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National Pg 3
Barriers hampering GBV fight

National Pg 5
Installation progress at Chamwino

National Pg 6
Youth benefit from cancer education

National Pg 7
Villagers suspend contributions



Director General Dr Agnes Kijazi

TMA: Overhead sun, El Nino causing heat waves

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA) has said that the ongoing periods of heat waves in various parts of the country will go on until March, next year.

The TMA Communications and Information Department said in a statement yesterday that extreme heat occurs in the October to March period when the sun is overhead the southern hemisphere.

As Tanzania is located in the southern hemisphere, if the peak of the solar cycle is overhead the southern hemisphere, experiencing unusual heat waves is unavoidable.

“Usually heat periods start in October and attain its peak in November, recurring in February when the suns overhead moves southwards over the Tropic of Capricorn. The situation however eases off again during the April rainy period,” the statement explained.

Overhead sun rays are associated with extreme temperatures as the earth's surface in the southern hemisphere comes closer to

TURN TO PAGE 2

Cabinet sworn in, big tasks outlined

● Would be deputy minister fails to read oath, sidelined



President John Magufuli, Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa, National Assembly Speaker Job Ndugai (2nd-L), Chief Justice Prof Ibrahim Hamis Juma (3rd-R), former Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda (2nd-R) and Chief Secretary John Kijazi (L) in a group photograph with members of the new cabinet moments after the president swore them in at Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: State House

By Henry Mwangonde

PRESIDENT John Magufuli yesterday tasked newly appointed ministers to come up with solutions to a list of challenges derailing service provision in their respective dockets.

Speaking at a ceremony to swear in the ministers at the Chamwino State House, Dr Magufuli took time to explain reasons for appointment of every individual in his cabinet.

President Magufuli told the gathered top state leadership that he had shifted Minister Ummu Mwalimu from her previous docket of Health to be Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and Environment) so that she addresses the various problems in her new office.

“I am confident that you are all going to perform because Tanzanians want actions and not words. They no longer want to hear words like feasibility study or detailed design, which have been negatively used by leaders as regards what is going on with many projects,” he asserted, insisting that the ministers must make bold decisions in the interest of all Tanzanians.

Dr Magufuli said the current cabinet is

“ Dr Magufuli said he has retained William Lukuvi and his deputy Angelina Mabula in the Ministry of Lands and Human Settlements Development to continue with the good work that they were doing

a mixed bag of elders, youth and middle aged individuals. He cited the case of George Mkuchika, the Minister of State in the President's Office (Public Service and Good Governance) who has been a minister since the first phase government.

Those appointed to ministerial posts were not the best among all Tanzanians, he stated, suggesting that some face challenges which will be worked on as time goes.

He said he had appointed people from various areas of the country including pastoralist communities to head the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries.

Dr Magufuli said he has retained William Lukuvi and his deputy Angelina Mabula in the Ministry of Lands and Human Settlements Development to continue with the good work that they were doing.

On the Ministry of Education, Magufuli said Prof Joyce Ndalichako has been appointed to lead the ministry again so that she should work on some of the issues such introducing the Tanzanian history subject in primary schools and make it compulsory as it is for Kiswahili.

On the Minister of State in the President's

TURN TO PAGE 2

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

Page 3



SADC, UN COOPERATION

Page 5



CHAMPIONS ON GBV

Page 6



Independence Day: Tree planting takes pilot seat

By Guardian Reporter

THE 59th Independence Day was yesterday marked in different styles with Tanzanians across the country engaging in massive tree planting activities.

The day is usually marked with a presidential address, a military parade and performances by music groups at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam, while this year such activities would have been held in Dodoma

President John Magufuli cancelled the celebrations to mark the country's Independence Day on

“ The day is usually marked with a presidential address, a military parade and performances by music groups at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam

December 9 and directed that funds earmarked for the event be used to purchase medical facilities for the newly built Uhuru Hospital in the capital. Officials said the government had allocated 835,498,700/- for the celebrations.

Back on November 20, 2018, the president cancelled celebrations to mark Independence Day directing that 995,182,000/- earmarked for the event to be used for construction of Uhuru Hospital.

In Tabora Region, Regional Commissioner Dr Philemon Sengati led the residents in planting more

TURN TO PAGE 2

JPM commutes sentences of 256 death row convicts

● Pardons 3,319 inmates finalising jail terms

By Henry Mwangonde

PRESIDENT John Magufuli yesterday said he will not sign execution warrants for 256 death row inmates sentenced to die by hanging, commuting their sentences to life imprisonment.

The president was speaking at a ceremony to swear in ministers and



their deputies at the Chamwino State House in Dodoma.

He asserted that in the last five years he was supposed to sign warrants to execute 256 prisoners but he has not signed the documents. He also insisted not to sign similar execution warrants brought to him.

“The law requires me to sign

TURN TO PAGE 2



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President John Magufuli congratulates newly appointed deputy ministers shortly after swearing them in at Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: State House

Independence Day: Tree planting takes pilot seat

FROM PAGE 1

than 300 trees at Igombe Dam Forest Reserve, a key water source for Tabora urban residents.

Dr Sengati said the exercise was also meant to support the government's environment conservation efforts, where it plans to plant 1.5 million trees annually.

He however challenged the management and board of the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA), Tabora municipal authorities and the Tabora Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority to ensure protection of the forest reserve.

The RC similarly challenged the residents to start planting cashewnut and mango trees as part of conserving the environment as well as generating income.

"We have already allocated land at Tura in Uyui District where interested investors can grow cashew nut and mango trees; this will facilitate establishment of processing industries," he stated.

The region planted over 700,000 trees in the 2019/2020 financial year, but just over a half of the planted seedlings trees grew up, he said.

In Dodoma Region, the National Service (JKT) planted more than 400 trees surrounding Uhuru Hospital in Chamwino District as part of activities in this year's celebrations to mark 59 years of independence.

The tree planting exercise which was implemented in partnership with the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) also involved cleaning of environment surrounding the Chamwino health center, built by the army in 1971.

National Service headquarters camp commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Alex Malenda, said the military wing decided to plant

the trees not only to facelift the environmental outlook in the area, but also to spearhead the war against drought in the district.

"Apart from today's exercise, we have already planted a total of 8,521 trees in the zone surrounding JKT headquarters, and plans are afoot to plant more trees," he elaborated.

The National Service was committed to push for varied activities and initiatives to ensure professional environmental conservation, including trees planting, he stated.

The Acting Head of Administration in JKT, Colonel Hassan Mabena, detailed that construction of a modern health facility is currently at 97 per cent.

In Mwanza, Sengerema District Commissioner Dr Emmanuel Kipole led an exercise to plant 70,000 trees worth 20m/-, directing each of the residents to plant two trees at their homes.

Dr Kipole noted that tree planting at residential areas was a useful way to conserve the environment, vowing to take stringent measures against those involving in charcoal burning.

"We have today planted the 70,000 trees provided by Tanzania Forest Service (TFS). No resident is allowed to cut a tree without a permit from the forest department," the DC underlined, noting that more trees will be planted during the ongoing rain season.

The TFS Assistant Conservator, Newton Mlay said the agency is offering the trees for free, calling upon the residents to wisely grab that opportunity. He said the trees can be planted at homes and open spaces.

"We have more than 70,000 tree seedlings at our nurseries which will be distributed to the villagers," the conservator added.

FROM PAGE 1

execution warrants to hang prisoners sentenced to die by hanging; I will not do that," said Dr Magufuli, noting that he has directed responsible ministries to review their sentences to life imprisonment.

The president said that to mark 59 years of independency, he has pardoned 3,319 prisoners who have served their sentences for years and some remain with but a few days to finalize their punishment.

"Of the number, there are those who have committed small offences and have served their sentences. Let me use this opportunity to reduce their

JPM commutes sentences of 256 death row convicts

punishments but also release some of them," he said.

Since he came into office, President Magufuli has rejected signing death warrants, showing distaste for the death penalty and upholding the right to live.

In 2017, the president stated clearly that he cannot assent to carrying out the death penalty despite its being legal in the country.

Data from the Legal and Human Rights Center (LHRC) indicates

that 472 people were sentenced to death in 2015, among them scores of women.

Human rights activists have been advocating for the abolition of the death penalty to complement endeavors to protect and promote the right to live, but no political consensus has been attained on the issue, with the country keeping capital punishment in its legal system since independence.

The death sentence in Tanzania

is maintained for four major offenses which are murder, treason, terrorism and in military punishments. Section 197 of the Penal Code (Chapter 16 of the laws of Tanzania), requires death penalty for a person convicted of murder.

Sections 39, 40 and 41 of the Penal Code also carry the death penalty for treason and misprision of treason, while the death penalty is also provided for in the Terrorism Act of 2002.

Cabinet sworn in, big tasks outlined

FROM PAGE 1

Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments) which is led by Suleiman Jafo, the president said he has been re-appointed following good performance in the past five years.

He however noted that minister Jafo failed to control the misuse of funds especially those on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) paid by various companies to district councils, especially in mining areas.

Dr Magufuli said that in the Ministry of Information Sports and Culture there are various issues to be addressed, including the national soccer team issue which has been losing all the time, tasking the new minister, Innocent Bashungwa to address the matter.

The new ministers have been appointed to serve the public, he said, noting that appointing them was not easy, having to go through CVs of 350 plus members of Parliament.

The president said he will replace the would-be Deputy Minister for Minerals, Francis Ndulane, shortly after failing to accurately read the content of his oath of office during the swearing-in ceremony.

Chief Secretary John Kijazi who presided over the event directed Ndulane to go back, get seated and relax in the drama that left everyone puzzled, including the president.

Referring to the incident, Dr Magufuli said he will be replaced and his Master's degree investigated.



John Myola from Agape mission in Shinyanga makes remarks in Dar es Salaam yesterday after being recognised as a champion of change under the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence'. The event was jointly organised by the Tanzania chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) and various other organisations. Others include WILDAF-Tanzania director Anna Kulaya (L) and founder Dr Judith Odunga (R). Photo: Joseph Mwendapole

TMA: Overhead sun, El Nino causing heat waves

FROM PAGE 1

the sun than in other places. At night it also appears to be warmer due to the presence of a high level of atmospheric humidity reaching 80 percent and above in some areas," TMA said in part, noting that the humidity retains heat from the sun rays and thus creates extreme heat.

During the month of December, some areas of Lake Victoria Basin regions, northern coast areas and its hinterlands, along with the north-eastern highlands will receive below normal rains with elevated chances of prolonged periods of dry spells during the season, the weather agency underlined.

"So, these areas will also continue to experience periods of high temperatures. The situation is expected to ease in January and returns in February, before ending in March."

It warned that in February the heat waves will increase even more when the sun will become stronger in the country,

emphasizing that TMA was closely monitoring its control systems to inform the public if any peculiar weather changes occur.

In March 2017, Dar es Salaam experienced an increase of temperature of up to 40 C degree, a situation which pushed TMA to issue a public alert statement.

TMA Director General Dr Agnes Kijazi cited El Niño conditions in the Pacific Ocean that appeared to underlie the change in weather patterns.

"The strong El Niño that emerged in 2015 in the country and continued into 2016 has impacted temperatures from October to December 2015 and the beginning of 2016," she said on World Meteorological Day (WMD) in March last year.

Temperatures during that period rose to 36 degrees centigrade, generally above monthly average by 1.7 to 2.0 degrees centigrade, particularly in coastal areas and the north eastern highlands, the director added.

Pandemic shows connectivity is not a luxury, Kagame says

KIGALI

President Paul Kagame has emphasised the need to accelerate digital connectivity, saying that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that it is not a luxury.

He was speaking during the ninth board meeting of Smart Africa, an alliance of African countries seeking to promote digital transformation.

"The pandemic has shown that connectivity is not a luxury. It is a necessity," he told Heads of State and Government, and other leaders who attended the virtual meeting.

Kagame said on Monday that the provision of education and health services depends on digital infrastructure.

"The good jobs of the future will also rely on technology skills and a digital identity," he noted, adding that Smart

Africa's mission is to do just that.

Smart Africa's mission is to define the continent's digital agenda and drive the continental single digital market, all this is done through a series of projects and activities.

Under the current arrangement, each member country spearheads a project that is aligned with Smart Africa's vision.

Smart Africa has gained seven more members since the last board meeting held in 2019. That brings the total membership to 31 countries.

The new members are Algeria, Cabo Verde, Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe.

The organization also saw new membership from the private sector, including Tahaluf Al Emarat, BICS, and Softbank.

Kagame emphasised the importance of private sector partnership to realize Smart Africa's core goals.

"We place a high value on what you as business leaders bring to these efforts," he noted.

The Head of State added that they will work with the private sector to make the necessary investments.

"This is especially evident in the process of recovering from Covid," he said.

The meeting was attended by leaders of Burkina Faso, Congo-Brazzaville, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



The pandemic has shown that connectivity is not a luxury. It is a necessity



National Service officers pictured yesterday taking part in a campaign expected to see at least 4,000 trees planted around Uhuru Hospital in Chamwino District, Dodoma Region. It was what they had elected to do in commemorating the 59th anniversary of Tanganyika's Independence. Photo: Correspondent Valentine Oforo

Foundation trains university graduates to acquire essential professional skills

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) yesterday brought over 150 students from various universities in the country to capacitate them with essential professional skills which would help them compete well in the labour market.

Speaking during the event in Dar es Salaam, FCS executive director, Francis Kiwanga said that the training also aimed to connect the students with other professionals and employers.

According to him, the majority of graduates from higher learning institutions have been grappling to secure job opportunities due to lack of small but essential skills needed by the employers.

He said that event is part of the commemoration of the 'Giving Tuesday', a global movement of generosity which promotes

love while encouraging people to extend their support to the helpless people. This year's campaign fell on Tuesday, December 1, 2020.

"FCS decided to honour this day by remembering college students who most of them are the victims of the employment crisis. We have conducted youth's skills training to connect professionals and the students as to eradicate the existing mismatches in the labour market," he said.

Kiwanga said that the experience has shown that higher graduates fail to compete in the market demand for some reasons including lack of practical skills.

"There is a huge gap between the graduates and needs of the current market demand, this includes lack of required labour skills, a situation which leads

majority of young graduates to lose intended jobs. It is our hope that today's session will help to add value to the expected new graduates who will enter the market," he said.

He further said the training had also focused on students who plan to venture in the business adding that the true development will be brought about by the Tanzanians themselves especially the youths.

According to him, there was a need to build capacity for the higher learning students to enable them to utilize effectively the opportunities available in the labour market to fast-track economic development.

For his part, the Dean of students at the University of Dar es Salaam, Prof Ulingeta Mbamba acknowledged that there was a big challenge facing graduates seeking jobs in the labour market.

He said UDSM had embarked to conduct courses to create uniqueness to address challenges they encounter once entered into the labour market to enable them to deliver.

"We have our incubator here to enable all those students who have their business idea and focus on entrepreneurship. The varsity enables them to develop until it materializes and become business," he said.

Sia Ngowa, a student at UDSM's Institute of Development Studies (IDS) welcomed the training saying that it will add value to their skills to compete in the labour market.

"We have today acquired the very essential skills and exposed the reality on the market ground. Therefore, it is our duty to work on it so that we can compete in the labour market," she said.

Tanzania commission for human rights underscores barriers hampering GBV

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) said it recognises the various challenges that hinder government efforts in building up a safe society without gender based violence (GBV).

Some of the challenges according to CHRAGG include customs, traditions and beliefs that allow under-age girls to get married instead of continuing with education.

In addition, circumcision of small girls including sex corruption at work places and higher learning institutions are also obstacles in attaining government efforts.

A statement issued by CHRAGG and signed by its chairman, Retired Judge Mathew Mwaimu at the commemoration of 16-Day Campaign Against Gender Based Violence and Child Abuse, said the Commission pleads with the society to abandon misleading customs, traditions and beliefs that spur GBV and Child Abuse.

The statement said CHRAGG stresses to public employees and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to abide by and respect rules and regulations in regard to public service so as to eradicate GBV and child abuse.

The campaign is marked every year from November 25 to its climax on December 10.

The campaign was first unveiled by Women's Global Leadership (WGL) in 1991 at University of Rutgers in the United States and up to now more than 6,000 organisations from about 187 countries continue to participate in the

annual event worldwide. The day was formally adopted by the United Nations in 1999.

The aim of those days is to mobilise the community to protect, safeguard and defend the rights of women and children.

The days also have the aim to build up a wide understanding in the community on GBV acts and child abuse committed by people and on how to fight them.

The statement further said CHRAGG congratulates both the Union and Zanzibar Governments for their various efforts in tackling the vice.

These efforts include the establishment of Strategic Plan in eradicating GBV and child abuse both in the Mainland and Zanzibar.

The plans aim at reducing GBV acts by establishing GBV desks at police stations, which has seen the establishment of 420 such desks, that have so far served 58,059 GBV and child abuse victims.

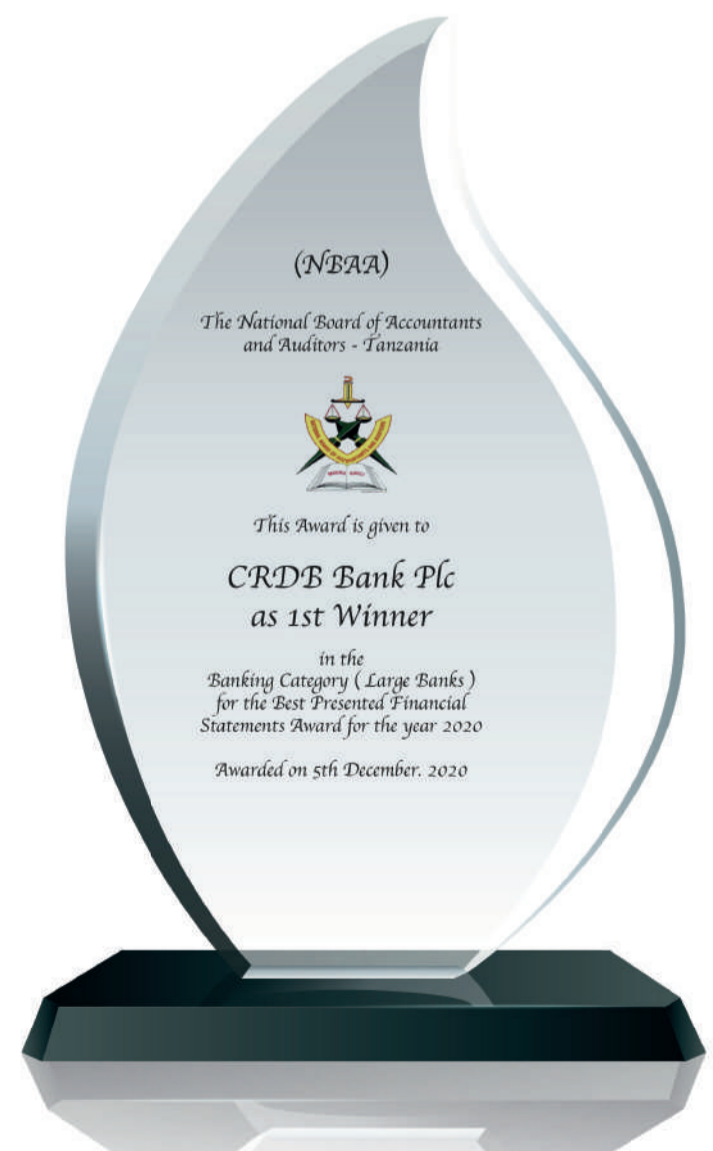
Other efforts were the establishment of 12 one stops centres for serving GBV victims and 11,520 women and children defense committees at all levels starting from village levels.

During the 16-Day Campaign, the Commission expects to hold workshops for students at Dodoma, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar Universities to educate students on how to eradicate the vice within their own environments.

The Commission also pledged to continue working together with the government and all other stakeholders to ensure GBV acts are eradicated.

Our commitment to transparency positions us at the forefront of our governing excellency

Best Presented Financial Statements Award 2019





Kiteto legislator Edward ole Lekaita (R) with Kiteto district commissioner Col Patrick Songea (L) pictured yesterday at Engusero health centre, where they presented foodstuffs to patients. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey



Taiko Laizer (foreground, with cap), councillor for Naisinyai ward in Simanjiro District, leads his fellow councillors in a dance to celebrate their recent election. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey



Simai Mohammed Said (R), Zanzibar's acting Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister - currently also Education and Vocational Training minister, has an audience with health attendants at Mnazi Mmoja referral hospital yesterday. Photo: Rahma Suleiman



Dr Zablon Nziku, Tanzania Livestock Research Institute's acting manager in Tanga Region, briefs journalists yesterday on better methods of managing livestock. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon



Arusha district commissioner Kenani Kihongosi addresses Lodhia factory workers earlier this week after he was briefed on the challenges they commonly contend with. Photo: Correspondent Getrude Mpezya



Mabula Magangila (2nd-L), CEO of a Mwanza-based electrical and mechanical engineering firm, presents computers, photocopiers, printers and stationery to a representative of Isagehe Secondary School in Kahama District as a token of support for the government's efforts to improve learning and teaching conditions. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa views drinks on display earlier this week at the ongoing exhibition of products produced in Tanzania at the Mwalimu Nyerere International Trade Fair grounds in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma



Biharamulo district commissioner Col Mathias Kahabi and legislator Ezra Chiwelesa have a first-hand account yesterday of a class in progress at Busiri Primary School pupils in an environment far from friendly. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

SADC and UN discussing areas of collaboration to strengthen cooperation

By Guardian Reporter

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Tax has hailed the existing collaboration and partnership with the United Nations (UN) through a number of UN agencies at both national and regional levels.

Dr Tax said this during a virtual courtesy call with Nicholas Haysom, Under Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the United Nations on November 30th 2020.

SADC and UN have enjoyed cordial cooperation through a number of UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation, through the Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa, in the area of agriculture crops, livestock, fisheries, forests; and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through the Africa Office, and Nairobi Convention Secretariat, on environmental aspects, including Blue Economy.

SADC and the UN also cooperate in the partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), through its Secretariat, in the area of combating desertification; and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through its Secretariat in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

There is also an ongoing agreement with World Food Programme (WFP), through its Southern Africa regional office, in the area of Regional Vulnerability Assessment Analysis (RVAA) with support

from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Dr Tax thanked Haysom for the engagement and assured him of SADC's commitment to the partnership where the two parties have worked together well over the years.

She called for a more robust and coordinated programme that brings together all UN agencies together to address both economic and social issues in the region in a coordinated and collaborative manner.

Dr Tax reiterated Africa's long call to have representation in the United Nations Security Council. She also called for a more coordinated approach and focus on strategic areas of cooperation with the UN.

Haysom thanked the Executive Secretary for the warm welcome and underscored that the UN remains committed to enhancing cooperation with SADC at both regional and national levels.

He explained that the UN is both engaging the SADC Secretariat and Member States to discuss ways of offering more support and further expand existing collaboration.

He averred that the UN is alive to the potential threats in the areas of cross-border crime, human trafficking and cross-border terrorism within the region.

