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# JPM blasts municipality staff exploiting traders

By Guardian Reporter

GOVERNMENT officials allocated themselves stalls at the newly-built modern market in Morogoro municipality for lease, pocketing 30,000 per month from traders.

Launching the 17bn/- facility yesterday, President John Magufuli ordered all state officials who engaged in the corrupt dealing to cough up all the monies they received from genuine traders if they want to continue in government employment.

The president said that he had established that civil servants from the municipal council, the office of the regional commissioner as well as district commissioner are the main beneficiaries of the government funded project and not traders as intended.

While the construction was going on, state officials colluded to allocate themselves the slots and leased them to real traders at 50,000/- instead of the official 20,000/-, he stated.

"Imagine civil servants earning 30,000/- per month from a project that was meant to benefit traders. This is corruption," he asserted, expressing anger with the practice, saying that it was sad that it was taking place at the watch of the RC and the DC who are his representatives.

"When I entered the new market, traders told me that one was supposed to pay



President John Magufuli listens to a business woman at Morogoro municipality's newly rehabilitated main mixed-goods market shortly after launching it yesterday. Photo: State House

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## Kiswahili replaces English as main language in courts

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government has tabled in the National Assembly the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, 2021 which will among other matters change The Magistrates' Courts Act to allow shifting of legal materials from English to Kiswahili.

However, a statement signed by the Clerk of the National Assembly, Stephen Kagaigai (pictured) said the Constitution and Legal Affairs Committee will today start hearing stakeholders' opinions on the proposed bill as part of legislative procedure, in accordance with Parliamentary Standing Orders.

The tabled bill proposes amending two other laws, namely the Interpretation of Laws Act, Cap.1 and the Land Disputes Courts Act, Cap. 216.

The proposed amendment in Section 84 (6) of the Act states that "the minister

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## TMA sees five days storms in 13 regions

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) has predicted heavy rains accompanied by strong winds and coastal high tides, all this over 13 regions for up to five consecutive days.

A statement released yesterday by the weatherman said that Dar es Salaam, Coast (including Mafia Island, Tanga, Mtwara and Zanzibar (Unguja and Pemba) are today expected to see strong winds of up to 40 kilometres per hour and high tides of up to two metres.

The forecast named other regions that will receive heavy rains in the course of five days as Lindi, Ruvuma, Njombe, Mbeya, Iringa, Rukwa, Songwe and

southern parts of Morogoro.

The forecast says five days of heavy rains in most parts of these regions was likely to have started yesterday.

"The weather will cause disruptions in areas like marine transport and fishing. Residents of the aforementioned regions are advised to take precautionary measures to avoid possible adverse impact," the agency noted.

TMA director general Dr Agnes Kijazi who is also third vice-president of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) yesterday led the second conference of the Panel of the WMO Enabling Central Committee.

Speaking at the opening of the

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## PM discounts salary review

### Says inflation worse for workers altogether

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government has said it will continue improving the welfare of civil servants but not initiate salary rises, to avoid hiking the cost of living.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa told the National Assembly in his impromptu question and answer session yesterday that whenever the government announces salary changes for civil servants, automatically the cost of living goes high as businessmen hike the cost of various goods.

This negatively affects all the people, he stated, noting that apart from salary hikes, there are multiple ways of improving employee welfare such as promotions

and reduction in tax deductions from double digit to single digit brackets.

"The government lowered workers' Pay as You Earn (Payee) deductions to single digit, and we are continuing to take other initiatives that are beyond salary increases, for the greater interest of the working class," he asserted.

He acknowledged the role and efforts of civil servants in national development, asking them to continue working hard as the government is working on their needs.

"This approach is a way better than adding some 20,000/- or 30,000/- in salaries. These options increase the take home package of an employee for a living. We don't want to affect the cost of living

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**Habari yako**  
Muli bwanji.

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Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has an audience at Zanzibar State House yesterday with members of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty board, who had just completed a four-day visit to the Isles. Story on Page 3. Photo: Zanzibar State House

## Kiswahili replaces English as main language in courts

FROM PAGE 1

responsible for legal affairs may make regulations prescribing circumstances and conditions where a law may be in a language other than Kiswahili language."

The changes will ensure that proceedings and rulings in courts, tribunals and other bodies charged with dispensing justice shall be in Kiswahili.

Under the Interpretation of

Laws Act, Cap.1, Kiswahili will be declared the language of the laws of the country and the language to be used in the administration and dispensation of justice.

"The use of Kiswahili will facilitate the realization of access to justice by all. The amendment further gives power to the Minister responsible for justice in consultation with the Chief Justice to determine circumstances and conditions

where the dispensation of justice may be made in a language other than Kiswahili," read part of the Bill.

Speaking at the opening of this year's Tanzania Law Day week and the 100th anniversary of the High Court, Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan said the executive and the judiciary have agreed to fully switch the legal system and legal materials from English to Kiswahili.

The VP said that it was unjust to deny justice to a group of the citizens on the grounds of a language barrier because rural residents are unaware of most legal processes, thus limiting access to justice in their communities.

At least 70 percent of court proceedings in the country are run in Kiswahili, with legal materials such as judgments still being recorded in English.

## TMA sees five days storms in 13 regions

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conference, conducted through video conference, Dr Kijazi called on members to abide by the goals set by a panel of advisors on how to build national capacity as part of strengthening weather forecast services worldwide.

"This meeting aims to discuss reports of task forces that form this panel and draft recommendations to be submitted to WMO Central Committee, especially for priority areas like preparing a strategic plan of action for capacity building for the provision of better forecast services.



Dr Kijazi (pictured) was elected Third Vice-President of WMO by the Eighteenth World Meteorological Congress in 2019 for a four-year term, having led TMA since 2011

## JPM blasts municipality staff exploiting traders

FROM PAGE 1

20,000 monthly for the stalls but a municipal council officer by the name of Haika was charging them 50,000 per slot. I warn her to return the money immediately if she really want to continue working," the president directed.

He meanwhile commended a Luguru chief, Kingalu, for his commitment towards environmental conservation and named the market after him.

He also thanked the municipal residents for voting for him in the October 2020 polls, noting that despite having failed to personally campaign in the region they voted for him in large numbers.

The CCM candidate garnered 99.6percent of votes in Morogoro with the region leading in voter turnout by 77 percent, after having sent the running mate, Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan and others to campaign for him.

"It is for this reason that I have decided to come to Morogoro. My aides had arranged that I continue but I have decided to sleep here so that I stay with you and understand your challenges," he added to vast applause.



**Imagine civil servants earning 30,000/- per month from a project that was meant to benefit traders. This is corruption**

## UNFPA elevates climate action to safeguard women and girls

By Special Correspondent, Climate Change Working Group.

Johannesburg

THE impact of climate change is already being felt and is projected to intensify significantly over the next 10 years.

During the Nairobi Summit in Kenya in 2019, a signature session on climate change adaptation and justice focused on the centrality of solutions driven by and aimed at safeguarding the wellbeing of women and girls, young people and marginalized groups, who bear the brunt of climate change and environmental degradation.

Fast forward to 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed systemic vulnerabilities, inequalities, and lack of protection, bringing new threats to and new impacts for women and girls, young people and, indeed, all people. UNFPA is stepping up its game to ensure that adaptation responses are rights focused, gender sensitive and people centered.

"Women and girls suffer from vulnerabilities exacerbated by climate change, including rapidly expanding food insecurity, inadequate access to safe, clean water and improved sanitation, and inadequate access to essential health and gender-based violence services," said Diene Keita, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director - Programme.

"We must protect progress on the transformative results from the effects of climate change, and we must enhance our humanitarian preparedness and response to climate-related emergencies," said Keita.

She made the remarks during a recent webinar, UNFPA and the Climate Crisis: Strengthening Resilience and Protecting Progress within the Decade of Action, organized by the UNFPA

The webinar presented UNFPA's value proposition and provided direction for engagement and discussion with climate change champions and activists such as governments, youth-led organizations, donors and civil society groups, with a clear offer of support on climate change policies and actions.

Working with climate champions for a better world

It is imperative that we move with speed to implement climate action as we build stronger, safer and more resilient communities and systems that will safeguard the livelihoods of all, including women and girls, to ensure that no one is left behind.

"Climate change is a development emergency and it has the potential to derail the achievements of our transformative results, so indeed, we need to step up," said Dr. Julitta Onabanjo, UNFPA Regional Director for East and Southern Africa.

"There is no time like now to ensure that we all know and understand what value we can bring to the table... but even more importantly, to begin to enable and equip each and every one of us to not only be advocates for this agenda, but to see how that impacts and integrates into the programme, particularly in relation to the Strategic Plan going forward," said Dr. Onabanjo.

Young people, who have championed the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), are our partners in building youth resilience and that of their communities, and in transforming societies towards low carbon emissions, climate resilience, and equitable and inclusive development.



The State of Palestine's Ambassador to Tanzania, Hamdi Mansour Abu Ali (L), exchanges documents with Prevention and Combating Corruption Bureau director general Brig Gen John Mbungu in Dar es Salaam yesterday shortly after they signed an MoU on cooperation in combating corruption. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## PM discounts salary review

FROM PAGE 1

for people who aren't in the public service," the premier cautioned.

He was answering a question from Konde MP, Khatibu Said Haji (ACT-Wazalendo), demanding the government to state its commitment to implementing the CCM election manifesto to improve the welfare of civil servants by increasing their monthly salaries.

"Among the promises of the CCM election manifesto was the improvement of employee welfare. This has also been stated by President John Magufuli. When will the government work on this pledge," he demanded.

The premier said the government is determined to keep improving the welfare of civil servants in a way that won't affect the living standard of those in the informal sector or the

private sector.

There are people working in farms, fishing and other sectors, he stated, noting that there is no single platform where the government can increase salaries generally, hence the need to balance the situation. Since the welfare of employees is not only salaries, the government continues to take underlying initiatives in the course of improving their living

standards.

"The government appreciates the contribution of civil servants in service delivery and all achievements recorded are the result of their working spirit," he declared.

The government will continue working closely with trade unions and workers' councils in addressing challenges facing workers all over the country, the premier added.





Equity Bank CEO Robert Kiboti (2nd-L), head of marketing and communications Godwin Semunyu (C) and head of commercial department Isabella Maganga (2nd-R) follow proceedings in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday from the Visitors' Gallery. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Policy experts challenged to put together strategies for better results in agriculture

By Guardian Reporter

EXPERTS in policy, research and agriculture have been challenged to come up with strategies that could bring in more benefits and better results for the development of Tanzanians.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Gerald Kusaya issued the challenge yesterday at a meeting that brought together experts in policy and research on agricultural crops from the Mainland's Ministry of Agriculture and Zanzibar's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, Natural Resources and Livestock.

The two-day meeting offered the opportunity to the experts to discuss cooperation between the two ministries.

Kusaya called on the experts to supply answers to some of the

challenges in the agricultural crops sector, saying Tanzanians from both sides of the Union expect to benefit from positive results from the economic sectors - agriculture and fisheries in particular.

Earlier, the meeting's chairman, the representative of the Director Policy and Planning Department from the Mainland's Ministry of Agriculture, Irene Lucas said the meeting will dwell on several resolutions, including that of cooperation in research, training and issuance of copyrights to innovators.

Other resolutions include provision of joint training to agricultural experts on the crops pests control.

Another resolution includes extending cooperation in the areas of irrigation, farming

equipment, joint policy and planning and crops development. Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) Managing Director Japhet Justine said experts from the Zanzibar Agriculture ministry wanted to know the procedure in accessing loans for agricultural development.

He said TADB is a public institution for all Tanzanians and it is strategic for the development of the sector, and has been in close relationship with the Zanzibar government, whereas in 2019 it provided 6.6bn/- in loans in support of purchase of cloves from farmers before being exported. He said the bank was ready to provide loans towards all agricultural projects that are seen to economically empower Tanzanians, hence, he said all Tanzanians were welcome.

## Govt working on possibility of setting uniform fee for relaying water in rural areas - Majaliwa

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa said yesterday that the government is conducting an assessment on the possibility of setting a uniform water connection fee in rural areas.

This follows successful implementation of the rural electrifying programme under the Rural Energy Authority (REA) whereas the government has set a 27,000/- power connection fee as a uniform cost per a household.

"The ministry of water is working on it and upon completion of the assessment, it will issue an official communication to announce the cost of connecting water services to all the households in the country," said Premier Majaliwa as he was responding to a question from Vunjo legislator, Dr Charles Kimeji (CCM) on the need for the government to cut the cost of connecting water services in rural areas.

The lawmaker claimed that in some parts of the country, the cost of connecting water stands at between 300,000/- and 600,000/-

per household, the amount which is unaffordable to most of the rural dwellers.

Dr Kimeji added: "Due to the high cost of connecting services to rural areas, most villagers have decided to use water from other sources including streams."

He asked for the possibility of the government, through the ministry of Water and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) to apply the modality used by REA in lowering the cost of connecting the service at the uniform charges in all villages.

Reacting, the Premier

**Despite the challenge, the government through water authorities has set the normal charges for all people to access water service**

acknowledged being aware of the variance in the cost of connecting water infrastructure at households, assuring legislators that the ministry of water is working on it.

Majaliwa reiterated the government commitment to continue working to increase the supply and accessibility of the precious liquid across the country. He however admitted that there are challenges in availability of reliable water sources in most parts of the country.

"Despite the challenge, the government through water authorities has set the normal charges for all people to access water service. There are also challenges on the distance from the source to the final consumer, this contributes to the variance in the cost of connecting water to the villagers," elaborated the Premier adding to address the shortage, the government is constructing water centres for the villagers to access the service at once.

He said the established water centres reduce the cost of the precious liquid.

## President Mwinyi hails MKURABITA efforts in formalising land, property

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi has hailed efforts by the Property and Business Formalisation Programme (MKURABITA) in formalising land and properties, something which stimulates economic development in the country.

Dr Mwinyi vowed that his government will continue supporting the programme which includes setting aside enough budgets to facilitate smooth implementation of its projects.

In his meeting with the Mkurabita's leadership committee at the Zanzibar's State House, Dr Mwinyi said the government's zeal is to see vulnerable people formalizing their properties and businesses so as to fight poverty.

According to Dr Mwinyi, because what Mkurabita is doing is part of the government's priorities, facilitating the programme with enough budgets was vital.

"Mkurabita has been doing a fruitful job which transforms

lives of vulnerable communities, I have been informed that the programme has spent 440.1m/- to implement various initiatives which include addressing several land conflicts in the Isles," he said.

"The issue of customary land title deeds are very important and has proved positively in supporting people to access capital and loans," he said.

Dr Mwinyi also hailed the establishment of inclusive centres saying that this would support local and foreigner investors to access services easily.

Earlier, vice chairman of the MKURABITA board Immaculata Senje said that the visit in Zanzibar meant to oversee MKURABITA's projects and especially those which are expected to be implemented in this fiscal year.

"While here, we have visited several projects and communities, launched an inclusive centre as well as distributing customary land title deeds and this has received a positive response from the public," he added.

Senje said that the launched inclusive business centres is to facilitate easy formalization of businesses and properties.

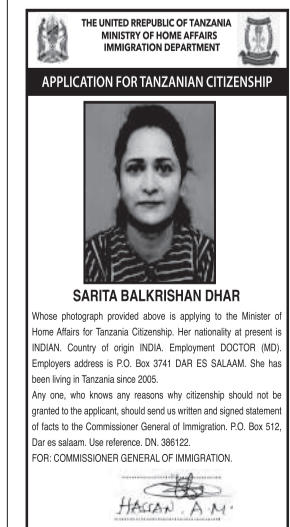
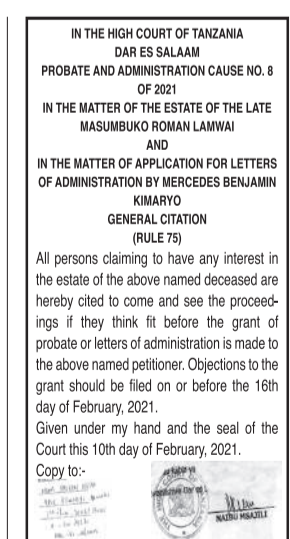
Dr Seraphia Mgembe, Mkurabita coordinator commended president Mwinyi for assuring them with intensive support from the government so as to facilitate implementations of the programme's plans.

Dr Mgembe also commended Zanzibaris for recognizing the importance of Mkurabita calling them to utilize fully all opportunities brought by the programme.

Launched in October 2004, Mkurabita seeks to establish an integrated system of property rights and business rules as a basis of transition of the urban, peri-urban and rural areas into a market that enables Tanzanians to have equal opportunities in using their assets to access credit services.

Mkurabita targets property and business owners in the informal sector, whose entry into the formal market economy is assumed

to enhance their opportunities by using their assets to access capital and thus improve national economic growth and reduce individual household poverty.



## Request for Quotation

RFQ Title: **Consultancy Opportunity**  
 RFQ number: 2020-K02-01  
 Date of Solicitation: 12th February 2021  
 Closing Date: Friday 26th February 2021, 11:00am (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania)  
 Submission Date and time: 26th February 2021  
 Questions and Clarifications Due by 22nd February 2021  
 Estimated Delivery/ Performance Date: 12th April 2021.

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

Pact Tanzania through the USAID Kizazi Kipya Project has been providing vocational scholarships and business start-up kits to targeted out-of-school OVC adolescents boys and girls ages 15-19 years as a second chance to acquiring new skills/knowledge to engage in productive income generating activities. For HIV negative OVC, this support has prevented and protected adolescents from engaging in behaviors and activities that will put them at risk of acquiring HIV. For Children Living with HIV (CLHIV), this support has provided OVC with opportunities to become more economically resilient and empowered to better achieve long-term Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) adherence and viral suppression.

During the 2018's and 2019's Financial Year (FY), Pact supported 8,385 OVC (2,091 male, 6,294 female) with vocational scholarships in 49 councils (those implements the DREAMS and non-DREAMS interventions). Upon completion of vocational courses, a total of 7,926 business start-up kits were procured and distributed to OVC. In FY20, six months after OVC received start-up kits, Pact administered Vocational Training Follow up Surveys to assess OVC's engagement in income generating activities and their overall economic well-being.

This Consultancy is meant to support USAID Kizazi Kipya project to document the vocational scholarship and livelihood service model for out of school OVC boys and girls age 15-19 including the approaches, services provided, best practices, lesson learned and show whether the support has prevented and protected adolescents from engaging in behaviors and activities that will put them at risk of acquiring HIV.

### Objective of the assignment

The overall objective of this assignment is to document vocational scholarship and livelihood service model used to provide support to out of school adolescent OVC boys and girls age 15-19 in 4 regions- Dar es salaam, Shinyanga, Kagera, Mbeya. The aim of this is to capture and share practices and experiences to build collective knowledge and inform best practices.

- Interested candidates should request for the full Terms of Reference through email to procurementTZ@pactworld.org before 22nd February 2021.

Interested, eligible candidate should deliver their proposal to:

**The Tender Committee**  
**Pact Tanzania**  
**74 Uporoto Street, Victoria**  
**P. O. Box 6348, Dar es salaam, Tanzania**  
**Or email procurementTZ@pactworld.org**

All proposals must be enclosed in a plain sealed envelope. The following information is required in your proposal. The deadline is 11am EAT Friday 26th February 2020.

1	Quoted price in for each item or service specified in <b>Tanzanian Shillings</b> . This price should be inclusive of delivery, and taxes, if applicable
2	Validity period of offer (Offer should be valid for at least 45 days).
3	Credit Payment Term: Pact is preferable payment with 1-month credit, after delivery of goods.
4	Indicate of delivery duration in weeks to complete the task after PO issue.
5	Your quotation must be on official letter head with authorized signature and stamp.
6	Specifications of the required service as per the ToR is fully addressed.

### Please note:

- Late or incomplete bids will not be accepted.
- The quote that complies with all the specifications/requirements and offers the lowest price, as well as all other evaluation criteria indicated in the TOR, shall be selected.
- Pact may cancel solicitation and not award.
- Pact may reject any or all responses received.
- Issuance of request for quotes does not constitute a contract commitment by Pact.
- Pact reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow the solicitation instructions.
- Pact reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.
- Pact will be contacting all offerors to confirm contact person, address and that the proposal was submitted for this solicitation.



# TPDC delegation tours IPP media outlets



The Guardian managing editor Wallace Mauggo (R) takes a Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation delegation led by managing director Dr James Mataragio (L) through the basics of newspaper production when the team made a familiarisation visit to IPP media outlets in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Looking on is TPDC director of finance and administration George Seni. Photos: Correspondent Miraji Msala



The Guardian Ltd printing manager Balasubramaniyan Venkadachalam (R) briefs the TPDC delegation on operations at the publishing firm's printing unit. Looking on (C, foreground) is IPP director Joyce Luhanga, who took the visitors around.



East Africa Radio programme producer Irene Tillya (R) explains to the TPDC visitors how radio programmes are aired.



ITV channel director Pius Paul (L) briefs the visitors on the airing of TV news bulletins.



Capital Radio deputy director Abdallah Mwaipaya (R) explains to the TPDC delegation how the station works.



ITV/Radio One managing director Joyce Mhaviile (2nd-L) briefs the TPDC visitors on elaborates on the operations of the twin outlets. Left is ITV channel director Pius Paul.



Radio One and Capital Radio director Deo Rweyunga (L) listens as Dr Mataragio (C) makes a remark during the tour.



IPP director Joyce Luhanga leads the TPDC visitors from The Guardian Ltd offices ready for a tour of IPP electronic media outlets.





Tourists from various countries enjoy the sea breeze from the comfort of a boat while heading for one of Zanzibar's historical sites yesterday. Photo: Selemani Mpochi

## Govt to construct markets at border posts

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government has embarked on construction of markets at various border posts to facilitate trade with neighboring countries and guarantee market for farmers' crops.

The facilities currently constructed at the Hororo border post in Kilimanjaro Region, Kagunga in Kigoma Region and the 3.5bn/- market at Nyakanazi in Kagera Region will also include zonal markets.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa made the statement in the National Assembly adding the market at Kagunga in Kigoma

Region will facilitate trade between Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda while the Nyakanazi market will ease trading activities between Tanzania, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

He said the government is now consulting officials in Zambia and DRC for the countries to start purchasing agricultural crops produced in Rukwa Region.

PM Majaliwa was responding to a question from Special Seats MP, Neema Lugakingira (CCM) who raised concerns over lack of markets for agricultural crops. She asked government plans to ensure availability of markets for

farmer's crops.

In his response, the Premier insisted that efforts are done to market Tanzania's agricultural crops abroad through embassies. He said that each of the embassies have been tasked to promote the agricultural crops and look for markets.

"We have been using our embassies to promote our crops; the strategy has been successful as many crops are now exported to various countries," said the prime minister.

He informed that other strategies to ensure market and good prices for the crops includes introduction of the warehouse

receipt system which is now applicable for different crops.

The warehouse receipt system requires farmers to deliver their crops to primary cooperative societies whereas the warehouse operators accept the deposit of crops in the warehouses and provide a receipt to the farmers.

Under the system, farmers receive part of the payments through bank financing based on the receipts.

"Farmers have been getting the best prices through the warehouse receipt system," he said adding that measures are taken to improve the market systems.

## Needy households to access health services more easily

By Guardian Reporter

SELEMANI Jafo, minister of State, President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) has launched a new initiative meant to distribute improved Community Health Fund (iCHF)/ Tiba kwa Kadi (iTIKA) cards to vulnerable households.

The programme will be implemented in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), through their KizaziKipya ("New Generation") project, which supports orphans and vulnerable children.

