lithuania 2-0 in Vilnius with Ciro Immobile adding a stoppage-time penalty for the Azzurri.

Andreas Olsen netted twice as Denmark thrashed Austria 4-0 to take charge of Group F, with Joakim Maehle and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg also on target in Vienna.

Scotland are second in the group after easing to a 4-0 win over the Faroe Islands. John McGinn bagged two goals while Che Adams and Ryan Fraser completed the scoring.

Iceland, in the same group as Germany, picked up their first qualifying points with a 4-1 win away to Liechtenstein.

Northern Ireland drew 0-0 at home to Bulgaria while Ukraine were held 1-1 by Kazakhstan in Kiev, a third consecutive draw for the side coached by former national team star Andriy Shevchenko.

## Off-form giants Zamalek, Mazembe desperate for points in Algeria



Simba Sports Club

JOHANNESBURG

STRUGGLING African giants Zamalek of Egypt and TP Mazembe of the Democratic Republic of Congo visit Algeria this weekend seeking victories that could help avoid humiliating CAF Champions League exits.

Zamalek must defeat Mouloudia Alger to stay in contention for a top-two finish in Group D while Group B tailenders Mazembe will be eliminated if defeated by Chabab Belouizdad.

"I have been working on raising morale, improving fitness and creating enjoyment among the squad," said Patrice Carteron, the French coach recently hired for a second spell with five-time champions Zamalek.

Here, AFP Sport previews matchday 5 as several clubs seek to join already-qualified Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa, Wydad Casablanca of Morocco and Esperance of Tunisia in the quarter-finals.

### Group A

Victories for leaders Simba of Tanzania, at home to V Club of DR Congo, and title-holders Al Ahly of Egypt, away to Al Merrikh of Sudan, will assure them of last-eight places.

It is a realistic scenario although V Club have been extremely unpredictable, notably when holding Ahly in Egypt and then losing heavily at home to the Cairo Red Devils 10 days later.

When Simba hosted V Club two seasons back the Congolese alleged that there was

a strange smell in the changeroom and the drinking water had an unusual taste.

The form of Mozambican attacker Luis Miquissone has been a key factor in the rise of Simba, whose French coach Didier Gomes da Rosa can choose a team containing stars from eight nations.

### Group B

Sundowns take the only perfect four-win group record this season to the Omdurman stadium where South Africa were booted out of the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying competition last Sunday.

Several Sundowns stars were in the team beaten 2-0 by Sudan and will realise that far more commitment is necessary if they are complete a double over Al Hilal, having won by two goals in Pretoria.

Sundowns coach Manqoba Mngqithi has told a multi-national squad including Uruguayans Gaston Sirino and Mauricio Affonso that "we have won nothing yet so keep your feet planted on the ground".

Belouizdad and Hilal have three points each and five-time champions Mazembe two, and all three sides are seeking a first victory in the section.

### Group C

Kaizer Chiefs of South Africa host Wydad in Soweto and want to prove they are a much better team than that which committed a string of defensive blunders when losing 4-0

to the Moroccans last month.

Chiefs goalkeeper Itumeleng Khune proved particularly vulnerable and the two-time champions from Casablanca are likely to face Nigerian shot-stopper Daniel Akpeyi this time.

The South Africans can draw some comfort from keeping clean sheets in their other seven Champions League matches as they seek to pip Horoya of Guinea for the second qualifying spot. Horoya, who play Petro Luanda in Angola, lead Chiefs on goal difference and their immediate goal is reaching the quarter-finals for a third time in four seasons.

### Group D

The pre-group assumption that Esperance and Zamalek, who have won the competition nine times between them, would cruise to the knockout stage has suffered a severe jolt due to Mouloudia Alger.

Well organised defensively, the Algerians have drawn with both clubs and need only one point against visiting Zamalek to clinch a quarter-finals place at the expense of the Egyptians. Zamalek reacted to gathering just two points from a possible 12 by axing Portuguese coach Jaime Pacheco and luring Carteron back from Saudi Arabia.

But the 50-year former coach of Mali, TP Mazembe, Al Ahly and Raja Casablanca admits he "needs time to fix various problems" and it is hard to imagine 2020 runners-up Zamalek making it to the final this season.