The two parties reiterated their commitment to the existing cooperation while exploring other potential areas of cooperation for the mutual benefit of the parties, particularly in mitigating the negative impacts of COVID-19.



Dr Charles Mwamaja (2nd-L), Commissioner of Finance Development in the Finance and Planning ministry, presents a National Board of Accountants and Auditors trophy to CRDB Bank Plc chief financial officer Frederick Nshakanabo in Dar es Salaam at the weekend after the bank emerged one of the top performers in NBAA's 'Best Presented Financial Statements' Awards for last year. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

PS inspects progress on NICTBB installation at Chamwino hospital

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communications and Technology, Dr Jim Yonazi has inspected the work progress of the National Information Communication Technology Broadband Backbone (NICTBB) at Uhuru hospital being built in Chamwino District in Dodoma Region.

Dr Yonazi inspected special rooms in which Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems will be installed that will be linked with BICTBB and the availability of voice and digital communications services including cellphones networks.

He said the aim of the inspection was to ensure quality communications services at the hospital abide by the modern ICT operations.

"Our basic responsibility is to enable various sectors,

including the health sector to use ICT, with the aim of ensuring the health sector uses ICT when providing services to the people, including online health education," stressed Dr Yonazi.

Simon Marwa, TTCL Manager for Dodoma Region said the construction of the infrastructure was 60 percent complete and will be completed when the hospital starts operating.

Marwa said TTCL was mobilising itself to implement Dr Yonazi's instructions to ensure internet services become available to the people who come to the hospital including mobile money transfer services using T-Pesa.

Neema Mlula, Chamwino Hospital Coordinator for Mother and Child Health said installation of the communication infrastructure at the hospital will enable health services

delivery at the hospital, data collection and patients' records keeping.

She added that ICT systems will be linked to eight departments of the hospital for better and prompt service delivery.

She mentioned some of the departments as including outpatient, X-Ray, laboratory, pharmacy, eye and dentistry.

NICTBB connects 26 regions of mainland Tanzania and neighbouring Congo, Zambia, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi.

NICTBB helps to fulfill the increasing demands of information services, strengthen competitive abilities of domestic data and voice operators as well as bridging the digital divide.

It is necessary in developing high speed broadband and helps to efficiently exploit the benefits from undersea submarine cables landing in Dar es Salaam.



Belgian Development Agency

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

LAKE TANGANYIKA WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Belgian Development Agency/ENABEL through the Lake Tanganyika Authority is implementing the Lake Tanganyika Water Management Project funded by the European Union in Burundi, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Rwanda. In Tanzania, the project is partnering with the Kigoma/Ujiji Municipal Council to improve the viability and coverage of its solid waste management service. The project is now seeking a qualified and competent local consultant to help building and strengthening the organizational and legal capacities of the staff members of the department in charge of solid waste management at the Kigoma/Ujiji Municipal Council and the Community-based organizations engaged in the door-to-door pre-collection of solid waste. Local consultants with proven experience are called to express their interest.

More information for this assignment are available at: <https://latawama.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Call-for-manifestation-of-interest-Recruitment-of-a-local-consultant.pdf>



SECTION I – INVITATION:

Tender No. 02/NCA-T/MuS/2020 FOR CONSTRUCTION OF TOWER AND INSTALLATION OF SIX SOLAR POWERED WATER SYSTEMS WITHIN MBULU AND HANANG DISTRICTS – DECEMBER 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021

- Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is a Norwegian non-governmental and development organization working to promote Social Justice, Human Rights and Economic Justice for poor communities. The NCA has its foundations based in a congregation of churches in Norway, whose efforts are dedicated towards eradicating poverty, its causes and social deprivation. In Tanzania, NCA works with poor communities and local partners in 36 districts.
 - NCA – MuS Project in Tanzania invites electronic bids from eligible and qualified registered Contractors for CONSTRUCTION OF TOWER AND INSTALLATION OF SIX SOLAR POWERED WATER SYSTEMS WITHIN MBULU AND HANANG DISTRICTS – DECEMBER 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021.
 - Bidding will be conducted through electronic procedures and to be opened to eligible registered Bidders and will be conducted as per NCA Procurement Policy.
 - Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from NCA Tanzania procurement committee, Email: procurement.tanzania@nca.no from 08:30am to 16:00pm on Monday to Friday from 10th – 15th December 2020 inclusive except on public holidays.
 - Qualification requirements include legal status i.e. CRB's registration Contractor in Construction Works, should have qualified and experienced key personnel for administration and execution of the contract, proposed sub-contractors and firms involved (if any) and sound financial status of the bidder(s)
 - Norwegian Church Aid will not accept hard copy of tender documents, therefore all bids should be scanned in one original document in PDF format and sent to procurement.tanzania@nca.no and shall be submitted on or before Monday 21st December 2020 at 16:00 pm Tanzanian local time. Late bids, incomplete of bids, hard copy bids, bids not received in the email, and not read out through digital meeting will be rejected.
- All bids will be opened electronically through digital meeting on Tuesday 22nd December 2020 at 14:00p.m by NCA Procurement Committee for read out and evaluation exercise. A link for this meeting will be shared to all bidders on Monday 21st December 2020 by 10.00am
- All bids and their supporting documents such as solar power scheme design sheets shall be accompanied by a bid securing declaration form in the format provided in the tender documents
 - Norwegian Church Aid is not bound/Obligated to accept the lowest/Highest bid or any of the bids
 - All bidders must attach detailed CVs for technical and non- technical team, list of equipment, list of all similar activities carried out for the past five years to date and legal certificates including bank statements
 - A financial bank statement of the company with official document proving that the person signing on behalf of the Construction company is duly authorised to do so, scanned copies of original documents defining the constitution or legal status, place of registration, and principal, place of business
 - Experience as prime contractor in the boreholes drilling and installation work of at least two projects of a similar nature and complexity equivalent to the Works under this Tender undertaken within the last 5 years (to comply with this requirement, works cited should be at least 70 percent complete and at least one project should be 100% completed and fully operational)
 - The essential equipment such as Concrete Mixer, 4W drive truck for transporting construction materials, at least one 4W-drive supervision vehicle and other essential tools to enable successfully installation of all works to be made available for the Contract by the successful Bidder
 - Evidence of adequate working capital for this contract, Information regarding litigation, current and any other material and information which should be provided and made known to the contracting authority.
 - The minimum required annual volume of construction work for the successful Bidder in any of the last 5 years shall be Tshs. 250,000,000.00



INVITATION FOR TENDER

SUPPLY, SERVICES AND MAINTANANCE OF COMPUTERS AND RELATED ACCESSORIES

TENDER NO. PIT/CO/10/FY21

- Plan International Tanzania is an International humanitarian child-centered development organization without religious, political or government affiliation. Plan's mission is to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning to their lives. Plan Tanzania has a physical presence and implements projects in the following Regions: Dar Es Salaam, Coast, Morogoro, Geita, Dodoma, Mwanza, Rukwa, Kigoma (Refugees Emergency Program in Kibondo District). Plan Tanzania directly sponsored 30,000 children and support directly more than 2.4 million people in the program areas. Plan Tanzania also works with other stakeholders in various projects countrywide
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- Tenderers must submit the proposals in a sealed envelope by hand or post to: The Country Director, Plan International Tanzania, Plot no. 496 Mikocheni Light Industrial Area, P O Box 3517, Dar es Salaam before 11 AM Thursday 7th January 2021, marked the respective Tender number. Not to be opened before 11AM Thursday 7th January 2021. Electronic and Late tenders will be rejected.

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Youth in Mbeya, Songwe regions to benefit from cervical cancer education

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

GIRLS and boys between 10 and 14 years old in Mbeya and Songwe regions are set to benefit from the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine education against cancer of the cervix and other integrated services.

The UNICEF funded HPV+ project which is led by Jhpiego is rolled out to improve coverage of HPV vaccination for the second dose in Songwe and Mbeya regions targeting adolescent boys and girls who will also benefit with sexual reproductive health services including nutrition.

Speaking during the inception meeting with the regional immunization stakeholders and partners, the HPV+ Project Manager, Dr Maryrose Giattas said the project will strengthen service provision in 200 health facilities across the two regions.

"Apart from the HPV vaccine, we will also provide other services such as sexual reproductive health, nutrition and menstrual hygiene management education to girls as well as counseling," she added.

Cervical cancer is the most common cancer among women and the leading cause of cancer related morbidity and mortality in women in Tanzania.

Giving the country status on cervical cancer, Dr Maryrose said Tanzania has one of the highest cervical cancer burden which is highest in Eastern Africa with an age-standardized incidence rate (ASR) of 59.1 cases per 100,000 women, and an age-standardized mortality rate of 42.7 deaths per 100,000 women.

Mbeya Regional Medical Officer, Dr Salum Manyatta thanked Jhpiego for considering Mbeya and Songwe as their implementation regions through the UNICEF support.

He said the regional health management team, and councils especially in Mbeya will always provide necessary support to partners like Jhpiego who compliments government effort to ensure universal coverage of health services to its people.

"We really appreciate this support and as a regional government, we will work together to address these challenges

especially to ensure adolescent girls and boys have access to friendly services including addressing cervical cancer through HPV vaccination, reducing new HIV/Aids infections and prevention of early pregnancies," added Dr Manyatta.

Earlier, presenting the immunization status for Mbeya, the Regional Immunization Officer, Danford Barnaba said the region has attained only 77 percent of the immunization coverage to girls aged 14 years on the second dose of HPV from January to October 2020.

The region faces a number of challenges including presence of nomadic pastoralist population in Mbarali and Chunya district, he said.

Other challenges include limited involvement of teachers in school health services, cancellation of outreach services by almost 21 percent, distances, and low immunization coverage of the second dose of HPV vaccine to some councils.

"With this support from Jhpiego we are confident that we will increase community demand for adolescent friendly services and provide HPV immunization to all the targeted groups and build capacity to health care service providers in all the councils," he added.

Globally, cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women with an estimated 570,000 new cases and 311,000 deaths in 2018.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) lack of urgent effort to scale-up cervical cancer prevention services contribute to increasing the number of deaths to 460,000 deaths by 2040, which is nearly 50 percent over the 2018 levels and nearly 90 percent of these deaths, will be in low- and middle-income countries.

The HPV integration project is a one-year project worth 1.4bn/- implemented in collaboration and guidance of the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, and the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government offices.



Jhpiego Human Papilloma Virus project manager Dr Maryrose Giattas (L) briefs HPV immunisation stakeholders on the project's scope and coverage at a meeting held in Mbeya earlier this week. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

IN a bid to support the government's efforts towards improving learning and teaching environments, Mwanza-based electrical engineering and mechanical firm--Magare Company Limited has hired six teachers for Isagehe Secondary School in Kahama District of Shinyanga Region.

At the same time, the firm has accomplished the installation of a water system in the school, as well as offering stationery equipment, namely computer, photocopy machine and printer.

"We promised and we have fulfilled. We have supported the school not because I personally schooled here but our company, which deals with engineering related activities in industries and mines is operating around this community, hence, we should give back part of our profit through the company's corporate social responsibilities, said Magare's Chief Executive Officer, Mabula Magangila recently when handling the

Isagehe secondary school in Kahama gets a new boost

aid.

According to him, the teachers are for science and commerce subjects, and already their names are on the company's payroll, ready for work from this coming January.

The teachers will be paid by the company until when the government will switch them into its formal employment system, stressing that: 'the aim is to improve not only learning and teaching environments but also boosting academic performance. The given stationeries are to serve in among others, examination compiling because it is a time when lots of copies are needed.'

Despite the fact that the government invests much energy in the education sector, there was a need for many private stakeholders to support the efforts, for full availability of necessary

school infrastructures in all learning institutions.

Isagehe Secondary School Headmaster, Adolf Kabyemela expressed his gratitude to the company's support, promising best school performance as a result of availability of some important infrastructures.

Availability of stationery equipment meant that examination compiling and printing activities will be conducted within the school's premises, and with no much costs, he said.

"We call up on more stakeholders to support the schools as many are still facing various challenges, including dilapidated infrastructure," said the headmaster.

On behalf of his fellows, student Nsia Jeta promised best academic performance since the aid encourages many to stick only to studies.

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Women request Magufuli to intervene on war against GBV

WOMEN in the country have requested President John Magufuli to lead the war to end Gender Based Violence (GBV) hailing him on how he managed to fight Covid-19, illicit drugs and corruption.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday during the special event to reward 16 champions on GBV for the year 2020, Ambassador Getrude Mongela said women in the country have a huge trust in President Magufuli because they believe that there is nothing hard he cannot do.

The awards were organised jointly by Women in Law and Development Africa (WILDAF), Embassy of Denmark and United Nations Food Programme (UNFPA) aiming to recognise common people who did wonders in the fight against GBV.

Mongela said she strongly believes that president Magufuli can end GBV in the country because he has done many tremendous things which are bigger than GBV.

"We believe GBV is a small thing compared to all the big things our president has managed to fight

against, these include, Covid-19, Shinyanga Regional Commission Zainab Telack who was among 16 champions, said after her appointment she started fighting killings of elder people and eventually she won the war.

"As soon as I was appointed I was mullied in heart that I am not going to sleep until I manage to end this stupid behaviour of killing our elders only because they have red eyes. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that through collaboration with my Regional Police Commander we have succeeded," she said.

Zainab said that in the war, they also arrested all people who were engaging in early marriages. "Majority of children who were living in the streets are now in different secondary and primary schools," she added. According to her, discrimination and violence was not only confined to women but children as well, a situation which needs collective efforts to fight as it has adversely impacts to the community and the country as whole.

She said people who were acknowledged were not selected randomly but went through a tough selection process in a list of more than thousand names and those who stood out the most, are the ones who deserved to be awarded.



Christopher Ndawa (standing), a nurse at a clinic in Kilolo, Iringa Region, takes girls through the basics of reproductive health to help them steer clear of temptations that might lead them into unprotected sex, sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancies and early marriages. This was during "transition guide training" organised by Camfed yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya



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World Vision Tanzania donates 13m/- medical equipment to Bahi hospital

By Guardian Correspondent, Bahi

WORLD Vision Tanzania in the Central Zone has donated medical equipment worth 13m/- to Bahi District hospital to reduce mother and child mortality.

Receiving the donation, Bahi District Commissioner, Mwanahamisi Munkunda said that earlier Bahi District hospital was facing shortage of medical equipment the thing that affects provision of certain health

services.

She praised World Vision Tanzania for the assistance, saying the items will also help in surgery services that aim to reduce mother and child mortality, as in the past such services were being provided at the Regional Referral Hospital.

Gambo Sostheni, Manager for the project to reduce mother and child mortality said the items donated included 10 beds, 10 mattresses, surgery lamps and

trolleys for distributing drugs in the wards.

He added: "This project in Bahi and Chemba districts is being implemented in collaboration with the district councils and the health ministry."

In addition to the assistance, World Vision Tanzania also provided various items for the construction of walkways at Mundemu Health Centre in Bahi District.



Tanzania Distilleries Limited human resources manager Mariam Kambinga (3rd-L) accompanied by her colleagues yesterday when presenting to Mary Mathias of Dar es Salaam's Maria Theresa Orphanage foodstuffs donated to the centre by the company's workers. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Villagers suspend contributions towards classrooms construction

By Guardian Correspondent,

Biharamulo

MORE than 350 students from Std 1 to IV at Busiri Primary School in Nyakahura ward, Biharamulo District are forced to use two classrooms for their lessons due to suspension of construction work of classrooms that was going on.

This was revealed during the inspection visit at the school by Biharamulo District Commissioner, Col. Mathias Kahabi whereas the villagers informed him that construction of the classes was suspended after the people started questioning the manner their money was being used.

The DC and his entourage witnessed the pathetic situation at the school where many students sit on the floor due to lack of school desks.

Earlier, Stephano Raphael, the Head Teacher said the school

was facing many challenges including classrooms, desks and pit latrines.

However, DC Kahabi praised the school's leadership for continuing teaching pupils despite the difficult environment and pledged to work on the challenges within a short time.

During the election campaign, people stopped the convoy of the Prime Minister, Kassim Majaliwa and told him about the school's problems including shortage of teachers.

"The Premier responded by allocating four teachers to the school; just be patient as the government works to resolve all the remained problems including construction of classes," said DC Kahabi.

At the public rally, Biharamulo West Member of Parliament, Ezra Chiwelesa thanked the people for having initiated the school's construction.

He said it was hard to fathom that people in the village,

located in a gold mining area fails to continue constructing the school and called on them to explain why they stopped contributing.

The villagers said they were being discouraged by village officials including its chairman by collecting their contributions without reporting back to them on how the money was spent.

They added that whenever they asked about money expenditure, they were being told that some records had been lost.

Village Executive Officer, Omary Ramadhani explained that he has records for the villagers who were yet to pay their contributions, while the Village Chairman said for those who had paid the records had been lost.

After this explanation the DC summoned to his office the two village executives for more interrogation on the issue and promised the villagers that the whole issue would be resolved in a short time.

By Guardian Reporter

Activists want efforts against GBV intensified

WOMEN activists have called for intensive and collective efforts in the fight against Gender Based Violence (GBV) especially sexual abuse which is now a serious problem in the society.

This was said during a symposium organised by the Tanzania Women Tapo under their Tabata branch which brought together women traders as part of commemorating sixteen days of activism against GBV.

Speaking during the symposium, the Chariman for Women Tapo Tanzania Stella Mbaga said the meeting was aimed at connecting and informing women traders on their rights and what to do when they face GBV acts.

"Most of the women face GBV and they do not know what do, this makes this challenge bigger

because it goes unreported," she said.

One of the GBV victims Hellena Daniel said sufferers of sexual abuse face victimization in the society adding that there is need for various stakeholders to chip in to assist them with social and psychological support.

Dr Dinna Mbaga of the Women Fund Tanzania (WFT) said sexual abuse being part of GBV violates key rights that one is entitled to saying more efforts are needed to ensure the malpractice is brought to an end.

According to her, WFT has been doing a lot in empowering women through connecting them

with financial institutions but also training them to know their rights on what they should do in case they come across such incidents.

According to Tanzania Legal and Human Rights Centre's (LHRC) 2012 human rights report, 43,129 students dropped out of school due to pregnancy, early marriage, rape and truancy.

Some of these issues of unwanted pregnancies due to rape, early marriage, and forced sexual activities like prostitution, all of which affects their academic abilities and ultimately lead them to drop out of school in fear of harassment or embarrassment from other students.



Employment Opportunities

Abt Associates, a global leader in implementing technical assistance programs and research in the fields of economic growth, agriculture, social and environmental policy, and climate change, seeks highly qualified candidates for the anticipated USAID Comprehensive Client Centered Health Program for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health in Tanzania, or the Tanzania C3HP RMNCAH Activity, which seeks to increase the demand for and use of quality integrated RMNCAH services in target regions, particularly women of reproductive age, youth and children, by improving access to quality RMNCAH services in both facilities and the surrounding communities, promoting positive health-seeking behaviors among Tanzania's population, and enhancing the overall policy environment for RMNCAH service delivery.

All positions will be based in Dar es Salaam and are contingent upon project award to Abt Associates.

Chief of Party (COP) - The COP's primary responsibilities are aimed at providing overall leadership and technical direction of the entire project activity, ensuring an integrated vision among different components and actors, and a focus on achieving the results defined in the project's scope of work. Candidates must have a Master's degree with at least 15 years of senior-level international project management experience in designing, implementing and managing large, complex health systems strengthening and service delivery programs in developing countries. Experience working in Tanzania required.

Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) - The DCOP, under the supervision of the Chief of Party, assists in developing and implementing innovative approaches to strengthening the capacity of Tanzanian institutions and communities to deliver quality, integrated health services. Candidates must have a Master's degree with at least 12 years of relevant experience or a Bachelor's degree and 16 years of relevant experience, including serving in a senior technical position for public health and/or international development project. Must possess technical expertise in FP/RH and MNCH and have demonstrated leadership experience supporting technical strategy for an international donor-funded health service delivery program.

Finance and Administration (F&A) Director - The Finance and Administration (F&A) Director, under the supervision of the Chief of Party, will have primary responsibility for financial, accounting, contract and compliance management for the project. S/he will provide supervision and oversight of the program's finance, administrative and human resources support staff, and establish the Activity's financial systems and procedures required to ensure compliance with USAID regulations and local labor laws. Candidates must have a Master's degree in finance, business, accounting, or other relevant field, and at least 12 years of experience managing project finance and administration for international development programs, or Bachelor's degree and 16 years of relevant experience. Expertise in US-AID contract and compliance regulations required.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Director - Under the supervision of the Chief of Party (COP), the MEL Director is responsible for designing the project's monitoring, evaluation, and learning agenda and creating systems to measure and document program process, output and impact data results by routinely and systematically collecting, analyzing and presenting program data for project staff, partners and donors. Candidates must have a Master's degree and at least 12 years' experience in statistics, M&E, or a related field, or a Bachelor's degree and 16 years of relevant experience. At least five years of professional experience supporting MEL activities on international donor-funded programs. USAID MEL experience required. Experience conducting research and evaluation in HIV/AIDS, malaria, FP/RH, MNCH, WASH or nutrition is desired.

Senior Technical and Administrative Specialists - In addition to the individual positions above, Abt is looking to fill several senior technical and administrative positions. These positions will be providing technical guidance and administrative management for a range of activities within the project. Qualified candidates will have a minimum of 10 years working on these issues for USAID or other international organizations in Tanzania.

Interested candidates may send a CV and cover letter to TanzaniaJobs@abtassoc.com. Please include the position title and "Tanzania RMNCHA" in the subject line of the email. One email per position application. **Deadline for applications is December 31, 2020.** Tanzanian nationals are encouraged to apply. Only qualified candidates will be contacted.

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Africa must work toward worldwide universal health coverage outcomes

UNIVERSAL healthcare also called universal health coverage, universal coverage, or universal care is a health care system in which all residents of a particular country or region are assured access to health care. It is generally organised around providing either all residents or only those who cannot afford on their own, with either health services or the means to acquire them, with the end goal of improving health outcomes.

Universal healthcare does not imply coverage for all cases and for all people - only that all people have access to healthcare. Some universal healthcare systems are government-funded, while others are based on a requirement that all citizens purchase private health insurance. Universal healthcare can be determined by three critical dimensions: who is covered, what services are covered, and how much of the cost is covered. It is described by the World Health Organisation as a situation where citizens can access health services without incurring financial hardship.

The Director General of WHO describes universal health coverage as the "single most powerful concept that public health has to offer" since it unifies "services and delivers them in a comprehensive and integrated way". One of the goals with universal healthcare is to create a system of protection which provides equality of opportunity for people to enjoy the highest possible level of health.

As part of Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations member states have agreed to work toward worldwide universal health coverage by 2030. Amref Health Africa has

established an independent commission to review the continent's progress towards achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) targets by 2030.

