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TANZANIA

THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY, 2021

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 Dr Mwinyi hails health sector



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# Shockwaves spread as Maalim Seif dies

By Guardian Reporter

YESTERDAY'S death of Zanzibar First Vice President Seif Sharif Hamad (pictured) marked the end of an era for Zanzibar since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in the early 1990s.

The news of the passing on of Hamad announced by Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Mwinyi sent shockwaves across the nation since the deceased was among the most popular public figures the country has ever produced.

He was early this month admitted at Muhimbili National Hospital in the city where he died yesterday morning at the age of 77. On January 31 he was reportedly hospitalized at Mnazi Mmoja Hospital in Zanzibar and his party ACT-Wazalendo said in a statement that he had tested positive for coronavirus.

Union President John Magufuli reacted to the news of Hamad's passing with a message of condolences to Zanzibar's President, the people of Zanzibar and Tanzanians as a whole.

"I have received with profound shock the news of the death of Hon. Seif Sharif Hamad, the First Vice President of Zanzibar. I send my condolences to

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## 'Sugar sector regulatory code grossly prohibitive'

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

AGRICULTURE minister Prof Adolf Mkenya (pictured) has said laws and regulations guiding the sugar industry in Tanzania are prohibitive for establishment of factories.

The laws prohibit establishment of sugar factories within 25 kilometres from an existing sugar factory, he said in example, noting that these laws have been responsible for the country's sugar shortage, urging capable Tanzanians to put up small and big sugar factories.

He urged financial institutions to provide loans to those willing to build sugar factories to

instill competition and attain self-sufficiency in sugar.

The sugar shortage isn't due to shortage of sugar cane but failure of existing factories to process all the canes produced by farmers, he emphasised, affirming that if 350,000 tonnes of sugar cane available was processed, it adds 35,000 tons of sugar per year, reducing sugar imports.

Touring Mtibwa Sugar factory in Morogoro Region early this week, he spoke on the sugar cane situation facing out-growers in the proximity of the factory.

The government has thus decided to invite investors, including local entrepreneurs, to invest in sugar production. They need to come out and the government will ensure they access needed bank loans, he stated.

"We want many investors in the sugar sector and the government will ensure they get bank loans to build sugar factories so as to solve the challenges faced by sugar cane farmers of not getting their harvests processed," said Prof Mkenya.

Protocols established in the past for

TURN TO PAGE 2

## ...Colleagues pay generous homage

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

A CROSS-SECTION of people who worked with seasoned politician Seif Sharif Hamad who died in Dar es Salaam yesterday have described him as a rare kind of leader whose shoes are too big to most Isles leaders.

His former comrade, ADC chairman Hamad Rashid Mohamed, said the late political figure fought hard for basic rights of Zanzibaris especially his constant demand for

**"The gap he leaves is huge, but the good thing is that he was conversant with many in our party since his days in the Civic United Front**

good governance and democratic space.

Even his removal from the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government and CCM arose from his demand for people's rights and better living conditions, plus his push for better arrangements within the union.

Opposition politician and journalist Ali Saleh described Hamad as a man who had the best interests of the people at heart and will be remembered for agreeing to be part of the Government of National Unity late last year which ushered in peace after tumultuous polls.

He said Hamad was a brave man with an enduring character, who despite contentiously losing general elections since 1995, still went

TURN TO PAGE 2

## TRCA hands telecoms 38bn/- fines on services

● Firms will use cash for infrastructure, not deposit it with Treasury

By Henry Mwangonde

THE Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) has slapped six telecommunications companies with fines totaling 38bn/- fine for failure to meet standards of quality in service provision.

TCRA Director General James Kilaba (pictured) told the media yesterday that the regulator conducted a quarterly review from October, November and December last year in which it was found that the companies failed to meet legally



binding standards in provision of network availability, including call connection failure rate, call drop rate, call set up time, service coverage and call success rate.

Other areas in which the service providers failed their customers are in call handover success rates in round trip time mean, attach failure ratio, attach set up time and SMS Service accessibility, he said.

TCRA ordered Airtel (T) plc to pay 11.5bn/- MIC (T) plc (trading as Tigo) 13bn/- Vietel (T) plc (Halotel) 3.4bn/-

TURN TO PAGE 2



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Vice President's Office (Union and Environment) minister of State Umyy Mwalimu (C) gets a briefing from Kibaha town council Director Jenipha Omolo on construction of a dump site on Tuesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## ...Colleagues pay generous homage

FROM PAGE 1

ahead to work with his political opponents for the sake of peace and prosperity of the islands.

"We have never had a leader with such perseverance. Despite tumultuous elections, he ably managed to be patient and kept his calm," he said.

ACT-Wazalendo senior advisor Juma Said Sanani agreed that patience was Hamad's crucial quality and the secret to his longevity in the Zanzibar political landscape.

He said the late leader's shoes

are too big for greenhorns in the party, despite that Maalim Seif groomed able cadres with whom he closely worked.

"The gap he leaves is huge, but the good thing is that he was conversant with many in our party since his days in the Civic United Front," he said.

Leading CCM cadre Vuai Ali Vuai said Hamad was one of the brains behind the Government of National Unity whose initial agreement was reached in 1999 and practiced after the 2010 general election, skipped in 2015

and restored after the 2020 polls.

The first agreement and GNU did not yield expected fruits but Hamad did not despair. Despite being in the cold after 2015 he went ahead and joined GNU late last year even with strong opposition from radicals within his own following.

"We have lost a national leader. Let me take this opportunity to send my heartfelt condolences to his family, ACT-Wazalendo, Zanzibaris in particular and Tanzanians in general," the former CCM deputy secretary

general for Zanzibar intoned.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Job Ndugai sent a condolence message to Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, Zanzibar people and members of ACT Wazalendo, saying the news of the demise of Zanzibar First Vice President came with a shock.

"We have lost a great leader who spent most of his time working for the people. He contributed to the country's development, promoting peace and ensuring national unity in the Isles. He will be forever remembered."

## Shockwaves spread as Maalim Seif dies

FROM PAGE 1

the President of Zanzibar Hon. Dr. Mwinyi, family, Zanzibaris, ACT-Wazalendo members and all Tanzanians. May his soul rest in peace," wrote the president on his Twitter handle.

In Zanzibar politics, Hamad, popularly known as Maalim Seif, was a permanent fixture, contesting the presidency but narrowly and contentiously losing since the first multi party elections in 1995 until last year's general election.

He joined the Government of National Unity (GNU) twice: first after the hotly contested 2010 General Election, and on 18 March 2019 he resigned membership in the Civic United Front (CUF) and joined ACT-Wazalendo..

He joined the Zitto Kabweli outfit as senior advisor and later elected national chairman, and then endorsed as the party's Zanzibar presidential candidate in last year's polls.

At the onset of political pluralism in 1992, Hamad was pivotal in the creation of the Civic United Front (CUF) from NCCR-Mageuzi umbrella, and for years he was its de facto leader as party secretary general. A split occurred following contentious opposition alliances in the wake of the decomposition during the 2015 general election until he decamped to ACT-Wazalendo, losing control of his original party to veteran chairman Prof Ibrahim Lipumba.

Hamad attended the University of Dar es Salaam from 1972 to 1975 and graduated with a degree in political science. He did a masters degree in development studies in 1978-79, while he was already head of the CCM economy and planning department, before rising to become Zanzibar Chief

Minister from 1984 to 1988, which led to his contending for the top post in an agitated manner, and fell out with the CCM national leadership in 1987.

At a certain point he served as Zanzibar minister for Education and Culture, but when then Zanzibar president Idris Abdulwakil dissolved the cabinet in 1988, Hamad was dropped as Chief Minister and sent into political oblivion, and intermittently restricted in his movements, and finally expelled from CCM.

Hamad was born at Nyali area in Pemba Island on October 22, 1943 where he attended primary school from 1950, proceeding with secondary education at the King George school.

More Photos on Page 4



**I have received with profound shock the news of the death of Hon. Seif Sharif Hamad, the First Vice President of Zanzibar. I send my condolences to the President of Zanzibar Hon. Dr. Mwinyi, family, Zanzibaris, ACT-Wazalendo members and all Tanzanians. May his soul rest in peace**

## TRCA hands telecoms 38bn/- fines on services

FROM PAGE 1

Vodacom (T) plc 7.8bn/-, Zanzibar Telecom 1bn/- and the Tanzania Telecommunications Corporation (TTCL) 1.3bn/-.

"The analysis we conducted has shown that all the named service providers did not meet the required service provision standards as indicated by section 48(2) and (3) of TCRA's quality service provision guidelines of 2017," he said.

The regulator ordered the fined companies to use the money to invest in infrastructure to facilitate quality service provision instead of taking it to the regulator.

In implementing this directive, the regulator required the service providers to prepare a plan and submit it to TCRA within three days on how the works they intend to undertake.

The Minister for Communication and Information Technology, Dr Faustine Ndugulile, recently

directed the TCRA Consumer Consultative Council to analyze and address complaints by users over being shortchanged on airtime bundle packages.

He issued the directive while on a tour to meet top officials of the council and the national ICT commission, to lay out strategies on how they can help the government propel technological advancement in the various sectors.

The minister referred to complaints by users over being shortchanged by telecom operators, saying the matter must be addressed with urgency. He asked the council to list complaints and solutions so as to gauge the council's performance.

The government has been working on ensuring that the sector contributes fully to economic growth by building an industry that is well regulated for security and economic development, he added.

## 'Sugar sector regulatory code grossly prohibitive'

FROM PAGE 1

preventing the establishment of sugar factories within 25 kms from any existing sugar factory had no relevance at the present, the minister declared, summing up these regulations undermined sugar cane farmers and have to be reviewed.

Earlier, Mvomero MP Jonas Van Zeland said sugar cane farmers face various challenges including selling their crops at low prices, with a tonne of sugar cane priced at 65,000/-, while at Kilombero farmers sell their crop at 110,000/- per tonne, and they are both in Morogoro Region.

The MP said in order to instill competition, the government needs to allow small sugar factories in areas with big factories to enable farmers to choose where

to sell their harvests.

Seif Hassan, a Mapambanov Village cane farmer in the district said that invasion of livestock at night time on their farms was inflicting great damage to the crop.

Dr Christine Ishengoma of the parliamentary committee for Agriculture, Livestock and Water said MPs were receiving complaints from farmers in Mvomero district, including low sugar cane prices offered by the Mtibwa factory investor. The issue has been referred to the government for action, he stated.

Japhet Justine, managing director of the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) said the bank were ready to provide loans for sugar processing factories.



Zanzibar Tourism and Antiques minister Lela Muhammed Mussa makes a presentation in the Isles House of Representative yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Rahma Suleiman

## 'Private sector plays huge role in Z'bar's drive on economic growth'

By Guardian Reporter

THE Director of the Department of Coordination for the Regional Administration and Local Government Dr Haji Salim Khamis has said in driving Zanzibar's development, the private sector has a huge contribution if they perform their responsibilities in the public interest.

Dr Khamis gave the remarks when opening a five-day training seminar to agricultural officers aimed at building for them the capacity in the preparation and monitor demonstration farm in five districts in Unguja in the Spices Project sponsored by the

European Union (EU).

He said as the government continues with its efforts towards Zanzibar economic growth, it was clear that it will largely depend on the private sector to increase employment and people's incomes.

He further said the farming sector is among Zanzibar's important sectors, hence everyone among the seminar's participants has the responsibility to ensure they listen and well understand the training provided to benefit others in their communities.

He also called on the Spice Project implementers to ensure

they supervise the project well keeping in mind the people expect a lot from the government and the project.

The Spice Project General Manager Amina Ussi Khamis called on the seminar participants to be creative as soon as they complete the training seminar.

"The training aims to provide training to agricultural officers with appropriate procedures in regard to the demonstration farms that will be used to teach the project's beneficiaries.

He said since the project involve modern farming, it will employ professional methods which

those concerned will be forced to learn.

Some of the training seminar participants from five Unguja districts said the training has come at the opportune time considering the needs of many farmers in their areas.

Mize Juma from Unguja South District said some farmers fail to perform well in farming from lack of appropriate education.

The Spices Project is being implemented by Zanzibar's Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA-Zanzibar), CFP and PDF under sponsorship from the EU and will run for four years.





Nyumba ya Mungu dam electrical power acting manager Eng Edmund Seif (R) briefs Tanesco board members during a visit in Kilimanjaro Region recently. Photo: Correspondent Oscar Kasimiri

## Zanzibar outlines plans for development projects

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Minister of State in the President's Office (Finance and Planning) Jamal Kassim Ali yesterday announced the government priorities for development projects which included construction of the container port, exploration of oil and gas in the Mangapwani area for the coming financial year.

He unveiled the plan in the House of Representatives when presenting the Zanzibar economy, development plan and budget estimates for the 2021/22 financial year.

The isles' 2021/2022 development plan is aligned with Zanzibar's development framework Vision 2050, under which deep sea fishing and blue economy projects are among the priorities.

He said the Isles' government plans to build modern port for containers, exploration of oil and gas, fisheries and floating dock so as to revolutionise blue economy in the Indian Ocean archipelago. According to him, the government is set to build Pemba airport, fisheries port at Mpigaduri.

The minister asserted that the government is also intending to construct the airport in Pemba as well as a fishing port at Mpigaduri.

He said in the coming fiscal year, the government will construct bridges, 135 kilometers of roads in the two islands and development of industries and special economic zones at Chamanangwe Dunga and Nungwi.

"We will, in the next budget, improve the Malindi port and start construction of a new Mkumbuu port. Plans are also underway to increase power generation through the use of alternative sources such as solar and gas," the minister said amid applause from Members of the House of

Representatives.

Ali added that major improvements will be made on transport infrastructure in both Unguja and Pemba.

He said the government is determined to invest in developing the ocean-based economy through establishment of small industries which would be processing various resources harvested in the Indian Ocean.

According to him, some of the ocean resources include salt, seaweeds and fish. He said to ensure development of the fishing sub-sector, the government will construct a number of dams to facilitate fish farming across the isles.

"We will further develop the tourism sector and encourage locals to visit the available attractions," said minister Ali.

On agriculture and the livestock sub-sector, the minister outlined plans to improve irrigation farming through construction of irrigation schemes and construction of modern slaughter houses.

Minister Ali said in the 2021/2022 financial year, the Zanzibar government intends to spend 1.5trn/-, of which, development expenditure will be 546.9bn/- and 959.3bn/- for recurrent expenditure.

He said the funds will be sourced internally and from development partners who are expected to contribute 2bn/-. Local government authorities will contribute 16.2bn/-, domestic loans will account for 50.9bn/- and subsidies amounting to 332.5bn/-. Funds from internal revenue sources will amount to more than 1.105bn/-.

He however commended the Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi for prioritising the fight against corruption as well as ensuring good governance.

## Complete construction of Mutukula's investment building by next month - Dr Mabula urges NHC

By Guardian Correspondent,

Missenyi

THE National Housing Corporation (NHC) in Kagera region has been called to ensure it finishes the construction of the investment house at Mutukula-Missenyi at the border with Uganda to spur cross border trade.

Deputy Lands, housing and Human Settlements Minister Dr Angeline Mabula gave the directive yesterday during her

inspection visit of the project and said it should be completed by March 15 this year to start operation.

Dr Mabula said trade on the Tanzania side of the border has been sluggish for lack of commercial buildings that has seen many people crossing into Uganda to buy goods.

"This is a long time project and has been idle for a long time hence I ask you to do everything you can by March 15 it should be completed and I will personally come to the end of the month

to inspect," said the Deputy Minister.

The building supervisor, Eng. Georg Shanelli said they were in the final stages of completion, and what remained was the fitting of doors and windows, adding that there were some items they were anticipating from outside the country to finalise the work.

He explained construction work began in 2014 and was supposed to be completed in 2018, but work stopped due to various reasons that saw the suspension of the original contractor.

He added that the building will cost 3bn/- after completion.

N HC Public Services Manager Muungano Saguye said they have started the process of construction of other investment buildings at Sirari and Tunduma border posts aimed at improving trade environment in the border areas.

He added that the completion of the Mutukula building will provide indication of the plan structures of the other buildings, all aimed to stimulate trade at Tanzania border areas.

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The Board of Directors, Management and The Staff of TPB Bank has received with great sadness the death of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of Zanzibar, Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad.

We offer our condolences to the President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, H.E. DR. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, Family, relatives, Friends, and all Tanzanians in general in the wake of the departure of a patriotic and righteous leader of his country.

**May God rest the soul of the departed in peace, in paradise. AMEN**

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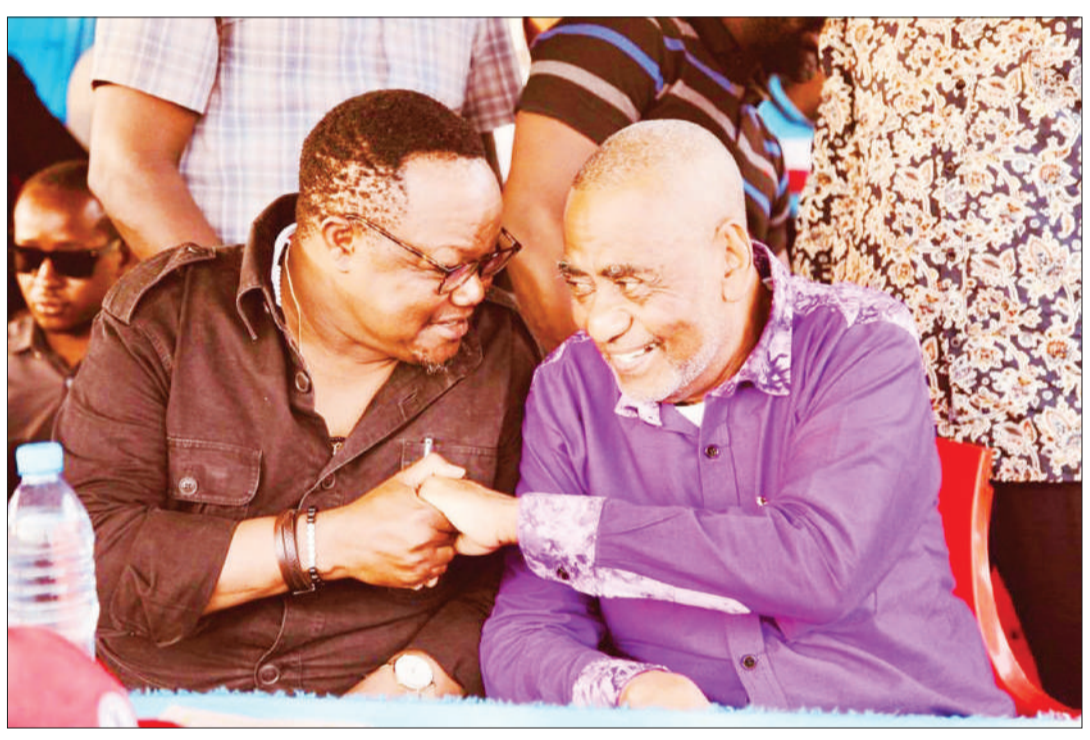
# THE LATE MAALIM SEIF SHARIF HAMAD DURING HIS POLITICAL JOURNEY AT PAST EVENTS



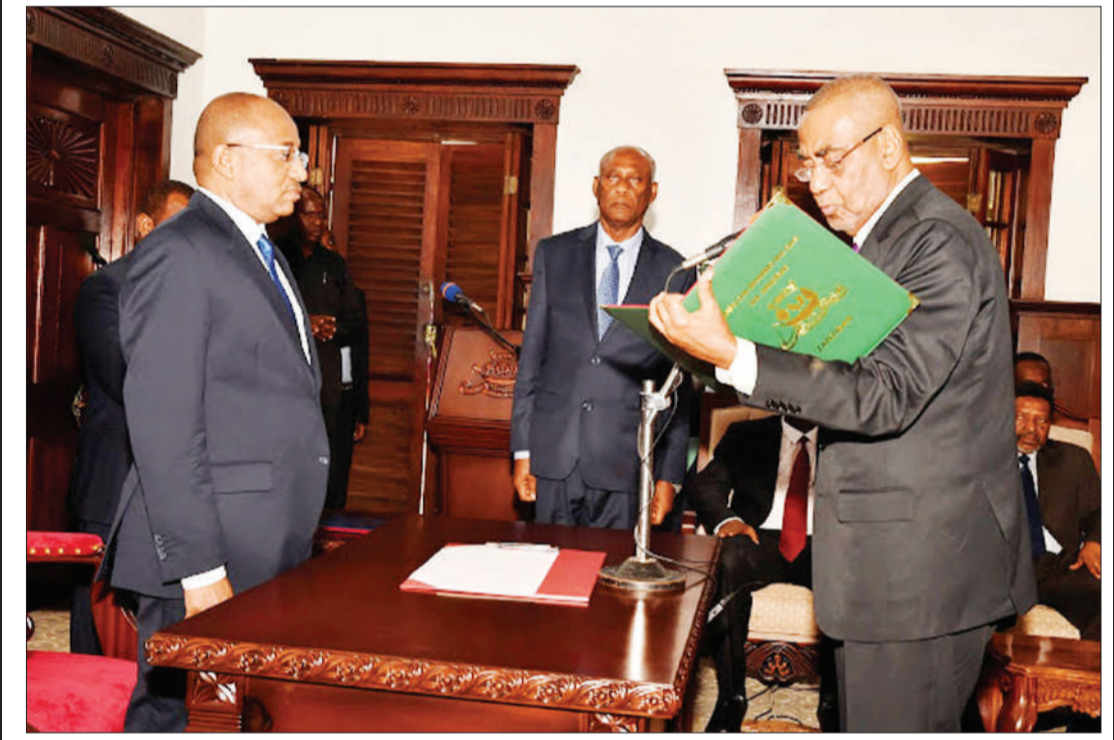
President John Magufuli meets with Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad at State House in Dar es Salaam.



Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad shows his card after joining ACT - Wazalendo and welcomed by the party leader Zitto Kabwe. File Photo



Seif Sharif Hamad talks with Tundu Lissu who was Chadema presidential candidate at a campaign rally in Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region last year. File Photo



President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi swears in Seif Sharif Hamad to be First Vice President at State House on December 8, 2020



Seif Sharif Hamad, then Zanzibar Chief Minister, makes a point at the House of Representatives. In the background is the then Speaker Idris Abdulwakil. The two contested for the Zanzibar presidential candidacy in 1985 nomination process. Photo: File Photo



Former Zanzibar President Amani Abeid Karume and Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad look at the new constitution after amendments to form the Government of National Union



Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad talks with former President Jakaya Kikwete at State House in Dar es Salaam. File Photo



Former Alliance for Change and Transparency presidential candidate for Zanzibar Seif Sharif Hamad casts his vote during the last year's General Election. File Photo





Kishapu District Commissioner Nyabaganga Taraba ( 2nd R) receives a donation of beds and mattresses for Jakaya Kikwete hospital from NMB Western Zone manager Sospeter Magesse as part of the bank's corporate social responsibility. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Councillors to camp 24hrs at bus stand to verify revenue collection

By Guardian Correspondent, Kibaha

KIBAHA Town councillors who are members of the financial committee have resolved to camp at the bus stand to follow up vehicles that come in in order to satisfy themselves with the actual revenue that was being collected.