AFP

## Man United's big decisions: What to do with Pogba? Henderson or De Gea?

BY ROB DAWSON, ESPN CORRESPONDENT

OLE Gunnar Solskjaer is facing a crucial summer as he tries to lift Manchester United back to the top of English football. The club's board has seen enough progress during Solskjaer's two years as permanent manager to consider offering the Norwegian a new contract but the time is fast approaching for him to deliver real success. In his own words, that means winning the Premier League title for the first time since 2013, or at least getting much closer to Manchester City than they have this season. Before doing that, there are key decisions for Solskjaer to make over the summer, including how to handle the transfer window and what to do about Paul Pogba.

### Decision 1: Pogba's contract situation

United's biggest decision of the summer will centre around Pogba, but it won't just fall on Solskjaer. Pogba is set to enter the final year of his contract at Old Trafford, and if his agent, Mino Raiola, is right, he won't sign a new one. If so, United can either sell in the summer or hold out and risk losing the 28-year-old for free in 12 months.

Owners the Glazers and executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward valued Pogba at more than £150 million in 2019. While that figure is significantly lower now, there are



Are the futures of Paul Pogba and David De Gea in doubt at Manchester United? (Agencies)

doubts about how Real Madrid or Juventus could afford a transfer fee and wages of more than £290,000-a-week in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

The third option is for United to push hard for Pogba to sign a new contract. Solskjaer hasn't given up hope that that could still happen, but there are fears that Raiola's terms -- a large wage increase or even a release clause -- could be too big a stumbling block. Solsk-

jaer deserves credit for his man-management of Pogba and the Frenchman's form since January has shown that he would be a big miss if he leaves.

### Decision 2: De Gea or Henderson?

Solskjaer didn't need to keep Dean Henderson last summer, as there were plenty of suitors to sign the goalkeeper on loan again, but he did so knowing there would be a season of debate about who should be

No. 1. There is a feeling within the club that the uncertainty cannot be allowed to carry on into next season.

Sources have told ESPN that Henderson is considered the more complete goalkeeper because of his distribution and ability to catch and punch high balls but there remains a loyalty to David De Gea because of what he's done over the last 10 years. Both have long contracts at Old Trafford and there is an acceptance De Gea's wages make a move away problematic.

Henderson is determined to play regular football and sources have told ESPN that a number of top European clubs have already expressed an interest. He was given a chance to make his case in the last month while De Gea was unavailable, which means the April fixtures give a big hint as to the way Solskjaer is leaning with the Spaniard back in his ranks.

### Decision 3: Does Lingard stay or go?

Jesse Lingard could barely make the squad before moving to West Ham

United on loan in January, but in the past two months he's been one of the best players in the league. Five goals in seven games has been enough to earn two player of the month nominations and a recall to the England squad after a two-year absence.

The 28-year-old will have one year left on his contract in the summer and Solskjaer will have to decide whether to offer a new deal or sanction a sale. Lingard has flourished as a No. 10 at West Ham, but he is unlikely to dislodge Bruno Fernandes at United.

In the peak years of his career, he is desperate to play regular football and will not accept another bit-part role at Old Trafford. West Ham have already decided they want to sign Lingard permanently, but he will have a lot of offers to choose from if he moves.

### Decision 4: Where to spend the money?

The coronavirus pandemic means money is tight across Europe, and while United are not immune, there

will be money to spend. The issue for Solskjaer, football director John Murtough, technical director Darren Fletcher and the recruitment department is where to use it. You can make a case that United need a right-back, centre-back, central midfielder, winger and a centre forward but it's unrealistic to expect that all those problems can be solved before next season.

Solskjaer will have to decide where his priorities lie while decisions will also be impacted by who leaves. Signing a striker will become more important if Edinson Cavani doesn't extend his deal. Promoting young players is a large part of Solskjaer's philosophy at Old Trafford, but it has to be balanced against winning games in the short term and it means there aren't always enough opportunities for youngsters. There are high hopes for Shola Shoretire and Hannibal Mejbri, but they may have to go out on loan to find the football they need to continue their development.

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

Off-form giants Zamalek, Mazembe desperate for points in Algeria

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## Africa Kabaddi Championship now pushed back

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE Africa Kabaddi Championship, which was slated for this year in Dar es Salaam, has been pushed back to June, Tanzania Kabaddi Sports Association (TKSA) said yesterday.

The TKSA's Chairman Abdallah Nyoni said the championship was slated for this month, however the Africa Kabaddi Union announced that the event will be held from June 29-July 5 in the city.