Speaking during the launching event, minister Jafo extended his gratitude to the United States government through PEPFAR/USAID for the support vowing that the government of Tanzania will continue to work hand-in-hand with partners to ensure marginalized groups access quality health services where and when they need it most.

He said that iCHF/iTIKA health insurance cards cover the costs of general health services, including child health services.

He noted that the USAID KizaziKipya project has subsidized the first year of premiums worth a total of 4.7 billion Tanzanian shillings (\$2 million USD).

"To ensure that these vulnerable populations can pay for the modest premiums in subsequent years, USAID KizaziKipya helps these households increase their income by supporting them to set up small businesses and engage with savings and lending groups," he said.

The USAID KizaziKipya will use its existing networks to provide iCHF/iTIKA cards to nearly 93,000 vulnerable households with a total reach of over 360,000 people.

The supported households come from 85 councils across 25 regions in Tanzania. Primary beneficiaries from this service include those with children living with HIV, child-headed households, households with elderly and chronically ill caregivers, and extremely poor households unable to meet the basic needs of their families.

USAID Mission Director, Andy Karas, urged the government to continue investing in the health sector to improve health services for marginalized populations.

"Investing in healthcare is a strategic decision to promote inclusive economic growth. When people have access to quality healthcare and education, they live healthier and more productive lives," he said.

The Mission Director also commented on PEPFAR's collaboration with Tanzania in their efforts to achieve HIV epidemic control. "For total HIV epidemic control, we will continue to strengthen our partnerships with the Government of Tanzania and civil society to advance sustainable, local solutions to ensure that the most vulnerable Tanzanians can access quality healthcare."



**Investing in healthcare is a strategic decision to promote inclusive economic growth. When people have access to quality healthcare and education, they live healthier and more productive lives**

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government is implementing a new strategy to promote the use of Kiswahili globally by establishing learning centres at foreign missions, Prime Minister Kassim Mjajiwa said yesterday.

"We have directed all our embassies to establish Kiswahili learning centres which will be used to teach the language in specific countries. This will also provide chances for Tanzanians to secure jobs as trainers," the Premier told the National Assembly.

PM Majaliwa added that Kiswahili language has been growing with various international broadcasters airing their radio and television programmes in Kiswahili language. He said that currently, there are many Kiswahili speakers in the United States, United Kingdom and Germany.

Majaliwa said the government has been taking measures to ensure Kiswahili is spoken

## Govt establishing Kiswahili training centres at embassies

regionally whereas it has successfully managed to make it the official language of the East African Community (EAC) as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

He said President John Magufuli has been touting for adoption of the language as the SADC fourth official language alongside English, French and Portuguese. Kiswahili is an official language of the African Union (AU).

According to the country's constitution, Kiswahili is the national language spoken by all the existing tribes and is currently the most spoken language in Africa, with over 140 million speakers.

During the Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government in August 2019 in Dar es Salaam, the leaders agreed that Kiswahili would be adopted at the level of council and summit, first as a

language for oral communication, before eventually being adopted for written official communication within SADC.

Opening the SADC 39th Heads of State and Government summit at the Julius Nyerere International Center, President John Magufuli appealed to the leaders to fast track the adoption of Kiswahili to be among the four official languages of the regional body.

The Premier was responding to a question from Kawe Member of Parliament, Joseph Gwajima (CCM) who wanted to know the government strategies to promote Kiswahili which is currently among the ten most spoken languages in Africa.

"Kiswahili is the second language spoken by many people in the continent, what are the government strategies to ensure it continues to grow and spoken by many people in the world," questioned the legislator.



Prof Elisante ole Gabriel (L), Permanent Secretary of Livestock and Fisheries ministry, has a word in Dodoma on Tuesday with herders attending a meeting on ways to promote the livestock sector. Photo: Correspondent Mbaraka Kambona



### Job Opportunities (2 positions; Moshi)

Amani Children's Home, Centre for Street Children, is seeking two talented, high-performing staff to support all international fundraising and communications efforts for this established and growing nonprofit, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

Amani is committed to reducing the number of children living on the streets in Tanzania by providing a nurturing place for homeless children to heal, grow, and learn. Amani also reunites children with their relatives when possible and equips their families with the tools they need to be self-sustainable. Amani is a community-based nonprofit that supports hundreds of children around Tanzania, and a national leader in promoting children's rights.

#### Position 1: Grants' Manager | Grant Reports Writer

We're looking for a Grants Manager & Reports/Proposals Writer who will monitor all of Amani's grants, write engaging & inspiring reports & proposals and ensure these reports & proposals are delivered on time.

#### Major Duties:

- Manage the grant cycles for 12-20 different grants – from prospecting to proposal submission to grant reporting.
- Coordinate continuous data collecting/tracking (narrative, statistics, and financial) for various grant reports.
- Write and submit accurate, well-written, inspiring narrative & financial reports for all existing grants.
- Work together with the ED to write equally accurate, well-written and inspiring narrative & financial grant proposals.

#### Skills & Qualifications:

- Ability to juggle multiple tasks and follow up with multiple people.
- Ability to create beautiful documents in Word, Excel and Canva.
- Good understanding of financial budget and expense reports for donor reporting.
- Native-level English fluency, with strong writing, editing and presentation skills.
- An intermediate-level grasp of Swahili is a strong advantage.

#### Education & Experience:

- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a relevant field (such as English, journalism, media, public relations, communications or related).
- A minimum of 2 years experience in professional grant/report writing and non-profit fundraising OR a minimum of 4 years comparable and transferable skills from previous roles.
- A proven, professional track record of successful fundraising / grant writing.

For immediate consideration, please email your resume and cover letter to [careers@amanikids.org](mailto:careers@amanikids.org), with the subject line: Grants Manager. The position will remain open until filled.

#### Position 2: Senior Communications Officer | Content Creator

We're looking for a Content Creator who will create a steady supply of photo, video and written material for Amani to use for social media, public relations and fundraising purposes. This role will also involve communications with donors and visitors as well as documentation of Amani's work in the streets and locations we serve.

#### Major Duties:

- Shoot and edit high-quality photos and videos of Amani's children, youth and programmes, in the city, in family homes and in the streets (including at night).
- Gather and write inspiring stories about the children we serve and any milestone achievements or program updates in Amani
- Write professional press releases about program events and milestones to make Amani better-known in local and international media.
- Maintain these stories, write-ups, photos and videos in an organized digital library.
- Repurpose or develop new stories, write-ups, photos and videos for use in Amani's blogs, newsletters, emails, social media, reports, proposals and website.
- Send out Thank-You letters and emails twice a month to people who donate.
- Respond to email queries from lower/mid-end Amani supporters.
- Welcome visitors and visiting groups to Amani and provide them a tour of the Children's Home.

#### Skills & Qualifications:

- Experience in using photo and video editing & design software.
- Experience in managing and creating content for social media, specifically Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.
- Excellent level of written and spoken English, with storytelling skills being a strong plus.
- An intermediate-level grasp of Swahili is a strong advantage.

#### Education & Experience:

- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in a relevant field (preferably in Communications, Journalism, Creative Writing, Public Relations, etc.).
- At least 3 years experience in a (non-profit) communications role.

For immediate consideration, please email your resume and cover letter to [careers@amanikids.org](mailto:careers@amanikids.org), with the subject line: Senior Communications Officer. The position will remain open until filled.



## Don't despair, get ready for upcoming elections, Zanzibar women told

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR women who lost last year's general election should not despair and instead have been asked not to give up and prepare for the upcoming 2025 elections.

The call was made here yesterday at the meeting that involved some of the participants, who are taking part in the 'Male Change Agent' project, which is being implemented by Tamwa-Zanzibar, with the support from UN Women. The project is aimed at encouraging Zanzibar women to actively participate in decision-making bodies.

One of the participants from Unguja North Region, Hassan Jani said some people in the community are not giving priority to women and leadership and that they need to be transformed so that they can provide more opportunities and support women.

He said despite the hard work of encouraging women to take part in the last year's election, many women have failed to achieve their goals of becoming leaders due to lack of solidarity in the community, noting: "Solidarity is the main way that would uplift all women candidates."

He further said the issue of solidarity and peace in various areas will enable more women to be accepted and empowered while continuing to educate the community more to see the importance of supporting women.

In another development, he said that while many areas are still waiting for the appointment of new regional commissioners, they have a responsibility to look into the issue and the importance

of women's participation in the appointment of new posts.

He said that despite the existence of a movement to empower women in leadership positions, still some community members have little understanding and feel women should not be leaders.

Another participant, Almas Mohamed Ally, said there was a need to influence people at the higher levels of the parties, which make decisions to approve candidates. He also urged political parties to ensure that women are given priorities when it comes to the election so as to increase the number of the group in decision-making bodies.

For her part, Ukhty Amina Salum Khalfan from the ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar said that there are some people in the community including clerics, who still have an attitude that oppresses women when it comes to leadership, something that needs to be changed.



**Solidarity is the main way that would uplift all women candidates**



Umyy Mwalimu, Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and the Environment), speaks at a seminar on international agreements for members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industries, Trade and the Environment on International Agreements held in Dodoma city yesterday. She is with her deputy, Mwita Waitara (L), and committee chairman David Kihenzile. Photo: VPO

By Guardian Correspondent

TANZANIA Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) has urged Tanzanians to actively participate in the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM), saying that only concerted efforts can achieve the efforts to end the ferocity.

Hellen Urio, TGNP programmes coordinator made the call in Dar es Salaam during a special campaign to fight FGM held at Kitunda and Kivule wards.

"Gender-Based Violence (GBV) including FGM remains one of the most serious human rights violations in the country which calls for determined efforts to curb it. So everyone in a society has a role to do to ensure that we eradicate this challenge," Urio said.

She said that the TGNP's campaigns are being organized

## TGNP calls for concerted efforts to put end to FGM

as part of the commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation which is observed annually on February 6.

Urio said that FGM is done within societies, a station that calls for strong support from the society themselves so as to eliminate the harmful practice which includes unearthing all culprits behind it.

"The public can report FGM practices to local government offices, paralegals, gender desks and several other public offices, it is high time now for the society to wake up and fight with all their

efforts these harmful practices which have been ruining lives and dreams of girls," she said.

Pastor Joseph Mapunda of Calvary Assemblies of God (CAG) said that even the bible strongly condemns all practices that abuse people's dignity.

"FGM is against what God has commanded, only men are the ones who have been allowed to be circumcised and not females, so those who are implementing this are offending the God," Pastor Mapunda said.

Abdi Mahanyu, secretary of the Muslim Council of Tanzania (Bakwata) in Kipunguni said that

the culprits should be told that what they are doing is against God's creation.

One of the elders at Kivule, Joseph Gasaya said that FGM is an outdated and harmful practice that should be condemned by all.

"The World has changed a lot; these practices were implemented several years ago when the majority of people had no idea on the impacts of the violence, but now everyone knows the huge impacts brought by FGM, so we should increase awareness to ensure that our girls live freely to achieve their dreams," he said.



Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project engineer Dismas Ngoche from the Tanzania Electric Supply Company Ltd (Tanesco) briefs journalists based in Iringa Region who visited the site of the project earlier this week. Photo: Friday Simbaya

## Insurance firm launches 'smart' health system for better services

By Guardian Reporter

AAR Insurance Tanzania Limited has officially launched the 'smart health system', an advanced medical insurance system which improves client's services and its operations, during the event which was held yesterday in Dar es Salaam.

The launching event attended by brokers was used as a platform to provide more information on the functionalities and benefits of the system which was introduced in 2020.

AAR Insurance's Chief Operating Officer, Dr Emmanuel Bwana said that the company utilizes the advancement of technology to ensure that their clients are efficiently and conveniently provided with the best health services.

"This step is part of our endless contribution in health sector to support efforts by the government and other stakeholders in ensuring accessibility of quality health insurance to every citizen," he said.

"Smart health system enables sales agents and brokers to sale insurance products and issues quotations on the real time environment while sitting in front of the client. Therefore, there will

be no more need for the agent or broker to call back AAR contact person to get a quote," he added.

Dr Bwana said that with the help of the system, clients can access an integrated smart health application and get various information which include claim history and benefits available, but not limited to service providers which he or she can access.

One of the insurance broker, Peter Sekidia commended AAR Insurance for introducing the system which he said will increase efficiency in dealing with clients, because its features enable quick handling of service providers claims, quick verification of members from the providers, member reimbursement as well as quick quotation generations.

"This event made me see a brighter day of the health sector, everything is now simplified, and every health stakeholder will enjoy the benefits of the system. We commend AAR Insurance for introducing this system. Surely, it will improve lives of many people in the country and worldwide," he said.

The step by AAR insurance company to introduce smart health system reflects the world's effort to having a fully functioning eHealth system.

## JUMAZA files case against Z'bar alcoholic drinks' control board

By Guardian Correspondent, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR Council of Imams (JUMAZA) has decided to file a court case against Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board following the latter's issuance of licences to eight firms to import alcoholic drinks instead of three as provided for under the 2020 law on alcoholic drinks.

Addressing reporters here yesterday, the community's

advocate from Mohas Law and Advocates Chamber, Omar Sheha Omar said the intention for petition has been submitted to the Chief Secretary and the Zanzibar Attorney General on February 8 this year.

He said JUMAZA has decided to file the case following violation of Sections 28(k) and 33(I) of the Zanzibar Alcohol Control Act (No 9 of 2020).

"Licenses for the import of alcoholics drinks will be given to

not more than three importers on laid down conditions, including the importer must be a Zanzibari, must be a tax payer, must have a warehouse and vehicle(s) for distribution," he said, quoting the relevant legislation enacted last year.

He said the aim to revoke the previous 1928 law (Cap 163) and enact a new law was a result of many complaints from the people.

He said the Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory

Board has failed to respect Section 28(k) of the Act that has set a condition for bars to be more than 1,000 metres away from areas with basic social services including schools, health centres, mosques, churches, madrassas markets or bus stands.

"The case will be filed under a certificate of urgency due to its importance after having been satisfied that the Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board violated the

parent Act for licensing eight alcoholic drinks importers instead of three," the advocate.

He said all the evidence has already been gathered including the identification of the licensed importers, including the bars that have been licensed, some of which close to houses of worship and schools.

For their part some members of the House of Representatives who participated in enacting the legislation said they were

depressed by the decision of the Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board that violated the aims in the enactment of the law.

However, the Chairman of the Zanzibar Alcoholic Drinks Control and Advisory Board Abdulrazak Abdulkadir said they decided to place the law aside for the interest of government revenues, by increasing the number of alcoholic drinks importers from three to eight.





National Electoral Commission Director of Elections Dr Wilson Mahera (L) and Tanzania's Ambassador to the United States, Wilson Masilingi, engaged in talks at the commission's offices in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: NEC

## East African countries called on to improve infrastructure to hasten cross-border trade

By Guardian Reporter

THE East African Business Council (EABC), a private sector investment lobby on Wednesday called for prioritisation of infrastructure development at border posts to facilitate seamless flow of goods and movement of persons as cross border business rebounds.

Peter Mathuki, CEO of EABC, particularly stressed the improvement of the infrastructure at Kenya's Busia One-Stop Border Post via the construction of a four-lane road to ease cargo clearance.

"The first lane should be to transport general cargo. The second lane to be used by passengers. The third can be for fresh produce and the fourth for hazardous products," Mathuki said in a statement.

The EABC official said poor infrastructure continues to be a huge trade barrier in East Africa and a major constraint to regional integration and development.

Mathuki who had visited the Busia One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) urged revenue authorities to install cargo scanners at border points to facilitate trade.

He said the OSBP is efficiently operating with only a kilometer truck traffic holding an average of 55 trucks.

He said nearly 1,000 trucks were moving goods through the border on weekdays with the number increasing to 2,000 trucks on weekends and reiterated the need for parking spaces to be built for cargo trucks near the Busia OSBP.

In October 2020, truck traffic snarl-up to the Busia border exceeded 15 kilometers, disrupting cross-border trade and escalating the cost of doing

business.

Mathuki said insufficient parking space for cargo trucks along the northern transport corridor trunk routes still poses a safety challenge for the traders and border communities.

According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), the East Africa region's growth is projected to recover to 3.7 percent in the baseline scenario and 2.8 percent in the worst-case scenario this year, under the assumption that COVID-19 would be contained in the short-to-medium term.

## Malaria fight a success despite Covid-19 crisis

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Union (AU) yesterday said some progress has been made in responding to malaria amidst the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Speaking at the visual launch of the 2020 Zero Malaria Starts with Me Campaign African Union Malaria Progress Report, chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta said despite COVID-19 severely impacted access to essential malaria services African countries averted a major malaria upsurge.

According to President Kenyatta, the continent ensured that over 90 percent of planned net distribution campaigns went ahead with COVID safety measures in place during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While we are now in the second wave of the pandemic, I am delighted to say that through the strongest in-country leadership, this predicted doubling in malaria deaths was averted," said President Kenyatta.

He said more children than ever before were reached with preventive antimalarial medicines in areas of highly seasonal transmission whilst following COVID-19 protocols.

Amira El Fadiel, the Commissioner for Social Affairs at the AU Commission said 'While the targets in the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030 are bold and ambitious, there is need to continue the big push for new funding initiatives with a focus on domestic financing, increased roles for the private sector, invest in new innovations and tools and above all maintain the political commitment, shared responsibility and global

solidarity'

During the meeting President Kenyatta launched the ALMA Youth Army Strategy that puts young people at the centre of the malaria fight in line with continental commitments including the African Youth Charter and the AU Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth.

Beating malaria remains a major public health challenge in Africa. During the COVID-19 pandemic African governments mounted effective responses that ensured access to malaria services which averted many thousands of deaths on the continent.

The response to COVID-19 has set a challenge, to apply the same vigour, in the fight against malaria, for Africa to accelerate the elimination of malaria by 2030.



**While we are now in the second wave of the pandemic, I am delighted to say that through the strongest in-country leadership, this predicted doubling in malaria deaths was averted**

By Special Correspondent

THE Tigray conflict could have been prevented if the continent acted on early signs, according to a report by the African Union released to mark the end of the four-year term of commission chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and his eight departmental commissioners.

The report titled, 'Taking Stock, Charting the Future' is an accountability statement by the team elected into office in February 2017. The team said it helped reach peace deals in Sudan, South Sudan and supported rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which led to resumption of ties in 2019.

But, the officials said the continental body urgently needs to upgrade its early warning system, which it argues will help stop the fighting before it begins.

"The recent conflict in Ethiopia brings to the fore the need for member states

## AU's conflict warning system needs urgent upgrade - report

and the AU to invest in early warning and early response systems as well as conflict prevention efforts to avert humanitarian disasters," said the report launched ahead of the AU elections.

The report said the Tigray conflict reaffirms "the need to invest in structural conflict prevention, political dialogue, mediation and post conflict reconstruction and development."

The report is a bold statement for the AU to suggest dialogue and mediation should have been used in Tigray, something the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed rejected, terming it instead as a law enforcement operation.


Since November 3, Ethiopia has

pursued the Tigray People's Liberation Front, a one-time ruling party in Ethiopia, which Addis Ababa now accuses of being a "criminal clique." In November, PM Abiy ordered a military response to the TPLF after they reportedly attacked a northern command of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces.

Last week on Thursday, the Ethiopian Attorney-General said the TPLF had committed "high treason, crime against constitutional order and terrorism." In an update on the Tigray operation, the Ethiopian AG said security agencies had arrested 349 suspects, 253 of whom were either retired or serving ENDF soldiers, as well as another 96 TPLF leaders.



Marco Munga, councillor for Naberera ward in Simanjiro District, addresses Okutu residents on Wednesday in connection with a land dispute in the village. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey



**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

**Open to Tanzania Nationals Only**

**Official Job Title:** Programme Specialist, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights  
**Grade:** NOC  
**Duty Station:** Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania  
**Full/Part time:** Full-time  
**Post Type:** Fixed Term Appointment  
**Duration:** One year fixed term initially, renewable subject to satisfactory performance and available funding  
**Closing Date:** 28 February 2021

**Organizational Setting**

**The Position**  
 The Programme Specialist post is located in Dodoma, Tanzania; under the guidance of the UNFPA Deputy Representative and the direct supervision of the UNFPA Assistant Representative who provides overall strategic direction. S/He is the Programme Specialist for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, including HIV, both in the development and humanitarian context; and will join a UNFPA team working in support of the Country Office Programme (2016/17-2021/22) in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. The Programme Specialist works in an integrated, coordinated, and rights-based manner which is fundamental to UNFPA's overall strategy; with the aim to enhance the capacity of the Country Programme to deliver results.

**Qualifications and Experience**

- At least 5 years of professional experience in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, including HIV prevention with significant programme and policy experience.
- Strong skills in policy analysis and demonstrated experience in policy development and programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Strong analytical and results-orientation with proven experience in using results-based management tools.
- Extensive knowledge of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights context and trends, and a thorough understanding of the social, cultural, economic and gender dimensions.
- Familiarity with the UN system and/or experience working with an international organization is an advantage.
- Experience working in collaboration with government, development partners, civil society organizations, private sector, and community-led organizations, in particular on issues related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, including HIV.
- Dedication to United Nations principles and demonstrated ability to work harmoniously within a team.
- Excellent oral, written, presentation and networking skills.
- Proficiency in current Microsoft Office Software Applications.

**Education**

- Post graduate degree in public health, medicine, anthropology, sociology or other related social sciences;

**Languages**  
 Fluency in Kiswahili and English

**How to Apply**  
 Applicants are kindly requested to apply through the online link below by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
[https://erecruit.partneragencies.org/psc/UNDPPIHRE/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRM\\_HRAM\\_HRS\\_CE\\_GBL?Page=HRS\\_C\\_E\\_JOB\\_DTL&Action=A&JobOpeningId=35219&SiteId=1&PostingSeq=1](https://erecruit.partneragencies.org/psc/UNDPPIHRE/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRM_HRAM_HRS_CE_GBL?Page=HRS_C_E_JOB_DTL&Action=A&JobOpeningId=35219&SiteId=1&PostingSeq=1)

UNFPA has established an electronic management system. This allows applicants to create a candidate profile, which can be updated regularly and submitted for more than one vacancy. Download the step-by-step guide to Applying in the E-Recruit System of UNFPA at <http://www.unfpa.org/employment>. Please print out the Guide for your reference during the registration and application process.

Full details of the vacancy and how to be apply can be found on UNFPA Tanzania's website at: <https://tanzania.unfpa.org/en/vacancies/programme-specialist-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>

**Notice:** There is no application, processing or other fee at any stage of the application process. UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV or AIDS and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status

UNFPA reserves the rights to respond only to applicants in whom UNFPA has further interest.



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

## Posts can cross technology roadblock - with new ideas

JUST how to revamp the decades-old Tanzania Posts Corporation (TPC) is a headache that all holders of the portfolio under which it has fallen over the year have had problems sorting out how to treat or cure.

It was in the early days of this century that the postal mode of delivery of letters, packages and other luggage more or less ran out, with scant use of either post office boxes to start with.

In addition, the onset of a free market opened a channel where private couriers had more direct affinity with service demanders in a way that could scarcely be expected in post offices; mass migration ensued to new service providers.

And even then there only was 'carcass' being fought over, namely, the parcels freight business, earlier taken up by 'upcountry' bus operators (from the city of Dar es Salaam and back to the city), and then commercial couriers with whom contracts could be signed for more dependable relationships.

It was a time that offices were retrenching non-essential staff and using a contractual mode of service delivery, as such method was a saving; these specialised firms employed casual labour, not salaried employees.