Addressing reporters here yesterday, the Town Council Chairman Musa Ndoma said the councillors will spend one week for 24 hours each day to sit at the bus stand and the nearby approach roads, and the following week at sand quarries.

Ndoma said they decided to take the step to satisfy themselves with the amount of revenue collected at the bus stand and to know how much revenue was being lost.

He said in the week they will be at the bus stand, they will remain there until 9.00pm and beginning 10.00pm they will shift to main Chalinze-Morogoro Highway to know the exact number of buses that do not proceed to the bus stand during the night.

Meanwhile Ndoma said in order to deal with the issue of abandoned farms in the town, every councillor via council sittings

will submit the number of abandoned farms in his/her area for further legal steps.

He said after receiving the reports and being satisfied with the existence of such farms, some of the farms will be given to public institutions for the construction of schools or dispensaries.

"There are some wards that are without schools or dispensaries while some people have taken up areas of land which have not been developed for very long time, we want to take these back to the government and hand them to public institutions to develop," he said.

## Mkenda dismayed over lack of reliable market for sugarcane growers

By Correspondent Gerald Kitabu, Morogoro

MINISTER for Agriculture Prof Adolf Mkenda has directed the management of Mbigiri Mkulazi sugar factory to finalise the remaining job and open up the factory to ensure sugarcane out growers with a reliable market.

The minister expressed dismay over lack of reliable market for cane growers who sometimes end up throwing them while the nation faces a sugar deficit.

Prof Mkenda issued the directive here yesterday during a tour at the factory where he also met and talked to the management of Mbigiri Mkulazi sugar factory and out growers at different occasions

"I visited Kilombero Sugar Company; farmers growing cane at the Kilombero valley have a surplus of 350,000 Metric tonnes of canes which have been thrown away due to lack of markets. We must do something," said Prof Mkenda promising to work on all the challenges to ensure farmers benefit from their hard work and investments.

Earlier, representatives of cane farmers, Habibu Maemo, Geoffrey Raphael, James Ndagije and Isack Chewe told the Minister that they had grown the canes under the factory assurance of markets but since the 2018/2019 agricultural season they haven't sold any sugarcane to the factory.

They complained of incurring huge losses due to loans they sourced from financial institutions which are not yet paid back.

Currently, farmers are forced to take their sugarcane to Mtibwa Sugar Estates Ltd where payments are small compared to the payments they receive from Kilombero Sugar Company.

Responding, the minister said the factory must open up soon and create a market for the farmers' cane.

"We can't wait any further, farmers grow the canes to end the sugar deficit of 40,000 metric tonnes, but at the end of the day the farmers end up throwing away the canes due to lack of markets," he said.

He said from next year the government has no plan to issue import permits instead it will work out the challenges including attracting more small, and medium factories that can produce between five to ten metric tonnes of sugar to bridge the sugar gap but also create competition for the traditional factories that want to monopolise sugarcane markets.

He added that this year, the government will do every possible means to make sure that sugarcane gets reliable markets and the sugar gap is fixed.

Besides markets, the out growers explained other challenges facing them are poor infrastructures to ferry their canes to the factories and exploitative contracts with some financial institutions and service providers.

## Govt praises CAMFED's learner guide training programme

By Correspondent Friday Simbaya, Iringa

THE government has commended the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) for support it provides to the community and marginalized students through the Learner Guide training programme.

Iringa District Education Officer (secondary) Hamis Mapoto made the remarks when speaking at the opening of a training dubbed 'My Better World' meant for student trainers under CAMFED programmes.

The 'My Better World' life skills programme is meant to help

students to navigate challenges, build confidence, set goals, and learn how to achieve their life dreams.

He said the government in the region is proud of the support given to students from poor families, urging the organization to continue empowering the girls through its various educative programmes.

Mapoto added that participants of the 'my better world program' have been equipped with life skills and reproductive health education to help them avoid pregnancies.

He said the various projects implemented by CAMFED in the

region will help reduce school drop outs as well as absenteeism.

"On behalf of the government I would like to urge you to continue doing this good work, your efforts and commitments are highly commended," said Mapoto.

Mwanaidi Mfilinge and Kidawa Kilave are among beneficiaries of the learner Guide programme said the 'my better world' programme will help girls to realize their life dreams and improve their academic performance.

Mfilinge explained that the organization has been volunteering to help vulnerable girls to get education

from primary to secondary school. She said those joining higher learning institutions are also assisted.

Learner Guides are young women from marginalized backgrounds, who were themselves once vulnerable to exclusion from education, but they are now working to keep more girls in their communities in school.

CAMFED was launched in Tanzania in 2005, working with the government to boost secondary school enrolment. It started working in Iringa region before spreading to eight other regions across the country. It works with 819 partner schools in 32 districts.

## Mwinyi commends Benjamin William Mkapa Foundation for supporting health sector in Isles

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has commended the Benjamin William Mkapa Foundation for supporting the health sector in the Isles.

President Mwinyi made the statement yesterday when he met with the management of the foundation which was led by Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr Adeline Kimambo, Member of the Board of Trustees Dr Ali Uki, Chief Executive Officer Ellen Senkoro and Program Director Rahel Sheiza.

He said the foundation has done a good job in improving provision of social services including strengthening the health sector.

He commended the foundation's decision to provide Zanzibar with 21 health experts who will provide health care services for 11 months until December 2021.

The foundation has also donated personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used by health care workers.

"We will continue providing support to the foundation as it implements its activities in the Isles," said the president.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr Adeline Kimambo said the foundation will apply techniques and experience used to implement a number of projects in Tanzania mainland, to support the Isles' health sector.

President Mwinyi served as the foundation's board chairman from 2006 to 2011. The foundation's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ellen Senkoro said they are working to improve the country's health sector whereas they are now implementing the third strategic plan which started in July 2019, and is expected to end in June 2024.

Dr Senkoro added that the

foundation has been implementing projects that are meant to strengthen health provision systems through deployment of health experts. She said they have been doing so since 2006.

"In Zanzibar, we have been implementing the 'Mkapa Fellows' project which provided employment to nine doctors in various categories. They were deployed to public health facilities in Kaskazini 'A' District in Unguja, Micheweni and Wete districts in Pemba.

She said that with the support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) the foundation is currently working to support government efforts towards curbing the spread of COVID-19. She said UNFPA will also provide 21 health practitioners.

She said the foundation's management has introduced an annual event in honour of the late President Benjamin Mkapa. The event to be celebrated every July is called Benjamin Mkapa Legacy Week.

In another development, President Mwinyi met with the management of the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA) led by Board Chairman, Stephen Wasira.

Dr Mwinyi appreciated the university's efforts in developing the Isle's education sector. He said some courses offered by MNMA are exceptional, adding so far many Zanzibaris have been educated by the university.

Meanwhile, Wasira informed President Mwinyi that they are in the process of transforming the MNMA into a full university.

MNMA Principal, Prof Shadrack Mwakalila said the university has been growing whereas it has opened a campus in Pemba. He said the number of students has also been increasing whereas there are 2,000 registered students.

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Development and skills promotion organisation director Athumani Mbonde poses a question to Livestock and Fisheries minister Mashimba Ndaki (not in the picture) at the meeting of chicken stakeholders in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## Kuwait TV journalists to visit the country next month on media familiarisation tour

By Beatrice Philemon

ELEVEN TV journalists from different media houses in Kuwait are next month expected to visit the country for Media Familiarization Tour to see what Tanzania has to offer in tourism sector.

The trip will also provide a room for them to assist the Tanzania Tourists Board (TTB) to market the country's tourist destinations in Kuwait.

TTB Managing Director Devota Mdachi said yesterday in Dar es Salaam while briefing journalists on Swahili International Tourism EXPO (SiTE) that will take place at Mlimani City Conference Centre from October 8th to 10th this year.

The TV crew will be in Tanzania for one week to experience themselves what the country has to offer and then have TV programs to attract more visitors from Kuwait to visit in Tanzania.

While in Tanzania the team will visit at Tarangire National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Zanzibar, Kilwa and Dar es Salaam region," she said.

"We expressed thanks to Kuwait media houses that has agreed to send journalists to Tanzania for media familiarisation tour to experience what the country has endowed with that in turn will help Tanzania to receive more tourists from Kuwait," she said

This is a new program aimed to give them clear information on the tourist attractions that we have in Tanzania so that they can help TTB to market destination Tanzania in Kuwait.

Tourists keen to visit Tanzania, the Tanzanian tourism offer is so diverse that can accommodate tourists of all sorts of interests and needs.

"Tanzania unforgettable, you can find everything you want as a tourist, all in one destination, that is what makes Tanzania different from other destinations," she said.

So far Tanzania provide stable political, economic and secure environments that underpin the development of the tourism industry for people willing to visit Tanzania.

Currently Tanzania's strengths are based on abundant natural resources that include wildlife area, beautiful beaches along the Indian Ocean and the Great Lakes, favourable climate, history and culture as well as its warm and friendly people who speak Kiswahili and English.

"With a new wave of tourism development and promotion, Tanzania expects to assume a higher rank in the list of African tourist destinations in the next five years," he noted.

Presently Tanzania is one of the fastest growing economies in Africa and one of the most successful wildlife conservation countries in the world and also is the largest country in East Africa and 28% of its land has been set aside for conservation purposes.

Right now tourism sector directly employs close to half a million people and contributes to almost 25 per cent of total export earnings and is one of Tanzania's fastest growing economic sectors that account for 17.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

## Stick to integrity, workers in industry, trade ministry told

By Correspondent Felix Andrew

WORKERS falling under the ministry of Industry and Trade have been insisted to stick to integrity while performing their activities so as to help the government reach its industrialisation drive.

The call was delivered in Dar es Salaam by the Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade Exaud Kigahe soon after he toured TBS offices in the city.

Kigahe said the government would not hesitate to take stern measures against any worker who will not stick to the integrity.

"We have been insisting on our workers not to engage into malpractice acts such as corruption, this might tarnish the image of our government and reduce efforts in the industrialization drive," he said.

Deputy Minister said the government wants to see workers in the ministry collaborate effectively with all people including investors in building the economy.

Early this week, Kigahe ordered suspension of three staff of Tanzania Bureau of Standards who were said to be soliciting bribes from management of Smart Industries in Dar es Salaam.

The suspended staff who were involved

in the saga are Sulemani Banza, a standard officer, Issa Mbarouk a driver and Tomas Mwamkinga, a transport officer.

Deputy Minister Kigahe said that Banza, who is not inspection officer, in collaboration with the driver went to the company's premises at Mikoche area with a man said to be a policeman asking the owner to give them money because he uses expired goods in production.

He said they demanded the managing director of the company to give them 100m/- but he said he had no money.

They lowered the amount to 50m/- but the director said he does not have sufficient fund at the premises.

Kigahe said the two workers accompanied by the director later on went to a bank where he managed to draw about 20m/- and gave them.

"After following closely and interviewing them the minister has ordered immediate suspension of the said workers, from Feb 15, 2021 and asked the PCCB and police to launch an investigation and send the culprits to the court," said Kigahe.

Deputy minister Kigahe said the ministry condemned the incident saying that they did not have their blessings to harass investors.

## Z'bar government guarantees benefits to communities near reserve forest areas

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR'S Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Ministry has said it has developed the Jozani Forest Reserve by instituting agreeable measures to benefit nine surrounding villages.

The Minister, Soud Nahoda mentioned the villages as Kitogani, Bwejuu, Pete, Michamvi, Ukongoroni, Charawe, Chwaka, Cheju and Unguja Ukuu surrounding the Jozani Forest Reserve in Zanzibar.

Nahoda was speaking in the House Representatives as he was responding to a question posed by Special Seats Member Representative Mwanatatu Mbarouk Khamis who wanted to know the benefits received by villages surrounding the national reserve forest areas.

Nahoda said in regard to Pemba, the villages surrounding Ngezi Makangale Forest Reserve include that benefitted Jiwe Moja, Kijini, Tondooni, Mkia wa Ng'ombe, Bandari Kuu, Kiuyu kwa Manda, Kiuyu Kipangani, Msuka and Mjimpya.

He said the measures are planned to be applied to other forest conservation areas and the benefits reaped by the surrounding communities include those accrued from ecotourism. He said the communities living in these areas engage in various activities for income generation and community development in general.

He explained that villagers are provided with training in establishing the projects including commercial beekeeping, seedlings beds, butterflies keeping and farming of various crops.



### CARE TANZANIA - EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY HEAD OF FINANCE

CARE is a leading humanitarian organization dedicated to fighting poverty and social injustice with a special emphasis on women and girls. CARE Tanzania is part of CARE International, whose vision is to seek a world of hope, tolerance, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE International is a global force and a partner of choice within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. We are known everywhere for our unshakable commitment to the dignity of people. CARE Tanzania and partners contribute to the empowerment of the most marginalized and vulnerable rural women and girls to exercise their rights.

CARE Tanzania seeks to recruit self-motivated, results driven, dynamic, suitably qualified, competent and experienced Tanzanian for the position of Head of Finance who will deliver finance excellence to drive the Country Office (CO) results.

#### JOB SUMMARY

The Head of Finance (HoF) will be responsible for ensuring the Country Office (CO) maintains gains in finance operational efficiency, and uses financial data to manage finance performance for the CO. S/he provides oversight of the day-to-day financial operations at the Country Office level and is responsible for organizing and providing high level quality financial services to the Country Office programs, projects, staff and management. S/he works closely with the CARE Shared Services Center (SSC) in Manila, Regional Management Unit (RMU) and CO senior management to ensure appropriate financial support and resources are timely available. S/he ensures a partnership is nurtured between Finance, Program and other program support units in the Country Office

The HoF ensures that program and finance teams are supported during proposal development to develop accurate budgets. S/he will be responsible for timely providing periodic analytical financial reports to Budget Holders and Senior management on CO, Grants and Sub-Grants expenditures, inform and advice the management on the financial position, performance and financial risks as input for effective resource management decision making. Provides technical support and guidance to other CARE staff and partners on compliance and ensures understanding and adherence of terms and conditions of donor grants, statutory requirements and CARE International policies including sub grants management policy.

The HoF will act as the focal person to coordinate and ensure workflow and other projects requirements in the financial and grants management system (PeopleSoft) are timely communicated and defined in the system, for smooth implementation and recording of financial data. Responsible for Treasury management including preparation of Cash forecasting, facilitating payments, deposits and acting as a link of communication with the designated banks to ensure efficiency and smooth flow of bank services. The position has a critical role of ensuring strictly adherence and timely submission of required accounting information (returns), taxes and other statutory payments and claims in accordance with the prescribed law and regulations in Tanzania. Will also be responsible for coordinating Internal and External audits organized for Donor fund, statutory audits or as may be required. S/he will manage a small team and will be responsible for the team's performance management and capacity development. The position will be based in Dar es Salaam and will report directly to the Southern Africa sub-regional Director of Finance.

#### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Budget development
- Financial record keeping
- Financial Analysis and Reporting
- Financial compliance
- Grants and Contracts Management
- Sub - Agreement Management
- Audit management
- Statutory compliance
- Staff and Performance and Development Management

#### EDUCATION QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

Professional qualification as a CPA and registration at the Tanzania NBAA in combination with one of the following three:

- A Bachelors' Degree in Business Administration, Accounting or Finance Management from a recognized institution; or
- A Masters' degree in Accounting or Finance; (iii) An MBA with focus on Finance or Accounting from a recognized institution.

#### Minimum of 5 years' experience in:

- Managing finance functions and supporting a senior management team of an International non-Governmental Organization with multiple offices in the country, funded by multiple donor with strict rules and regulations
- Grants and sub-grants management, budget preparation and budget management as well as in preparing financial reports of an International non-Governmental Organization
- Working with Enterprise Resource Planning systems (Procurement, Financial and HR module) preferably PeopleSoft
- Managing at least three staff, supervising and building capacity of persons working at remote locations in the areas of: compliance to rules and regulations, financial record keeping and reporting, budgeting, program grants, sub-grant agreement, contract and budget management

Only a letter of application and updated CV including names of at least 3 reputable referees from previous jobs (preferable line Managers) with reliable contacts should be sent by email to Human Resources Department [TZHumanResourcesDepartment@care.org](mailto:TZHumanResourcesDepartment@care.org) by CoB 28th February 2021 at 17:00 hours.

CARE is an equal opportunity employer promoting gender, equity and diversity. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. Our selection process reflects our commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable people from abuse.

### THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA



### MINISTRY OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania through the Fair Competition Act, Cap. 285 established an independent Tribunal known as the Fair Competition Tribunal (FCT). The Tribunal is a specialized quasi-judicial body with cross-disciplinary expertise in law, economics, commerce and public administration whose core function is to hear and determine appeals involving competition and economic regulatory issues. Therefore, the Tribunal has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals that arise from orders and decisions of the Fair Competition Commission (FCC) and Regulatory Authorities namely the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA), the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA), the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA) and the Petroleum Upstream Regulatory Authority (PURA). In addition, the Tribunal also hears and determines appeals from orders and decisions of the Chief Inspector of the Merchandise Marks in respect of counterfeit products.

The Tribunal consists of a Chairman and six other Members who work on part-time basis. The Chairman and six Members are all appointed by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. The President appoints the Chairman from amongst the Judges of the High Court after consultation with the Chief Justice. He also appoints six other Members after consultation with the Attorney General from candidates nominated by the Nomination Committee.

The term of service of the Members of the Tribunal has expired and therefore, applications are invited from qualified Tanzanians to fill the above six posts of "Members of the Fair Competition Tribunal" who will serve on part-time basis for a period of three years.

Applicants must have knowledge and experience of not less than ten (10) years in the field of law, economics, commerce, industry or public administration. Knowledge of or experience in competition law and competition economics will be an added advantage.

#### Mode of Application:

Application letter with Curriculum Vitae (CV) including e-mail address (if any) and day time Telephone number, together with certified copies of academic certificates and names and contacts of two referees should be addressed to the undersigned and reach him within two weeks from the date of this publication.

**Chairman  
Nomination Committee  
Fair Competition Tribunal  
2nd Floor, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology  
Building, Jamhuri Street,  
P.O. Box 79650**





Tanzania Postal Bank marketing officer Doroth Joseph (L) hands over various items to Temboni primary school head teacher Patrick Kahwa for special needs children in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Beatrice Philemon

## TFS embarks on new campaign to promote eco-tourism sites in Vikindu Forest Reserve

TANZANIA Forest Services Agency (TFS) has come up with new marketing strategy to promote eco-tourism at the Vikindu Forest Reserve to woo more tourists.

Agency's Forest Conservator Charles Kaselya unveiled the plan over the weekend when briefing local tourists who were visiting the area located 17km from the country's commercial capital-Dar es Salaam.

He said that the forest is home to velvet monkeys, black monkeys, butterflies, birds, dik-dik, duikers, adansonia digitata, and a wide range of snake species such as black mamba, and python. The reserve has a natural dam called Miwaleni, which houses fish species.

"In this area, there is a natural bridge called Mkangazi which is the main tourist attraction."

According to him, there are 65 different tree species-Afzelia quanzensis, Annpna

Senegalensis, hymenocardia Ulmoides, Warburgia Stahlmanii, and Erythroxylum Fischeri. "Most of those trees are suitable for medicinal and wood purpose but are not allowed for harvesting, it has been conserved for eco-tourism and research purpose," he said.

The official called on Dar es Salaam residents to visit the area because it has a lot to offer them.

"We have decided to promote eco-tourism to earn revenue generated from eco-tourism activities and help communities living close to the forest to benefit from it in terms of employment and business," Kaselya said.

Located in Mkuranga District, Coast Region, the reserve has 1,690 hectares of land and is endowed with natural tree species, which is

suitable for medicinal and wood purposes, though they aren't for harvesting.

In a bid to attract more tourists to visit there, TFS has built campsites for the visitors to camp and right now the agency invites investors who can build more accommodation facilities.

"We need accommodation facilities because tourists from Bulgaria and other foreign countries have started flocking to Vikindu Forest Reserve to see butterflies, natural dams, natural forests for research and learning purpose including other tourists' attractions," he said.

"TFS will soon construct two towers inside the forest reserve while tourists will be able to climb the towers to view all the forest reserve as well as view the whole

Dar es Salaam city. We'll also create a butterfly garden inside the forest reserve to allow tourists watch it and take photo more easily because is the best tourists attractions that attract more international visitors."

In this financial year, the agency will construct msonge house, kitchen, reception office, rest house and restaurants where visitors will get meals.

Kaselya added: "Tourists can organize picnic inside the forest where a group of guests can eat, use toilet facilities and enjoy the scenery, we have shades, benches that have been made for visitors."

According to him, the fee charged for local tourists keen to visit the area is 2,000/- per adult, children 1,000/- while foreigners are US\$ 10 for adults while children are about US\$ 5.

## Abide by laws in preparation of human rights report, CSOs told

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

LEGAL and Constitutional Affairs Deputy Minister Amon Mpanju has called on the country's Civil Societies Organisations (CSOs) to abide by the existing laws and procedures in the process of preparing report on issues of human rights by submitting correct human rights issues as they happen.

Mpanju made the call here yesterday when opening a meeting for the evaluation in the preparation of the reports and on how Tanzania is implementing human rights issues to be submitted to the UN General Assembly.

He said the reports should desist unacceptable language and all other issues that have been proscribed, pledging that

the government will continue working together with the CSOs.

The deputy minister praised the CSOs for the solidarity shown the joint report that expresses maturity and high degree of patriotism.

The Managing Director of Tanzania Human rights Centre (LHRC) Anna Henga said in addition to the implementing the war against corruption, eradication of the killing of people with disabilities, reports show rights of children are being violated every day.

She said they have met with more than 100 CSOs in order to endorse the special report for submission to the UN to see how Tanzania was respecting and protecting human rights under the process of Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG)

Commissioner Dr Fatuma Khalfan praised government efforts in implementing recommendations that were agreed upon since the first such evaluation in 2008.

A member of the Board of Defenders of Human Rights, a participant in the meeting, Kenneth Simbaya said human rights issues were very important especially in regard to the country's destiny in bringing about equality, respect of human beings and to ensure every person sees Tanzania as a safe place to live in.

The process in the preparation of the report has integrated more than 100 CSOs whereby every after four years every UN member state submits its report to the UN Commission for Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, and this year Tanzania will be evaluated in its implementation of human rights.



Mbeya Water Supply and Sanitation Authority workers dig a tunnel to supply water services for the residents of Nzovwe, Isyesye and Itezi. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

## IITA-Tanzania welcomes Dr Tripathi as new director for eastern Africa

By Guardian Correspondent

THE International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has welcomed its new director for the Eastern Africa, Dr Leena Tripathi, who will be based in Dar es Salaam.

Dr Tripathi is the third hub director and succeeds Dr Victor Manyong, who retired at the end of December last year after 11 years of leading the hub. Due to his extensive experience in economic research and management, Dr Manyong will remain at the Institute as an Emeritus Director based at IITA in Dar es Salaam.