He said the postponement of Africa Kabaddi Championship has come after the union's Executive Committee's meeting held on March 10 agreed to postpone the competition due to coronavirus pandemic in some of the member countries.

"I'm pleased and honoured to officially inform our valuable journalists from different media houses, stakeholders and sponsors that the Africa Kabaddi Championship 2021 will be held from June 29-July 5 in Dar es Salaam instead of April 2021," he said.

He said in the meantime the Tanzania's Kabaddi team are continuing with other planned activities such as finding sponsorship, media partner, preparation, marketing and promotion of the Kabaddi sports.

He disclosed: "The TKSA in the relentless support of its partners such as Dar es Salaam

Regional Commissioner's office, Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, along with National Sports Council of Tanzania, India High Commissioner to Tanzania and our patron, is working hard to ensure the preparation the said event is a success from the beginning."

Nyoni expressed his hope of continued support in preparations for the Africa Kabaddi Championship.

He disclosed: "On the other hand we still invite contributions and funding, we need more sponsorship for preparation of the national team especially in trial matches and drills."

He stated: "Apart from that we need to purchase all necessary items including jerseys, Kabaddi playing mats and others."

Wikipedia describes Kabaddi as popular sport in India and other surrounding Asian countries.

It is a contact team sport played between two teams of seven players.

The sport's objective is for a single player on offence, referred to as a 'raider', to run into the opposing team's half of a court, tag out as many of their defenders as possible, and return to their own half of the court, all without being tackled by the opposing outfit's defenders, and in a single breath.



India's Deputy High Commissioner to Tanzania, Shri R. Chandramouli (C), pictured with Dar es Salaam Regional Sports Officer Adolph Halili (in black shirt), Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre's official (in stripe T-shirt), Tanzania Kabaddi Sports Association (TKSA)'s Chairman, Abdallah Nyoni (wearing white cap), and finalists of a tournament targeting to commemorate the previous season's World Kabaddi Day in the city in 2019.

## Namungo FC's preps for Nkana FC match in top gear

By correspondents Joseph Mchekadona & Nassir Nchimbi

TANZANIA'S Namungo FC has intensified preparations for Sunday's CAF Confederation Cup Group D match against Zambia giants, Nkana FC, which will take place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Namungo FC Information Officer, Kindamba Namlia, said they are preparing well for the encounter as the aim is to collect three points at home.

He said the good thing is that morale in the camp is extremely high, a situation which is giving them confidence of winning the game.

"The team are training hard ahead of the game as our plan is to win at home, our dream of reaching the other stage can only be achieved with victory," he said.

Namlia said Namungo FC's head coach, Hemed Suleiman, is working on a game plan and rectifying the tactical flaws his team displayed, leading them to losing the previous two CAF Confederation Cup matches in Group D.

He stated: "Our coaches know the Sunday game is tricky as our opponents will come flat out hunting for nothing short of a win."

He disclosed: "Our coaches are preparing the players on how to handle



Namungo FC's head coach, Hemed Suleiman.

the game with extra caution technically, mentally and psychologically."

The Sunday game is important as both Namungo FC and Nkana FC have not recorded victory in the CAF Confederation Cup's Group D.

They are both coming from losses to group favourites Morocco's Raja Casablanca and Pyramids FC of Egypt.

Nkana FC head coach Manfred Chabiniga is reported to have said the Sunday game is a must win for his side.

He stated: "We are not doing well in the CAF Confederation Cup but we still have

matches to play, we must make sure that we are winning our remaining games."

Suleiman further noted he still hopes to lead the team to finish in the top four of this season's Mainland Tanzania Premier League's standing, albeit the club faces a tough task ahead of them in CAF Confederation Cup.

This season's Premier League's title race is slowly becoming a two-horse race involving the domestic soccer giants, Simba SC and Yanga.

The coach said the return of some of players, including central defender Amani Kyatta, who were nursing injuries, is good news for them as they are facing many competitions ahead of them.

Suleiman pointed out: "We are not in a good position, it is our responsibility as a team to fight and make sure we move to higher positions, that is our main goal at the moment."

"About winning the league's silverware we have already been left out the race and it is difficult to say we have a place in that," he said. He added: "It's important every game should be taken seriously and we should fight for three points, I know by doing that we can achieve the goal."