With all these changes, it became especially difficult to see how Posts as a profession fits into this arrangement.

But authorities either in the posts corporation or in the government have not tired figuring out how to go about it, but there are differences as to how this matter is handled.

There is a danger of going the 'business as usual' way, where there is an employment structure

and a series of officials overseeing each stage of the structure, with no visible link with the amount of work they have to do, or the amount of business they transact per day.

That obviously leads to losses, constant appeals for subsidies, and thus inability to deliver dividends to the Treasury.

This is precisely the sort of operational format that the government finds increasingly difficult to tolerate, for it amounts to setting up a welfare scheme for a certain category of citizens specialised in postal office skills.

That is evidently no way of running a modern economy and amounts to a shambles that those employed won't necessarily see as negative until someone else looks at their books of accounts and annual returns to really appreciate the seriousness of the situation.

That is what the government has lately been doing, and newly appointed Communication and Information Technology minister Dr Faustine Ndigulile has pointedly raised the matter with the TPC Workers Council, issuing clear instructions.

He said that the law governing the corporation is obsolete and not in tune with the current environment, and hence the need for its review and a major overhaul of the corporation.

Meanwhile, as such changes are awaited, there are shuffles of a regulatory character that the minister wants the board and management to carry out. However, chances are that they will hardly be any real changes - unless there is a new set-up in tune with the changes the minister indicated. It is some wait and see game here.

## Freedom fighters' routes are vital African heritage

A PUZZLE is being set up by Tanzania, South Africa and other regional states in the form of a proposal by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and supported by Tanzania - that the world should formally recognise the routes used by freedom fighters as part of world heritage.

We say it is a puzzle because the world or, rather, United Nations institutions recognise freedom around the world and sovereignty though they are not in a position to exalt armed struggles per se.

The reason is that the UN was created to foster peace among nations and the peaceful resolution of conflicts within nations and among nations, including equal rights.

All the same, this particular proposal shows how far Africa and the world have come from the days where Southern Africa liberation movements were seen as terrorist crusaders.

The new US authorities are restoring relations with the UN agency helping Palestinian refugees, who have opted not to be citizens of other countries more than 70 years after Israel was created.

The reason is an intractable character of the Middle East issue, and the whole issue of designating those movements as terrorists or freedom fighters is up to each country to decide, and UN agencies only seek a minimum of consensus.

That minimum is achievement of democratic objectives by peaceful methods, not through warfare.

So there is something of excessive ambition in the

proposal, where the factually valid element is that these routes are a heritage site, for Southern Africa first and Africa by extension, and sympathetic groups around the world especially of African heritage in the vast Diaspora.

But asking UN agencies to take up such relics or artifacts as part of the world body's own heritage opens a can of worms that sours the amicable ties that these countries have with Western countries and UN agencies.

Indeed, the region doesn't need cash from any UN agency to keep these routes known, for instance by raising them to usable road level with light tarmac surface if it is deep in rural areas as in Mtwara (Tanzania) and Cabo Delgado province (in Mozambique) or from any point in Zambia to Botswana and on to Namibia. It would mean a minor infrastructure project and a proper survey if the tracks are lost.

In the wider international setting, such a proposal for wider recognition of these routes can be directed at organisations with the same outlook as the old Non-Aligned Movement - say, the South Centre previously chaired by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

There is also the UN Decolonisation Committee which, by a separate resolution, can make these tracks a heritage site, while in the UN General Assembly or UNESCO the level of dissent might be much higher.

And it is this sort of affinity that would lead to repeated discord between the US and UN organisations, like when the US withdrew from the World Health Organisation on account of a psychological tussle on the origins of Covid-19.

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By Special Correspondent

THE pledges countries made to reduce emissions as part of the 2015 Paris agreement are woefully inadequate, and the world must nearly double its greenhouse gas-cutting goals to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change, according to just-released research findings.

"The commitments are not enough," said Adrian Raftery, a University of Washington statistics professor and co-author of the study, published in Communications Earth & Environment.

The study found that even if countries were to meet their existing pledges, the world has only about a 5 per cent chance to limit the Earth's warming to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over preindustrial levels - a key aim of the international agreement.

Raftery and a colleague calculated that global emissions would need to fall steadily - about 1.8 per cent each year on average - to put the world on a more sustainable course.

He said that, while no two countries are alike, that amounts to overall emissions reductions roughly 80 per cent more ambitious than those pledged under the Paris agreement.

In many respects, the race to slow the Earth's warming is a daunting math problem. Emissions have risen by about 1.4 per cent annually on average over the past decade, not including last year's abnormal plunge driven by the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2019, the world logged the highest emissions ever recorded, at 59 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions, a category that includes not only carbon dioxide but also methane and other climate-warming agents.

If that trend continues unabated, scientists say, the world could begin to cross troubling climate thresholds within the coming decade.

The architects of the Paris accord and numerous world leaders have long underscored that the pledges made in 2015 were not enough to limit warming to acceptable levels. The expectation was always that nations would grow more ambitious with time, and there is evidence that is happening.

But as global emissions have continued to rise, as countries have failed to hit even modest targets and as the consequences of a warming world have become more tangible, the push for leaders to act more aggressively has become only more urgent.

"Time is running out," Niklas Höhne, a German climatologist

## 'Countries must ramp up climate pledges by 80 per cent to realise key Paris target'



and founding partner of NewClimate Institute, said in an interview, warning: "The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be to turn emissions downwards."

Höhne is also part of the team behind Climate Action Tracker, an effort that tracks what cuts countries have vowed to take and how they are, or aren't, living up to those promises.

He said that, with the pledges countries have made, the world is currently on pace to reach 2.6 Celsius (4.7 Fahrenheit) of warming by the end of the century. But, based on measures they have actually put in place, the figure is closer to 2.9 Celsius (5.2 Fahrenheit).

At either level, scientists say humans would be forced to grapple with ever more extreme weather events, crippling heat waves and wildfires, and disastrous levels of flooding that could leave some coastal communities uninhabitable.

The level of ambition necessary varies greatly between countries, Raftery said, noting that the United States would need to increase its existing goal by 38 per cent to do its part towards achieving the 2C goal.

The UK, which has already made progress on its promises, would need a boost of about 17 per cent. Countries such as Brazil, which have seen emissions climb despite promises to scale them back, would meanwhile need bolder action to make up for lost time.

Kelly Levin, a senior associate at the World Resources Institute, noted that the research referred to did not take into account more recent policies that some large countries have adopted or have already begun to implement, and which could put the world on a more hopeful path.

"Given the recent momentum we have seen - for example, from the (US President Joe

Biden administration's recent executive orders, to bans of the internal combustion engine in countries and by companies - their estimates, which are based on recent trends, are likely too conservative," Levin said in an email.

Still, she said, by any calculation there remains "a wide gulf between where emissions are headed today" and where they need to be to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

The findings also echo the ones published late last year by the UN Environment Programme to the effect that nations would need to "roughly triple" their current emissions-cutting pledges to limit the Earth's warming to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius.

To reach the loftier goal of holding warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), that report found, countries would need to increase their targets at least five-fold - a change that would require rapid and profound shifts in how societies travel, produce electricity and eat.

A critical moment will arrive later this year when leaders from around the world assemble in Glasgow for a UN climate conference, which was delayed for a year owing to the coronavirus pandemic.

Presidents and prime ministers around the globe already are facing pressure to show up with more ambitious pledges in hand.

Some of the world's biggest economies have said they intend to do just that. China, the world's largest emitter, has promised to reach zero net carbon emissions by 2060. For its part, the European Union has said that it intends to cut emissions "at least 55 per cent" from 1990 levels by the end of the decade.

More than 125 countries, representing more than two-thirds of global emissions, have either adopted or are discussing

a goal of reaching net zero emissions by the middle of the century, Höhne said.

The US, which is rejoining the Paris accord after President Donald Trump withdrew from it last year, has not yet formally submitted a new pledge. But President Biden has made clear that he will aim to put the world's second-biggest emitter on a path to net zero emissions by 2050, while also decarbonising the electricity sector by 2035.

"President Biden knows that we have to mobilise in unprecedented ways to meet a challenge that is fast accelerating. And he knows that we have limited time to get it under control," US climate envoy John F. Kerry told an online summit last month.

UN Secretary General António Guterres has meanwhile continued to press nations to go further and faster, as the world has already surpassed 1 degree Celsius of warming.

"The drive for net zero emissions must become the new normal for everyone, everywhere," Guterres said in a speech on Monday, adding: "At the same time, all commitments to net zero must be underpinned by clear and credible plans to achieve them. Words are not enough."

Raftery said that while the findings of the study might initially seem discouraging, he sees glimmers of optimism: "Major countries are promising bold action, markets are moving away from fossil fuels, businesses are paying attention to climate concerns and upcoming stimulus funding could prioritise greener investments."

"I'm a bit surprised in a way to see it's not as hopeless as I would have felt three years ago. It's a heavy lift, but it's not impossible," he said of the changes needed to alter the world's course.



# My end of mandate reflections – AU youth envoy

By Aya Chebbi

It has been an honour to serve Africa's youth as the first African Union (AU) Special Envoy on Youth for the past two years and to engage thousands of youth from around the continent and the diaspora.

It has been an honour - in the process - to visit countless cities and communities to learn from brave and passionate young people, listen to their stories of agency and hope and explore how the AU can better support their crucial work.

These are young people that I shared a cup of tea with at the many youth engagements: we cried together at the struggles we went through, we laughed and danced together, we shaped the Office of the Youth Envoy (OYE) into what it has become today, by "Shaking Things Up".

In the two years of our term, my team and I have demonstrated that young people are up to the challenge. Looking back to the Banjul+10 meeting in the Gambia, where the idea of a Youth Envoy was first broached, a lot has since happened.

We have seen the AU evolve because of growing numbers of young people within its structures using the arts, technology and advocacy to advance the development agenda.

The 2019/2020 Action Plan, which was the result of six months of consultations with young people, guided our work throughout the mandate. During our tenure, we built collaborations with over 170 partners and elevated the African youth agenda by launching a number of national, regional and global initiatives.

In 2020, when many were still trying to comprehend the outbreak of Covid-19, at OYE, we immediately adopted the 'new normal'. With young people, we mobilised to ensure mainstreaming of the youth agenda in various AU member states, ensuring that the activities, missions, consultations and Intergenerational Dialogues continued.

I look back on two years of important advances, but I would like to share ten key milestones.

One: In the last two years, starting from within the (AU) commission, we solidly anchored youth platforms in the different departments - notably, the Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors and African Youth Ambassadors for Peace.

We worked with various AUC departments, directorates and organs engaging all commissioners to champion the youth agenda in joint advocacy efforts - including on ending female genital mutilation and early child marriage as well as putting youth central to the African Free Trade Area (AFTA), Free movement protocol, Digital Transformation, Diaspora engagement, to mention a few.

Two: In an effort to bring the AU closer to the grassroots, together with the Youth Advisory Council, we undertook 73 missions to 35 AU member states and global platforms and we reached over 80,000 youth through town halls, meetings and consultations and over 160 government officials - including in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Morocco, Namibia, Côte D'Ivoire, Eritrea, Uganda, Liberia, Chad, Egypt, Kenya and Mauritania.

During the recent Africa Youth Day (November 1) com-



memoration, I also joined the young peacebuilders of South Sudan's Rumbek community at the Weapons Collection Site where over 1000 guns were collected in voluntary disarmament.

Prior to this visit, I had also spent a day with displaced youth at POC 3 Equatorial State in the South Sudanese capital Juba, where we discussed youth engagement in that country's revitalisation and peace process.

Three: In my role as the AU Youth Envoy, I used every platform within reach to bridge the generation gap and bring youth to the table - and it is working! We hope OYE will be remembered for building the foundation for "Intergenerational Co-leadership" as an approach to the reforming of decision-making and prevent emerging conflicts.

We consistently advocated for collaborative leadership between generations in governments and regional structures. This led to an increase in youth participation in member states' delegations at the AU Summit in 2020, and an increase in the number of youths occupying ministerial portfolios and parliamentary seats in Chad, Namibia, Sudan,

South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Angola, among other countries.

We institutionalised intergenerational co-leadership through the organisation of 100 intergenerational dialogues with diverse stakeholders, including Global Peace, and brought over 150,000 African youths to the table with over 800 Elders offline while reaching 14.9 million people through #100IGD online.

In the same vein, we reinvigorated conversations on public policies on youth and particularly reforms related to African youth in public service. This led to the publication of the "Greater Inclusion of African Youth in Public Service and Governance" report in partnership with the African Leadership Institute - which additionally resulted in the development of a network of African Youth in Public Service.

Four: Through various briefings, consultations and advocacy efforts, the OYE played an instrumental role in advancing the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda and contributed to policy outcomes.

I briefed the United Nations Security

Council in 2019 and 2020 as well as the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Briefing in 2019 and 2020, amplifying refugee voices and demanding support for young peacebuilders.

At the AU PSC, the past two years brought tremendous advancements in the YPS agenda, culminating in the Adoption of the premier Continental Framework on Youth Peace and Security.

In addition, the Youth Silencing the Guns campaign has become the AU's main platform for rallying youth on the theme of the year - which increased youth agency in Silencing the Guns.

Through support from partners, we launched the Youth Silencing the Guns Awards with a \$20,000 grant, as a platform to recognise the exceptional work of youth organisations across the continent.

It's no surprise that the #ShutItAlDown movement emerged as one of our winners, their incredible mass mobilisation to highlight sexual violence in Namibia standing as a solid testament to youth power.

We also convened six Regional Silencing The Guns Intergenerational Dialogues with over 1,800 participants, which resulted in Youth Silencing the Guns Declaration.

In order to highlight the pivotal role women played in the peace agenda, we trained 38 young African women and equipped them with tools and knowledge on peace, security and international instruments through the Fellowship on Silencing the Guns.

We are positive that these steps have moved us closer to the full integration and inclusion of young people in YPS. However, further financial investment in youth-led peacebuilding and development of National Action Plans on YPS are now the next crucial steps.

Five: We built a movement of youth-led accountability of 110 African Youth Charter Hustlers to work closely with the AU to monitor progress on the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter.

A young man and woman per country, from each of the AU member states,

were selected from 2,100+ applications. The initiative opened up closed intergovernmental spaces with inclusive gender balance and diaspora engagement.

This is the first AU initiative with fully inclusive youth representation across the 55 AU member states. Continued support for this initiative in partnership with UNITAR will be crucial in solidifying youth-led advocacy, agency and collaboration with governments, national youth councils and other structures in advancing the youth agenda as well as link the AU better to the grassroots in Africa - a key feature still missing in several well-intended AU interventions on the continent.

Six: The Gender agenda has been among my top priorities as AU Youth Envoy. I am immensely proud of the work we did with the over 1,500 youths, both young women and men, from 45 countries.

We convened these in five regional barazas and developed the Africa Young Women Beijing+25 Manifesto with ten concrete demands on the urgent interventions so desperately needed by young African women. In addition, we established Sauti (the Kiswahili for Voice) as a feminist platform where 25 young women told their stories on the first ever AU blog.

These stories were a collection of text, visual art and other forms of digital means of self-expression to fully capture the desire, demands and agency of young African women, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was accompanied by a \$5000 grant to support the contributors.

To move these efforts forward Sauti voices should continue to be heard in an annual publication and the Manifesto should be presented to Generation Equality Forums in Mexico and France and adopted by Action Coalitions Leadership.

Seven: In all our activities, we consistently ensured that vulnerable youth were present and the spaces were designed to have a bottom-up consultative approach and consistent feedback.

*Continues tomorrow*

# Seven new predictions for a post-Covid-19-pandemic world

By Emma Rose Bienvenu

In the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, I published my predictions about how the coronavirus pandemic would reshape our lives. While many of these predictions are currently bearing out, it is increasingly clear that the disruptions caused by Covid-19 are only just getting started.

The magnitude of any crisis is a function of both its striking force and of the strength - or fragility - of the system it attacks.

Long before this pandemic, developed societies were plagued by widening inequalities and staring down a technological abyss. In 2021 and beyond, the knock-on effects of shifts accelerated by the pandemic will cascade through our institutions and individual behaviours.

Here are seven additional shifts we should expect in the aftermath of the pandemic era. Some will create enormous challenges, but many will open opportunities to revise our foundational assumptions about economics, business and public policy so that, after the public health war has been won, we effectively mobilise to take advantage of abandoned and updated norms.

One: Equity markets will continue to soar, as fears of inflation drive commodity and crypto booms. So far, the US Congress has approved pandemic relief packages worth more than \$4.1 trillion. It funded these outlays not by raising taxes or selling bonds to the public, but rather by printing new money, marking an unprecedented expansion in the overall money supply.

Roughly one-fourth of all circulating US dollars was printed in the past year; much of it has ended up in the capital markets, sending financial assets rocketing to record highs.

Generous stimulus checks and pent-up demand from months in lockdown have also left consumers with record-high savings rates, which could propel a post-pandemic spending spree.

Taken together, these factors will make investors increasingly uneasy about inflation. This will drive demand for traditional store-of-value commodities, like gold and silver, and fuel the continued ascent of cryptocurrencies like bitcoin that are valued against a finite supply of coins rather than a basket of other currencies.

Banking giants like JPMorgan, Guggenheim, financier Paul Tudor Jones and insurer MassMutual have already bet hundreds of millions of dollars on bitcoin's future as a critical hedge against USD devaluation, publicly touting price targets upwards of \$400,000 per bitcoin.

Enterprise companies will increasingly follow their lead, as most corporate balance sheets come to include some a small percentage of crypto-denominated reserves.

Two: While Amazon builds its empire, Shopify will keep bolstering the rebels. The online retail revolution has arrived ahead of schedule. Merchants that once re-



lied on dominating retail shelf space or physical proximity to their customers will need to learn to sell online.

In practice, this means either joining crowded direct-to-consumer markets or capitulating to Amazon, which controls nearly half of all US e-commerce - and counting. This will set the stage for e-commerce wars pitting Amazon against effectively everyone else.

Shopify will lead the anti-Amazon coalition, by continuing to help level the e-commerce playing field for smaller online sellers.

The company's core innovation was to leverage its economies of scale to provide sophisticated, affordable e-commerce tools rivaling those of the largest incumbents. It has since expanded to off-line logis-

tics and fulfilment, hoping that one day it will match Amazon's customer service, fast shipping and easy returns.

It does not, however, help merchants find and attract customers online. To avoid an "Amazon takes all" future, that will need to change.

The central challenge for Shopify - and independent sellers in general - is that Amazon effectively controls online demand. A full 82 per cent of US households have Amazon Prime memberships, and most Prime members start their shopping journeys on Amazon, now the second largest search engine in the US.

In that this lowers customer acquisition costs, more sellers join Amazon Marketplace. Amazon's vast selection attracts more buyers, which further drives down customer acqui-

sition costs on the platform.

For independent merchants to survive in Amazon's e-commerce future, Shopify will need to provide an alternative by embracing a strategy focused on localising and personalising e-commerce.

Independent sellers will never match Amazon's economies of scale and scope, but they can outperform it with consumers who want to shop in their community, support brands whose values they share, or embrace compelling and highly differentiated brands.

For users to find those merchants, however, they need a searchable platform - which Shopify is ideally positioned to provide by expanding its Shop app into something that looks more like a local marketplace.

Three: The rapid transition to a gig

economy will upend US health insurance markets. To increase their resilience to future shocks, businesses will look to limit the stickiness of their cost structures.

Accordingly, fixed asset ownership will go down, office leases will get shorter, and full-time positions will be automated away or replaced with short-term contract workers. This transition is well under way in industries like grocery delivery; eventually, it will affect all sectors of the US labour market.

The accelerated transition to a gig economy will upend US health insurance markets, which rely on employment-based group insurance to shield risk pools from adverse selection pressures.

When a bloc of employees, rather than only its sickest members, receives coverage from an employer, young and healthy employees effectively subsidise those with greater coverage needs.

This balance will not hold when tens of millions of gig workers suddenly become responsible for buying their own insurance. Many - particularly the young and healthy - will choose to go without.

*Continues tomorrow*



# Advice to independent journalists before they see whether to go solo

By Jacob Granger

**T**HE rise of newsletter platforms like Substack, Medium and Forbes' recently launched Journalist Entrepreneur have opened up avenues for journalists to build and monetise their own following.

Add to that a range of membership and podcast platforms, and journalists are not short on options to be truly independent and start their own publishing brands.

But it takes more than shiny tools to make publishing business sustainable; you need sharp commercial acumen and good planning skills too.

In a podcast with Journalism.co.uk, entrepreneurial journalist Isabelle Roughol, founder and host of the Borderline podcast and newsletter, shares her story into the world of 'indie journalism'.

Roughol had worked for LinkedIn for the past seven years in various editorial positions, with her last role being international editor. She had taken her sabbatical leave at the start of 2020 in need of a breather and in search of a new challenge.

She founded Borderline six months later armed with the professional know-how she had amassed during her time at the company.

But it was not just her skills that helped her launch her new brand. She saw the gap in the market as no publisher caters specifically for people who live in a different country from where they were born.

Roughol, originally from France, studied and lived in the US before moving to the UK. This life experience helped her to understand and connect with the large community of immigrants worldwide.

Roughol shared some lessons that she has learned so far for those considering taking the plunge.

## Take time to cleanse yourself of burnout

Before you even start, make sure you have the energy to commit to your project in the long-term. Roughol's sabbatical had afforded her enough time of rest and reflection to start from a clean slate.

"You really need to go for weeks and weeks of nothing happening, and then one morning you wake up and there's something that appeals again which is a very nice feeling when you're a creative person," she explains.

Diving into a project already burned out from your previous occupation is a sure-fire way to fail quickly - so take care of your mental wellbeing first.

## Discover your market

Working independently grants you total editorial control and freedom. But to stand out in the crowd, you must have a community in mind that your content speaks to.

"I don't know if I had pitched this to a traditional media outlet they would have responded to it, given how few immigrants there are in the media and how nationally focused most media are. This idea of this thing that crosses borders would be a bit alien to them," Roughol says.

She elaborates: "I am no longer representing anyone but myself. But it has downsides; it's hard to work without someone to bounce ideas off of. It might be even harder to do this for deeper, investigative reporting."



## Work in whatever way makes sense to you

The other perk is setting your own hours. So, whether you are an early bird or a night owl, pull shifts around the clock at whatever hours best suit you.

"There's no-one telling me that my work hours aren't right, but the thing that keeps you accountable is that you have to make the rent cheque at the end of the month," Roughol says.

## Have realistic goals and expectations

It is easy to get caught up in the euphoria of the big success stories. In reality, growth and monetisation are painfully slow.

"It's going to be more work than you think, and it's going to grow more slowly than you think, especially podcasts - and newsletters too. But audience growth is so hard and saturated," Roughol says.

She adds: "And it's going to make less money than you think; you can't just open up a Patreon membership

and think 'everyone thinks what I do is amazing'."

Roughol recommends the assigning of yearly goals around numbers of subscribers gained and in total - then building a plan with a clear route about how to get there.

## Consider financial runway, alternative funding

There are no guarantees when it comes to building your own business. In the meantime, you have to live. From Roughol's experience, you should have at least one year's worth

of cash on hand to keep you going.

In addition to Borderline, she does consultation work for clients as back-up income.

"I wish I could spend every minute of my day working on my own business. However, if you want to keep the lights on, you also have to do other work for income, and that distracts you from your business," she explains.

She adds: "That means that your growth is even slower, that you are pushing back the date on which you can concentrate on your business, so it's always a balance."