Dr Tripathi, an Indian national, has been with IITA for 21 years serving in various capacities in Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya.

Her latest position was as the Deputy Director of the East Africa Hub and Country Representative for IITA in Kenya. She has also served as the Country Representative of IITA-Uganda.

While addressing the IITA-Tanzania staff in a town hall meeting, Dr. Tripathi said she was looking forward to learning from and working closely with all staff and partners at the hub for impactful research in Eastern Africa. "The agriculture sector is facing more challenges now than ever, including the impact of climate change and a rapidly increasing population. We, therefore need to work together and harder than ever before, and with our partners, to ensure our research-for-development activities address these challenges and deliver impact," she informed the researchers at IITA-Tanzania.

Dr Manyong said, "Leena has been an excellent award-winning scientist and a highly valued member of IITA for many years. She has done an excellent job of managing the IITA country office in Kenya and previously in Uganda and guiding the research during challenging years."

Dr Manyong noted that he was happy to be stepping down after 11 years as hub director for

Eastern Africa and had seen the hub grow from 94 staff members (7 international and 75 national) in 2009 to 191 (41 international and 150 national) in December 2020. He wished her all the best in her new position.

As an eminent scientist, Dr Tripathi is leading biotechnology research and support to the CGIAR Research Program for Root, Tubers and Bananas (CRP-RTB). She is a faculty member of various institutions, including an Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland, Australia, and a Faculty member of Biosciences eastern and central Africa at the International Livestock Research Institute (BeCA-ILRI) hub.

She also serves as an Editorial Board Member for Plant Biotechnology Journal, Frontiers in Genome Editing, Scientific Reports, and Plant Cell Reports.

Dr Tripathi's primary research focuses on genetic improvement of banana/plantain, cassava, and yam for disease and pest resistance. Her scientific contributions have been recognized internationally through awards and honors, such as excellence awards for Outstanding Scientist and publications. She has been honored as an elected fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for contributions to Agriculture.

Her team's research outputs have been published in about 100 articles in refereed journals with high impact factors like Nature Biotechnology or book chapters. Her research has been featured in more than 200 national and international news articles and documentary films like CNN's Earth's Frontiers and Food Evolution.

Dr Tripathi has global collaboration, including advanced labs in the USA, UK, Australia, and National partners in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi, and regional partners. She obtained her PhD in Plant Molecular Biology and MSc in Molecular Biology & Biotechnology.



### INVITATION FOR BIDS TO PROVIDE SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO SUPPLY IMPROVED POULTRY PARENT STOCK

#### 1.0 Background

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Pathfinder International (PI) in Tanzania are jointly implementing an integrated Program known as Tuungane which addresses Population, Health and Environment (PHE). Agriculture which forms the main livelihood activity on the terrestrial environment has been blamed for the increasing siltation of Lake Tanganyika through unsustainable farming practices. To reduce the soil sediments that have adverse effect to the lake fisheries productivity, Tuungane program aims at supporting smallholder farmers in the Greater Mahale Ecosystem (GME) in improving their agricultural practices through adoption of conservation agriculture/Climate Smart Agriculture. Tuungane program has been implementing some alternative Income Generating Activities (IGAs) to reduce overdependence on agriculture and fisheries for the community livelihoods. Poultry husbandry is one of the IGAs implemented by the program in 3 villages.

Currently, Tuungane program seeks short term consultancy services from an experienced individual who can source out some improved poultry parent stock from Singida region for small community poultry project in Sibwesa, Katumbi and Ndele villages.

#### 2. Consultancy Services

The following is the list of needed consultancy services:

2.1 Source out some improved poultry parent stock from Singida and supply them to farmers in Sibwesa, Katumbi and Ndele villages. The improved poultry parent stock of big size should consist of 60 hens and 12 cocks for each of the 3 villages of Sibwesa, Katumbi and Ndele.

2.2 The consultant will conduct a practical training to community members on how to formulate poultry feeds (starter feeds, broiler feeds and layers feeds). Apart from providing the training, he/she will be responsible for formulating standard feeds using locally available materials and feed the poultry flock for the period of 6 consecutive months. For the first month all raw materials will be provided by the consultant and thereafter the locally available raw materials will be provided by the beneficiary local communities.

2.3 The consultant will conduct a practical training and mentorship to the community members on how to vaccinate the poultry against the major diseases namely Newcastle Disease, Gumboro Disease (Infectious Bursal Disease) and Fowl pox. Finally, he/she will ensure that all the poultry are vaccinated against the 3 major diseases mentioned above.

2.4 The consultant will be responsible for general health of the poultry by ensuring that the birds receive all the required veterinary services and proper nutrition for 6 months.

2.5 The consultant will coach and mentor the COCOBA members on the general management of the poultry during the 6 months of executing the assignment.

2.6 The consultant will prepare and submit to TNC/Tuungane program management a monthly project progress report.

#### 3.0 Eligibility Criteria

Eligible consultants should possess the following minimum qualifications:

- Diploma or Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry/Animal Health/Veterinary Medicine.
- Have an experience in animal husbandry or poultry husbandry of at least 2 years.
- The consultant should be based and operating in Kigoma region.

#### 4.0 Application procedures

Interested individuals with technical skills and appropriate experiences on the above mentioned assignment are warmly welcome to submit their electronic Technical Proposals which includes a well Itemized Financial Budget on or before 28th February 2021 by email to: [hshilinde@tnc.org](mailto:hshilinde@tnc.org).

Please, note that no telephone calls are entertained and that all application received after the deadline will not be honored.



THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2021

Taking A New Look  
At The News  
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

## Leapfrogging: Key to Africa's development?

WHILE nations around the world grapple with how to best respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, many low-income countries in Africa now face a triple threat. In addition to the health and economic challenges posed by the virus, a locust infestation is decimating crops in East Africa and putting the food security of millions of people in peril.

At a time when social distancing and travel restrictions challenge traditional responses, development specialists are increasingly relying on satellite data to monitor swarms, breeding grounds, and the environmental conditions that might lead to new invasion.

This is just one of the ways that data is being used to respond to various development challenges throughout the continent. Because satellite data is cheaper and easier to access than ever before, it has become a key tool that scientists can use to tackle a range of important development issues by combining geospatial data with other sources, such as population data and censuses.

In fact, a recent study on the status of Earth observation and geoinformation sciences in Africa found that, over the past 20 years, the continent has witnessed a steady advancement in space-based technologies that are "increasingly recognized as an essential tool for decision-making that can leapfrog African development."

However, harnessing their potential requires data training and literacy on a massive scale – among university students, who will become the next generation of data scientists, as well as government officials looking to

use data for improved decision-making. Today, universities across Africa are trying to fill that gap by ramping up their data science degrees and providing shorter 101 courses to policymakers and professionals in the development sector.

The field has already presented great opportunities for solving real-world issues. Now, universities need to collaborate with the end users to build data applications if they are to really solve challenges on the ground. Data literacy and capacity are currently the biggest barriers preventing policymakers from making data-driven decisions to improve policies and their outcomes.

Once policymakers have been sensitized to the potential of satellite data, then technical equipment and computing infrastructure, such as connectivity, can be addressed. This would make satellite data accessible for applications in development efforts ranging from agriculture to natural resource monitoring and management, he said. For example, satellites can be used to help countries remotely monitor their crops to create yield estimation and food balances, among other applications.

Agriculture and food security are one of the key areas where we do a number of activities that support countries in crop monitoring.

One way that universities are supporting the scale-up of the practical applications of satellite data for development is to offer more data science-focused programmes. Historically, if one wanted to be a data scientist, they would either go study a statistics degree or they might do a computer science degree.

## ICT should strengthen youth employment opportunities

INVOLVING youth in agricultural development and decision making processes is key to ensuring sustainable development in Africa, and framing this within the context of ICTs and entrepreneurship provides a valuable dimension to the discourse of agricultural modernisation and prosperity

While the agricultural sector is traditionally not very popular among youth in Africa, notably because it lacks policy support, ICT innovations are contributing to improving its image. They advance value chains, providing new employment opportunities, and attract more young people to the sector.

Facilitating cheaper and more reliable access to ICT devices and connectivity is needed to accelerate ICT adoption among youth in agriculture, especially young farmers and agripreneurs. Efforts in this field must go hand in hand with increased capacity building in ICT use, tailored towards agribusiness development.

ICT entrepreneurship and innovation development in the agricultural sector is a recent

development that offers new employment opportunities to African youth. It needs to be further promoted in all African countries and needs multi-stakeholder support to strengthen its profitability and effectiveness.

African agricultural educational institutions should include or strengthen courses on ICT innovations in their curricula. This is essential to nurture a generation of young agriculturalists fully prepared to

take advantage of ICT innovations in their professional career after graduation. There is a need to strengthen ICT use in agriculture by public and private institutions through awareness creation and capacity building. This involves improving equipment in ways that enhance work environments and make them more conducive to innovations by youth in agricultural professions.

Information and communications technology (ICT) is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage and audiovisual, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

The term ICT is also used to refer to the convergence of audiovisual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system. There are large economic incentives to merge the telephone network with the computer network system using a single unified system of cabling, signal distribution, and management.

ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device, encompassing radio, television, cell phones, computer and network hardware, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and appliances with them such as video conferencing and distance learning.

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## Healthcare for military veterans uncovered as a social security benefit in Ethiopia

By Tigist Mekonnen Melesse

IN the Horn of Africa where many competing interests are exposing the region to security threats, the defense forces play crucial roles in maintaining peace and security. They have been on the frontlines in protecting the national sovereignty of the country and ensuring law and order under difficult conditions. Despite their lifetime service, soldiers in Ethiopia are not well remunerated both during their service and after retirement, lacking social security benefits. Hence, they constitute one of the less well-off groups in Ethiopian society. This calls for a special policy decision to provide retirement health care coverage for Ethiopian army members and their families as a gratitude for their heroic service to the nation. This can be particularly fitting following the recent events and their triumphant role in protecting the country despite the shocking attacks on the Northern Command.

Since 2018, as part of the new "homegrown economic reform" agenda, the government of Ethiopia has made many economic and social policy reforms. Reforms in the health sector that include social security for the army can be crucial welfare improving interventions that can enhance the quality of life for those who have been serving their country on the frontlines.

Since time immemorial, Ethiopian army has also fought several wars to maintain peace and stability both in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region. For instance, the legacy of Ethiopian forces during Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1896 at the Battle of Adwa has inspired the black global and led to resistance to colonialists across Africa. Egypt's ambitions of occupying Ethiopia to have direct control of the Nile River ended in the Battle of Gura in 1876 with the sacrifice made by Ethiopian patriots. The Ethiopian army also defeated the Sudanese Mahdist army, who invaded Ethiopia in 1889, at the Battle of Gallabat. In 1978, the gallant Ethiopian army defeated and repulsed the invading Somali army, which controlled significant parts of eastern Ethiopia. During the Eritrean-Ethiopian war in 1998, thousands have lost their lives to defend the country. The Ethiopian army has also participated in regional

and international peacekeeping missions and is praised for its courage. For instance, in 1951, more than 3,000 soldiers from Ethiopia fought in the Korea War their motto was "Never be captured in the battlefield" and contributed to the liberation of Korea. Currently, Ethiopia is a major contributor to the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) peacekeeping missions.

To this effect, Ethiopian soldiers have been in Darfur Sudan, Abyei South Sudan, and Somalia to strengthen cross border conflict management in the Horn of Africa together with eight other member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The majority of IGAD's peacekeeping force is from Ethiopia.

Ethiopian soldiers have also successfully participated in many other development activities, including maintenance and construction of public infrastructures (e.g., schools, roads, health centers), helping the people during national health and disaster emergencies (e.g., COVID-19, locust infestation, flood). However, the Ethiopian army has never been paid back for its national, regional, and international services in the form of social security benefits, they deserve more than retirement healthcare coverage. The current health reform effort in Ethiopia should consider as a similar initiative of countries that have a better healthcare program. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all citizens is also one of the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals- SDG3. Countries that have not been investing in health services were also facing challenges during an unprecedented time like the COVID-19 that affects senior citizens more. Investing in health, education, and infrastructure are also key areas of social development.

Although the move in the direction of universal health coverage, following the World Health Organization (WHO) framework, has been slow, Ethiopia can still learn from the experience of other developing and developed countries. First, Rwanda and Ghana, provide health coverage for their population through a national health insurance scheme. The Rwanda Defense Force in its citizens outreach program

which was launched in 2009 provides several socioeconomic services besides serving the community for free medical services that include dentistry, ophthalmology, orthopedics, internal medicine, gynecology, pediatric and dermatology, and minor surgeries. Second, in the United States of America, retired military personnel and their families have several incentives the TRICARE For Life program, for instance, provides a range of options for army veterans to receive healthcare coverage. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program also supports over 1.3 million veterans and their families.

Ethiopia's health insurance system has remained traditional and underdeveloped. The system is dominated by community based schemes established more than 100 years ago called Idir an informal institution which provides financial help to families for emergencies like funerals. An improvement in the health sector including intervention in the care program is needed. The Idir is organized by a group of people where members pay premiums regularly as protection against unforeseen emergencies. Currently, as part of the universal health coverage, the government is trying to scale up Idir through its new initiative "Idir while alive" the plan is to pool members' premium payments into a collective fund to use for basic healthcare costs at local health centers when a member is sick. While such progress is appreciated, a modern form of health insurance like any other developing country remains weak and underdeveloped in Ethiopia.

A new form of social security in terms of healthcare insurance coverage for veterans who have honorably served the country in the frontlines is needed. Soldiers, in particular, are vulnerable groups since 1991 the Ethiopian army, which fought multiple wars to protect the country, was disbanded without any compensation but then remobilized for the war with Eritrea in 1998. Several soldiers after the Eritrea war have been unjustifiably demobilized and again invited to help the army with the current internal conflict (with the Tigray region).

It is also important to understand that frequent conflicts have economic, social, and environmental consequences

including poverty and migration problems, and children, women, and the elderly are often the most affected groups. In many countries that face frequent internal conflicts, their governments are greedy for power and trap their people into poverty, transition to democracy and development can be delayed significantly the military personnel, in particular, who sacrificed their lives to protect civilians from conflicts, who have been wounded and disabled, required retirement healthcare coverage. Provision of some level of social protection and healthcare to retired military officers not only reduces the threat of endless war and conflict but it has enormous social benefits in the long run.

More particularly, providing healthcare for military veterans can offer the following types of benefits. First, it helps to maintain peace and security in a conflict-affected region. Second, it makes servicing the country in the military attractive to the educated youth as well adds dignity and honor to those who retire after their gallant service to the nation. Third, the incentive may allow the government to consider a national peacetime training and short term service in the military for the youth (this is not to fight wars) as a way of building discipline, commitment and patriotic duty as has been practiced by several developed countries which use this model for cultivating their youth after high school graduation.

Retirement healthcare coverage as a social security benefit for the army could therefore be the first of its kind in Ethiopia and provide immense social benefits. As part of the effort for extending universal healthcare in the country, it can incentivize and recognize distinguished public service for peace and security and facilitate democratization and sustainable development. As part of the healthcare reforms, intervention on retiree healthcare for the army (and their immediate family) can improve the quality of the life of soldiers who have been providing unique national service to secure peace and facing enormous risks to their lives in the conflict affected region. This can also be a good initial experience to innovate and identify other vulnerable groups in the country and explore feasible policy options to expand social protection.



# Saudi Arabia eyes Dubai's crown with HQ ultimatum

DUBAI

**S**AUDI Arabia has raised the stakes in a competition with freewheeling Dubai for foreign talent and cash. From 2024, the Saudi government will stop giving state contracts to companies and commercial institutions that base their Middle East hubs in any other country in the region, the Saudi finance minister told Reuters.

The measure is the latest attempt by the kingdom, a religiously conservative nation that is the birthplace of Islam, to remould itself as a financial and tourism hub under the leadership of de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

But challenging the dominance of Dubai, in neighbouring United Arab Emirates (UAE), as the region's commercial and financial capital will not be easy.

With little of the oil wealth of its neighbours, Dubai has built its economy on its open-for-business credentials and the promise of a glitzy lifestyle for well-heeled expatriates.

"It's a further challenge to UAE business, especially Dubai, though the superior operating environment, legal environment and facilities (there) suggests that businesses may continue to have offices across the region," said Rachel Ziemba, adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank.

Still, the UAE is taking seriously the threat from Saudi Arabia, the largest Arab economy and the world's top oil exporter.

The UAE has already moved to make the country more attractive to foreign firms including allowing expatriates to divorce, cohabit and drink alcohol without a license.

Dubai's former finance chief Nasser al-Shaikh said Riyadh's move contradicted the principles of a unified Gulf market.

"Global experiences and history have proven that forced attraction is not sustainable," he tweeted following the Saudi announcement.

Saudi's finance minister told Reuters that Dubai and Riyadh would complement each other.

"This is not about Dubai or Abu Dhabi or any other city, this is about Saudi Arabia's right to have its fair share of regional headquarters," Mohammed al-Jadaan said.

Along with the ultimatum, Saudi Arabia is offering companies that set up regional headquarters in Riyadh zero corporate tax for 50 years, a waiver on mandatory quotas to employ Saudis for at least 10 years and potential favouring in government entities' tenders and contracts, according to a brochure by Invest Saudi, the country's investment brand overseen by the Ministry of Investment.

They would get relocation services, faster licence issuance and eased rules for work permits for spouses, it showed.



FILE PHOTO: A Saudi man walks past a logo of the Future Investment Initiative ahead of the opening ceremony of the fourth annual conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia January 27, 2021. REUTERS

Some sectors would also be exempt from the decision to link state contracts to setting up regional headquarters, according to Jadaan. Detailed regulations will be issued before the end of 2021.

**WORKAROUNDS**

Saudi Prince Mohammed has pushed through social and economic reforms in his plans to modernise the Muslim

kingdom and attract foreign investment to help diversify the economy away from oil. He has said he wants Riyadh to become a global city by 2030.

The crown prince has eased restrictions on concerts, allowed women to drive and ended a 40-year ban on cinemas, dramatic steps for Saudi Arabia. But Dubai already boasts multiplexes, nightclubs and world-class beachfront

hotels that, when the pandemic is not raging, attract millions of visitors each year.

Meanwhile, Saudi projects such as the King Abdullah Financial District, planned since 2006 to house banks across an area roughly four times the size of London's Canary Wharf, have yet to take off and attempts to lure foreign capital outside the energy sector have

flattered in recent years amid political controversy, an opaque legal system and the coronavirus crisis.

The UAE has spent years attracting businesses and shifting to Riyadh after decades in Dubai would be difficult, bankers told Reuters.

One said some financial institutions with offices in Saudi Arabia could rename them as regional headquarters while maintaining a presence in Dubai. "The amount of business that's generated from the government needs to be justified," the banker said. "For an investment bank, there's no revenue to justify the move."

Karen Young, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, told Reuters the Saudi move could encourage "workarounds that defeat the purpose and don't create growth."

Franklin Templeton, which has offices in the UAE and Turkey, said it was awaiting more details on Riyadh's proposed rules.

"With further information on the new regulations planned to be issued this year, we will be monitoring this closely to evaluate our approach," the investment firm said. Foreign banks such as HSBC, JPMorgan and Citigroup, which are based in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), declined to comment.

For technology companies bidding for business as Prince Mohammed pushes on with plans for a \$500 billion business zone on the Red Sea, however, an office in Riyadh may make strategic sense.

"Expanding in Saudi Arabia is a way to advance a company's chess pieces in the Middle East: it's strategy," said Sam Blatteis, a former head of government relations at Google for the Gulf and CEO of The MENA Catalysts, a consultancy.

# Libyans desire national reconciliation 10 years after uprising against Gaddafi

TRIPOLI

**M**UHAMMAD Tishor, a 48-year-old owner of a sewing workshop in the Libyan capital city of Tripoli, has been visiting the Martyrs Square over the past few days. As the 10th anniversary of the uprising against late leader Muammar Gaddafi approaches, the square has been decorated with flags and slogans.

"This place has great symbolism and stirs mixed feelings among many Libyans," Tishor said, sitting on a bench on the Martyrs Square.

"When many Libyans came out 10 years ago, the slogan or motive was nothing but gaining freedom and equality for all ... we will continue to strive to achieve all of its goals," Tishor said.

In February 2011, many Libyans demonstrated against Gaddafi's government and soon afterwards, the demonstrations turned into an armed conflict. Since then, Libya has been plagued by escalating violence, political division and economic instability.

"With the situation we have reached today, we seek and hope to achieve national reconciliation among all the people despite their various political, geographical and social affiliations," Tishor said.

"We want a strong Libyan society that is not separated by politics, and we want people to be able to exercise their right to express without fear, whether they support or oppose the revolution," Tishor added.

Ibtisam Dardour, whose son participated in the demonstrations, also believed that national reconciliation is the only way to save the country.

"My son Abdullah was one of the young people who went out in Martyrs Square on the night of Feb. 16 (2011). He was with thousands who chanted in the name of the revolution," Dardour told Xinhua.

Abdullah was killed in the following violence, she said, with tears in her eyes. Carrying a small sign saying "National Reconciliation -- the Way to Peace and Coexistence," Dardour said she believes that national reconciliation can end the conflict between Libyans.

"For me, at the beginning of the revolution, I held a grudge against anyone who supported Muammar Gaddafi, because I considered them all accomplices in killing my only son.

However, I decided to forgive them, because hatred will not bring my son back to life," Dardour said. "I hope that the new government will pay more attention to the reconciliation, and that all the displaced people will return to their cities," she said.

The political process in the war-torn country has recently made concrete steps forward. In October 2020, the Libyan parties signed a permanent ceasefire agreement that ended the war between the east-based army and the UN-backed government in and around Tripoli.

Earlier this month, the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) selected a new interim executive authority for the country, which was accepted by all



Fighters of the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) fire at the east-based Libyan National Army (LNA) troops at a frontline in Tripoli, Libya, on Aug. 24, 2019. Libya has been struggling to make a democratic transition amid insecurity and chaos ever since the fall of former leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. (Xinhua)

parties involved.

The new authority's main task is to prepare the country for the upcoming general elections on Dec. 24, 2021, as agreed upon by the LPDF. The United Na-

tions Security Council welcomed the major achievement in Libya as a milestone in its political process.

Through a presidential statement, the council "welcomes the agreement reached by the Libyan

Political Dialogue Forum on a new unified interim executive authority charged with leading the country to elections."

Xinhua



# Successful crop innovation is mitigating climate crisis impact in Africa

IBADAN and MEXICO CITY,

**A**FRICAN smallholder farmers have no choice but to adapt to climate change: 2020 was the second hottest year on record, while prolonged droughts and explosive floods are directly threatening the livelihoods of millions. By the 2030s, lack of rainfall and rising temperatures could render 40 percent of Africa's maize-growing area unsuitable for climate-vulnerable varieties grown by farmers, while maize remains the preferred and affordable staple food for millions of Africans who survive on less than a few dollars of income a day.