The Africa Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC) Commission on the State of UHC in Africa will, in addition to reviewing the continent's progress, provide recommendations on leadership, accountability, technology/innovation and health security, to help guide the continent towards achieving UHC targets.

The independent body will deliver its mandate through 11 commissioners selected from a range of disciplines and sectors across Africa: global experts and thought leaders who will provide valuable guidance, engage with key stakeholders and collate data to provide an accurate overview of African nations' collective advancement towards UHC. The commissioners will also spotlight pressing challenges faced by different countries and work closely with governments, policy shapers and implementation teams to navigate them effectively for the delivery of health services to all.

The AHAIC Commission's immediate focus will be the production of a State of UHC in Africa Report. The report will provide a detailed account of steps taken by African governments to achieve UHC in their countries, reflecting on successes, barriers and lessons learned on the journey towards providing equitable access, quality health care and financial protection as envisioned within an African context. The findings of the report will be delivered at the fourth edition of the Amref-sponsored AHAIC Conference, which will be held from 8th to 10th March 2021.

Tanzania named best Africa Safari destination: Thanks to its natural and wildlife attractions

INDISPUTABLY, Tanzania has been placed the Best Natural Tourist destination Africa by its best natural tourist attractions than other countries in the continent, pulling big numbers of travelers from all corners of the world.

Tourism is travel for pleasure or business; also the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours. Tourism may be international, or within the traveller's country.

The World Tourism Organisation defines tourism more generally, in terms which go "beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only", as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure.

For Tanzania, the reasons are simple: Two of Unesco's World Heritage Sites, Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Crater, are located in Tanzania's northern safari circuit. The Serengeti is home to the "great migration", an event in which over 2.5 million zebra and wildebeest migrate annually.

Experts and visitors voted Tanzania for it is a host to the best chimp tracking in Africa, and visitors can climb the highest mountain on the continent.

Visitors can enjoy authentic African wilderness without paved roads and fencing. There are safari options for any budget and holidays can be spent enjoying beach extensions on Zanzibar Island. Travel is

simple, with direct access flights to the two major safari circuits. Tanzania is also a politically stable

and safe country.

It is also against the backdrop that participants at the first Africa Tourism Day (ATD) recently have voted Tanzania as the most exciting and fascinating tourist destination in Africa.

The regional event was part of the Lagos State World Tourism Day 2020, described as a successful 'phygital' celebration in Nigeria, in which virtual participants of the first exciting ATD were asked to vote for the African country which is best for tourism. The poll voters selected Tanzania as the most exciting African safari destination, followed by Mozambique and Nigeria.

Abigail Olagbaye, the Africa Tourism Day organizer and African Tourism Board (ATB) ambassador in Nigeria who is also Desigo Tourism Chief Executive Officer (CEO), announced the winners of the poll which targeted to pick the best photograph contest winner and the most exciting and fascinating travel destination in Africa.

The ATD photo contest winner was Steven Sigadu from Zambia who was awarded a five-day visit to Cape Town in South Africa.

Tanzania has been rated among the leading safari destinations in Africa due to its rich natural attractions, mostly the wildlife in leading protected parks including the Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Ruaha, Selous Game Reserve, Manyara and other fascinating nature reserves with scenic beauty.

"Visiting and staying in Tanzania could be a lifetime and memorable moment when visitors meet some of the friendliest people one will ever meet who will go above and beyond to help guests out and make them feel welcomed in their country," she stated.



Africa desperate for debt burden relief to recover from COVID-19

By Amadou Mahtar Ba

AFRICA'S debt burden is stifling the growth of economies and stagnating the very health care systems necessary to maintain healthy and productive populations. While a number of governments have increased the proportion of total public expenditure allocated to health, African countries spend up to five times their health budgets on debt repayments.

The economic and health costs to Africa of the COVID-19 pandemic are unprecedented by any measure. With the death toll rising above 50,000 and more than two million confirmed infections so far, the continent has many reasons to be worried.

So far, COVID-19 lockdowns have triggered the first continent-wide recession in 25 years, costing Africa an estimated U.S.\$115 billion in lost output and pushing up to 40 million additional people into extreme poverty, according to the World Bank.

Even before the coronavirus struck, Africa was in trouble, with most countries struggling to repay an accumulated \$547 billion in debt owed to other countries, multilateral banks and private lenders. Now we face a cash crunch: National treasuries do not have money to cover the costs of dealing with the pandemic, worsening our socio-economic challenges. The resulting high private out-of-pocket expenditure has pushed many people into poverty. While richer countries have been able to deploy more than \$11 trillion to cushion themselves from the impact of COVID-19, African nations are badly in need of resources to provide a robust response and recovery.

To recover from the economic damage, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that African governments face a financing gap between now and the end of 2023 of about \$345 billion - the amount that would be needed to cover emergency stimulus packages to jump-start economies, to strengthen national health care systems and to set up social safety nets to cushion vulnerable communities. Such funding could also finance the "liquidity and sustainability facility", which the UN Economic Commission for Africa has proposed to lower borrowing costs by ensuring that short-term commercial debt obligations



can be met and to provide extra liquidity for the private sector.

The lack of fiscal space by African countries to tackle the pandemic and its aftermath can be attributed to four challenges, according to the IMF:

First, the high debt-to-GDP levels, which the IMF considers unsustainable, since countries are near or at distressed levels, while still borrowing without evaluating exchange rate risks and the real costs of repaying the debts;

The response to Africa's plight by creditors has so far been lukewarm. G20 countries have responded to the crisis with a temporary suspension of \$5 billion in debt service payments, which is about 40 per cent of what Africa was spending on the health sector before the pandemic.

Second, the huge gaps between spending and revenue mean that African countries are forced to explore alternative financing for development projects. Consequently, loans become a recourse, further exacerbating the debt burden;

Third, the high cost of borrowing, with crippling interest rates between five and 16 per cent on 10-year government bonds, compared to near-zero to negative rates in Europe and America. For sub-Saharan African economies, interest repayments constitute the highest and fastest growing portion of expenditure.

Lastly, the depreciation of many African currencies against major international currencies has triggered inflationary pressures. For example, the Botswana Pula and the South African Rand have lost about 8 per cent of their value against the U.S. dollar since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Africa's debt burden is stifling

the growth of economies and stagnating the very health care systems necessary to maintain healthy and productive populations. While a number of governments have increased the proportion of total public expenditure allocated to health, African countries spend up to five times their health budgets on debt repayments. Overall, inadequate health financing remains a major constraint to effective health service delivery.

Over the next year alone, the continent is expected to fork out almost \$55 billion to service public debts. If these debt repayments could be put on hold, governments could divert the funds to meet rising health care demands and support vulnerable businesses and communities.

The response to Africa's plight by creditors has so far been lukewarm. G20 countries have responded to the crisis with a temporary suspension of \$5 billion in debt service payments, which is about 40 per cent of what Africa was spending on the health sector before the pandemic. Aside from bilateral lenders, multilateral institutions and private financiers - including international bonds and commercial banks - are non-committal about delaying some \$24 billion that is due to be repaid by African countries over the next year.

Rich nations should further be encouraged to voluntarily transfer part or all of their special drawing rights to boost foreign exchange liquidity and ease pressure on central banks in poorer countries.

African countries should not be forced to choose between meeting debt payments and responding to COVID-19's health and economic emergencies. For this reason,

the African Union (AU) should take the lead in monitoring how vulnerable countries are to rising debt.

The following steps need to be taken to address the coronavirus-generated crisis:

The AU can rally member states to pressure G20 countries, multilaterals and commercial lenders to suspend debt repayments until the end of 2021.

Rich nations should further be encouraged to voluntarily transfer part or all of their special drawing rights to boost foreign exchange liquidity and ease pressure on central banks in poorer countries.

At the same time, national treasuries should borrow for productive expenditure and manage the proceeds of international bonds more prudently and with integrity and transparency. The Conference of Speakers and Heads of African Parliaments (CoSAP) could serve as a mechanism to hold African leaders accountable. CoSAP has committed itself to ensure transparent and effective utilisation of resources from debt relief.

African governments must also tackle corruption and establish transparency and accountability mechanisms that ensure freed-up resources are properly invested in social, economic and human capital development.

Amadou Mahtar Ba is a member of the Africa Policy Advisory Board of ONE, the global movement which campaigns to end extreme poverty and preventable disease by 2030. He is also a co-founder and the executive chairman of AllAfrica Global Media Inc., which owns and operates allAfrica.com

University: An institution of higher learning

THE esteem to which any secondary school is held in this country is dependent on how many students it sends to universities. I remember the prize-giving days back in school. When the crowds would roar with thundering excitement on the announcement of how many students from the previous year were to proceed for higher education. As ongoing students, that prided us, momentarily turning universities into our highest aspiration. Every single relative's advice had an emphasis on 'study hard so that you make it to the university.' The implication was subtle but clearly registered; the university was where all the answers were.

I was hardly in my first year when I began to question the myths around the hype. Back home, everyone was extremely proud of my newly acquired identity; a university student, while I myself was finding it hard to figure out what this newly acquainted freedom meant just like all first year students currently. There used to be a manual perhaps that had been lost through the years; an outline of sorts on how to navigate to the bigger purpose of this moment that all the years of education were culminating to. The lack of which, between the huge chunks of time in our far-between classes, we were collectively slowly drifting like planks on still waters, hardly going anywhere.

Upon arrival at the university, the first advice students receive is 'this is not high school, we don't study here.' That was to be the first in the series of lies that many of us woke up from by the time you get to your third year. In retrospect, teachers had been conditioning us to believe that throughout our "education." A revelation as to how far back the system had been broken. Teachers repeated time and time again that secondary school would be the only difficult part of our entire education different from University. They enforced it further with, "...you won't have to remember a thing after a semester is done because you won't ever use it again". But what exactly was the point of getting to study at the university then?

I like to call universities institutions of hire learning. In the same spirit as hire purchase, you're likely to be paying for the lies that sail you through the years way after you're done. Like how a degree is what you're after and how it translates to a high paying job.

Of everything that a university student will run out of is time, time is something he will always have in abundance. One ought to assume that with so much freedom comes the ease of decision but the opposite in fact. The university student is often in paralysis with regards to arriving at choices on how to consciously and effectively use his time. It's harder to decide when your options aren't narrowed down. We jumped from one thing to the next in the most defining period of our lives, some of us turning it into this plateau where no growth whatsoever happened. Here for a good time, not a long time, right?



Our identities were based around our groups of friends. We formed communities, forged connections; the introverted from us got adopted by extroverts and collectively, we became highly unmotivated lazy master procrastinators who walked into exam rooms with nothing in their heads but confidence. All this while, everyone back home was so proud of us. The fresh brilliant minds expected in the workplace after all this was over.

I laugh hard at times when I remember the figures I used to draw up in my head as my entry-level salary.

I was lucky enough to get my first 'formal' employment a few months after graduation. It was less of a job than a contract really, for that research, that was even way past my estimated pay. A paycheck to ruin all paychecks. I'm still partly living off of it. In that program, I was lucky enough to interview an acquaintance, now a close friend and she walked me through her tarmacking experience; how hard it was for fresh graduates out here, breaking

through to my ignorance, giving me a glimpse of what to expect. "Saly," she said, "I know you're dreaming of your first salary being 40K at least but the earlier you lower your expectations to less than half that, the better." I took her seriously. So, I wasn't shocked when I saw the offer for my first 'allowance' at this starting position I got into. I simply smiled and remembered her.

So, imagine me, the most confident I've ever been. There's something about being an introvert in tight spaces that puts you in your element. I'm charming.

I'm brilliant and full of wit despite my total lack of preparation. I seem to recall I was far much better in my first interview in January. I'm thinking if only I had watched those YouTube interview preparation videos more keenly, maybe I would have nailed that interview even better. They asked me about the salary I expected and for a moment, I blank out. All eyes are on me. There is always no right answer for this especially when you're an intern. Anyways, there I was, be-

ing all humble, no you go, no you, the back and forth dance with the C.F.O as the head of H.R, this young woman chuckled to herself as I reluctantly declined to mention any amount and finally, I put my towel down and said a number judging by an article a friend had mentioned to me some two years back on the intern's pay.

As an intern, there's always this huge debate on whether you deserve to be paid or not and I do hear both sides. On one hand, you're nothing but potential, you're qualified, you'll be doing whatever every employee does for less the money and that's not fair.

On the other hand, your lack of experience in that field makes you a liability, and company resources will be used in training you. You're nothing but potential but at the same time a liability that an employer is taking a gamble on. And that's extremely generous isn't it?

Although thinking of all I just wrote, I made the same mistake everyone else made, treating university as this place of specialized

training for the field you'd like to get into and that's beside the point.

Society curves out this period for us, 3 years perhaps 4 that are never offered to us again well gives us this respectable identity of "university student" and a lot of freedom that comes with it. Yet they fail to tell us the most fundamental thing to that. Cause anyone who says that they go to university to simply study and prepare for their career is probably lying. University is the place where we go to forge our identities.

Like Jordan Peterson puts it, "I don't understand what's happening in the university. I can't believe that you're not told on the first day you come here that look man, you're here on a heroic mission. You're here to take your capacity to articulate yourself to levels that are undreamed of. You're going to come out of here, unstoppable. You're going to be able to do anything you want. That's what you're here for."

The biggest resource a university has is its unbelievable libraries. This wealth of knowledge by the most brilliant of men preserved to this moment, all for you to take. You don't know this yet but there's nothing as powerful as a man who can think and is articulate beyond comprehension. That is the big fuss about this place. I'm sorry if they didn't but that's the first thing, they should've told you.

Universities are supposed to produce men that will contribute to the world; not complainers who put a strain on it. Always have that in mind as you decide; "What big contribution are you going to make to the society?" take your time, no pressure.

College Comfort Zone
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Education: A fundamental human right and the priority of the 21st Century

NEW YORK

E DUCATION is not a privilege. It is a fundamental human right. Yet, education is undervalued even at the best of times. We often fail to connect the dots between the right to education and the realization of all human rights. As noted by the Nobel-winning economist Amartya Sen, we have failed to give 'this massive potential in transforming human lives' the attention it deserves.

This is true especially in times of crisis. When conflicts, forced displacement and natural disasters occur, education is generally the first service interrupted and the last to be resumed, receiving the least amount of funding in humanitarian settings. Between 2010 and 2017, less than 3% of humanitarian funds were allocated to education. In an active crisis, education is lifesaving. It brings an element of protection from violence, provides mental health and psychosocial support and provides nutrition. In protracted crisis settings, the development of the child or adolescent is just as important. Still, educational needs tend to be put on the backburner, overshadowed by other sectors. This is not to say that water and shelter are not important. However, with humanitarian crises lasting for years, the lack of a quality education inevitably removes the foundation for human rights and real empowerment becomes elusive.

Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to unlocking all other human rights - be it social, economic or cultural rights, or political and civil rights. The right to employment, the right to health, freedom of expression, the

right to a free and fair trial, and the overarching prohibition against discrimination - all of these rights rest on the foundation of a quality education: to be able to claim, enjoy, protect and respect these rights. This is ever more important in countries affected by armed conflict, where the rule of law often is replaced by the rule by force.

Education's impact on poverty is a prime example. According to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report: '171 million people could be lifted out of extreme poverty if all children left school with basic reading skills', while 'educational attainment explains about half of the difference in growth rates between East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa between 1965 and 2010'. Poverty is a violation of human dignity. Education offers an economic improvement to the lives of individuals, while also restoring their right to dignity.

The International Labour Organization estimates there are 152 million child labourers, and 73 million of them work in hazardous conditions. The ILO views education, alongside social protection and economic growth, as indispensable measures in reducing child labour.

Increased literacy rates have been shown to increase political engagement too. UNESCO's Institute of Statistics writes: 'Participation in adult literacy programmes is correlated with increased participation in trade unions, community action and national political life.' Alongside literacy and numeracy skills, appropriate education ensures a broad set of life skills - the ability to make well-balanced decisions, to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner, to develop



Yasmine Sherif, Director of Education Cannot Wait

good social relationships and critical thinking. Such skills are pivotal in creating a tolerant and aware community to prevent persecution, discrimination and violent conflict resolution. In crisis affected countries, education serves as a tool for young people to be prepared to re-engage with their political system, bolster their right to assembly and participate in creating a stable and accessible government, which is accountable to its people.

UNICEF credits education in playing 'a critical role in normalising the situation for the child and in minimising the psychosocial stresses experienced when emergencies result in the sudden and violent destabilisation of the child's immediate family and social environment.' As noted by a UNHCR-led conference on the protection of children in emergency settings, education has a 'preventive effect on recruitment, abduction and gender-based violence'.

Prior to COVID-19, an estimated 75 million school-aged children and youth were deprived of a quality education due to armed conflict, forced displacement and natural disasters. Today, they face the double blow inflicted by COVID-19, all while the numbers are growing. According to a recent report by the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Global Protection Cluster, experts estimate that an additional 15 million women and girls would be exposed to gender-based violence for every three months of Covid-19 lockdown globally.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) was established in 2016 to increase financial resources and accelerate delivery of quality education to those left furthest behind in conflict, forced displacement, climate-induced disaster and epidemics. A global fund hosted in the United Nations and serving as a pooled funding mechanism, ECW was also tasked to support humanitarian-development coherence in the education sector.

In so doing, ECW brings together host-governments, UN agencies, civil society and private sector to deliver on Sustainable Development Goal 4 in some of the harshest circumstances on the globe. The Fund has mobilized over US\$650 million and delivered quality education to close to 4 million children and adolescents.

Since WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic, ECW has invested in over 100 grantees (partners) across 35 different countries/contexts in multiple phases through our First Emergency Response. The second phase was dedicated exclusively to refugees, internally displaced and their host-communities.

Still, education is a development sector requiring sustainability and thus emergency assistance is not enough. Working with host-governments, and through established coordination mechanisms designed for humanitarian contexts, ECW invests in Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs) that are designed and implemented jointly by both humanitarian and development actors. As a rights-based global fund, these investments place a strong emphasis on protection and gender, human rights and humanitarian principles.

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, stated at the launch in August 2020 of his Policy Brief on Education: "Education is a fundamental human right, the bedrock of just, equal and inclusive societies and a main driver of sustainable development."

As a human rights lawyer, I have hope that the international community of the 21st century will recognize that an inclusive quality education is the foundational human right for all other human rights. As we commemorate the International Human Rights Day, we all need to remember that children and adolescents enduring conflicts and forced displacement know all too well the consequences of inhumanity. By investing in their education, we still have a chance to restore their hope in humanity.

Female parliamentarians need to influence changes favouring their destiny

By Correspondent Daniel Semberya

STUDY has found out that the extent of women's participation in the general elections as candidates and voters is still low though there is a significant increase of the number of women in the parliament, the house of representatives, councillorship, and in the governmental positions.

The finding further revealed that political parties set aside special seats for women candidates to contest for the leaderships.

Regarding the challenges facing women candidates in the general elections, the study has found out that women candidates and women voters had less time and space for strategising the political issues, less or with no experience and skills on political matters, limited resources to manage campaigns, and socio-cultural constraints either within their families or in the society as a whole.

With regards to the suggested appropriate measures to increase women's participation in the general elections, the study has found out that there is a need to improve training/seminars for women to raise awareness among women to fight against gender-based harassment, early preparation for the election process, and use of democratic means of getting participants which is expected to favour women candidates.

From the study findings, it is recommended that The National Electoral Commission (NEC), political parties, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), women's organisations, the media, development partners, and the government as a whole should join their efforts to foster policies on gender balances in the leadership by having 50:50 representations in the top positions.

Speaking recently during Policy Forum's Breakfast Debate on "A Reflection of Women Participation in the 2020 General Elections and What the Future Holds" a Lecturer at the Open University of Tanzania, Dr Victoria Lihuru has called on NEC and other responsible organs to allow candidacy for all positions to be from 18 of age; to allow for private candidacy more opportunities for women and girls to enter leadership roles; reduce electoral deposits to allow more youth, women and people with disabilities to



Women who form 51 per cent of the country's population should have at least 20 per cent of elected MPs. File photo.

afford to it.

She has further urged for the review or rethink of special seats and revise election petition security of costs; 50:50 considerations in all presidential appointments; regulate nationally the modality for selecting or electing special seats candidates.

Youth and gender sensitive voter and civic education is an imperative; transparent and enforceable mechanism for dealing with harassment, discrimination and violence in the electoral process needed. Importantly, NEC, ZEC and other election institutions to ensure there are more women in decision making positions.

She has advised the 137+ women in the parliament to prioritise and influence for the returning of young mothers to mainstream schools; VAT-free menstrual products, speak against misogyny and male chauvinism; against male-centric appointments to the government positions; new constitution; 50:50 and civic space.

General elections took place on the 28th October, 2020 on Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar with an additional day 27th October for early voting in Zanzibar.

There were mixed conclusion from different observer missions some said that it was fair and free, others cried foul. CCM won by a landslide in the United Republic of Tanzania Parliament.

During his June 2020 speech when closing the parliament President Dr John Magufuli urged political parties to refrain from insults during the campaign period including youth, women and people with disabilities (PWDs) in the electoral process.

Women still access political decision making positions through special seats; 10 presidential appointments and by virtue of your position, like Attorney General or speaker.

In the last General Elections women took part in different steps of the elections including among others: Voter registration, party nominations, parliamentary level; NEC nominations and campaign.

With regards to campaign environment, she said that as it was in the previous general elections incidences of harassment and violence against women were reported but haven't been systematically documented...

Out of all the parliamentary seats, women won 24 constituency seats. An additional 113 women have entered as special seats-94 from CCM and 19 from CHADEMA. They all have been sworn in.

In a different platform veteran woman politician and retired National Assembly Speaker, Mama Anne Makinda, was quoted urging competent women to come out of their shells and vie for vari-

ous positions in the general election.

Makinda believes that women who form 51 per cent of the country's population should have at least 20 per cent of elected MPs.

Apparently a culture of intimidation, threats and abuse is discouraging more women from taking part in scouting for a political position.

"We all must be ready to win, not lose," said Mama Abdallah who served in various capacities as a lawmaker and minister.

"Women must re-elect or vote for competent and strong female candidates that will champion the gender equality agenda and promote sustainable development," she said.

Ummu Mwalimu, the then Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children noted that the government has been implementing a series of policies, rules and regulations seeking to advance the rights of women and children in the country.

Other literatures have revealed that historically, women have always been active in politics in Tanzania. They participated actively in the struggle for independence although once independence was achieved, the first cabinet did not have a single woman.

A story is told that when the late Bibi Titi demanded an explanation from the then President, the late Mwl Julius Nyerere, first President of independent Tanganyika and later of the United Repub-

lic of Tanzania, as to why he did not include women in his cabinet as full ministers, she was informed that there were no women with 'relevant experience'.

In Tanzania, multi-party politics were reintroduced on 1 July 1992 following Nyalali Commission's recommendations after almost thirty years of one party state politics.

According to Ngware (1998), the evolution and re-introduction of multi-party politics "was neither automatic nor inevitable."