## Focus, focus, focus

Roughol also started a podcast for her French listeners, which she has always been eager to do. But as these account for a fraction of her audience, it is not a priority, attached as she is to it.

Products should always serve a purpose, she advises. Plenty of projects are "worthy", but not all play into the core business objectives.

This is something Roughol learned during her time with LinkedIn. For her, the podcast is the main shop window - free at the point of access, and widely available - then newsletters and Patreon membership tools provide extra value or early access to content.

"Focus is the hardest and most important thing in business, especially when you are starting out and your resources are so limited."

## Quickfire advice

Connect with industry peers. Other independent journalists are happy to offer visibility, exchange projects or do last-minute stand-in interviews when your guest cancels an appointment.

Make sure your initial posting schedule is manageable. A weekly podcast guest sounds like great fun, but how realistic will that be with all your other deliverables and amongst guests' tight schedules?

## Should journalists use social media to give their opinions?

By Regan Kerr

**"ALL** views are my own, not those of my employer" is an oft-seen disclaimer on journalists' social media profiles - but these days hardly anyone buys any of that.

Even when it is not the intention, our online activity has an impact on our news outlets' public image. Some journalists self-censor and do not share their personal opinions on news, or at least they think very, very carefully before hitting the "Tweet" button.

Others follow their employer's social media guidelines that provide at least some framework for what is and what is not acceptable behaviour on social platforms. But for most, finding the right balance is a true minefield.

To help you navigate the choppy waters of Twitter storms, we recently invited four experts to Newsreired to talk about the pros and cons of getting personal on social platforms.

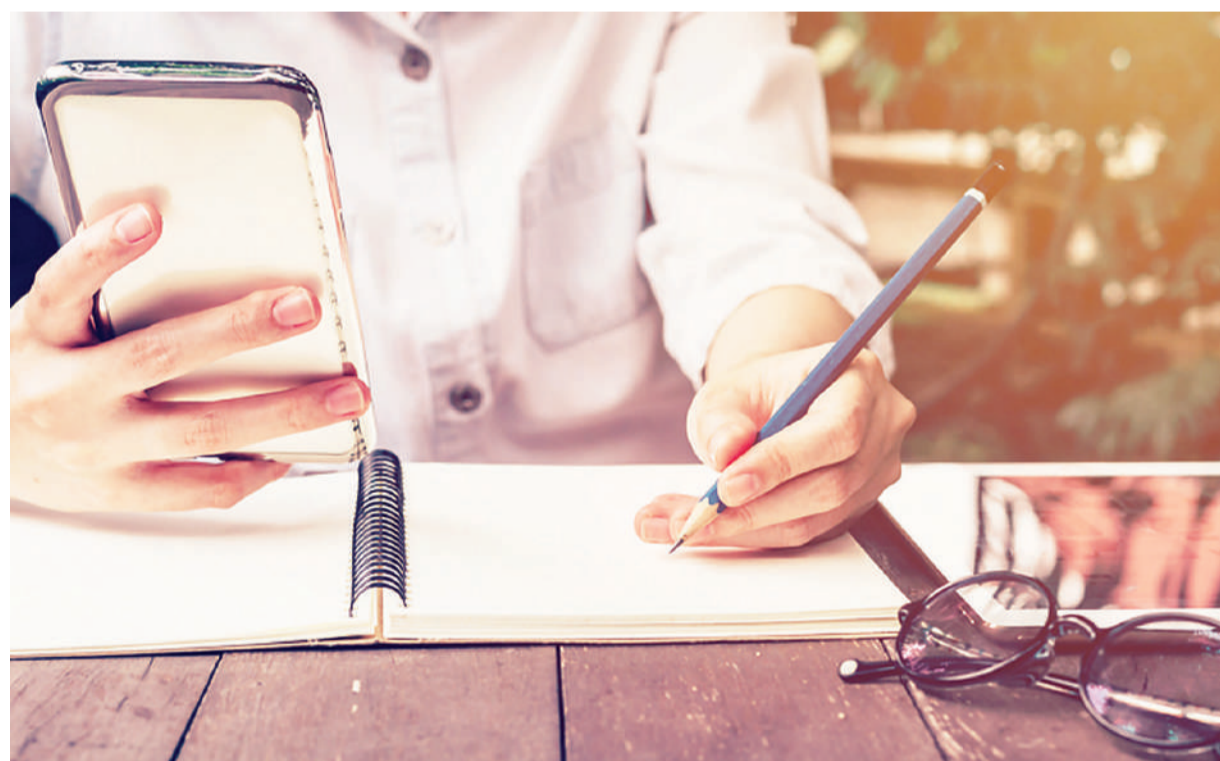
## Shifting attitudes

Many organisations have recently tightened their social media policies for journalists. But the BBC took this one step further with its new social media guidance that tells employees not to 'express a personal opinion on matters of public policy, politics, or controversial subjects' on online platforms.

Richard Sambrook, professor of journalism at Cardiff University, spent 30 years at BBC News as a producer, editor and director of Global News and the World Service. Earlier this year, he led an independent review on how the corporation maintains impartiality on social media and he also advised on the new rules, although he was not the one drafting them.

As a public broadcaster, the BBC is required by the law to be impartial in its news coverage. Expressing, say, political allegiance or judging public policies on social media goes directly against this. And once a journalist has the BBC brand in their bio, users may easily consider individual views as those of the corporation and feel that their public news service is biased. "A lot of journalists and organisations are still thinking about social media as it used to be," says Sambrook, adding: "Some think it's informal, some think it's quite fun - a way of getting closer to your audiences, but things have moved on. It is now a significant channel of communication."

He encouraged organisations and journalists to use social media as a professional output tool rather than



a personal media channel.

"In many respects social media have become toxic," he says, noting: "There is a lot of abuse and criticism, and both organisations and individuals' approach to social media need to wake up a little bit to how it works now."

## Objectivity vs impartiality

Robyn Vinter, founder of the independent news outlet The Overtake, spoke of the challenges entailed in navigating different social media guidelines when working with several outlets.

"My goal is to serve the reader," she said, adding that it can be difficult to be careful and diplomatic when posting something a journalist has strong feelings about - "but you can do both of those things; it's about finding the right balance".

Vinter, who has been a prolific Tweeter for a decade, added that she sometimes realises that sharing strong views may have alienated some people. On the other hand, she noted, speaking with an authentic voice helps her audiences to see her as a real human being and not a "corporate robot" who just shares her stories.

There is another advantage to this human relationship. When she was a freelancer, Vinter would often get commissioned after having shared strong views on a news topic at the right time.

Finally, she says, when the readers can identify themselves with the journalist, they are more likely to share story leads.

"I had people who told me: 'I don't speak to journalists but I will speak to you'," she concluded.

## Why objectivity matters

Jo Adetunji, managing editor of The Conversation UK, provided a contrasting opinion on the need for impartiality within journalism.

"You have to show that you can be objective, of course we all have opinions, but I think it's not enough - especially in an industry that suffers from trust issues - to say 'you just have to trust us'," she explains.

As an editor you have to be able to commission people with different views, she added, especially as we are seeing a rise of "activist journalism".

Social media constitute a great way for journalists to engage in debates on topics that may not normally be

relevant or interesting to the wider audience.

Therefore, journalists can find it challenging to keep their personal and professional online lives separate, as seen by Adetunji, who shared her own experiences of social media and upkeeping her professionalism.

She says: "I remember thinking Twitter is where I'll do professional stuff, Facebook is where I'll do personal stuff, and then you just end up getting very confused about where you're putting anything."

But more than that, journalists often get too sucked into Twitter storms and online debates, forgetting that there is a much wider community who does not engage with - or care about - online debates.

## Challenging the norm

Adriana Lacy, senior associate for audience and growth at Axios, spoke about how the Black Lives Matter movement and the US presidential elections tested the notions of objectivity and impartiality in US newsrooms.

"Whose objectivity are we following?" she asked, adding that both events prompted many black and also immigrant journalists to become vocal about their experiences on social media.

"For many people, these are not our opinions, these are our lives," she said.

Since working on audience growth, Lacy saw how important it is for reporters to be online and share their stories. Sometimes when they share stories they are personally connected with, these perform much better than when they are shared by the official outlet account.

While understanding the way in which journalists use opinions, she also acknowledged how incredible the power of social media is in reaching audiences traditionally not acknowledged by the media.

"Social media have been a really great tool for journalists to spread their work and reach communities who are often not reached," she said, adding: "I'm hoping that social media will continue to be a healthy and more productive way to share thoughts online."



# NGO joins hands with govt in waging war against TB

By Correspondent Daniel Semberya

EVERY year, there are estimated 9 million new TB cases worldwide but consistently three million cases were not diagnosed, treated or registered by National TB Programmes (NTPs), according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Among the new TB cases nearly 1.5 million people die each year.

TB is among the top ten causes of global mortality and morbidity accounting for about 26 per cent of all preventable deaths. It is the third leading killer of adults behind Malaria and Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Speaking in Dar es Salaam recently during Policy Forum's Breakfast debate on decentralisation of childhood tuberculosis diagnostic services: What should be done to address systemic policy issues? Project Manager-Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric Aids Foundation (EGPAF), Dr Leo Haule, said that childhood TB in NSP VI, had targeted to maintain proportion of children-TB among the notified cases at 15 per cent and; increasing the ratio of ages '0-4'; 5-14 years from 1.3 in 2019 to 1.5 by 2025.

Dr Haule said that the main intervention of his organisation in combating TB among others was to expand advance sample collection (75% of hospitals perform sputum indication and gastric aspiration), integrate TB services to child and adolescent health services in the facilities and communities.

Considering the gap for under five children, National Strategic Plan (NSP) V have added advance sample collection as well as target 0-4/5-15 ratio increase.

EGPAF together with many other likeminded actors in Tanzania have continued with their effort to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with pediatric TB through active TB screening and intensified case finding in health facilities and communities. And by strengthening linkages to diagnosis and treatment for both active and latent TB infection in 45 sites that currently receive direct support from EGPAF (3.3% of all EGPAF sites) across the two of the country's 31 regions—Singida and Tabora in the Central Zone.

Considering the size, geographic and social diversity of Tanzania, a range of regions is required, to demonstrate the generalisability and scalability of the models proposed, without significant increase in the costs of implementation.

The sites have been chosen to maximise the yield of pediatric TB cases, making the CaP TB Project's contribution significant to the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children and to UNITAID.

Specific site selection criteria include—burden of TB and HIV where facilities with high burden of either disease were selected basing on the assumption that increasing efforts in TB screening among HIV clients will bring an increase in TB case detection in facilities that currently have low TB numbers.

According to Dr Haule, in Tanzania EGPAF has been a key implementing partner in reproductive health and HIV prevention, care, treatment and support programmes including TB/HIV collaborative activities

to the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children in Tanzania since 2003. Through its Boshesha Afya Project (2016-2021) EGPAF is now also a leading TB partner for USAID in six of the country's 31 regions.

Pediatric TB is included as a priority focus in Tanzania's National Strategic Plan (NSP) V for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme 2015-2020, which was developed by the ministry through the National TB and Leprosy Programme (NTLP) and in collaboration with a multi-sectoral group of partners and stakeholders.

The NSP focuses on children as a key vulnerable group, and calls for intensified efforts to increase the number of childhood TB cases identified, diagnosed, and treated, as well as increased integration of TB care into other reproductive and child health services.

The Tanzanian government has demonstrated its strong commitment to improving pediatric TB services in Tanzania.

For example, in 2016 the National TB and Leprosy Programme (NTLP) revised the national guidelines for management of Tuberculosis in Children and training curriculum to accommodate current WHO recommendation including use of new FDCs and have taken advantage of Expert MTB/Rif rollout to improve case detection by including children in the testing algorithms.

To support the integration and demand for new drugs and technologies, EGPAF has been following up on the existing regulatory framework for introduction of TB drugs/technologies in the country, which requires that there is available global evidence that the new drugs/technology is approved and has WHO endorsement.

Having recognised that low capacity among health care workers (HCWs) was a barrier to improving pediatric TB services, EGPAF/Tanzania was leveraging its existing TA and mentorship plans under the USAID-funded Boshesha Afya project to intensify training for HCWs and CHWs in pediatric TB management.

Under USAID Boshesha Afya Project, EGPAF has received funding to support facilities with TB screening tools and build HCW capacity in pediatric TB clinical diagnosis and management through training on pediatric TB and TB/HIV case finding and infection control.

It expected that by the end of the project (2021), CaP TB will: More than double the number of children diagnosed with active TB; double the number of children initiated on first-line TB treatment and treat more than 16,000 children with active TB.

Ensure that 90 per cent of children diagnosed with active TB are initiated on treatment and that 90 per cent achieve treatment success; increase the proportion of children who are initiated on TB preventive treatment (TPT) for latent TB infection (LTBI), treat more than 52,000 children with LTBI, and increase the share of children completing LTBI treatment from 50 per cent to 80 per cent.

In 2019 the project achieved the following: A total of 81059 pediatrics where screened for TB in all entry points of 22 supported facilities, 2046 of them were found to be TB presumptive cases, 354 were diag-



Project Manager at Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric Aids Foundation (EGPAF), Dr Leo Haule, stresses a point at Policy Forum's breakfast debate on decentralisation of childhood tuberculosis diagnostic services in Dar es Salaam last week.

nosed with TB disease; and all were put into treatment (100%).

The Global Plan to End TB for 2016 - 2020 says by achieving 90 per cent of all people living with TB including key populations such drug users and by achieving 90 per cent treatment success of all these people with TB will achieve the target.

While great strides have been made to control and cure TB, people still get sick and die from this disease in many countries including Tanzania.

Speaking in a different platform the Manager of NTLP, Dr Beatrice Mutayoba was quoted as saying that Tanzania was the first country in the world to successfully combine the control of TB and Leprosy into a single programme.

Dr Mutayoba said although major efforts were taken by the government but TB was still a major public health problem in the country.

For the past ten years, statistics from health facilities in Tanzania show that ten regions were leading in TB cases and were being led by the country's business centre of Dar es Salaam. The other regions include Mwanza, Shinyanga, Mbeya, Morogoro, Mara, Arusha, Iringa, Kilimanjaro and Tanga.

The First National -wide Research to determine the

scale of the TB problem in Tanzania showed that the disease has also been spreading to the rural areas.

Earlier findings had painted a different picture, which showed that TB cases were rampant in congested urban areas only, but now the rural areas are in big danger. And it showed that the most affected group were the youth.

It also indicated that the growing number of adults aged over 50 years, were suffering from TB compared to other groups in society.

Men are the most affected group in the society, compared to women. It was alleged that men easily contract the disease due to the nature of their lifestyles, which force them to assemble in beer drinking sites, cigarette smoking groups and many other activities including mining, just to mention a few.

TB is a chronic infectious disease caused bacillus Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It typically affects the lungs (PTB) but can also affect other sites (ETB).

TB is mainly airborne; spread to children by adults, older children and adolescents who have TB of the lungs. Once exposed to someone who has pulmonary TB disease a child may end up with; infection - No symptoms.

## Southern Africa: Homes become dangerous place for women and girls during Covid-19 lockdown

By Special Correspondent

DURING the COVID-19 lockdowns imposed by Southern African countries, some homes across the region became enclaves of cruelty, rape and violence for women and girls trapped with abusive family members and nowhere to report or escape the danger, Amnesty International has said.

Harmful gender stereotypes embedded in social and cultural norms, which suggest that women must always submit to men or that a man who beats his wife does so because he loves her, have fueled the rise in violence against women and girls in Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. As one activist in Mozambique said: "Girls are taught that husbands only beat their wives when they love them."

Amnesty International also found in its briefing, "Treated like furniture: Gender-based violence and COVID-19 response in Southern Africa", that women and girls who dare to report violence and abuse risk social rejection for failing to conform to gender roles -- and when they do speak out, their complaints are not taken seriously by authorities.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted an escalation in gender-based violence against women and girls in

Southern Africa. It has also magnified existing structural problems such as poverty, inequality, crime, high unemployment and systematic criminal justice failures," said Deprose Muchena, Amnesty International's Director for East and Southern Africa.

"Lockdown measures meant that women could not escape abusive partners or leave their homes to seek protection. Across Southern Africa, women who suffered gender-based violence struggled to report abuse because both women and organizations working to provide protection and support to women were not seen as an "essential service", and so faced severe restrictions of movement, resulting in them abandoning filing cases."

Of the five countries where gender-based violence was documented in this briefing, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe stand out as countries where support services to women and girls subjected to violence and abuse were not taken into consideration in the design of the measures to control the spread of COVID-19.

### Rape, beatings and killings during lockdown

Within weeks of countries being on lockdown, violence against women increased sharply across the region. In the first week of the lock-



down, the South African Police Service (SAPS) reported receiving 2,300 calls for help related to gender-based violence. By mid-June 2020, 21 women and children had been killed by intimate partners in the country.

One emblematic case was the brutal murder of 28-year-old Tshogofatso Pule, who went missing on 4 June and was found four days later, stabbed and hanging from a tree in Johannesburg while eight months pregnant.

In Mozambique, civil society organizations received unusually high numbers of domestic violence cases after the start of the state of emergency in March 2020. In one case, a man killed his wife and then himself on 6 June in Matola district in Maputo province.

Horrifying details also emerged of the robbery, rape and murder of a Maputo Central Hospital employee on 31 May 2020. She was on her way home, late at night because of the scarcity of public transport during the state of emergency restrictions.

In Zimbabwe, an organization that offers protection for women survivors of domestic violence, had documented 764 cases of gender-based violence in the first 11 days of the national lockdown. By 13 June 2020, the number was 2,768.

One Zimbabwean woman, Maria\* (not her real name), was violently thrown out of her home by her husband after he moved his mistress in during the lockdown.

In Madagascar, the rise in poverty due to lockdown was a major factor for the

increase in gender-based violence during the lockdown period, with women and girls becoming poorer, more economically dependent on abusive partners and therefore more exposed to abuse.

Zambia was the only country that recorded a slight decrease in gender-based violence during the national lockdown compared to the same period in 2019, according to official police statistics. The country recorded a 10% decrease in the first quarter of 2020, which may reflect the fact that women were unable to call for help rather than a decline in gender-based violence cases. However, one NGO, Young Women's Christian Association, recorded an increase in sexual violence cases during the first quarter of 2020.

### Barriers to justice

The briefing identified several barriers to justice for victims and survivors of gender-based violence across Southern Africa. These include a lack of trust in the criminal justice system and secondary trauma which victims and survivors often suffer at the hands of authorities, including the police, and health services when they attempt to report cases.

These barriers came into sharper focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. In South Africa for example, there has been public outrage about the institutional failures to administer justice for women and girls who are victims and survivors of gender-based violence, even though the country's Domestic Violence Act of 1998 explicitly states that victims may lay criminal complaints against offenders.

One rape survivor, Natasha\* (not her real name) said violence against women had increased because "police don't take gender-based violence victims seriously enough when they file cases".

South Africa's Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Ronald Lamola, admitted on radio in June 2020 that there were weaknesses in the system that frequently failed victims of gender-based violence.

In Mozambique, when a gender-based violence com-

plaint is filed, police are required to open an investigation. However, like in South Africa, many victims are reluctant to come forward because of pressure from society to put up with domestic violence, financial dependence on the perpetrator, and a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system.

According to civil society organizations, in some instances, police officers were accused of dismissing gender-based violence complaints because they saw them as family matters and not crimes. The stigma around sexual violence was also cited as a contributing factor to underreporting.

"It is shocking that for many in Southern Africa, the most dangerous place to be a woman or a girl during the COVID-19 pandemic is at home. This is simply inexcusable. The leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) must ensure that prevention and protection of women from gender-based and domestic violence is an integral part of national responses to pandemics and other emergencies," Deprose Muchena said.

"States must ensure that women and girls continue to have access to police protection and justice as well as to shelters and other support services to escape the blight of gender-based violence."



# To prevent another civil war, South Sudan must create a unique political system

BONN, Germany

**T**HE threat of a full-blown civil war in South Sudan remains unless the country's leaders can broaden power sharing, warns a new report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) released almost a year into the country's formation of a government of national unity.

The report titled "Toward a Viable Future for South Sudan" formulates a stark conclusion. Almost a decade after its 2011 independence from Sudan, "South Sudan - the world's newest country - needs a reset, if not a redo."

"Our argument is that South Sudan is so fragile and faces so many challenges and is so diverse that we think the only way to govern South Sudan peacefully is through radical consensus as a form of power sharing and government," Alan Boswell, ICG's Senior Analyst for South Sudan and one of the authors of the report, told IPS.

The report urged South Sudanese elite, religious leaders and civil society to rethink the country's system of governance and create a political system that would work for one of Africa's most diverse nations with more than 60 different ethnic groups.

Upcoming elections, which could possibly be set for 2022, as well as the country's "winner-take-all" political system which "ill suits a country that requires consensus among major blocs to avert cyclical power struggles," could inflame tensions, said the report released today, Feb. 10.

"Incentives for post-election violence will be acute. South Sudan's highly centralised power structure and political economy raises the election's stakes, since there are limited consolation prizes especially if [President Salva] Kiir continues to flout the constitution by refusing to devolve oil revenues and removing powerful governors by decree," the report said. South Sudan has the third-largest oil reserves in sub-Saharan Africa, which generates the majority of the government's wealth.

South Sudan gained independent after Africa's longest civil war, which lasted from 1956 to 1972 and then again from 1983 to independence. But two years later, in 2013, the nation descended into civil war after Kiir fired his cabinet and accused his vice president, Riek Machar, of being behind a plot to oust him.

**Majoritarian democracy proved itself to not be a successful model for South Sudan.**

"We make the argument that although South Sudan has structured itself along with many other states around the world as a majoritarian democracy, where in theory they go to polls and whoever the majority picks rules. That in practice in South Sudan's context is likely a recipe for many groups feeling shut out of power, and a recipe for the ongoing power struggles that have already killed 100,000s of South Sudanese," Boswell said.

In September 2018, all sides signed the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which included a power sharing agreement. The government of national unity was formed almost a year ago, at the end of February 2020, as part of the conditions of the agreement.

Boswell urged South Sudanese elites and the country's external partners to support the country and "go back to the drawing board" and think "how they create the political system that works for them rather than copying po-



This year marks South Sudan's tenth independence anniversary (file photo).

litical systems from other places that might not be as appropriate."

Boswell said in order to prevent more conflict, the ICG called for pre- and post-election power sharing. "In order to prevent more conflict South Sudan really needs a very broad, inclusive power sharing before, during and after the vote. What you don't want is a situation where the election is seen as a path by the one party to defeat another party," Boswell said.

The report cited examples of rotational power sharing that could "encourage multi-ethnic alliances or mean losers of elections feel they have a shot at the presidency next time around," the report stated.

For example, Nigeria - where through informal agreement the country rotates its presidency between the Muslim north and the Christian south; and Tanzania - where the presidency is rotated between a Muslim and Christian every decade.

**Additional recommendations included, among others:**

Setting aside prominent positions in the national government for electoral runners-up as a way of guaranteeing them positions of influence to

prevent them from taking up arms.

Having regional leaders broker pre-election dialogue, to extract assurances from losing parties in order to lower the stakes as well as guaranteeing in advance another broad-based unity government.

A system where power can be shared more equitably at the centre.

Agree to designate the first vice president position, for the presidential runner-up, while allocating at least one other vice presidential position to the next most successful contestant.

Life for South Sudanese remains a harsh reality of food insecurity and continued conflict.