Farmers across the continent understand that the climate crisis is affecting their harvests and their "daily bread". In sub-Saharan Africa, growing numbers of people are chronically undernourished, with over 21 percent of the population suffering from severe food insecurity.

The global battle against climate change and all its interconnected impacts requires a multisectoral approach to formulate comprehensive responses. For farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, especially smallholders, this involves producing improved crop varieties that are not only high-yielding but also tolerant to drought and heat, resistant to diseases and insect pests, and can contribute to minimizing the risk of farming under rainfed conditions.

CGIAR, a global partnership involving numerous organizations engaged in food systems transformation, has been at the forefront of technological innovation and deployment for many decades. The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) are the two CGIAR research centers undertaking innovative maize research and development work in the stress-prone environments of Africa. Successful development of improved climate-adaptive maize varieties for sub-Saharan Africa has been spearheaded by these two CGIAR centers that implemented joint projects such as the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) and Stress Tolerant Maize for Africa (STMA) in partnership with an array of national and private sector partners in the major maize-producing countries in Eastern, Southern, and West Africa. Under the 10-year DTMA initiative, about 160 affordable and scalable maize varieties were released.

High-yielding, multiple stress-tolerant, maize varieties using CIMMYT/IITA maize germplasm released after 2007 (the year the DTMA project was started) are estimated to be grown on 5 million hectares in 2020 in sub-Saharan Africa. The adoption of drought-tolerant (DT) maize varieties helped lift millions of people above the poverty line across the continent. For example, in drought-prone southern Zimbabwe, farmers using DT varieties in dry years were able to harvest up to 600 kilograms more maize per hectare – enough for nine months for an average family of six – than farmers who sowed conventional varieties.

The STMA project that followed DTMA also operated in sub-Saharan Africa, where 176 million people depend on maize for nutrition and economic well-being. The project, which ended in 2020, and followed by a new project called Accelerating Genetic Gains for Maize and Wheat Improvement (AGG), developed new maize varieties that can be successfully grown under drought, sub-optimal soil fertility, heat stress, and diseases and pests. In 2020, CGIAR-related stress-tolerant maize varieties were estimated to be grown on over 5 million hectares, benefiting over 8.6 million smallholder farmers in 13 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.



A smallholder woman farmer in northern Uganda with DT maize on her farm.

In Kenya, farmers with the new maize varieties are harvesting 20 to 30 percent more grain than farmers without drought-tolerant seeds. Prasanna Boddupalli, Director of CIMMYT's Global Maize Program and the CGIAR Research Program on maize, says this has a cascading effect on livelihoods – improving the nutritional intake of the community, helping children return to school, and reducing poverty.

In an interview with Gates Notes, Kenyan farmer Veronica Nduku, who has been growing CIMMYT's drought-

tolerant maize for 10 years, had said that she always harvests even when there is no rainfall.

In Zambia, a study by CIMMYT and the Center for Development Research has shown that adopting drought-tolerant maize can increase yields by 38 percent and reduce the risks of crop failure by 36 percent, even though three-quarters of the farmers in the study had experienced drought during the survey.

Besides climate-adaptive improved maize varieties, both CIMMYT and IITA have developed maize varieties

biofortified with provitamin A; vitamin A deficiency is highly prevalent in populations across sub-Saharan Africa. These biofortified maize varieties, developed in partnership with HarvestPlus, are being deployed in targeted countries in sub-Saharan Africa in partnership with national programs and seed company partners.

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of its founding this year, CGIAR unveiled its roadmap for a new 10-year strategy at the online 2021 Climate Adaptation Summit, hosted by the Netherlands in January.

The new sustainable research strategy puts climate change at the heart of its mission, with an emphasis on the realignment of food systems worldwide, targeting five impact areas: nutrition, poverty, inclusivity, climate adaptation and mitigation, and environmental health.

Through food system transformation, resilient agri-food systems, and genetic innovations CGIAR's ambition is to meet and go beyond the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for a concerted global effort to radically realign food systems to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030.

CGIAR warns that without more science-based interventions to align agriculture with climate targets, the number of undernourished people around the world could exceed 840 million by 2030.

To shift its focus and investment into agricultural research that responds to the climate crisis, CGIAR is undergoing an institutional reform. Now named 'One CGIAR' the dynamic reformulation of CGIAR's partnerships, knowledge, assets, and global presence, aims for greater integration and impact in the face of the interdependent challenges facing today's world.

Scientific innovations in food, land, and water systems will be deployed faster, at a larger scale, and at reduced cost, having greater impact where they are needed the most.

Ground-breaking progress to date would not have been possible without the generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Yet Bill Gates, who recognizes the essential role of CGIAR in "feeding our future", also acknowledges that current levels of investment do not even amount to half of what is needed.

Investments in maize breeding and seed system innovations must expand to keep up with the capacity to withstand climate variability in sub-Saharan Africa, the world's most chronically undernourished region, and provide food and nutritional security to millions of maize-dependent and resource-constrained smallholders and consumers.

At CIMMYT and IITA, we have invested on long-term breeding to increase genetic gains using many new tools and technologies. These efforts need to be further intensified. More funding is also needed to reach out to smallholders with quality seed of climate-resilient maize varieties. While 77 percent of Zambian households interviewed said they experienced drought in 2015, only 44 percent knew about drought-tolerant maize.

Mindful that adopting new technologies and practices can be risky for resource-poor farmers who do not enjoy the protection of social welfare safety nets in rich countries, CIMMYT encourages farmers, seed companies, and other end users to be involved in the development process.

It is not enough to lower carbon emissions. African farmers need to adapt quickly to rising temperatures, draw-out droughts and sharp, devastating floods. With higher-yielding, multiple stress tolerant maize varieties, smallholder farmers have the opportunity to not only combat climatic variabilities, diseases and pests, but can also effectively diversify their farms. This will enable them in turn to have better adaptation to the changing climates and access to well-balanced and affordable diets. As climate change intensifies, so should agricultural innovations. It is time for a "business unusual" approach.

IPS

## China strives to ensure a safe and happy Spring Festival holiday amid COVID-19 pandemic

By He Juan,

**S**AFETY and health have become the most important keywords in China's efforts to coordinate epidemic prevention and control measures and various public services during the upcoming Spring Festival, also known as the Chinese Lunar New Year, amid sporadic COVID-19 outbreaks and cluster infections in some areas.

This year's Spring Festival, the grandest festival in China and the most significant occasion for family reunions, falls on Feb. 12. In an effort to make sure Chinese people enjoy the holiday while keeping them safe, the Chinese government is advancing the implementation of differentiated and precise epidemic prevention and control strategies across the country.

At present, COVID-19 risks are generally controllable in China. Thanks to prompt responses and decisive measures, the numbers of new daily confirmed COVID-19 cases in areas that have reported cluster infections earlier this year have started to drop.

People's health is regarded as the top priority of governments at various levels during the Spring Festival.

Recently, the General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council of China issued a circular that requires all localities in China to do a good job in guaranteeing considerate and adequate services for the growing number of people who choose to stay where they live and work for this year's Spring Festival for the sake of security amid the pandemic.

Local governments across the country should lose no time in making arrangements for tasks including guaranteeing a stable supply of basic necessities, convenient and smooth transportation and logistics services, as well as protection of legal rights and interests of people who stay where they work during the holiday, according to the circular.

China has granted conditional marketing authorization for its first self-developed COVID-19 vaccine, and cities across the country have used the vaccine on some key groups.

However, the epidemic situation remains grim and complex, especially when the Spring Festival travel rush has kicked off, which has certainly brought about increasing gatherings.



Teachers help children of migrant workers who decide to stay where they work for the upcoming Spring Festival make traditional pastries to celebrate the holiday in Leidian township, Huzhou, east China's Zhejiang province, Jan. 31, 2021. (File photo)

Against such backdrop, strict implementation of epidemic prevention and control measures is rather significant and challenging.

In order to prevent further spread of the virus, the Chinese government has requested that all residents in high-risk areas for COVID-19 shall stay at their current residing localities during the Spring Festival holiday, called on people in medium-risk areas to do the same in principle, and encouraged residents in low-risk areas to try their best to stay put for the holiday and avoid travel for the sake of security.

Employees with government organs, public institutions and state-owned enterprises have been asked to take the lead in following the policy.

Responding actively to the call of the central government, various regions in China have rolled out initiatives to encourage enterprises, institutions and individuals to properly arrange activities during the

Spring Festival in a bid to reduce population flows and public gatherings to lower the risk of further spread of the virus.

China's capital city Beijing encouraged citizens to stay in the city for the holiday; Huainan, east China's Anhui province, issued a public letter to mobilize migrant workers to try to stay in the city during the Spring Festival; Yinchuan, northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region, suggested that citizens plan their trips properly.

By taking measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic, the Chinese government aims to ensure the security of Chinese people while bringing them a sense of happiness.

Nationwide efforts to balance epidemic prevention and control with economic and social development have shown the wisdom of local governments and reflected their governance philosophies.

Ningbo, east China's Zhejiang province, has improved services to support companies in enhancing investment and securing growth while mobilizing employees to stay put during the Spring Festival holiday through heartwarming activities.

Quanzhou in southeast China's Fujian province has provided generous gifts for migrant workers who decide to stay in the city during the Spring Festival, and offered to mail their purchases for the holiday to their homes for free.

The China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. has allowed passengers to cancel their tickets without charging fees, in a bid to encourage them to change their plan to return home for the festival.

While encouraging people to stay put during the holiday to prevent spreading the epidemic, these thoughtful measures have brought warmth to people.

By formulating epidemic prevention and control policy during the Spring Festival travel season in accordance with the law, China strives to reduce the risk of virus spread as much as possible, rather than setting up unnecessary barriers for family reunion during the Spring Festival.

Epidemic prevention and control efforts during the Spring Festival should be targeted and effective, according to relevant authorities, which criticized certain areas for adopting the "one-size-fits-all" approach in implementing relevant policy.

A spokesperson with the National Health Commission of China stressed that Chinese cities, except for Beijing, should never forbid residents from returning to their hometowns for the Spring Festival out of no good reason or keep those who get back home in quarantine.

Local governments and relevant departments of China have been asked to release information in a timely manner and roll out targeted and differentiated policies based on their actual conditions, and make full use of good practices and experience in protecting people's livelihood while containing the epidemic last year so as to try their best to ensure normal functioning of society and guarantee another safe and happy Spring Festival holiday for the people.

People's Daily



# WB support for COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Africa

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE World Bank approved an additional financing of \$5 million from the International Development Association (IDA) to provide the small island nation of Cabo Verde with affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

This is the first World Bank-financed operation in Africa to support a country's COVID-19 immunization plan and help with the purchase and distribution of vaccine in alignment with the COVID-19 vaccines global access (COVAX) facility.

This additional financing will support the country's efforts to purchase and deploy more than 400,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, as well as personal protective equipment including masks and other medical supplies to help ensure an effective vaccination rollout.

The project will also finance cold chain equipment and transport, as well as improve health infrastructure to help reopen the country for tourism. It builds on the emergency support provided through the Cabo Verde COVID-19 emergency response project.

"As a second wave of coronavirus is taking a serious toll on African lives and economies, closing down schools and businesses, we are stepping up our efforts to help our countries purchase and distribute vaccines, tests, and treatments, and strengthen vaccination systems," says Ousmane Diagnana, World Bank Vice President for Western and Central Africa. "Cabo Verde has a lot of experience in vaccination campaigns and is well prepared to start vaccine deployment this month.

This is a critical step to help secure the future of the people of Cabo Verde, restore jobs and reboot the tourism industry particularly hit by the pandemic".

The economy has been severely affected by the crisis, with GDP expected to contract by 11 per cent in 2020.

The island economy off the coast of West Africa has seen its tourism arrivals drop by 70 per cent in 2020, unemployment reached nearly 20 per cent, and its poverty rate more than doubled from 20 per cent to 45 per cent in the short term. While two thirds of the deaths occur among people over the age of 65, the young and economically active Cabo Verdeans are the most affected by the virus.

"Following months of rigorous work and great collaboration, we are quite pleased that

the World Bank has approved this additional financing to help Cabo Verde purchase and distribute vaccines against the COVID 19 virus," said Dr. Olavo Avelino Garcia Correia, Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Finances of Cabo Verde.

"This financing is the necessary complement to the wide ranging and prompt measures put in place in Cabo Verde at the onset of the pandemic. We are keen to now ensure that we promptly vaccinate the population so that we can restart economic growth in a more diversified and resilient way".

To help prepare the National COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, a COVID-19 vaccine readiness assessment was conducted by the Government of Cabo Verde with support from the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nation Children's Fund

(UNICEF). The assessment showed that preparations are well underway, the legal framework and identification process of the target population are in place, and Cabo Verde is now eligible to make use of the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (COVAX-AMC) as the main mechanism for purchasing vaccines.

In response to the pandemic, the World Bank Group in Cabo Verde responded swiftly and focused on three main areas to: save lives, protect the poor and build back better. As part of the health response, a \$5 million emergency health operation and an additional \$940,000 grant through the Pandemic Emergency Facility (PEF) helped procure essential medical equipment. In addition, a \$10 million Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Operations (CAT DDOs) was

triggered to help close the fiscal financing gap unlocked by the economic shock and health response. To protect the most vulnerable, \$3 million was reallocated through the Social Inclusion project and an additional financing of \$10 million was approved to provide emergency cash transfers to additional families in distress. The Education and the Skills Development Enhancement project also helped purchase tablets and televisions to ensure remote learning during the lockdown.

To reboot the economy, an additional financing through the access to Finance for Micro, Small, and Medium Sized Enterprises COVID-19 project is supporting small and medium enterprises to access credit.

An additional \$25 million was also recently approved to

strengthen fiscal resilience and reform State Own Enterprises.

The World Bank, one of the largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries, is taking broad, fast action to help developing countries respond to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

This includes \$12 billion to help low- and middle-income countries purchase and distribute COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments, and strengthen vaccination systems.

The financing builds on the broader World Bank Group COVID-19 response, which is helping more than 100 countries strengthen health systems, support the poorest households, and create supportive conditions to maintain livelihoods and jobs for those hit hardest.

## 'Global wildlife trade causes decline of species abundance'

By Special Correspondent

INTERNATIONAL wildlife trade is causing declines of over 60 per cent in the abundance of species on the planet, say scientists who call for more research on the impacts of this severe threat across the world.

The scientists, including those from the University of Sheffield in the UK found that wildlife trade is causing declines of around 62 per cent in the abundance of species, with endangered species suffering losses of over 80 per cent.

Although there are policies managing trade, the study, published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution, warned that without enough research on the effects of wildlife trade these policies cannot claim to safeguard species.

According to the researchers, at least 100 million plants and animals are internationally trafficked each year and the international wildlife trade is said to be worth between \$4 to \$20 billion per year.

Citing some examples, they said wildlife trade continues to impact the decline of African elephants due to the ivory trade and the demise of pangolin species across Africa and Asia.

The research called for better protective measures for threatened species and management of trade with trade still driving declines of 56 per cent in protected areas.

"Thousands of species are traded for pets, traditional medicines, and luxury foods, but how this impacts species' abundances in the wild was unknown," said David Edwards, Professor of Conservation Science at the University of Sheffield.

While the declines in abundance are worse for species being traded as pets, the scientists said these are also caused by trade for bushmeat.

"Our research draws together high-quality field studies to reveal a shocking reduction in most traded species, driving many locally extinct," said Edwards, one of the corresponding authors of the study.

The scientists believe trapping drives particularly severe declines in species at high risk of extinction and those traded for pets. "Such high levels of off take suggests trade is often unsustainable, yet a lot of trade is conducted legally. As a society, we urgently need to reflect upon our desire for exotic pets and the efficacy of legal frameworks designed to prevent species declines," Edwards said.

According to the scientists, an understanding of how wildlife trade is impacting species is severely lacking in developed nations, and for many commonly traded wildlife groups, despite it being one of their biggest drivers of species extinction.

"Where extraction for wildlife trade occurs we found large declines in species abundances. This highlights the key role global wildlife trade plays in species extinction risk," said Oscar Morton, lead author of the research from the University of Sheffield.

Without effective management, Morton believes such trade will continue to threaten wildlife.

"For such a severe threat to global wildlife, we uncovered concerning limited data on the impacts of wildlife trade in Asia, North America and Europe, as well as a lack of data for many amphibians, invertebrates, cacti and orchids, despite these groups often being traded," he added.



## Rural energy enterprises view agriculture sector as high risk

By Special Correspondent

A NEW study shows that lack of robust energy services in Africa's agriculture sector is a major obstacle to the sector's growth.

Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a \$1 trillion industry in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, and access to sustainable energy should be at the top of the agenda for the sector's transformation.

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

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

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

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

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

"However, these energy providers don't have the customer and market understanding or the capacity and interest to develop and serve opportunities in ag-



riculture. With few examples of successful projects at scale and many barriers to entry, investors view the opportunity as high risk with questionable returns. There is a clear gap in designing and demonstrating energy projects that can be attractive candidates for commercial investment," the report adds. "Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is underpowered. Growing agribusinesses and smallholder farmers need modern energy to thrive, but generally lack the technical knowledge, financing, and project development and management capacity to access energy services. Rural energy enterprises, in turn, need reliable energy consumers anchoring demand for their services. Agriculture should be a key market for rural energy providers. This creates a set of needs and opportunities at the ag-energy nexus. These opportunities are real and compelling, but they are not straightforward," the Principal at Factor[e] Ventures, Seth Silverman told Prosper magazine.

### Partnerships

To power Africa's agricultural economies, we need

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

According to Silverman, energy is an essential service for modern agricultural economies, enabling farmers to irrigate, work the land, refrigerate, dry, heat, process, and transport crops.

Engines supply only 10 per cent of farm power in Africa. Only 4 per cent of agricultural land in Africa is irrigated. This figure contrasts with 37 per cent of cropland that is irrigated in Asia.

"The developed world has 200m<sup>3</sup> per 1,000 people of refrigerated storage capacity. In the developing world, it is 19m<sup>3</sup> and in Kenya and Nigeria, it is less than 3m<sup>3</sup>. Africa imports over \$400m (Shs1.5 trillion) of processed fruit and vegetables a year, but agro-processing is predicted to be the fastest-growing sub-

sector in the next decade - a \$122b revenue increase. Farmers can lose up to 30 per cent of grain due to mycotoxins and bacteria from poor storage and drying," Silverman adds.

"If agribusiness in sub-Saharan Africa is to become a one trillion-dollar industry in the next 10 years, rural development efforts will need to span both energy and agriculture. Projects need to focus on big target opportunities to encourage agribusiness, energy, and technology actors to work together," the report concludes.

Energy access and technology adoption in agriculture must accelerate through motivated agricultural, energy, and technology enterprises. This means building the capacity of those operating in agriculture and assembling the physical and financial infrastructure they need to grow.

### Fixing problem

According to the report, renewably powered technologies could fix agriculture's problems.

"However, the many established innovations that have not been widely adopted show that technology alone is not enough. Solar irrigation pumps remain substantially underutilised despite attracting lots of funding. To unlock the value that solar dryers can deliver, drying centres need strong leadership from a motivated dehydrated products trader to operate effectively. Biodigesters can deliver energy from on-farm waste, saving costs and increasing productivity, but without a market signal that values quality, the full potential of these systems to improve smallholder incomes will go unrealised.

"There are few partners around whom minigridd developers can build a reliable value proposition and they struggle to build the expertise and teams that are needed to stimulate demand in the villages in which they operate. Thus, it is the combination of the right technology tailored to offer value for rural customers, a rural focused business model to capture and grow that value, and an effective operator to deliver the model that are required for success," it adds.



# IP, vaccine imperialism cause death and suffering, delay recovery

SYDNEY and KUALA LUMPUR,

**V**ACCINE developers' refusal to share publicly funded vaccine research findings is stalling broader, affordable vaccinations which would more rapidly contain COVID-19 contagion. The pandemic had infected at least 109 million people worldwide, causing over 2.4 million deaths as of mid-February.

Avoidable delays in preventive vaccination are imposing terrible burdens on the world economy and human welfare, with economic disruption demanding more relief and recovery measures. They have cost US\$28 trillion in lost output globally, with developed countries contracting by 7% in 2020.

## Avoidable vaccination delays

National capacities to cope with the pandemic have been largely determined by means and power. Thus, access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, personal protective equipment and other pandemic supplies has been severely lacking in most African and other poor countries.

At current vaccination rates, it would take "not one or two years, but six years" to reach 75% global coverage, currently considered the minimum to achieve 'herd immunity' against COVID-19.

Patent protections, vaccine production constraints and the rich country scramble will deprive more than 85 poor countries of public access to vaccines before 2023. As of 5 February, not a single dose had been administered in 130 countries with 2.5 billion people.

Of the more than 131 million doses available by 8 February, the US, China, the EU and the UK had 78%, while Africa had 0.2%! Meanwhile, the African Union has only ordered less than half of what it needs to reach herd immunity, i.e., just 670 million doses. Meanwhile, besides Brazil, other Latin American countries only have 150 million doses for less than a quarter of their population.

## Supply shortfalls

By the end of 2021, total global capacity of the 13 leading COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers would still be well short of the needs of the world's almost 7.7 billion people. Even if they all produce at maximum capacity, a fifth of the world's population would not have access until 2022.

Rich countries continue to oppose the South African-Indian proposal to temporarily suspend relevant provisions of the 1994 World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to effectively block rapid scaling up of generic vaccine production.

The resulting "catastrophic moral failure" is thus mainly due to vaccine suppliers' profit maximisation, also limiting supplies and access. Meanwhile, rich countries' grossly excessive vaccine purchases can vaccinate their residents several times over.

The US will soon have enough to vaccinate its population twice over, while Canada and Australia have booked enough to protect residents several times over. Exceptionally, New Zealand - which has also ordered several times its population's needs - plans to freely share vaccines with its Pacific island neighbours.

## Manufactured scarcity and prices

Global needs now greatly exceed available supply. Middle-income countries have joined the scramble, making onerous direct deals with vaccine suppliers, typically on worse terms than if they had bargained collectively. Unsurprisingly, vaccine prices vary considerably, by more than 12-fold, from US\$6 to US\$74 per dose.

As countries have not published contract details, according to vaccine suppliers' terms, lack of transparency has enabled abuses. And when forced to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests, documents are heavily redacted before release.

Such limited transparency enables 'vaccine imperialism' as big power 'vaccine nationalism' impairs others' access. Thus, following its spat with AstraZeneca, the European Commission (EC) banned vaccine exports to most countries outside the EU.

## Double standards rule

In fact, cross-border enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPRs) is relatively recent. Big Pharma successfully lobbied their governments for TRIPS inclusion in the 1994 WTO founding documents. This greatly strengthened and extended IPRs transnationally.

Now, as these non-transparent deals are disputed, European politicians are threatening 'patent grabs'. EU President Charles Michel has warned of "urgent measures" demanding compulsory licensing, provided for by the European Treaty.

This would require vaccine developers to facilitate generic production, which the developing country-



backed TRIPS temporary waiver proposal seeks for all countries. Nevertheless, the EU, other rich countries and their allies still oppose the request to enable rapid scaling-up of affordable vaccine supplies.