Both internal and external factors contributed to this reality. Between 1992 and to date, 17 fully registered political parties have been established including the ruling party, Chama cha Mapinduzi. As very few women belong to formalised political groupings, this means that most women will be left out.

Likewise, the Political Act of 1992, which is expected to play an important role in promoting intra party democracy, is silent on many critical areas relating to female participation in political parties.

Free trade deal could boost African manufacturing

BY KOUASSI YEBOUA AND RUIER WAIT

INDUSTRIALISATION has become one of the most talked about issues among African policymakers. A vibrant manufacturing sector is crucial to transforming economies on the continent, achieving sustained growth, creating more jobs and achieving prosperity for all.

Yet Africa's experience with industrialisation has been disappointing. Trade liberalisation and appropriate complementary policies could turn things around. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents an opportunity for economic growth and transformation across the continent. To get there though, several major hurdles in implementing the new deal will need to be overcome.

After independence, most African countries tried to industrialise through state-led import substitution policies. These endeavours failed due to poor leadership, a lack of commitment, mismanagement, commodity price busts and an absence of clear industrial development planning.

Research by Bruton shows the extent to which these efforts were implemented on an ad hoc basis, lacking a clear economic rationale. Subsequent structural adjust-

ment programmes seem to have further dampened the ideal of industrialisation in many African countries. They encouraged states to focus on what they already had an 'advantage' in - often commodities.

There is considerable room to grow intra-African manufactured exports if trade is further liberalised

Today Africa is less industrialised than it was in the 1970s. The share of the manufacturing sector in Africa's GDP is currently 11%, down from 15% in the 1970s. Africa's contribution to global manufacturing output declined from 3% in the 1970s to less than 2% in 2013. The share of manufacturing in Africa's total exports fell from 26% in 1995 to 19% in 2014. In other words, African countries are deindustrialising while still poor.

Almost without exception, those countries that have sustained rapid economic growth over time, including the Asian Tigers and China, did so on the basis of a strong manufacturing sector. It seems unlikely that African countries could achieve inclusive and sustainable structural change without industrialisation.

Given Africa's significant agricultural potential, agro-processing could be a start to achieving a vibrant manufacturing sector. However, the continent's exports to developed countries face more pronounced tariff regimes in processed agricultural prod-



ucts, with higher tariffs on processed commodities than on raw materials. This 'tariff escalation' discourages countries from moving up the value chain.

In 2014, manufactured products accounted for only 15% of Africa's exports to outside the continent compared to 42% for intra-African exports. Evidence suggests that there is considerable room to grow intra-African manufactured exports if trade is further liberalised.

The AfCFTA aims to boost intra-African trade by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers. Its full implementation will help mitigate the constraint of tariff escalation, encouraging countries to focus on more value-added products, and hence diversify exports away from commodities.

Technical barriers to trade, such as corruption and cumbersome custom systems must be removed

Implementation starts in January 2021 and if fully realised, the deal will help firms

overcome the constraint of narrow domestic markets and facilitate economies of scale, diversification and more value add. AfCFTA covers all African countries, with an estimated combined GDP of US\$2.5 trillion and a population of about 1.3 billion.

The trade deal will help attract foreign direct investment, especially in the manufacturing sector, as the large market can increase profit margins for external investors. By establishing a subsidiary on the continent rather than exporting from outside Africa, the unified African market can be accessed more easily and at lower costs.

The AfCFTA offers an opportunity to boost industrialisation across Africa. It offers numerous manufacturing opportunities such as agro-processing, clothing, car assembling, machinery and equipment, among others.

However, its implementation will undoubtedly pose serious challenges. Regional economic communities such as

the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community aren't functioning as they should. Intra-regional trade in ECOWAS is officially reported to be only 8-13% of total ECOWAS trade, and Nigeria recently closed its land border with Benin.

African governments and policymakers must do everything in their power to make the free trade area work. Technical barriers to trade, such as corruption and inefficient and cumbersome custom systems, have to be addressed.

Ethiopia is aligning its trade and industrial policies by developing economic zones and industrial hubs

The AfCFTA will probably be hampered by Africa's huge infrastructure deficit and low quality

of trade logistics. African countries should actively invest in both areas. Also, trade liberalisation often creates winners and losers, especially when it takes place between countries with different levels of development. This could undermine the free trade area if compensatory measures aren't taken for equitable distribution of gains.

Even fully implemented, the trade deal may not lead to the level of industrialisation expected unless appropriate complementary policies are put in place. Industrial parks and special economic zones are a good platform to exploit these opportunities.

Lessons can be learnt from Ethiopia which is doing well in aligning its trade and industrial policies through developing economic zones and industrial hubs. The country is focusing on investments and production in manufacturing export sectors such as textiles and apparel, leather products, pharmaceuticals and agro-processing.

African countries should also invest in human capital, improve business regulations and enhance access to credit for export-oriented manufacturing firms. Such supportive policies, along with the effective implementation of the AfCFTA, can boost industrialisation and development on the continent.

The future of Africa will depend on its ability to use the industrialisation opportunity presented by the free trade area. Leaders now need to show the political will and commitment to ensure that technical trade barriers are removed and that industrial policies are in place and coordinated at both national and regional levels.

Amref establishes independent commission to review progress towards UHC in Africa

By Special Correspondent, Nairobi

AMREF Health Africa has established an independent commission to review the continent's progress towards achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) targets by 2030.

The Africa Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC) Commission on the State of UHC in Africa will, in addition to reviewing the continent's progress, provide recommendations on leadership, accountability, technology/in-

novation and health security, to help guide the continent towards achieving UHC targets.

The independent body will deliver its mandate through 11 commissioners selected from a range of disciplines and sectors across Africa; global experts and thought leaders who will provide valuable guidance, engage with key stakeholders and collate data to provide an accurate overview of African nations' collective advancement towards UHC.

The commissioners will also

spotlight pressing challenges faced by different countries and work closely with governments, policy shapers and implementation teams to navigate them effectively for the delivery of health services to all.

The AHAIC Commission's immediate focus will be the production of a State of UHC in Africa Report.

The report will provide a detailed account of steps taken by African governments to achieve UHC in their countries, reflecting on successes,

barriers and lessons learned on the journey towards providing equitable access, quality health care and financial protection as envisioned within an African context.

The findings of the report will be delivered at the fourth edition of the Amref-sponsored AHAIC Conference, which will be held from 8th to 10th March 2021.

"The commissioners have a big task ahead of them. With only three months to the AHAIC Conference, they will be working with a multi-stake-

holder team and employing various research methodologies to develop and deliver a comprehensive report that will inform subsequent UHC discussions in Africa. The report will serve as a reliable roadmap and reference point on progress made so far, as viewed through an African lens," said Dr. Githinji Gitahi, Global CEO, Amref Health Africa and Co-Chair, UHC 2030 Steering Committee.

Commenting on the selection criteria, Dr. Gitahi noted: "The selection committee has

assembled a youth- and gender-inclusive commission that reflects the rich diversity of the continent and brings together experienced, versatile, well-respected global health experts from across Africa."

The AHAIC 2019 resolution to achieve health targets through increasing access to health services; improving the effective delivery of quality health services; establishing mechanisms to guarantee adequate and sustainable public-led financing, and strengthening people-led accountability

to safeguard transparency and efficiency at all levels.

African countries' commitment to the attainment of UHC must be followed by action, reflection, and more action. Progress will fundamentally hinge on genuine and sustained political action. This commission intends to help us all reflect on Africa's UHC progress, successes and challenges, and articulate areas of action to accelerate progress," noted Prof. Edwine Barasa, one of the Co-Chairs of the Commission.

Avoiding cheetah hangouts helps ranchers protect herds - study

WASHINGTON

ON the dusty savannahs of Namibia, one of the last strongholds of cheetah populations on Earth, conflicts between cattle ranchers and big cats threaten the survival of the embattled carnivores.

But new research on how cheetahs use the landscape has allowed some ranchers to reduce the number of calves killed annually by 86%, largely by avoiding popular cheetah hangouts.

Cheetahs are the fastest land mammal, capable of speeds exceeding 60 miles per hour (97 kilometers per hour). But they also hold another distinction: the rarest big cat in Africa, with fewer than 7,000 alive in the wild.

By following movements of 106 GPS-collared cheetahs from 2007 to 2018, researchers from Germany and Slovenia gleaned new insights into cheetah social structure, which they shared with ranchers.

Unlike most African felines, cheetahs hunt by day, covering vast distances. Some males team up to hunt and defend territories, but other males and all females lead largely solitary lives.

Even a loose-knit society needs a way and place to communicate. Within core areas of their territories, some male cheetahs leave scent marks by urinating or defecating in prominent locations, typically on trees, termite mounds or rocks. Other cheetahs come to these areas to sniff around and learn who's passed by recently, and who may be ready to mate or fight.

"You can think of these landmarks as the most popular bar in town," said Joerg Melzheimer, an ecologist at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife

Research, and co-author of a study published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "It's the main address for all the boys and girls looking for partners to go. It's a communication hub."

And these hubs are enduring. Through interviews with ranchers, Melzheimer learned that some trees marked by cheetahs in his study were also used by cheetahs 80 years ago. "They go back generations and generations," he said.

Using GPS tracking data that recorded locations every 15 minutes, the researchers calculated that cheetah activity around these hubs is about 20 times higher than elsewhere.

"This is an extraordinary data set demanding a huge amount of work and the authors have used state-of-the-art statistical methods to analyze the data thoroughly," said Tim Caro, a biologist at the University of California, Davis, who was not involved in the study.

The hub areas are the most dangerous for calves, which are vulnerable to cheetahs during the first six months of their lives.

In 2008, researchers convinced the first rancher to move herds to avoid cheetah hubs during calving season. The team initially wasn't certain whether the big cats would follow the herds, or simply prey more on wildlife such as grazing oxen in and around the hubs. The latter happened.

As word got out, other ranchers joined the experiment. The scientists collected data on cheetah kills before and after herding routines were changed for six ranches. Other ranchers also changed their routines.



The average number of calves lost to cheetahs per year went from 15 to two, the researchers found. The trend held for a decade, indicating it wasn't just happenstance.

The study shows cheetahs "are only opportunistically targeting livestock, not selecting them," said Elizabeth Naro, a conservationist at African People & Wildlife, who works on carnivore monitoring in Tanzania and was not involved in the study.

"What the authors found is exciting because it shows that cheetahs rely on activity centers, where predation is simply incidental," said Christine Wilkinson, a University of California, Berkeley researcher who

studies carnivore conflict in Kenya and was not involved in the study. "The researchers realized the focus should be on 'problem areas,' not 'problem individuals,' for cheetahs."

Keeping calves away from cheetah communication hubs can help mitigate conflict with ranchers, said Vincent Van Der Merwe, a biologist at the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Cheetah Metapopulation project in South Africa.

"This is not a complete solution, because cheetahs still roam a larger landscape," added Van Der Merwe, who was not part of the study. "But it can make a big impact."

Local manufacturers of plastic pipes commend govt's move to control importation of products

By Guardian Reporter

LOCAL manufacturers of plastic pipes have commended the government's move to control importation of the products saying the move will help boost local industries.

Plastic pipes are used in various projects in a number of sectors such water, energy, agriculture and construction. Imported plastic pipes were sold at lower prices compared to those manufactured locally due to various reasons including low production cost and availability of raw materials in the specific countries

This was stated on Tuesday by Plasco Limited chief operations officer, Alimiya Osman when briefing journalists at the firm's offices in Dar es Salaam on the new 6 million Dollars technology investment—Weholite pipes which can be used to control storm water as well as construction of culverts and irrigation water distribution.

The invented technology is likely to provide improved solutions for sanitation and water storage and ultimately address challenges of outdated infrastructure for water supply, water storage and sanitation.

According to Osman, a number of challenges facing local plastic pipes manufacturers have been resolved by the government through the Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI).

"We are grateful to the government for controlling importation of plastic pipes; it was previously difficult for us to compete in the market in presence of imported products," he said noting that Plasco is the only factory licensed to manufacture Weholite pipes in the East African bloc.

Established in 1993, the industry also exports its products to Rwanda, Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Apart from storm water pipes, the factory manufactures pipes for use in gas, irrigation and water projects.

He added: "We work to satisfy our customers, our



Plasco Limited's technical sales engineer, Mafikri Mushi showing some Weholite pipes to journalists who visited the factory on Tuesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

products go through various quality control processes whereas even raw materials are tested to determine if they are within the required specifications."

He said that Weholite pipes which are made from high density polyethylene (HDPE) can last longer compared to concrete which can last for 20 years.

"This is a new-age technology in the construction industry currently being used across the world to provide improved piping solutions especially in drainage and storm water management," he said adding the factory has variety experts and engineers who

also provide technical support to customers during their project implementation.

Mafikri Mushi is the company's Technical Sales Engineer; he said the pipe also saves an alternative to concrete culverts in revamping drainage infrastructures.

"We call upon the government and stakeholders engaged in the construction industry to use pipes as a solution to the flooding challenges in various cities including Dar es Salaam," he added noting the pipes available in sizes of up to 2200mm internal diameter.

African artists and youth uniting in Africa Union pledge for peace

By Special Correspondent, Addis Ababa

A PLEDGE to end all forms of violence and set in motion a grassroots civil society campaign to promote peace was launched today by a coalition of community activists, artists, victims of war, academics, business leaders and African youth.

Emmanuel Jal, a spokesperson for the coalition and a prominent peace campaigner, said: "We are losing the battle to end hostilities. Ours is a call to action. We have come together from different backgrounds and different nations to create a positive, global awakening, responding to the AU's call for pledges for peace. We need every African citizen galvanised to make peace a reality and to rid the continent of war and civil unrest. Peace is you."

The centrepiece of the coalition's appeal is a short animation endorsed by the African Union Commission called 'My Pledge for Peace', narrated by Nigerian actor Folu Storms (<https://bit.ly/2L3LVmj>). Grammy-nominated singer Niniola (<https://bit.ly/3IM42Kp>) South African musician Zoë Modiga (<https://bit.ly/39NexdT>) and Emmanuel Jal (<https://bit.ly/2JQ07Nv>) inviting all Africans to show their commitment to peace with a hand gesture and a pledge (#MyPledgeforPeace).

The launch coincides with the conclusion of the African Union heads of state summit this weekend to review progress towards "Silencing the Guns by 2020: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development". African heads of state at the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on Silencing the Guns unanimously agreed to extend the initiative's efforts to end hostilities for another ten years. They stressed the

importance of involving grassroots organisations and African citizens in tackling the root causes of conflict.

Terrorism, conflict and crisis have proliferated in 2020, despite calls from AU and UN leaders for a global ceasefire. The combined effects have been devastating for the most vulnerable, including refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and migrants, as well as youth, women, children and the elderly.

Folu Storms said "There are many complex and interdependent challenges to achieving peace, but every conflict resolution starts with a conversation. And today we are having that conversation and galvanising citizens to make a commitment to actualising the AU's vision of a conflict-free continent."

Zoë Modiga, a celebrated South African musician, said "Many debates around improving the human condition have surged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic this year. We have seen acts of violence across the continent and witnessed the effects of systemic oppression, a global conversation with practical solutions is the highest priority now."

Niniola, added: "The challenges confronting our continent today require us to work together. While our differences are what make us human, it's only by working together that we can draw sufficient strength to heal what we have harmed and to mend what we have broken."

African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace, Karabo Mokgonyana said: "All it takes for evil to flourish is for good people to do nothing. It's time for us to make our voices heard and to make our actions count. It's time for us all to make a commitment to peace and dialogue, and to silence the guns."

Inside the illegal trade in West Africa's cultural heritage

By Julia Stanyard

IT was late summer 2019 when Bourama (not his real name) answered his phone. He was near Mopti, in central Mali, he told us and was in the midst of illegally excavating one of Mali's thousands of archaeological sites.

The site that he and his team of three workmen were excavating had so far mostly yielded ancient stone beads, which he estimated to date back to the palaeolithic era. These are often found at spots in this region, particularly ancient burial grounds. Reminiscing about a previous excavation, he described how "we opened the tombs and found cadavers wearing the beads. They had them on their necks, their waists, and their wrists."

He has unearthed everything from bronze jewellery to urns and statues. Other looters he knows have dug up the famed Djenné terracottas. These are unique to Mali and one of the most ancient forms of figurative art in Africa.

Unexcavated artefacts in Mali are legally the property of the state. Removing them from their original context, or exporting them, is unlawful according to standard legal frameworks in archaeological source countries.

These laws aim to preserve antiquities in their original context. Without such context, it is difficult to understand these objects' meaning and importance in ancient cultures. As Bourama describes, the looters' methods are hardly the painstaking research of a professional archaeologist. "I have more freedom, because the people I employ just come with pickaxes and shovels and dig, so I have lots of freedom."

While Bourama claims he excavates only for his own personal collection, there are many other dealers in Mopti and around other key archaeologically rich areas, such as Gao, Djenné and Timbuktu, who exploit this trade for profit. Regional middlemen for antiquities dealers based in the capital have pillaged the sites in these regions for decades. They command and finance large, organised teams of looters to excavate sites.

Looting has surged since the outbreak of conflict in Mali. Rising economic hardship and the breakdown of state structures have meant new groups of raiders have flooded the market, increasing demand for the services of regional intermediaries.

Almost no sites have escaped unscathed. Representatives from cultural institutions and archaeologists estimate that between 80% and 90% of locations in key regions have been plundered. Recent looting has exacerbated the damage caused by decades of illicit excavations.

The black market in Malian antiquities has historically been concentrated in Bamako.



Many dealers in Mopti and around other key archaeologically rich areas, such as Gao, Djenné and Timbuktu (pictured) are illegally excavating archaeological sites. Antiquities and artworks uncovered are subsequently sold on the black market. (Photo: File photo)

From the late 1990s to 2012-2013, dealers based in the capital sold objects to wealthy European collectors that had been excavated by looting networks. A new ENACT organised crime study found that recent years of conflict have radically reshaped Bamako's antiquities market. A small number of powerful, well-connected dealers reportedly continue to supply artefacts to clients overseas.

Research in North Africa has found that online groups are now playing a vital role in antiquities trafficking. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, play host to these groups. Looters on the ground, at remote sites and in conflict zones, connect online with po-

tential buyers around the world. The monitoring of this criminal activity is poor and antiquities crime isn't a priority for those enforcing social media guidelines.

Mali's cultural institutions - the Directorate Nationale du Patrimoine Culturel, the National Museum of Mali and the Ministry of Culture - undertake missions to protect archaeological sites even in the active conflict zones. Despite their efforts, objects continue to be smuggled out over Mali's land borders and by air from the capital.

Dealers in Bamako told the ENACT research team that Malian artefacts, in particular the highly prized Djenné terracottas, continue

to disappear primarily to European markets. The legacy of colonial-era collections of looted African art continues to shape the international art market.

The terracottas feature on the Red List of cultural objects at risk published by the International Council of Museums. The Red List provides an international alert of types of cultural heritage that are likely to have been looted.

Archaeologists and provenance researchers argue that looted artefacts continue to circulate on antiquities markets with impunity. In their view, collectors and dealers don't do enough to ensure due diligence on

the objects they sell. The counter-argument by Western-based professional associations of art dealers is that ever-increasing regulations throttle their business. Meanwhile, the informal online trade in antiquities continues apace; much of it, reportedly, either looted or fake.

The illegal trade in African cultural heritage continues to cause untold damage to archaeological sites and monuments. Mali is a standout case study of how this illicit business is draining the continent of its collective history. **DM**

BDS creates more opportunities for global aviation industry

BEIJING

CHINA'S BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) is creating new opportunities for the global aviation industry as it expands its international aerospace industry partnerships.

"China has been sharing BDS achievements with the world in an open and cooperative manner, coordinating and collaborating with other satellite navigation systems," said Ran Chengqi, director of the China Satellite Navigation Office.

China officially commissioned the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System on July 31, opening the new BDS-3 system to global users.

"China has been promoting the incorporation of BDS into the standards of international organizations in fields such as civil aviation, maritime affairs, search and rescue, and mobile communication," said Ran.

A total of 189 BDS-3 performance indicators passed technical verification at the just-concluded 6th plenary meeting of navigation system panel of the International Civil Aviation Organization, highlighting international recognition of BDS-3 services and laying a foundation for promoting its industrial applications.

Backed by the country's civil aviation authorities and the China Satellite Navigation Office, a joint team has spent

10 years drafting and verifying BDS standards for applications in the civil aviation sector.

The next step involves formulating standards for BDS applications in the global civil aviation sector and developing BDS-based air navigation equipment.

MASSIVE MARKET

"The ancient Chinese invented the compass, and the modern Chinese are giving the world BDS," said Wang Yongquan, chairman of Shanghai ComNav Technology Ltd.

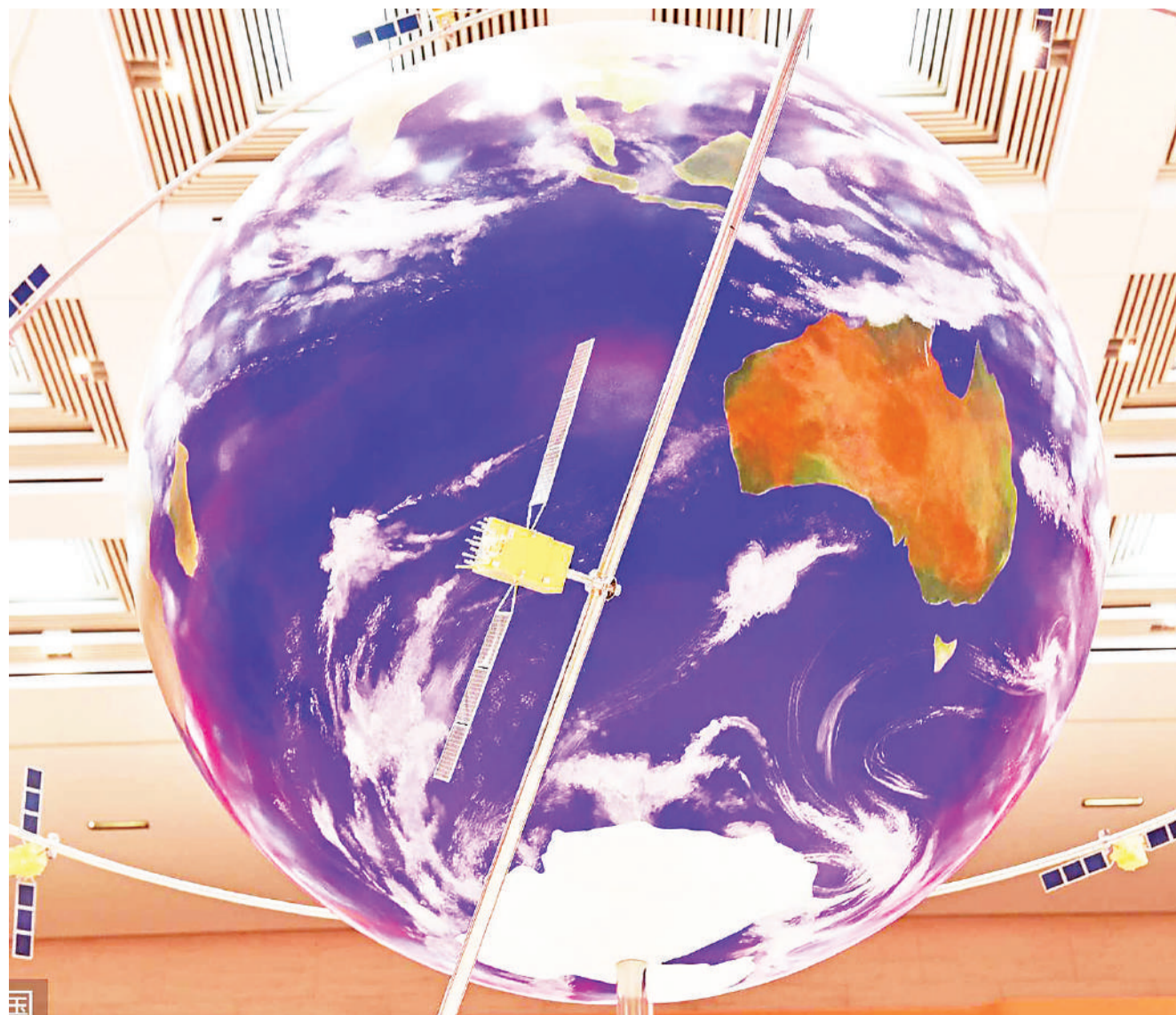
BDS brings more choices for global users and integrates with other major satellite navigation systems, said Wang.