Namungo FC, whose next league game will be against Mbeya City FC, sits 10th in the league standing with 27 points after

featuring in 18 matches, so they have 16 matches left to complete the season.

Mathematically they have 23 points behind the league leaders Yanga with 50 points while Jangwani Giant have played five more matches than Namungo who also have 19 points difference behind title holders, Simba who are ahead of them by two games with 46 points.

On CAF Confederation Cup duties, Namungo's Information

Officer, Namlia, stated they are ready for clash against Nkana FC.

He stated: "Preparations are well underway and we realize that we have work to do on Sunday in front of Nkana FC."

"Everything is going well and the players have high morale for the victory. We are at home and we will use the opportunity to do well," he said.

Among Namungo FC's key performers, who are ready for the clash against Nkana FC, are

Stephen Sey, Sixtus Sabilo, Shiza Kichuya and Abdulhalim Humud.

In Group D of the tournament, Namungo FC is positioned third after losing the first two group games.

Namungo FC succumbed to 1-0 loss to Raja Casablanca in Morocco, the Tanzanian club thereafter conceded 2-0 defeat to Pyramids FC in Dar es Salaam.

## CAF now allows fans to attend Simba SC versus AS Vita Club tie



A section of Simba SC supporters cheer their club at one of recent CAF Champions League's Group A fixtures in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBAS C

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA Football Federation (TFF) has announced that Confederation of African Football (CAF) has allowed only 10,000 fans to attend tomorrow's CAF Champions League Group A's match between Simba SC and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) giants, AS Vita Club, at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

The two giants meet tomorrow in a clash either team need to win to reach the last eight of CAF Champions League. Simba are leading Group A with 10 points whilst AS Vita Club is placed third with four points.

Information posted by TFF on the federation's social media pages yesterday said that CAF has allowed 10,000 fans to attend the game.

"Following our request to CAF to allow fans to attend the game between Simba SC and AS Vita Club, only 10,000 fans have been allowed," the federation said.

However, as we went to press, there was no immediate comment from either Simba SC or TFF on which mechanism will be used to count the supporters, who will enter the venue, and prices of tickets for watching the game.

The development is a big boost to Simba who need a point to reach the last eight of Africa's premier club football tournament.

The last time Simba SC played without the side's vocal and cheerful supporters in CAF Champions League at Benjamin

Mkapa Stadium was last month when they beat Al Merreikh of Sudan 3-0.

The CAF banned fans from attending the game due to alleged violation of Coronavirus guidelines by Simba.

Simba, as it is the case for any other team, depend on the vocal support from their enthusiasts. The outfit always regards its supporters as number 12 player.

After the COVID-19 outbreak late last year, CAF banned all football activities in the continent.

The CAF, nevertheless, later directed that soccer activities should resume after the confederation's Medical Committee, in collaboration with the Technical & Development Department and a team of experts, had put together a comprehensive plan to guide the Member Associations (MAs) on the restart of football activities on the continent.

The confederation released its report titled 'CAF Guidelines to Resume Football in Africa' emphasizes on the health of the major stakeholders (players, officials, fans and partners) as the essential element, which should constitute the basis of all decisions regarding the re-introduction of football activities across the continent supported by the authorization of relevant State Authorities.

The plan also highlights effective and continuous medical assessment (testing) of players and officials, guidelines for training sessions, disinfection of sporting facilities, as well as strict adherence to the global preventive protocols.

The CAF noted: "This comprehensive document is a major step towards resuming football on the continent. Based on recent developments, it is important we have a plan in place to guide our stakeholders on the return of continental and domestic competitions, and the need for an all hands on deck approach."

The confederation stated: "Many considerations were factored into the putting together of the document by our team of experts notably the specificities of the continent."

"Together with strategies established by local authorities, it provides the MAs with adequate information to resume operations upon receiving the green light," the confederation added.

Meanwhile, some of Tanzania's football analysts have warned Simba SC to opt out of entertaining complacency when the squad meets AS Vita Club in the clash, which is a must win for both sides.

Simba just need a draw to book a place in CAF Champions League's last eight.

Soccer analyst Michael Msemakweli said Simba SC should look for a win, not a draw, in tomorrow's tie.

He said Simba's head coach, Didier Gomes, should not prepare the team to either sit back or retreat since the squads, in the end, needs the goals in order to chalk a win.

"The team need to deploy an offensive approach since AS Vita will be looking for a win at any cost," he said.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