## Publicly financed vaccine development

To accelerate vaccine development, expenses and risks have been mainly borne by governments, rather than by developers or private finance. The six top candidate vaccine developers have already received over US\$12 billion of public money, sometimes with little to show for it.

Of the more successful, Moderna received US\$955 million for research and development plus a premarket purchase commitment of US\$1.53 billion. In Europe, Pfizer/BioNTech got €375 million from the German government and another €100 million for debt refinancing from the European Investment Bank.

Yet, despite massive public financing, vaccine developers retain the IP monopoly right to profit. Thus, the prospect of huge gains from 2021 vaccine sales revenue of almost US\$40 billion is delaying progress against COVID-19.

## Greed kills, unless...

AstraZeneca promised Oxford University not to profit off any COVID-19 vaccines "for the duration of the pandemic". However, its contracts allow it to declare the pandemic over as early as mid-2021. It could then charge higher prices for vaccines developed with public money for the university.

The AstraZeneca vaccine was 'tried' on the South African population. Yet, it is paying 2.4 times more than the EU - US\$5.25 compared to US\$2.16. This makes a mockery of "benefit-sharing" and priority "post-trial access" promises. Meanwhile, turning 'ability to pay' on its head, Uganda is paying 20% more than South Africa!

Having the greatest vaccine manufacturing capacity in the world by far, the Serum Institute of India has several contracts to produce the AstraZeneca vaccine for different countries. In India, it will sell 90% to the government and 10% to the private sector at a higher price.

## Waiver can end pandemic

Vaccines produced generically at greater scale will be far more affordable, enabling more rapid containment of the contagion, infections, deaths and disruptions. Until herd immunity is achieved nationally and globally, priority in allocation should be on the basis of urgent need, rather than ability to pay or political muscle.

The best way forward now is the TRIPS waiver proposal, still blocked by rich country governments at the WTO. It would enable all countries to affordably make or buy 'generic' vaccines. This would most effectively expedite containing the pandemic with the least loss of lives and livelihoods.

# West Africa's latest counter-terrorism plan makes little progress

By Sam Kwarkye

**M**ORE than a year after adopting an action plan to 'eradicate' terrorism in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) has made little progress. Despite expressions of support by member states, the regional body faces several challenges. Key among them is whether member states are really committed to a regional approach to counter-terrorism.

Considering that a regional counter-terrorism strategy and implementation plan passed by Ecowas in 2013 was never implemented, the apparent lack of enthusiasm for the latest action plan raises questions about its prospects for success.

The 2020-2024 Action Plan, adopted by Ecowas in 2019, has a budget of US\$2.3-billion. Its eight priority areas range from pooling of efforts and coordination of counter-terrorism initiatives to promoting inter-community dialogue and preventing violent extremism. It's a step in the right direction. The plan enables Ecowas to provide leadership on an issue that it has been competing with for years against the United Nations, African Union and Group of Five Sahel (G5 Sahel).

However, according to interviews conducted by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), only initial meetings have been held with member states to discuss and agree on putting the plan into operation in their respective countries. These engagements were followed by a meeting of donors in November 2020, although no specific commitments were made.

Several challenges are obstructing implementation. First, for countries affected by terrorism, existing counter-terrorism initiatives such as the Multinational Joint Task Force, G5 Sahel and Accra Initiative are the preferred vehicles for addressing specific vulnerabilities within their borders.

For some of these states, Ecowas seems ill-equipped to confront developing threats and adapt in a timely manner. Counter-terrorism officials from member countries of the Accra Initiative, for example, told the ISS there were complaints about the length of time it took Ecowas to organise the Ouagadougou extraordinary summit, which was requested for February 2017 but was held in September 2019.

Ecowas also has the familiar problem of inadequate resources. Officials interviewed said funds weren't forthcoming. No specific reasons were given other than apparent differences among member states over the mechanisms for financing the plan. Some have opted to not put funds in the common pot, instead allocating them to activities in line with their national counter-terrorism initiatives, which aren't necessarily inspired by the plan.

An allocation by the West African Economic and Monetary Union is reportedly disbursed directly to its member states. While Nigeria and Ghana have pledged a total of \$400-million, they are yet to make significant deposits to the pot. This may reflect countries' economic difficulties, in Nigeria's case brought on by the substantial declines in oil prices. But it could also indicate a tacit lack of confidence in Ecowas as an effective mechanism for regional counter-terrorism.

The outbreak of Covid-19 also shifted member states' attention away from countering terrorism. The unexpected need to provide immediate relief to their citizens has strained national budgets as economic activities and tax receipts across the region have declined.

Compounding these problems are the action plan's problematic objective and focus. For example, one of its key aims is to end terrorism in the region in the next five years. This is an overly ambitious goal considering that terrorism is a menace to all 15 Ecowas states and a serious problem in at least four of them (Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso).

Counter-terrorism is a complex, long-term endeavour that requires significant investments of time and money. This is no doubt another reason why states in the region haven't shown enough commitment to implementing the Ecowas framework.

Despite a multiplicity of strategies by national governments and partners for sever-

al years, violence and insecurity linked to terrorism in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions persist and, in some cases, have worsened. At its 58th Ordinary Session held virtually on 23 January, Ecowas leaders decried "the continued terrorist attacks in frontline countries ... despite the intense efforts deployed by these countries."

The Ecowas plan's lack of emphasis on addressing the root causes of terrorism, particularly governance and development deficits, also fuels scepticism about its chances of success. Violent extremist groups exploit these longstanding vulnerabilities, partly by providing services to populations in areas where the state is either absent, resented or too weak to shoulder its responsibilities.

Another major shortcoming is that nearly 80% of the plan's budget is allocated to three areas: border management and security; information and intelligence sharing; and training and equipment for defence and security forces. These are necessary for some aspects of the counter-terrorism response, but prioritising them to that extent means the conditions that allow terrorism to thrive will go unattended.

Better training and improved intelligence may facilitate the identification of suspected insurgents, early detection of plots, or the disruption of terrorists' resource supply chains. But these are only the symptoms - not the underlying causes of the problem.

Ecowas should not just pool resources and coordinate initiatives, but serve as a conduit to enhance the quality and delivery of existing counter-terrorism efforts. Platforms for sharing knowledge and experience are needed so that lessons can be learnt and best practices adopted. This will highlight the importance of dealing with the governance and development problems that underpin terrorism.

DM

## RADIO ONE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE



THURSDAY

TIME	PROGRAMME
05.00 AM	HALI YA HEWA / KUMEPAMBAZUK.
06.00 AM	AMKA NA BBC
06.30 AM	NIPASHE
06.50 AM	MATANGAZO
07.00 AM	NEWS BULLETIN
7:10 AM	MATANGAZO
07.15 AM	TAARIFA ZA BARABARANI
07.25 AM	UDONDOZI WA MAGAZETI
07.40 AM	KUMEPAMBAZUKA II
08.00 AM	HABARI NYEPESI
08.10 AM	KUMEPAMBAZUKA III
09.00 AM	HABARI ZA BIASHARA
09.10 AM	MATANGAZO
09.20 AM	BRAND TALK
09.30 AM	KUMEPAMBAZUKA UKIMWI
10.00 AM	NEWS BRIEF
10.03 AM	DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS
10.10 AM	YALIYOMO YAMO
13.00 HRS	NEWS BULLETIN
13.10 HRS	DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS
13.30 HRS	DJ SHOW
16.00 HRS	NEWS BRIEF
16.03 HRS	DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS
16.30 HRS	HOJA YA LEO
18.30 HRS	DIRA YA DUNIA BBC
19.30 HRS	SPOTI LEO
20.00 HRS	NEWS BULLETIN
20.10 HRS	UCHUNGUZI KAMILI
21.00 HRS	NEWS BRIEF
21.05 HRS	MALUMBANO YA HOJA
23.00 HRS	NEWS BRIEF
23.03 HRS	AFRO TIZII

## FAHARI YA MSIKILIZAJI // THE LISTENERS PRIDE

**CAPITAL RADIO**

THURSDAY	
05:00-09:00HRS	MORNING JAM
09:00-13:00HRS	LETE RAHA
13:00-14:00HRS	DW-RADIO
14:00-16:00HRS	CLUB 101
16:00-18:00HRS	DALA DALA
18:00-18:10HRS	HABARI
18:10-20:00HRS	BOZOUK TIME
20:00-21:00HRS	SPORTS
21:00-23:00HRS	MALUMBANO YA HOJA
23:00-01:00HRS	MUSIC & JINGLES
01:00-05:00HRS	LETE RAHA(marudio)





Thursday 18 February 2021

## Over 40bn/- invested in good financial governance programme

The programme among other targets, focus on digestion of the Control and Auditor General's reports so that ordinary taxpayers can understand how their monies are being spent.

**With the implementation of the first phase, five partner LGAs were supported to publish 15 taxpayers' friendly reports about how revenue from local sources was utilized.**

By Francis Kajubi

**T**HE second phase of the Good Financial Governance programme intended at contributing to efforts to strengthen good financial governance on how public revenues are collected and spent by the government has just rolled-out as its implementation agreement between the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP) signed last December.

Financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the European Union and implemented by the GIZ, the three year programme targets at recognizing the crucial connection between revenue collection, public service provision and civic involvement.

In an exclusive interview with GIZ staff earlier this week with The Banker, David Lahl, Head of GFG Programme said the second phase of the programme will come to its end in 2023 with a budget allocation of up to 43.646billion/- (Euro15.5million).

With the first phase implemented in six regions of Arusha, Morogoro, Kilimanjaro, Mwanza, Tanga and Kigoma, will be dedicated to same regions with a target of strengthening accountability, transparency, improved quality in revenue mobilization and digestion of the Control and Auditor General's reports so that ordinary taxpayers can understand how their monies are being spent.

"We are going to put emphasis on external auditing in an increasingly digital environment, compliance trainings for internal audit units, implementing the strategy for the further development of the internal audit system in cooperation with the Internal Auditor General Division (IAGD);

In the area of domestic revenue mobilization, the programme will also focus more on data management and targeted interventions to improve data quality of registered businesses with the objective to increase service levy payments" said Lahl.



David Lahl, Head of GFG Programme speaks during an interview conducted over the internet on Monday. Listening attentively are Umehani Khatri, Senior Advisor for External Audit GIZ (R) and Stephen, Communications manager GIZ. Photo: Courtesy of GIZ.



Equity Bank Tanzania's Managing Director, Robert Kiboti addresses journalists on the bank's new partnership it has entered with digital money transfer service companies earlier this week. Photo: Courtesy of Equity Bank.

## Equity Bank partners with global leading money transfer companies

By The Banker Reporter

EQUITY Bank Tanzania has entered a partnership with leading digital money transfer service companies to launch a new instant money transfer service to Tanzania from anywhere in the world.

The service will enable Tanzanians to receive seamless international remittances to and from abroad. The deal will also support the growing demand for remittances in the country.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam this week, Equity Bank Tanzania's Managing Director, Robert Kiboti said the services are into two main categories; remittances channeled through a

partnership with the world giant remittance companies of Western Union, Money Gram, World Remit, Small World, SimbaPay, Transfast, Terrapay and Thunes.

Kiboti said the second one is known as inter-country, which is a platform that is connected through all Equity Bank branches in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, DRC and South Sudan, at a minimal cost of only US\$6 per transaction of below 10m/-.

"We are proud to provide a reliable financial link between Tanzanians in Diaspora and their families back home. We aim to expand our network expeditiously and provide 100 percent coverage of countries

popular with millions of Tanzanians abroad," Kiboti said.

"We are extremely proud to be linked with these global remittance companies such as World Remit, Western Union, who have an impressive global network linking Tanzania to the rest of the world," said the MD. Currently, Tanzania is the third top-earner in East Africa when it comes to remittance-receiving, with four million Tanzanians in Diaspora sending home close to \$437 million in remittances in 2019, according to the World Bank.

About the convenience of the services and future expansion plans, the EBT MD noted, "We're excited to

expand and reach more Tanzanians abroad so they can save and invest at home. Along with our Diaspora products, we aim to demonstrate our long-standing commitment and convenient service to Tanzanians abroad."

He further noted that Equity Bank is a highly respected financial institution with an extensive network throughout the country and across the region. "Our partnership with these money remittance giants will ensure our fellow Tanzanians in the Diaspora have the widest choice of payout options when sending money back home," Kiboti added.

## Safaricom shortlisted for Ethiopia telco licence bid

NAIROBI

SAFARICOM has made it to the shortlist of six firms that have been cleared to bid for one of two Ethiopian telecoms licences that will be offered this year.

The Ethiopian Communications Authority has whittled the list down from a consortia of 12 that had expressed interest in entering the country's telecommunications market.

Firms will be required to submit their technical and financial bids by April 5, compared with a previous deadline of March 5.

Safaricom, which last year expressed an interest in a consortium with Vodacom and Vodacom, has signed an agreement to borrow up to \$500 million (Sh55.7 billion) from America's sovereign wealth fund US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to fund the Ethiopia expansion.

"There are about five to six consortia who are qualified to bid. Bids are due to be submitted in April," said Michael Joseph, Safaricom chairman, in an interview. "We are working towards the final submission around March/April."

The Horn of Africa nation's telecoms industry is considered the big prize due to the huge size of the market, which serves more than 100 million people.

Ethiopia is pressing ahead with the auction of the new licences and the sale of a 45 percent stake in state monopoly Ethio Telecoms, in spite of a military conflict in the northern Tigray region.

Winners will be given full operating licences, but they will not be allowed to offer mobile phone-based financial services like M-Pesa, government officials said last year.

They will also be required to set up their own network infrastructure, such as cellphone towers.

The financial investment in Ethiopia is expected to top the \$1 billion (Sh111 billion) mark, with the DFC loan deal seen as part of the project's fundraising efforts.

Safaricom had earlier said it was ready to take more debt in its role as the majority shareholder of the consortium with a 51 percent stake.

Vodacom has a five percent interest in the joint venture, with the rest of the ownership spread among unnamed strategic financial investors.

The Safaricom consortium, if successful, will likely rely on funding from deep-pocketed foreign investors such as DFC given the size and international nature of the Ethiopia investment.

The Nairobi Securities Exchange-listed firm's borrowings have so far been limited to local banks from which it has mostly taken short-term debt denominated in Kenya shillings.

The company recently raised its bank borrowings to a new high of Sh32.7 billion to fund capital expenditure and pay dividends, with most of the debt expected to be settled by March next year.

Safaricom sees Ethiopia, a market with more than 100 million people and relatively low uptake of mobile and broadband services, as presenting significant growth opportunities.

The Ethiopian Communications Authority announced that it had received expressions of interest from scores of firms, including telcos and non-telecom operators by June 22.

They included the Safaricom consortium, Etisalat, Axian, MTN, Orange, Saudi Telecom Company, and Telkom SA.

Others were Liquid Telecom, Snail Mobile, Kandu Global Communications and Electromecha International Projects.

The Ethiopian Communications Authority is yet to disclose which of these firms have been dropped from bidding.

Vodacom recently told its investors that the capital expenditure for the potential Ethiopian entry was not yet clear.



# Over 40bn/- invested in good financial governance programme

Continued from page 13

SECONDING his senior staff, Stefan Ehrentauf, Senior Advisor for Social Accountability and Domestic Revenue Mobilization said the programme retains the main intervention logic and module objective of the first phase with special focus on women, youth and people with disability fund and promoting citizen participation.

On her part, Thereza Ngunangwa, a GIZ Advisor for Internal Audit said GFG had in the first phase 2016/20 supported the Internal Auditor General Division (IAGD) in developing a national 'Strategy for the further development of the internal audit system in the public sector' which was officially adopted by the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP) in December 2019, an important milestone as it serves as a blueprint for the reform of the internal audit system.

"A conformance assessment tool has been developed to enable auditors to assess the extent to which internal audit

reports conform to selected International Standards" she said.

She asserted that ten internal auditors of IAGD have obtained certifications on risk management (ISO 31000) and have shared their knowledge with internal audit units at regional and local level. Capacity development of 74 internal auditors to improve compliance of audit reports with international standards has been provided.

With respect to external audit, Umehani Khatri, Senior Advisor for External Audit, said GFG in the first phase supported the National Audit Office of Tanzania (NAOT) in its efforts to professionalize auditors through application of newly developed manuals and rolling out comprehensive audit methodology in 77 Local Government Authorities

(LGAs).

Raymond Nzali, a GIZ Advisor for Domestic Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Decentralisation embedded in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government said during the first phase own source revenue in 10 partner districts of the six regions of the programme implementation increased by 123 percent.

"Digital recording of revenues and the electronic generation of invoices has raised the efficiency of local revenue collection considerably. With GFG's support, five partner LGAs published a total of 15 citizen friendly reports about how revenue from local sources was utilized during the period" he said.

In his firm remarks, Leslie

Stephen, Communications manager emphasised that the signing of the Implementation agreement for continued cooperation symbolises the good quality of cooperation and great results the previous phase had achieved, and that GIZ is thoroughly committed to continuing supporting the government to bring about real change needed in transforming the lives of ordinary Tanzanians.

"This is why moving forward the programme shall deepen, broaden and scale up so that the government institutions can further benefit from what the project has to offer in terms of enabling them to collect more revenue, utilise modern digital methods and further improve public services provided to citizens" he concluded.

# Mombasa, Kisumu, Malaba passenger train resumes service in September



Songas Limited's natural gas plant on Songo Songo Island in Kilwa District.

## MOMBASA

TRAVELLERS from Kisumu and Malaba to Mombasa will from September get seamless train services, linking the newly built standard gauge rail (SGR) line and the refurbished metre gauge track.

Kenya Railways Corporation managing director Philip Mainga said the seamless services will commence once the construction of a rail line linking the SGR to the older railway track at Longonot is completed.

"Passenger operations from Mai Mahiu to Malaba via Longonot through a revamped metre gauge train for visitors to western parts of Kenya will start in September," he told the Business Daily in an interview Tuesday.

The train from Kisumu will terminate its journey in Nakuru and its passengers transferred to the one from Malaba for the rest of the journey to Naivasha where they would board the locomotive on the SGR.

The construction of the new link between Mai Mahiu to Longonot will cost Sh5 billion while the rehabilitation of old rail tracks from Longonot to Malaba will cost Sh2.5 billion.

Kenya Railways says that some Sh2.5 billion will be used to compensate land owners.

Construction of the new

23.5-kilometre link line from Naivasha to Longonot started in August 2020 while rehabilitation of the Longonot to Malaba metre gauge railway line started in October.

China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) that constructed the Mombasa-Naivasha SGR line is building the new line and rehabilitating the metre gauge rail. The Chinese firm is working with engineers from the Kenya Railways to deliver the project.

The seamless service comes more than a decade after the company stopped operating passenger trains to western Kenya due to the dilapidated state of the rail.

"The plan is to make movement of passengers between the towns easy. We also plan to target peasant farmers along the route and this means our fare must be minimal for now," Mr Mainga said.

It is not clear how much passengers would pay for seamless travel between Mombasa and western Kenya.

Bus transport firms such as EasyCoach and Guardian charge between Sh1,200 and Sh1,500 when demand is low but increase the fares to as high as Sh2,500 during the peak seasons like Christmas, schools re-opening and closing and Easter holidays.

Kenya Railways said that the cargo trains on the Mai-Mahiu to Longonot will start operating in June as the service targets transporting goods such as fertiliser and cereals to and from the food basket of western Kenya.

The cargo and passenger services

will enhance the economic viability of the SGR line through easing movement of freight and passengers from the Port of Mombasa to Uganda and the neighbouring countries.

The Sh320 billion SGR line linking the Port of Mombasa with Nairobi was opened in May 2017. It was later linked with the Sh150 billion line to Naivasha, which started operations in September 2019.

Kenya will clear goods imported through the Port of Mombasa and headed to western Kenya and neighbouring Uganda, the Democratic Republic Congo and South Sudan through the Naivasha dry port.

The Nairobi-Naivasha SGR line was meant to be connected to the old railway track running to the Malaba border town to allow for seamless movement of cargo from the Mombasa port to Uganda.

Uganda is also working on the reconstruction of the metre gauge line from Malaba to Kampala with funding from the European Union.

The upgrades of the two lines, Malaba-Kampala and Tororo-Gulu, will cost Uganda some Sh18 billion. Kenya had already offered to give Uganda land to construct an inland depot in Naivasha.

There have been concerns that the Mombasa to Naivasha SGR line that cost an estimated Sh477 billion, would not be economically viable if it were not connected to Kampala, which is a major user of the Mombasa port for its imports.



# Dollar hits five-month highs vs yen as US yields rise

LONDON

THE dollar rose against low-yielding currencies on Wednesday, reaching a five-month high against the yen, as U.S. bond yields jumped on the prospects of further economic recovery and a possible acceleration in inflation.

Bitcoin set a record high of \$51,721, a day after the cryptocurrency rose to \$50,000 for the first time. That brought its total market capitalisation to more than \$900 billion, as traders bet on its further acceptance among major companies.

The dollar's index against six other major currencies recovered from Tuesday's three-week low of 90.117 to last stand 0.2% higher at 90.864.

Soaring U.S. bond yields boosted the dollar, with the 10-year yield rising as high as 1.333% from around 1.20% at the end of last week.

"The sell-off in U.S. Treasuries is the major driver of FX at the moment, with the dollar inevitably finding support, and not only vs the usual victim JPY (USD/JPY has the highest correlation in FX with US 10Y yields), as commodity currencies are actually being hit the hardest," said Francesco Pesole, GIO FX strategist at ING.

"While the bond market is doubling down on reflationary bets, other assets are failing to show signs of upbeat risk sentiment. The risk is that the rise in U.S. yields has gathered such pace so as to start being self-defeating and cause a correction in risk assets."

The yen, which is sensitive to U.S. yields, reacted the most with the dollar jumping to as high as 106.225 yen in Asian trade, its highest since September, before retreating to 105.89 yen.

"I think the dollar's downtrend is over. At the start of the year, speculators were betting on a fall in the dollar below 100 yen. They seem to have abandoned such a view now," said Yukio Ishizuki, senior strategist at Daiwa Securities.

A sign of dwindling bets on the dollar's fall against the yen is apparent in the options market. Short-term dollar call options, or bets on the dollar, have become more expensive than dollar puts, bets against the currency.

The one-week risk-reversal spread is now in favour of dollar calls for the first time in almost five years.

"If one thinks U.S. yields will rise further, we could see more gains in the dollar," said Jun Arachi, senior

currency strategist at Rakuten Securities.

"I would say this trade could continue until Biden administration's stimulus package will come into effect, possibly in March, at which point people could start unwinding their bets to 'sell-on-fact'."

Biden tried to build public support for his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief plan in a town hall.

The New York Federal Reserve's Empire State manufacturing report released on Tuesday offered an upbeat economic picture, with a rise in its "prices paid index" stoking concern over faster inflation.

That optimism was echoed by St. Louis Fed President James Bullard, who told CNBC that U.S. financial conditions were "generally good," and that inflation was likely to heat up this year.