As a pioneer in the international satellite navigation market, ComNav Technology has extended its global network to more than 120 countries and regions, including about 40 along the Belt and Road.

The company's products have gained popularity due to its high-accuracy positioning capacities through integration with other navigation systems.

"Our products have been applied in UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles) and other domains. We will further explore the civil aviation demand for high-accuracy positioning," Wang said.

China has the world's second largest civil aviation market. By the end of Octo-



The model of China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System

ber, the country's civil aircraft fleet totaled 6,408, including 3,771 transport aircraft and 2,637 general aircraft, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

Strong growth is expected to continue despite near-term challenges. China's airlines are expected to acquire 8,600 new aircraft valued at 1.4 trillion U.S. dollars over the next 20 years, according to Boeing's 2020 annual China market

forecast released in November.

GREAT POTENTIALS

BDS has been deeply integrating with emerging technologies and playing significant roles in the fight against COVID-19.

BDS-based UAVs and unmanned ground vehicles were

used to deliver medical supplies to epidemic-stricken areas.

BDS is also used in some models of China's large-scale Wing Loong UAV family.

"UAV requires the aid of external systems to bring its role into full play and BDS provides essential support for it," said Li Yidong, chief designer of Wing Loong UAV series of AVIC (Chengdu) Unmanned Aircraft System Company.

BDS can also support emergency telemetry and tele-control with its distinctive short message communication function.

"All these have improved the capability and level of services provided by Wing Loong UAVs in important domains such as emergency rescue, meteorological services and maritime monitoring," Li said.

BDS has been installed on about 300 general aircraft, accounting for 11 percent of the total in China, said a report on the construction and development of BDS by the China Satellite Navigation Office.

BDS is one of four global navigation satellite systems, alongside the United States' GPS, the European Union's Galileo, and Russia's GLONASS.

China has been actively encouraging cooperation and exchanges between BDS and other navigation systems. BDS and GLONASS are compatible, and the BDS and GPS are compatible and interoperable.

"BDS will adhere to the principles of openness, cooperation and sharing. We will actively perform in international cooperation and promote the development of global satellite navigation," Ran said.

Xinhua



EA court abolishes excise duty imposed by Nairobi on Dar glass exports

By The Banker Reporter

A 25 percent excise duty imposed by Kenyan authorities on glass bottles exported by local manufacturer, Kioo Limited has been abolished by East Africa Court of Justice which described it as violating East Africa Community Customs Union Protocol.

In its application, Kioo Limited claimed that authorities in Kenya moved to implement Business Laws (Amendment) Act 2020, section 41 and the first schedule to the Excise Duty Act of 2015 which imposed the excise duty on its glass exports with effect from March 2020.

The Dar es Salaam based manufacturer said introduction of the excise duty, which excluded glass bottles for packaging pharmaceutical products, bleached various provisions of the EAC Treaty, the Protocol on East African Customs Union and Protocol on the Establishment of the East Africa Community Common Market as it gave preferential treatment to locally manufactured glass bottles in Kenya which are not subject to excise duty.

"Kenya is an important market for glass products manufactured by Kioo," said Kioo Limited's General Manager, Kumar Krishnan. "Imposition of the excise duty on our products meant that glass from Tanzania was more expensive compared to locally manufactured glass in Kenya and therefore Kenyan companies refrained from importing glass from Tanzanian companies or imported at a higher landed cost



Kioo Limited's manufactured glass bottles at its factory in Dar es Salaam.

which has a direct impact on the cost of doing business in Kenya," Krishna said in the statement.

It stated that Tanzania and Kenya have more or less than the same cost structures and market potential while Tanzania has local gas available, Kenya has local soda ash available. Both are major cost drivers in the business and almost neutralize the advantage to both Kenya and Tanzania.

The statement said Kioo is the largest manufacturer of glass containers in the EAC, exporting almost 60 percent of its production to EAC members. "This ruling is expected to give a reprieve to other companies importing glass into Kenya from the EAC as we wait for the final determination of the matter," said Faith Macharia who is a partner at ALN Kenya, Anjarwalla & Khanna and Kioo's lawyers at the EACJ.

Kioo remains the only company in the region which converts locally available materials into value added finished products and supplies the EAC bloc and other Central and Southern African countries. Kioo exports almost 60 percent of its production outside the country mainly into the EAC region and directly and indirectly employs over 600.

Stanbic unveils 'Bofya Bofya' digital account opening solution

By The Banker Reporter

In a bid to simplify account opening by new clients, Stanbic Bank Tanzania has introduced a digital innovation onboarding solution dubbed 'Bofya Bofya.'

The self-registration process allows customers to open accounts on the bank's website by following quick and easy steps and is conveniently equipped with security features to ensure safety backed by two-factor authentication via SMS verification.

"Stanbic has always been at the forefront of digital banking solutions and the latest self-onboarding is part of the bank's innovative solution that aims to enhance customer experience," said the bank's Head of Physical Channels, Jennifer Hillal during the launch in Dar es Salaam earlier this week.

Hillal pointed out that the latest digital innovation is in response to market demand the government's call on financial institutions to expand accessibility of banking services to all parts of the country including rural areas.

"Bofya Bofya' will be of immense benefit to all Tanzanians as they will get to open accounts wherever they are and at any time. We will continue to introduce more innovative services to make banking available anywhere at any time," she said.

Hillal further noted that the



Stanbic Bank CEO, Kevin Wingfield

model has been adopted by many financial and non-financial institutions in other parts of the world adding that the emerging banking technologies continue to simplify service delivery to customers, foster financial inclusion as well as drive economic growth.

Recently Stanbic Bank Tanzania was named as the country's 'Bank of the Year 2020' by The Banker magazine of London in UK thanks to its handling of business during the coronavirus outbreak earlier this year.

"We are delighted to have received this award, we

thank our customers and other stakeholders for their continued support in this difficult and unprecedented year. Without them, we could not have achieved this award," said Stanbic Bank CEO, Kevin Wingfield.

Wingfield paid tribute to the bank's staff for their energy and commitment during the challenging year during which Stanbic launched its new tagline, 'It can be' aimed to inspire belief in Tanzania's future while renewing its commitment to providing client-centric and innovative solutions.

Indian central bank now to step up scrutiny of shadow lenders, large local banks

NEW DELHI

THE Reserve Bank of India will undertake closer scrutiny and auditing of shadow lenders and large urban co-operative banks in a bid to improve supervision of the financial sector.

The central bank will implement risk-based audits at shadow lenders and urban co-operative banks that focus on localised lending, governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday. It will also harmonise guidelines relating to the appointment of auditors across all types of lenders.

The tighter scrutiny comes after India's financial sector was rocked by a shadow banking crisis that led to the bankruptcy of two major finance firms and the rescue of a couple of banks. The debacle added to bad loans at the nation's banks, which are estimated to swell to a two-decade high of 12.5 per cent of credit by March.

"Our supervisory focus in improving governance and assurance functions in supervised entities continues to engage the attention of the RBI," Mr Das said after keeping key interest rates unchanged as expected. To date, the RBI has focused such audits on traditional banks and large shadow lenders.

In the recent past, weakness in business units, risk management and internal audits have proved to be a "major fault line" affecting some lenders, Mr Das said in his statement. The central bank will also put in place minimum security standards for payment systems, following a surge in digital transactions during the pandemic.

The RBI gives "highest importance to the security controls" and will develop guidelines to ensure customers can use digital payment products in a safer manner, Mr Das said. The proposals come a day after the RBI imposed rare curbs on HDFC Bank's digital initiatives following a series of technical glitches at the private-sector lender.

Mr Das urged all financial entities to spend more on technology. "Public confidence in digital banking has to be maintained," he said at a virtual briefing. "If you want to remain competitive in coming years, technology robustness is the key."

Banks slash ATMs to seven-year low

NAIROBI

BANKS have cut automated teller machine (ATM) numbers in Kenya to a seven-year low as customers increasingly turn to agency, internet and mobile banking.

Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data shows the banking sector has closed 54 ATMs in the last 12 months, leaving it with 2,409 units at the end of October. Some 26 were closed in the last six months.

This is the lowest ATM count since September 2013, reflecting the growing popularity of agents, internet and mobile banking among customers as they search for convenience. The shift has also been quickened by the onset of Covid-19 pandemic in Kenya in mid-March, which has seen customers opt for cashless transactions to reduce risks of contracting the infectious virus. Total registered mobile money accounts had, for instance, stagnated below 60 million but started rising in March from 58.71 million to hit 65.25 million in October.

Cash transacted through mobile phones has been



Clients drawing cash from KCB ATM in Nairobi

rising since April, hitting an all-time monthly high of Sh528.9 billion in October on continued waiver of fees for sending up to Sh1,000 and free bank-to-mobile wallet transfers to encourage digital transactions. Disclosures of top two banks in the country – KCB and Equity – show that ATM transactions are declining, reducing contribution to overall revenue.

The number of transactions via KCB ATMs dropped by 16.3 per cent to 8.7 million in the nine months to September 2020 compared to the 10.4 million in the previous similar period. The bank further said ATMs closed September accounting for four per cent of transactions as opposed to five per cent in the previous similar period.

Revenue from ATMs dipped from Sh359 million to Sh274 million during this period. Equity data showed ATM transactions fell 23 per cent to 15.8 million in nine months to September as the value of transactions also dipped by 11 per cent to Sh191.9 billion.

The lender's value of transactions on digital platforms such as Equitel and EazzyBiz grew by 25 per cent to Sh1.988 trillion, marking the first time for digital platforms to transacted more money than branch and ATM combined.

The banking sector has also been shifting from branches and ATMs in a push to adopt cost-effective delivery channels in offering financial services efficiently.

The sector had 2,718 ATMs at the end of 2015, meaning that over 300 units have been shut down in under five years. The continued drop points to the waning popularity of the once-revolutionary technology that was introduced in Kenya during the 1990s to decongest the banking halls.

Kenya had more than 16 million active mobile phone deposit accounts valued at over Sh105 billion at the end of 2018. ATMs offered customers the first escape route from long banking queues, forcing banks to install more machines.

Tanzania Central Establishment chief salutes Treasury for digitising board members' lists



Permanent Secretary at Ministry of State at President's Office responsible for the civil service, Dr Laurean Ndumbaro (C) addressing participants of a training session of Board Management Information System held in Morogoro earlier this week. Right is Treasury Registrar, Athuman Mbutuka. Photo courtesy of Treasury.

By The Banker Reporter, Morogoro

DIGITIZATION of the management of board members names for public enterprises and parastatal companies will improve efficiency and reduce time taken to appoint new members in case of need.

Permanent Secretary at Ministry of State at President's Office responsible for the civil service, Dr Laurean Ndumbalo said here earlier this week when opening training session for public officials who will be using the Board Management Information System.

Dr Ndumbalo said appointment of new board has often been delayed because responsible ministries have failed to present lists of names of proposed new board members upon expiry of existing once six months before the deadline.

"I commend office of the Treasury Registrar for coming up with this innovative solution that not only helps

simply the process of naming new board members of public enterprises but also enhances efficiency," he said.

The Central Establishment highest civil servant further noted that because of manual handling of the process of such boards, many public enterprises have been going without new boards for years because the appointing authority was not presented with the names timely.

"This system will also help your office to easily manage and monitor all boards of public enterprises but also help Permanent Secretaries of responsible ministries to monitor and hence submit timely names of board members once the existing ones expire," Dr Ndumbalo added. He paid

tribute to Treasury Registrar Athuman Mbutuka for being innovative and investing in digital technologies which, among other things, has helped the government to curb misuse of resources naming the PFMRP as such an important tool.

"I know that these digital tools were not there before hence congratulate your office for the investment," he noted while stressing that Mbutuka's leadership has played an important role in improving efficiency at the Treasury but also among managements of parastatals.

Briefing Dr Ndumbalo on the new system, Mbutuka said his office in partnership with Ministry of Finance and development partners installed the BMIS

infrastructure during the 2019/20 fiscal year following demand for it.

"This system has installed by our own local information technology experts many of who are young graduates," Mbutuka noted while emphasising that manual monitoring of boards of directors for public enterprises was a tough task.

"Presence of this system will also help to monitor the conduct of the boards but also timely appointments of new boards once the existing ones expire," the Treasury Registrar added saying digitization will also eliminate the challenge of duplication where individuals sit on more than one board contrary to regulations.

Report brings fresh perspective to household financial wellness

JOHANNESBURG

THE 2020 Science of Success Festival brought a fresh perspective to household financial wellness using data and insights from the Momentum Unisa Household Financial Wellness Insights report in an accessible and unconventional way.

Now, in its second year, the festival is a long-term commitment to the financial success of South Africans, seeking to enable and empower households to take on a positive outlook of their financial futures. It is an opportunity to take back financial control for all, a call to overcome barriers to success and provides a platform to broaden the understanding of financial advice.

The Momentum Unisa Household Financial Wellness Insights report serves as the backbone of the festival as it seeks to provide South Africans with an in-depth look at the state of their homes; it stands as a tool that sharpens our awareness and gives us new angles and solutions to progress.

It is against this backdrop that the Science of Success Festival was held, to provide some much-needed support and motivation to households around the country, many of whom are desperately looking for ways to build a better future for themselves.

The festival is organised by Momentum, whose aim is to bring attention to the way in which behavioural patterns can affect - either accelerate or decelerate - your financial health. It is a beckoning call for South Africans to take an active role in the "better tomorrow" that they envision for themselves, taking into account that finances are a big part of elevating one's life.



Miss South Africa, Shudufhadzo Musida (L) and Ntokozo Madonsela, group chief marketing officer at Momentum at the 2020 Science of Success Festival.

It is Momentum's life-long goal to be the biggest supporter of everyone's journey to success, enabling progress through offering sound financial partnership and products that stand citizens in good stead for their future.

Adopt a positive attitude towards money matters

At the Science of Success Festival, the brand called upon a number of financial and success experts to remind everyone that adopting positive behaviours toward money matters will enable people to achieve their goals and aspirations. The information was packaged in an engaging way that provided sensory and experiential moments that were rolled out in an "un-conference conference" style, bringing a fresh perspective to household finances.

"The wellbeing of households' financial standings has been negatively affected by COVID-19 but Momentum, as a progressive optimist and knowledgeable expert, believes that there is always a silver lining when it comes to financial planning. With

the right financial knowledge and professional expert advice, people can turn things around for themselves and their families," said Nontoko Madonsela, chief group marketing officer of Momentum Metropolitan Holdings.

"An integral part of success and the planning thereof, is getting sound financial advice from a trusted source. You need to establish a partnership built on advice and financial solutions. With the right financial knowledge, professional advice and new angles to smart money management, people can turn their lives around. And that's what we're about at Momentum, expanding your outlook and introducing you to enlightening and unique views toward the management of finances," Madonsela said.

"We are a brand that stands for enabling success by partnering with our clients to help them achieve the financial ambitions they envision for themselves. And that is why we put this festival together, for South Africans to know that we are here for everyone's journey to success," Madonsela concluded.

MARKETTRENDS



Moroccan King Mohammed VI.

Moroccan King Mohammed directs universal vaccination against covid

RABAT

MOROCCAN King Mohammed VI has ordered his government officials to adopt free-of-charge vaccination of all people against the coronavirus outbreak to curb against the spread of the deadly virus.

The lofty decision by King Mohammed VI draws its essence from continuous solicitude and human benevolence towards all components of the Moroccan people since the outbreak of the first cases of the virus.

It also falls within the framework of the high royal guidelines aimed at launching a mass vaccination opera-

tion against the pandemic in the coming weeks." It aims at ensuring the vaccine for all Moroccans as an adequate means of immunization against the virus and containing its spread in the perspective of a gradual return of citizens, God willing, to their normal life in peace and security," the King said.

The Moroccan King had chaired working session dedicated to the vaccination strategy against Covid-19 on November 9 as part of the continuous monitoring by the Sovereign of the evolution of the pandemic and measures to fight its spread and protect the health and safety of citizens.

Access Bank in Rwanda wins 'Commercial Bank of the Year'

KIGALI

DURING the Service Excellence Award 2020 ceremony held on Friday, December 4, at Park Inn by Radisson Kigali, Access Bank (Rwanda) Plc was awarded "Commercial Bank of the Year." The award spotlights the bank's commitment to meet and exceed customers' expectations, according to officials.

Olivier Gakuba, the Head of Strategic Business Units at the bank who received the award on behalf of Access Bank noted: "We are delighted and honoured to have been selected to receive this prestigious award and we dedicate it to our customers for their loyalty and trust." "At Access Bank, one of our core values is "Passion for customers." We abide by it and incorporate it into the initiatives and solutions we come up with, the relationships we build and our daily practices.

This is further evidenced through the recent deployment of "Ikaze Agency Banking" which aims at making our services easily accessible to our customers. We are committed to putting the full force of our people and resources to ensure our customers obtain exceptional customer experiences," he said. Gakuba lauded the efforts of competent staff of Access Bank Rwanda for their contribution in helping to provide services that people want.

"We recognize that all you are doing is what enables us to confidently assure our customers that we will continue to provide services and solutions that enrich their lives enabling them to create a better future for themselves, their families and their communities," he remarked. He also thanked Kalisimbi Events and East African Youth Development Agency for initiating this awarding platform.

Emmanuel Mugisha the Managing Director of East African Youth Development Agency and Kalisimbi Events said that the fifth excellence award was based on clients' voting and research carried out on the companies.

"We first carry out research on different categories of companies and their popular brands and then establish an opinion poll where clients vote online. Online voting is attributed 40 percent while with the rest, we assess other criteria such as use of ICT, social media in terms service delivery to clients in the companies, marketing and handling clients' complaints and the time it takes. We also look at different reports that talk about the companies' service delivery including reports from the media and others," he said.

SoftBank eyeing gradual buyback of shares and going private

TOKYO

SOFTBANK Group is debating a new strategy to go private by gradually buying back outstanding shares until founder Masayoshi Son has a big enough stake he can squeeze out the remaining investors, according to people familiar with the matter.

The approach would likely take more than a year and would mean the Japanese company continues to sell assets to fund successive buybacks, the people said, asking not to be identified because the plan is private. Mr Son wouldn't buy more shares himself, but his ownership stake, now about 27 per cent, would increase as other investors sell stock. Under Japanese regulations, Mr Son could compel other shareholders to sell when he gets to 66 per cent ownership, perhaps without paying a premium, the people said.

One advantage of the plan, which insiders have called a "slow-motion" or "slow-burn" buyout, is that it gives SoftBank flexibility to purchase its own stock when it dips, according to the people. In the case of a formal buyout, it would have to pay a premium, likely of around 25 per cent. Shareholders are also likely to support buybacks, especially since the company continues to trade at a discount to the total value of its holdings in companies from Alibaba and Uber to DoorDash.

The billionaire said as recently as February he thought SoftBank was better off as a public company. More recently, he has declined to comment on his plans after reports about a possible buyout in publications, including Bloomberg News.

Safaricom seeks unit trust, insurance launch approval

NAIROBI

SAFARICOM is seeking regulatory approvals to launch insurance, unit trust and saving products as it races for a larger piece of the financial services market and tap more earnings from mobile money platform M-Pesa.

The telco has been testing the three products dubbed Bima (Insurance), Mali (mobile savings) and a unit trust investment product. Now, the giant telco has sought approvals from regulators – Capital Markets Authority (CMA), Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) and the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) for commercial launch of these products. This is the latest plan to grow the mobile money platform beyond sending and receiving cash, tapping loans as well as paying for goods to include insurance and wealth management.

Safaricom growth strategy hinges on widening M-Pesa offerings and bolster its data business through switching about four million 2G and 3G phones to 4G to offset a fall in revenue from mobile calls amid a saturated market.

Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa says the telco wants to tap into M-Pesa's 26.7 million active customers that transact about Sh1.5 trillion a month to grow the savings, unit trust and insurance products.

"We are exploring the area of wealth management. We have developed a couple of products and we are seeking regulatory approval. Until the approval is given, we may not want to announce the specifics of the products," said Mr Ndegwa. Mr Ndegwa says the telco wants to use the new products as part of the strategy to broaden M-Pesa into a financial service provider that will rival banks, insurance firms and fund managers.

Mali (Kiswahili for wealth), will offer interest rates of 10 percent on deposits capped at Sh70,000 per saver based on a pilot test. It started testing the savings product in December. Policymakers say Kenya suffers from a low national savings rate and analysts said that Safaricom could be looking to target the untapped market with the new savings product.

At 10 percent, the return from Mali is nearly double the current interest rate that banks are paying



Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa

on savings. Safaricom did not divulge details of the unit trust product, but it is expected to partner with a fund manager already licensed by the CMA, who will also approve the new product. The product will generate new revenues from M-Pesa with Safaricom ex-

pected to earn fees from the wealth management service. Kenya, like many other African countries, has a very low insurance penetration rate, estimated at below 10 percent of the population.

The figures have attracted international firms like Prudential Plc and Swiss Re, which have entered the market in recent years. Safaricom is also racing to get a piece of the insurance business with its target being the uninsured, riding on its technology and data analytics to determine consumer behaviour and develop new strategies.

Unlocking market potential requires targeting uninsured people, particularly the growing middle class, in creative ways, with analysts citing how M-Pesa had transformed the notion of "unbanked" in Kenya. The new products come at a time its parent firm, Vodafone Group, has disclosed that it wants to partner with Chinese digital payment provider, Alipay, to extend M-Pesa into financial services.