Last September, Yasmin Sooka Chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan said in a statement that the implementation of key areas of the revitalised agreement had stalled. "While the COVID-19 pandemic can take some of the blame, the lack of progress poses a threat to the peace process," she said, noting the escalation in violence in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, and Warrap States, and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

"A breakdown in the ceasefire with armed groups in the Equatorias has fuelled the violence and already displaced thousands of South Sudanese civilians," she said in a statement to the Human Rights Commission.

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), "more than four million South Sudanese have been displaced across the region and within their own country in one of Africa's largest displacement crises". Of the four million displaced, UNHCR notes that there are almost 2.3 million refugees and asylum seekers, with the largest number in Uganda (over 890,000), followed closely by Sudan (736,700), followed by Ethiopia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Last December, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that almost half - 5.8 million - of the country's 11 million people were acutely food insecure. "In 2020, communities were hit hard by the triple shock of intensified conflict and sub-national violence, a second consecutive year of major flooding, and the impacts of COVID-19. Some 1.6 million people remained internally displaced and

another 2.2 million as refugees in the region," OCHA said in its 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview for South Sudan.

Meanwhile, the ICG report also noted that development partners, fatigued by years of conflict resolution had "no clear plan for finding peace, despite the substantial sums still devoted to humanitarian aid."

There was also widespread cynicism among donors, Boswell said. "They have lost any vision of what a peaceful South Sudan could look like and how to help get it there," he said.

**He cautioned this was not very sustainable.**

"If there is not a vision or a plan that both South Sudanese and both donors can look upon and push towards where the country is heading and what a peaceful situation looks like then we fear that donors would gradually, as they have been, pull more and more out of South Sudan and start doing the bare minimum of just keeping people alive," Boswell said.

South Sudanese have lost a lot of hope in their country, because they have lost faith in their leaders after seeing them act in ways that are clearly selfish, Boswell said.

One example of this is the large-scale corruption within the country.

According to Transparency International, in 2012 Kiir accused at least 75 government and ex-government officials of embezzling \$4 billion of public funds and in a public statement urged for the money to be returned. Only \$60 million was reportedly returned to a bank account in Kenya.

Last September, during her statement to the Human Rights Commission, Sooka cautioned that "lives are being destroyed by financial corruption on an epic scale" in South Sudan.

She referred to a recent report to parliament by South Sudan's National Revenue Authority that had shown "that approximately \$300 million have been 'lost' in the last three months alone."

IPS.

# Xi's idea of building a community with a shared future for humankind particularly inspiring

By He Yin

**O**N Jan. 18, 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech entitled "Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind" at the United Nations (UN) Office at Geneva.

The speech came at a time when a new year had just begun and everything had taken a new look. It was also a time when the world was full of uncertainties and people longed for a bright future but were bewildered about what would come.

Xi's speech won high praise from the international community, with many believing that the Chinese leader portrayed a bright prospect of a community with a shared future for mankind and lit the way forward for human beings with insightful observations.

Four years on, Xi's idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind is particularly inspiring when the world is plagued by the raging COVID-19.

The world today is experiencing unprecedented changes, which have been worsened by the once-in-a-century pandemic.

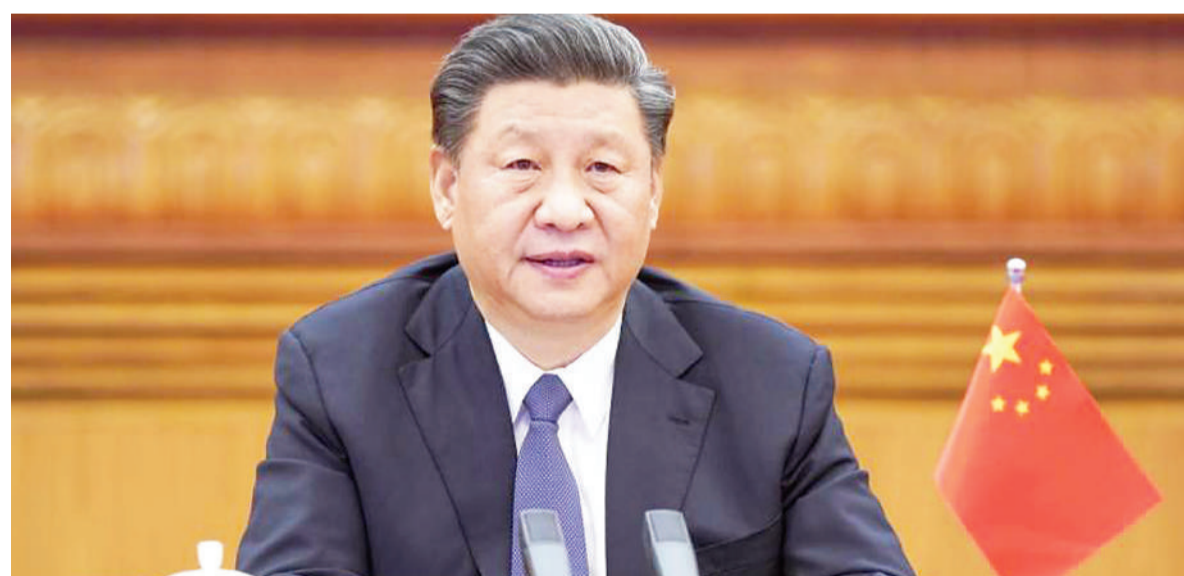
The global economy has been put into deep recession, the world is entering a period of turbulence and transformation, and human society is faced with numerous challenges.

People from all countries have become more aware that they must advance the building of a community with a shared future for mankind as everyone is living in an interconnected global village and shares weal and woe with each other.

At such a moment, by reviewing Xi's speech made four years ago, looking back at the history in the past century and more, and thinking about the questions of "what is going on with the world" and "what shall we do about it," people around the world will better understand the common aspiration held dear by mankind.

"Pass on the torch of peace from generation to generation, sustain development and make civilization flourish: this is what people of all countries long for; it is also the responsibility statesmen of our generation ought to shoulder. And China's proposition is: build a community of shared future for mankind and achieve shared and win-win development," Xi said in the important speech he delivered four years ago.

He put forward specific proposals from such aspects as partnership, security, growth, inter-civilization exchanges and the building of a sound ecosystem.



Chinese President Xi Jinping

Xi called for staying committed to building a world of lasting peace through dialogue and consultation, building a world of common security for all through joint efforts, building a world of common prosperity through win-win cooperation, building an open and inclusive world through exchanges and mutual learning, and making the world clean and beautiful by pursuing green and low-carbon development.

He has formulated a blueprint for human society, and charted the way forward for progress and development.

As an ancient Chinese adage goes, "the greatest ideal is to create a world truly shared by all."

Building a community with a shared future for mankind represents the greatest common divisor of all peoples' aspirations for peace, development and prosperity.

It is generally acknowledged by the international community that by advocating and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, China has demonstrated its active efforts to advance with the times.

In February 2017, the concept of "building a community with a shared future for mankind" was written into a UN resolution for the first time. Later, it was also adopted by the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council.

At present, China is forging bilateral community

with a shared future with more and more partners. The country has reached agreement with relevant parties on building a community with a shared future with its neighbors, a community with a shared future in the Asia-Pacific, a China-ASEAN community with a shared future, a China-Africa community with a shared future, a China-Arab community with a shared future, and a community with a shared future with Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In addition, China's proposals for building a community with a shared future in cyberspace, a community of shared future for global nuclear safety, a maritime community with a shared future and a global community of health for all have been actively echoed around the world.

Great visions can be realized only through actions. China has firmly adhered to the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, and practiced the vision with actions.

From unswervingly upholding multilateralism to tackling climate change together with other countries, from promoting joint efforts for high-quality construction of the Belt and Road to leading international cooperation in poverty reduction, China has taken concrete actions to promote the implementation and realization of the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

China will hold high the banner of peace, develop-

ment, cooperation and mutual benefit, follow the independent foreign policy of peace, boost foreign exchanges at all levels in various fields, and promote the building of a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for humanity, according to the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee's proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.

China will continue to uphold the vision of a global community of shared future, and follow the principle of pursuing the greater good and shared interests; it will do everything within its means to promote cooperation and inject Chinese strength into global development, said a white paper on China's international development cooperation in the new era recently released by the State Council Information Office of China.

In global response to the epidemic, China stands for the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, taking it as its responsibility to ensure not just the life and health of its own citizens, but also global public health.

Chinese President has conducted in-depth exchanges and communication with leaders from other countries, proposed and actively promoted the construction of a community of common health for mankind, and called for mutual assistance and unity to fight the epidemic.

The international community generally believes that Chinese ideas and actions have become an important force in pushing the world out of the darkest moments in such a special period, and that building a community with a shared future for mankind is the right way to deal with the common challenges of humanity and establish a more prosperous and better world.

"We are not alone on the Great Way and the whole world is one family," Xi once said.

Building a community of shared future is an exciting goal, and it requires efforts from generation after generation, he pointed out.

Countries need to respond to people's call, follow the trend of the times toward peace, development and win-win cooperation and jointly make unremitting efforts to advance the great cause of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

People's Daily



# TANGOLD TO START PAYING COMPENSATION AT BACKREEF MINE

By Property Watch Reporter

**F**OLLOWING approval by Ministry of Minerals and Mining Commission, Tanzanian Gold Corporation will start paying compensation to residents of Geita District who will pave way for the construction of a 40 tons per hour oxide mining and processing.

In a statement last week, TanGold said its officials accompanied by their peers from State Mining Corporation, met with Mining Minister Dotto Biteko and Mining Commission representative to discuss the project.

“TanGold and Stamico will move forward the documentation and approval process for the previously agreed to amendments of the Buckreef Joint Venture Agreement as disclosed in January. Buckreef Gold Corporation Limited will also begin the land compensation and procurement process required under Tanzanian mining law,” the statement said.

In order to speed up the project, TanGold announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement with several institutional investors for the purchase and sale of 32,923,078 shares of its common stock at a purchase price of US\$0.65 per share in a registered direct offering.

“The company has also agreed to issue to the investors warrants to purchase up to an aggregate of 16,461,539 common stock in a concurrent private placement. The common stock warrants will be exercisable six months after the date of issuance, have an exercise price of US\$0.80 per share and will expire five years from the date of issuance,” the statement



Oxide pit at Buckreef Gold Mine in Geita.

added.

The statement further noted that closing of the offering is expected to occur on or about February 11, 2021, sub-

ject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions. A.G.P./Alliance Global Partners is acting as sole placement agent for the offering.

“The company intends to use the net proceeds from the offering for continued development of the Buckreef Gold Project, including capital expenditures, continued exploration, general corporate purposes and working capital,” the statement added.

Meanwhile TanGold has announced the appointment of Andrew Cheatele as Chief Operating Officer after receiving the approval of the updated mine plan for the Buckreef Gold Project from the Mining Commission.

Cheatele is an accomplished mining executive, geoscientist and director having graduated from Royal School of Mines, Imperial College in London and has 30-plus-years of experience in operations/production, development and exploration in both the senior and junior mining sectors.

His considerable operational and project management experience includes senior positions with the development of (at that time) Anglo American Corporation’s Moab Khotsoeng Gold Mine, JCI’s South Deep Project and major expansions of Placer Dome’s/Goldcorp’s Musselwhite Mine.

Cheatele currently sits on the board of directors at Condor Gold Plc, Troilus Gold Corp., and TanGold. He also volunteers on the advisory councils of the Development Partner Institute, the Canada-International Finance Corporation Africa Local Economic Development Partnership and as a director of International Women in Mining.

## Economic opportunities in Kigali’s wetlands

KIGALI

AS the government continues to mobilize funds to invest in recreational wetlands in Kigali City, Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) has committed to encourage ecotourism investments among the private sector.

Different recreational wetlands are expected to generate revenues once developed. Doing Business has looked into some wetlands and how their conservation could generate or are generating revenues.

### Nyandungu wetland

Among the wetlands where biodiversity conservation could generate revenues is Nyandungu wetland connecting the sectors of Nyarugunga of Kicukiro District and Ndera of Gasabo District where an ecotourism park is being created, 130 hectares.

Theogene Ngaboyamahina, the Environmental Mainstreaming Officer at REMA said, last week, during wetland day celebrations that the construction works are at 72 percent and are set to be complete in May, 2021. The urban park is being created to increase and conserve biodiversity, create green jobs, manage pollution and reduce floods.

The Ecotourism Park will feature walkways, cycling routes, boardwalks and bridges, nature viewing areas, bird hides, kiosks and picnic areas among other facilities that a modern park would have. Initial projections indicated that the park should generate over Rwf1 billion profit in the first 12 years of operation.

The park will offer several revenue streams including entry fees using differential pricing whereby visitors will be charged for entry to the park, guiding fees where visitors can choose to employ a freelance guide for the guide to earn an income while some areas in the park will be offered for wedding photos for a fee.

They also include ground rent on restaurant /café whereby

a site in the park will be offered as a concession and the restaurant / café then pay a ground rent to the park. Sale of native plant species is another revenue stream as gardeners working at the site will grow native species of trees and other plants that will be offered for sale to visitors and others.

The revenue sources again include entertainment and cultural events. The park may choose to rent out areas of the park for events, providing that they fit the ethos of the park. REMA is set to work with Rwanda Development Board for a long-term management plan.

### Gikondo wetland

The green and environmentally friendly Gikondo Recreational Park is being developed in the former Gikondo industrial park. On one part of the wetland, gardens with green lawns, colorful indigenous tree species and refreshment facilities have been established.

Different species of indigenous trees such as sycamore trees, acacia trees have been planted as well as small ponds of waters with paths designed for pedestrians coming for sightseeing. Kiosks from which different products can be sold such as refreshments and snacks for people will be set up to generate revenues. Other facilities such as benches and chairs around swimming pools, showers and washing rooms, bicycles lanes, seats, Public Park, lights and sites for photography among many others are expected.

In order to fully restore the wetland, Gikondo is among the wetlands that are part of \$175 million (approx. Rwf173bn) project to green the city and rehabilitate wetlands. The wetlands to be rehabilitated include Gikondo, Nyabugogo, Rugenge, Kibumba, Rwintare, and Rugunga.

### Umusambi village

Already, players like Olivier Nsengimana, a renowned conservationist, have revamped a popular wetland formerly called Bambino Super-city along the Kigali-Rwamagana road,



Artificial lakes in Nyandungu wetland Ecotourism Park.

into a nature reserve for wild crowned cranes.

Umusambi Village is a beautifully restored wetland area, providing a sanctuary for over 70 endangered Grey Crowned Cranes saved from the illegal pet trade from private gardens around Kigali and other parts.

The village is a 21-hectare nature reserve, the first of its kind in Kigali that will allow visitors to enjoy walking trails while learning about the importance of protecting natural environments. Last week, Nsengimana said that during peak seasons, the village is visited by about 4,000 visitors per month.

### Sunday Park

The wetland separates the affluent neighbourhood of

Nyarutarama and Kacyiru in the Gasabo sector, opposite to the golf course. According to the developers, the wetland had been polluted with waste.

The park has gardens, small lakes, a mini-golf course, a nature park and an art exhibition that conserve biodiversity and attract tourists. It has tree species that attract birds which are rare in Kigali city. The birds help in conservation education in schools and different research.

# PepsiCo aims for net-zero emissions by 2040

NEW YORK

FOOD and beverage giant PepsiCo plans to more than double its science-based climate goal, targeting a reduction of absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across its value chain by more than 40% by 2030. In addition, the company has pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040, one decade earlier than called for in the Paris Agreement.

Specifically, PepsiCo plans to reduce absolute GHG emissions across its direct operations (Scope 1 and 2) by 75% and its indirect value chain (Scope 3) by 40% by 2030 (2015 baseline). This action is expected to result in the reduction of more than 26 million metric tonnes of GHG emissions or the equivalent of taking more than five million cars off the road for a full year.

“The severe impacts from climate change are worsening, and we must accelerate the urgent systemic changes needed to address it,” said PepsiCo

chairman and CEO Ramon Laguarta. “Climate action is core to our business as a global food and beverage leader and propels our PepsiCo Positive journey to deliver positive outcomes for the planet and people. Our ambitious climate goal will guide us on the steep but critical path forward - there is simply no other option but immediate and aggressive action.”

PepsiCo’s sustainability strategy, informed by science-based measures and cost-benefit analysis, focuses on the areas where it can have the most impact, while creating scalable models and partnerships for accelerated progress across the full value

chain. The company’s emissions target aligns to the Business Ambition for 1.5°C pledge and has been approved by the Science Based Targets initiative as the most ambitious designation available through their process.

“We congratulate PepsiCo on setting an emissions reduction target consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C, the most ambitious goal of the Paris Agreement,” said Nate Aden, senior associate at World Resources Institute, one of the Science Based Targets initiative partners.

Action plan  
 PepsiCo’s action plan is centered around both mitigation, reducing

GHG emissions to decarbonise its operations and supply chain, and resilience, reducing vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change by continuing to incorporate climate risk into business continuity plans. With operations in more than 200 countries and territories around the world and approximately 260,000 employees, the company’s emissions reduction plan will be comprehensive across priority areas such as agriculture, packaging, distribution and operations.

With agriculture accounting for approximately one-quarter of worldwide GHG emissions and one-third of PepsiCo’s emissions,

PepsiCo will further scale sustainable agriculture and regenerative practices that help lead to emissions reduction and sequestration, as well as improved soil health and biodiversity, decreased deforestation, and increased productivity for farmers. This includes expanding the company’s global network of Demonstration Farms, which provide localised training and tools to implement sustainable practices and improve livelihoods.

PepsiCo will lower GHG emissions impact with a continued drive to reduce virgin plastic use and increase recycled content in its packaging. Through the implementation and upgrading of environmentally sustainable manufacturing, warehousing, transportation and distribution sites, similar to the Frito-Lay North America facility in California, the company aims to maximise efficiency in its supply chain, while also adopting zero- and near-zero-emission technologies.



# STANBIC TOUTS STEM FOR GIRLS TO PAVE WAY FOR INDUSTRIALISATION

By Property Watch Reporter

**F**OR the country to speed up industrialization, girls should be encouraged to study Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as they constitute a significant part of the population.

Stanbic Bank Tanzania's Head of Private and Business Banking, Omari Mtiga said in Dar es Salaam this week after presenting a 10m/- cheque donation to Vijana Think Tank, that the bank supports government efforts to industrialise the economy.

"To advance as a country and achieve the industrialization agenda, we must increase the enrolment of women and girls in STEM subjects and scale-up approaches to enhance their attraction to and retention in the field," Mtiga said.

He pointed out that Stanbic's partnership with Vijana Think Tank forms one of the many social campaigns that the bank continues to be part of to encourage youth to work hard, have ambition and continue to self-improve in order to achieve success.

Mtiga further noted that economic growth depends upon the full utilization of the human capital available. "To succeed in having gender equality in this field, all sectors must create more partnerships to empower women, girls and all youth to encourage their participation and interest in science and technology," he added.

Stanbic's donation is aimed to recognise the vital role women and girls play in science and technology by pro-



Stanbic Bank Tanzania headquarters in Dar es Salaam.

moting further female participation and interest in STEM courses which are key towards driving the country's industrialization agenda.

"Science, technology, and innovation have been recognized as key drivers of global development and industrialization not just in Tanzania, but in many emerging economies in the world today. Stanbic Bank's partnership is informed by the meagre enrolment numbers of girls into STEM courses across universities and colleges," the Stanbic Bank Head of

Private and Business Banking added.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) data, it indicates that women in Tanzania represent around 40 percent of university enrolment but only about 24 percent are take courses in science, engineering and technology. This gap continues to place women at risk of losing out on today's and tomorrow's best job opportunities as the world continues to move towards full digitization and technology

innovation.

Since the formation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) governments, organisations, and individuals have been challenged to take significant steps in creating a more inclusive society through equitable development.

In a vote of thanks, Vijana Think Tank's William Mshery said the donation will help finance activities to commemorate International Day of Women and Girls in

Science being organised by his not for profit organization.

"We believe this partnership with Stanbic Bank Tanzania will unleash the full potential of science, technology and innovation as a driver of Tanzania's growth and development. We are grateful for the bank's contribution and commend their continued efforts to empower young women and men in Tanzania," Mshery said.

## Gas power plant planned for Malalane, Mpumalanga

MAPUTO

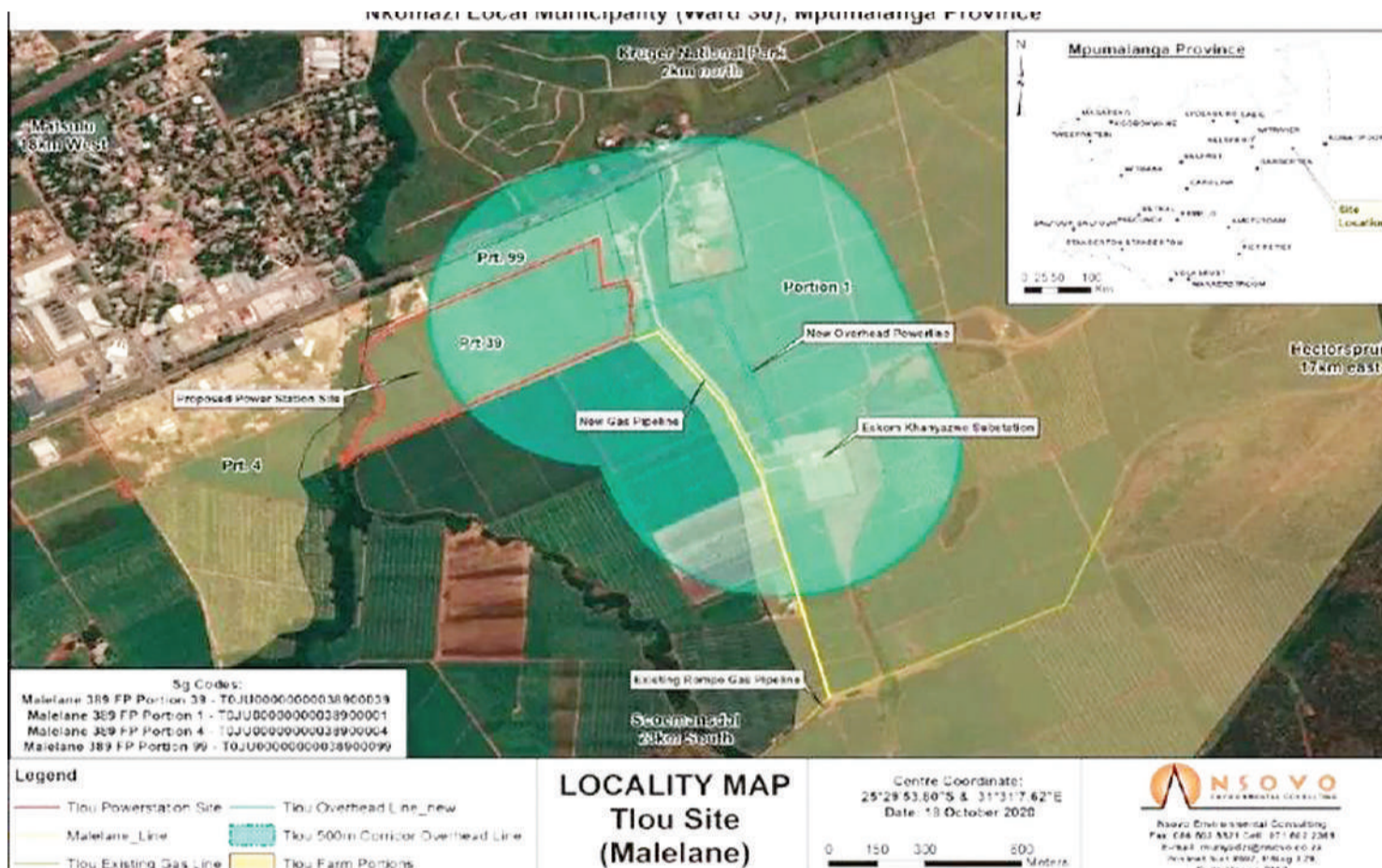
A state-of-the-art power plant, propelled by piped gas from Mozambique, has been proposed by a private company to be erected near Malalane town.