San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly, however, said pressures on inflation are still downward, pushing against critics warning low interest rates and government spending could overheat the U.S. economy and spark high inflation.

The euro slipped 0.4% to \$1.2058, though its fall was less pronounced after its gains earlier on Tuesday following strong German economic sentiment data.

"Although we continue to see short-term risks to EUR/USD as balanced, it was worth yesterday to notice the USD reaction to stronger U.S. data," said Mikael Milhøj, senior analyst at Danske Bank.

"Unlike recently where we saw weakness in payrolls and CPI data take USD weaker, we now saw some evidence that positive data surprises (Empire manufacturing) are USD-positive too. This is different from last year, where positive US surprises were USD-negative by removing global deflation risks."

The positive mood on the economic outlook is underpinning risk-sensitive currencies.

The British pound fell 0.3% to \$1.3856, having reached its highest level since April 2018 on Tuesday. Against the euro, the pound traded at its highest level since early May at 86.84 pence per euro.

The Australian dollar fell 0.2% to \$0.7736, not far from Tuesday's one-month high of \$0.7805.

The offshore Chinese yuan stepped back to 6.4576 per dollar after hitting a two-and-a-half-year high of 6.4010 earlier in the week.



# Leave no one behind: uniting to bridge the digital chasm in Africa

BY HISHAM HENDI

LIFE as we knew it is no more the Covid-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted our lives and the digital landscape globally and accelerated digital transformation. While the mobile community in sub-Saharan Africa responded to this crisis with great tenacity to keep citizens and businesses connected, nearly a billion people on the continent are still being left behind. Remediating this is the seminal challenge of our time.

Today, Vodacom Tanzania PLC is proud to join our teams across Africa in the Vodacom Group and invite governments, industry and businesses as part of our Africa.Connected campaign to further accelerate our digitalisation efforts as we come together to ensure everyone is connected.

This campaign builds on our six-point plan commitment to future-proof our network and infrastructure, accelerate support to government (to support eHealth and eEducation), enhance digital accessibility and literacy for the most vulnerable, promote widespread digital adoption for business, and support our societies to overcome the Covid-19 crisis through targeted digital adoption and enabling financial inclusion.

The economic repercussions of the pandemic have been brutal, with sub-Saharan Africa facing a significant economic crisis. According to The World Bank in Africa, growth in sub-Saharan Africa is predicted to fall to -3.3 percent in 2020, pushing the region into its first recession in 25 years.

To advance Africa's economic recovery post-pandemic, the continent must accelerate digitalisation and expand regional cooperation. We have the opportunity to transform the entire continent, improving living conditions and economic opportunities for more than 1 billion people. To support this, Vodacom Tanzania is launching the Africa.Connected campaign.

Vodacom Tanzania's vision is to take the country into the digital age and transform lives through technology. As such, we are ready to continue to support and work with Government, industry and social sector institutions to expand and broaden digital offerings, foster an enabling environment for rapid digitalisation and speed up infrastructure investments.

In November of 2020, in his inaugural address to the 12th Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency President John Pombe Magufuli outlined several ambitious and commendable targets for his government over the next 5 years. Key in these targets were his aims for:

Broadband coverage to rise from 45% to 80 percent, Increase handset usage to cover the whole country, Make R&D in ICT a priority and make electrification a key component of the country's energy policy

All having the stated aim of growing the national economy to benefit all Tanzanians. Vodacom Tanzania fully supports these goals and is keen to work collaboratively with the Government and its relevant stakeholders as well as Non-Governmental and private institutions to make this a reality.

Partnerships with governments, businesses, and organisations, both local and international, are an important cornerstone of continued success in digitalisation. We must continue a collaborative approach to build a future that is fair, inclusive, and sustainable. Initiatives such as the African Union Commission digital transformation strategy and the UN Digital Cooperation Roadmap provide sensible frameworks for how this could progress.

Public-private partnerships are crucial to accelerate development

There is much at stake and ambitious targets to close the current digital divide that we simply can't achieve if we work



in isolation. What we must put in place is a strategic and considered set of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to compete in the global digital economy.

The mobile industry worked hand-in-hand with governments and businesses to develop initiatives that helped alleviate the impact of the pandemic on citizens; such as mobile-money transaction fee waivers, discounts on data tariffs for health and educational sites, as well as cash and equipment donations.

Mobile companies and other industry players have supported vulnerable communities during the pandemic, while also contributing to economic recovery efforts. Vodacom Tanzania extended direct support to the governments of The United Republic of Tanzania and Zanzibar through a donation of Tsh. 2.3 Billion as well as providing free internet connectivity to the Dar es Salaam Ministry of Health offices.

Projects such as M-Pawa and M-kulima on the M-Pesa platform helped small scale farmers access unsecured loans, connect to markets, improve their value chains and tap into much needed education and information on agriculture and farming. The M-Pesa platform itself performed a key role in reducing the cash-reliant nature of most commercial transactions thus helping increase efficiency and security for many small businesses and helped to greatly increase financial inclusion.

On education and learning, the instant school project

worked to provide free educational content, not just academic content but also vocational and more practically oriented information for all learners, even those not in formal institutions.

We must get more people online

Internet connectivity across Africa is still low, and there's a need to use innovative ways to connect the unconnected and the underserved. The GSMA found that the mobile market in sub-Saharan Africa will reach several important milestones over the next five years: half a billion mobile subscribers in 2021, 1 billion mobile connections in 2024, and 50% subscriber penetration by 2025. These achievements will be underpinned by operators' continued investment in network infrastructure.

To support broader digitalisation, major infrastructure expansions will be required, including those in backbone networks and last-mile connectivity. It is estimated that governments, development finance institutions, companies, and investors will need to spend \$100 billion on key ICT infrastructure by 2030 to achieve universal broadband access. And with 5G on the horizon, although

not yet at the point of rollout in most African countries, there is no question that there is a significant task ahead.

There is no 'one size fits all' solution to connect everyone across all markets. Each country faces unique challenges and conditions. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania has already taken important steps and made great strides in the effort to get its citizens connected and has committed itself to continue to do so. However, there is a role for other stakeholders in the country to play and, as such, Vodacom Tanzania and the Africa.Connected campaign will be at the forefront of driving the conversation in Tanzania about digitalisation and the strategies, commitments and resources that will be needed from all stakeholders in order to achieve our own goals as well as the Government's stated targets.

The digitalisation of our continent will not happen overnight. This is a long-term commitment that is only possible through sustained, robust and authentic collaboration.

**Hisham Hendi is the Managing Director, Vodacom Tanzania**

# Airlines passenger numbers fall 66pc on Covid storms

NAIROBI

THE global resurgence of the coronavirus and the closing of borders has hampered the air travel recovery with the passenger

numbers dropping by 66 percent as at December last year, compared with the same period in 2019, according to aviation agency.

The decline that the International Air

Travel Association said (IATA) is the sharpest in aviation history, is a result of the second wave of the Covid-19, which has seen airlines suspend some of the routes because of tight restrictions, even as the agency warns that

the first quarter of the year will remain extremely challenging for the airline industry.

"The revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) rebound has been impacted by a sharp spike in Covid-19 cases and new travel restrictions. Forward bookings have been falling sharply since late December, which points to a challenging start for 2021," said IATA.

Kenya Airways has not been spared by the pandemic having suspended flights to France this month and cut the New York frequencies from two to one in what the management attributed to restrictions that have seen demand for travel go down.

"The fragile travel industry has seen a worsening dip in demand due to implementation, and in some cases, reinstatement of travel restrictions in various countries in response to the second wave of Covid-19," said KQ chief executive officer Allan Kilavuka, noting that most EU countries imposing travel conditions are also limiting travel from Africa.

"The US has implemented Covid-19 testing as a requirement. Rwanda, Burundi, and the UK are implementing quarantine requirements," said Mr Kilavuka.

IATA last year warned that the quarantine measures put in place by different countries had discouraged passengers from flying and urged governments to use an alternative measures such as screening at the ports of entry.

Countries like the United Arab Emirates have suspended travel from Nigeria on direct and indirect flights.

Mr Kilavuka said KQ has responded by reducing capacity deployment in some key markets such as the UK and the US.

"We have reduced our operations to JFK from the planned twice weekly to once weekly, and we continue to monitor the situation. We are also using smaller aircraft than earlier planned to operate routes such as Johannesburg and Lagos," he said.

IATA says the year 2020 brought an unprecedented challenge to the airline industry in a form of closed borders, strict travel controls, and depressed travel confidence - all effects of the pandemic.

The agency noted that all regions were severely affected last year with the Middle Eastern airlines reporting the sharpest RPK decline at -72.2 percent due to their reliance on long-haul international routes, which are still largely closed.

IATA says although vaccine rollout is good news for air travel, the immunization has been slow so far and that it will take time before its impact is reflected in passenger numbers.

"For now, willingness to travel is low - at least based on the evidence from bookings for future travel which were down 70 percent year on year in January," said IATA.

Carriers in Africa posted the lowest international RPK decline of all regions in December at 68.8 percent year on year and also showed the most resilient outcome for the year as a whole, at -69.8 percent as the region benefitted from relatively less strict international travel restrictions compared to



A KQ Dreamliner aircraft. File photo.



## WORLD

# Trump slams McConnell as top Republicans' feud deepens

WASHINGTON

FORMER President Donald Trump lashed out at Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday, signaling a growing feud between the two most senior Republican voices after the party lost the White House and control of the Senate.

"Mitch is a dour, sullen, and unsmiling political hack, and if Republican Senators are going to stay with him, they will not win again," Trump said in a statement just three days after McConnell excoriated him following the former president's second impeachment trial, on a charge of inciting the deadly attack on the US Capitol.

Trump and McConnell parted ways in the weeks after the Nov 3 presidential election, with Trump irked that McConnell had recognized Democrat Joe Biden as the winner in mid-December. They have not spoken since, a former White House official said.

The loss of both the White House to Biden and control of the Senate - which Democrats picked up in a pair of upset Georgia election runoff victories last month - leaves Republicans on edge as they plot how to win back congressional control in 2022.

The gap between the two men widened when McConnell declared on the Senate floor after Trump's acquittal by the chamber on Saturday that Trump was "practically and morally responsible" for the Jan 6 Capitol attack.

McConnell nonetheless voted to acquit Trump, saying he believed the Constitution limited impeachment and conviction to current, not former officials. The House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump on Jan 13 for inciting insurrection, but McConnell declined to reconvene the Senate ahead of its scheduled Jan 20 session for the impeachment trial.

Trump, who delivered a fiery speech to supporters just before the Capitol assault, denies any responsibility for the violence.

"The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president," McConnell said in his Senate speech, adding he was outraged by the violence and Trump's repeated false claims that his election defeat was the result of widespread election fraud.

**'Electability'**

The two are trying to push the party in



This combination of pictures shows former US President Donald Trump and US Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

opposite directions - McConnell back toward the roots of a budget-focused, pro-trade party, while Trump, who is still backed by a large portion of the Republican voter base, advocates a more populist approach.

McConnell, who normally stays out of intra-party conflict, told the Wall Street Journal in an interview published on Monday that he would consider "trying to affect the outcome of the primaries" during the 2022 congressional campaign season.

He said that he welcomed Republicans of all stripes, but "what I care about is electability."

Trump gave notice that he too would be involved in the Republican primaries. "Where necessary and appropriate, I will back primary rivals who espouse Making America Great Again and our policy of America First," he

said in his statement on Tuesday.

A decade ago, when Republicans took a sharp turn to the right with the Tea Party movement, it was McConnell who pointed out that the movement's right-wing candidates may have been able to win some Republican Senate primaries but often sank in the general election.

That era saw the Democratic majority in the Senate swell to 59-41 by 2009. Republicans reclaimed the majority in 2015, in part due to McConnell's support of more moderate Republican Senate candidates.

Despite their current differences, McConnell played a major role during Trump's administration in helping pass the president's signature 2017 tax cut and in confirming three conservative justices for the US Supreme Court. **Agencies**

## Chinese envoy stresses central role of UN in global affairs

UNITED NATIONS

A Chinese envoy on Tuesday stressed the central role of the United Nations in international affairs.

Geng Shuang (pictured), China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, said the purposes and principles of the UN Charter provide guidance for handling international relations, and are an important cornerstone for stabilizing international order.

He said the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization is the only standing meeting mechanism within the UN framework devoted to the discussion of the UN Charter.

China supports the special committee in continuing its

work within its mandate and making greater efforts and contributions to safeguarding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and strengthening the role of the organization, Geng told the opening of the 2021 session of the special committee.

In recent years, the special committee has made useful explorations on issues such as UN sanctions and the prohibition of the use of force, an effort that has China's appreciation, he said.

On UN sanctions, Geng said China wished to reiterate that sanctions are a means rather than an end, and should serve the purpose of the political settlement of related issues.

He said the Security Council should take a prudent and responsible attitude toward sanc-



tions.

Second, sanctions should be imposed only at the exhaustion of all other peaceful means, and should be carried out in keeping with the UN Charter and relevant principles of international law, so as to minimize the impact on the general public and third countries, Geng said.

He said China maintains that all parties should strictly abide by and implement the Security

Council resolutions concerning sanctions.

China opposes the imposition of additional unilateral sanctions that are inconsistent with the UN Charter and that undermine the effectiveness and authority of UN sanctions, Geng said.

On some countries' proposal to ask the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the use of force by states without the authorization of the Security Council, Geng said China is of the view that this proposal will help further clarify the rules about the use of force as contained in the UN Charter.

He added that China supports further discussion within the special committee on this issue.

On the peaceful settlement of disputes, China has always maintained that parties to a dispute should properly resolve it through peaceful means, Geng said.

In the case of mediation, arbitration, judicial and other dispute settlement means, the countries' right for independent choice should be respected, he added.

Geng noted that the special committee was set to discuss arbitration as a means of dispute settlement. China would like to take this opportunity to stress that, arbitration, like other peaceful means to settle disputes that involve the intervention of a third party, has a fundamental premise - the voluntary acceptance of arbitration by all parties to the dispute, he said. **Xinhua**

## Russia, US interested in cooperation on Middle East settlement problems

MOSCOW

RUSSIA and the United States are interested in constructive cooperation to promote peace process in the Middle East, the Russian foreign ministry said on Monday after talks between Russian Foreign Ministry's Envoy for the Middle East Settlement Vladimir Saifonov and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Israeli and Palestinian Affairs Hady Amr.

"The sides discussed prospects for cooperation between Moscow and Washington on the track of the Palestinian-Israeli settlement, including within the format of the Middle East Quartet of international mediators.

The Russian side hailed the

United States' readiness to resume its full-fledged participation in the Quartet and spoke in favor of invigorating bilateral dialogue on the Middle East settlement problems," the ministry said.

"In general, the sides stated mutual commitment to constructive cooperation in order to promote peace process in the Middle East," it noted.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said earlier that the organization was ready to begin arrangements for a meeting on the Israeli-Palestinian settlement as the time was ripe for it following the change of the US administration.

Members of the Middle East Quartet of international media-



tors (Russia, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations) have agreed to maintain regular contacts and stressed the importance of direct dialogue between Palestine and Israel, the Russian foreign ministry said on Monday after a Quartet online meeting.

"The Russian side stressed

the importance of efforts to create conditions for the soonest resumption of the Quartet-mediated direct Palestinian-Israeli talks in the interests of settling fundamental issues of the final status on the basis of the internationally-recognized two-state solution envisaging peaceful co-existence of two states - Pal-

estine and Israel. It was stressed that unilateral steps are inadmissible, whether it be instigating violence or expansion of settlement activities, including breaking Palestinian buildings on the West Bank," the ministry said. "Participants agreed to organize meetings in the Quartet format regularly."

Addressing the United Nations Security Council debates on the Middle East settlement on January 26, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov suggested a ministerial meeting of the Quartet members, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, as the co-author of the Arab Peace Initiative, be held in the spring or summer 2021. **Xinhua**

## UN chief calls for stable, predictable funding for peacekeeping in Sahel

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for stable and predictable funding for peacekeeping in the Sahel. In a pre-recorded video message for the G5 Sahel Summit held in N'Djamena, Chad, Guterres on Tuesday said that African peace support and counter-terrorism operations must receive a mandate by the UN Security Council and sustained financing.

The G5 Sahel, which groups Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, has a key role to play in addressing the dire security and humanitarian situation in the region. In this context, the G5 Sahel Joint Force must have stable and predictable funding, he said.

There are more than 2 million displaced persons and millions of others are facing acute food insecurity.

Xinhua

## AU and UN chiefs call on Somali leaders to inclusive elections

ADDIS ABABA

CHAIRPERSON of the African Union (AU) Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat and Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) Antonio Guterres on Tuesday urged Somali leaders to resume dialogue so as to overcome the last political hurdles to inclusive elections.

Mahamat and Guterres "call on Somali leaders to resume dialogue and work in a spirit of compromise to overcome the last political hurdles to inclusive elections as soon as possible and to respect the agreement they reached on Sept 17, 2020," reads an AU statement.

The AU Commission Chairperson and the UN Secretary-General also reiterated their joint commitment to continue to support the government and people of Somalia on their path to peace and prosperity.

They also commended the people and leaders of Somalia for progress achieved in recent years towards the stabilization of the country.

"The hard-won gains are a testimony to the firm determination of the people of Somalia towards lasting peace and prosperity, following decades of instability," the statement read.

Failure to resolve the electoral impasse has plunged Somalia into a political crisis since President Mohamed Farmajo's term ended on Feb. 8 while the four-year term of parliament ended on Dec 27, 2020.

Last week, amid the ongoing electoral impasse, Mahamat urged Somali parties involved to work constructively together to resolve political differences that have led to the present electoral and political stalemate.

Noting that the stability of Somalia "is at stake," Mahamat called on all Somali stakeholders to put national interest first and constructively seek solutions to their differences through dialogue and compromise. **Agencies**

## Wife of DPRK's Kim makes first public appearance in a year

SEOUL

DEMOCRATIC People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) leader Kim Jong-un's wife, Ri Sol-ju, appeared in state media for the first time in more than a year yesterday, joining her husband at a concert on one of the country's biggest holidays.

The official ruling Worker's Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun released photos of the pair at the event to mark the birthday of Kim's late father and former leader Kim Jong-il.

Ri had often accompanied Kim to major public events, but had not been seen since January last year at an event for the Lunar New Year holiday.

Ri and Kim smiled as they watched the concert at Mansudae Art Theatre in the capital of Pyongyang.

The newspaper also reported that Kim visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, which houses the embalmed remains of his father and grandfather, to lay wreaths for the anniversary, called the Day of the Shining Star. **Agencies**



This picture taken on February 16, 2021 and released by the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency on February 17 shows DPRK leader Kim Jong-un (right) and his wife Ri Sol-ju (left) watching a performance at the Mansudae Art Theatre in Pyongyang. (STR / AFP / KCNA VIA KNS)

## Britain says UAE should show that Dubai's Sheikh Latifa is alive

LONDON

BRITAIN wants to see proof that Sheikh Latifa, one of the ruler of Dubai's daughters, is still alive after the BBC showed a video in which she said she was being held against her will in a barricaded villa, the foreign minister said yesterday.

"It's deeply troubling and you can see a young woman under deep distress," Dominic Raab said.

In the video, shown as part of the BBC's Panorama current affairs programme, Latifa, 35, said: "I am a hostage and this villa has been converted into a jail."

She said she was making the video in the

bathroom of the villa, the only room she could lock herself into, adding: "All the windows are barred shut, I can't open any window."

Asked whether he would support seeing some kind of proof from the United Arab Emirates that Sheikh Latifa was alive, Raab told Sky News television: "Given what we've just seen, I think people would just at a human level want to see that she's alive and well."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the United Nations was looking into the situation.

"That's something obviously that we are concerned about but the U.N. Commission

on Human Rights is looking at that," he told reporters. "I think what we'll do is wait and see how they get on. We'll keep an eye on that."

The Dubai government's media office referred questions about the video to Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum's law firm, which did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Reuters could not independently verify when or where the video was recorded.

**'FREE LATIFA' CAMPAIGN**

Sheikh Latifa bint Mohammed al-Maktoum drew international attention in 2018 when a human rights group released a video

made by her in which she described an attempt to escape Dubai.

Last March, a London High Court judge said he accepted as proved a series of allegations made by Sheikh Mohammed's former wife, Princess Haya, in a legal battle, including that the sheikh ordered the abduction of Latifa. The sheikh's lawyers rejected the allegations.

Asked if Britain would impose sanctions on the UAE after the video, Raab said: "It's not clear to me that there would be the evidence to support that."

The Free Latifa campaign, which has lobbied for her release, said it had managed to smuggle a phone to Latifa, which had been

used to send a series of secret video messages taken over the past two years.

Before Tuesday, the only time Latifa had been seen since she was brought back to Dubai was when her family released photos of her sitting with Mary Robinson, a former Irish president and a United Nations high commissioner for human rights, in late 2018.

But Robinson told the BBC she had been "horribly tricked" during the visit and never asked Latifa about her situation, fearing it would exacerbate a mental condition she was told the princess had.

Mohammed has a vast horse racing stable in Britain and has been pictured with Queen Elizabeth at Royal Ascot horse races.



# Myanmar coup protesters mass again, reject army's claim it has public support

HUNDREDS of thousands of people marched in Myanmar yesterday, rejecting the army's assertion that the public supported its overthrow of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and vowing they would not be cowed in their bid to end military rule.

Opponents of the Feb. 1 military coup are deeply sceptical of junta assurances, given at a news conference on Tuesday, that there would be a fair election and it would hand over power, even as police filed an additional charge against Suu Kyi.

The Nobel Peace laureate, detained since the coup, now faces a charge of violating a Natural Disaster Management Law as well as charges of illegally importing six walkie talkie radios. Her next hearing is set for March 1.

"We love democracy and hate the junta," Sithu Maung, an elected member of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) told tens of thousands of people at the Sule Pagoda, a central protest site in the main city of Yangon.

"We must be the last generation to experience a coup."

Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, spokesman for the ruling council, told the Tuesday news conference that 40 million of the 53 million population supported the military's action.

Sithu Maung poked fun at that saying: "We're showing here that we're not in that 40 million."

Suu Kyi's party swept a Nov. 8 election as widely expected, but the army alleges there was fraud. It said its seizure of power was in line with the constitution and it remained committed to democracy.

A protester who gave her name as Khin was scornful.

"They said there was vote fraud but look at the people here," said Khin.

The coup that cut short the Southeast Asian country's unsteady transition towards democracy has prompted daily demonstrations since Feb. 6.

The takeover has also drawn strong Western criticism, with renewed anger from Washington and London over the additional charge for Suu Kyi.

Although China has taken a softer line, its ambassador in Myanmar on Tuesday dismissed accusations it supported the coup.

Despite that, protesters also gathered outside the Chinese embassy.

Tens of thousands took to the streets of the city of Mandalay, where some people also blocked its main rail link, and crowds gathered in several other places.

Photographs from the small central town of Khin U showed a sea of people in straw hats and coronavirus masks listening to speeches. Thousands marched in the capital, Naypyitaw, and hundreds in the southern town of Mawlamyine, witnesses said. Both places saw clashes



last week.