"Through a strategic technology partnership with Alipay, we are developing a new 'super app' that will offer customers a unified suite of financial services, entertainment, shopping, merchant services and direct marketing," said Vodafone.

M-Pesa posted Sh35.89 billion revenue in the half year ended September, equivalent to 30.3 percent of the firm's service revenues of Sh118.41 billion raked in during this period. The firm forecasts M-Pesa will account for half of its sales in coming years as revenues from voice and SMS flatten.

Started 12 years ago as a service to allow Kenyans without access to the banking network to transfer money via mobile phones, M-Pesa now offers loans and savings in conjunction with local banks as well as merchant payment services.

Safaricom launched an overdraft feature called Fuliza on January 7 last year. Fuliza is underwritten by Kenyan lenders KCB Group and NCBA Group, which already had partnerships with Safaricom to offer short-term loans under KCB M-Pesa and M-Shwari respectively. It is not clear if the deposits in the new savings product will be used to back loans akin to the mode of operations in banks.

Tax changes for companies and individuals in Mauritius

JOHANNESBURG

LEAVING South Africa permanently is neither easy nor cheap. Many jurisdictions have been offering several options to attract foreigners by way of investments, business development or property. Mauritius has recently been heavily punted as an emigration destination for South Africans who are eager to leave the political and economic instability of home behind.

According to Caoilfhionn van der Walt, international tax partner at Regan van Rooy in Mauritius, recent changes to the permit regime have all been positive. "The Mauritian government has tried to make the country more attractive for people to live and work on the island."

Enticements

People are now able to obtain a work permit for 10 years instead of the previous three years, renewable for another three years. Van der Walt notes that the monetary requirements for certain permits have also been reduced.

Foreigners wishing to invest in Mauritius by setting up their own business will require \$50 000 (around R750 000) instead of \$100 000. The country also offers the right to residency to a foreigner and their family for the purchase of residential property at around \$375 000 (around R5.6 million), compared with the previous purchase price of \$500 000.

There is also a new permit, focusing on remote workers. This allows foreigners to stay in Mauritius for one



Keith Engel, CEO of the South African Institute of Tax Professionals.

year, provided they can show a monthly income of \$1 500 (around R22 500) and do not enter the Mauritian workforce.

Ernie Lai King, MD of I Road Consulting, says individuals who spend 183 days or more during an income year in Mauritius, or who have a combined presence in Mauritius of at least 270 days in the tax year and the two preceding tax years, become island residents.

Mauritius residents are taxed on Mauritius-source income and foreign income remitted to Mauritius. The standard rate for individuals is 15%, but a reduced rate of 10% applies to individuals whose annual net income does not exceed MUR650 000 (around R247 000).

Bad developments

However, there have been some "bad developments" in terms of personal income

tax, says Van der Walt. The big change is the increase of the Solidarity Levy from 5% to 25%. This change will have the most impact on mid-income earners. People who earn between MUR3 million and MUR5 million annually (around R1.4 million - R1.9 million) will now pay 15% personal income tax plus the 25%.

And the bad news for workers does not end there. The Mauritian government has introduced a new social security regime known as Contribution Sociale Généralisée, applicable from September this year. This new system of social contributions replaces the National Pensions Fund.

For employees earning more than MUR50 000 (around R19 000), the contribution will be 3% and that of their employers 6%. Contributions will no longer be capped against a ceiling of

MUR18 740 as had been the case under the National Pensions Act. The main reason for these drastic changes is political pressure for more revenue generation.

Global pressure

Mauritius was removed from the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) and the European Union Commission's greylist for uncooperative tax jurisdictions by introducing some far-reaching changes to its corporate tax regime.

This included the scrapping of the Category 2 Global Business Company (GBC2) regime. This allowed businesses to remain tax non-resident in Mauritius, exempting them from tax on the island, despite maintaining a bank account in Mauritius or entering into a business relationship with a management company or even a qualified auditor in Mauritius. The regime will remain in place until June next year. The deemed foreign credit system has also been scrapped and grandfathered until June next year. This system enabled companies to reduce their effective tax rate to 3%. Transfer pricing is also becoming an issue in Mauritius.

According to Keith Engel, CEO of the South African Institute of Tax Professionals, the Mauritius Revenue Authority is now challenging back-to-back management fees or loans, requesting a transfer pricing mark-up. This challenge has caught many companies off-guard, especially given that the challenge goes back many years.

Not all is lost

Mauritius has now ended up on the EU's revised list of high-risk countries, allegedly having "strategic deficiencies" in its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks.

But according to Van der Walt, not all is lost. She explains that there are currently around 20 different tax holidays available for businesses - some with very general requirements and others with quite specific criteria for qualification. "Many see the partial exemption regime as the new answer," she says.

"The regime works on the principle that 80% of certain types of income is tax exempt."

Any foreign tax that has been suffered on income taxable in Mauritius can be offset against the Mauritian tax. This includes withholding taxes, which can be quite substantial in Africa. Engel says the Mauritius system is in transition, seeking to maintain its historic advantages while satisfying the new OECD and other global mandates.

A mixed view is emerging from day-to-day practitioners, notes Engel. "The historic camp believes that Mauritius remains a good proposition, especially for South Africans given their geographical proximity. "Others say it may be time to reconsider other options, such as Dubai, given all the uncertainty."

BANKING & FINANCE

How top oil trader paid bribes for years

NEW YORK

FOR years, the world's largest oil trading firm has maintained that it has "zero tolerance" for corruption. Now Vitol Inc. has admitted that it was paying bribes through a network of shell companies and sham contracts.

As recently as July 2020, while publicly repeating those assurances, Vitol was bribing government officials in Ecuador and Mexico. In Brazil, a Vitol executive delivered cash to traders at Petroleo Brasileiro SA in exchange for the "gold number" – the price at which Vitol should bid to win tenders from the Brazilian state oil company.

The revelations, from a deferred prosecution agreement between Vitol Group's U.S. unit and the Department of Justice, are part of Brazil's so-called Carwash bribery scandal, that's described by the Petrobras chief as "an MBA in corruption."

They are a setback for all commodity traders, undermining efforts to cast off a reputation for malfeasance that's dogged the industry since the days of

Marc Rich, the pioneer who spent two decades as a fugitive from American justice.

"The risk traders are taking in being compromised in such scandals is enormous," said Jean-Francois Lambert, a consultant and former trade finance banker. "Bad behaviors are simply not tolerated anymore and such wrongdoings are bound to be exposed sooner or later."

Gold number

Agreeing to pay just over \$160 million to regulators in the U.S. and Brazil, Vitol admitted to having bribed government officials for more than a decade, between 2005 and 2020, DOJ documents show.

"We understand the seriousness of this matter and are pleased it has been resolved," said Russell Hardy, Vitol's chief executive officer. "We will continue to enhance our procedures and controls." The company paid more than \$8 million in bribes to Petrobras executives between 2005 and 2014, according to the DOJ documents. In exchange, officials from the Brazilian oil company gave the trading house



Russell Hardy, Vitol's CEO.

valuable information about its tenders, including the price of the highest bid from competitors.

That meant Vitol could bid for Petrobras's oil products at exactly the price that it knew would win. Within the trading house, this was referred to as the "gold number," according to the DOJ documents. In internal

emails between the Vitol traders, information from the Petrobras officials was marked "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL PLEASE", according to a separate order from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Petrobras has said it is the victim of crimes unveiled by the Carwash probe and is cooperating with investigations.

On one occasion, in early 2013, an executive at Vitol in Brazil emailed his colleague in Houston the exact price that one of the trading house's competitors was bidding for a cargo of high-sulfur diesel, according to the DOJ documents. "This is the gold number," he said. "Okay great...we'll take it," replied the trader.

Tricks of the trade

The mechanisms Vitol used for paying bribes were hardly revolutionary. Vitol SA, the Swiss unit that handles a large portion of the company's trading, sent money to intermediary companies via bank accounts in the U.S., Curacao, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, Portugal and Brazil.

On some occasions, the money was then converted into Brazilian currency by a "doleiro," a professional money launderer, before being delivered in cash to a Petrobras trader, according to the DOJ documents.

Vitol and the individuals involved in the schemecreated fake invoices showing the payments were for consulting services and "market intelligence." The traders communicated using codenames, including "Batman," "Tiger," "Phil Collins," "Dolphin," "Popeye," and "Beb."

"Shell/offshore companies, fake consulting contracts, fake invoices, sham email accounts – nothing is new under the sun," said George Voloshin, director for corporate intelligence and investigations at Aperio Intelligence. "The tricks of the trade have changed little from the previous century."

Industry scrutiny

Authorities in the U.S. and Brazil are also investigating Vitol's rivals, Glencore Plc and Trafigura Group Ltd., on similar allegations. Brazilian prosecutors last week filed a civil lawsuit against Trafigura and several of its top executives, alleging it also paid bribes to Petrobras executives.

Trafigura said it hired the law firm Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP to review the allegations. So far the firm's investigators believe "any allegations that current management were involved in, or had knowledge of, alleged improper payments to Petrobras are unsupported by the evidence and untrue."

Glencore, the world's biggest metals trader, declined to comment. It has previously said it is cooperating with the Brazilian investigation.

WORLD

US Supreme Court rejects Republican challenge to Biden's Pennsylvania win

WASHINGTON

THE U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday handed a defeat to Republicans seeking to throw out up to 2.5 million mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania as they try to undo President Donald Trump's election loss, with the justices refusing to block the state from formalizing President-elect Joe Biden's victory there.

The court in a brief order rejected a request by U.S. congressman Mike Kelly, a Trump ally, and other Pennsylvania Republicans who filed a lawsuit after the Nov. 3 election arguing that the state's 2019 expansion of mail-in voting was illegal under state law.

Pennsylvania was one of the pivotal states in the election, with Biden, a Democrat, defeating Trump after the Republican president won the state in 2016. State officials had already certified the election results.

There were no noted dissents from any of the justices on the court, which has a 6-3 conservative majority including three Trump appointees. Trump had urged the Republican-led Senate to confirm his most recent nominee, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, before Election Day so she could participate in any election-related cases.

Trump has falsely claimed that he won re-

election, making unfounded claims about widespread voting fraud in states including Pennsylvania. Democrats and other critics have accused Trump of aiming to reduce public confidence in the integrity of U.S. elections and undermine democracy by trying to subvert the will of the voters.

"This election is over. We must continue to stop this circus of lawsuits and move forward," Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, wrote on Twitter.

The Supreme Court also must decide what to do with another election-related case brought on Tuesday. Republican-governed Texas, hoping to help Trump, mounted an unusual effort to overturn the election results in Pennsylvania and three other states - Georgia, Michigan and Wisconsin - by filing a lawsuit against them directly at the Supreme Court.

The Republican plaintiffs argued that the universal, "no-excuse" mail-in ballot program passed by the Republican-controlled Pennsylvania legislature in 2019, enabling voters to cast ballots by mail for any reason, violated the state's constitution.

Biden won Pennsylvania by 80,000 votes and received a much higher proportion of the mail-in votes than Trump. Many more people voted by mail this year because of health con-



President-elect Joe Biden

cerns prompted by the coronavirus pandemic as they sought to avoid crowds at polling places.

Ahead of the election, Trump urged his supporters not to vote by mail, making groundless claims that mail-in voting - a longstanding feature of American elections - was rife with fraud.

JUDICIAL POWER

Pennsylvania said in a court filing that the Republican challengers were asking the justices to "undertake one of the most dramatic, disruptive invocations of judicial power" in U.S. history by nullifying a state's certification of its election results.

The state said most of what the challengers had sought was moot because the election results already were certified and what they were really wanted was for "the court overturn the results of the election." Pennsylvania's top court on Nov. 28 dismissed the challenge, saying that the lawsuit was not filed in a timely manner when the mail-in voting law was first enacted. It threw out a lower court ruling that had ordered the state not to certify the election pending a hearing.

Trump's campaign and his allies have lost in a stream of lawsuits in key states won by Biden, also including Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin and others. Judges have rejected sweeping assertions of voting irregularities.

Biden has amassed 306 electoral votes - exceeding the necessary 270 - compared to 232 for Trump in the state-by-state Electoral College that determines the election's outcome, while also winning the national popular vote by more than 7 million votes.

Tuesday represents a "safe harbor" deadline set by an 1887 U.S. law for states to certify presidential election results. Meeting the deadline is not mandatory but provides assurance that a state's results will not be second-guessed by Congress.

Agencies

UK, EU leaders try to secure trade deal

LONDON

THE United Kingdom's prime minister will sit down with the president of the European Union's executive branch this week to try to break a logjam blocking a comprehensive trade deal.

Boris Johnson, who will travel to Brussels for the meeting, also spoke to Ursula von der Leyen by telephone on Monday evening in search of a way forward for the negotiations that began after the nation left the bloc on Jan 31.

Both leaders have said they want a trade deal in place that ensures tariff-free goods and services continue to flow free-

ly between them.

But, despite agreeing in many areas, they have been deadlocked on a handful of issues that include the best mechanism to police any future deal, the degree of access EU fishing boats should have to UK waters, and the best way to ensure a level playing field for all businesses.

Now, the clock is ticking down to the Dec 31 end of the transition period that has meant the UK has continued to trade with the bloc as if it were still a member.

After Monday's phone call, the leaders issued a statement saying: "We asked our chief negotiators and their teams



to prepare an overview of the remaining differences to be discussed in a physical meeting in Brussels in the coming days."

The Guardian newspaper quoted Johnson as saying: "You've got to be optimistic, you've got to believe that the

power of sweet reason (can) get this thing over the line, but I've got to tell you, it's looking very, very difficult at the moment."

Matt Hancock, the British health minister, said the upcoming meeting shows Johnson is "straining every sinew" to get a deal done.

"That deal is potentially doable but the EU, obviously, has to want to do it," he said.

The UK's main opposition, the Labour Party, said the prime minister should have become involved in the talks weeks ago, instead of "leaving it to the 11th hour."

The Financial Times said the "make-or-break" talks will be

held either on Wednesday or Friday because an important EU summit is set for Thursday.

Ireland's foreign minister, Simon Coveney, told television broadcaster RTE the "increasingly frustrated" EU now expects a deal will not be done.

"In Brussels, certainly, the mood is starting to shift to contingency planning for a no-deal," he said.

A no-deal Brexit would be expensive. The UK's independent Office for Budget Responsibility has said it would dent the UK economy by 2 percent, or around 40 billion pounds (US\$53.4 billion), and cost 300,000 British jobs in 2021.

Agencies

UN peacekeeping chief wants smooth exit of peace mission from Sudan's Darfur

UNITED NATIONS

UN Undersecretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix on Tuesday asked for efforts to ensure a smooth exit of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The United Nations, the African Union and the Sudanese authorities have recommended the termination of UNAMID at the end of its current mandate, namely Dec. 31, 2020, followed by a six-month period of drawdown and liquidation thereafter, Lacroix told the Security Council in a briefing.

There is a need to coordinate international support for the efforts of the Sudanese

government and the armed groups in Darfur that are parties to the Juba Peace Agreement in providing protection, said Lacroix.

In case the UN Security Council decides to terminate the mandate of UNAMID by Dec. 31, 2020, the peacekeepers will cease operations as of Jan. 1, 2021. As the drawdown begins, remaining contingents will be dedicated to the protection of the UNAMID personnel, team sites and assets, while preparing for exit.

In the event of any major security incident or threat to civilians in Darfur in this period, the onus is on the Sudanese authorities and the relevant institutions to respond as UNAMID will not be able to inter-

vene after Dec. 31, he said.

The Sudanese government has begun to deploy a civilian protection force to Darfur, whose size and reach are intended to surpass that of UNAMID, he noted.

It is critical that transition from UNAMID to a follow-on UN presence, the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), sustains gains made in peacebuilding, said Lacroix.

How to ensure that UNITAMS and the UN Country Team will be able to assist the Sudanese government in maintaining peacebuilding support to further enhance the protective environment so as to prevent conflict relapse in fragile communities

will need to be factored in the drawdown period, he said.

Coordinated political advocacy is required in support of an orderly and safe drawdown of UNAMID and closure of the team sites, said Lacroix. The Sudanese government has pledged its full support for the facilitation of an orderly and safe drawdown and liquidation process.

However, at the local level, the operation is facing resistance from state authorities and local communities to the removal and withdrawal of assets and equipment from the team sites, he said.

If the drawdown process is further accelerated, it would be essential that the Sudanese government provides further concrete support at all levels

and a robust security plan to prevent looting and other untoward incidents, he said. Notwithstanding these challenges, there is a real opportunity to end the decades-long conflict in Darfur through the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, said Lacroix.

The immediate peace dividends, the permanent ceasefire and the deployment of the joint security-keeping forces, composed of soldiers from government forces and signatory armed movements, will change the dynamics on the ground and enhance the ongoing government efforts to gain the confidence of the local communities, he said.

Xinhua

Russia's Kazan nuclear sub to complete state trials this year - fleet commander

MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S latest nuclear-powered submarine Kazan will complete all state trials by the end of the year, Northern Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Alexander Moiseyev told the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper in an interview published yesterday.

"State trials of the Kazan nuclear submarine, which is to enter service with the [Northern] fleet, are scheduled for completion by year-end," he said.

The vice admiral said the Northern Fleet has been receiving numerous fourth-generation warships and submarines.

"This year alone, the Knyaz Vladimir Borey-A-class ballistic missile submarine [SSBN] and the first serial Project 22350 frigate Admiral Kasatonov joined the Northern Fleet's ranks," Moiseyev said.

The Project 885M lead nuclear-powered submarine Kazan was laid down on July 24, 2009 and floated out on March 31, 2017. The sub is currently at the stage of trials. The Project 885 and 885M nuclear-powered subs carry Kalibr-PL and/or Oniks cruise missiles as their basic armament.

Vice Admiral Alexander Moiseyev also said that the Northern Fleet is expected to receive another Project 22350 frigate, Admiral Golovko, by the end of 2021.

"In May 2020, another Project 22350 frigate, Admiral Golovko, was floated out at the St. Petersburg-based Northern Shipyard (Severnaya Verf). It is expected to join the fleet by the end of 2021 and become the third frigate of its class," the official said.

The Admiral Golovko is the third Project 22350 frigate and the second serially produced warship of its class.

The Admiral Gorchkov lead ship was delivered to the Navy in 2018. The first serial frigate Admiral Kasatonov was made operational with the Navy in 2020. Both of them are in service with the Northern Fleet.

The frigate's main weapons are two versatile launchers for the Kalibr-NK (NATO reporting name: SS-N-27 Sizzler) and Oniks (SS-N-26 Strobile) cruise missiles.

Former US homeland chief Johnson says he will not join Biden administration

WASHINGTON

FORMER U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, who was widely viewed as a strong contender for several Cabinet positions under incoming President Joe Biden, told Reuters on Tuesday he will not join the Biden administration.

Johnson (pictured) had been under consideration to become Biden's secretary of defense, but Biden nominated retired General Lloyd Austin for that role. Johnson was also viewed as a candidate for attorney general, a position that has not yet been announced.

"I will not be in the Biden administration," Johnson said in an email.

When asked why, Johnson only referred to "the news over the last 24 hours," possibly referencing reports of Austin's selection for the top Pentagon role.

Johnson helmed DHS from late 2013 to early 2017. He also served as Department of Defense general counsel in the early years of Barack Obama's presidency and as general counsel of the Air Force during the Clinton administration.

During Johnson's DHS tenure in 2014, the Obama administration announced a major program to grant deportation relief and work permits to millions of immigrants living in the country illegally, but that effort was ultimately blocked by a federal appeals court.

Johnson also pushed to expand the detention of migrant families as a deterrent following a surge in illegal immigration from Central America in 2014, an effort that drew criticism from pro-immigrant activists.

Johnson's comments will refocus attention on the other leading candidates for attorney general.

Possible nominees include Sally Yates, a former deputy attorney general, and Doug Jones, a former federal prosecutor and U.S. senator with a strong civil rights record, Reuters reported earlier this month.

Federal appeals court Judge Merrick Garland has also been mentioned in media reports as a contender.



China ready to build community with shared future in cyberspace with various countries

CHINA is ready to work with other countries to seize the historic opportunities presented by the information revolution, foster new growth drivers through innovation, break new ground in digital cooperation, create a new pattern for cybersecurity, build a community with a shared future in cyberspace, and join hands to create a brighter future for humanity, said Chinese President Xi Jinping.

He made the remarks in a congratulatory letter to the 2020 World Internet Conference (WIC) Internet Development Forum, which kicked off in Wuzhen, east China's Zhejiang province, on Nov. 23.

Xi's letter shows China's sincere wishes to join hands with other countries in the world

to boost the development of the Internet and digital economy, injecting impetus and charting the route for the efforts of various countries to fully release the potential of digital economy and jointly promote global Internet governance.

At the critical moment when the world is fighting COVID-19 and exploring ways to achieve economic recovery, how to strengthen solidarity and cooperation, maintain fairness and justice, and share digital dividends in cyberspace has become a major task facing all countries.

Since the novel coronavirus outbreak, telemedicine, e-learning, sharing platforms and collaboration systems have been widely used, Xi said, hailing the internet's important

role in promoting economic recovery, ensuring social progress in countries around the world, and promoting international cooperation against COVID-19.

In the future, countries need to actively respond to changes, turn crises into opportunities, further strengthen global Internet governance and amplify the positive effects of digital economy.

In this way, they are able to generate new opportunities for jointly fighting the pandemic, developing the world economy, responding to global challenges, and benefiting people of all countries.

In the current context, jointly building a community with a shared future in cyberspace has become increasingly important

and urgent.

Cyberspace is the common space of activities for mankind. The future of cyberspace should be in the hands of all countries.

Developing cyberspace into a community where people can jointly advance development, safeguard security, participate in governance, and share the benefits with the philosophy of "achieving shared development, ensuring common security, realizing joint governance, and enjoying benefits together" suits the trend of the times and conforms to the will of people in all countries.

To improve the global Internet governance system and maintain the order of cyberspace, countries should firmly follow the concept of mutual support, mutual trust

and mutual benefit and reject the old mentality of zero-sum game or "winner takes all".

They should also emphasize both security and development, respect cyber sovereignty, and promote fairness and justice.

China has put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security and three principles that should be followed in global digital governance, namely upholding multilateralism, balancing security and development, and ensuring fairness and justice, as well as eight specific proposals, further making contributions to discussing and formulating global digital governance rules with other countries.

People's Daily

Trump administration makes new \$916 billion offer for COVID-19 aid

WASHINGTON

THE Trump administration proposed a \$916 billion coronavirus relief package on Tuesday, after congressional Democrats shot down a suggestion for a pared-down plan from the Senate's leading Republican, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he presented the administration's \$916 billion plan in a conversation with House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat. Writing on Twitter, he said it included money for state and local governments, a Democratic priority, and liability protections for businesses, a Republican priority.

Earlier on Tuesday, McConnell (pictured) suggested that lawmakers pass a targeted coronavirus relief plan that did not include the liability protections or the state and local government aid, as those have been among the more contentious provisions during months of arguments in Washington about a fresh coronavirus package.

But both Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer dismissed McConnell's idea and accused him of trying to obstruct bipartisan efforts to reach a deal.

Late on Tuesday, Pelosi and Schumer said in a statement it was progress that McConnell had signed off on the \$916 billion offer, but bipartisan talks were the best hope for a solution.

"The President's proposal starts by cutting the unemployment insurance proposal being discussed by bipartisan Members of the House and Senate from \$180 billion to \$40 billion. That is unacceptable," the statement said.

Republicans and Democrats face mounting pressure to deliver a fresh infusion of aid to families and businesses reeling from a pandemic that has killed over 283,000 people in the United States and thrown millions out of work.

Lawmakers enacted \$3 trillion in COVID-19 aid earlier this year but have not been able to agree on fresh relief since April. Both House and Senate leaders have said they will not leave town this year without approving more help.

Mnuchin, writing on Twitter, said \$140 billion of the \$916 billion administration proposal would be covered by unused funds from the small business portion of previous coronavirus relief, and that \$429 billion would come from Treasury funds.

House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy told reporters in the Capitol he



Mitch McConnell

thought Mnuchin's plan was "a great offer."

The administration offer tops, just slightly, the \$908 billion COVID-19 relief framework that a bipartisan group of lawmakers from the House and Senate outlined last week. They have been trying to agree on language on liability provisions as well.

Senator Angus King, an independent who caucuses with Democrats and has been working on the bipartisan plan, told reporters that he and Republican Senator Lindsey Graham were "very close" to an agreement between themselves on a liability provision. He did not elaborate.

Mnuchin's offer came as something of a surprise as he had conducted lengthy talks on a possible deal with Pelosi before the Nov. 3 presidential election, but these had failed. There had been no public proposals from the administration since the election, which Republican President Donald Trump lost.

President-elect Joe Biden, a Democrat, said on Tuesday that Congress should immediately fund vaccine distribution this month in case

early efforts by the Trump administration stall.

MCCONNELL'S IDEA SHOT DOWN

For McConnell to suggest abandoning the liability provisions, even temporarily, marked a significant departure for him, as he has spent much of the year talking about how necessary such protections are for businesses, universities and other organizations.

McConnell, who spoke earlier in the day, said lawmakers should pass what they can agree on, such as aid to small businesses, vaccine delivery and assistance to healthcare workers.

But his idea was rejected by Schumer and Pelosi, who said that scrapping new aid to state and local governments would put at risk the jobs of police, firefighters and other frontline public workers battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

A group of emergency aid programs implemented in response to the pandemic, including supplemental unemployment benefits and a moratorium on renter evictions, is set to expire at the end of December.

US envoy says ties with ROK will remain strong under Joe Biden

SEOUL

A SENIOR US envoy yesterday said the trust and alliance between Washington and Seoul will remain firm regardless of the upcoming change in administrations, the Republic of Korea's foreign ministry said.

The remarks came as the US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, who helped lead unsuccessful efforts to turn US President Donald Trump's personal outreach to Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) into progress in denuclearization talks, met with ROK's Deputy Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun.

Choi asked Biegun to play a bridging role to ensure the achievements the two allies have made together make progress before President-elect Joe Biden takes office next month.

Choi said the two allies have made significant achievements in the past three years under ROK President Moon Jae-in, in building peace on the Korean peninsula, cooperation in COVID-19 responses, and relocation of US military installations in the ROK.

Neither side publicly mentioned an ongoing multi-billion dollar dispute between the two allies over how much Seoul should pay toward maintaining the roughly 28,500 US troops on the peninsula.

Biegun also met with ROK's chief nuclear negotiator Lee Do-hoon to discuss DPRK's denuclearization issues, the US embassy in Seoul said in a Twitter post.

Biegun is also scheduled to meet a number of ROK officials, including the foreign minister and the minister of unification, who handles relations with the DPRK.

Agencies

Agencies

Armenian president asks Putin to assist border demarcation with Azerbaijan

YEREVAN

ARMENIAN President Armen Sarkissian has sent a message to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, in which he asks the Russian leader to assist the border demarcation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to avoid tensions between Yerevan and Baku, the Armenian president's press service informed.

"The Armenian president has noted that unfortunately, there is still a potential danger of new disputes arising between the sides due to the demarcation issue. Considering the

exceptional importance and relevance of the issue, President Sarkissian (pictured) has addressed the Russian president with a request to provide assistance to conclude the demarcation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to avoid further tensions and negative developments," the message says.

In his letter, Sarkissian thanked the Russian president for the efforts "that put an end to bloodshed in Nagorno-Karabakh and led to a ceasefire, which helped avoid new victims and tragic events."

Renewed clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia erupted on



September 27, with intense battles raging in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, a disputed territory that had been part of Azerbaijan before the Soviet Union break-up, but primarily populated by ethnic Armenians, broke out in February 1988 after the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region announced its withdrawal from the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

In 1992-1994, tensions boiled over and exploded into large-scale military action for control over the enclave and seven adjacent territories after Azerbaijan lost control of them.

On November 9, Russian Presi-

dent Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signed a joint statement on a complete ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh starting from November 10.

The Russian leader said the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides would maintain the positions that they had held and Russian peacekeepers would be deployed to the region. Besides, Baku and Yerevan must exchange prisoners and the bodies of those killed.

Agencies

Agencies

Mass COVID-19 vaccination begins amid surging cases worldwide

BEIJING

AMID surging COVID-19 cases worldwide, some countries are kicking off mass COVID-19 vaccinations after months of waiting, bringing hope to people in the pandemic-battered regions.

Over 68 million cases have been registered across the world, including more than 15 million cases in the United States as of Wednesday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Meanwhile, AFP tally showed that the total number of confirmed cases in Europe has surpassed 20 million. Britain started its large-scale COVID-19 vaccination program on Tuesday, about a week after it became the first Western country to greenlight a COVID-19 vaccine.

A 90-year-old retired shop clerk from Northern Ireland was the first to get a dose, and the process was closely watched around the world. Also on Tuesday, the country recorded the highest number of weekly coronavirus deaths since May 15.

In Russia, mass vaccination program on Friday kicked off in the capital city of Moscow, the country's worst-hit region. Sergei Sobyenin, mayor of



Moscow, said on Monday that around 2,000 people from high-risk groups, including medical workers, teachers, and social services employees, have been injected with vaccine.

The nationwide vaccination is expected to start in Russia later this week, as President Vladimir Putin said on Dec. 2. Vaccination campaign in Mexico is also on schedule, with priority given to healthcare professionals and the elderly, according to Deputy Health Minister Hugo Lopez-Gatell.

The official said on Tuesday that vaccination should begin "in the last days of the third week of December," starting

from the capital Mexico City, home to some 20 million residents, and northern Coahuila state.

In Israel, the government plans to vaccinate its population from Dec. 20, state-owned Kan News quoted the director-general of the Israeli Health Ministry as saying, adding that medical staff are expected to receive vaccine even before that date.

Israel confirmed purchase of 8 million doses of the vaccine from the U.S. pharmaceutical firm Pfizer last month. Meanwhile, some campaigners are concerned that people from poor countries might be missed out in the distribution

of vaccine.

"Nearly 70 poor countries will only be able to vaccinate one in ten people against COVID-19 next year" while rich nations representing just 14 percent of global population have bought up 53 percent of all the most promising vaccines so far, said the People's Vaccine Alliance, a coalition of campaigners, on Wednesday.

The alliance called on pharmaceutical firms working on vaccines to "openly share their technology and intellectual property through the World Health Organization (WHO)" to produce more vaccines.

WHO has been appealing for a fair and effective distribution of vaccines and leading the development of the Fair Allocation Framework, which advises that all countries should receive doses in proportion to their population size to immunize the highest-priority groups once a vaccine is authorized to use.

On Dec. 3, the UN agency also quoted a report by the Eurasia Group as saying that leaving low- and lower-middle-income countries behind in distribution of vaccines might cause "significant economic damage that puts decades of economic progress at risk."

Xinhua

Global business leaders assured on 'one country, two systems'

HONG KONG

CHIEF Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngo yesterday assured the international business community that the rule of law, judicial independence and people's rights and freedoms, the core values underpinning Hong Kong's success, will continue to be upheld under "one country, two systems".

Speaking during an interview by The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) as part of the program of the WSJ CEO Council Summit held on December 7 and 8 (US Eastern Time) online, Lam stressed that the central government would unwaveringly implement the policy of "one country, two systems".

She explained, among others, the constitutional arrangement of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under "one country, two systems", and the enactment of the National Security Law.

Lam pointed out that many unfair comments made about Hong Kong in recent events show a lack of understanding of the policy of "one country, two systems". As an innovative concept aimed at preserving as much as possible the



way of life in the city, it is also built on the firm foundation of Hong Kong being an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China and must not move away from the principle of "one country".

She stressed that under "one country, two systems", Hong Kong will continue to uphold its core values, including the rights and freedoms of the people, the rule of law and independence of the judiciary. Pointing out that following months of riots since June last year, she said the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the highest organ of state power, had no option but to enact the National Security Law and apply it in Hong Kong to protect national security.

Lam stressed that, under the National Security Law, Hong Kong people's rights

and freedoms under the Basic Law as well as the relevant provisions of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong will continue to be protected. Important legal concepts including the presumption of innocence, fair and open trial and non-retrospectivity are embedded in the National Security Law.

Looking forward, she said that the government will strive to make concerted efforts to enhance education and promotion of national security in society.

On the disqualification of four Legislative Council members last month, Lam explained the background and the legal basis of the relevant decision made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Lam said that, with law and order in the city restored by the implementation of the National Security Law, and that Hong Kong will play an active role in the national development, with particular reference to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong has promising prospects and it is an opportune time for businesses to invest in the city.

THE world's largest free trade zone by size that boasts the largest population and the greatest potential for development officially set sail, as the deal of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was officially inked by the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand at the 4th RCEP Summit on Nov. 15.

RCEP member countries are complementary in economy and enjoy close exchanges in trade and investment, as well as broad and intensive cultural and people-to-people communication. They have a bright prospect of cooperation. The signing of the RCEP deal conforms to the trend of the times and the development interests of each party. It is a common expectation of all member states.

The 15 members that signed the

RCEP to usher in new opening-up, cooperation paradigm

RCEP agreement this time have a combined population of 2.27 billion. Their total GDP adds up to \$26.2 trillion, and total export \$5.2 trillion. All the three figures account for around 30 percent of the world's total respectively.

Covering developed countries, developing countries, and the least developed countries, the RCEP accommodates the needs of all parties to the greatest extent and accords the least developed countries the special and differential treatment. It also helps developing members enhance capacity building, and aims to make regional development open, inclusive, balanced and ben-

eficial to all.

The RCEP has built high-level regional economic and trade rules. Targeting at building a comprehensive, modern, and high-quality free trade agreement (FTA) that is beneficial to all, the RCEP has formed opener, more free, and more transparent regional rules that cover trade in goods, trade in services and investment in a 14,000-page text. Over 90 percent of goods will eventually enjoy zero tariff, which is expected to tremendously reduce the trade cost and commodity prices in the region.

The RCEP promises to open trade in services in

most sectors. As far as liberalization level is concerned, all the 15 parties made commitments higher than the level of their 10+1 free trade agreements.

On the investment side, the 15 parties all made high-level liberalization commitments through negative list on manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining, greatly enhancing policy transparency.

The member states also incorporated intellectual property, e-commerce, competition and government procurement and providing for strengthened cooperation on small and medium-sized enterprises

and economic and technical cooperation.

China has played an active role in reaching the agreement. It has always supported the centric role of the ASEAN, joined all negotiations and played an active and constructive part.

The import and export of goods between China and other RCEP members, exceeding \$1.4 trillion in value annually, will be subject to preferential tariffs following the RCEP implementation.

Meanwhile, China also promised to open more than 120 service sectors, including R&D and elderly care, 22 more than the number of sectors the country had

agreed to open upon accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The RCEP marked the first time that China has made commitments on investment through negative list under an FTA, included the flow of data in an international pact, and comprehensively introduced intellectual property right protection in an FTA.

The world is going through profound changes unseen in a century, and the COVID-19 pandemic has been accelerating such changes. The world economy is in the doldrums, with increasing factors of uncertainty and instability. Against such a

background, the signing of the RCEP is not only an icon for the integration of regional economy, but also another major outcome of China's opening-up since the country joined the WTO.

It will exert profound impacts on a new round of high-level opening-up and the promotion of win-win results, as well as play an active role in boosting global recovery and safeguarding the multilateral trading system.

The RCEP is a milestone of China's opening-up. After the signing of the agreement, China has inked 19 FTAs with 26 countries and regions, and its trade volume with free trade partners now accounts for 35 percent of its total trade, up from the previous 27 percent. The agreement also lifted the two-way opening up between China and its partners.

People's Daily

SPORT



Polisi Tanzania players warm up before they played one of their opponents in a recent Vodacom Premier League tie, which took place at Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam.

Polisi Tanzania to again use Ushirika Stadium for VPL matches

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

TANZANIA Premier League Board (TPLB) has given green light to Kilimanjaro's Ushirika Stadium to again serve as a venue for the 2020/21 Vodacom Premier League (VPL)'s games from Tuesday.

Kilimanjaro's Polisi Tanzania had earlier been using the venue for home matches in the domestic top flight before the facility was banned by the TPLB as it was in poor state.

They were forced to first use Arusha Sheikh Amri Stadium and later Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam once the Ushirika Stadium was banned.

The side will, in this case, resume using the Ushirika Stadium after the facility's owners had renovated it.

A statement from TPLB's Information and Communication unit stated that the decision had been made after the Club Licensing committee had inspected the stadium and confirmed that all shortcomings identified during the ban

have been rectified.

The board called on all VPL outfits to continue seeing to it that the stadiums they are using for their respective home games comply with the rules throughout the season.

Polisi Tanzania's skipper, Shabani Stambuli, said their squad had trained intensively for the VPL tie against Simba, which was slated for yesterday in Dar es Salaam.

The Kilimanjaro outfit had in its previous VPL match posted 1-1 draw with Coastal Union at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Simba had cruised to a comprehensive 7-0 victory over Coastal Union in the form's last VPL duel.

Stambuli noted all Polisi Tanzania players, who were attending training to prepare for the duel, had been working hard in an effort to post good results in the yesterday match.

He said they know their opponents and were aware that they were facing tough opponents.

He noted: "We will meet Simba on Wednesday, it will not be an easy game at all as the teams are in good shape and they are seeking good results."

KMC FC in pursuit of victory over Mtibwa Sugar



Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC's players warm up prior to playing one of the team's Vodacom Premier League matches, which took place in Dar es Salaam recently.

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

DAR ES SALAAM's Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC's officials have stated the squad is out to collect three points in a Vodacom Premier League clash against Mtibwa Sugar, slated for tomorrow at Jamhuri Stadium in Morogoro.

The KMC FC edged Dodoma Jiji FC 1-0 in the former's latest domestic top flight game, which took place in Dar es Salaam last weekend.

Midfielder Emmanuel Mvuyekure banged in KMC FC's goal in the clash against Dodoma Jiji FC, connecting home a well taken corner kick by fullback Ally Ramadhan.

Christina Mwangala, KMC FC information officer, said the squad has already started preparations for the coming clash in Dar es Salaam under coaches, John Simkoko and Habib Kondo.

She disclosed the main purpose is to

stretch the team's winning streak in the top flight after the squad had cruised to victory over Azam FC and Dodoma Jiji FC.

She said: "At the moment the squad has started preparations for our game against Mtibwa Sugar and we are confident that we will get positive results in the away duel."

"We believe that the game will be tough but we are ready, given that at the moment the players are eager to win."

She said the KMC FC's supporters should continue cheering the squad, noting the outfit's leadership is optimistic it will do well.

Mtibwa Sugar have equally started preparing for the coming duel after notching 1-0 win over Mwadui FC in a previous tie, held at the Jamhuri Stadium in Morogoro last weekend.

Mtibwa Sugar's management made it clear that they are ready for the tie

against KMC FC.

The Morogoro club's caretaker coach Vincent Barnabas faces a tricky task of leading his side in the clash against KMC FC, which is expected to be highly competitive.

The 13th placed Mtibwa Sugar will be locking horns with KMC FC now placed fifth in the domestic top flight table with 21 points after playing 12 games.

Speaking to a domestic media outlet, Mtibwa Sugar's information officer, Thobias Kifarua, said the squad is ready for the coming match and the players are eager to win.

He disclosed: "The players are ready for our game against KMC FC, we know it will be a tough game but we have no option, we are ready for that game."

"Our fans should support us so that our team can put entertaining football on the pitch, we will not let them down," he said.

Yanga officials revel in VPL achievements

By Correspondent Ismail Tano

YANGA's leadership has said that the side's victory over Ruvu Shooting in a Vodacom Premier League (VPL) tie, which took place in Dar es Salaam last Sunday, is a continuation of the former's efforts to fulfil their targets.

Yanga have yet to concede defeat in the domestic top flight. They are currently placed first in the VPL with 34 points following victory in 10 games and draw in four outings.

Second-placed Azam FC has collected 27 points from 14 matches.

Yanga will lock horns with Mwadui FC in a league match to be played at the latter's venue Kambarage Stadium in Shinyanga on December 12.

Antonio Nugaz, Yanga's spokesman, said his team's victory in the previous match should remind the next match's opponents to prepare adequately for the former.

He noted: "This is a continuation of what we have planned to do in the league and in other competitions we will take part in, we are in good shape."

"We would like to tell them that we are out to post good results, we are strong and we are fighting from beginning to end."

"We need three points in every game, we want to see to it everyone fulfills his responsibility on the pitch, our fans should continue supporting us," he said.

Yanga's new striker, Said Ntibazonkiza 'Saido', has noted the experience he has gained from successfully playing in various leagues around the world, including Europe, will help him do well in the Vodacom Premier League.

Ntibazonkiza was signed by Yanga after put impressive showing for Burundi's national team in an international friendly against Tanzania's Taifa Stars, which took place at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam on October 11.

He netted the goal which separated the two teams on the 86th minute of the tie,



Yanga. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

beating Taifa Stars' keeper, David Kissu, with a long range shot.

The striker had turned out for, among others, France's SM Caen, Burundi's Vital'O and outfits in Kazakhstan, Netherlands and Turkey.

Ntibazonkiza said: "I have made it clear that I'm very happy to join Yanga, what with the achievements the team have had in Tanzania and Africa."

"It's good to see we are leading the league's standing so far and it shows the quality of the squad we have."

"I plan to work with my teammates and make use of my experience, the most important thing is I must help Yanga fulfil their goals this season."

NBA coaches attire: Masks are in, jackets are optional

MIAMI

FOR NBA coaches, masks are required this season. Jackets are not.

Rules for coaching attire will be relaxed by the league this year, though not as much as was the case during play at the bubble at Walt Disney World this past summer. Suit jackets or sport coats will not be required – as was the case in the bubble, when most coaches wore polo shirts and many said they preferred that option.

The new league mandate, as detailed in a memo sent to coaches Sunday and obtained by The Associated Press, requires "business attire ... dress shirts, pants, socks, and shoes." There's no mention of ties, which some coaches have often gone without in recent years, but an exception is made for polo shirts as long as they are NBA-licensed and the head coach and all assistant coaches are wearing the same shirt.

The biggest change, though, is the masks, a decision made with safety in mind as the coronavirus pandemic rages on and NBA teams prepare to play in arenas again for the first time since last season was suspended on March 11 when Utah center Rudy Gobert tested positive.

"The NBA has always been a dynamic business and the challenges we face in society right now with COVID, it only amplifies the dynamic nature of our business," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle, the president of the National Basketball Coaches Association, told AP on Tuesday night. "You have to be able to adapt, you have to be looking for solutions ... and we're going to make it work."

The NBA preseason begins Friday and the regular season starts Dec. 22. The NBCA discussed the changes in a call with the league

Tuesday night, and some teams will begin traveling for preseason games Thursday.

"Wear a mask at all times," Carlisle said when asked how he's preparing for the challenges that will come with traveling again for games. "That's your No. 1 shield. And No. 2, be alert and follow the protocols. It's an incredible amount of work to not get COVID. You've got to work extremely hard to try to stay out of harm's way and there are never any guarantees. But if you work at it you have a chance."

San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich wore masks for games in the bubble this past summer, as did former Houston coach Mike D'Antoni and former New Orleans coach Alvin Gentry. They are all 65 or older, and at more risk of contracting the virus based on guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Now, masks are a mandate for all coaches, regardless of age.

Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said he hopes the move by coaches will further normalize mask-wearing among the public; the Heat were part of a campaign across Florida last summer, as virus numbers were soaring, to get people to wear masks. "That's why I continued to wear masks during the playoffs, during the finals, even when we were not required to wear them during our media sessions," Spoelstra told The Associated Press. "One, it became a habit. And then two, we want to continue to use our platform to make people aware that masks can and do make a difference. And if they see us wearing them all the time and not having a problem with it and understanding the importance of it, hopefully that can normalize it everywhere else."

Ronaldo on Messi: 'I never saw him as a rival'

BARCELONA

CRISTIANO Ronaldo said he has always got on well with Lionel Messi and never saw him as a rival after scoring twice in Juventus' 3-0 win over Barcelona in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Ronaldo, 35, scored two penalties as the Italian champions ended Barca's 38-game unbeaten run at home in Europe to reach the last 16 as group winners. Barca progress as runners-up.

It was the first meeting between Ronaldo and Messi in more than two years, since the Portuguese forward left Real Madrid for Juventus in 2018.

"I have always had a cordial relationship with Messi," Ronaldo told Movistar after the game. "As I have said before, for 12, 13, 14 years [I have been] sharing prizes with him."

"I never saw him as a rival. He always tried the best for his team, and I tried the best for mine. I always got on well with him. I am sure he will say the same if you ask him."

"But we know in football, people always look for a rivalry to create more excitement."

Messi, 33, and Ronaldo, who between them have won the Ballon d'Or in 11 of the past 12 years, came to define the Clasico rivalry between Barca and Real Madrid over the past decade.

However, both find themselves in the latter stages of their careers now, and their respective sides have made below-par starts to their league campaigns domestically.

Ronaldo said he hoped the win

would provide an "injection of confidence" for a Juve team that are currently fourth in Serie A.

Barca could also do with some confidence. The defeat to Juve came on the back of Saturday's loss to Cadiz in La Liga, but despite the Catalan side's troubles, Ronaldo said he doesn't think Messi – who had all seven of Barca's shots on target on Tuesday – is in decline.

"Messi is the same as ever [on the pitch]," he said. "Barcelona are in a difficult moment, but they are still Barca. I am sure they will come out of it. All teams have bad runs, but Barcelona are a very good team."

Meanwhile, Barca forward Antoine Griezmann was critical of his side's performance, as they were well beaten by Juve.

In between Ronaldo's penalties, United States international Weston McKennie was also on target, with a fourth goal, scored by Leonardo Bonucci, ruled out for offside by the VAR late on.

"We didn't turn up," Griezmann said. "They turned us over in the first half. We were lacking in every department: attitude, desire to run, to defend... everything was bad."

"Who's to blame if not those of us who are out there playing? We know how to run, how to work hard, and that's what we must do to move forward."

"I don't want to look for excuses. We have to leave that to one side and work hard, there's nothing else for it. There's a game on Sunday [against Levante], and we have to win it. The image [of the team] tonight was ugly."

ESPN

Solskjaer refuses to blame Champions League exit on Pogba disruption

LONDON

MANCHESTER United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer refused to blame claims that Paul Pogba is "unhappy" for their Champions League exit after a 3-2 defeat at RB Leipzig.

United were punished for a slow start, conceding early goals by Manchester City loanee Angelino and Amadou Haidara before Justin Kluivert put Leipzig 3-0 up midway through the second half.

United pulled back goals in the final ten minutes as Pogba came on to score a late header to make it 3-2 after Bruno Fernandes converted a penalty.

In the build-up, Pogba's agent Mino Raiola said the World Cup-winning France midfielder, 27, is "unhappy" and needs a "change of scene" after struggling to establish himself under Solskjaer.

Solskjaer gave a terse answer when asked if Raiola's comments had unsettled his side.

"The squad is fine, they are a team and they stick together, as soon as Paul's agent realises it's a team sport and we work together, the better," he said.

"That is the last thing I want to say about it," Solskjaer replied when asked if he had spoken to Pogba about Raiola's comments.

Instead, the Norwegian blamed the defeat on his side's lethargic start.

"We didn't perform well enough as a team," he said.

AFP

Moukoko, 16, becomes youngest Champions League player in Dortmund win

PETERSBURG

BORUSSIA Dortmund striker Youssouf Moukoko, aged 16 years and 18 days, became the youngest player in Champions League history on Tuesday when he came off the bench in a 2-1 victory away to Zenit Saint Petersburg.

Cameroon-born Moukoko, who made his European debut as a 58th-minute substitute in Russia, broke the previous record of Celestine Babayaro, who was 16 years and 87 days when he played for Anderlecht in November 1994. Dortmund, who had already qualified for the last 16, equalised within minutes of Moukoko's introduction, with Lukasz Piszczek cancelling out Sebastian Drusci's first-half goal. Axel Witsel's low shot from the edge of the area on 78 minutes won the game for Dortmund as they secured top spot ahead of Lazio in Group F.

"It was an ugly win that was more about our mentality than our quality, but you have to win games like this too," Dortmund captain Marco Reus told DAZN. "With all the injuries on top of that too, a win like tonight and finishing top of the group feels good."

Moukoko, who has already played for Germany Under-20s, broke a record for the second time in three weeks, having become the Bundesliga's youngest player on November 21, the day after his 16th birthday.

As Man United exit UCL, is Solskjaer the man to return club to the top?

MANCHESTER, England

IT could have been a week that proved Manchester United are on the right track under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, but instead, their season is in danger of derailing.

A 3-2 defeat to RB Leipzig on Tuesday was enough to cut short United's return to the Champions League, and they will be back in the Europa League in the new year. On Monday, Paul Pogba's agent Mino Raiola dropped the bombshell that the France midfielder will not sign a new contract and wants to leave the club at the earliest opportunity. Manchester City, visitors to Old Trafford on Saturday, are waiting in the wings to make it a hat trick of crises.

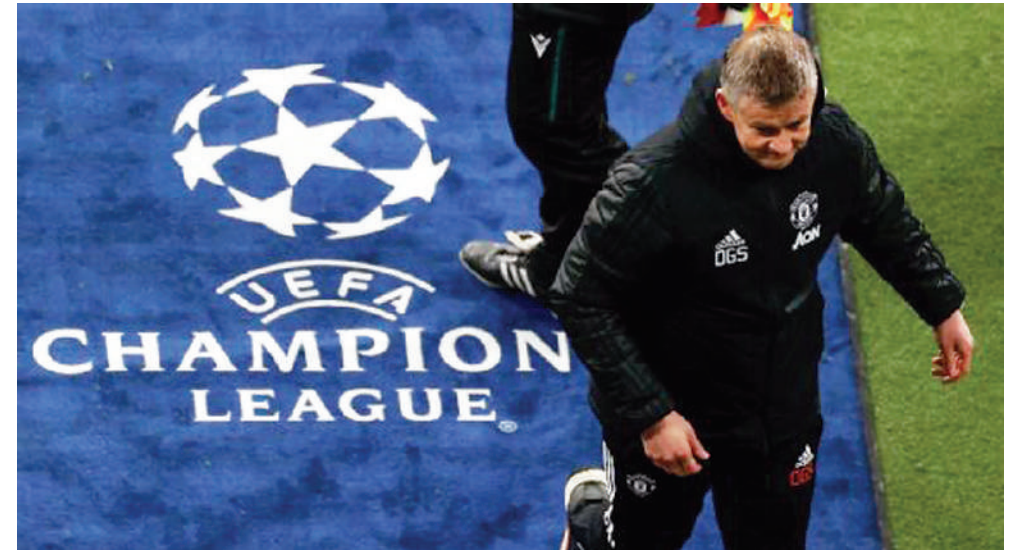
Pogba was left on the bench for the make-or-break clash against Leipzig – Solskjaer insisted before kickoff the decision had nothing to do with Raiola's explosive interview with Tuttosport, which was published just as the players landed in Germany on Monday evening – but by the time he was introduced after an hour, United were already 2-0 down and well on their way to an early exit.

"We didn't perform as a team well enough, and that's always the manager's responsibility, to get everyone ready," said Solskjaer afterward. "We knew they were going to come at us, we knew they were going to put crosses in the box and, unfortunately, we conceded two goals and never got going."

United remain steadfast in their belief that Solskjaer is the right man for the job, but there will be questions asked about how his team have managed to be eliminated after starting the campaign with victory at Paris Saint-Germain and a 5-0 demolition of Leipzig. Ultimately, they have paid a high price for the 2-1 defeat to Istanbul Basaksehir that looks even more ridiculous now than it did on the night. Paul Scholes branded the result in Turkey "a disaster."

Solskjaer is the first manager to lose six of his first 10 Champions League games in charge of an English club, but he is not in any immediate danger, having built up enough goodwill with executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward and owners the Glazers. However, he will know enough about the club's recent history to be aware that when Louis van Gaal's United were knocked out of the Champions League with a 3-2 defeat to Wolfsburg in 2015, it was the beginning of the end for the Dutchman. Six months later, he was replaced with Jose Mourinho.

Mauricio Pochettino would have been forgiven for allowing himself a small smile as he continues the search for his next job. Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann and PSG boss Thomas Tuchel, the two managers who will progress from Group H at Solskjaer's expense, would also be in the frame, but United are not at that



Once again, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has failed to reassure fans he's the man to return Man United to the top. (Agencies)

point yet.

Solskjaer, though, should be worried that he asked his key players to step up ahead of a crucial game and they did not. Even more concerning was captain Harry Maguire admitting they "weren't it at" from the start of the biggest game of the season.

Needing only a point to qualify, Solskjaer picked a back five that included Luke Shaw, handed his first start for more than a month after recovering from a hamstring injury. But for 30 minutes, it was hard to tell if United were playing five defenders or none at all.

Former Manchester City full-back Angelino took advantage of Aaron Wan-Bissaka's complete lack of awareness at the back post to make it 1-0 after two minutes. After 12 minutes, it was 2-0 when Shaw went AWOL and Amadou Haidara was left with a simple volley past David de Gea. Emil Forsberg should have made it three shortly afterward when United's back five decided the Sweden forward wasn't worth marking at all before VAR came to their rescue when Willi Orban's tap-in was ruled out for offside.

The only positive from a disastrous first half was that it wasn't quite as disastrous as it should have been.

Maguire and de Gea added their names to roll of dishonour by somehow combining to allow Justin Kluivert the simplest of finishes to make it 3-0 after 69 minutes,

and although United rallied with goals from Bruno Fernandes and Pogba in the final 10 minutes, it proved one comeback too far.

Pep Guardiola is in for a treat when it comes time to analyse the defending ahead of this weekend's Manchester derby. United have conceded the first goal in eight of their 10 league games and three of their six Champions League games, and although it has allowed for some thrilling comebacks, it is not a sustainable strategy for success.

"In other games where we conceded the first goal, we started pretty well, but today we just didn't turn up until they scored the second goal, suddenly then we started playing again," said Solskjaer. "The second half was one-way traffic more or less and the one chance they had they managed to score. Three-0 down is difficult, but they all gave everything, good character and effort. I can't fault anyone, and we were close to getting the third, and that would have been some achievement against a good team like Leipzig."

It leaves Solskjaer with the task of picking up his players ahead of the first derby of the season while again setting about rebuilding his reputation with supporters who are still doubtful he can return United to the top. It could have been the week to prove he is capable of scaling those heights, but after a chastening Champions League exit, the Norwegian has got a mountain to climb.

ESPN

Players walking off 'lays down a marker' in racism fight

PARIS

PLAYERS have taken a knee, unfurled slogans and demanded tougher action only to find soccer – their working environment – remains infected with racism.

The tipping point might just have come, with elite players in Paris taking the ultimate step by refusing to continue playing.

At the end of a year of striking gestures against racial injustice and discrimination, the Champions League produced one of soccer's most powerful shows of solidarity against racism when players from Paris Saint-Germain and Istanbul Basaksehir left the field and didn't return.

"The walk off by both Basaksehir and PSG together lays down a marker in Europe," Piara Powar, executive director of the anti-discrimination Fare network, told The Associated Press. "Many players are fed up with half measures to tackle racism and are more prepared than ever to exercise their right to stop a match."

The flashpoint came on the touchline 14 minutes into Tuesday's game when the fourth official – Sebastian Coltescu of Romania – was accused of using a racial term to identify Pierre Webo before sending off the Black assistant coach of Basaksehir for his conduct on the sidelines.

"You are racist," Basaksehir coach Okan Buruk said to Coltescu.

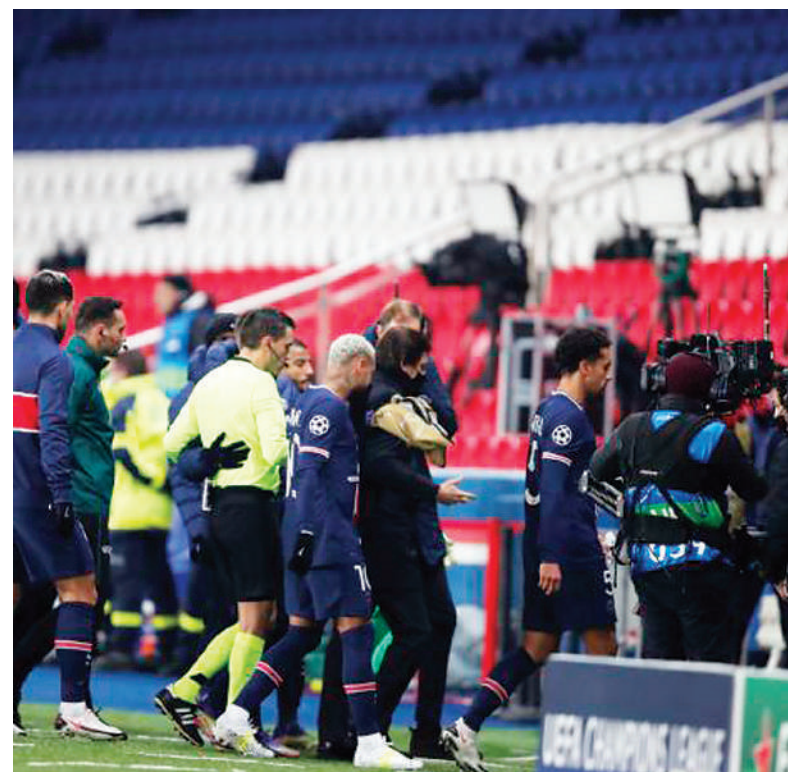
An enraged Webo demanded an explanation from Coltescu, repeating at least six times: "Why you say negro?"

The exchanges were broadcast live around the world from soccer's biggest club competition.

"Why when you mention a Black guy, you have to say 'This Black guy?'" asked Basaksehir substitute Demba Ba, who is Black.

It is the Fare network that helps UEFA prosecute discriminatory incidents like Tuesday night's alleged abuse at the Parc des Princes.

"Our colleagues at the Romanian state anti-discrimination organization have confirmed it is racist in Romanian



Players of Paris Saint Germain leave the pitch, after an argument between the Istanbul Basaksehir players and the fourth referee during the Champions League group H soccer match between Paris Saint Germain and Istanbul Basaksehir at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris, Tuesday Dec. 8, 2020. (AP Photo)

to refer to a player by using his race as an identifier," Power said. "There is no ambiguity. This incident shows the need for much better training of match officials. Unintentional racism is still racism."

While games in nations such as France are being played without fans because of the COVID-19 pandemic, typically the racism has come from the stands.

It is the high-profile incidents that highlight an inadequate response, like in the Portuguese league in February.

When Porto striker Moussa Marega tried to walk off the field after being the target of racist abuse from fans in a game against Guimarães, he demanded to be

substituted.

But he faced attempts by his own teammates and opposition players to prevent him from leaving the pitch. Even the referee booked Marega for refusing to continue in the game – the type of action that dissuades players from walking off.

The same Romanian referee who took charge of the game in Paris on Tuesday – Ovidiu Hategan – was also in charge for the 2013 Champions League game when Manchester City player Yaya Toure complained about the lack of action against monkey noises he heard from CSKA Moscow fans.

"If officials cannot set the standards by their own behavior," Powar said, "they cannot be relied on to deal with racism on the pitch or in the stands."

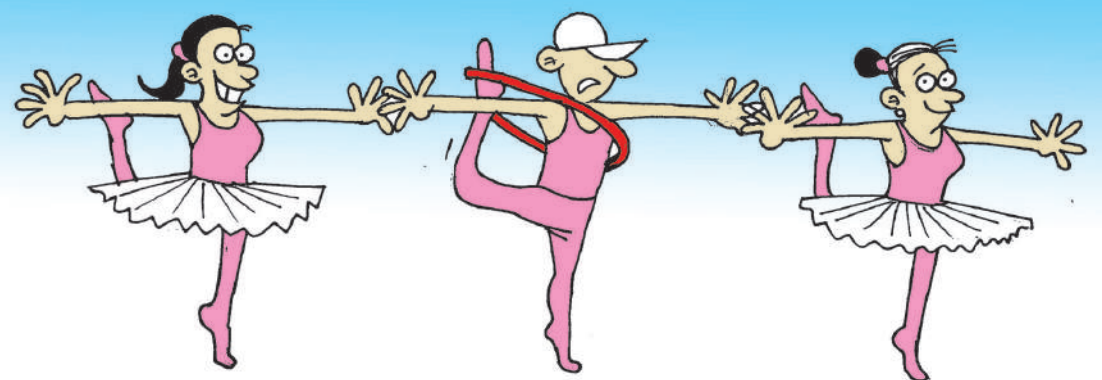
Referees have often been criticized for not leading players off the pitch, rather than leaving them to take the decision. England decided to continue playing a men's international in Montenegro last year after Callum Hudson-Odoi and Danny Rose were targeted with monkey chants.

The Champions League game that was abandoned in Paris will now only resume on Wednesday with a new refereeing team.

"The players walking off is a step in the right direction," former England and Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand said on Britain's BT Sport television. "But it can't just be left to them."

AP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

As Man United exit UCL, is Solskjaer the man to return club to the top?

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Simba SC must step up performance in CAF Champions League, says Dewji

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA Sports Club's Board of Directors' Chairman, Mohamed Dewji, has stressed that now the team are entering the toughest stage in this season's CAF Champions League and they, therefore, must use new tactics in a bid to excel in the event.

The Tanzanian side sailed through to the premier continental club competition's first round with a 1-0 aggregate win over Nigeria's Plateau United in the preliminary round.

Dewji stated he is aware of the hurdles Simba SC will experience in the first round tie against FC Platinum of Zimbabwe, which will see Simba book a place in the group stage of the competition, if the squad knocks the opponents out.

"I ask you to support me," Dewji told Simba's fans.

He disclosed he has asked Simba's players to give their all and he will support them.

"We have to practice a lot and we have to come up with new tactics, much as I'm not a coach, I would say we wasted a lot of opportunities against Plateau United," he said.

He disclosed: "Simba's focus was great and we created many chances, but we could not use them to score goals."

"We have to first know that we are competing in the CAF Champions League, so, we have to fight hard to get what we need in our future games."

In another development, Simba's head coach Sven Vanderbroeck said the side's main goal is to book a place in the showpiece's last eight stage and, for that matter, they have to come in with the right techniques in every clash to get the best results.

"The Vodacom Premier League's games and preparations for the match against FC Platinum are most important for us presently, I believe we will do well and move on to the next stage," the coach stated.

Simba will lock horns with FC Platinum in the first leg of the first round between December 22-23 and the return leg has been scheduled to take place between January 5-6 next year.



Simba SC's Board of Directors' Chairman, Mohamed Dewji.



Dar es Salaam volleyball players participate in the Faru tournament, held in the city last month. PHOTO: COURTESY OF FARU VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Volleyball stakeholders ought to back East Africa Championship - call

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

THE 2021 East Africa Volleyball Championship's organizers have asked the sport's stakeholders and individuals to come forward and support the former to smoothly host the regional event which is expected to take place in Dodoma in June.

The competition brings together volleyball outfits from within the East African Community (EAC).

It is an annual competition that first was known as Mirjam East Africa Championship and was, for two consecutive years, held in Mwanza.

Frank Kang'ombe, Mwanza-based Home Life Sports (HOLIS)'s Event Marketer, said early this week that preparations for the event that will, for the first time, be held in Dodoma are on top gear.

Kang'ombe said that HOLIS is still looking for the support from individuals, companies and institutions to make the championship a success.

"Everything is going on well so far, but we depend much on financial support to stage it," he said.

"We therefore appeal to well-wishers to come forward and support us," he said.

He said that they have extended invitations to EAC member states to come for the much-awaited biggest event in the region.

As part of the promotion of the showpiece, organizers have also opened doors for the U-18 volleyball teams to take part in it and challenge each other.

Honorati Mayunga, HOLIS Chairman, recently disclosed that the changes for the tournament were later made to allow the Tanzania Volleyball Association (TAVA) to register the event as the East Africa volleyball Championship.

He disclosed it will be a platform for the local teams to challenge and share experience with visiting teams, apart from exposing their talent to the international level.

Mayunga stated volleyball squad which will excel in the showpiece will get hefty prizes, including a trophy and 5m/- for the tournament's winners, whereas 3m/- and 2m/- will be handed over to runners-up and third-placed sides respectively.

The institution has been doing wonderful job towards promoting and developing the game in the country from grass-roots to the upper level in just few years of its presence.

This year's East Africa Volleyball Championship was called off because of the coronavirus pandemic as teams could not travel due to global travel restrictions.

Kilimanjaro Aces edge Ngorongoro Titans in 2020 TCA Super League

By Guardian Reporter

ARSHAAN Jasani put scintillating batting showing to steer Kilimanjaro Aces to a one-wicket victory over Ngorongoro Titans in a thrilling Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) Super League clash, which took place in Dar es Salaam early this week.

Ngorongoro Titans were skittled for 145 runs once they got the chance to bat first in the duel played at University of Dar es Salaam venue.

Senior batsman, Abhik Patwa that had opened the side's innings had a day to forget in the clash, given he was dismissed for duck by Kilimanjaro Aces' pacer, Ally Mpeka.

Ngorongoro Titans' other opener, Abbas Adamjee, withstood the opponents' challenge for some time posting 12 runs which consisted of a four.

Arsalaan Premji, batting at number three, made his presence felt, posting 32 runs which included two fours.

There was as well significant contribution from Aahil Jasani that notched 24 runs which consisted of three fours.

Middle order batsman, Seif Athuman, chipped in with 10 runs and fellow middle order batsman, Kibwana Salum, boosted the club's total with his 22 runs, which included a six.

Karim Kiseti posted unbeaten 18 runs as the outfit sought to pile more runs.

Spinner, Athumani Siwa, had the best bowling figure, ending with four wickets, Mpeka ended his spell with two wickets, as it was the case for spinner Kassim Nassor, during Kilimanjaro Aces' bowling stint.

Siwa gave away 20 runs and had one maiden over in his 10-over spell, Mpeka gave away 16 runs in 6.1 overs, Nassor had one maiden over in his 10-over spell which had the bowler giving away 20 runs.

In response, Kilimanjaro Aces mounted a successful chase, posting 146 runs for the loss of nine wickets in 34.5 overs.

It was hardly a plain sailing for Kilimanjaro Aces, given they came up against spirited Ngorongoro Titans' bowlers who did all they could to frustrate the chase.

After a brief spell by opener, Dhruvit Mehta, who notched 12 runs which included two fours, fellow opener Jasani put his batting virtuosity to show nailing 55 runs which consisted of six fours.

Baraka Robert notched 12 runs for the squad, which shortly thereafter experienced a setback following a dismissal of prolific batsman, Jitin



Serengeti Giants' Issa Safari (R) is presented with the man of the match prize by national cricket squad's head coach, Steve Tikolo, after the former's team had locked horns with Tembo Warriors in a TCA Super League's tie, which took place in Dar es Salaam last weekend. Safari had five wickets and gave away 28 runs in 7.1 overs. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TCA

Singh, who could only notch four runs.

There were three quick dismissals of Nassor Zahoro, Mpeka and Siwa as Kilimanjaro Aces' chase faced more hurdles.

Nassor later made full use of his experience to restore confidence in the chase after notching 25 runs which consisted of two fours.

There was yet another scare for Kilimanjaro Aces given youthful batsman, Abubakar Selemani, did not last long at the crease after posting four runs.

Laksh Snehal and Mohammed Yunus made certain of Kilimanjaro Aces' victory with one run not out and nine runs not out respectively.

Jasani ended with three wickets, Tambwe Rashidi and captain Ashish Kamania took two wickets apiece in Ngorongoro Titans' unsuccessful attempt to foil Kilimanjaro Aces' chase.

The national cricket governing body has organized the 50-over format event, which has brought together four clubs, with a view to boosting promotion of the sport at the domestic level.

The tournament, moreover, serves as part of the pathway for capped and uncapped players to stake claim in the senior national squad for international tournaments in 2021.

EATV THURSDAY

MORNING @ 11:00

DADAZ.

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 MPYA
12:30 Bongo Hits
13:00 Msozi Kitaani (r)
13:30 Kali Za Wana
14:00 Ujenzi (r)
14:30 DK10 Za Maangamizi
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Wagonga Ulimbo (r)
16:00 Ubongo Kids (r)
16:30 #HSHTAG
17:00 5SELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:30 EATV SAA I
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 Kibiashara Zaidi

DADAZ.

DADAZ A show that explores social and political issues from a feminine perspective.

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Flexibles by David Chikoko