Although the environmental impact assessment (EIA) was open for public participation, neither the Nkomazi council nor the business sector of the Onderberg are aware of these ambitious plans, as Corridor Gazette found upon inquiring.

However, the proposal was published in sister publications: Lowvelder on October 15 and November 12, and in Mpumalanga News on November 11. Up to date, there have been no objections to the proposed project from members of the public.

The power plant proposed by DNG Energy, a private energy production company, will produce 620 megawatts of electricity to be fed into the South African power grid, said Nto Rikhotso, spokesperson for the company.

The proposed site for this plant is next to the N4, on the right-hand side of the



A map showing the site of the proposed gas plant location.

road on the way to Hectorspruit, about one kilometre from Malalane and about two kilometres from the Kruger National Park. This newspaper was handed a bulky copy

of the environmental impact study before DNG Energy was contacted. It admitted its plans, which include a proposed development of approximately 500 metres for a

275-kilovolt overhead powerline from the proposed power plant to the existing Eskom Khanyazwe Substation.

"The proposed facility involves the de-

velopment of the power plant, the aboveground gas pipeline from the existing Republic of Mozambique Pipeline Investments Company (Rompro) gas pipeline to the power plant, and aboveground storage tanks to store liquefied natural gas," added Rikhotso.

The gas that will power the project will be transported from Mozambique through the Rompro pipeline. Eskom will be the beneficiary of the electricity produced by the plant.

"The power that we will produce from our project, if approved, will be for the benefit of all South Africans who are electrified. The power would be fed into the national grid and transmitted to various parts of the country under the stewardship of Eskom," Rikhotso added.

"However, as it is fed into the grid at the local Malalane Substation, this will have the effect of significantly strengthening the local grid and helping to contribute to a more reliable local supply of electricity."

The project is still in the assessment phase, which means the interested and affected parties, including Nkomazi Local Municipality and Ehlanzeni District Municipality, have not yet been notified of the plans.

"The project is still in the planning and EIA phase, and will only proceed to commencement on receipt of the relevant approvals," Rikhotso added.

NAIROBI

UBA Bank has revived its bid to sell troubled Uchumi's Supermarket land situated on Langata Road over a debt of Sh172 million.

In an application before the High Court, UBA says Uchumi has failed to implement a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA) agreed in March last year between the supermarket and 121 suppliers on how to settle Sh4.2 billion owed to them. Under the CVA agreement that was initially opposed by UBA Bank, the retailer was to form a committee to ensure the payments are made on time.

"The Company's (Uchumi) failure to review and meet the terms of the CVA has had a detrimental effect on the Applicant/Bank as a secured creditor as it unjustly relieves the Company of its obligation to service the loan facility extended to it," the application reads. The lender says Uchumi has been in default of its facility for close to four years, terming it a huge concern to both the bank and its regulators given the negative impact it has on its depositors' funds.

"That in view of the foregoing, it is in the interests of justice and fairness that the Applicant/Bank be granted leave to enforce its security," the lender says. Last year, the High Court stopped the planned sale and all pending debt recovery cases, outstanding loans and rent claims in favour of the CVA.

The lender accuses the troubled chain of failing to implement the CVA as agreed.

## UBA in fresh bid to sell Uchumi land

In the deal last year, Justice Mary Kasango had indicated that the agreement would be reviewed in six months, in case Uchumi defaults.

Justice Kasango had ruled that all money claims currently before court be suspended to allow the payments to be made, failure to which Uchumi's assets would be auctioned and the retailer evicted by landlords.

The retailer that is currently struggling to stay afloat has now reneged on the deal. "The Company has failed to call a creditors' meeting to review the CVA within the said 6 months as ordered by this Honorable Court.

"In light of the Company's default of the court's Orders, the Applicant/Bank seeks to enforce its security over that property known as Land Reference Number 209/12593 Nairobi as per the order of the Court," said the Bank through Nyaanga and Mugisha advocates. UBA says Uchumi's failure to review the CVA greatly prejudices the Bank's position as a secured creditor. The bank says that Uchumi has been in default of its facility for close to four years which is a huge concern to it and its regulators given the negative impact it has on its depositors' funds. The move by UBA Bank is a second attempt after the lender failed to get access to proceeds from the sale of Uchumi's other land in Kasarani.



Uchumi Supermarket's Langata Road plot.



## TECHNOLOGY

## CARNIVAL BOSS 'CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC' ENTIRE FLEET WILL RETURN TO OPERATIONS THIS YEAR

## FLORIDA

**T**HE chief executive of Carnival Corporation, the world's biggest cruise ship operator, said he remains "cautiously optimistic" that the company will be able to get its entire fleet back on the waters by the end of the year.

The company, which had to suspend sailings in March last year, has largely been unable to sail since and does not know when it will be able to recommence operations, chief executive Arnold Donald told the Bloomberg Year Ahead conference on Tuesday evening. Carnival not only needs approval from the US Centres for Disease Control to recommence sailing, but also clearance from the destinations to which its cruises sail, Mr Donald said.

"We're not going to be able to start at once. We'll stagger our starts - a few ships at a time. We'll be slower coming back, but we will come back, depending on when it's in the best interests of public health to sail here in the US and elsewhere in the world," Mr Donald said.

"We're cautiously optimistic, hopeful, that we can have nearly all of the fleet back sailing by the end of the year," Carnival Corporation has a fleet of 87 ships operating under the Carnival, Princess Cruises, Cunard and P&O Cruises brands, among others.

The suspension of services has hit the company's finances hard, though. It lost \$2.2 billion in the last quarter of 2020 alone, adding to an \$8bn loss in the first nine months of the year. Earlier this month, Carnival said it expects to burn through cash at a rate



The Carnival Liberty leaving Port Canaveral in Florida in March 2020.

of about \$600 million a month during the first quarter of this year.

"To have a business with no revenue for an extended period of time and a significant burn rate - because, obviously we have to keep our ships operational ... it's been very challenging. On the other hand, the company has proven its resilience. Our people have been fantastic," Mr Donald said.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Carnival has also raised more than \$19bn of capital through debt and equity funding. Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund took part and was the company's second-biggest shareholder as of the end of the third quarter of 2020, with a stake of just over 7 per cent. The fundraising gives the company enough liquidity to make

it through 2021 without earning any revenue, Mr Donald said.

"That gives us time. And we've already publicly stated we have additional capacity for debt," he said. "Obviously, as we move forwards, we will pay attention to the balance sheet and if we determine it makes sense we can do additional equity raise if we need to. So we have some flexibility, which gives us confidence we can weather the storm."

Once cruises recommence, they will do so with advanced health protocols and mandatory Covid-19 testing for passengers, Mr Donald said. "Even with the advent of vaccines, even with the acceleration of low-cost, rapid [and] more accurate testing, even with the advancement of treatments, Covid

is still out there," he said. Initially, the company will probably limit the number of passengers, Mr Donald said.

"But the ships are vast ... the most important thing is not how many people but in those situations where you can have a congregation of people, is there adequate room for distancing? "There will probably be some limitation ... but maybe not as much as people think. Our ships initially will start slow but chances are we will be back to relatively full occupancy, just with different practices," Mr Donald said.

## Marriott grows resorts portfolio through deal with Sunwing Travel Group

## ANTIGUA

MARRIOTT International is expanding into all-inclusive resorts, adding nearly 7,000 rooms in the Caribbean and Central America in a move highlighting how hotel giants are plotting a recovery from the Covid-19 travel bust.

Marriott has struck a deal to add 19 resorts owned by Sunwing Travel Group, including properties in Mexico, Jamaica and Costa Rica, as the world's largest hotel company bets that vaccination campaigns will unleash a boom in vacation travel.

"This is a transformative transaction that helps us really solidify our position in a segment we think will continue to grow rapidly," said Tony Capuano, president of the global development, design and operations services group at Marriott. "There is enormous pent-up demand for those destinations." Marriott shares slipped 1.6 per cent to \$127.01 on Tuesday in New York.

Toronto-based Sunwing will continue to own the properties, including the 566-room Planet Hollywood Beach Resort Cancun and the Royalton Punta Cana Resort & Casino in the Dominican Republic. The hotels will convert to Marriott's Autograph Collection, a so-called soft brand that lets independent hotels access corporate loyalty programmes and reservation systems.

The deal more than doubles Marriott's all-inclusive portfolio, according to a statement on Tuesday.

Caribbean hotels were hit hard by the pandemic, with occupancy rates falling to 30 per cent in 2020, down from 64 per cent in the prior year, according to lodging data provider STR. But proximity to US holidaymakers bodes well for the region, especially compared to properties that will rely on corporate travel to spur recovery.

In the long term, the hotel

industry needs business travellers to get back on the road. But for now, pent-up demand for leisure travel is the best bet to drive a hotels rebound, according to a research note from Michael Bellisario, an analyst Robert W Baird & Co.

Marriott is navigating its pandemic recovery without its longtime leader, chief executive Arne Sorenson. The company said recently that Mr Sorenson, who has led the company since 2012, would reduce his work schedule to undergo demanding treatment for pancreatic cancer. Mr Capuano is one of two executives who are handling the company's day-to-day operations.

For Marriott, the deal with Sunwing marks the next step in a foray that began before Covid-19 rattled the global hospitality industry. The company splashed into all-inclusive resorts in the summer of 2019, announcing plans for two new resort properties, including a Ritz-Carlton on Mexico's Riviera Nayarit.

Those deals represented a milestone for Marriott and the business model. For decades, all-inclusive resorts had been the domain of specialist operators, which offered budget-minded travellers lodging, meals and other items for a single price.

As the concept gained popularity with holidaymakers, the world's largest hotel companies determined that loyalty members who accrue points on business trips would like to spend them at all-inclusive resorts.

The model is especially appealing to hotel companies now, when demand for leisure travel is outstripping bookings by corporate road warriors and conference-goers. "The pandemic has been a historic challenge to the travel industry, and we're finally seeing a light at end of tunnel," said Mr Capuano. "We want to be prepared to take full advantage when demand comes roaring back."



The 294-room Royalton Antigua Resort & Spa in Antigua is one of the Sunwing Travel Group-owned resorts that Marriott will add to its management portfolio.

## Prime property market in Dubai showing signs of improvement

## DUBAI

DEMAND for prime residential property in a number of flagship communities in Dubai rebounded in the second half of last year, recording higher prices and transaction levels, according to Knight Frank.

Transaction volumes for prime properties increased by 7.9 per cent in 2020, compared to an overall 16.4 per cent market decline, the company's UAE Market Review and Forecast said. "On the prime side of things, it's been a relatively good year. In the vast majority of markets, we've actually seen greater volumes in terms of transaction numbers in 2020 than we've seen in a few years," Taimur Khan, associate director at Knight Frank Middle East told The National.

Although prime residential values decreased by 4.2 per cent in 2020, in the second half of the year apartment and villa prices on Palm Jumeirah increased by 5.1 per cent and 9.4 per cent, respectively. Prices for villas in the Mohammed Bin Rashid City District One Community were 3.5 per cent higher and other prime markets such as Downtown Dubai and Emirates Hills also showed signs of improvement, the report showed.

The reasons for recovery are area-specific, but a common theme is a demand for mature communities. "If you look at what's happening on the Palm, a lot of it is fairly developed out now. You can't really get the Dubai continuous additional development," Mr Khan says.

There had also been a readjustment in prices that meant even prior to the pandemic, "we were seeing a bottom for villas on the Palm". Improvements to roads and the addition of amenities such as the malls and other leisure attractions have helped drive demand.

Similarly, new community facilities at District One, where Meydan Mall is moving closer to completion, is also making the community attractive to prospective buyers, Mr Khan said. "District One has done well because it's a really good product in a really good location - the ABCs of property," Mr Khan said.

## Florentia Village opens Chongqing outlet mall

## BEIJING

THE COVID-19 pandemic put a dent in China's transformation to a consumption-driven economy last year, but the slowdown in the country's retail market has not deterred the expansion of luxury mall developer Florentia Village.

The outlet mall specialist opened its seventh Greater China location on February 3rd when it debuted its Chongqing outlet before the spring festival holiday, giving its Italian parent firm RDM its second location in south-western China.

With 37,000 square metres (398,265 square feet) of leaseable shop space in its first phase, the luxury shopping destination is poised to bring global fashion brands to one of China's fastest-growing economic hubs after Florentia Village's three-year-old location in nearby Chengdu.

### Bringing global designers to Chongqing

Florentia Village Chongqing will bring more than 100 designer shops in its first phase to its location in the metropolis of more than 30.5 million people, where the group's approach of offering global designer goods at ongoing discounts of up to 80 percent is projected to replicate the success of Florentia Village's locations in Chengdu and other cities.

The project, which covers a total construction area of over 60,000 square metres (645,835 square feet), will offer local residents and visitors access to brands from Europe, United States, and Asia including Furla, Calvin Klein, Karl Lagerfeld, Ports, Brooks Brothers, I.T, Tommy Hilfiger, Agatha, Adidas, Under Armour, New Balance, Puma, Vans, Skechers, Asics, and Sasa.

Based on RDM's experience in China, where it now manages a combined leasing area of 300,000 square metres across its properties, the company projects that Florentia Village Chongqing will attract



Florentia Village in Beijing.

800,000 visitors this year, with those guests expected to spend around \$77.2 million.

During 2020, despite nationwide restrictions during the first quarter due to the coronavirus pandemic, Florentia Village's outlet in Chengdu saw its visitor total for the full year rise by 25 percent, compared to the prior 12 month period, to reach 2.5 million people. During last year the location in Chengdu, which at 16.33 million has just over half of Chongqing's population, rang up \$123.5 million in sales - an increase of 78 percent over 2019.

### Shoppers defy pandemic

Last year's performance for Florentia Village's Chengdu location is in line with south-western China's status as a major growth hub for the country, which saw economic expansion and growth after recovering from the early shocks of the pandemic. In Chongqing, the gross domestic product grew by 3.9 percent for the full year of 2020, with retail sales of consumer goods expanding by 1.3 percent, according to official gov-

ernment statistics.

As 2020 progressed, retail sales of consumer goods in Chongqing quickly bounced back with third quarter statistics showing 8.3 percent growth over the same period in 2019. Country-wide, retail sales in China grew steadily last year after the lock-down period ended in March.

While the COVID-19 pandemic was the biggest challenge that Florentia Village had faced in China, the company saw its investment in omni-channel platforms and e-commerce pay off as online sales grew by 500 percent in the early part of 2020. In addition, the total portfolio of Florentia Village offline locations achieved close to \$1.54 billion sales and saw 19 million visitors in 2020.

### Ongoing expansion

This year marks 10 years since Florentia Village was first introduced to China market. The company rapidly expanded its business and now has total of seven locations in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan and Hong Kong, in addition to its Tianjin, Chengdu and Chongqing stores.

Florentia Village development is backed by major institutional investors as it completes its pipeline with the seventh outlet location. A joint venture backed by Nuveen Real Estate, Hong Kong Gaw Capital, Fingen Group, and Waitex has helped boost the company's footprint across Greater China, including a new pipeline to be disclosed in the second half of the year.

Besides opening in Chongqing, this year Florentia Village is expanding its existing locations in Shanghai and Chengdu as it continues to target value-conscious mainland China luxury shoppers and maintains its position as leading international luxury designer outlet in China.

The Florentia Village Shanghai Phase II project targets to open in the middle of this year with total construction area of around 27,000 square meters (290,626 square feet), accommodating 120 new stores; while the Chengdu Phase II project is expected to be open in the fourth quarter with a construction area of around 30,000 square meters (322,917 square feet) and approximately 100 new brand stores.



## WORLD

## Dozens of former Republican officials in talks to form anti-Trump third party

WASHINGTON

DOZENS of former Republican officials, who view the party as unwilling to stand up to former President Donald Trump and his attempts to undermine U.S. democracy, are in talks to form a center-right breakaway party, four people involved in the discussions told Reuters.

The early stage discussions include former elected Republicans, former officials in the Republican administrations of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Trump, ex-Republican ambassadors and Republican strategists, the people involved say.

More than 120 of them held a Zoom call last Friday to discuss the breakaway group, which would run on a platform of "principled conservatism," including adherence to the Constitution and the rule of law - ideas those involved say have been trashed by Trump.

The plan would be to run candidates in some races but also to endorse center-right candidates in others, be they Republicans, independents or Democrats, the people say.

Evan McMullin, who was chief policy director for the House Republican Conference and ran as an independent in the 2016 presidential election, told Reuters that he co-hosted the Zoom call with former officials concerned about Trump's grip on Republicans and the nativist turn the party has taken.

Three other people confirmed to Reuters the call and the discussions for a potential

splinter party, but asked not to be identified.

Among the call participants were John Mitnick, general counsel for the Department of Homeland Security under Trump; former Republican congressman Charlie Dent; Elizabeth Neumann, deputy chief of staff in the Homeland Security Department under Trump; and Miles Taylor, another former Trump homeland security official.

The talks highlight the wide intraparty rift over Trump's false claims of election fraud and the deadly Jan. 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol. Most Republicans remain fiercely loyal to the former president, but others seek a new direction for the party.

The House of Representatives impeached Trump on Jan. 13 on a charge of inciting an insurrection by exhorting thousands of supporters to march on the Capitol on the day Congress was gathered to certify Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

Call participants said they were particularly dismayed by the fact that more than half of the Republicans in Congress - eight senators and 139 House representatives - voted to block certification of Biden's election victory just hours after the Capitol siege.

Most Republican senators have also indicated they will not support the conviction of Trump in this week's Senate impeachment trial. "Large portions of the Republican Party are radicalizing and threatening American democracy," McMullin told Reuters. "The party needs to recommit to truth, reason and



Donald Trump

founding ideals or there clearly needs to be something new."

**'THESE LOSERS'**

Asked about the discussions for a third party, Jason Miller, a Trump spokesman, said: "These losers left the Republican Party when they voted for Joe Biden."

A representative for the Republican National Committee referred to a recent statement from Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel.

"If we continue to attack each other and focus on attacking on fellow Republicans, if we have disagreements within our party, then we are losing sight of 2022 (elections)," McDaniel said on Fox News last month.

"The only way we're going to win is if we come together," she said.

The Biden White House did not immediately respond to a request

for comment. McMullin said just over 40% of those on last week's Zoom call backed the idea of a breakaway, national third party. Another option under discussion is to form a "faction" that would operate either inside the current Republican Party or outside it.

Names under consideration for a new party include the Integrity Party and the Center Right Party. If it is decided instead to form a faction, one name under discussion is the Center Right Republicans.

Members are aware that the U.S. political landscape is littered with the remains of previous failed attempts at national third parties. "But there is a far greater hunger for a new political party out there than I have ever experienced in my lifetime," one participant said.

Agencies

## Russia in talks with 50 states on providing anti-coronavirus vaccine

MOSCOW

RUSSIA is in talks with about 50 countries on providing the anti-coronavirus vaccine Sputnik V, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Pankin told TASS in an interview.

"The highly effective and safe product Sputnik V, created in our country, is being used in Russia on the massive scale and has been authorized for use in more than 20 countries.

It looks like by the middle of February this list will grow to 25. Negotiations on providing the vaccine are underway with about 50 states," he said.

Pankin stressed that Russia joined the global efforts to fight against the coronavirus pandemic at early stages by providing assistance to some individual countries and through cooperation via international organizations.

"We are determined to step up this work and to offer all interested partners our products in the field of vaccination against the coronavirus," Pankin said.

He recalled that Moscow was cooperating with the World Health Organization for the purpose of including Sputnik V in the list of medical products to be used in emergencies.

"In this way we advance cooperation in different formats, which, to my mind is the most effective tactic amid the continuing pandemic. This concerns the promotion of other Russian anti-coronavirus vaccines to the world market, too," he concluded.

Agencies

## Houthi claims responsibility for Saudi airport attack

SANAA, Yemen / WASHINGTON

YEMEN'S Houthi militia on Wednesday claimed responsibility for a drone attack on a Saudi civilian airport.

"Our drone air force targeted Wednesday noon Abha airport by using four bomb-laden drones, which hit the target accurately," said Yahya Sarea, spokesman of the Houthi militia, in a statement aired by the Houthi-run al-Masirah television.

"The attack was in response to the airstrikes and blockade imposed by the (Saudi-led) coalition on our country," Sarea added.

Earlier in the day, the Saudi-led coalition said the Houthi militia's drone attack on Abha airport caused a fire in a passenger plane, adding the fire was put out later.

"The Houthi attempt to target a civilian airport and threaten civilian travellers is a war crime," the coalition said in a statement aired by the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television.

This was the latest in a series of the Houthi militia's cross-border ballistic missile and drone attacks targeting Saudi civilian airports and oil facilities. Most of the attacks were foiled by the Saudi-led coalition.

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed diplomatic efforts to end the war in Yemen and bolstering Saudi Arabia's defenses in a call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, the US State Department said.

The two officials "outlined diplomatic outreach to find a negotiated political settlement to the war in Yemen" and "discussed joint efforts to bolster Saudi defenses against attacks on the Kingdom," the State Department said in a statement.

Yemen has been mired in a civil war since late 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthi militia seized control of several northern provinces and forced the internationally-recognized government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi out of the capital Sanaa.

Agencies

## WHO recommends AstraZeneca vaccine use amid concerns over efficacy against virus variant

GENEVA

BENEFITS of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University outweigh known and potential risks, the World Health Organization (WHO) has ruled amid concerns over vaccine's efficacy against the coronavirus variant found in South Africa.

The WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) panel on Wednesday said the two-dose AstraZeneca vaccine efficacy tended to be higher when the interval between doses was within the four to 12 weeks range. It also added that although preliminary analyses based on a small sample size in South Africa indicate a marked reduction in vaccine effectiveness against mild and moderate disease, it did not allow a specific assessment of vaccine efficacy against severe COVID-19.

As indirect evidence is compatible with protection against severe COVID-19, the situation remains to be demonstrated in ongoing clinical trials and post-implementation evaluations.

In view of this, WHO currently recommends the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine even if the variants are present in a country. Countries should conduct a benefit-risk assessment according to the local epidemiological situation, including the extent of circulating virus variants.

Xinhua

## Suu Kyi aide, electoral officials arrested in Myanmar, Biden approves sanctions

A close aide to ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi was detained in a new wave of arrests following last week's military coup, a party official said yesterday, as Washington moved a step closer to imposing sanctions on the junta.

The aide, Kyaw Tint Swe, had served as minister for the office of the state counsellor under Suu Kyi, who has been detained since the Feb. 1 coup.

Regarded as Suu Kyi's right-hand man, Kyaw Tint Swe had been one of her representatives in crunch talks with the military days before the civilian government was overthrown.

Kyi Toe, an information committee member of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), said Kyaw Tint Swe and four other people linked to the previous government had been

taken from their homes overnight, and the top leadership of the former electoral commission had all been arrested.

The military launched the coup after what it said was widespread fraud in November elections, won by the NLD in a landslide. The electoral commission had rejected those claims. Myanmar authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment, and Reuters was unable to confirm the arrests independently. Scores of officials have been detained since the coup, including many of the NLD's top leaders.

Protesters gathered across the country for a sixth straight day yesterday. Hundreds of workers lined a road in the capital Naypyitaw in support of the civil disobedience movement, chanting anti-junta slogans and carrying



placards supporting Suu Kyi.

In keeping with the creativity of recent demonstrations, where some protesters have worn ball gowns and costumes, rallies in Yangon included men and boys dressed in short skirts. "We don't take off our skirt until we get democracy back," one sign read.

Hundreds of protesters also demonstrated outside the Chinese embassy in Yangon, accusing Beijing of supporting the military junta despite Chinese denials.

"Support Myanmar, Don't support dictators," read one of the

placards in Chinese and English.

The Chinese embassy made no immediate response. Late on Wednesday, it posted a statement on Facebook dismissing reports on the internet of Chinese planes bringing in technical personnel, and said the only flights were regular cargo flights importing and exporting goods such as seafood.

Protesters also demonstrated near the embassies of the United States, Russia and France as well as the offices of the United Nations. The French ambassador went out to meet them to state his support for democracy and for the release of detainees.

**U.S. SANCTIONS LOOM**

The protests have revived memories of almost half a century of direct army rule, punctuated with bloody army crackdowns, until the military began

relinquishing some power in 2011. U.S. President Joe Biden on Wednesday approved an executive order for new sanctions on those responsible for the coup, and repeated demands for the generals to give up power and free civilian leaders.

Washington would identify the first round of targets this week and was taking steps to prevent the generals in Myanmar, also known as Burma, having access to \$1 billion in Myanmar government funds held in the United States. "We're also going to impose strong exports controls. We're freezing U.S. assets that benefit the Burmese government, while maintaining our support for health care, civil society groups, and other areas that benefit the people of Burma directly," Biden said at the White House.

Agencies

## EU rejects most UK demands on N. Ireland trade, except steel

BRUSSELS

THE European Union rejected on Wednesday most of Britain's demands for easier trade with Northern Ireland but said it was examining more flexibility on steel.

In a letter to British Cabinet Minister Michael Gove, European Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic (pictured) said the EU executive arm was "examining possible amendments" to make steel imports into Northern Ireland from Britain

count against the tariffs quota given by the EU to Britain.

But the EU rejected calls for more time, until Jan 1, 2023, for British supermarkets and their suppliers to adjust to the new customs border on the Irish Sea for goods shipped to the province, including chilled meat, parcels and medicines.

The customs border between Britain and Northern Ireland was created as part of the deal on Britain's exit from the European Union so as to prevent the creation of a hard border be-



tween the province and the rest of the island of Ireland.

"As regards additional flexibilities concerning the application of Union law applicable in Northern Ireland with regard to

meat products, export health certificates and parcel and express services I would like to recall that blanket derogations ... cannot be agreed beyond what the Protocol foresees already," Sefcovic wrote.

Sefcovic is due to meet Gove on Thursday in London for further talks.

Certain European Union states "need to cool it" and "dial down the rhetoric" on relations with Britain, Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin said on Thursday ahead of the meeting.

Agencies

## China's CoronaVac vaccine recognised by multiple countries

BRAZIL'S Health Regulatory Agency (Anvisa) announced on Jan. 17 that it has approved the emergency use of the CoronaVac vaccine, from the Chinese biotech firm Sinovac.

The first batch of Brazilian vaccines were vaccinated on the same day. This made Brazil the third country in the world to approve the emergency use of the CoronaVac vaccine, after Indonesia and Turkey. Chinese vaccines' overall safety and efficacy are widely being recognized in the world.

The CoronaVac vaccine started Phase I and II clinical trials in last April. After being proved to be safe and effective, it was put into Phase III clinical trials in Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia and Chile. According to Turkey's interim data, the Chinese vaccine is 91.25 percent effective. It was also proved to have an efficacy rate of 65.3 percent by Indone-

sia's Phase III clinical trials. Brazil's Phase III clinical trials showed that the vaccine is 100 percent effective against severe symptoms and 78 percent for mild cases, which led to a general efficacy of 50.38 percent.

Yin Weidong, chairman of Sinovac, said on Jan. 13 press conference that the Phase III clinical studies have already proved the safety and efficacy of the Chinese vaccine in the global context.

"We have a projected annual production capacity of more than 1 billion doses," Yin said, adding that the biotech firm has built a production line that is able to produce about 500 million doses of the CoronaVac vaccine solutions annually. "The production line for the second phase of our vaccine solutions

will be put into operation in February this year," he continued.

It is reported that multiple countries, including Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines have signed deals with Sinovac for vaccine supply. The vaccine developed by the company was also injected to multiple state leaders, which demonstrated their trust to the Chinese vaccine.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received his first dose of the CoronaVac vaccine in Ankara on Jan. 14, local time, a day after Turkey announced to approve Sinovac vaccines for emergency use. CoronaVac is the first COVID-19 vaccine approved by the country.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo re-

ceived the first dose of CoronaVac on Jan. 13, live on television. Indonesia's food and drug authority BPOM issued an emergency use authorization to the vaccine on Jan. 11, explaining the vaccine has undergone a Phase III trial in Bandung, and its efficacy was higher than the 50 percent threshold stipulated by the World Health Organization.

Malaysian state-run pharmaceutical company Pharmacia on Jan. 12 reached a deal on COVID-19 vaccine cooperation with Sinovac. The Chinese firm will provide 14 million doses of ready-to-fill COVID-19 vaccines to Malaysia, and the Malaysian company will carry out a fill-and-finish process of the vaccine in Malaysia.

The Ukrainian Lekhim Group also part-

nered with Sinovac on the purchase of 5 million doses of CoronaVac vaccine. Besides, the Ukrainian firm is planning to produce locally multiple Sinovac vaccines, including the CoronaVac, from 2022.

Brazilian Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello said on Jan. 7 that Brazil has signed an agreement with the Butantan Institute of Sao Paulo to purchase 100 million doses of CoronaVac vaccine.

The Department of Health of the Philippines recently disclosed that the Philippine government has secured 25 million doses of Sinovac-developed CoronaVac vaccine. The country's Food and Drug Administration said it has received an application from the Chinese firm seeking an emergency use authorization for the CoronaVac vaccine. The vaccine is expected to be granted as early as this February.

People's Daily



# Xi speaks with Biden on phone on eve of Lunar New Year

BEIJING

CHINESE President Xi Jinping yesterday morning took a phone call from US President Joseph R Biden on the eve of the Lunar New Year.

The two presidents wished each other good fortune in the Year of the Ox, and had an in-depth exchange of views on China-US relations and major international and regional issues.

Biden conveyed festive greetings to the Chinese people and wished the Chinese people a happy and prosperous New Year. Xi congratulated Biden once again on taking office as US president, and wished the people of China and the United States a happy and auspicious Year of the Ox.

Xi pointed out that the restoration and growth of China-US relations has been the most important development in international relations over the past half century and more.

Despite various twists and difficulties, he added, the relationship has on the whole kept moving forward and delivered enormous benefits to the Chinese and American peoples and contributed to global peace, stability and prosperity.

Xi stressed that China and the United States both gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation; cooperation is the only right choice for both sides.

When China and the United States work together, they can accomplish a great deal for the good of both countries and the world at large; confrontation between the two countries, however, will definitely be disastrous for both countries and the world, he added.

Emphasizing that the China-US relationship is currently at an important juncture, Xi said it is the common desire of both peoples and the wider international community to see the sound and stable development of China-US relations.

"You have said that America can be defined in one word: Possibilities. We hope the possibilities will now point toward an improvement of China-US relations," Xi said to Biden.

The two countries, he suggested, should make joint efforts in the same direction, follow the spirit of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, focus on cooperation, manage their differences, and work for the sound and stable development of China-US relations.

In this way, they can deliver more tangible benefits to people in both countries, and make their due contribution to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting world economic recovery and maintaining regional peace and stability, Xi added.

Xi emphasized that while the two



This combo photo shows Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) and US President Joe Biden.

sides may differ on some issues, it is crucial to show mutual respect, treat each other as equals, and properly manage and handle the differences in a constructive fashion.

The foreign affairs departments of the two countries may have in-depth communications on wide-ranging matters in the bilateral relationship and major international and regional issues, and the economic, financial, law enforcement and military authorities of the two countries may also have more contacts, Xi said.

The two sides should re-establish the various dialogue mechanisms, read each other's policy intentions accurately, and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation, he said, adding that it is important to manage differences where they exist and jointly pursue cooperation where it is desirable to do so.

The Taiwan question and issues relating to Hong Kong, Xinjiang, etc are China's internal affairs and concern China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the US side should respect China's core interests and act prudently, Xi stressed.

Xi emphasized that confronting a highly uncertain international situation, China and the United States shoulder special international responsibilities and obligations as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The two sides, he added, should act to conform to the trend of the world, jointly safeguard peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and make historic contributions to promoting world peace and development.

Biden, for his part, noted that China has a long history and a great culture and the Chinese people are a great people.

The United States and China must avoid conflict and they may work together on climate change and many other issues, he added.

The US side, he said, is prepared to have candid and constructive dialogue with the Chinese side in the spirit of mutual respect and to improve mutual understanding and avoid miscommunication and miscalculation.

The two presidents agreed that their phone conversation today will send a positive signal to the world and the two sides will maintain close communication on China-US relations and issues of mutual interest.

Xinhua

CDC experiments show double masks substantially reducing exposure to virus

WASHINGTON

THE U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently conducted experiments to improve the fit of masks amid COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that combining cloth mask and medical procedure mask could reduce a wearer's exposure to virus by over 90 percent.

In January, the CDC conducted experiments to assess two ways of improving the fit of medical procedure masks: fitting a cloth mask over a medical procedure mask, and knotting the ear loops of a medical procedure mask and then tucking in and flattening the extra material close to the face.

Each modification substantially improved source control and reduced wearer exposure, according to a report released by the CDC on Wednesday.

"Based on experiments that measured the filtration efficiencies of various cloth masks and a medical procedure mask, it was estimated that the better fit achieved by combining these two mask types, specifically a cloth mask over a medical procedure mask, could reduce a wearer's exposure by over 90 percent," said the report.

These laboratory-based experiments highlight the importance of good fit to optimize mask performance. Until vaccine-induced population immunity is achieved, universal masking is a highly effective means to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 when combined with other protective measures, such as physical distancing, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces, and good hand hygiene, according to the CDC.

Xinhua

## Western hysteria directed at Russia won't change Moscow's policy, diplomat says

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN policy does not depend on pressure of external players, hysteria of Western countries regarding Moscow cannot change its political course, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Channel One.

"Let's not focus on this hysteria as on something that can cancel out, change our policy. Our policy

is not formed depending on somebody wanting to hurt us, do harm and so on," she said.

The spokeswoman noted that the situation with deportation of Russian diplomats from Germany, Sweden and Poland is not an unprecedented one, "roughly repeating what we have already seen and experienced." "This has been going on for years, decades, centuries. People, and I mean our collective



West, defend their own interests. When they don't have any opportunities for equitable competition which would be based on law, on legislation, on common rules of regulation, they move on to aggressive policy," she added.

On February 5, the Russian Foreign Ministry reported that Russia declared a Swedish, a Polish and a German diplomat personae non gratae for participating in unau-

thorized rallies in Moscow and St. Petersburg on January 23. Representatives of these countries' embassies were summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry and handed notes of protest.

On February 8, as a retaliatory measure, these countries deported Russian diplomats. The Russian Foreign Ministry pointed out the baselessness of these actions.

Agencies

## China's GDP exceeds 100 trillion yuan for first time

CHINA'S GDP expanded 2.3 percent and hit 101.5986 trillion yuan (\$15.51 trillion) in 2020, exceeding the 100 trillion yuan mark for the first time, official data showed recently.

Facing the rare COVID-19 pandemic, the world economy plunged into the most severe recession since the end of the World War II over the last year. The Chinese economy also slipped 6.8 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, the first ever negative growth registered since the country started recording quarterly economic data.

At the critical moment, the Chinese government precisely assessed the situation, took decisive actions and coordinated epidemic prevention and control and economic and social development. Launching a battle against the epidemic by mobilizing all resources and blocking the spread of the virus, China pledged to increase its deficit by 1 trillion yuan over last year and issue 1 trillion yuan of government bonds for COVID-19 control. It also called on financial institutions to concede 1.5 trillion yuan worth of their profits to companies and increased tax and fee cuts by 2.5 trillion yuan.

Thanks to these efforts, Chi-

na became the first country to control the pandemic and resumed work and production, being the first major economy to recover positive growth. The growths of the country's economy in the four quarters last year were -6.8 percent, 3.2 percent, 4.9 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively, and China is predicted to be the only major economy that is able to secure positive growth. The country's economic value now accounts for 17 percent of the total global economy, up from 16.3 percent in 2019, making a new historical record.

As the country steps onto a higher level economy-wise, great strides have also been made in its social, technological and ecological progress.

The last nine impoverished counties of the country, all in southwest China's Guizhou province, have eliminated absolute poverty, the province announced on Nov. 23, 2020. This meant that all 832 registered poor counties in China have shaken off poverty, indicating that the country has achieved the poverty reduction target of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule.

The country's Chang'e-5 probe returned the Earth after retrieving lunar samples, and



Containers are loaded to a vessel at a container terminal in Lianyungang Port, east China's Jiangsu province, Jan. 14, 2020. (File photo)

its Mars mission Tianwen-1 was successfully launched. In addition, China announces the completion of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and started providing all Beidou services. Its quantum computer prototype Jiuzhang was also created.

Though impacted by COVID-19, China's innovation and development still step forward. The country unswervingly implemented its new vision for development and promoted high-quality development, which resulted in a steady rise in both the quality and benefits of its economic growth, said Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). China has brought its social productive forces to a new level, he added.

What's behind the 100 trillion

yuan mark is the constant improvement in China's comprehensive national strength. Last year, China's total grain output hit a new record in history, exceeding 650 billion kilograms for six consecutive years and ranking the first in the world. Its added value of manufacturing industry is also expected to top the world for 11 years in a row. The total mileage of operational high-speed rails in China has hit 38,000 kilometers, and its expressways add up to over 155,000 kilometers, both ranking the first in the world. Besides, China is also a country that holds the most 5G users, with more than 200 million terminals connected to its 5G network.

People's Daily

## UN chief thanks China for supporting multilateralism, UN

UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday extended his gratitude to China and the Chinese people for their support for multilateralism and the United Nations in his video message for the Chinese Lunar New Year, which starts today.

"I thank China and the Chinese people for your continuous support for multilateralism and the United Nations, across all pillars of our work. I look forward to our continuing cooperation," the UN chief said.

Guterres began his message in Mandarin: "Chun Jie Kuai Le!" (Happy Spring Festival!) "I send my best wishes to everyone celebrating the Lunar New Year."

"This year is the Year of the Ox - the same sign as the year of my birth," said the top UN official. "The ox symbolizes energy, strength, and courage. These qualities are what the world needs now."

On COVID-19, the secretary-general said that last year, the COVID-19 pandemic brought great uncertainty and disruption. However, he stressed that "in 2021, we must stand together to fight the virus, take climate action and build a strong recovery from the pandemic."



After expressing the wish of maintaining closer cooperation with China and the Chinese people, the UN chief extended his "best wishes to all for prosperity, health and happiness in the Year of the Ox."

**Xi's Speech Inspires Overseas Chinese**

Overseas Chinese, after listening to Chinese President Xi Jinping's speech on behalf of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, extending Spring Festival greetings to all Chinese Wednesday, have said that they are inspired.

The overseas Chinese said they will work hard to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and contribute to the noble cause of peace and development for all mankind.

Wang Jiaqing, head of Council for Peaceful National Reunification of China

in France, said that Chinese living overseas are deeply touched by Xi's speech ahead of this year's Spring Festival, or the Chinese Lunar New Year, which falls on Feb. 12.

For Peng Yi, director of Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, she and her colleagues were inspired to continue striving to tell the world about China and its people and promote people-to-people exchanges between China and South Africa.

Li Wei, general manager of Zhongman Petroleum and Natural Gas Group's branch in Egypt, noted that China has successfully overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and achieved economic development.

"As overseas Chinese, we listened to President Xi's speech while seeing the achievements we have, which made us really happy," Li said.

Xinhua

## EU member states agree to revise ePrivacy rules

BRUSSELS/GENEVA

EUROPEAN Union (EU) member states agreed on Wednesday to revise rules on the protection of privacy and confidentiality in the use of electronic communications services.

The original proposal was presented by the European Commission back in 2017.

The European Council said in a statement that the agreement paves the way for negotiations with the European Parliament on the final text of the new rules which will repeal the previous directives.

The revised rules will define cases in which service providers are allowed to process electronic com-



Flags of European Union member states fly in front of the Louise Weiss building (right), headquarters of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France, on July 1, 2019. (File photo)

munications data or have access to data stored on

end-users' devices. Portugal's Infrastructure

and Housing Minister Pedro Nuno Santos, president of

the Council, said that robust privacy rules were vital for creating and maintaining trust in a digital world.

"The path to the Council position has not been easy, but we now have a mandate that strikes a good balance between solid protection of the private life of individuals and fostering the development of new technologies and innovation," he said.

Portugal is holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU.

An update to the existing ePrivacy directive of 2002 is needed to cater for new

technological and market developments, such as the current widespread use of voice over IP (VoIP), web-based email and messaging services and the emergence of new techniques for tracking users' online behavior. The mandate also covers rules on online identification, public directories, and unsolicited and direct marketing, the Council said.

**Protection against online child sex abuse**

As the global community marked Safer Internet Day on Feb 9, UN human rights experts have called on the

EU to "close the legal gap" in children's protection from sexual abuse online.

In a press release issued on Wednesday, Mama Fatima Singhateh, UN special rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children, was quoting as saying: "The fact that there currently exists no legislation within the EU that allows for the technology companies to detect and report child sexual abuse online is very concerning to me."

If no agreement is reached on temporary legislation to allow for the continued use of technological tools to tackle such abuse, "many children will continue to be abused with impunity with no hope in sight for assistance," she said.

Agencies



# SPORT



Simba defender Mohamed Hussein.

## Pawasa counsels Simba SC fullbacks

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIA'S Simba full-backs, Mohamed Hussein and Shomary Kapombe, have been urged to keep DR Congo's AS Vita Club wingers in check during the two squads' CAF Champions League's Group A match, to be played in Kinshasa today.

Simba's former defender, Boniface Pawasa, said Hussein and Kapombe are doing a great job of attacking and defending but he urged them to be careful in the fixture based on their opponents' experience.

Pawasa said he played both as fullback and central defender, for that matter he knows the hard work the two Simba defenders have to do.

According to Pawasa, the players need to be skilful, seeing to it they do not let opponents attack their squad from the wings.

He disclosed: "International matches are different from the domestic league's fixtures, in domestic event, they are familiar with each other."

"In international fixtures, opposing squads are out to look at the chances of someone making a few mistakes, that's why I advise fullbacks to avoid losing

concentration," he stated.

"There are times when they are very aggressive and fail to return quickly to catch, which can be detrimental if they meet running wingers, so be more careful in the game," he said.

In addition to giving tactics to the peripheral defenders, he said even the midfielders should get along with the attacking midfielders to make sure they start attacking their opponents before they reach the opponents' area.

"The opponents must be given a central position, that will relieve the pressure on the goalkeeper to regularly save AS Vita Club strikers' attempts, however I believe Simba can do wonders in the game, they should be confident and play against the opponents with discipline," he said.

And the team's former coach, Abdallah Kibadeni, echoed Pawasa's statement, maintaining Simba's fans should be confident that their club is facing 11 players on the pitch.

Kibadeni was of the opinion Simba need to attack, an approach that will shock opponents and force them to settle for different tactic.

He noted: "Players should not go on the field with a lot of fear, they should showcase commitment, discipline and resort to attacking approach, the move will shock AS Vita Club."

## TFF issues ban on Shinyanga, Tabora football officials

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

THE Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) has banned Shinyanga Regional Football Association (SHIREFA) Chairman Bannister Misango from participating in football activities for two years after violating the sport's rules.

The leader has been suspended through the TFF Ethics Committee immediately after failing to perform his duties professionally, violating SHIREFA constitution's article 41 (10).

In 2009, Misango breached the rules via appointing a representative of the region's clubs, Michael Kaijage, as SHIREFA's acting secretary general, instead of the association's assistant secretary, Stephen Mihambo.

The SHIREFA Chairman pleaded guilty before the TFF Ethics Committee.

A statement from the TFF stated that the leader was punished in accordance with Article 2 (6) (1) and Article 3 (9)(1) of the 2013 Ethics Manual.

The TFF Ethics Committee also banned Dikson Mulimuka, a candidate for the Tabora Regional Football Association (TAREFA) chairmanship and party leader Stella Maganga from engaging in football activities for 10 years.

Mulimuka, who was a candidate in the TAREFA election, had overseen the Urambo District Football Association election, an act which is contrary to Article 19 (2) of the 2013 TFF code of conduct.

In the case of Stella, a TAREFA leader, she was suspended by the TFF Ethics Committee after she had served as a candidate, an administrator and a voter in the Sikonge District Football Association election contrary to Article 3 (3.1) of the TFF Code of Ethics, 2013 edition.

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The TFF Ethics Committee also banned Dikson Mulimuka, a candidate for the Tabora Regional Football Association (TAREFA) chairmanship and party leader Stella Maganga from engaging in football activities for 10 years.

## SPORTS

### Gwambina FC drags feet over unveiling new head coach



Gwambina Football Club

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

DESPITE Gwambina FC's leadership avoiding confirming the signing of the club's new head coach, Mohamed Badri, The Guardian is convinced the team are already under the tutelage of the gaffer for the remainder of this season's Vodacom Premier League (VPL).

Mwanza-based Gwambina FC, featuring in the (VPL) for the first time, did not have a head coach after the sacking of Fulgence Novatus and his assistant, Athuman Bilali 'Billo', following the outfit's string of poor results.

The Misungwi District team were under caretaker coach, Hassan Salum, who was the squad's U-20 team's coach, assisted by physical trainer, Seleman Kisendi, after sacking the former head coach.

The news received by The Guardian is that Badri was introduced to the

players this week and he already accompanied the team to Bukoba for their VPL game against Kagera Sugar, which took place yesterday.

However, the club's secretary, Dany Kirai, stated the process was ongoing, noting they would make it clear if the process will go smoothly.

"No, we have not yet brought in a new coach, talks are in progress and if we complete it we will make it clear, it is a small issue that has been delayed but we are doing well to make this right quickly," he noted.

A few days after parting ways with Gwambina FC, former head coach Novatus has found new home after sealing contract with Tabora's Rhino Rangers.

The gaffer vowed to showcase his ability to help the side get promotion to VPL.

Novatus was sacked along with his former assistant, Bilal, following their bosses' dissatisfaction over the team's results.

Rhino Rangers, currently battling it out in the First Division League (FDL) and placed in Group B, have not had good results, given the team have collected eight points and sit seventh in the group.

The coach has confirmed his deal with the (FDL) outfit and that he has already started his responsibilities.

He stated he wants to show his ability in the coaching

job. He said he has seen the team experience difficulties in terms of getting good results, so he is not worried.

He pointed out with his experience in coaching sides which feature in competitive leagues, he only seeks to fully cooperate with the outfit's administration in an effort to live up to expectations.

"As we speak, I am at the squad, I know the club's results are not good but it is our job as coaches to make things right and turn the situation around, I have experience and ability in the competitive league so all I ask this team and fans is they should cooperate with me," he disclosed.

### More Dar athletes set to qualify for Olympic Games



Director of Sports in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports, Yusuph Singo.

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE government has said it expects a total of 17 more athletes to qualify for the Olympic Games, which will take place in Tokyo, Japan from July 23 to August 8.

So far only two athletes, Alphonse Simbu and Failuna Matanga have so far secured a ticket to compete in the global showpiece.

Athletics, judo, boxing and swimming are sports disciplines that the country is expected to participate in.

Recently, Athletics Tanzania announced 25 athletes in search of qualification.

Open Boxing Federation of Tanzania announced 15 boxers seeking qualification, and judo association disclosed that 10 players are seeking to make it to the Olympics.

The mentioned players will be responsible for finding the qualifying

marks for the Olympics.

The Tanzania Swimming Association announced three swimmers who will be responsible for finding the qualifying marks.

While the athletes are in the process of preparing for the showpiece, Director of Sports in the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports, Yusuph Singo, said so far they are not satisfied with the number of qualified athletes and they expect to see others win qualifying tickets.

Singo said they expect to see six more athletes make it to Olympics, as well as four boxers.

"We also expect all three swimmers to qualify for the competition to get a satisfactory number, not these two that we currently have," Singo revealed.

He said the government has now put in place a strategic plan for the competition, whereby they have held various forums to see how they are going to increase the number of athletes in the competition.

"We have held various meetings and

delegated responsibilities. Apart from the four associations, the meeting also involved the Tanzania Olympic Committee (TOC). It is our hope that we will be able to successfully increase the number of athletes," he disclosed.

The Summer Olympic Games also known as the Games of the Olympiad, are a major international multi-sport event normally held once every four years. The Games were first held in 1896 in Athens, Greece, and were most recently held in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) organises the Games and oversees the host city's preparations.

In each Olympic event, gold medals are awarded for first place, silver medals are awarded for second place, and bronze medals are awarded for third place.

This tradition began in 1904. The Winter Olympic Games were created out of the success of the Summer Olympics.



## Bennacer credits vocal Ibrahimovic with inspiring AC Milan's young guns

MILAN

ZLATAN Ibrahimovic rarely hesitates to harangue his young AC Milan teammates but "it's better than if he said nothing", says Algeria midfielder Ismael Bennacer.

France-born Bennacer joined Milan from Empoli in 2019 and has, over the past two seasons, become one of the key members of the team who are currently leading Serie A.

"Even if sometimes we see that he's screaming on the pitch, it's better than if he didn't say anything, otherwise it would mean that he doesn't care," the 23-year-old told AFP.

"He brings us a lot. With all the experience he has acquired, he tries to take us to the highest level with him, he always seeks perfection. He gives us a lot of advice."

The 39-year-old Swedish star has been a talismanic figure since returning to Milan in January 2020, reviving the fallen European giants.

Ibrahimovic has become a standard bearer among a new generation of young talent, with the average age of the seven-time European champions one of the lowest in Serie A.

Playing alongside Bennacer is 24-year-old Ivory Coast midfielder Franck Kessie, France's Theo Hernandez, 23, Portuguese Rafael Leao and Belgian Alexis Saelemaekers, both 21.

Despite his experience, goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma is also only 21.

Milan were top of the league at the halfway point in January for the first time since 2011, the year they went on to win their 18th and last Scudetto.

The catalyst for the revival was possibly their humiliating 5-0 defeat by Atalanta at the end of 2019.

"After this defeat, there was a lot of soul searching," said Bennacer, who was born in Arles, in the south of France, to an Algerian mother and a Moroccan father.

AFP

## Mourinho blames mystery injury for Bale absence

LONDON

A COY Jose Mourinho has blamed a mystery muscle injury as the reason for Gareth Bale missing Tottenham Hotspur's 5-4 FA Cup loss to Everton.

Bale has started only two games and played a meagre 230 minutes in the Premier League since joining Spurs on loan from Real Madrid at the beginning of the season, and was once again missing from Mourinho's team sheet on Wednesday.

Tottenham keenly felt the absence of the Wales star as Everton secured the extra-time win, and Mourinho once again had to field questions about Bale's availability for his team.

"Well I think it's better for me to say," Mourinho responded when asked about Bale after the match. "So we played against West Bromwich on the Sunday and he didn't play. On Monday I was a little bit surprised by him wanting to have a scan because he was not comfortable with some muscular area."

"So he didn't train on Monday, and then on Tuesday he trained with the team, but I was informed that his desire would be to work with the sports science for a couple of days to

strengthen that area.

"That's the reason why he's not here."

Mourinho's remarks came just 24 hours after 31-year-old Bale shared a picture of himself training on Instagram. Tottenham, who battled back from 3-1 and 4-3 down having taken the lead in the third minute, have now lost four of their last five games.

Mourinho lamented his side's ability to defend, saying that four goals should have been enough to comfortably beaten Everton.

"When you score four goals, you have to win. The way we played, we should win comfortably," Mourinho said. "Attacking football only wins matches when you don't make more defensive mistakes than what you create."

"We were brave, we create, we were the best team while winning 1-0. But in five minutes it was pom-pom, mistake-mistake-mistake, goal-goal-goal. You fight back, go again, but more mistakes. You fight back again. That was the mouse and the cat. The mouse was our defensive mistake, and the cat was us trying to compensate that by playing well."

(Agencies)

## Maradona death: Three suspects added to probe

BUENOS AIRES

TWO nurses and a psychologist have been added to the investigation into the death of Diego Maradona.

Maradona died at the age of 60 of a heart attack on Nov. 25, two weeks after being released from a hospital in Buenos Aires following successful brain surgery.

A probe was opened by authorities in Argentina to establish if there was negligence in Maradona's treatment following the operation and if so, for those individuals to face a criminal case for manslaughter.

Leopoldo Luque, the neurosurgeon who performed Maradona's brain surgery, and psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov, who had treated the former Napoli star, are under investigation and had their homes and offices searched shortly after his death.

Psychologist Carlos Diaz, who treated Maradona in the months prior to his passing, and nurses Dahiana Gisela Madrid and Ricardo Almiron, have now been placed under investigation, according to sources from San Isidro's Prosecutors' Office.

Shortly after Maradona's death, his lawyer, Matias Morla, had requested a full investigation of the circumstances of the footballing legend's death, criticising what he said was a slow response by emergency services.

# Atletico's battle-scarred stars key in march to La Liga title

By Graham Hunter, ESPN Spain writer

(PICHA:) (PICHA: Luis Suarez)

SINCE Atletico Madrid last won the Spanish title in 2014, the average number of points needed to win La Liga has been 86. Even if Monday night's 2-2 draw at home to Celta Vigo was disappointing, especially conceding such a late equaliser, it's a very good bet that with 51 points in the bag Atleti are, at most, 12 wins away from what would be only their third Spanish title win in 44 years. Heady times.

In fact, if you take into account Atleti have games in hand on Barcelona, Real Madrid and Sevilla FC, perhaps it's as few as eight or nine wins which will give Diego Simeone and his band of brothers that golden champion feeling.

But hold on a minute. The fixture list has obstacles for Los Rojiblancos. The champions-elect must try to win away in some of Spain's most testing places – at Sevilla, at Villarreal, at Athletic Bilbao, at Barcelona, at Levante and at Real Betis.

The "Amen Corner" of Atleti's title charge, if I may call it that in honour of them trying to "Master" Spain, runs like this: away to Granada, away to Levante, at home to Levante four days later, away to Villarreal, at home to Madrid, at home to Athletic, away to Getafe, at home to Alaves, away to Sevilla and then away to Betis.

In the midst of all that there are Champions League tests against a tougher, revived Chelsea under new manager Thomas Tuchel.

You emerge from that bruising run without too many "bogey" matches, without a bloody nose, points sliding out of your grasp, without injuries, suspensions or a loss of morale and, frankly, you're nearly on top of the podium.

Whether Atleti achieve it or not isn't simply about the marvellous squad they've assembled, about their points advantage or the fact that Spain's "Big Two" (Madrid and Barca) are in deep upheaval.

It's less evident than their playing attributes but Simeone has a strong central core of gnarled, battle-scarred footballers who've been disrespected, discarded, pushed around, insulted, felt fear for their lives – but who, to a man, have reacted.

This isn't quite the "Dirty Dozen" – a specially assembled squad of streetwise misfits who'll break all the rules, nick your medals if you drop your guard but fulfil the mission because they've nothing left to lose but self respect.

But it is a squad full of those who've fed off the survival instinct, who are fired by an aggression and determination which should see them through the bumps, bad luck and wobbly moments of an intense title run-in.

Simeone is a good starting example. Top general, massive salary, the most successful coach in Atleti's entire history – but haunted.

Their Champions League final defeats, particularly the acid burn of losing to Madrid twice, each time in the most horrible circumstances of either conceding a last-minute equaliser (2014 in Lisbon) or Juanfran's crucial penalty clipping the post and bouncing wide (2016 in Milan), absolutely haunt him.

He's admitted, perhaps not wisely, that the infamous Champions League anthem, which gives so many football people goosebumps and fills them with ambition, "makes me feel pure pain every time I hear it."

A driven man? More driven than Miss Daisy.

His first lieutenant in this "Dirty Dozen" metaphor is, of course, Luis "El Pistolero" Suarez.

All his life he's had to fight. Fight to work his way up the football ladder, fight to win recognition, fight to win the sport's big prizes and, above all, fight to restore people's respect and admiration after the various controversial episodes which, temporarily, have made him a pariah figure. Every damn time he's fought back and moved up.

Then, at Barcelona, he not only establishes himself as the best striker partner Lionel Messi has ever enjoyed but he proves that he's one of the most technical, smartest centre-forwards of the modern era.

Until he falls foul of the embarrass-



Diego Simeone

ing, now former, Camp Nou president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

Picked upon, booted out the door and shown zero respect, never mind affection or gratitude. Just the other day he used Spanish radio to confirm: "It was brutal the way that I was disrespected by FC Barcelona. I wanted my kids to see me leaving with dignity and honour. The proper way. When the moment came to tell the kids what they were doing to me it was very hard."

"Maybe I could have insisted on staying, taken my salary and done my best in the circumstances but I knew that at the first hint of difficulties I'd come under attack. For my own pride and self respect, given how they were treating me, I needed to move."

You think he's putting all that anger, all that competitive rage into his season at Atleti? Damn tootin' he is – 16 goals, two assists, leader of the Pichichi scoring charts and both Barcelona and Madrid looking at his heels at the top of the division. Burn baby burn. It's a Suarez inferno.

These narratives count in the deep midwinter of a title challenge. Who's driven more by the scent of silverware than salary? Who's got something to prove or experiences which are psychological scars – events to tell you never to be intimidated or tentative again?

Strangely enough, Jan Oblak's in that group. He's had something to prove since almost the very beginning at Atleti. Signed to replace the outgoing Thibaut Courtois in the summer after the 2014 title season and a Champions League final loss, the Slovenia international had been Benfica's No. 1 as they won the domestic Treble.

Moving to Atleti for €14 million, Oblak was suddenly relegated to second choice behind Miguel Angel Moya and, out of the blue, had to confront the idea that Atleti had immediately lost all faith in him and wanted to send him back to Portugal.

Benfica president Luis Filipe Vieira told the club's TV station that: "I never thought that Oblak would be returning here but the world's a weird place and Atleti have offered him back to us... we said 'no' of course."



Luis Suarez

Whether it was true, whether there was some mischief-making... whatever. Oblak, in a new, strange, demanding environment, was hit with doubt and disrespect.

It's an experience which either makes or breaks you. From that day to this, where many would argue he's the best keeper in the world, has been quite a journey – still fuelled by the 'I'll show everyone!' mentality.

The list goes on – many, perhaps most, of Simeone's disciples have steel about them, forged by experiences which have no relationship to their talent, their wealth, their exalted status.

Take Saul, for example. He was a Real Madrid starlet – they call them "Mirlos" (after birds who are usually dark or mottled in colour but who, when they have white plumage, are exceptional). For whatever reason his talents weren't appreciated and he's often explained how he was bullied – by fellow players but, in his view, by those who were central to the structure of the youth Academy.

After having his boots and his snacks "stolen" the worst came when an offensive letter was sent to one of the coaches – purporting to be from Saul when, categorically, it wasn't. He quit. Atleti came calling, he loved the idea and... here we are.

He's won five trophies with Atleti and played in three youth-level European finals for Spain. Don't for a second think that being mistreated and picked upon hasn't fired him up to be the man, the winner, he is. The names and the similar character traits just keep coming. Simeone's fighters.

Kieran Trippier is another good example. Beaten in his, now, home stadium for Tottenham Hotspur in a Champions League final where they never got going against Liverpool, he left the Metropolitan that night willing enough to speak to reporters. He castigated himself for poor form, a poor season and swore that he'd be ferocious in pressing a "restart" button.

Weeks later he'd secured a move to Atleti, was diligently learning Spanish at a rate which would have scared

the daylight out of Gareth Bale and he established himself as an essential part of Simeone's attacking wide-defender system. An Englishman abroad – but one fuelled by an iron desire to replace bitter memories with sweet, silverware alternatives.

Koke? Held up at gunpoint a couple of years ago so that the thugs could rob his expensive watch. Shrugged it off. Barely an impact. He hated, though, the fact that last season some of the most loyal Atleti fans and media were speculating about his form, his worth to the team and his motivation.

Especially at a time when he'd been dropped by Spain's national team since the disastrous 2018 World Cup in Russia. Response? A special season this term: driven, important, responsible. Leading the team he's always supported and adored, he was restored to La Roja starting XI by Luis Enrique just in time to be one of the standout players when Spain thrashed Germany 6-0.

Made of the right stuff, Koke – like Simeone, Suarez, Trippier, Oblak, Saul, and Angel Correa, who could only arrive and play for Atleti after a six-month recuperation following heart surgery in 2014 at the age of 19.

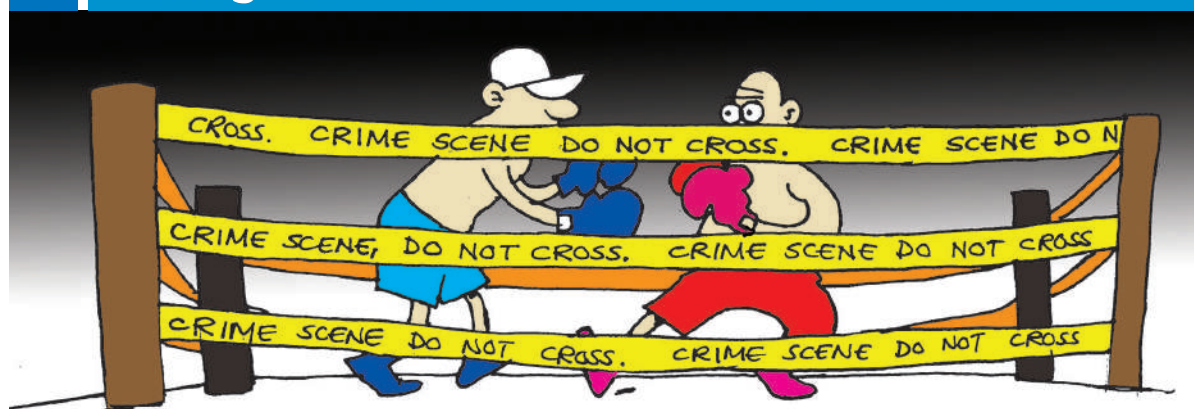
Joao Felix – rejected by Porto as a kid for being "too slight" is Atleti's record signing. He is awfully glad he fought through the temptation to quit football altogether in disgust at his treatment at Os Dragões.

Marcos Llorente, misused and then discarded by Zinedine Zidane at the club he loved, where his father, great uncle and grandfather all starred – proving those at the Bernabeu wrong with every run, assist and goal.

Yannick Carrasco, who so powerfully regretted moving to play for Dalian in China that he moved back to Atleti, delighted to knuckle down and follow Simeone's rules to apply the best he can.

The theme is that they all have scars. They've all been in battles, won and used the experiences. There's still a long road from here to the winners tape – but please don't doubt the motivation, character or hardness of Simeone and his band of brigand brothers.

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

**Atletico's battle-scarred stars  
key in march to La Liga title**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

## Simba SC forwards gain prominence in DR Congo

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

WITH Tanzania's Simba SC set to lock horns with DR Congo's AS Vita Club in this season's CAF Champions League's Group A match in Kinshasa today, football fanatics in the Central Africa country are talking more about the presence of the former's attackers Bernard Morrison and Chris Mugalu.

Simba SC has landed in Kinshasa with 27 players to honour the game, which will take place at Stade des Martyrs.

According to Jenovic Mbowa, a talented sports analyst and sports presenter for Top Congo FM, the two players are the most talked about.

He pointed out the attackers are highly expected to be a threat to the hosts, given they have a good understanding of DR Congo and the type of football, and the venue.

He said Morrison, should he add focus on the goal, stands to be a player who can have the most impact inside the match as soccer followers know him.

"Mugalu is a good player and besides being a Congolese, he understands a lot of things here as he played a lot for FC Lupopo in Lubumbashi and he knows AS Vita Club very well, he will upset," he said.

He noted: "Morrison is a Ghanaian, but he has played here a lot."

"He knows all the tricks and that is why they are afraid of him. He played for AS Vita Club and later went to Motema Pembe."

"He's a very disruptive player and they know him, so adding his edge just a little bit he has the ability to do well in the game."

"Morrison is very familiar with Martyrs Stadium where this match will be played, so it will be a huge advantage for him to decide this game although I don't know what his level will be that day," Jenovic who is one of Kinshasa's most respected analysts, stated.

Regarding AS Vita Club he said they are still recovering although some of the outfit's players, who were on the DR Congo national team, have been late to join their teammates in the camp.

He, nevertheless, stated he still gives them a chance to do well especially by looking at their domestic and international league records in the field.

Meanwhile, Simba will be missing three of their players in Friday's game.

John Bocco has a knee injury, whereas Perfect Chikwende, is not allowed to feature in the clash as he played for FC Platinum in the competition's previous stage's tie.

Defender David Kameta 'Duchu' has been selected for Tanzania's national U-20 team heading into the Africa U-20 Nations Cup finals in Mauritania starting this month.



Mbeya City Football Club

## Mbeya City FC out to stun Yanga in VPL

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

THE Vodacom Premier League's remaining phase is already in action, with the much-awaited game being the one pitting Mbeya City FC against Yanga at the former's venue tomorrow.

Mbeya City FC stated Yanga should prepare for a quite competitive clash because the former are seeking revenge for their defeat to the latter in the top flight's first phase.

The match will be played at Sokoine Stadium, with the locals out to revenge for a 1-0 defeat they suffered in the first phase fixture played in Dar es Salaam.

Mbeya City FC's assistant coach Mathias Wandiba said this time around Yanga should not rest on their laurels.

Wandiba said at the moment their team are fit especially the squad's strikers who are mature and ready to face the giants and collect three points.

The coach stated their youngsters are doing well and are well prepared to start scoring by beating the VPL leaders, who have not lost a game.

He said they are not in a good position so they desperately need a win in the game and all the rest of the Premier League that will keep them in good shape and avoid relegation next season.

"We are fine we have practiced strength and the biggest problem we were facing in our squad is the offensive line which was a major shortcoming especially in the end but now it is OK so we are ready to face Yanga," Wandiba disclosed.

He noted: "We have made improvements to our squad as we signed various players and the main goal is to make sure we do well in this second round which we really need to get and good results that will put us in a safe place to stay in the league."

Yanga, who have recorded 44 points after playing a total of 18 matches, are tasked with finding three points in the match.

The match is expected to be highly competitive after the first match played at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, ending with Mbeya City FC losing 1-0.

The fixture's winning goal was scored by centre back Lamine Moro with a header, connecting a Carlos Fernandes' corner kick.

The Angolan midfielder now has two assists and two goals for the club.

Yanga's Acting Secretary General Haji Mfikirwa said the team headed to Mbeya with 24 players and 18 officials, eight of them being members of the club's technical bench.

He added: "The team will leave Dar es Salaam on Thursday (yesterday), we will leave with 24 players and 14 officials, we will have a convoy of 38 people."

"On Saturday we are facing a tough game against Mbeya City FC but we are determined to make sure we win, our goal is to win the VPL trophy this season," he said.

Kaze pointed out he knows it will be very competitive but they need to get three points.

## Yanga trio regains fitness

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

VODACOM Premier League (VPL) leaders Yanga will be out to extend their winning run as they confront Mbeya City FC in a match, which will take place in Mbeya on Saturday.

The VPL leaders' strikers Michael Sarpong and Yacouba Songne along with new center-back, Dickson Job, have recovered from injuries they picked and are expected to be in the squad.

The club's midfielder Said Ntibazonkiza is yet to gain fitness.

Prior to heading to Mbeya, Yanga had five injured players in their squad and that threatened the side's plan to notch victory in the clash.

Yanga's manager Hafidh Saleh has made it clear that there is good progress in the number of injured players after strikers Sarpong and Yacouba returned to the squad.

The strikers have scored four goals apiece in the VPL before the league was suspended on January 3, with their team leading the rest of the top flight clubs with 44 points after taking part in 18 matches.

Saleh said apart from the strikers returning to the field, the outfit's new defender, Job, who was injured in training the second day, returned to the squad, maintaining their squad will face Mbeya City FC in full swing.

"There is good news in the group of players who were injured, three players have returned including Songne, Sarpong and Job, who were nursing injuries and various pains," Hafidh noted.

He revealed: "They are back in training with their teammates this week and we are continuing assessing them, we believe their recovery will bring them back to our next away game against Mbeya City."

Yanga are expected to face Mbeya City FC in the VPL second phase at Sokoine Stadium on Saturday.

The VPL leaders, in the first phase duel with Mbeya City FC which was held in Dar es Salaam, edged the latter 1-0.

Central defender Lamine Moro, also Yanga's skipper, scored the goal which separated the teams.

However, Hafidh stated their veteran striker, Said Ntibazonkiza 'Saido', is not part of their squad as he is not sure of featuring in the game.

He noted: "Saido is still in Dar es Salaam and there is no possibility of traveling with the team as he has not yet been able to prepare for the upcoming game, he maybe take part in the next match."

The official stated the other two players in contention are goalkeeper



Yanga's forward, Michael Sarpong. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

Ramadhan Kabwili and defender Abdallah Shaibu 'Ninja', who had malaria, the two have not yet started training.

He said: "We have to be able to practice and after that we will know the full list of players who will be part of the game but the rest I can say are right. It is just the coaches' decision."

Yanga have not tasted defeat in the VPL since they lost 1-0 to Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC in last season's match played on March 12.

The club has played a total of 30 matches without a loss, reaching the record set by Simba in the 2009/10 season.

For now, Kaze will lead his team to the record set by Azam FC between 2013-2015 by playing 38 league matches without losing.

**EATV FRIDAY**

**TONIGHT @ 9:00**

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 Mid Week Movie (r)  
13:30 Kali Za Wana  
14:00 Bongo Hits  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Wakilisha (r)  
16:00 Ujenzi (r)  
16:30 #HASHTAG  
17:00 5SELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Skonga  
19:30 EATV SAA !  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 Friday Night Live  
23:00 Kurasa (r)

**Friday Night Live** The Weekend begins here! Listen to upbeat mixed music by the hottest Djs, Gossip, showbiz updates and exclusive interviews with celebrities from home and abroad. Don't you dare miss this.

**eastafrica RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast  
10:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Plane! Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
20:00 Kipenga  
21:00 Friday Night Live

**88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM**

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