There were no reports of serious trouble on Wednesday.

Earlier, U.N. Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews said he feared the possibility of violence against the protesters and made an urgent call on any country with influence over the generals, and businesses, to press them to avoid it.

In Yangon and elsewhere, motorists responded to a "broken-down car campaign" spread on social media, stopping their supposedly stalled cars, with bonnets raised, on streets and bridges to block them to police and military trucks.

Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners group said more than 450 arrests had been made since the coup. Those arrested include much of the NLD's senior leadership.

The suspension of the internet at night has added to a sense of fear.

### 'DISTURBED'

Zaw Min Tun told the news conference, the junta's first since the coup, that the military was giving a guarantee that an election would be held and power handed to the winner. He gave no time frame, but said the army would not be in power for long.

The last stretch of army rule lasted nearly half a century before democratic reforms began in 2011.

Suu Kyi, 75, spent nearly 15 years under house arrest for her efforts to bring democracy.

The United States was "disturbed" by reports of the additional criminal charge against Suu Kyi, State Department spokesman Ned Price said. Washington imposed new sanctions last week on the military. No additional measures were announced on Tuesday.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also decried the new criminal charge, saying the military "fabricated" it.

The unrest has revived memories of bloody suppression of protests under previous juntas.

Police have opened fire several times, mostly with rubber bullets, to disperse protesters. A protester who was shot in the head in Naypyitaw last week is not expected to survive.

A policeman died of injuries sustained in a protest in Mandalay on Monday, the military said.

As well as the demonstrations in towns across the ethnically diverse country, a civil disobedience movement has brought strikes that are crippling many functions of government.

Agencies

# New starting point to revive global trade

### BEIJING

AFTER months of delay, members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Monday agreed by consensus to appoint Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a Nigerian economist, as the next director-general.

The appointment of Okonjo-Iweala, the first woman and the first African to head the WTO, came at a critical juncture when the world is wrestling with the haunting spectre of protectionism and grappling with economic fallout of a once-in-a-century global health crisis.

It also marked a fresh beginning for the world community to rededicate itself to reforming the multilateral trade body so that it can do a better job in facilitating global trade and commerce in this utterly challenging age.

Since the end of World War II, the world has been relying on the multilateral system to safeguard global peace and facilitate social and economic progress. The WTO is an indispensable component of that system and stands at the heart of global trade.

However, the WTO and the multilateral trading system have been hobbled by the previous U.S. administration of Donald Trump in apast years, as Washington heightened trade tensions globally and became openly hostile toward the organization. In fact, the belated appointment of the new WTO chief was caused by the blinking of the Trump administration, which has also paralyzed the WTO's crucial dispute settlement body after impeding the appointment of judges to the WTO's top court.

For a world in urgent need of new impetus to promote multilateralism and uphold an open global economy, the collective decision made this time by the entire membership has demonstrated a vote of trust not only in Okonjo-Iweala herself, but also in the vision of preserving and updating the multilateral trading system.

Agencies

# Russia will not tolerate attacks on its sovereignty, Putin warns

### NOVO-OGARYOVO

RUSSIA will not allow foreign meddling in its parliamentary elections, nor will it turn a blind eye to any assault on its sovereignty, President Vladimir Putin emphasized at a meeting with parliamentary faction leaders yesterday.

"This choice [by the people] must be protected from any meddling attempts from overseas. We

cannot afford to and we will not permit any attacks on the sovereignty of Russia or on the right of the people to be masters of their own land.

Putin said that on this issue all parliamentary factions saw eye to eye. He hopes that they will continue to adhere to a firm patriotic stance further on.

"I believe that such patriotic cohesion is crucial, especially for



those leading parties that have their own traditions, ideology and real influence in society," Putin insisted. He called for maintaining this authority and keeping in touch not only with supporters, but also with opponents and those who are politically neutral.

Putin stressed that the 2021 State Duma elections must be held on a genuinely competitive basis.

"All of us are interested in an

open, and honest election with dignity, held on a highly competitive basis," he said, adding that it was important both for the parliamentary parties and for forces not represented in the State Duma that plan to take part in the elections.

This is also crucial first and foremost for the voters "who will determine the outcome of the election campaign," Putin concluded.

Agencies

# 2021: Year of the Ox



CHINESE people are about to usher in the Year of the Ox, starting from Feb. 12, 2021, and lasting until Jan. 31, 2022. Why is 2021 the year of the Ox? What does the ox mean for Chinese people? And what is the spirit of the ox? Keep reading below to find the answers.

As an essential part of Chinese folk culture, the Twelve Chinese Zodiacs, a classification system based on the Chinese lunar calendar, assigns an animal and its reputed attributes to each year in a repeating 12-year cycle. These twelve animal signs are the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

The order of the Twelve Chinese Zodiacs was decided by the final rankings in a race between the 12 animals as revealed in a Chinese legend. To win the race, the hardworking Ox sets off earlier than the other animals, and gives a free ride to one of his rivals, the Rat, who is unable to pass a river along the way. Near the end of the race, the Rat jumped out of the Ox's ear and dashed towards the finish line. In the end, the warm-hearted Ox was defeated by his fellow Rat, having placed second place in the race. Hence, the Ox became the second animal in the Chinese Zodiac.

This widely known legend of the Chinese Zodiac also demonstrated that the ox is both hardy

and kind in the Chinese people's eyes.

One of the first animals to be domesticated, the ox played an important role in ancient China. Farmers trained oxen to plow the fields and replace human labor, which vastly improved production capacities since oxen are much more powerful than human beings. Besides agriculture, oxen contributed to the development of transportation and military. In the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE), the authorities used "ox carriages" to transport supplies during wartimes when pressures on transportation had become increasingly mounting. Serving as a powerful weapon, oxen were rigged to carry torches and were deployed to fight against enemy forces in wars

during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

The ox's image has penetrated into Chinese culture due to its fundamental role in almost every aspect of life. The ox is crowned as the God of Sheji (which means the "god of soil and food"), who stole seeds from Heaven to free earthly dwellers below from hunger. According to the legend, Yu the Great, an emperor of the Xia Dynasty (c.2070-1600 BC), always threw an ox-shaped sculpture into the river near an area where he sought to control the floods, praying the sacred Ox would protect residents from harm.

The affection and reverence afforded to the Ox have extended to everyday life as well, with traditions having regularly been held to worship the animal. During Lichun, the first solar term of the traditional Chinese lunar calendar, Chinese people would craft a clay ox stuffed with grain and whip it, expressing their hopes for a bumper harvest in the upcoming new year. Paper cuttings of the Ox are very popular in local markets this year, with Chinese people scrambling to buy their own unique paper designs. Decorating houses with these festive decorations shows people's good wishes in welcoming a new year.

From paintings to poems, art-

ists are keen on burnishing the spirit of the Ox in their work. Li Gang, a brilliant poet in the Song Dynasty, complimented the ox's temperament to work hard without any complaints in his poem. In the ink and wash painting of Qi Baishi, a distinguished painter in China, vivid images of the self-sacrificing animal come alive. Lu Xun, a famed Chinese writer, associated himself with the ox, saying that "fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers, head bowed like a willing ox I serve the people." Since then, the willing and able Ox has become a metaphor to describe those who are willing to sacrifice for the benefit of others.

The Ox's spirit, symbolizing diligence, steadfastness and tenacity, was inherited from generations of Chinese tradition and has evolved over time. With society stepping into a new era, the Ox's spirit has continued to take on new meaning.

Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed the New Year's gathering of the CPCC National Committee on Dec. 31, 2020, encouraging the Chinese people to promote the spirit of the ox in serving the people, driving innovative development and working tirelessly. The unique characteristics of the ox vividly personifies the outstanding qualities that Chinese people continue to aspire for.

People's Daily

# Trial of 'Hotel Rwanda hero' begins amid family's fears of injustice

### KIGALI

PAUL Rusesabagina, the hotelier depicted as a hero in a Hollywood film about Rwanda's 1994 genocide, was charged with nine terrorism-related offences in a Kigali court yesterday, at the start of a trial that has drawn international scrutiny.

His family say Rusesabagina, a critic of President Paul Kagame, is in poor health and his trial is a sham. Rwanda's government says he has fomented violence and directed deadly attacks on its territory from exile.

"We don't expect a fair trial," his daughter Carine Kanimba, told Reuters on Tuesday. "This hearing will be a theatre."

The trial has thrust a spotlight not just on Rusesabagina, but on Kagame, accused by rights groups of using authoritarian means to quash political opposition and extend his 21-year presidency. Several high profile political dissidents have been murdered abroad; the government has denied any involvement. Kagame, who led rebel forces that fought their way into the capital and ended the genocide in 1994, denies accusations of abuses. He has enjoyed widespread support from Western donors for restoring Rwanda to stability, cracking down on



corruption and boosting economic growth in the nation of 12 million.

Rusesabagina's daughter said that the charges against her father were fabricated and that he was denied his choice of defence lawyers. Judiciary spokesman Harrison Mutabazi said Rusesabagina was being tried like any other citizen. "We give justice with due process," he told Reuters on Tuesday.

### MOVIE HERO

Rusesabagina's case has attracted international attention partly because the Oscar-nominated 2004 film "Hotel Rwanda" was based on his life. The movie shows how Rusesabagina, played by Don Cheadle, used his connections as a hotel manager to save ethnic minority Tutsis fleeing slaughter by majority Hutus. An estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed during the 100 day genocide. Rusesabagina's father was Hutu; his mother and wife were Tutsi.

Rusesabagina later ob-

tained Belgian citizenship and became a U.S. resident. He received the Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honour, in 2005.

He became a vocal critic of Kagame and called for armed resistance to the government in a YouTube video in December 2018, saying that democratic change was impossible. The year before, Kagame won a national election with 99% of the vote.

During pre-trial hearings, Rusesabagina told judges he had been kidnapped from Dubai. Rwandan officials have suggested he was tricked into boarding the plane.

In a September pre-trial hearing, Rusesabagina told the court that he had contributed 20,000 euros (\$24,000.00) to the National Liberation Front (FLN), the military wing of the Movement for Democratic Change, a political party which he co-chaired from exile. But he denied any wrongdoing.

Rusesabagina will be tried alongside 20 other Rwandans whom prosecutors describe as fighters for the FLN. Most were captured after attacks in Rwanda's southern province in 2018, said judiciary spokesman Mutabazi.

Agencies

# Xinjiang officials and residents use personal experience to refute rumours, restore truth at press conference

REFERRING to their personal experience, many officials and residents of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region revealed the truth and debunked rumors about Xinjiang, such as suppression of the Uygur ethnic group, and the so-called "forced labor", "forced demolition of mosques", "forced sterilization", as well as "genocide", in front of Chinese and foreign media at a press conference held in Beijing on Feb. 1.

The population of ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang, including the Uygur people, has been growing continuously, said Xu Guixiang, deputy director general of the Publicity Department of Communist Party of China (CPC) Xinjiang Committee, at the press conference.

According to data, from 2010 to 2018, the number of Xinjiang's permanent residents increased by over 3.05 million, or 13.99 percent, from about 21.82 million to nearly 24.87 million, Xu said, stressing that the region's Uygur population grew by about 2.55 million, or 25.04 percent, much higher than the growth rate of the population of Han people, the largest ethnic group in China, which stood at 2 percent.

"Is it also the result of 'genocide'?" Xu asked rhetorically.

Tulanisa Rehman, a 32-year-old ethnic minority woman from Xinjiang's

Hotan prefecture, smashed false reports by foreign media hyping forced contraception and compulsory sterilization against Uygur people and other ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang with her own experience.

"Some foreign media's reports on the forced contraception and compulsory sterilization are sheer lies. There is no such kind of things at all. It was vicious of them to make these rumors although I have no idea why they did that," Rehman said at the press conference.

"If we were 'forced to have contraception and compulsory sterilization', how come

there are so many lovely children in the village," Rehman said.

"The Family Planning Policy of our country is looser in Xinjiang," Rehman noted, adding that she and her husband have two sons and a daughter.

The government cares about the reproductive health of ethnic minority women very much, according to Rehman, who added that she received free health care during pregnancy and that her children have enjoyed medical insurance and free education.

"The achievements in the development and progress

of human rights in Xinjiang are obvious to all," said Elijan Anayat, spokesperson of the Information Office of People's Government of Xinjiang.

The arduous fight against terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang has brought worthwhile changes to the situation in the region, with unprecedented achievements being made in socio-economic development, improvement of people's livelihood and protection of human rights, Anayat stressed at the press conference. Since the end of 2018, more than 1,200 people of 80 groups have visited

Xinjiang, including United Nations (UN) officials, foreign diplomatic envoys to China, representatives of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, permanent representatives of relevant countries to UN's Geneva Office, media reporters and religious groups, Anayat said, adding that these people, who come from more than 100 countries and regions, generally appreciated China's achievements in fighting against terrorism and extremism and safeguarding human rights.

Recently, an article by certain Western scholar claimed that "hundreds of thousands

of ethnic minority laborers in Xinjiang are being forced to pick cotton by hand through a coercive state-mandated labor transfer and 'poverty alleviation' scheme" and that "the U.S. government should put a Withhold Release Order on any product that contains cotton from any part of Xinjiang, not just cotton produced in the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) regions."

Kakri Usur, a cotton farmer from Kuqa, county-level city of Xinjiang's Aksu prefecture, was outraged by the claim.

"Recently I've heard some media reports abroad say that Xinjiang forces farmers to work or plant cotton, which is nonsense," Usur said at the press conference.

People's Daily



# SPORT



Serengeti Boys' head coach, Hababuu Omari.

## Serengeti Boys' coach asks clubs to value youthful players

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIA's national U-17 football squad 'Serengeti Boys' head coach, Hababuu Omari, has called on various clubs in the country to take on and nurture the squad's players' talents.

Omari stated the approach will see to it the country is endowed with talented and well trained young players at all times.

The tactician made the remarks while discussing his team's preparations for the Africa U-17 Cup of Nations tournament to be held in Morocco from July 2021.

He said that there are plenty of talented young players in various regions in Tanzania but they are not featuring for any team.

He insisted it is imperative local sides take the players and develop their talents.

He moreover pointed out the Tanzania

Football Federation (TFF)'s plan is to have teams with players in U-17, U-18, U-19 and U-20 brackets in a bid to ensure the youthful players' talents are not wasted.

Regarding the selection of players for the team he said that they have traveled to different regions and that they believe the team represents the national image by having players from different areas.

He said he believes the U17 will do better in this year's competition than it did in 2018 which Tanzania hosted.

Serengeti Boys booked a place in the Africa U-17 Cup of Nations tournament after settling for the second spot in this season's East Africa U-17 football tournament, which took place in Rwanda at the end of last year.

The showdown, which saw Uganda emerge as champions, as well served as the Africa U-17 Cup of Nations tournament's qualifiers.

## Boxers enter camp for EA Olympic trials

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

SEVENTEEN boxers are attending non-residential camp in Dar es Salaam to prepare for the East Africa Olympic trials which will be held at the end of this month.

Open Boxing Federation Of Tanzania (OBFT) secretary general, Lukelo Willilo, said the trials will be held from February 28 to March 4 and they have extended invitations to many countries to take part in the showdown.

He said so far, Zimbabwe and Burundi have confirmed to attend the trials and the OBFT officials are waiting for Zambia, Malawi, Uganda and Rwanda to confirm their participation.

The OBFT secretary general said after the trials, the federation's technical committee will select boxers who will represent the country at

various international events.

The tournaments include Tokyo Olympics, and AIBA World Boxing Championships, which will be held in Belgrade, Serbia.

"We have organized East Africa Olympic trials, we have extended invitations to many nations to field teams in the trials, the aim is to give our boxers international exposure and select boxers who will represent the country at international events this year," he said.

Domestic boxers Yusufu Changarawe, Boniface Mligwa and Haruna Mhando attended 2020 African Boxing Olympic Qualification Tournament, which were held in Senegal.

However Willilo could not say whether the federation will retain the three boxers for Tokyo Olympics or they will identify other boxers for the Games.



## SPORTS

## Namungo FC to host both play offs against CD Primeiro de Agosto



Namungo FC

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE Confederation of African Football (CAF) has decided that the Confederation Cup's play offs pitting Angola's CD Primeiro de Agosto against Tanzania's Namungo FC will be played in Tanzania.

The decision was made after the CAF committee found that neither CD Primeiro de Agosto nor Namungo FC was directly responsible for blocking the first leg, which was slated to be held in Angola on February 14.

Both matches are required to be played at least 72 hours, and must be played before February 26 this year.

According to the schedule, CD Primeiro de Agosto will host the first match, so the team will be responsible for all preparations including meeting

the match officials' expenses.

Since the CAF Confederation Cup's groups are scheduled for February 22, the overall winners after the two matches will not be considered non-ranked at the time of planning.

The match was postponed due to what was described as the Angolan authorities requiring all Namungo FC players to be quarantined after three of the team's players and one official were told they had been diagnosed with the Coronavirus.

After Namungo FC boycotted the matter, the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) investigated to find out the facts until CAF decided to cancel the first away game.

So according to a statement issued by TFF yesterday, it is official Namungo FC will be at home in both matches here.

Namungo FC returned to the country on Monday night after their first clash of the play offs against CD Primeiro de Agosto, which was due to be played on Sunday, was cancelled.

Commenting on the tragedy, Namungo's information

officer, Kindamba Namlia, stated: "The team has been forced to return to the country without three of our players and one leader who, basically due to the rules of their health authority, will remain until they recover."

"We are still waiting for the CAF's decision but in reality the things our locals did are not intimidation as many people take it, but it is a planning crime that has involved various authorities in the country," he disclosed after they returned home in Tanzania.

## Fenerbahce set to sell Samatta

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TURKEY's Fenerbahce could sell Tanzanian forward, Mbwana Ally Samatta, loaned to the outfit by England's Aston Villa, despite already agreeing a long-term contract with the striker, according to reports in Turkey.

Samatta joined Fenerbahce on loan from Aston Villa in September last year, with the move set to be made permanent at the end of the season.

The attacker, an £ 8.5 million arrival at Villa Park from Belgian club Genk in January 2020, joined the Turkish side on an initial season-long loan in September.

He hit the ground running, netting twice on his debut in the 2-1 Super Lig win over Fatih Karagümrük in early October.

But the Tanzania forward has added only two more goals in 16 league appearances since then in the victories against Ankaragücü and Kayserispor in January.

Samatta's stay at Fenerbahce is due to be made permanent at the end of the season for around £ 6m with the 28-year-old having agreed a four-year contract.

According to Turkish news outlet, Aspor, Fenerbahce are now making contingency plans unless Samatta's fortunes in front of goal improve.

They report he has performed 'far below expectations' for coach Erol Bulut's side.

The outfit is already considering moving him on in the summer window to be 'replaced by a better striker'.

Samatta began his career as a youth player for Tanzanian club African Lyon in 2008. He turned professional in 2010 with Simba Sports Club, where he played for only half of the season before moving to DR Congo's TP Mazembe.

The attacker had spent a total of five years with TP Mazembe, initially becoming a first-team regular.

He was named the 2015 African based Player of the Year and finished the season as the top goalscorer of the CAF Champions League, as he helped TP Mazembe to win the title.

In January 2016, Samatta signed for Belgian side K.R.C. Genk, helping them qualify for the UEFA Europa League and win the Belgian Jupiler League in 2019.

Having finished the season as the top goalscorer of the Jupiler League, he also won the Ebony Shoe award in



Mbwana Ally Samatta

Belgium for his outstanding season with Genk.

In January 2020, he moved to Aston

Villa, becoming the first Tanzania-born player to play and score in the English Premier League.



## Europe's media hails 'hurricane' Mbappe after hat-trick blows away Barca

LONDON

EUROPE'S media lavished praise on PSG's "hurricane" superstar Kylian Mbappe after a stunning Champions League hat-trick blew away Lionel Messi's Barcelona at the Nou Camp on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old's goals in the round of 16 first-leg tie made him the first-ever player to score a hat-trick against Barcelona in the knockout stages of the elite competition.

French daily L'Equipe called the striker "atomic" and the team a "formidable collective force" which stopped the genius of Messi, who is considered one of the greatest footballers of all time.

It called PSG's stars "Galacticos" on its front page and said "it will be necessary to consider stopping football" if the Parisians do not qualify for the quarter-finals after securing a 4-1 first-leg lead.

- 'Historic display' - Spain's Madridista press, while hailing the young Frenchman, was more critical of the Barcelona performance.

Madrid daily AS did not hold back, saying Barcelona had seen in PSG "a mirror that reflects their image" of a team that now "terrorises, subdues and destroys them".

"Mbappe went through the Camp Nou and devastated it like a hurricane, with a historic display, one that will remain etched in memories forever," wrote the Marca daily, also from Madrid.

Missing other top stars Neymar and Angel Di Maria, PSG were "led by an unstoppable Kylian and a colossal Veratti,"

it said, calling Barcelona "light years away from the great dominators of the continent, once again humiliated in the Champions League."

"Mbappe destroys Barca in the Nou Camp," read the headline in Barcelona daily Mundo Deportivo.

"Barca remain very, very far from the level required for the Champions League," it read.

The other Barcelona sports daily, Sport, said Barca were "pulverised by PSG" and Mbappe "has proven to be an uncontrollable giant".

- 'Changing of the guard' - British tabloid The Sun said the match pointed to a "changing of the guard at the head of world football" as speculation mounts that Messi will part ways with his longtime club at the end of the season.

"Lionel Messi, for so long the planet's greatest player not only of his day but of all time, was completely upstaged by Kylian Mbappe," it wrote.

It said the "electric Frenchman" of just 22 years "now looks ready to claim Messi's crown as the king of world football" after his hat-trick.

The Daily Telegraph echoed that sentiment, saying that if it was Messi's final European adventure with Barcelona "it might well be remembered as the season in which the crown was ripped from his head".

It said Mbappe produced "one of the great European hat-tricks of recent years" while Messi faded from the game "like a light bulb losing power".

The PSG star delivered "nothing short of a masterclass," it concluded.

AFP

## Koeman calls quitting Barcelona 'crazy' talk

BARCELONA

BARCELONA coach Ronald Koeman said it was "crazy" to suggest he should consider his future at the club after Tuesday's 4-1 defeat to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

Lionel Messi gave Barca a first-half lead from the penalty spot at Camp Nou but PSG, inspired by a Kylian Mbappe hat-trick and a Moise Kean header, fought back to take a three-goal advantage into the second leg in Paris next month.

The loss leaves Barca on the cusp of a second successive trophy-less season. They're eight points behind La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid having played a game more and lost the first leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal 2-0 against Sevilla last week.

"If I was someone who gets happy when we win and then after a result like today said I had no desire to continue, that would be crazy," Koeman said in a news conference when asked if the manner of the defeat would force him to consider stepping down.

"I know where I am and what we have to change. We're trying. We're not at the end of the path yet, we're halfway down it."

It's the fourth time in as many seasons that Barca have suffered a heavy defeat in the Champions League following similar losses to Roma, Liverpool and Bayern Munich.

Since losing 8-2 to Bayern in August, which led to the firing of Quique Setien and the hiring of Koeman, Barca have tried to make several changes to their team, bringing through younger players while allowing Luis Suarez, Arturo Vidal and Ivan Rakitic to leave.

Koeman argued, therefore, that expectations need to be adjusted at the club, despite saying in the build-up to Tuesday's match he felt his side could compete with anyone.

"You always have to aspire to win everything, but we have to recognise that we're short in certain areas," the Barca boss added.

"I have said several times that we're on the right path, but we lack things. [Sergino] Dest at 20, in four years will be better. Pedri, at his age

is already brilliant, but in five years he will be better than any PSG midfielder.

"It's tough, especially with the [demands] from the press. But I am realistic. I always defend my team. We did everything. We can defend better; we can be more aggressive and we're going to change that and work on it.

"We lack things, sure, but I have never thought before this game that we didn't. It's not the end of the path. It seems I am more realistic than everyone else."

Barca overturned a four-goal deficit in 2017 when they last met PSG in the knockout stages of the Champions League, famously winning the return leg 6-1, but Koeman isn't expecting another heroic comeback when the two sides meet at the Parc des Princes on March 10.

"I could lie but at 4-1 there's hardly any chance of going through," he acknowledged. "They're a side that has already been put together and we are in transition. We must improve in the areas where we're lacking. That's my responsibility.

"The first half was more even, we had the Ousmane [Dembele] chance at 1-0 but they were better in the second half, above all physically, and were the much more effective team."

Barca were in the game until half-time. Messi gave them the lead from the spot, Dembele came close and Antoine Griezmann had two chances, denied once by Keylor Navas and later shooting wide, before Mbappe's equaliser.

It was one-way traffic after the break, though, with goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen making saves from Mbappe and Kean to keep the score down. "Against teams like PSG you need an almost perfect game and we didn't manage that today," Griezmann lamented. "They were superior. It's not the image we want to show. It was a bad game.

"Now we must work hard, move forward and fight until the final second. We will go there to try and win and get through. We know it's complicated, but we won't go there just to visit [Paris]."

ESPN

## Mbappe leads PSG to emphatic win, Barca woes deepen

By Gabriele Marcotti, Senior Writer, ESPN FC

WE look for meaning – especially these days – and there was plenty to be had in an empty Camp Nou. Kylian Mbappe's hat-trick – only the second Barca conceded at home in the Champions League after Dynamo Kiev's Andriy Shevchenko in 1997 – propelled Paris Saint-Germain past Barcelona 4-1 and, to some, it will symbolise him taking the baton from Lionel Messi.

That's nonsense. That's premature. Not just because Messi is Messi (and because that other guy in Turin might have something to say about this) but because Mbappe is writing his own history, one not defined by others. With Neymar (and Angel Di Maria) absent, he guided PSG with the calm of a veteran, the exuberance of a kid and, above all, a rare blend of talent, athleticism and intelligence.

The image of him after the fourth goal – arms open like Rio de Janeiro's Cristo Redentor, head nodding like a bobble-headed doll – encapsulates just what he brings. That's meaning enough. The next decade belongs to him.

As for Barca, the night reaffirmed just how deep the rebuild ahead will need to be. There will be no Champions League band-aid to paper over cracks (and, perhaps, less Champions League revenue than anticipated), the seven straight La Liga victories mean little. This is a team that has been emotionally razed to the ground. They'll be back, building around Marc-Andre ter Stegen, Ansu Fati, Pedri, Frenkie de Jong (though maybe not Wednesday night's version) and possibly one or two others. Messi? We just don't know and won't for a while. But the boil had to be lanced and it happened against PSG.

For many of Europe's super clubs, the Champions League knockout rounds are an early ritual of spring renewal. It's a chance to forget whatever woes afflict you domestically and relaunch your season. Both clubs had plenty of woes to consign to the past.

PSG, last year's beaten finalists, are embroiled in a legitimate three-way dogfight for Le Championnat with Lille and Lyon. It's not a role to which they're accustomed, given they've

won seven of the past eight French league titles. But even beyond that, things have been far from comfortable at the Parc des Princes. They parted ways with manager Thomas Tuchel on Christmas Eve and have been fretting over things like Mbappe's new contract and Neymar's beach-house festivities.

Of course, that was positively halcyon compared to Barcelona's past six months. From Messi's Burofax to president Josep Maria Bartomeu's resignation to dire warnings of insolvency and financial meltdown to a freakish run of injuries that robbed them of Gerard Pique (the "other" resident icon and Mr. Shakira), Fati (the heir apparent wunderkind) and jack-of-all-trades Sergi Roberto, it's been a campaign to forget. And that's before you get into events domestically that, thus far, see them third in La Liga, eight points behind Atletico Madrid (who have played one fewer game).

Escaping from all of this was motivation enough, even before last week's "Affaire Messi," when the esteemed French magazine France Football put the Barca star – who becomes a free agent in 134 days – on its cover with a photoshopped PSG kit, prompting gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair back in Catalunya.

It's easy to forget that, for all the glamour and bon vivant imagery set against the backdrop of the City of Lights, there's plenty that's genuinely blue-collar about this PSG side. For every social media sensation that rocked up with a ready-made entourage and nine-figure transfer fee (read: Neymar and Mbappe), there are plenty of kids, grinders and second-chancers too.

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Kylian Mbappe's hat-trick has PSG on the verge of the quarterfinals and Barcelona on the brink of elimination. (Agencies)

won seven of the past eight French league titles. But even beyond that, things have been far from comfortable at the Parc des Princes. They parted ways with manager Thomas Tuchel on Christmas Eve and have been fretting over things like Mbappe's new contract and Neymar's beach-house festivities.

Of course, that was positively halcyon compared to Barcelona's past six months. From Messi's Burofax to president Josep Maria Bartomeu's resignation to dire warnings of insolvency and financial meltdown to a freakish run of injuries that robbed them of Gerard Pique (the "other" resident icon and Mr. Shakira), Fati (the heir apparent wunderkind) and jack-of-all-trades Sergi Roberto, it's been a campaign to forget. And that's before you get into events domestically that, thus far, see them third in La Liga, eight points behind Atletico Madrid (who have played one fewer game).

Escaping from all of this was motivation enough, even before last week's "Affaire Messi," when the esteemed French magazine France Football put the Barca star – who becomes a free agent in 134 days – on its cover with a photoshopped PSG kit, prompting gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair back in Catalunya.

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Moise Kean and Idrissa Gueye arrived from – with all due respect – Everton. Marco Verratti landed as a teenager after a season in the Italian second division. Keylor Navas came after losing the starting job at Real Madrid. Alessandro Florenzi is on loan from AS Roma, where he was unwanted. Layvin Kurzawa has been at the club for five years and never started as many 20 league games. Leandro Paredes was a bust in Italy before reinventing himself, to a point, in Russia.

Mbappe would go on to take the headlines and rightly so. Not just for his hat-trick, but for the leadership and precocious savvy he shows at 22 years of age, particularly with his favoured sidekick, Neymar, absent. But there was a lot of the supporting cast in his victory, plenty of "we're your foot soldiers, lead us to the promised land." That they would put so much of their trust speaks volumes: they know him best, they know what he offers.

Across the way, Messi has carried Barcelona for most of the past 15 years. And he had begun 2021 on a high, with nine goals in ten games, all of them from open play. When he nonchalantly stroked it on a dime to De Jong from deep, it led to Kurzawa conceding a soft penalty, which Messi himself converted. Less than half an hour had gone. He turned wordlessly to his teammates, his hooded eyes saying, "I got this."

Just like he had so many times in the past.

But he didn't. Because with this Barcelona team, whenever the Messi ticker shifts from superhuman to merely outstanding, bad things are wont to happen. And PSG's riposte was near immediate. A brilliant pass from Ver-

ratti, a first-time low cross, a somewhat lucky control that froze Clement Lenglet and Mbappe had rifled the ball into the back of Ter Stegen's net. Quick feet, quick mind, quick turnaround.

Moments later, Kurzawa again got away from Ousmane Dembele and forced Ter Stegen to make a world-class stop. Pique, who had willed his 34-year-old body back into the starting lineup after a nearly three-month lay-off, waved his arms and pleaded with his teammate. But there was a sense of foreshadowing for what would happen in the second half.

Barca boss Ronald Koeman spent much of the time haranguing his back line, ordering them to defend higher up the pitch and let Ter Stegen worry about the ball over the top. But when you play with fear and little confidence and weary legs, you get sucked back towards your own goal. And it's not a coincidence that at the half it was PSG who had the bulk of possession.

Ter Stegen again had to perform a minor miracle at the start of the second half after a driving Mbappe run – there's plenty of horsepower under that hood – and 20 minutes later PSG were in the lead. Paredes found Florenzi, Pique botched his clearance and the ball fell for Mbappe to make it 2-1. And, before Barca realised it, it was 3-1, with Kean somehow making himself invisible between Lenglet and De Jong to beat Ter Stegen.

By this point, the blow was as much psychological as it was physical and practical. Mbappe, on the break, made it four, which matters because a PSG defeat by four clear goals at the Parc des Princes – which is, realistically, what it would take for them to go out – appears about as likely as Cristiano Ronaldo replacing Messi at the Camp Nou next season.

Meanwhile, Kylian Mbappe said he is "happy" at Paris Saint-Germain following his hat-trick in Tuesday's 4-1 Champions League round-of-16 victory over Barcelona.

Mbappe scored his side's first, second and fourth goals on the night and then opened up on his future with the Ligue 1 champions after the match.

"I have always said that I am happy here. This sort of match makes me even happier. The PSG shirt is one that I hold dear to my heart," the France international told RMC Sport in a post-match interview.

## Europa League returns amid complaints about Covid relocations

LONDON

MANCHESTER United and Arsenal face tough ties when the Europa League returns for the knockout stages on Thursday amid complaints over the relocation of various matches due to coronavirus restrictions.

Both legs between Arsenal and Benfica have been moved to neutral venues with Thursday's first clash taking place in Rome and the second leg in Athens.

United's trip to Real Sociedad this week has also been switched to Turin with no elite sport exemption allowed for the English giants to travel to the Basque Country due to concerns over new strains of Covid-19.

Real Sociedad's director of football, Roberto Olabe, criticised UEFA for what he sees as an unfair advantage should the Spanish side have to play the second leg in Manchester.

"It does not seem coherent to me that as the home team, we play on a neutral field and as a visitor, we do it there," he told Diario Vasco.

"I would like the return to be also on a neutral ground or for UEFA to appoint a single venue for a one-game tie as it did last year."

United were involved in the final stages of last year's competition when one-off ties, all held in Germany, were used to make up for lost time due to the pandemic halting games across the continent for three months.

The Red Devils manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, is also in favour of a return to the one-game format to ease the fixture burden with his side still involved in three competitions.

If United progressed to the finals of both the Europa League and FA Cup, they could still have 26 games to play before the end of the season, meaning they would



Dangerous duo: Real Sociedad's Mikel Oyarzabal (left) and Alexander Isak (right) will pose a threat to Manchester United. (Agencies)

be in action twice a week until late May.

"It's not a decision we made but when one game is in a neutral venue, it's a disadvantage to the team that doesn't have the home game," said Solskjaer.

"That's out of our hands. We can't say we'd go to Turin and play one game, I wouldn't mind that at all, it would be one game less."

- Carrot of Champions League -

However, there are no guarantees that Solskjaer's side will progress against Real Sociedad, who boast a collection of some of Europe's most exciting young talents,

allied to the experience of David Silva, who was a consistent thorn in United's side during 10 years at Manchester City.

Swedish forward Aleksander Isak has scored six times in his last five La Liga games, while Spanish international Mikel Oyarzabal is the latest supreme talent to come through the club's youth academy, following in the footsteps of Xabi Alonso and Antoine Griezmann.

Despite a flying start that took them to the top of La Liga, La Real have slipped to fifth and may now see winning the Europa League as their best chance of securing

Champions League football next season.

The carrot of a return to the Champions League is even more pressing for Arsenal.

After 19 seasons in Europe's premier club competition between 1998 and 2016/17, the Gunners have spent the last four seasons in the Europa League with severe financial repercussions.

Sitting 10th in the Premier League, a top-four finish looks beyond Mikel Arteta's men.

Tottenham Hotspur are another side who may have to pin their hopes of a Champions League return on Europa League success as they face Austrian side Wolfsberg, with the first leg moved to Budapest.

Spurs have lost five of their last six games to pile the pressure on coach Jose Mourinho, but the Portuguese has won the Europa League in the two previous occasions he has managed in the competition, with United and Porto.

AC Milan take on Red Star Belgrade in a clash of former European champions, while Ajax face Ligue 1 leaders Lille in another standout tie.

AFP

## Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

**Mbappe leads PSG to emphatic win, Barca woes deepen**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Kilimanjaro Aces cricket team's Arshaan Jasani showcased impressive batting displays to catapult his squad to seven-wicket win over Ngorongoro Titans in this season's Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Reliance Insurance T20 Super League's fixture, which took place in Dar es Salaam recently.

## Kilimanjaro Aces wallop Ngorongoro Titans in TCA T20 Super League

By Guardian Reporter

KILIMANJARO Aces' cricketers have got off to an impressive start in the 2021 Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Reliance Insurance T20 Super League, cruising to seven-wicket victory over Ngorongoro Titans in Dar es Salaam early this week.

Ngorongoro Titans showcased a woeful batting showing when they were presented with the opportunity to start batting in the duel, which was reduced to 15 overs, given they were skittled for 43 runs in 14.3 overs.

Opening batsman, Abhik Patwa, was the only player to have managed what could be termed as meaningful contribution in the team's innings, given he notched 12 runs.

The experienced batsman managed to hit a four and a six during his spell, with fellow opener Abbas Adamjee falling victim to early dismissal without a run to his name.

There was little the rest of the team's batsmen could do to help their outfit stay in control of the innings, given they did not last long at the crease.

Kilimanjaro Aces' youthful performer, Mohammed Yunus, put impressive bowling performance, ending with three wickets.

Yunus gave away 17 runs in three overs, notching an economy rate of 5.67.

Abubakar Selemani and pace bowler Ally Mpeka chipped in handsomely, given they ended with two wickets apiece.

Needing mere 43 runs to notch victory, Kilimanjaro Aces smoothly chased their opponents score, ending with 44 runs for three wickets in 9.3 overs.

Opener Arshaan Jasani recorded 15 runs not out to effectively steer his side to the successful chase.

They were unperturbed by the exit of their top order batsmen, Dhruvit Mehta, skipper Kassim Nassor and Nassoro Zahoro.

Nassor and Zahoro notched seven runs and five runs respectively and were dismissed by Ngorongoro Titans' spinner Tambwe Rashid and Aahil Jasani, as the Titans sought to frustrate their opponents' chase.

Athumani Siwa formed a solid partnership with opener Jasani to win the fixture for Kilimanjaro Aces, with the experienced Siwa chipping in with six runs not out.

The weekend also saw Serengeti Giants cruise to eight-run victory over Tembo Warriors.

Serengeti Giants were skittled for 94 runs in 20 overs when they got the chance to start batting.

Despite batting zealously, Tembo Warriors failed to live up to expectations, when it came to reaching the target, given they were skittled for 86 runs in 19 overs.

Reliance Insurance are main sponsors for the tournament, which is organized by the national cricket governing body in a bid to boost cricket promotion at the domestic level.

The showdown's co-sponsors are Sayona Drinks Ltd, Unity Computers, Sterling, Pepsi, Harab Motors and GI Security.

## Kilimanjaro Marathon 2021 race number collection set for Dar

By Guardian Reporter

THE prestigious Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon 2021 is finally here as the organizers have announced the race number collection point and dates for Dar es Salaam.

A statement issued by the race's organizing committee said the exercise will be conducted at Mlimani City's parking area in front of Pizza Hut restaurant on Saturday and Sunday from 12pm to 6pm.

"We are calling on all participants for the Kilimanjaro Premium Lager Marathon, Tigo Half Marathon and Grand Malt 5km Fun Run who indicated that they will collect their race numbers in Dar es Salaam to turn up on those two days to collect their race numbers ready for the event scheduled for February 28, 2021 in Moshi," read the statement in part.

According to the organizers, the participants are required to carry either their identification cards or passport and the confirmation messages they received upon payment and those collecting for corporate groups will be required to carry with them copies of their IDs and will be served at the groups' desk.

"We are appealing to those collecting the numbers to adhere to the timings and note that the exercise will be for only two days in Dar es Salaam then shift to Arusha on February 23rd and 24th at the Kibo Palace Hotel and later Moshi on February 25, 26 and 27 at Keys Hotel," the organizers stated.

Meanwhile, the organizers also noted that all preparations are set and that they are working closely with the government and other important stakeholders like Athletics Tanzania to ensure everything runs smooth before, during and after the event.

They indicated that registration for the 42km race and 5km Fun Run is still on and entries will be sold on cash basis at the race number collection points but 21km is already full and registration is closed.

"We will put in place many hand washing points, we will have sanitizers and also issue face masks to participants during race number collection to be worn when they gather before the race starts then they will remove them as they run and upon finish," they disclosed.

"We will issue them with other masks for protection as they mingle at the Moshi University of Cooperatives (MuCO) stadium after the races," the statement stated.

Participants for 5km will, according to statement, be issued with one mask only during number collection that will be used before and after the race and not while running.

This year's event is sponsored by Kilimanjaro Premium Lager- 42km race, Tigo- Half Marathon, Grand Malt-5km Fun Run, water table sponsors, Unilever Tanzania, Simba Cement, TPC Sugar, Kilimanjaro International Leather Company Limited and Kibo Palace Hotel.

The marathon's official suppliers include Garda World Security, Keys Hotel and CMC Automobile.

The event is organized by Kilimanjaro Marathon Company Limited and nationally coordinated by Executive Solutions Limited.

## Ngorongoro Heroes' head coach vows to fight for win



National U-20 football squad, Ngorongoro Heroes.

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA's national U-20 football side 'Ngorongoro Heroes' head coach Jamhuri Kihwelo has disclosed he will rectify the mistakes he observed in his team during their opening match of this year's African U-20 Cup of Nations finals against Ghana in Mauritania on Tuesday.

Ngorongoro Heroes lost 4-0 to Ghana's U-20 squad in the Group C fixture and, in an interview monitored on Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) website, Kihwelo said he, in cooperation with the squad's technical panel, will work on the mistakes they saw.

He said despite the defeat, his charges deserve credit as they played well and he is confident that his team will bounce back against Gambia on Friday.

Kihwelo said for Ngorongoro Heroes' hopes of reaching the showpiece's quarterfinals to be realized, they must beat Gambia on Friday.

"We played well, of course we made some mistakes which we will rectify before facing our next opponents," the coach noted.

"We do believe that we can make it to the quarterfinals as the boys are mentally and physically fit," he said.

In Group C's other clash, which was as well held on Tuesday, Morocco beat Gambia 1-0.

On Tuesday, Ghana's Black Satellites, coached by Abdul Karim Zito, scored their goals through a Precious Boah's double, a sublime Abdul Fatavu Issahaku's effort and a late Joselpho Barnes' strike.

Ngorongoro Heroes, through German-based winger, Ben Starkie, midfielder Novatus Dismas of Israeli side Maccabi Tel Aviv and midfielder Ally Msengi of South African outfit, Stellenbosch, did all they could but they failed to find the opponents' back of the net.

The Total U-20 Africa Cup of Nations (previously known as the African Youth Championship or the African U-20 Championship) is the main international youth football competition for CAF nations.

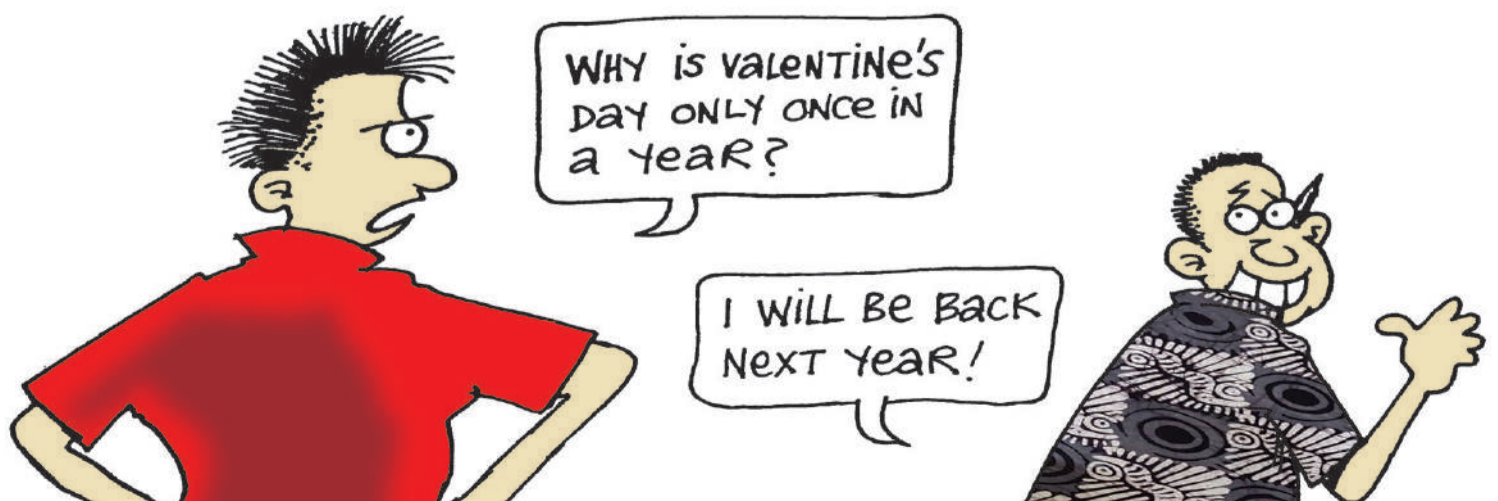
It is competed for by U-20 year olds. It is held every two years with the top four teams qualifying for the FIFA U-20 World Cup.

From 1979 until 1989, the African representatives were determined purely on a home and away qualifying basis without a final tournament, with the African champions determined through the same qualification.

Since 1991 there has been a qualifying stage followed by a final tournament played by eight teams in a chosen country.

On August 6 2015, the CAF Executive Committee decided to change the name of the tournament from the African Youth Championship to the U-20 Africa Cup of Nations, similar to the senior's version, Africa Cup of Nations.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko



**EATV THURSDAY**

**MORNING @ 11:00**

**DADAZ.**

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 MPYA  
12:30 Bongo Hits  
13:00 Msosi Kitaani (r)  
13:30 Kali Za Wana  
14:00 Ujenzi (r)  
14:30 DK10 Za Maangamizi  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Wagonga Ulimbo (r)  
16:00 Ubongo Kids (r)  
16:30 #HSHTAG  
17:00 SSELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Music/Soap  
19:30 EATV SAA I  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 Kibiashara Zaidi

**DADAZ.** A show that explores social and political issues from a feminine perspective.

**east africa RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast  
10:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
20:00 Kipenga  
21:00 The Cruise

**88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM**