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TANZANIA

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Coronavirus: South Korea in emergency as cases rise

SEOUL

SOUTH Korea has stepped up measures to contain the spread of the deadly new coronavirus, as confirmed infections increased sharply for a second day. Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said yesterday that it was now an emergency as 100 new cases and the country's second death were confirmed.

The southern cities of Daegu and Cheongdo have been declared "special care zones," with the streets of Daegu now largely abandoned.

All military bases are in lockdown after three soldiers tested positive.

About 9,000 members of a religious group were told to self quarantine, after



All military bases are in lockdown after three soldiers tested positive

the sect was identified as a coronavirus hotbed.

The authorities suspect the current outbreak in South Korea originated in Cheongdo, pointing out that a large number of sect followers attended the funeral of the founder's brother from 31 January to 2 February.

On Friday, a second person who contracted the coronavirus died. He was a patient at the same mental hospital in Cheongdo as the country's first victim.

About 15 other patients have also tested positive.

On Thursday, 53 new cases were

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'Lugola, Andengenyne risk economic sabotage cases'



Zanzibar President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein opens a meeting of the Southern African Development Community member states' ministers responsible for disaster management in Zanzibar yesterday. Other dignitaries at the event included Zanzibar Second Vice President Seif Ali Iddi and Zanzibar West Urban regional commissioner Hassan Khatib Hassan.. Photo: Zanzibar State House

THE two were sacked last month by President John Magufuli, who expressed disappointment at their conduct

By Guardian Reporter

FORMER Home Affairs minister Kangi Lugola and Tanzania Fire and Rescue Force ex-commissioner general Tobias Andengenyne could be charged with economic sabotage, according to the Preventing and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) chief.

The bureau's acting Director General, Brigadier General (rtd) John Mbugo, told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday that investigations into the fire and rescue equipment procurement deal worth over Itrn/- the two are alleged to have presided over have largely been completed, with the specified offences falling under economic



What we unearthed in our investigations constitute economic sabotage

sabotage law provisions.

"We are currently compiling the file on the matter. We shall forward it to the Director of Public Prosecutions within one week for further action," he said.

Lugola, Andengenyne and 15 other former employees of the Home Affairs ministry are under investigation following reports suggesting that they negotiated and signed a memorandum of understanding for the supply of fire and rescue equipment with a company in Romania, Rom Solutions Co. Ltd, without regard for lawful procurement and debt procedures.

Brig Gen Mbugo said that the firm has since sought to cancel the signed deal without requesting for compensation for the contractual inconvenience.

"What we have unearthed in our investigations constitutes economic sabotage," he declared.

He hinted that investigations sought to find out if there was negligence, disregard for the law, elements of corruption, if the signatories were authorised to do what they did and if the supplier was legally suitable to be selected for that mandate, adding: "We also looked at tax avoidance and abuse of office issues," he stated.

President John Magufuli relieved Lugola and Andengenyne of their duties last month, expressing disappointment with their conduct and saying they signed the contract involving a colossal amount of money without involving the Treasury and without parliamentary oversight of the procurement procedure.

The then permanent secretary in the

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PM: Tight ID card filing in border regions right

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has defended stringent processes for acquiring national identity cards for residents of regions bordering neighbouring countries as some residents complain of being treated as foreigners.

Speaking in Kigoma yesterday, the premier said strict processes in border regions are necessary due to reality, that some foreigners may seize national IDs to land Tanzanian citizenship irregularly.

He said there was no need to worry for



All foreigners who wish to become Tanzanian citizens must follow laid down procedures

genuine applicants since all Tanzanian citizens will get the IDs after proving to relevant authorities that they are indeed

Tanzanian as required.

This intervention comes after residents of regions bordering neighbouring countries complained that they were being taken through rigorous interviews by authorities and yet they were not being issued with the documents.

Majaliwa first received the complaints while in Bukoba on Thursday when MPs from constituencies in the region told him that residents there were being treated as foreigners and feared they would not get

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Z'bar lines up Chinese courses in secondary schools

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR'S Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is finalising plans to introduce Chinese language in the secondary school curriculum, it was announced yesterday.

Deputy Minister Simai Mohamed Said (pictured) told the House of Representatives that the decision to introduce the language has been informed by increasing commercial and social interaction between Zanzibar and China.

Responding to a question from Paje lawmaker Jaku Hashim Ayoub who wanted to know when the language will start being taught in secondary schools, Simai said those plans were at an advanced stage.



"I hereby inform the House that we are working on plans to introduce the Chinese language in our secondary school curriculum to make it easier for students from Zanzibar

who get an opportunity to further their studies in China to master their courses," he stated.

Riziki Pembe Juma, the minister for Education and Vocational Training recently visited several higher learning institutions in China as part of efforts to lay the groundwork for introducing the Chinese language in the secondary education curriculum in Zanzibar.

"The ministry has already introduced the Chinese language diploma course at the State University of Zanzibar," she said.

Through its Department of Foreign Languages, the State University of Zanzibar teaches Chinese alongside English, French, German, Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish, she elaborated.

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'Lugola, Andengenyne risk economic sabotage cases'

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ministry, Brigadier Jacob Kingu, was also reported to have had a part in the deal and submitted his letter of resignation by the time the minister was being relieved of his duties.

"Kangi Lugola was my student at Sengerema Secondary School, but for this, I'm saying NO. It is much the same for Andengenyne who, I know, is doing a good job - but for this I'm saying NO. He went to Europe and signed a contract that cost trillions of shillings without parliamentary approval," the president said when commissioning Dar es Salaam's Ukonga Prison housing project.

He also directed the PCCB to interrogate all suspects, and this started with the former minister being summoned to the anti-corruption offices in Dodoma.

Also interrogated are Home Affairs deputy minister Hamad Masauni and the respective deputy permanent secretary, Ramadhani Kailima.

Zanzibar lines up Chinese courses in secondary schools

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The Confucius Institute at the University of Dar es Salaam also offers Chinese, she said.

Last year, Kenya announced plans to introduce the Chinese language in its secondary school syllabus, with the country's Curriculum Development Institute saying the design and scope of the Mandarin syllabus has been completed and will be rolled in out in 2020.

Primary school pupils from grade four (aged 10) and onwards will be able to take the course.

In South Africa, the Chinese language has been an optional language course for students since 2014, and

in December 2018 Uganda introduced Mandarin to secondary students in selected schools.

Standard Chinese, usually called Mandarin, is the official standard language of China and Taiwan, and an official language in Singapore.

About 1.2 billion people (around 16 per cent of the world's population) speak some form of Chinese as their first language.

Varieties of Chinese are usually considered by native speakers to be regional variants of ethnic Chinese speech, without consideration of whether they are mutually intelligible, experts maintain.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa speaks with muslim bealivers shortly after attended Friday prayer at Mujahidina Mosque at Buzebazeba area in Kigoma region yesterday. Photo: PMO

Coronavirus: South Korea in emergency as cases rise

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reported. South Korea now has a total of 204 cases making it the largest cluster outside Mainland China and the cruise ship docked off Japan.

The new virus, which originated last year in Hubei province in China, causes a respiratory disease called Covid-19.

From the 100 new cases reported on Friday, 86 were in Daegu, a city 300km (186 miles) south-east of the capital Seoul,

and nearly all of those were from a cluster involving the religious sect.

Reacting to the quickly deteriorating situation, the government promised swift measures to prevent further spread of the virus.

"It is urgent to find people who have contacted infected people and cure patients," the premier said, in remarks carried by the news agency Yonhap.

He said the government was readying resources like sickbeds, medical equipment and health

workers, warning that the virus was now spreading locally.

"The government has so far focused on curbing infections coming from outside the country. From now on, the government will prioritise preventing the virus from spreading locally."

Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said authorities would allow hospitals to isolate respiratory patients from others in an effort to prevent any spread within medical institutions.

All pneumonia patients in

Daegu hospitals would be checked for the virus, he stated.

The city's biggest cluster appears to be at a branch of a religious sect named the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony.

South Korean health officials believe these infections are linked to a 61-year-old woman who tested positive for the virus earlier this week

The Shincheonji, reputedly a tightly closed cult, said it had now shut down its Daegu

branch and that services in other regions would be held online or individually at home.

As of yesterday, more than 400 members of the church were showing symptoms of the disease, though tests were still ongoing, the city mayor said.

Daegu is the country's fourth-largest city, with a population of 2.5 million people.

Residents are now being asked to remain at home after authorities described the church cluster as "super-spreading event".



Students from Rukwa Region secondary and primary schools carry posters bearing messages on children's rights during Thursday's launch of a strategic plan meant to 'shield' schoolgirls from early pregnancies. The march was held at Namanye in Nkasi District. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

UK launches criminal record check programme to protect the children

By Correspondent James Kandoya

THE British High Commission to Tanzania yesterday launched a criminal record check programme on UK citizens and residents who seek to work with children in Tanzania.

Speaking during the launch of UK's International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) in the city, High Commissioner Sarah Cooke said it aims at protecting children from individuals who pose risk of sexual

abuse, physical as well as psychological harm.

ICPC is a criminal record check against police and intelligence databases in the UK that can be requested as due diligence before employing UK national or anyone who lived there.

She said tackling serious and organized crime in sub-Saharan Africa is a priority for her government adding that it undermines investment, growth and poverty reduction - and it affects the poorest and most vulnerable members

of society.

"We are working with the Tanzanian authorities to stamp out a range of criminal activity: corruption, illicit financial flows, human trafficking, drug smuggling and the illegal wildlife trade and Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is another crime which we are tackling with our Tanzanian and global partners", she said

She explained that the criminal record check programme involves identifying local and international sex offenders

operating in the countries in which UK work.

Furthermore, it involves protecting children from exploitation online, a rapidly growing threat as technological change allows criminals to share indecent images of children.

"Child sexual exploitation and abuse is a very sensitive subject which can be difficult to talk about in countries such as Tanzania but we must," she insisted.

In his presentation, the international liaison officer Jon Meredith

said the programme was very important to be implemented for several reasons because it is deterrent.

Furthermore, Meredith said it was additional assurance, increase organization awareness as well as identifies unsuitable employees.

He said the ICPC will contain any criminal conviction data for offense committed in the UK, and may also contain conviction information about offences committed in other

countries.

Additionally, as part of the ICPC process, the NCA will make an assessment of the available intelligence and information and disclose on the certificate anything it deems relevant in the interest of child protection.

In Kenya, now, the UK-government supported child sexual exploitation unit has over 150 live investigations; 55 arrests; and already safeguarded over 400 children adding that the second unit was opened in Mombasa just this week.

PM: Tight ID card filing in border regions right

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the document.

The premier was received with the same complaints upon arrival in Kigoma but defended the stringent measures, maintaining that the government cannot allow the national ID project to be used by foreigners as an easy route to getting Tanzanian nationality.

"All foreigners who wish to become Tanzanian citizens must follow laid down procedures," he said, on the basis of a news release by the PMO.

He appealed to those who have applied for national identity cards but are yet to get the documents to be patient and let the relevant authorities do their work of thoroughly vetting the applicants before issuing IDs.

"I ask you to be patient and cooperate with authorities when they take you through the processes," he urged.

There has been a rush for national IDs countrywide since it is the only document used for biometrical registration of mobile phone simcards as the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) switches off unregistered handsets.

Guidelines issued by TCRA to oversee the exercise require that a subscriber who wishes to biometrically register a sim card shall be required to present a Nida ID number bearing fingerprint verification.

As of 12th February, TCRA had switched off 7,316,445 simcards out of the 43,777,515 mobile phones in use countrywide. The fact that mobile phones are being switched off has led to a rush to offices of the National Identification Authority (NIDA) to process issuance of the prized document.

Ukerewe residents called on to take up beekeeping

By Guardian Reporter, Ukerewe

DEPUTY Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Constantine Kanyasu has called upon residents of Ukerewe island in Mwanza region to engage in beekeeping activities in order to generate income.

He said the government at district level will work on modalities to allow interested residents to hang their bee hives in the five forests which are under the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS). He said the decision to allow them to conduct beekeeping activities in the forests was reached after realizing the shortage of land in the island.

According to the Tanzania Forest Service (TFS), Tanzania has the potential to produce over 100,000 tonnes of honey per year but currently produces slightly over 50,000 tonnes.

Tanzania has a total land of 945,203 sq km where 4.53 per cent is arable and 6.2per

cent is water. The forest cover of Tanzania is 38.8 million ha which is 39 per cent of the land cover.

Kanyasu said the government has embarked on a plan to empower wananchi economically through establishment of various income generating activities instead of depending on fishing only. Speaking to a group of people with disabilities who are being trained on modern ways of beekeeping in Nansio, Ukerewe the deputy minister said the forests which are under the 1300 hectares will help farmers on modern beekeeping methods.

Kanyasu told the residents that due to the decomposition of soil and reduction of fish in Lake Victoria which is associated with illegal fishing, the only option was beekeeping because of its demand in the local and international markets.

The deputy Minister assured the residents of markets in China and the United States

of America, saying Tanzania has not executed the whole of its international markets.

Kanyasu said that China alone needs 600,000 litres of the honey from Tanzania but beekeepers are yet to exploit the business potential.

In his remarks, the director of Ukerewe district council, Esther Chaula promised to offer loans for the group of beekeepers to enable them generate more incomes.

In another development, Kanyasu directed TFS to ensure it purchases special gear for beekeepers and distribute them to would be farmers.

He said about one 1 billion bees are killed every year due to bushfires that are not friendly to the environment.

Earlier, leader for the disabled beekeeper's group, Nestory Kilampa said despite efforts, they are still struggling to sell their product due to lack of coordinated markets.

According to the Tanzania Honey Council (THC) beekeeping can be practiced

countrywide although production potential varies from one location to the other.

The sector employs about 2 million people and generates about US\$ 2 million p.a. It also helps in bio-diversity and in increasing agricultural production through pollination.

Data from THC indicates that the country's production potential is huge having about 38.8 million ha of forests and woodlands ideal for beekeeping. Utilization of this potential is only about 7 per cent.

Several policies which affect beekeeping in Tanzania include the National Beekeeping Policy (NBP) which was formulated in 1998 with the purpose of enhancing the sector's economic contribution and management of natural resources through active participation of all stakeholders.

Two instruments have been put in place to effect its implementation: The National Beekeeping Programme 2001-2010 and the Beekeeping Act No. 15 of 2002.



Arusha Cooperative Union chairman Bethuel Akoyo (C) and colleagues board a police vehicle in Arusha city on Thursday evening after being arrested in connection with allegations of involvement in misappropriation of over 4bn/- belonging to the union. Photo: Correspondent Asrajji Mvungi



Natural Resources and Tourism deputy minister Constantine Kanyasu (foreground, in glasses) inspects improved beehives made by carpenters with disabilities when he visited them at Nansio in Ukerewe District on Thursday. Photo: MNRT

Dr Shein urges SADC on disaster preparedness

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein yesterday called on member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to come up with strategies to cope with natural disasters which is costing the region billions of dollars annually.

Dr Shein made the call when speaking at the official opening of the SADC meeting involving ministers responsible for disaster risk management. Tanzania is the current chair of the 16 SADC member states.

This meeting provides a platform for learning how the Comoros, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe coped after they were hit by Idai and Kenneth cyclones in 2019 that left the countries in devastation. It is estimated that 13 out of the 16 member countries of SADC were in 2016 hit by severe drought that affected about 40 million people in the region.

"As a result of what happened in the SADC member countries, we need to reinforce efforts on disaster preparedness and response in the region," Dr Shein suggested.

Citing examples, Dr Shein said that SADC member states should come up with better ways of addressing Coronavirus (Covid-19), which has so far spread in different countries across the world.

He also cited the new invasion of locusts in the east African countries as challenge that need collective efforts to address the vice which is a threat to agricultural sector and food security in the region.

President Shein explained that disasters lead to deaths, destruction to property and

infrastructure in nearly all SADC countries, urging: "It is important for these countries to cooperate in the preparation of strategies for disasters management."

According to Dr Shein, between 2015 and 2018, SADC region recorded 160 disasters, which killed 20,000 people and affected 22million people.

All the disasters cost the region US\$3.7billion as well as affecting people psychologically.

He however described the meeting as important to the growth of the region, taking into accounts that disasters derail any country's socio-economic development. "That's why it is important for countries to implement what agreed at the SADC summit level," he said.

Dr Shein added that Zanzibar is implementing some of the regional strategies at the country levels including coming up with the Zanzibar Disaster Management Policy of 2011 provides a situational analysis of the natural hazard risks faced by Zanzibar in the United Republic of Tanzania as well as establishing Zanzibar Disaster Management Commission.

The Isles' government has also established the Zanzibar Disaster Communication Strategy (ZDCS) is to ensure the operability, interoperability and continuity of communications to allow emergency responders to communicate as needed, on demand, and as authorized at all levels of the government.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office responsible for Policy, Parliamentary Affairs, Labour, Employment, Youth and the Disabled, Jenista Mhagama said that the SADC meeting is meant to address

better ways of managing calamities in the wake of ongoing droughts and floods in the region. It also provides a platform for ministers and technocrats to discuss ways of improving the necessary technical and financing capacities when member states faced droughts and floods, according to Mhagama.

She said that the meeting is geared towards lessening diversion of budgets planned for implementation of development projects to funding programs in areas devastated by droughts or floods.

Earlier, SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Tax commended the government of Zanzibar and Tanzania for organizing the meeting which will give opportunity to delegates to visit various tourists' attractions in the Isles.

In the past few decades, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has experienced an increasing frequency and severity of droughts and floods that were attributed to climate change and variability, resulting in food insecurity.

The recent Synthesis Report on the State of Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability in Southern Africa, estimates that the region has a cereal deficit of more than 5.4 million tonnes this year following subdued rainfall during the just-ended season.

Between January and April 2019, the region faced several weather related phenomenon such as Tropical Cyclone Desmond, Enawo, Idai and Kenneth, which caused extensive flooding in countries such as the Union of Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Indian envoy accredited to the EAC

By Guardian Reporter

INDIA'S High Commissioner to Tanzania, Sanjiv Kohli, has been accredited as the country's representative to the East African Community.

The High Commissioner presented his letter of credence to East African Community (EAC) Secretary General, Ambassador Liberat Mfumukeko, during a ceremony held at the EAC headquarters in Arusha, according to a press statement is-

sued yesterday.

During the event, the Indian envoy expressed delight at the accreditation saying India has a good relationship with the EAC member states.

Kohli said India supports the EAC goals and lauded the community developing policies and programs aimed at improving the well-being of its citizens.

He said: "We consider regional integration to be a highly effective means of promoting prosperity

through increased trade and investment".

The Indian envoy proposed a joint EAC-India conference on trade and investment, an idea that was welcomed by the Secretary General.

"We are open to investment and there are opportunities which we can explore together," said Ambassador Mfumukeko, who also urged India to invest in the region especially in ICT, agriculture and capacity building.

The Secretary General briefed the envoy on the key milestones recorded in the integration process and pledged to link up the envoy with the East African Business Council (EABC) through which Indian investors could explore available opportunities.

Also present at the ceremony was the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng Steven Mlote, and the EAC Principal International Relations Officer, Suma Mwakyusa.

Police hold 5 more 'illegal immigrants' from Ethiopia

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

JUST two days after 61 illegal migrants from Ethiopia were arrested at Doma forest in Mvomero district, Morogoro region police had arrested five immigrants from the same country who are said to have entered into the country illegally.

Morogoro regional acting Police Commander, Mugabo Wekwe said the illegal migrants were arrested

on February 20, 2020 at Green area along Morogoro - Iringa highway. He said the migrants were in Toyota Cresta-T 621 CWD driven by Jafari Mshana, a resident of Dar es saalam.

The arrested Ethiopians are Mulken Tefsaye (28), Samuel Wamebo (21), Mohamed Amani (23), Abdulsalme Amsnr (20) and Solomon Demekwe (20).

Early this month, Foreign Affairs and East Africa, Regional and International Cooperation, Prof.

Palamagamba Kabudi met and held talks with Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu inside the line of the ordinary session of the 33rd AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where Tanzania advised Ethiopia to conduct thoroughly investigations on why its citizens are illegally migrating into the country, a situation contributing into congestion in prisons.

Prof Kabudi claimed that prisons in Tanzania were full of inmates,

most of them being illegal migrants from various countries including Ethiopia. He urged the country to take measures to control its citizens who have been reported to migrate to other African countries including Tanzania.

The minister said so far there are more than 1,300 illegal migrants in various prisons across the country.

"We have a number of illegal migrants in our prisons, they are causing unnecessary congestion.

Countries should take measures to control their citizens from migrating into other countries without relevant permits", he noted.

During the talks, Tanzania and Ethiopia agreed on measures to be taken to repatriate illegal migrants as well as exchange of prisoners.

Meanwhile, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu backed Tanzanian Minister insisting to take measures to control Ethiopian youth who are said to migrate to other countries through

Tanzania. He said most of the youth leaving the country end up in Southern African countries and Europe.

He was optimistic that talks to be held between the two governments will facilitate repatriation of all Ethiopians held in Tanzania.

Dr Gebeyehu insisted that Ethiopia will continue to cooperate with Tanzania in various sectors including aviation, infrastructures and exchange of experts in the construction sector.

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KATIKA MAHAKAMA KUU YA TANZANIA
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MAREHEMU KARL RUDDY MULLER
NA
CHRISTINE MWALONGO MULLER.....MWOMBALI
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TAARIFA YA KAWAIDA
(KANUNI YA 75)
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Mapingamizi yoyote kuhusu maombi haya yata
yameandikishwa mnamo au kabla ya tarehe 10/03/2020
Inewasilishwa Tanga leo tarehe 12/02/2020
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NBC public relations manager William Kallage (R) briefs Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children deputy minister Dr Faustine Ndugulile (2nd-R) on the sidelines of the Medical Association of Tanzania's anniversary celebrations in Dar es Salaam on Thursday. Others are the bank's Samora branch marketing officer Dustane Lipawaga (L) and CSR manager Irene Peter. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Arusha NGO starts programme to offer mobile clinic health services

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

ARUSHA based non-governmental organisation—Aspiration for Vulnerable Rehabilitated Families (AVUREFA) has introduced a programme to offer mobile clinic health services to residents living in the city's peripheral areas.

The mobile clinic service is geared at enhancing treatment of chronic diseases and provides quality medical services to the villagers.

Speaking during a stakeholders meeting here on Thursday, AVUREFA director, Dr Furaha Kitiwe said they have also a plan to start offering health services at homes. She said the home based medical treatment is mainly for patients suffering from HIV/Aids,

malnutrition, tuberculosis and family planning services.

She said some women avoid seeking family planning services at hospitals and health centers due to various factors including religious beliefs. She said interested individuals will be attended at home as the service providers will easily reach them using the mobile clinic.

"We will offer mobile clinic services in partnership with the district authority. We aim to reach people at their residential areas where they will also be educated on various health issues in regard to HIV and TB infection", said Dr Kitiwe adding there will be doctors to educate people on symptoms of cervical cancer and the importance of early diagnosis and

treatment.

According to her, district authorities in Arumeru and Arusha districts will provide health specialists who will work with their counterparts from the organization. He said while educating people on how to prevent themselves from TB infections, they will also provide free TB testing and enroll for treatment those who will test positive.

"We will educate care takers on how to care for TB patients especially drug administration. This will help reduce stigma but also prevent care takers from being infected with the disease", she noted.

She said the organization will educate villagers on how to prevent from new HIV/Aids infections

as well as ensuring balanced nutritional diet to HIV positive patients.

Dr Kitiwe said AVUREFA is doing all these to complement government efforts towards improvement of health services provision in the country.

Representing Arusha District Medical Officer, Arusha District Health Officer, Issa Msumari said the government is ready to cooperate with the organization to ensure medical services to people in peripheral wards and villages.

Msumari said since the government aims at ensuring closer and better health services to citizens, the mobile clinic will enable many people to get specialized treatment.

Sambasha Ward Executive Officer, Nkini said most of the resi-

dents at the area are not aware of the TB symptoms and treatment. He said it was important that they are educated on how to prevent themselves from being infected as they are ones taking care of TB and HIV/Aids patients.

"Most of our people do not have proper understanding on symptoms and treatment of HIV/Aids and TB diseases; this contributes into increased number of TB patients as people get infected in the course of attending to their relatives

AVUREFA's mobile clinic services will be implemented in phases whereas in the first phase services will be offered to villagers in Sambasha ward for six months before being expanded to other wards in Arumeru and Arusha districts.

Prisons chief Brig General Mzee all for sustainable innovations

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Commissioner General of Prisons, Brigadier General Suleiman Mzee, has directed every prison in the country to be innovative for sustainable operations instead of depending on the government resources.

Commissioner Mzee made the directives yesterday when he toured projects run by the prison in Dodoma including brick making and construction of 20 houses for prisons officers.

He commended the Dodoma prison for the efforts and called upon other prisons in the country to emulate instead of depending on government to run its activities.

He said the prison has powers and the ability enough to come up with economic generating activities depending on the geography that they are located.

"We had a meeting with senior officers country-wide in Dodoma and during that meeting I have insisted every prison sustains itself by having economic activities to feed itself," he said.

The newly appointed commissioner said the prison through its income generating corporation has a lot to offer to ensure they are utilized.

In his remarks, the Commissioner for Dodoma Prison Kenneth Mwambije said the construction of the house up to roofing cost about 7m/-.

He said the successes have been achieved due to the proper use of resources available including prisoners.

"Tanzania prisons has been determined to run its operations without requesting for support from anywhere," he said.

President Magufuli ordered prisons authorities to ensure that inmates worked hard.

President Magufuli said prisoners were given too much leeway and enjoyed freedom which was forbidden to people in incarceration.

The president outlined a few issues he said were what he expected from the new prisons boss, including restricting some of the freedoms and instilling work ethic in prisoners.

He said prisoners had to work hard, including making bricks and farming so prisons staff could have better housing and prisoners can feed themselves.

USAID salutes Tanzania's rights, governance agency

By Guardian Correspondent

THE United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission director in Tanzania, Andy Karas, has recommended the vital role played by the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) in promoting and protecting human rights and principles of good governance in the country.

Karas said proper implementation of its mandate facilitates the country's efforts towards fulfilling its dream of being a middle income country by 2025.

During a brief meeting between him and CHRAGG top officials at the commission offices in Dodoma on Thursday, he said: "CHRAGG is doing a pivotal role, our doors are open for consultation and we will continue exploring opportunities for cooperation with you on good governance aspect".

Karas revealed that USAID has been investing on implementation of different projects in Tanzania whereby annually invests US \$ 350 million for execution of projects in various sectors including health, education, agriculture and good governance.

He said USAID investment in Tanzania goes in line with the country's strategic development plans.

"We are here today to share ideas and explore areas where we think we can merge our effort to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights and adherence of good governance within the country", Karas added

Speaking earlier, chairperson of CHRAGG, (retired) Judge Mathew Mwaimu briefed Karas on the mandate of the commission insisting CHRAGG bestowed the dual mandates which are to promote and protect human rights while at the same time to maintain the observance of principals of good governance within the country.

Judge Mwaimu listed priority areas which CHRAGG wants to embark on this year including receiving complaints on violations of human rights and principal of good governance, rising human rights awareness, strengthening cooperation with stakeholders within and outside the country'

Other areas are building capacities of CHRAGG staffs and to conduct monitoring on general election to explore the compliance of human rights and principals of good governance.

"We are planning to provide civic education to citizens at the same time we want to have meeting with stakeholders including the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to discuss and remind each other on the importance of having smooth and peaceful election", Judge Mwaimu said.

He said the commission has currently deployed officers to conduct monitoring of the on-going updating of the biometric voters registration. He said the officials are monitoring the exercise in Dar es Salaam and Coast regions.

"We will later monitor the election process all over the country", said Judge Mwaimu .



Dodoma city marketing officer James Yuna briefs journalists yesterday on the planned removal all small traders' stalls standing in unauthorised areas. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Cases of Ebola in DRC declining, says WHO

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has announced a decrease in new Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), saying during the past week, incidences of new Ebola virus disease (EVD) cases have remained low.

"In the past 21 days from January 29th to February 18th 2020, eight confirmed cases were reported from four health areas within two active health zones in North Kivu Province", said a WHO statement.

According to the statement, from February 12th to 18th 2020, one new confirmed case was reported.

The case was reported in Beni Health Zone, North Kivu Province and had an epidemiological link to a confirmed case reported on 5 February.

As the case was alerted and transferred to an Ebola Treated Centre four days after symptom onset, there remains a risk that onward transmission to contacts may have occurred, and further cases may be expected from the currently active chain of transmission.

Ebola virus may also persist in some survivors' body fluids for several months, and in a limited number of instances, transmissions from exposure to body fluids of survivors have been documented during this outbreak.

The ongoing programme for survivor care helps mitigate the risks of re-introduction events.

To maintain operations and prevent re-emergence of the outbreak, WHO has been requesting funding whereby under the Strategic Response Plan (SRP 4.1), WHO's financial need for the Ebola response from January to June 2020 is US \$ 83 million.

Generosity from donors during 2019 managed WHO to get funds which enabled it to maintain operations through February 2020.

US \$40 million is currently needed to ensure continuity of response and preparedness activities to bring the case

incidence to zero, and continue building strong, resilient health systems.

It has been more than 42 days since Butembo and Mambasa health zones reported new cases. The continued reduction of geographic spread of Ebola cases and the declining trend in case incidence observed in the past 21 days are encouraging.

Substantial case finding activities continue with more than 5000 alerts reported and investigated daily, among which, approximately 450 suspected Ebola cases are detected each day who require laboratory testing and specialized care within the established Ebola treatment and transit centers.



Selemani Jafo (L), Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments) speaks in Dodoma city yesterday shortly after receiving a research report on the state of education situation in Dodoma Region conducted by University of Dodoma lecturers. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Seed agency appeals for irrigation infrastructure

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THE Agricultural Seed Agency (ASA) is facing a shortage of irrigation infrastructure that would have assisted to increase seeds production at all times.

Speaking here to reporters in his office, ASA Chief Executive Officer Dr Sophia Kashenge said apart from the current situation where they grow while selling the seeds, if they had irrigation farming, they could have produced the seeds in abundance.

She said irrigation farming could have helped them having seeds reliability from all their nine farms countrywide which would have stopped importing seeds from foreign countries.

She also lauded the government for being able to procure three tractors and their farming implements last year at a cost of 1bn/- through ASA.

She said earlier ASA had only three tractors that lacked farming capacity hence it necessitated the



She said despite various challenges they are still able to increase seeds production whereas in 2018/19 season 1,220 tonnes of various seed crops was produced, an increase of 784 tonnes than the previous year.

hire of aircraft for spraying insecticide whenever destructive pests appear in the fields.

Dr Kashenge said as of now the three tractors with their implements can spray insecticide, used as planter, and for harrowing 9 seed farms owned by ASA in various regions in the country.

She said despite various challenges they are still able to increase seeds production whereas in 2018/19 season 1,220 tonnes of various seed crops was produced, an increase of 784 tonnes than the previous year.

She added that in 2018/19 they produced 1,436 tonnes of seeds though their eight agents whereas in 2017/18 they produced 2,500 tonnes of seeds, making a total of 3,936 tonnes.

She said the current plan is to produce 4,400 tonnes of various seeds crops.

ASA is a seeds agency in the country engaged in the production of various seeds crops including sunflower, rice, millet, maize, cassava and vegetables.

IOM responds to measles outbreak across Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA'S Public Health Emergency Management department has recorded more than 700 cases of measles since an outbreak was declared on 24 January 2020.

However, the actual caseload in the community remains undetermined due to inaccessibility of some among the affected areas.

The outbreak was declared in the East Wollega Zonal Health Bureau, in the country's southern district of Nunu Kumba, with the first case dating back to early December 2019.

IOM is supporting the government with social mobilization and has reached out to more than 15,000 individuals in Adare and Brinkas Kebeles (districts) with health awareness messaging, including breaking measles-related taboos.

The outbreak has claimed five lives in East Wollega, but thanks to intensified surveillance and case management, no further measles-related deaths were recorded after 27 January.

Rashal, a mother from East Wollega Zone said: "I was in the market when I saw an IOM team gathering people to talk about measles. One of my five children had acquired the illness and I thought keeping him at home was okay. After listening to the information provided by IOM, I learned that bringing him to the health center will help my child recover while also avoiding the spread of the disease."

Rashal added: "I was so happy to see doctors and IOM staff members at the Adare health centre treating patients coming in. Now, my child is saved."

Karrupiah Vedharaniyam, Head of Sub-office at IOM Nekemte, said: "IOM, with its shelter team, plans to support the delivery of non-food items, the

construction of a temporary kitchen and to rehabilitate the current isolation room in Adare health centre, which will enhance capacity to manage incoming caseload. We will continue to assess the conditions to extend further support.

However, IOM's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) team is looking to rehabilitate institutional latrines and to add handwashing facilities and water points.



The support by IOM is timely. We were able to reach out to the affected population and to mobilize a team to the field immediately," said Sonan Desalegn, Head of East Wollega ZHB.

"The support by IOM is timely. We were able to reach out to the affected population and to mobilize a team to the field immediately," said Sonan Desalegn, Head of East Wollega ZHB.

Desalegn added: "Still, needs exist in terms of building capacity of the health extension workers and the system. We look forward to working with IOM continuously."

IOM's response to the measles outbreak in Ethiopia was made possible through the support of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund and the Ethiopian Humanitarian Funds.



Tanzania Ports Authority board chairman Prof Ignas Rubarutuka (L) and director general Deusdedit Kakoko (2nd-L), who is also Bandari College board chairman, follow an IT-aided presentation during their visit to the Dar es Salaam-based college on Thursday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Villagers conduct secret poll for identifying cattle rustlers

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbulu

PEOPLE living in Yaeda Chini Valley bordering Mbulu and Karatu districts in Manyara and Arusha regions respectively have conducted a secret poll to expose cattle rustlers in the area.

Mbulu District Commissioner Chelestino Mofuga and his Karatu counterpart Theresia Mahongo supervised the poll aimed to eradicate cattle rustling in the border areas of the two districts.

Theresia said the poll required people to write down the names whom they claim to be cattle rustlers in the area and their collaborators.

Chelestino said in the same poll they were able to identify people who destroyed boundary marks infrastructures in the Valley after the people were also required to write down their names.

"This is the right to identify criminals and we believe you cannot write the names of people who were not involved in

the crimes, and we think cattle theft will end as those involved are now known and if they continue the government will act," she said.

She said since they were appointed and took the oath to serve the wananchi, they will not allow a few thieves engaged in the breach of the peace and impoverish other people, and added that we will keep the names and "you will soon see a stop to cattle rustling."

Earlier some wananchi in the area were pointing fingers

among themselves, hence the government came up with the secret poll to identify the perpetrators.

A resident of Matala village Julius John said he believes cattle thieves collaborate with a big criminal network of people living in the area in stealing and selling livestock.

John said it is not possible for a person coming from far away to come and steal cattle from the village, unless he works in the said criminal network.

Ulega cautions fisheries officers against harassing Isles fishermen

By Correspondent George Sembony, Pangani

DEPUTY Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Abdallah Ulega has cautioned government officers against harassing fishermen from the Isles who come seasonally to conduct fishing activities along Tanga region.

Addressing fisheries stakeholders and traders

in Kigombe, Muheza and Pangani on Thursday, Ulega said by so doing the officials are playing with a sensitive union matter. He urged them to avoid creating unnecessary conflicts between residents of Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar.

"Fishermen from Zanzibar are part of Tanzania and they are privileged to work anywhere in the two

sides of the union," Ulega said noting that the fishermen are only required to follow country laws, regulations and procedures in conducting fishing activities and buying fish in mainland coastal villages.

The regulations, he said, include having proper documents from fisheries officers from Zanzibar and paying for a license and other required charges in

Tanzania mainland.

According to him, the Fisheries Act no 22 of 2003 and its regulations of 2009 as well as the amendments of 2018 and 2019 requires any fisherman who shift his fishing activities from one place to another to have a license and all permits to enable him conduct his activities in another area of the Indian Ocean.

The Deputy Minister

informed that the government is working to remove taxes in fishing tools in a new move aimed at strengthening the sector, increase employment and improve national income.

The deputy minister said that there is a need to review the law so as to grant tax exemption in fishing tools as it is in some of the agricultural tools.

"We will work on this but we need to be extra careful because some of dishonest people may use the fishing tools in other activities thus denying revenue to the government. The modern fishing technology also involve pipes which are relevant to those used in house construction, so some people may evade tax by claiming that they are importing the tools

for fishing while not," he added.

He said the ministry is in the process of developing a database of fishermen and their activities with a view of creating ways of developing their activities through provision of loans. Earlier, fishermen and traders from Zanzibar had complained over harassment by fisheries officers claiming to be stopped from conducting

fishing activities on mainland waters.

The fishermen claimed that officials in mainland have been refusing to recognize licenses and letters issued by Zanzibar officials.

The fishing sector contributes 1.7 percent in GDP and provides employments something which confirms that fishing is important to the country's economy.

44 women registered for this year's female future programme, reports ATE

By Aisia Rweyemamu

A TOTAL of 44 women have registered for this year's female future programme—cohort 5&6 which aims to capacitate and attract them into various management posts of decision making in companies.

Executive Director of the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) Dr Agrey Mlimuka said this in Dar es Salaam on Thursday during the launch of the programme.

Dr Mlimuka said ATE has partnered with the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) to deliver the training.

He said the 44 participants of this year's course are from both, public and private organisations. He said the course which will take nine

months, will be completed with official accreditations and recognition to participants and their organisations.

"Through the programme we will empower women to have great and productive contribution in their organisations and the nation," Dr Mlimuka explained.

ESAMI Director General, Prof Bonard Mwape said there are still challenges in most of the organisations in the country where almost all top positions are held by men.

"Researches and experience show that women are capable as men and they can do the best," said Prof Mwape.

According to him, the female future programme being founded globally has proved that organisations that have women in top positions perform

better. He said women in top posts provide high quality jobs.

"Our objective is to equip women who are working to take up higher responsibilities," said the director noting that the programme will help women to acquire necessary skills to help them make right decisions.

Female future programme was introduced for women in Africa to help them move and bear with circumstances in board rooms, directorship, business, cabinet, parliament and senior management role in all sectors of the economy.

The programme started in Norway many years ago being implemented by ATE partners named Consideration of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO) and it is successfully being offered to help women boost their careers.



Prudence Constantine (R), head of communication in the Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children ministry's Community Development Department, briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on the forthcoming (February 27) commemoration of International Women's Day in Tanzania. He is with Erasto Ching'oro, a senior communication officer in the ministry. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Responding to domestic needs of natural gas

By Guardian Correspondent

SINCE the discovery of natural gas on Songo songo Island in Lindi Region in 1974 and Mnazi Bay in Mtwara Region in 1982, followed by commercial extraction of the resource in 2004 and 2006 respectively, Tanzanians have come to realise its benefit in various ways. For domestic users, life has become simple and cheap; using natural gas for cooking, for example, it is more convenient than using charcoal, firewood or electricity. The cost incurred is also low.

While initially the gas was used mainly in Mtwara, Kilwa and Lindi towns, construction and subsequent commission of the Mtwara-Dar gas pipeline in 2015 opened up new demands for the resource in Dar es Salaam and Coast Regions.

Currently the natural gas sector enjoys a fair share of the domestic market with about 50 consumers, mainly factories, using the resource. These also include hotels and other facilities. In addition, 380 houses in Mtwara and Dar es Salaam are supplied with natural gas which residents use for cooking while over 300 vehicles use natural gas instead of petroleum as fuel.

All the natural gas currently used in the country is extracted from Songo songo and Mnazi Bay gas field. "About half of the 12 gas wells in Songo songo are not operational for various reasons while gas is being extracted from all five wells at Mnazi Bay. TPDC has contracted Pan Africa Energy Tanzania and Maurel et Prom to manage the resources in Songo songo and Mnazi Bay respectively.

The companies sell the gas to various consumers," says TPDC's Development and Production Manager, Modestus Lumato adding that the Corporation now strives to supply natural gas to many users because it is available and cheap.

"Families are replacing charcoal and electricity with natural gas. Many factories have also switched over to gas-powered electricity instead of diesel or industrial oil. The demand for natural gas in the country is growing."

According to Tanzania Invest, in 2016 the country's total power installed capacity was 1,357.69 MW composed of hydro 566.79 MW (42%), natural gas 607 MW (45%) and liquid fuel 173.40 MW (13%).

"Today, natural gas accounts for 57 percent of Tanzania's electricity," notes Lumato. Recently TPDC Director General Dr James Matarajio said that natural gas production for domestic use has risen in line with increased domestic demand.

"In 2004 average production stood at 100mcf but currently production stands at 200mcf," Dr Matarajio was quoted by the media as saying.

He was speaking at a recent event to inaugurate natural gas installations in four restaurants at the University of Dar es Salaam.

As part of its drive for economic growth, Tanzania has plans to expand its domestic gas pipeline network through its Natural Gas Utilisation Master Plan that would deliver supplies to five regions: Morogoro, Tanga, Dodoma, Kilimanjaro and Arusha. "This follows a feasibility study conducted by JICA and the next

stage is implementation of this plan, phase by phase. The ultimate aim is to supply all mainland regions with natural gas," said Deputy Minister for Energy Subira Mgalu during a stakeholders meeting in January this year.

The Natural Gas Utilisation Master Plan indicates that government has drawn a network of pipelines through which the onshore blocks will supply the domestic market. The proposed network will be basis for distribution of natural gas in the domestic market, bearing in mind that about two-thirds of the available area in Tanzania is yet to be explored and there is great probability that companies are likely to discover more gas in onshore blocks. According to "A snapshot of Tanzania natural gas" published by Norton Rose Fulbright in 2014, private sector involvement in natural gas has been slow and uncertain.

"The private sector was not strong enough, not well-prepared to participate in the natural gas economy. Only after offshore gas deposits in 2010 did the government begin to build local foundations that would prop up the sector as well as create private sector space in the gas economy," reads part of the publication.

However, the assertion is no longer valid now as in July last year, TPDC called for investors in compressed natural gas (CNG) to establish fueling stations for vehicles. Construction of the fueling stations is part of implementation of the Corporation's plan to build two large stations in Dar es Salaam and investors would support trucking

of CNG to retail stations located in various places.

"This is an opportunity for businesses in the natural gas value chain to buy CNG from TPDC at wholesale price and resell it to end-users specifically vehicle owners. It is also an opportunity to enable scaling up of the gas utilisation potential in the transport sector by replacing costly and environmentally unfriendly diesel and petrol which are wholly imported," the corporation said.

However, there has been a significant shift of interest by government, from gas powered electricity to hydro-power electrify. The change of focus and interest has sent a bad signal to investors and domestic users of natural gas in general.

"It is true; we are now redirecting our efforts to hydropower, particularly the MW2115 Mwalimu Nyerere hydropower scheme," said an official with TANESCO.

Industry watchers have, however, different views regarding the government's shift of interest.

"Government should wise up and go for a balanced energy mix in a bid to not only creates energy safety net but also to tap huge revenue from the natural gas resource which is important for the country's economic development. We should also have in mind the effects of climate change on availability of water," notes Dr Donald Kasogi, a Policy Analyst and Board Chairman of Haki Rasilimali.

A social worker and Executive Director of FAWOPA, an NGO based in Mtwara town, Baltazar Komba said that neglecting natural gas as a

source of electricity is a misplaced agenda. "In fact, developing the natural gas sector is not just about generating cheap electricity but it is also about raising the country's revenue. We are grounding our industrialization drive on expensive and unreliable source of electricity instead of natural gas which is cheap and abundant," he says.

However, in a bid to meet the increasing demand of natural gas in 2020 by various consumers PanAfrican Energy (PAET) in May 2019 signed a long-term Gas Sales Agreement for 20 MMscf/d with TPDC, subsequently increasing to 30 MMscf/d depending on rise in demand. Apart from being primarily used for increased power generation, gas will also be sold to power and industrial customers in Dar es Salaam.

"PAET expects further increases in gas demand in 2020, across the power and industrial sectors, and potentially through the expansion of its ongoing compressed natural to vehicles project. Additional power generation is expected to be installed at Kinyerezi Thermal Power Station in Dar es Salaam, commencing in the third quarter of 2020," reads part of the company's operations report for 2019 published recently.

The report notes further that alongside gas for power generation, PAET is actively seeking to further accelerate industrial expansion in Dar es Salaam and has recently restructured and lowered gas prices to industries to ensure gas remains a cheaper and cleaner alternative to more expensive and far more fossil fuels such as diesel or coal.

'Govt spent 9bn/- for upkeep and building of new health centres in Tabora between 2015 and 2019'

By Guardian Correspondent, Tabora

THE government has disbursed 8.8bn/- for maintenance and construction of new hospitals and health centres in Tabora Region in a period of between 2015 and 2019.

The move is aimed at improving provision of health services as well as bringing them closer to the people. The hospitals to be equipped with modern medical equipment will see Tabora residents getting quality health services near their residential areas.

"Residents will no longer walk for distances in search of medical treatment at the regional hospital, newly constructed health centres will have all needed equipment," said Tabora Regional Commissioner, Aggrey Mwanri.

He was presenting a report on implementation of the ruling party's election manifesto to members of CCM Central Committee in Tabora Region.



"We still have a good number of people who do not have access to free medical care at our facilities. We need to encourage them to enroll with the system to access medical services even when they do not have money," he noted.

Mwanri informed that of the monies, 3bn/- have been spent on construction of Sikonge and Uyui district hospitals whose implementation has reached 97 percent.

He said the region spent 1bn/- to renovate Zogolo, Upuge and Nzege health centers. He said a total of 4.8bn/- was spent to repair various health centers namely Simbo in Igunga, Ulyankulu at Kaliua, Ussoke in Urambo, Kitunda and Kipili in Sikonge, Busondo and Ussoke Mlimani in Urambo district.

Other renovated health centers includes, Igurubi, Maili Tano, Igalula in Uyi district and construction of maternity and newborn ward at Nzege district hospital.

CCM Ideology Secretary in Urambo district, Obed Balola urged district authorities to encourage residents to enroll with improved Community Health Fund (CHF) to be able to access quality health services at lower cost.

He said the region has a total of 421,023 households whereas only 5,780 households have been enrolled with CHF.

"We still have a good number of people who do not have access to free medical care at our facilities. We need to encourage them to enroll with the system to access medical services even when they do not have money," he noted.

Manonga Member of Parliament, Seif Gulamali applauded the government for disbursing funds for implementation of various projects in the region including renovation and construction of hospitals.



Prof Wim Blonk (2nd-L) of Belgium's charitable organisation Close the Gap, lays the foundation stone for a 700m/- project at Msandaka Deaf Vocational Training in Moshi recently. He is accompanied by some members of the Lion Club of Moshi-Kibo. Photo: Correspondent James Lanka

TanESCO advises Makete residents to install special devices designed to prevent lightning in their houses

By Guardian Correspondent, Makete

THE Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO) in Makete District, Njombe Region has advised residents to install special gadgets to prevent their houses from lightning strikes which have so far claimed lives of people.

The advice was given by TanESCO officials from headquarters in Dar es Salaam as well as those from Njombe and Makete during their tour to educate electricity users on safety issues and inspect progress implementation of rural electrification phase III under the Rural Energy Agency (REA).

TanESCO's Marketing Manager, Sylvester Matiku from Dar es Salaam said the team arrived in the region to offer knowledge on environmental conservation because the villages will receive electricity for the first time.

Matiku said response from Wananchi on the need for electricity in the area is very high saying TanESCO was ready to bring the services. About 29 villages in Makete District are expected to receive electricity through the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) where a team of experts informed the public at four wards of Bulungwa, Luwumbu, Tandala and Tupalilo.

The officer called upon wananchi to complete the exercise before the end of the project in June. The administrator for REA projects in Njombe Region Yusuph Salimu said the electricity distribution exercise in Makete was going on very well despite the challenges of rains.

Currently REA provides the procedures for integrating environmental and social considerations into the planning process and implementation of rural energy projects and programmes.

The manual replaces all Environmental and Social Safeguards Operational Guidelines previously used by the agency.

In 2016 REA announced the beginning of implementation of the Rural Electrification Programme Phase III, a project that aims to electrify more than 7,873 villages in rural Tanzania for 5 years. 7,697 villages will be connected to the national grid, while the remaining 176 will be connected to other energy sources.

The project is implemented by private contractors and supervised by REA, the Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO) and a Trust Agent.

As of June 2016, 4,395 villages in Tanzania were connected to electricity during Phase I and II of the project.



George Lugata (3rd-R), Vodacom Tanzania Plc's Head of Sales, Distribution, Shops and Customer Service, pictured yesterday cutting a ribbon to launch a shop the firm has opened at Mbezi Beach kwa Zena in Dar es Salaam. He is assisted by the shop's manager, Devota Kijogoo (to his right), as their colleagues look on. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

ATU rallies African countries to share resources while generating corresponding satellite notices

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Telecommunications Union (ATU), in collaboration with Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio communications Sector, has rallied 31 African countries to a special workshop to share the newly available resources and generate corresponding satellite notices to the ITU.

These countries stand a chance to utilize new usable resources to launch satellite systems for satellite broadcasting services (satellite TV). Satellite notices are a legal way of requesting the ITU

to process and formalise any change to the satellite resource plans.

Over 20 years ago, each African country was allocated equal share of the orbital slots, but half the continent did not follow on their allocated satellite resource which have now been rendered obsolete due to interference from other satellite networks and natural degradation.

John Omo, Secretary General of the African Telecommunications Union said the workshop is part of the implementation of one of the decisions of the World Radio communications Conference (WRC) that was held for the first time in Africa, in 2019, in Sharm El Sheikh Egypt.

He said during the conference ATU made a request to have a special window for generating the satellite notices.

"The space applications will be used to address the socio-economic developmental needs of Africa by providing critical information for evidence-based management of human habitats, ecosystems and natural resources," said Omo. South Sudan, the newest country in Africa, will have their first chance to acquire the resources as they were not in existence at the time of establishing the plans.

Despite the continent's challenges, some countries have exploited the resources by launching satellites into the

designated orbital slots. South Africa was the first, launching a miniaturized satellite called SUNSAT, which was designed and manufactured in the country, in a NASA-sponsored launch in 1999.

Other African countries followed by launching satellite for commercial and research purposes. They include Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Rwanda and Ethiopia.

According to the African Space Policy by the African Union, space communication is critical to the improvement of Africa's economy and the quality of life of its people.

Although Africa is one of the wealthiest continents in terms of

natural resources and has a relatively high economic growth, it is, however, one of the poorest in terms of per capita income, with a relatively low level of gross domestic product.

Globally, other continents are reaping benefits due to their advancements in satellite communication.

ATU was founded in 1977 as a specialized agency of the Organization of African Unity, now African Union, in the field of telecommunications.

ATU took its present name in 1999 which led to the transformation of the agency into a partnership between public and private stakeholders in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

Kigoma regional authorities urged to ensure serious monitoring of all local programmes

By Guardian Correspondent, Kigoma

MINISTER for Works, Transport and Communications, Eng Isack Kamwelwe has tasked authorities and citizens in Kigoma Region to closely monitor implementation of road infrastructure projects as well as ensure value for money.

Eng Kamwelwe made the remarks on Thursday when speaking at the signing ceremony for construction of the Kabingo-Kasulu-Manyovu road held at Ujiji. The 260 kilometer road will be constructed at a tarmac level by four contractors namely, LOT 1-M/S ZCCC, LOT 2-M/S SINOHYDRO, LOT 3-M/S STECOL and LOT 4-M/S CHICO.

He noted that President John Magufuli had during general election campaigns in 2015, promised to improve road infrastructures in western zone regions including Katavi, Kigoma and Tabora.

"Improvement of road infrastructures in these regions will open-up a number of economic opportunities thus improve people's wellbeing," said the minister commending the African Development Bank for continued support in improving economic infrastructures in the country.

Prof Joyce Ndlichako, Minister for Education, Science and Technology said: "We are thankful to the President because Kigoma will now be linked to neighbouring countries and other regions. Construction of the road will facilitate transportation services and make the road passable throughout the year."

Finance Minister, Dr Philip Mpango said apart from road infrastructures, the government is also planning to construct a new passenger terminal as well as expansion of the Kigoma airport.

Kigoma Regional Commissioner, Emmanuel Maganga said signing of the four construction agreements means all sections of the Kabingo-Kasulu-Manyovu road will be constructed at one time, thus easing transport services.

"We will monitor implementation of the project and will guarantee safety and security of contractors," he said.

Chief Executive Officer of the Tanzania National Roads Agency (Tanroads), Eng Patrick Mfugale said completion of the road will supplement government's poverty reduction strategies. He said the road will be constructed in three years or less depending on the pace of contractors.

Eng Mfugale noted that they are also going to construct and repair markets and bus stands at Manyovu and Kabingo area.

He said the project is implemented with financial support from the African Development Bank providing 584.72bn/- while the government will provide 58.47bn/- equivalent to 10 percent of the total project cost.

Masasi DC forbids farming activities at water sources

By Guardian Correspondent, Masasi

MASASI District Commissioner Selemu Mzee has appealed to farmers who conduct farming activities near water sources to stop doing so as they cause destruction to both the environment and road infrastructures.

Mzee issued the order at a meeting after inspection of the roads by the District Roads Board for Masasi District.

He said from the visit board members discovered environment destruction at the water sources and roads.

He said many water sources in Masasi district have started disappearing due to invasion by farmers and that the government would not tolerate this and called for every person to stand firm to rectify the deteriorating situation.

Speaking about the roads inspection tour the DC said the contractors' pace of road construction in the district has been slow thereby delaying the completion of many road projects.

He said the government in the district wants the contractors to ensure the projects given by the government are finalised in agreed time as per contracts.

He said the roads visited included the Makong'onda - Mkwaya and the work at Mbuyuni Bridge, as well as Mchaulu -Luatala and Masasi - Nachingwea roads.

For his part Mtwara TANROADS roads engineer Leocard Kambale said TANROADS will ensure they push up the contractors to finish work in time.

He said already TANROADS has started close follow-up on the contractors to assess the quality of the work done.



Dr Edmund Mndolwa (L), national chairman of the CCM parents wing, makes remarks yesterday shortly before presenting a brick-making machine to the wing's Longido District branch. He is in Arusha Region to assess implementation of the party's election manifesto. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

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Taking A New Look
At The News
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Massive border-spanning campaign needed to combat upsurge of locusts in East Africa

The desert locust is a species of locust, a swarming short-horned grasshopper in the family Acrididae. It is one of the most devastating migratory pests in the world and it is highly mobile and feeds on large quantities of any kind of green vegetation, including crops, pasture, and fodder.

A typical swarm can be made up of 150 million locusts per square kilometer and is carried on the wind, up to 150 km in one day. Even a very small, one-square-kilometer locust swarm can eat the same amount of food in one day as about 35 000 people.

It is an international transboundary pest which threatens agricultural production and livelihoods in many countries in Africa, the Middle East, and south and southwestern Asia. Its migratory nature and capacity for rapid population growth present major challenges for control, particularly in remote semiarid areas, which characterize much of the distribution area.

Locusts differ from grasshoppers in their ability to change from a solitary living form into gregarious, highly mobile, adult swarms and hopper bands as their numbers and densities increase.

The desert locust is potentially the most dangerous of the locust pests because of the ability of swarms to fly rapidly across great distances.

In February 2020, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation announced that desert locusts are destroying tens of thousands of hectares of crops and grazing land in North East Africa in the worst invasion in 25 years. The UN warns that a dangerous situation is now facing the region and in particular eastern Ethiopia. Since this announcement, swarms have caused Somalia to declare a state of emergency and spread to other East African countries.

In the same vein, the government

has called upon development partners in the country to share their experiences with the government on how to fight against red locusts now wreaking havoc in neighbouring Kenya.

The Deputy Minister for Agriculture Hussein Bashe made the call recently in Dodoma when reacting to the topics and arguments at the Annual Agricultural Policy conference (AAPC).

This year's theme was "Public and Private Sector Investment for Agricultural Transformation in Tanzania" and had involved over 150 participants from the academia, research institutions, policy makers, advocacy groups and development practitioners in the country.

Bashe said although the government had already hired two planes that will be used in spraying pesticides to kill red locust incase they enter the country the lesson learned from other countries was also very important to us.

Indeed the information from their experiences will help us as the country to strengthen monitoring of the symptoms or any alerts of the locust early and take action early.

About one month ago, the minister for Agriculture, Japhaet Hasunga, said the government had enough stock of pesticides to tackle locust invasion should the pests that are currently wreaking havoc in neighbouring Kenya cross into the country.

His statement came a few days after the swarms of locusts invaded Turkana County, destroying several hectares of vegetation and food crops, worsening the threat of acute hunger in a region that already suffers recurrent drought.

Although Tanzania is a member of the International Red Locust Control Organisation, as a country we should prepare ourselves enough in the case of the outbreak.

Vandalism: We can ill afford to ignore crime prevention methods

Theft and vandalism impede the sustainability of renewable energy development projects in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, it is essential to explore where these crimes originate from, how they propagate and how they can be counteracted.

Vandalism is the action involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property. The definition of vandalism allows to distinguish hostile behaviour aimed to damage or destroy the object, instrumental behaviour consisting of damage or destruction caused to an object as a mean to achieve other goals (appropriation of another's property, sabotage), and behaviour motivated by a desire to express oneself through the degradation of objects as well as a play vandalism (breaking window panes).

The term also includes property damage, such as graffiti and defacement directed towards any property without permission of the owner.

More serious forms of vandalism that may take place during public unrest such as rioting can involve the willful destruction of public and private property. Vandalism per se is sometimes considered one of the less serious common crimes, but it can become quite serious and distressing when committed extensively, violently, or as an expression of hatred and intimidation. In response, local governments have adopted various legal measures to prevent vandalism, but research has shown that the conventional strategies employed by the government in response to at least unapproved graffiti are not the most effective.

It is crucial to thwart the potential of theft and vandalism for projects ongoing in the country. This is simply because impact of theft and vandalism in relation to the sustainability of renewable energy development projects in sub-Saharan Africa is immense. We

should further determine the actions and interferences that could hinder the sustainability of these projects being thrown into disarray, whilst considering the principal instigators, project types and already existing levels of interference.

Considering that vandalism costs businesses and residential communities millions of shillings each year, business owners and communities can ill afford to ignore crime prevention strategies.

For example, vandalism is on the increase in Tanzania. Electrical wires, bridge metal parts, telephones cables, manhole covers and bus stop sheds fittings are stolen for sale as scrap metals. Although the nation seems to take vandalism as one of the less serious common crimes, it is increasingly becoming serious, for example, in cases when fuel is stolen from transformers or when rails, fasteners and sleepers are taken away.

The Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) has cautioned the public against vandalising road infrastructure describing it as an economic sabotage and should not be allowed to wipe out the gains already made.

TARURA manager in Ilemela Municipal Council Eng Clement Kihinga sounded the warning recently, saying the government is spending a lot of money on road infrastructure and those engaged in the vice it is true that road features such as sign posts are meant to enhance road safety and should not be vandalized. It is crucial that agencies ought to embark on sensitization of the public or public awareness on the importance of road features.

It is the duty of the public to protect the road infrastructures in their areas because they are the one who use the roads therefore it is good for them to be part of making sure that the roads continue to be in good condition.

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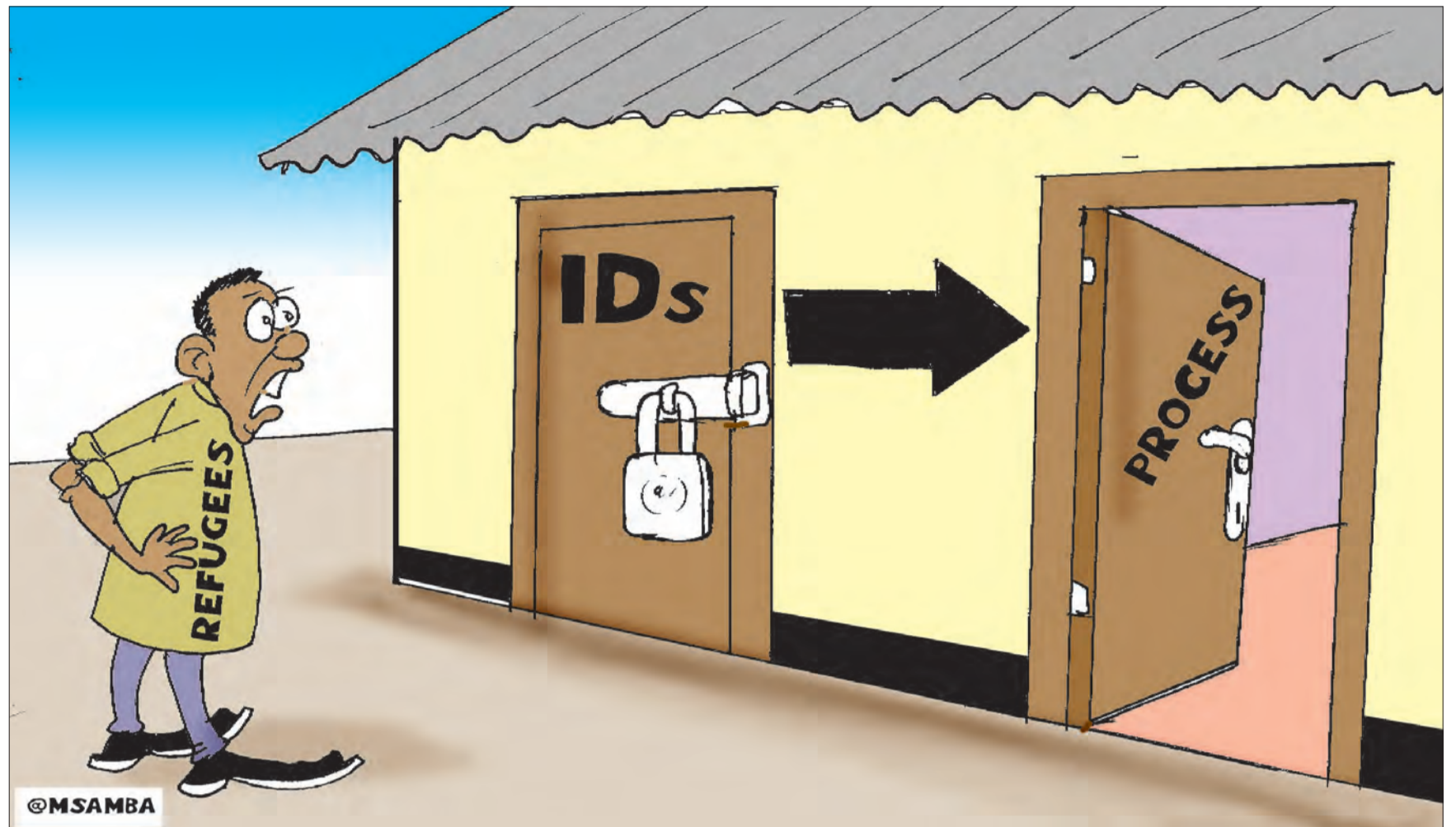
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The myth of FW de Klerk

By Ferial Haffajee

I have never bought into the myth of what FW de Klerk or his foundation means. Here's why.

As part of the interviewing panel of journalists for a 1994 pre-election debate between apartheid's last president FW De Klerk and Nelson Mandela, I remember thinking in the television studio how much less presence the balding leader had than his media image suggested.

Short in stature and with a thin voice, his answers were rehearsed, clearly meant for the television cameras.

In the flesh, he lacked the substance that the reams of adulatory copy about him as a great reformer had suggested since his surprise decision to unban the ANC and a string of liberation movements and organisations on 2 February 1990.

This image of a De Klerk press conference in the wake of that decision may offer one explanation of how the myth was constructed.

Then South African president and political leader FW de Klerk surrounded by the press at the international press conference where De Klerk announced the release from prison of Nelson Mandela in Cape Town, South Africa, 2 February 1990. (Photo: Gallo Images / Media24)

Because of journalism and the media's structure at the time (a reflection of the apartheid hegemony), almost the entire political reporting corps was white.

Of course, there were large and radical differences among the journalists and analysts who wrote about what De Klerk had done, but on the whole, the moment and how it was covered began the myth of De Klerk, not as a wily politician who read the writing on the wall, but as a great liberator. The black and independent media of the time covered it differently.

The key texts which flowed out of this period like editor Allister Sparks's 'Tomorrow is another country' and foreign correspondent Patti Waldmeier's 'Anatomy of a Miracle' fall straight into this seductive narrative as subsequent events have revealed.

Throughout his time in office, De Klerk was not the statesman he is projected as, but instead adopted an obstreperous and conservative mien despite the multiple political acrobatics Mandela had to perform to accommodate him. He eventually quit the government in a fit of pique.

The upcoming film, Influence, by Daily Maverick's Richard Poplak and Diana Neille reveals that the myth-making was the work of Lord Tim Bell, who later founded Bell Pottinger, and who claimed to the directors that he was paid by billionaire Johann Rupert to assist De Klerk. (Rupert has denied the allegations).

The late Lord Bell revealed in the film



Former South African president FW De Klerk, South African President Ramaphosa's and his wife Elita (L), with parliamentary presiding officers before the February 13, 2020 State of the Nation address.

that he had created the idea of the liberator and boosted De Klerk's image in order to win a greater slice of the vote for the National Party to ward off a landslide black majority election victory in 1994.

Like Bell's work on crafting the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher's image, De Klerk was then made for the media, a construct. To learn this now has filled in a lot of blanks I've encountered about the man I have covered for over 30 years as a journalist. (The film will premiere in South Africa in June).

A vanishing smile

I followed De Klerk on the election trail through the 1994 election and watched with some alarm how his team used a coloured electorate to bolster its fortunes, a narrative lost on many, but not all, of my white colleagues as they would not have understood the nuance of what was happening.

Perhaps my alarm related to the fact that I grew up in Bosmont, a coloured area in Johannesburg which suffered, like all black group areas did, the worst of the Nats' separatist policies.

It was like all townships, a deprived reserve, its people placed where we were a buffer between the white suburbs and the southwestern townships which make up the acronym for Soweto.

We all know how budgets were cut up for the four constructed race groups that apartheid's master-planners spent in different group areas. To live it was a whole different story of appalling public transport, deprived schools, broken third-class train coaches, deep poverty and a life of struggle.

To then see De Klerk pretend to represent coloured people sickened me to my core and to see how people were bused into his events, given lunch packets and told to wave Nat flags of blue and yellow was cynical politics of the worst order.

On stage, he spoke Afrikaans to these constituents smiling and promising the world like the patriarchal populists who dot the globe today. Journalists were positioned behind the stage for some

reason and I watched at meeting after meeting as the smile was wiped clean off his face as soon as he left the stage and got into his limousine. He looked on occasion as if he found his newfound constituents almost as distasteful as I felt about his performance politics. These were not "his people", that look seemed to indicate to me.

Recently, a friend asked where I was on 2 February 1990 as journalists deliberated the day as a fruit of struggle, not for it being bequeathed by a white knight, another myth that is sustained to this day by De Klerk's foundation and by his supporters.

For me, then and today still, my abiding memory of De Klerk at the time was of the man who passed the university bills which sought to make more difficult the access of black people to white universities by cutting the subsidies which were lowering the colour bar.

Not then and not now have a generation of us bought into the myth, so his statement, now retracted, that apartheid was not a crime against humanity was hardly surprising to many of us.

We know through lived experience that apartheid was criminal, no matter what Dave Stewart, the chair of the FW De Klerk Foundation, said in his statement last week.

The foundation alleged that the UN resolution declaring apartheid a crime against humanity was "Soviet agitprop" (classically apartheid "rooi-gevaar"-speak, or fear of communists), but it back-pedalled on Monday 17 February 2020 when activists threatened to start a campaign to have the Nobel committee take back its peace prize.

Stewart is said to be the hardliner at the foundation who likely scripted De Klerk's apartheid denialism, so creating

the storm. Stewart was chief of staff for FW when he was in office.

De Klerk's identity (and income, through speaking engagements) rests on the Nobel and it's likely that the advisory committee, as well as foundation funders, pushed for the apology and retraction of the statement. It's worth noting that the foundation has lost its most significant black staff members in the recent past.

The idea of the white knight persists. Here's how the foundation apologised this week:

"The FW de Klerk Foundation has accordingly decided to withdraw its statement of 14 February unconditionally and apologise for the confusion, anger and hurt that it has caused.

"By 27 April 1994, under my leadership, the whole legislative framework of apartheid had been dismantled and the way had been opened for the adoption of our present non-racial democratic Constitution."

In this statement, it's clear that the myth of a white knight persists and it's clear in the words "By 27 April 1994, under my leadership..."

As history shows us, the road to a peaceful election on 27 April was not because of De Klerk alone, but rather the work of a well-regarded political negotiation headed in the main by a junior minister in De Klerk's Cabinet, Roelf Meyer, and now-President Cyril Ramaphosa.

In fact, the historical record shows that De Klerk's role was less than salubrious and that he became increasingly focused on protecting group rights, the tight protectionism of which continues to haunt South Africa more than a quarter of a century into the new democracy. Which brings you to whether De Klerk and his foundation support the central pillars of the Constitution - a united and non-racial South Africa? In my dealings with the foundation, I would argue that they do not.

Instead, the foundation peddles difference instead of unity, it avows a system of minority rights against a bogey of majoritarianism. South Africa is seen less as one people in one country and rather as a set of minorities (that it clumsily and unsuccessfully tries to "own" and represent) arrayed against a majority.

Of course, the ANC and the EFF play exactly the same identity politics and the DA is headed in that direction too. It is a politics that is the polar opposite of the non-racial, non-sexist society sculpted so beautifully in the Constitution and while all politicians, including De Klerk, pay lip service to these principles, their actions often turn these into paper tigers.

De Klerk has done so in spectacular style, 30 years to the month since he began to cultivate a new profile for himself. It was a case of back to the future. Or otherwise of the mask of myth slipping.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework aims at reinforcing efforts to save world's ecosystem

UNITED NATIONS

The UN's highly-touted socio-economic agenda, which lays out an ambitious global plan for "people, planet and prosperity", has been dominated by "goals, targets and deadlines."

But regrettably, most developing nations are struggling to reach these goals—due largely to a shortfall in much-needed funding or lack of political will on the part of most governments.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—which was launched in 2015 and includes the proposed eradication of extreme poverty and hunger—are expected to be achieved by the targeted date of 2030.

But judging by the limited progress made so far, even the United Nations is skeptical about winning the race against global poverty and hunger—on deadline—besides achieving gender equality, quality education and climate action worldwide.

The 2016 Paris Climate Change agreement has "a global stock-take every 5 years to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement and to inform further individual actions by Parties."

And the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets – aimed largely at protecting and preserving the world's ecosystems—have a 2020 deadline, with just 10 months to go.

The 20 global targets were formulated under the

2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and grouped under five goals, including addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across governments and society, reducing direct pressures on biodiversity while promoting sustainable use; and improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.

In the run-up to an upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference in China, officials and experts will convene at FAO headquarters, Rome, February 24-29 for negotiations on the initial draft of a landmark post-2020 global biodiversity framework and targets, extending through 2030.

The new framework will be considered and adopted by the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15), scheduled to take place October 15-28, in Kunming, China.

Asked if the Aichi achievements are far below targets, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Acting Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), told IPS "as you point out, research is leading us to the conclusion that actions have not been sufficient to accelerate progress to achievement of the Aichi Targets to the extent required - and consequently, that none of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets are likely to be fully



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema

met, although some specific components or elements within the targets have been achieved".

She said the full assessment of the status of the targets will be published in Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, which will be released on 18 May 2020.

"But we can say in general, that there has been a wealth of policies and actions developed in all parts of the world to address biodiversity loss, even if cumulatively they have not been sufficient to meet the goals agreed by the global community."

"We will need to build on these as we move forward to achieve the 2050 Vision", she noted.

Excerpts from the interview:

IPS: There have been reports that very few people have ever heard of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets compared to SDGs and the Paris climate change agreement. Is this a fair characterization? How important is public outreach and how will this be different for the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework?

Mrema: Progress has

been made in public awareness and understanding of biodiversity and its values; there is wide variation across countries and attention to biodiversity in the media remains at a much lower level than coverage of climate change.

Nevertheless, the heightened public alarm about the impacts of climate change is frequently expressed alongside dismay at the state of biodiversity, in particular the extinction crisis.

The media coverage of the IPBES Global Assessment in 2019 was incredible, and

this has demonstrated that people are ready to engage on this agenda. But more can be done.

This is why the Parties have asked that any post 2020 global biodiversity framework include an innovative and active communications and outreach strategy, which will be developed as part of the negotiations.

IPS: What shortcomings, if any, have been already identified in feedback about the zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework? Are you expecting any significant changes to the draft before

adoption?

Mrema: The Parties will only provide their feedback on the zero draft when the meeting of the working group begins in Rome on 24 February. I invite you and your readers to follow the proceedings of the meeting, which will be webcast.

IPS: As the 20 targets are expected to expire by the end of 2020, will the Parties to the CBD adopt a revised set of targets for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework? Any indications of what these revised targets would be?

Mrema: As you correctly point out, the period for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 is nearing its end. In 2018, the Conference of the Parties, at its fourteenth meeting in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt adopted a process for developing a post-2020 global biodiversity framework by establishing an Open-ended Working Group (WG2020) to support this process and appointing two Co-chairs, Francis Ogwal (Uganda) and Basile van Havre (Canada) to lead the process.

Subsequently, the WG2020, at its first meeting in August 2019 in Nairobi, requested the Co-chairs and the Executive Secretary, with the oversight of the Bureau, to prepare a zero draft text of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for consideration by the second meeting of the Working Group, which will be held from 24 to 29 February 2020 in Rome.

The Co-chairs and the Acting Executive Secretary, made this "zero draft" of the global biodiversity framework available on 13 January.

The Zero draft was prepared based on extensive regional and thematic consultations, the advice from the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and from the Working Group on Article 8 J and written submissions.

The Zero draft was also developed taking into account global trends and future scenarios, including the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

The framework is built around a theory of change which recognizes that urgent policy action globally, regionally and nationally is required to transform economic, social and financial models so that the trends that have exacerbated biodiversity loss will stabilize in the next 10 years (by 2030) and allow for the recovery of natural ecosystems in the following 20 years, with net improvements by 2050 to achieve the Convention's vision of "living in harmony with nature by 2050".

The zero draft contains suggested global goals for 2030 and 2050 and action-oriented targets for 2030. As I noted, there will be considered by the Parties at their meeting taking place next week in Rome.

Agencies

Will Omar al-Bashir and ICC meet at last?

BY KAREN ALLEN

At the peak of the Darfur crisis in the mid 2000s, a cloud of fear hung heavy in many of the camps for internally displaced people as women returned from gathering firewood to their makeshift tented homes. This daily ritual became a terrifying dash as stories emerged of women being raped or killed by the Janjaweed militia lurking outside, allegedly acting on behalf of the government under former Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir.

And if one were to fly over the mountainous terrain of Jebel Marra in the west, the scorched remains of the villages from which tens of thousands had fled would bear testimony to the alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide of which al-Bashir is indicted.

Now that it seems al-Bashir could be handed over to the International Criminal Court (ICC), it is worth recalling that this is essentially a story of people and power. To date no one has been held accountable for the estimated 400 000 killed and three million directly affected by the conflict as set out in the ICC indictment.

The politics of last week's announcement are complex, bound up as they are with ongoing peace talks. But what lies at its core is the delicate balancing act between politics and the law, and the global appetite for individual criminal responsibility.

It seems unlikely that Sudan would consent to al-Bashir's prosecution happening in The Hague.

The al-Bashir case is totemic. The situation in Darfur was the first time the United Nations Security Council referred a case to the ICC. The case was brought in 2005 on behalf of Darfuris being allegedly targeted and persecuted by their head of state. The UN Security Council has only ever succeeded in referring one more case since - that of Libya in 2011.

The al-Bashir case is also significant because it was the first time that a sitting head of state was indicted by the ICC. It became a political hot potato as arrest warrants for al-Bashir were blatantly ignored by several state parties to the Rome Statute - the founding document of the ICC - as opposition to the court in some quarters hardened.

The case also became something of a rallying cry for the African Union (AU), which believed the ICC was targeting Africa given the disproportionate number of cases from the continent.

Early indications are that the fragile new transitional administration in Khartoum may be willing to hand al-Bashir over - possibly in return for seeing Sudan removed from the United States sanctions and to appease armed groups in Darfur. What does this mean for international justice and the future of the world's first permanent war crimes court?

Can the ICC hold a trial



Despite many hurdles, the former Sudanese president seems a step closer to facing trial at the International Criminal Court. File photo

in Sudan if the country isn't a state party to the Rome Statute?

Even if al-Bashir is turned over to the ICC, the reporting so far indicates that it's unlikely that the Sudanese authorities would consent to the prosecution happening in The Hague. If a request were made to hold the trial in Sudan it would be problematic on several levels, not least because it is not a state party to the Rome Statute.

Politically the ICC would

find itself dependent on the cooperation of the Sudanese government to exercise its work, e.g. to access alleged atrocity sites that are remotely situated. It isn't clear whether the military component of the fragile administration would permit this.

The ICC is also cash-strapped and is struggling to carry out existing investigations. It would have to borrow assets such as airplanes to do its job in Darfur. Although there is pro-

vision in the Rome Statute for supplementary funding by the UN Security Council, this is yet to be tested.

Another consideration is whether the ICC would consent to al-Bashir facing an ICC trial elsewhere. As Tom Maliti from the International Justice Monitor points out, "There are precedents for applications having been made for trials or parts of hearings to be held away from The Hague e.g. in the [Joshua] Sang and [William] Ruto case in Kenya,

and in the case of Dominic Ongwen in Uganda, but all were rejected."

Would a hybrid court to try al-Bashir make the world's first permanent war crimes court redundant?

Would the al-Bashir case and that of the other four accused of crimes in Darfur (militia leader Ali Kushayb, Minister Ahmed Haroun, Abdallah Banda and Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein) be treated any differently? One option is to hold an ICC trial in Arusha,

where the infrastructure of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has remained and where the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights is headquartered.

The idea of a hybrid court has also resurfaced having originally been mooted by the AU following a high-level panel led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki. Could such a court with both Sudanese and international judges sit comfortably alongside the

ICC, or would it effectively make the world's first permanent war crimes court redundant?

And how long would it take to set up? By the time any hybrid court were established, the political winds of change inside Sudan supporting a tribunal could have moved on.

What about resistance from the AU? Does the potential surrender of al-Bashir to the ICC by his own country remove the last vestige of regional opposition to the court? Scholar Dr Mark Kersten, writing extensively on ICC issues, believes dissent has surfaced and receded with the shifting political sands of the day. AU opposition to the court persists and has largely revolved around issues of state sovereignty in cases where sitting heads of state are indicted by the ICC.

But Kersten believes that throwing a deposed leader such as al-Bashir to the wolves of the ICC may no longer invite the same criticism. His may be a controversial view but Kersten argues that we are not yet at a point when 'states no longer find it useful to outsource matters of international justice to the ICC.'

Perhaps tellingly, the AU has remained silent on the latest development regarding al-Bashir and the ICC. There are still a lot of caveats at play and the jury is out on whether the ICC's prized case will ever see the light of day.

Agencies

South Africa could play important role in S. Sudan, but to what effect?

By Carrien Du Plessis

The release of a United Nations Human Rights Council report on abuses in South Sudan on Thursday 20 February coincided with an agreement between the warring leaders, President Salva Kiir and former rebel leader Riek Machar, to form a unity government on Saturday 22 February. Two such agreements since 2011 have already ended in disaster. The Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan details a host of abuses in the country since renewed conflict broke out in the continent's youngest country in December 2013.

It found that millions of civilians had been deliberately deprived of access to basic services, and many were starved while the country's politicians siphoned off national revenues, much of it from petroleum. Corruption and political competition fuelled human rights abuses and are major drivers of ethnic conflict in the country, which saw twice as many deaths in 2019 than in 2018, according to the commission. Children as young as 12 were recruited to fight by both sides. More than 55% of civilians nationwide, mainly women and children, face food insecurity, the report found, and this is exacerbated by climate-induced factors such as the locust plague that has beset

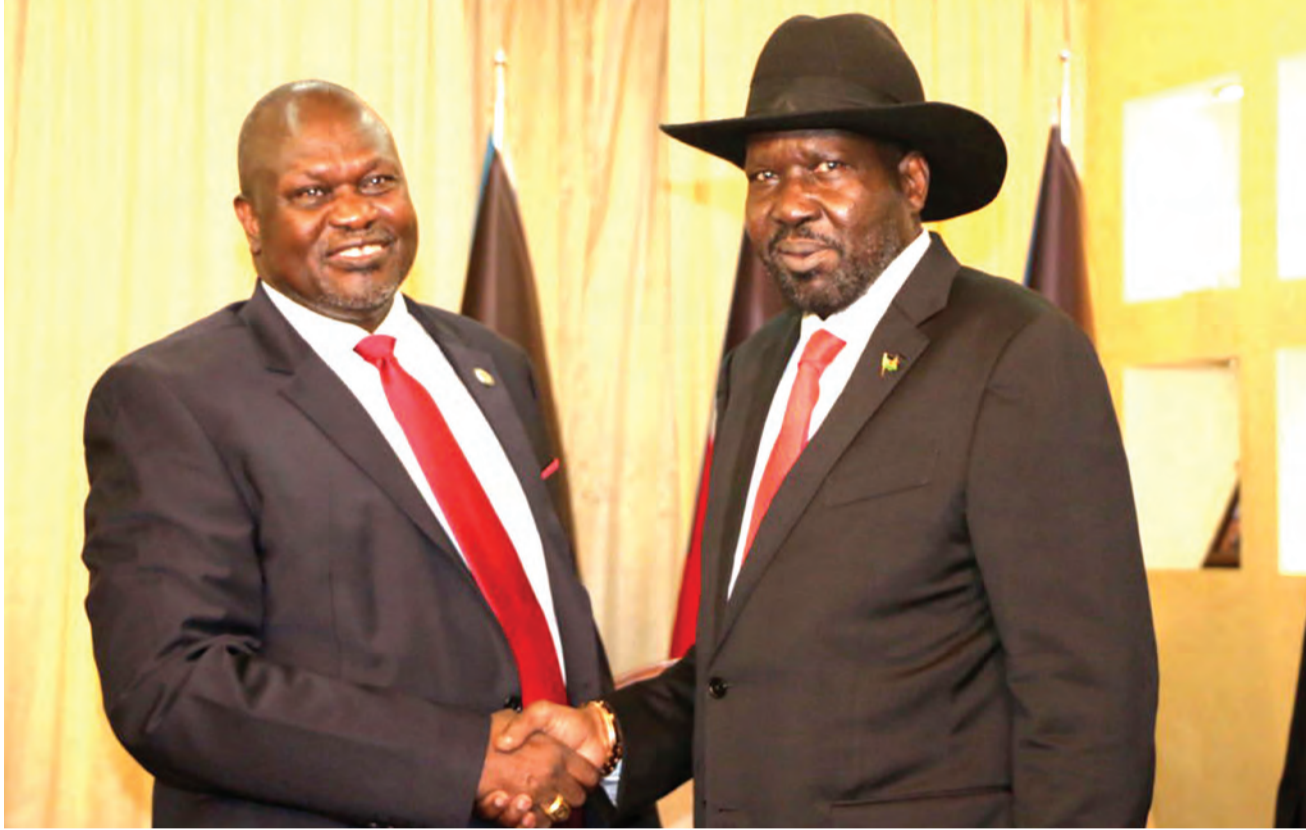
the region.

Commission member Barney Afako, who joined commission chair Yasmin Sooka for a press conference on the report's release in Johannesburg, said the role of South Africa in South Sudan's transition was "terribly important" and should go beyond public statements to actual engagement.

South Africa is the chair of the African Union, which played an important role in the South Sudanese peace process, and it has a seat on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member in 2020. It is also one of five African countries involved in the peace talks, with Deputy President David Mabuza currently tasked with the responsibility of representing South Africa in the process. President Cyril Ramaphosa has singled out the conflicts in South Sudan and Libya as the AU's top priorities for 2020.

"It is terribly important for a respected African country to intervene, not just publicly, but also in a close way, providing support to South Sudanese leaders, [and] advice on how to govern and how to manage resources," Afako said, adding that this included managing corruption. South Sudan could also learn from South Africa in the way leaders have addressed issues of accountability and reconciliation.

There is irony to these



South Sudan President Salva Kiir (R) and Riek Machar (L)

recommendations, though, because South Africa is still very much grappling with most of these issues within. Add to this list of ironies the ANC's own battle with growing divisions while having to advise the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on ways to achieve unity. The truth and reconciliation process South Africa embarked on following the first democratic elections in 1994, has been similarly imperfect. SABC foreign editor Sophie Mokoena asked Sooka how South Africa could be an example

to South Sudan if its own process is flawed of holding leaders to account for crimes committed under apartheid, including former president FW de Klerk. Sooka herself served on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In a long answer to this question, Sooka described South Africa's process as a complex one with compromises. "When South Africa had its own transition it was incredibly influenced by the process in Latin America," she said. The transition to democracy there was from

military dictatorships and authoritarian rule, whereas South Africa was emerging more from a scenario where there was conflict in which citizens were targeted. "Also, you had a racialised system of laws under the system of apartheid which was declared a crime against humanity by the [UN] General Assembly," she said.

Some balance was also necessary to avoid instability. The first democratic president after the military dictatorship in Argentina, Raúl Alfonsín, who came to power in 1983, almost lost power when he

tried to persecute the military heads and middle level officers, and he was compelled to pass a law that gave them amnesty, Sooka said.

"The real question that held up the signing of our Interim Constitution [in South Africa] was this question of criminal accountability," she said, with some calling for a general amnesty and human rights lawyers arguing for accountability, but not at the cost of destabilising the new government.

In the end there was a conditional amnesty

premised on full disclosure, she said. "You had to prove that the actions of the crimes you had been implicated in were committed at the instance of the former state and its different organs or of the liberation movements." She said that, by law, if you didn't apply for amnesty or were refused, the law should take its course, and this has been the battle that many victims and their families had pursued between 2003 and 2016 to ensure proper accountability.

Sooka said the AU's view was that it's not an either/or choice.

"Criminal accountability on its own is not sufficient," she said, because when you prosecute those with the greatest responsibility there are "impunity gaps", dealt with by mechanisms like a truth and reconciliation commission. Other domestic processes as well as reparations were also part of accountability.

The hybrid court which should be set up in South Sudan according to the 2015 and 2018 peace deals was "not a figment of the imagination or a creation of the West," she said. The AU's commission led by former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo recommended a hybrid court on the basis of the crimes that had taken place, as well as a truth commission and a reparations authority. The hybrid court will incorporate prosecutors and judges from

South Sudan as well as the rest of Africa, and consider aspects of domestic and international law.

The UN believes there should be more urgency to getting the court up and running, and the South Sudanese government should be bypassed if necessary. The repeated outbreak of conflict in South Sudan had become a way of shifting out the formation of the hybrid court, Sooka said.

"In our report we want a legal interpretation of the resolution of the AU saying: 'you have the authority to set up this court.'" She said it was also a test of the AU's own credibility and commitment in dealing with serious international crimes on this continent. She said the commission had compiled a list of more than 100 names of those who should be prosecuted when a hybrid court was up and functioning. It also kept open the possibility of involving the International Criminal Court.

Afako said the commission wanted the AU to put forward a timeline by which the South Sudanese should have co-operated with the establishment of the court. "We expect the delay is now a thing of the past as soon as the new government is formed," he said. The hope in the continent is that South Sudan's peace would hold the third time around.

AGENCIES

Zimbabwe's thin line between child smuggling and child trafficking

Elton Ndimiso*, a bus-conductor who works the route from Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, to neighbouring South Africa, sees it all the time: Zimbabwean women travelling with three or four children, who are clearly not their own kids, and taking them across the border.

It's a crime that most bus drivers or conductors either turn a blind eye to, or become accomplices in by assisting the women.

Ndimiso told IPS that in many cases some bus drivers and conductors go as far as "talking to" or even bribing border officials, to allow them to let the children and women enter neighbouring countries without regular migration documents.

The practice is not a new one.

"A number of children have been transported by female smugglers to cross the border. Some of the women will be in possession of signed affidavits that claim they are the legal guardians of the children. It is difficult to prove what the intentions of the smugglers would be once they have crossed the border to South Africa," Ndimiso told IPS.

The Parliament of Zimbabwe notes that child trafficking is one of the greatest challenges the country is facing as a result of the prevailing economic conditions.

And according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) – an intergovernmental United Nations agency that provides services and oversight around migration – there are a number of cases of Zimbabwean parents living in neighbouring countries who pay smugglers to reunite them with their children in their new country.

Ndimiso may not know what risks await the children after they cross the border, but he's seen cases of children being at risk during the journey as well. He remembered a recent case of a woman who was smuggling four children across the border into South Africa and had lost one of the kids when the bus stopped for a break.

"The young child was eight years old and disappeared in the small mining town of Mvuma in Midlands Province where the bus had stopped for recess. We searched for the child but could not find her. We had to leave the woman at the nearest police and a police report was made," Ndimiso told IPS, explaining that the woman had claimed she was transporting the children to join their parents in South Africa.

IOM told IPS that despite there being a large number of instances of child smuggling and trafficking

across Zimbabwe's porous borders, these cases still remain unknown and unreported because of the nature of the crime.

IOM-Zimbabwe head of programmes Ana Medeiros told IPS that this was largely due to the fact that in many cases victims were afraid to speak out and tell their stories.

The 2018 Zimbabwe Parliament Committee on Human Rights' report states that figures about this illicit crime are unavailable.

In the report, parliament recorded that in Zimbabwe the crime of child trafficking is difficult to establish as large amounts of money is gathered in the illegal trade to create networks around the world.

"These are calculative syndicates who create links within the government and ... world to recruit unsuspecting victims who are lured by the need to improve their lives," read the report.

Head of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, an independent rights body in this southern African nation, Virginia Muwanigwa, told IPS that very few cases of child trafficking are addressed each year in Zimbabwe as they are difficult to trace.

"In most cases, the traffickers who pay the smugglers to transport the children along the borders



A large number of children are regularly transported across Zimbabwe's borders by women who are not their mothers. While there are a large number of instances of child smuggling and trafficking across Zimbabwe's porous borders, these cases still remain unknown and unreported because of the nature of the crime. File photo

are close family members who may have ... affidavits and consent from parents or guardians of the children for transportation and may also pay a bribe to border officials," she explained.

According to IOM, smuggling is mostly prevalent on the borders of South Africa and Botswana because documents can be forged and people bribed to allow entry without proper documents.

Medeiros, however, was careful to point out that, "smugglers are not

traffickers because in most cases they are paid for their service to facilitate the process of smuggling. However, in some cases they may be linked to the traffickers." The easily porous borders means that the trafficking of children is also prevalent.

"Child trafficking cases are difficult to trace because minors are not responsible for their actions and there is a thin line between smuggling and trafficking. Trafficking is not always clear as many trafficked

people may be recorded as migrants in the country of destination," Medeiros told IPS.

And Medeiros told IPS that when it comes to cases of child trafficking, usually trusted people like church and family members recruited children with promised work or education outside the country where they either ended up in domestic servitude or as sex slaves.

"As a result of the nature of the crime, the component of confidentiality when

investigating the issues of child trafficking and lack of knowledge on the crime of human trafficking, many families and children fall victim to trafficking, particularly with people who are close to them who are paid by traffickers to recruit young children," Medeiros told IPS.

IOM is currently supporting Zimbabwe with capacity building and training programmes to educate people on the crime of human trafficking.

"IOM has supported the government through the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare and Civil Society Organisations in providing information through promotional materials such as flyers, banners, T-shirts, road-shows throughout the country's provinces to educate people on trafficking," Medeiros told IPS.

In addition, the U.N. agency also shelters victims of trafficking, also providing them counselling.

"At the shelters victims receive counselling and share their stories on how they ended up being smuggled or trafficked," Medeiros added.

The United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons in Zimbabwe says it also provided more than \$750,000 in assistance for anti-trafficking programmes

covering victim services, awareness and referrals, aligning legislation and building mutual capacity.

The Global Sustainability Network (GSN), which actively supports the U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 8 of decent work and economic growth, has focused much of its work on eliminating modern slavery. It, however, acknowledges that globally the legal system has failed to put an end to trafficking and that new laws are needed to protect citizens from this.

"The legal system can be the driver for change – so let's use the instruments already in place – the law firms that are willing to drive change. Initiate any new laws/programmes not as a marketing add-on but a business norm and a business imperative. We need rule of law and safety of citizens in place – civilised society cannot exist without the rule of law in place," GSN states on its website.

Muwanigwa too wants to see stronger laws in place to protect Zimbabwe's children.

"There is need for legislation reform as very few cases of child-smuggling or trafficking in persons are investigated. Resource constraints are also the major drawback when it comes to issues of human trafficking in Zimbabwe," Muwanigwa told IPS.

Agencies

By Bjorn Andersson

So-called 'female circumcision' not only has no medical value whatsoever but it's one of the most egregious human rights violations that exists today

"Reach perfection through circumcision," promised the ad on the Facebook page of a community organisation in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Parents were invited to bring their daughters to a mass ceremony where the procedure would be performed for 100,000 rupiah - or even less for those who couldn't afford the equivalent of \$10.

Event organisers said more than 100 girls between the ages of one and 14 had been signed up for the procedure which many families believe is a religious requirement that also benefits the health and wellbeing of women and girls.

Nothing can be further from the truth.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) and cutting - so-called "female circumcision" - not only has no medical value whatsoever, it's one of the most egregious human rights violations that exists today, reflecting deep gender inequality and an extreme form of discrimination and violation of the rights of girls and women.

The practice stubbornly persists across many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and

To end FGM, we ought to change hearts and minds



Documentary defying the 'cutting' season follows a number of girls standing up for their human rights and fighting against female genital mutilation. Photo courtesy of Samson Kapanga/Giselle Portenier/Defying Destiny

Asia - where it's witnessed either on a wider scale or in select communities. Across Asia, this includes Brunei, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

In Asia, FGM typically involves pricking, piercing,

scraping or cauterizing the genital area. Procedures practiced elsewhere are even more invasive and horrific. But this is not a question of degree - any type of mutilation of the female genitalia is a human rights violation.

There's a concrete target

to eliminate FGM by 2030 under the Sustainable Development Goals which all countries have pledged to achieve. However, ending a tradition steeped in religious trappings is far easier said than done.

Even in countries with laws aimed at ending FGM,

the practice often continues largely unchecked - either through traditional service providers in rural areas, or, increasingly, through clinics and hospitals in urban centres where the procedure has become medicalized, often performed routinely at birth.

What must be done?

All governments should actively commit to "zero FGM" in both policy and practice as a priority under their efforts to achieve commitments under the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) and the SDGs. These efforts also require the need to gather better data on FGM, including the full extent of prevalence. Revealing this should spur ministries to work together on a coordinated response - including health, women and child protection, education and national human rights institutions.

Existing policies must be reviewed and revised to ensure that laws banning the procedure are explicit. And enforcement of laws must be effective and pervasive. In tandem with legal enforcement, education is an equal priority, particularly amongst health sector practitioners. FGM's harms must be included in curricula for doctors, nurses and midwives. This has begun to occur in some countries - such as Indonesia, where

the national midwives' association is at the forefront of helping eradicate FGM.

Perhaps the most important factor in eliminating FGM is the need to change the hearts and minds of parents, families and entire communities. This cannot occur without the active engagement and the help of religious and cultural leaders. It is often that messages grounded in scripture, delivered by community leaders, have significant influence in shaping how families and societies think and act.

Significant success has already occurred through initiatives which include working with faith and community leaders in targeting child marriage and domestic violence. Incipient signs of success are evident from using this same inclusive approach in tackling FGM.

There's also emerging evidence that women who themselves suffered FGM are increasingly refusing to allow their daughters to be similarly harmed. As well, more and more men are realizing the harm that FGM

has caused their wives, and they are motivated to ensure their children don't suffer the same cruel fate. It's clear that as authentic awareness of the harm of FGM increases across societies, we will collectively achieve better outcomes over time.

But time is not on our side. Some 200 million women alive today have already been mutilated - with 4.1 million girls around the world at risk this year alone.

With the clock ticking, it's time to muster our collective will and take concrete action to convert commitments into reality, safeguarding the futures of the millions of girls at risk of FGM today and preventing a lifetime of harm.

"The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children." This profound wisdom from Nelson Mandela should inspire our efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation and relegate this insidious procedure to the annals of history.

A new joint study from UNFPA and Johns Hopkins University indicates that eliminating female genital mutilation in 31 priority countries globally by 2030 would require an investment of \$2.4 billion, for programmes aimed at prevention, protection, and care and treatment.

Bjorn Andersson is the UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Director.

Who should decide when a child could change gender?

By Hugo Greenhalgh

A rise in the number of teenagers seeking to go through gender reassignment has spurred a series of court cases around the age at which they can choose to transition - and who has the final word.

It was a case that tore a family apart - and exposed the faultlines in an increasingly bitter global row over the rights of a child to define their own gender.

The battle late last year in Texas between two parents over the gender identity of their child sparked a raft of bills across the United States that have been dubbed anti-LGBT by campaigners and pro-family by conservative groups.

A global rise in the number of teenagers seeking to go through gender reassignment has also spurred a series of court cases around the world around the age at which young people are able to choose to transition - and who has the final word.

The escalating debate has revealed a gap in global laws, pitting family and religious groups against trans activists for legal rulings on whether the decision to transition is up to the child, parents or doctor.

For Currey Cook, counsel at LGBT+ rights group Lambda Legal, conservative groups have focused on trans minors as "an easy target for people who are

anti-LGBTQ in general".

"This is just the next target," Cook told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Yet others, including Susan Evans, a former employee at Britain's leading gender identity clinic, the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, argue that children are being put at risk.

Puberty blockers, which delay the onset of puberty and are usually the first step in the process of transitioning, are nothing more than "experimental drugs", said Evans.

As part of the next stage, hormones - such as testosterone and estrogen - will be prescribed when the child, in most countries, reaches 16 or 18.

Gender reassignment surgery is widely restricted to adults over the age of 18.

Under some of the proposed new laws across the United States, doctors could be barred from prescribing puberty-blocking drugs to children,

A measure introduced in South Carolina last year would revoke the licenses of doctors who treat trans children.

Meanwhile the South Dakota legislature voted down a bill that would see doctors charged with a misdemeanor if they prescribe puberty blockers.

"The world is upside-down that protecting children from sterilization (sic)

and mutilation is causing a firestorm," Republican state representative Fred Deutsch, who sponsored the bill, said on Twitter ahead of the vote on Feb. 10.

Deutsch's office was contacted for comment but with no response at the time of publication.

The issue has spilled beyond the borders of the United States, with many countries either mulling new laws or moving to update them.

"Access to transition-related healthcare for minors is a hot button issue for Europe and around the world right now," said Cianan Russell, senior policy officer at LGBT+ rights group ILGA-Europe.

Last month, Brazil lowered the age at which young people can access gender reassignment surgery from 21 to 18 and dropped the age requirement for hormone therapy from 18 to 16 - although those under 18 must have the consent of a parent or guardian.

Mexico is examining the laws governing young people looking to transition. Last year, the Mexican authorities said all LGBT+ people, including those who are trans, should be able to access medical care free from discrimination with children given access to puberty blockers.

Australia's proposed Religious Discrimination Bill would give medical professionals the right to

refuse treatment on religious grounds, according to Nikita White, activism support coordinator at Amnesty International Australia.

And in Canada, a court ruled against a father last month who had sought to stop his 15-year-old undergoing treatment to become male.

Britain has seen a similar flurry of legal activity.

Last month, Evans applied to Britain's High Court for a judicial review of the age at which children can be prescribed puberty-delaying drugs, currently available to those under 18.

Evans, who spent 11 years at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust as a psychiatric nurse and senior clinical lecturer, said the long-term effects of puberty-blocking drugs were as yet unknown.

However Stephen Whittle, professor of equalities law at Britain's Manchester Metropolitan University, said the current domestic laws governing medical healthcare for young trans people were fit for purpose.

"There's absolutely nothing wrong with the current legal system, which requires doctors to obtain informed consent before providing any treatment of any sort," Whittle said.

Part of the issue is that current laws have yet to catch up with the rapidly evolving nature of society, particularly in terms of trans people's rights, added



"Before my husband Tom and I had a baby, we truly didn't fight. Then we had a baby, and fought all the time," says mother and author Jancee Dunn, who went on to write a book entitled "How Not to Hate Your Husband After Kids". If either part of Dunn's story sounds familiar - the fighting or the hating - you're not alone.

Jonathan Cooper, a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, a leading human rights practice.

Referring to the current situation in Britain, Cooper cited the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and stressed that the CRC guarantees children the right to autonomy and physical, mental and emotional integrity.

The CRC also recognises the rights of trans children, Cooper added.

He warned that preventing trans youth from accessing puberty-delaying drugs and forcing them to go through "the hell of puberty" could be deemed "inhuman and degrading treatment", under both the CRC and Britain's Human Rights Act.

The rights and protections for trans people of any age remain relatively new - or non-existent - in many parts of the world.

Europe is seen as the standard bearer, with the most liberal laws governing access to puberty blockers or gender assignment surgery.

According to a report from the European Commission, "EU primary legislation contains no explicit references to gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics" - unlike sexual orientation, which is protected under EU law.

But the EU's equality directives do apply to discrimination arising from

gender reassignment, the report noted.

Malta - often seen as Europe's leader in terms of LGBT+ rights - stands alongside Ireland and the Netherlands in allowing access to hormone therapy at the age of 16.

Parts of the Americas pursue a similar approach to Europe.

In Canada, medical regulations state puberty blockers may be used for girls as young as 10-and-a-half and boys aged 11-and-a-half. Hormones may be administered to teenagers from the age 16.

Further south, Uruguay in 2018 became one of the world's most progressive countries in terms of rights for trans children when it approved a law allowing anyone under 18 to receive medical treatment paid by the state.

Yet despite the advances for trans rights in parts of the world, the welter of legal challenges underway reveals the urgent need for change, said Jessica Stern, executive director of LGBT+ rights organisation OutRight Action International.

"The law has not changed as rapidly as society has," she said.

"By definition the law will always lag behind cultural attitudes, but this is an area where the law is not just lagging behind but running fast in the opposite direction away from the pace of social

Preparing for season's rains

Abuja

The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) has given a broad outline of the quantity of rain to expect across the country this year. The authorities in the 36 states therefore have enough time to prepare adequately against the elements to avert another tragedy. The forecast projected that the coastal states will experience rain from February 24, while Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Jigawa, Yobe and Borno States are likely to begin to experience rainfall from June 2. There are simple measures we must all take to minimise our individual and collective vulnerability. Blocked drains, especially in areas where flood waters easily accumulate and generate a strong force, should be cleared and subsequently kept free.

Meanwhile, NiMet should be applauded for preparing the report as it will serve as a guide for the various sectors of the country. One particular aspect of the report which farmers will find welcoming is the prediction of a longer than normal length of growing season across the country. Farmers are by the report urged to adopt moisture conservation techniques to mitigate crop losses during the wet season. Another important takeaway in the report is the advisory on flash floods.

Given the projection for high intensity of rainfall, particularly in the peak of the season, there is possibility of isolated flash floods in areas that are prone to flooding. Farmers can feel the brunt of devastating consequences of flash flood which can result in environmental degradation and in effect impact on the economy. Bearing this in mind, we advise all stakeholders to take this alert seriously because farms, roads, bridges and homes can be submerged by rains that provide significant flooding.

It is noteworthy that floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss and they have caused untold damage in the last couple of years, especially with prolonged rainfall over several days. Therefore, we implore all the relevant authorities to prepare for the rains with great diligence. Individuals and groups living on flood plains should be evacuated, or made to stay away from the potential dangers of their places of abode. The focus should be on prevention and pre-emptive intervention, because little is gained when resources that should be put into developmental initiatives are dissipated in dealing with avoidable emergencies and calamities.

We must also come to terms that the perennial bloodshed between farmers and herdsmen is embedded in the struggle for pasture which is scarce during the dry season in northern parts of the country. It is this scarcity that informs the seasonal migration of herders for fodders and water for the survival of their livestock, a development that occasionally makes clashes with other land users inevitable.

Because of the primacy of farmers and herders in the economic chain of our country, what is expected of government is to put in place measures that will sustain the harmonious relationship between these two groups and avoid needless bloodshed. Another challenge which stakeholders should reflect upon concerns reducing the alarming post-harvest losses in the agricultural sector. These losses that traditionally occur during the peak of the rainy season are detrimental to the country's economy.

Agencies

Generation equality: Four ways to accelerate progress

NAIROBI

The global gender community will meet in New York in March to review progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in the 25 years since the Beijing declaration. The theme for this year's Commission on the Status of Women gathering is Generation Equality, emphasizing how the current generation must close the gender gap.

Examples of gaps include how women's representation in national parliaments is only 23.7 per cent. In 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights. In 49 countries there are no laws protecting women from domestic violence, and globally 750 million women and girls are married before the age of 18. In the agriculture sector where I work, women are just 13 per cent of agricultural land holders globally.

While the UN hopes these kinds of gender gaps can close in a generation, analysis by the World Economic Forum in their Global Gender Gap Report 2020 sets different expectations. The report says it will take 99.5 years to close the gender gap if we accelerate progress, but if we continue the current pace, it could

take up to 257 years. This is alarming.

It will take 99.5 years to close the gender gap if we accelerate progress, but if we continue the current pace, it could take up to 257 years.

While numerous development actors are engaged in projects around the globe that seek to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, governments and other agencies need to act fast and at scale to accelerate progress to ensure we become generation equality.

First, there needs to be political commitment by governments across the world to address gender inequality and women's political participation. This can be in the form of women's representation in parliament, gender responsive budgeting or advancing policies that protect the rights of women.

By February of 2019, only 12 countries – led by Rwanda with 61.3% – had over 40% representation of women in parliament. The proportion of ministerial posts held by women however remains low, at only one in five. France, Canada and Spain and more recently Scotland have all had cabinets with at least as many women as men.



Equal political participation by women and men needs to be the norm rather than the exception. Strategies that have worked include quotas for women's representation, reforming political parties to be more gender equal, and ensuring a level playing field for women political aspirants.

Second, governments need to accelerate laws that protect the rights of women and girls. Without these laws, the efforts of organiza-

tions will not be sustainable as they are not protected under the law. Evidence shows that discriminatory laws still exist in many countries.

For example, the Women, Law and Business report 2020 shows that 90 out of 190 countries still have at least one restriction on the jobs women can hold. In terms of laws to redistribute women's care work, more than half of the economies covered mandate paid leave

specifically reserved for fathers, but the median duration of that leave is just five days.

Only 43 economies have paid parental leave that can be shared by mothers and fathers. This is despite research that shows law reforms and policies that empower women are not only good for women's empowerment, but they also boost economic growth.

For example, when women can move more freely,

work outside the home and manage assets, they're more likely to join the workforce and strengthen the economy.

Third, we must address the harmful social and cultural norms and societal perceptions of women as laws by themselves are not enough in protecting the rights of women. Evidence from Bangladesh for example shows women who routinely wore burkah/hijab, and hence are more compli-

ant with religious and cultural norms are less likely to be engaged in outside work.

In Kenya, while equal inheritance of land and other property is entrenched in the constitution, women own less than 7 per cent of the land in the country, mainly due to cultural norms that still do not recognise the rights of women and girls to inherit land.

Engaging men, boys, traditional and religious leaders can change norms and

practices that are harmful to women and girls. In countries like Zambia and Malawi, traditional chiefs have been instrumental in reducing forced and early child marriage.

And finally, we must invest in research and evidence to test what works, where we are making progress and where progress is not happening so as to inform future action. While there are indicators to track progress, the analysis of what is working in different contexts to achieve gender equality is not always that robust. Tools like the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, tracks women's empowerment in agriculture and shows the impact of different interventions on different indicators of women's empowerment. Analysing data used to track SDG 5 on gender equality to track what is working and use the lessons for future implementation can help to accelerate progress.

While some progress has been made in addressing gender inequality in recent years, a big push in this last decade before the expiry in 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals is clearly needed. Now we must use different tools than those which created the problem.

Agencies

The four ages of Frederik Willem de Klerk

By J Brooks Spector

The imbroglia over former president FW de Klerk's real feelings and his true state of mind, deep down inside, about apartheid, continues to rumble onward, even if the man himself has increasingly become nearly invisible in the country's contemporary political life.

Economic Freedom Fighters CIC and MP, Julius Malema, claimed that because of De Klerk's culpability in administering apartheid – and most especially his most recent pronouncement that apartheid had not been a “crime against humanity” – De Klerk's very presence at the SONA speech was an affront to citizens of the country's hard-won democratic order.

Forced to defend De Klerk's presence in Parliament, the ANC was awkwardly caught out, left to express repugnance towards the words, but forced, reluctantly, to embrace the wordsmith – albeit at arms' length.

But the reverberations from De Klerk's initial statement have continued despite the fact that the De Klerk Foundation, acting on behalf of the retired politician, was forced into issuing a statement that effectively said, yes, the former president did understand apartheid was a criminal act against humanity and they apologised for any inconvenience, etc, etc – somewhat along the lines of Eskom responding to yet another unexpected power outage.

Predictably, all of this has provoked calls for De Klerk's share of that jointly won Nobel Peace Prize to be rescinded, that he be prosecuted for war crimes, that he be brought before the International Criminal Court, or that he be sentenced to serve the rest of his lonely days on St Helena, like another historical figure. Well okay, maybe not that last punishment, but pretty much everything else.

The key point, though, is that FW de Klerk has now become a historical figure,

rather than a man of any contemporary importance. But his very problematic place in history is an integral part of the negotiated way (still incomplete for many) South Africa moved from the institutionalised cruelties of apartheid to its current more democratic order – but without the grim satisfaction on the part of some for the kind of closure that could have come via show trials, and then the inevitable incarcerations or even executions of the guilty. That would be better than the less than comprehensive result that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's focus on individual acts of brutality.

Let me make it perfectly clear right now that I have no qualms with describing the apartheid order as a deeply, traumatically dehumanising one to millions of unwilling South Africans. This is personal to me too. Every one of my in-laws (and my wife) suffered from the deep, legally specified racial inequalities of the old order, in common with so many others. Over the years, this had included restrictions on gaining employment or education and on where they could live or work, as well as the severe limitations on the right to the free expression of political and social views – sometimes at a risk to their lives. Sadly, too, the more subtle after-effects from all this continue to linger for newer generations whose places on the ascending economic ladder often remain confined to the lower rungs.

But, is FW de Klerk responsible for nearly every bit of this, as some would have it? Or, is he, perhaps, the man who turned it all around through larger-than-life heroics and acts of political bravery against his white tribe, but who is now, in the winter of his life, being maligned as new political scores are being settled?

Curiously, most of what is being written about him

virtually ignores the man himself, choosing to focus instead on the evils of apartheid, and the use of him as its convenient avatar. But there is more to his story.

I first encountered FW de Klerk in 1976. At the time, I was a young, low-ranking American diplomat assigned to our offices in Johannesburg. Every year around this time, each of the sections of an embassy is asked to nominate people from the host country whom they believe could benefit from an invitation to explore the US for a month – so they could delve into things in their professional capacities, as well as for their personal interests.

Back then, it was obvious such trips could have profoundly liberating effects on black South Africans, freed from the repressive nature of their own society, gaining opportunities to explore pretty much whatever they wanted to in another, freer society. But for white South Africans, too, it was agreed such trips could sometimes have important, beneficial outcomes.

Anyway, in 1976, but before the explosion of student opposition in Soweto in June of that year, one of the officers in the embassy's political section had nominated a young member of South Africa's Parliament, representing the city of Vereeniging, for one of those grants. All nominations were vetted at a large committee where officers debated the merits of the nominees. Such arguments could become heated. On the day of the meeting, my supervisor was ill and so I represented our office.

When FW de Klerk's nomination came up for consideration along with a half dozen other politicians, defending my turf in support of other nominees, I remember saying words to the effect of: “What? A Nat MP from a right-wing constituency? A man closely connected to the National Party's charmed inner circle! A man who



Former South African president FW de Klerk. File photo

was so conservative he was a member of the version of the Dutch Reformed Church that forbade dancing! This is a waste of a grant.”

In an article published in The New York Times in 1989, De Klerk had described himself “...as a Christian, a South African, an Afrikaner and a lawyer, in that order. He was born in Johannesburg on March 18, 1936, to a family prominent in Afrikaner politics. His father, Jan, a former school headmaster, became the National Party's secretary in the Transvaal, a Cabinet minister and president of the now-defunct Senate. A great-grandfather had been a Senator, and his paternal grandfather ran twice for Parliament.”

That sounded pretty much like the description of a politician on the escalator to rising political prominence, but one intent on making very few waves in the process.

Well, the committee, aiming for a finely tuned racial and political balance, picked him anyway. He visited the US and returned to his parliamentary career, rising in the party hierarchy, but never really taking on one of those hard-edged securocrat jobs that were the sharp point of

the lance of the apartheid system.

By mid-1989, through some well-played intra-party manoeuvring, De Klerk had outplayed all his party rivals and consummated the removal of PW Botha. The latter had been the hard-as-nails state president who had been afraid to “cross the Rubicon”, but who was by then seriously weakened by a stroke.

Perhaps something was already up just as De Klerk took over. By November 1989, a number of political prisoners, including Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu, had been released, and secret negotiations with the ANC over a larger programme of change were underway.

But, did these events represent a major change of heart for De Klerk? Were they tantamount to a Damascene conversion? In that 1989 New York Times interview, De Klerk had revealed some of his thinking.

“As far as myself is concerned, I have jumped the gap,” De Klerk declared at an informal political meeting last year, according to a friend who was present. At his inauguration two months ago, he declared that his goal

was ‘a totally changed South Africa, a South Africa which has rid itself of the antagonisms of the past... a South Africa within which the democratic forces – all reasonable people – align themselves behind mutually acceptable goals and against radicalism, irrespective of where it comes from.’ Nor, he warned, would he take responsibility for ‘unreasonable expectations which have been aroused.’

As De Klerk told it, the genesis for all this had been that the “1976 visit to the United States as a guest of the United States Information Agency convinced him that race relations could not be left to run their course. He enjoyed New York, Washington, San Francisco and Los Angeles. He marvelled at the Grand Canyon and listened to late-night jazz in New Orleans. But, he says, ‘I saw more racial incidents in one month there than I previously, at that stage, had seen in South Africa in a year. I was involved in an incident where the bus driver called a black American “boy,” and a fight immediately erupted.’ On one taxicab ride, he says, the driver shouted epithets at black pedestrians, and De Klerk crunched down in the rear seat out of embarrassment.”

The lesson of his US sojourn, he decided, was that “the negative effects of racism isn't limited to South Africa and that it was a problem in the hearts and minds of people; also, that in a country with a great conflict potential, with a much more complicated population structure” – and here he meant South Africa – “that it is necessary to manage the conflict potential which arises from a multiracial society, as we believe, in a non-discriminatory manner.” This conviction that race relations must be deliberately controlled colours De Klerk's philosophy of change. These are hardly the words of a courageous revolutionary, but neither are they the

thoughts of a racially driven Neanderthal.

Most of all, perhaps, they were the thoughts of a clever bureaucrat, eager to salvage what he could from the unpalatable dog's breakfast he had by now inherited. To encounter senior, powerful, long-experienced Cabinet figures like Stoffel van der Merwe or Gerrit Viljoen by the late 1980s was to see figures whose drawn faces were etched with the fatigue of trying to hold things together for the old system just a bit longer.

Years afterwards, speaking at the Rand Afrikaans University (now the University of Johannesburg), De Klerk had explained that a key impetus in pushing the government towards negotiations had been the growing realisation on the part of leaders such as himself that in the face of sanctions, boycotts, and over internal and external pressures, his government's policies were never going to be able to deliver to their children's generation (of their community) the life they themselves had enjoyed, and so something must be done, no matter how difficult or distasteful. Again, this was not the hero bestriding history, but rather someone going for the best that would or could be achieved.

Then, in the face of the conclusion of a negotiated settlement, the Nobel Prize, and the international acclaim, De Klerk became an international icon. Despite a complex, difficult partnership with Nelson Mandela, the immense burden of apartheid's scars and history, and with the weight of the world leaning on him, he had policies to lead his people to a better landscape than the one they were then trapped in. There were international conferences to attend, speeches to give, a foundation to create, and lessons about peacemaking to impart to a waiting world.

But, as the years wore on, instead of gradually pulling

back and accepting the dimming spotlight gracefully, there seems to have still been that old political call and an itch to settle a few scores before it was too late. There could have been a book of memoirs on his political education and the lessons learned from all the dramas of the 1980s and 1990s.

But instead, there was one final kick to give, to prove that the old order had not been irredeemably bad, that the international accusations of apartheid's inhumanity had largely been an old-style Soviet card trick instead. The apology finally extracted from his foundation has done little to calm things or burnish his reputation. Instead, it has reinforced the belief of those who had never really trusted him; of those who believed he was at the core of apartheid's evils; and of those who were convinced his real views had never been supportive of the post-apartheid world of South Africa.

And so, the four De Klerks – collapsed from Shakespeare's famous seven.

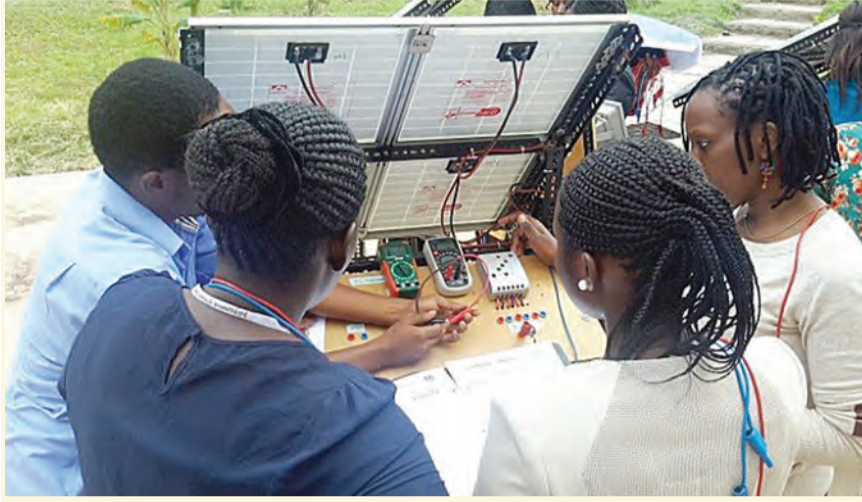
The first was the eager, rising politician, ready to move up the ranks of the National Party as positions opened. Then came the realist reformist, perhaps recalling his American sojourn and ready to take a chance on the future.

Thereafter came the adulation for a compromise negotiation that had pulled a healthy rabbit out of a potentially disastrous hat. But then there has come along a further age, a kind of dog in the manger moment, those public comments that brought back all the misgivings (or worse) about his sincerity in reaching an accommodation with Nelson Mandela – and reality.

In the end, it would have been better if he had simply stayed shunt and finished up his memoirs quietly for posthumous publication. It seems like such a waste, when you think about it.

Agencies

BUSINESS



Women solar engineers at work in Botswana.

GENDER-BLIND

Nine Botswana women drawn from remote villages become sought-after solar engineers

GABORONE

The nine women from rural Botswana who left their homes in August last year to attend the Barefoot College in India on a skills development journey are headed home with new qualifications in hand that will enable them to light up their communities with solar power.

The Great Plains Foundation working with local community organisations, the Okavango Community Trust (OCT), Village Development Committees (VDC) and Dikgosi identified the nine women from five villages in the Okavango Delta to receive solar energy training in India.

The initiative is aimed at enabling women to build, install and maintain solar panels and batteries to provide a renewable source of energy to their communities. Barefoot College has been working on the program for over 7 years providing training to rural, unemployed women to become solar engineers - bringing clean power and light to their villages. The training runs over six months, and the program uses mostly visual learning tools, like color-coded pictures and manuals. All the women selected are over 30 and established in their communities.

After successfully completing their training the women are returning to their villages to start working and empowering their communities with skills and power. They will run the construction of Rural Electrification Workshops, which will be a base for the storage of the solar equipment and their tools.

A Rural Electrification Committee will then be established, to oversee the Solar Engineers and orders from the families who would like to receive solar

home lighting systems. The women will be responsible for installing and maintaining these solar homes lighting systems, continuing their existing enterprises with improved financial understanding, and provide training to other women in their villages, based on their experiences in India.

"Solar energy is gradually becoming a go-to sustainable power source, inspiring many along the way. At Great Plains, we understand that empowering women will go a long way in ensuring sustainability and longevity in supporting their families and contributing to the development of their communities. While we continue to share our passion for using renewable energy and looking after our planet, we are also glad to be able to change lives and inspire communities. We are truly grateful and proud of these women for this accomplishment, this will open many doors for them," said Derek Joubert, Great Plains founder and CEO.

The Great Plains Foundation is proud to work with the Barefoot College who has been doing incredible work in this space for women around the world. They seek to demystify and decentralise technology and put new tools in the hands of the rural poor with a singular objective of spreading self-sufficiency and sustainability.

The women will be touching down at OR Tambo on the 17th of February before making their way to Gaborone that evening, they will spend the day in Gaborone before the final leg of their journey to Maun, Botswana on the 19th where they will be greeted by a welcome home celebration at Great Plains Conservation before returning to their villages on the 20th of February.

GREEN INVESTMENT

Amazon's Jeff Bezos pledges \$10bn to fight climate change

NEW YORK

Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos on Monday said he would commit \$10 billion to fund scientists, activists, charities and other groups fighting to protect the environment and counter the effects of climate change.

The Bezos Earth Fund, which aims to fund "any effort that offers a real possibility to help preserve and protect the natural world," will begin issuing grants this summer. "Climate change is the biggest threat to our planet," Mr Bezos wrote in an Instagram post.

"I want to work alongside others both to amplify known ways and to explore new ways of fighting the devastating impact of climate change on this planet we all share. 'It's going to take collective action from big companies, small companies, nation states, global organisations and individuals,'" Mr Bezos said.

The world's richest man, with a fortune worth about \$130bn, he is among a growing list of billionaires to dedicate considerable funds to battle the effect of global warming. Countering climate change has become a popular cause for US billionaires

in recent years, with Microsoft's Bill Gates, Michael Bloomberg and hedge fund manager Tom Steyer among the world's wealthiest environmental philanthropists.

Last year, Mr Bezos pledged to make online retailer Amazon net carbon neutral by 2040, making it the first major corporation to announce such a goal. He also said he would buy 100,000 electric delivery vehicles from US vehicle design and manufacturing start-up Rivian Automotive.

Mr Bezos said Amazon would meet the goals of the Paris climate accord 10 years ahead of the accord's schedule and invest \$100 million to restore forests and wetlands. But environmental activists have long criticised his company for its significant impact on the environment.

Amazon delivers 10 billion items a year and has a massive transport and data centre footprint. The company has also faced criticism from within its own workforce. The e-commerce giant has faced protests by environmental activists and pressure from its employees to take action on climate change, which were inspired by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg.

ACTIVISM

SA teens boycotting classes on Fridays to protest climate crisis

JOHANNESBURG

Four SA teens, concerned about the climate crisis, have taken to boycotting classes on Fridays in an effort to get government to heed their call to action. They are young, smart and daring, and that's not all: They are on a mission to change the world and will do almost anything to attract the attention of government.

This includes sitting on the pavement outside the entrance of Parktown High School for Girls in Johannesburg, holding placards and banners to protest against government's inaction regarding the climate crisis.

Dressed in civvies, the four youths who have embarked on this campaign - which includes missing classes on Fridays - are Raeesah Noor-Mahomed (17), Munnira Katongole (16), Jacob Gordon (14) and Benno Leibowitz (14).

It may seem extreme to some, but the four are taking it upon themselves to do more than turn a blind eye at the ever-present dangers presented by obvious changes in our weather patterns. The idea was sparked by Raeesah, a matric pupil at Parktown High School for Girls.

"I have been following the climate crisis for quite a while and attending the Extinction Rebellion, or XR, protests [referring to a global environmental movement whose aim is to use nonviolent civil disobedience to compel governments to address the climate emergency]," Raeesah said.

"But this whole thing with the fires in Australia and the floods in Indonesia - I just got really angry. Australia did not see this coming and our ecosystem is very similar to theirs. So, it is possible for something like that to happen here."



South African teens protesting against climate change inaction by their government.

She said if anything like these disasters were to hit South Africa, it would be much harder for the country to recover than it would be for a developed country such as Australia. "If I know that, shouldn't the people in government know that? And if they know, why aren't they doing anything? I decided that I'd had enough and wanted to do something to get their attention in a drastic way." She said her school was in support of her bold protest.

"They are very supportive of the cause, but being an educational institution, they are concerned about

having pupils outside busy protesting and not learning." Although she has missed some classes, she has been able to catch up.

Very few pupils have joined the protest action as parents will not consent to it. Inspired by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (17), Raeesah started out as a lone protester more than a month ago, before Munnira joined her.

"Initially, I was scared. It seemed like a huge sacrifice. But as I thought more about it, I realised what a great and powerful, smart and symbolic way this is of trying to attract the attention of the

department of environment, forestry and fisheries," said Raeesah.

"There has been some response from the education department, but we are not sure if they are responding because we are missing school or because we are doing it for the sake of the climate." An astute pupil from King David High School in Victory Park heard about Raeesah's protest and decided to join her. Jacob, who is in Grade 8, said his main reason for doing so was the rapid rate at which certain species were going extinct.

"In the past 100 years,

there have been 477 extinctions recorded - and those are only the ones we have discovered. There are probably many more species that went extinct before we discovered them," he said, adding that there were various factors contributing to this, but the main one was the climate crisis.

Jacob believes that one in every 10 extinctions has occurred directly because of the climate crisis. "I love nature. I want to be a conservationist when I grow up. If things keep going the way they are, I won't be able to be a conservationist as I won't have anything to conserve."



Ahmed Al Falasi lifts his trophy after being named the winner of the Arab Hope Makers award by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid.

HUMANITARIAN

Emirati Hope Makers winner says he will use hefty prize supporting more kenyan

DUBAI

The Emirati man who won Dh1 million for his humanitarian work said the money would be used to help more people in Kenya.

Ahmed Al Falasi, 60, was named the 2020 winner of the Arab Hope Makers award in Dubai on Thursday night. The annual award honours people in the Arab world who dedicate their lives to humanitarian work.

He received the accolade for his work helping transform the Coast General Hospital in Mombasa into one of the most advanced facilities in the country. However, after receiving his prize from Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, he insisted there was still much more work to be done.

"I would like to buy more advanced medical equipment because before this we couldn't buy it. But now we can," he said. "We want to buy a new MRI machine because the one we have been using is 10 years old and is being used by thousands of people."

"The need for new equipment is high." Mr Al Falasi dedicated his award to the UAE leadership for their efforts in supporting his cause. "They told me to help people and it doesn't matter what religion they are," he said. "They told me, 'if someone needs help, give it to them.'"

He plans to extend his charitable work to other Kenyan regions but, for now, the focus is on Mombasa. "We are going to be working in other places but my main target is to make this hospital

active," said Mr Al Falasi. The recognition of being named as the latest recipient of the Arab Hope Maker award helps shine a light on the need for aid in Kenya, he added.

"I hope with your voice and your cameras and microphones we can show the world there is a need to put a focus on that area," he said, speaking to the media after winning the award. Mr Al Falasi's efforts to help the people of Mombasa started when he visited the region 27 years ago and was shocked to find ragged beds and patients on the waiting list for months before receiving kidney dialysis.

His late mother had received kidney dialysis treatment, which meant the plight of those in Mombasa struck a chord. That inspired him to help create

a kidney dialysis section that supported 8,000 patients. He then established a new-born unit with 570 beds and incubators to benefit 17,000 each month.

He also constructed wells and houses for people affected by floods in Mombasa. Mr Al Falasi's work was not limited to Mombasa. He had left a mark in China after he established a school and an orphanage there.

He worked closely with his wife and daughter on his humanitarian efforts, relying on the family's personal funding to help others. He would not say how much he had spent on providing aid to those in need.

"It's a lot but it's between me and God," said Mr Al Falasi. "Even Sheikh Mohammed asked me how much I had spent and I had to say 'sorry, sir!'."

INNOVATION

Kenya's growing yoga movement saving people from poverty

DUBAI

When Kelly Alomba arrived on the Kenyan island of Lamu to work as a teacher, he didn't realise he would spend so much of his time leading breathing exercises and correcting postures. Nine years later, he teaches five classes a day as a full-time yoga instructor - a job that was virtually unheard of in the country not so long ago.

Alomba, 36, was introduced to the centuries-old practice by the Dutch mother of one of his pupils. "Before I came here, I didn't even know what yoga was. It never even crossed my mind," he says.

As a youth, Alomba trained as a gymnast and he is using those skills to serve the country's newly health-conscious middle-class. Thanks to a grassroots initiative that began more than a decade ago, Kenya has become the yoga capital of Africa, churning out talented instructors while broadening the country's appeal beyond safaris and white-sand beaches.

The Africa Yoga Project



The Africa Yoga Project graduates hold classes across Kenya in places such as Nairobi.

in Nairobi offers subsidised training for hundreds of prospective yogis, as well as free classes that aim to spread the benefits of yoga to the masses. The goal is to build careers around the fast-growing wellness industry to counter the high unemployment rate that plagues Kenya's youths, with the World Bank saying 18.3 per cent of Kenyans aged between 15 and 24 are without a

job.

"People have a different picture of what a yoga teacher looks like or where they come from," AYP co-founder Paige Elenson tells The National. The main priority for the non-profit organisation is to create opportunities for young people to be leaders, she says.

Much of that relies on the backing of donors, including fashion retailers Lu-

lulemon and Kate Spade, brands that collectively pledged more \$1 million last year, with nearly all of it used to provide tuition and other assistance to students. For many AYP graduates, the results have been life-changing.

A year after his first yoga session, Alomba received a scholarship to attend the AYP's two-and-a-half week teacher training course. He became the

first Kenyan-qualified yoga teacher in Lamu, which is fast becoming a hub for the practice. The island, known for its Omani-influenced culture and a ban on the use of cars for the general public, is to host the seventh annual Lamu Yoga Festival from Wednesday to Sunday, March 4 to 8, when more than 300 yogis from across the world will visit Lamu and neighbouring Manda Island. Alomba was instrumental in helping Monika Fauth, the Dutch woman whose child he taught, launch the festival in 2014.

"We are getting more Kenyans starting to teach yoga, therefore we can reach out to the local community more and more," says Fauth, who 20 years ago, opened Lamu's Banana House hotel, which operates as a yoga centre. "That is really my dream. Imparting the knowledge is fantastic, but I am still a white woman from Europe - that has a different connection than an African person teaching other Africans."

It's a trend that's now taking off across the continent. While the AYP began as a local outreach programme, it now provides support

to more than 450 teachers spread across more than 20 countries - most notably in Rwanda and Uganda, with 15 graduates operating in both countries. Often, the organisation will pay for travel costs and housing for qualified overseas students who are accepted into its teacher training. Currently, 300 applicants are bidding for 70 spots in the next programme. To be considered, candidates must be aged between 18 and 35 and show a passion for community work, while a lack of access to education and employment would be considered favourably, the AYP says.

The effect it has seems surreal to Elenson, who met her first students while on safari in Kenya with her father in 2006. As an instructor taught by Power Yoga guru Baron Baptiste, she was quick to display her handstand skills to a group of acrobats performing for tourists. Months later, they found Elenson online and asked her to return and teach them yoga. "Our bodies may not be flexible, but our minds are," they said in their message. She went back to Kenya a year later and taught them while liv-

ing in the biggest slum in Nairobi.

"That first trip was very eye-opening to a different way of living," she says. "As a New Yorker, I thought I knew everything, but I really knew nothing." During the next few years, Elenson made several trips, instructing the poor for free and charging wealthy locals and UN staff, until one day she had an epiphany. She says that at the time she thought "this is how systemic poverty keeps existing". "People with privilege keep their privilege and make income from it, while people born without privilege are waiting on handouts," she says. "What would it look like if I were to spend my time training young people on how to work in the middle and upper-classes instead?"

She recruited Baptiste to join her in conducting the AYP's first yoga teacher training in the coastal town of Malindi. It turned out that many of the 60 participants in the class came because they had never seen the ocean nor stayed in a hotel. Nearly all of them were employed straight after their training was complete.



President Paul Kagame and Masai Ujiri (L)

DIVERSITY

Kagame and Masai announce first Giants of Africa Festival

KIGALI

President Paul Kagame and Masai Ujiri, Founder of Giants of Africa and President of the NBA's Toronto Raptors on Thursday, announced the inaugural Giants of Africa Festival that will take place in Rwanda, in August 2020.

The week-long festival will take place from 16-22 August, bringing together 200 youth, from 11 African countries, namely Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, Mali, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Somalia.

The event intends to help young people celebrate the game of basketball and showcase their different respective cultures. It will also see participants meet with inspiring industry leaders from around the world who will offer the youth with leadership and education seminars.

In his remarks, Kagame said that the festival is not only an opportunity for youth in Rwanda but also the whole continent. He said: "I thank Masai for bringing this festival here, and this will benefit not only Rwanda but also Africa in

general because it will provide a pathway for our young people to become giants."

He added that: "Young people, you are giants in the making. This implies that there is enormous work ahead of you to do and will require that you work hard so as to fulfill the enormous potential you have."

"We have to invest in ourselves and do what needs to be done, and especially take opportunities available to us like this moment and this festival, for the African young people who form the majority of the population of our continent," he added.

The President also reiterated that Rwanda will make sure that the event is successful. Ujiri shared his reason for selecting Rwanda for the inaugural festival:

"The whole point of basketball and sports is to win whether on the court or off the court. I strongly feel in my heart that Rwanda is a winner," he said, adding that: "Rwanda is a shining example and that should spread across the continent." Ujiri also mentioned that Africa must win in all aspects and at all costs.

SENSATIONAL

Hlelo and Ntando Masina back and excited about their return to fame

JOHANNESBURG

Speaking to Channel24, Hlelo and Ntando, who once graced the covers of Fairlady, Real and Kick Off, talked about their decision to leave the spotlight, personal growth and their recent return to the public eye.

Former media darlings Hlelo and Ntando Masina left the spotlight several years ago and in 2019 decided to make their return to the public eye with a brand new YouTube channel. In 2013 the identical twins dropped off everyone's radar when they left YFM, after being on air for 5 years. Their exit followed two seasons of their reality show Blame It On Fame in 2012.

Following their departure from TV and radio, Hlelo and Ntando immersed themselves in the Campaign For Girls initiative, which involves assisting young girls in their career, self and community development.

Even though they were no longer active on the entertainment scene, they confess that they would often still get asked about their return to fame, especially when they are out together. About deciding to not rush into their next gig, Hlelo told Channel24: "TV and radio are what put us in the spotlight, and when we stopped doing it we didn't feel the need to stay there."

For Ntando, the break from the industry inspired a metamorphosis she wouldn't have experienced without the privacy. "I needed spiritual, mental and emotional grounding. Self-reflection and growth helped me reassess my priorities and goals," she said. According to the twins, they gained a new perspective on their career, which they sum up as: Content and ownership is king. And it was this new outlook that inspired their YouTube channel.

"We've always known that we wanted to create content that we own together. After being out of the spotlight for so long, we wanted to have control of our own ideas and voice. We really missed expressing ourselves on screen," they explain.

Together with their new YouTube channel, Hlelo and Ntando also ramped up their social media presence with a brand-new Instagram account. About once again sharing the screen with her sister, Hlelo says: "We've been collaborating even before 'collaboration' was a buzz word. We were born collaborating."

She laughs: "Working with Ntando is always a blast, she has been the cause of many headaches, but it's fun for the most part." Ntando is in complete agreement and calls the experience "epic", saying: "We've both gone through a dynamic



Hlelo and Ntando Masina.

transition and I'm excited to see where our creativity takes us."

What they enjoy most about making videos for the online video platform is using the production skills they've acquired over the years, and continuing to learn more with every project. "Learning to use new equipment was my biggest challenge. Editing and camera software was intimidating at first. I'm learning something new every day, and I love it," said Ntando.

"Be yourself and create

content that feels authentic to you because you have to really love the entire production process," said Hlelo when asked about the lessons she has learnt with this new chapter of their careers.

When asked about the content viewers can expect in the coming weeks, they said: "Our content is primarily about sisterhood. Some topics are questions that people ask us in real life or online. Our topics are trending and timeless, the kind that we have with our

friends and peers."

The pair elaborate further, saying: "The topics reflect our needs, aspirations and concerns in our personal and professional lives. We are still newbies on YouTube, and we're exploring different types of content like vlogs, lifestyle content and collabs with other content creators."

Both sisters agree that since leaving radio and TV, the industry has stayed relatively the same and look forward to "exploring opportunities" within the space. "Radio and TV have always been a huge

love of ours and should an opportunity that feels right present itself we will explore it," they added.

Even though they left our TV screens, the twins still maintained a dedicated fan base. "We appreciate the love that we received then and appreciate the love even more now," they say. "It's super humbling to be loved for loving each other and being ourselves. Whether we were on screen or not, people continue to show us love," they say, thanking their supporters.

CREATIVITY

How one small Indian label sold its hand-embroidered cashmere shawls to Chanel and Dior

NEW DELHI

“To me, luxury is enjoying everything you do - whether it's a book you read, a fruit you eat or a shawl you wear,” Jyotika Jhalani tells me over the phone from her home in Delhi, India. “It's not driving a fancy car and being miserable inside. If you sit back and think about what you actually want, it's very simple. You want to be happy, and you can be happy just looking at a beautiful sunset.”

This almost meditative mindset is what led Jhalani on an unorthodox business path. Having dropped out of school when she was 15 (“I decided it was not for me”), she spent a decade working at the World Bank, an experience she describes as “incredible”. She then realised she wanted to help promote the unique heritage of handwork that her home country boasts

and, despite having no formal education in design, in 1998, she opened a tiny atelier in what was her son's childhood bedroom, and Janavi was born.

Jhalani started out making lace shawls. Word soon got around of her label's exceptional quality, and soon she was producing pieces for Fendi and Valentino. Cashmere shawls followed. “For me, it has always been about getting the ‘made in India’ label out there to international brands like Hermès, Chanel, Dior and Ferragamo, and they all became very dear to me, almost like family,” she says. “It's great when a brand that is already well established wants to buy from you. It's very trying, but also very exciting.”

The cashmere is ethically sourced from Inner Mongolia, Jhalani says with a distinct sense of pride. “Our goats are very well treated - I can send you pictures

of them smiling. We do our own dyeing, weave our own cashmere and make everything in-house, even our packaging.”

The 500-strong team have India's vast design heritage at their disposal, and each shawl is beautifully decorated and embroidered with motifs such as flying birds, roses in full bloom, Monarch butterflies and delicate blossoms. There is even a collection entirely in pink and decorated with elephants - an ode to Jaipur, the Pink City of Rajasthan.

“Nature really inspires me, so you will see a lot of that in our shawls. I see every shawl as a canvas, an expression of art. You will also see a lot of quirkiness and playful elements ... flamingos in the sun, monkeys doing a dance,” she says. Other designs are not quite as literal. There are inky black shawls scattered with diamante stars and others covered in bold



Hand-embellished butterfly shawls by Janavi.

geometric patterns such as two-tone circles. When actress Catherine Zeta-Jones visited Delhi earlier this year, she wore Janavi's bestselling linear pattern called “fluttering colourful pipes”.

What unites all these designs is the free rein given to Janavi's craftspeople, so each piece is, literally, a labour of

love. Sometimes, however, things can take an unexpected turn. “One of the guys started making shawls covered in mushrooms, turnips and all kinds of vegetables. I said: ‘What on earth are you doing?’ And he said: ‘Show it to [John] Galliano.’ I said: ‘Galliano is not going to be eating our shawls.’ But he insisted, so I did, and Galliano put

one in a Dior collection. That's how crazy [our creative process] can be.”

Having spent years manufacturing products for other companies, Janavi has a vast bank of expertise it can draw on, even the ability to replicate handwork. “Of course, we can repeat the same thing if needed. When we made for Chanel, it needed 2,000

identical shawls. For a royal family wedding in the GCC, the bride wanted a peacock, so we put one on a shawl and she gave it to her guests. All 700 women wore their own to the wedding.”

The years of collaboration with major brands, however, eventually led to a business rethink. “I never thought of launching anything with the labels until recently. I told Loro Piana: ‘I will produce for you, but from now on we need to call it Loro Piana x Janavi’. This is a major change for us,” says Jhalani. “Next we are collaborating with Charlie Chaplin's granddaughter, Kiera, on a luxury label that will be launched at fashion week in Paris. It's very 1920s Art Deco-inspired.”

Shawls aside, Janavi also dabbles in handbags, cushions, baby blankets and toys, all handmade in Kashmir. “Handwork is important to me,” she says, “because I think it is the only way you can actually express, beautifully, what you are able to do.”

CLIMATE CONSCIOUS

Richard Branson unveils carbon-neutral cruise ship fitted with yoga deck, restaurants and tattoo studio

LONDON

Richard Branson has unveiled his much-hyped Scarlet Lady in the port of Dover in the United Kingdom.

The 600,000-tonne cruise liner is a dream come true for the British entrepreneur, he said in a statement. “I have dreamed of starting my own cruise line since I was in my 20s and I'm thrilled that moment has arrived. The Scarlet Lady is truly special and we've worked with some of the world's most sought-after designers, artists and architects to craft an extraordinary experience.”

The adult-only ship comes complete with a tattoo studio, yoga deck and more than 20 restaurants, in a conscious attempt by Branson to lure a younger generation of cruise passengers. Operating under Virgin Voyages, a new travel and lifestyle brand under the Virgin Group banner, Scarlet Lady was nearly three years in the making and is the first of four ships ordered from master shipbuilder Fincantieri.

In an age when the cruise industry is under increasing scrutiny for its negative impact on the environment, Virgin Voyages has pledged to counter Scarlet Lady's indirect climate change emissions through the purchase of carbon offsets. It is also one of first cruise liners to employ Climeon, a technol-

ogy that utilises heat from the ship's engines to generate electricity, decreasing the demand for fuel.

“I'm so proud that as we start this exciting journey, we also bring to life Virgin Voyages' commitment to preserving the ocean and the first of many steps towards a net zero carbon future,” says Branson.

“The ocean is our home, and we are on a mission to protect it,” added Tom McAplin, chief executive and president of Virgin Voyages. “The single-biggest threat facing our ocean is climate change, and we want to be part of the solution. We are committed to pioneering new technologies onboard, and working with our industry peers to advance research and development for zero-carbon fuels.”

The Scarlet Lady is scheduled to set sail from Miami to the Caribbean in April, but the timing of the launch is unfortunate. This week, quarantined passengers on the Diamond Princess, a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama with 600 confirmed cases of the coronavirus reported on board, started disembarking, with two elderly passengers subsequently dying from the virus. The epidemic has already taken its toll on cruise operators as travel restrictions and widespread fear have led to the cancellation of trips to the Far East.



The adult-only cruise ship comes complete with a tattoo studio, yoga deck and more than 20 restaurants.



ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM

<p>MONDAY 17 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Soap: Isidingo the need 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Jagina rpt 11:30 Igizo rpt: Mtego 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Jungu kuu rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Mjuzi Zaidi 13:45 Art and Lifestyle rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Art and Lifestyle rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Aibu yako rpt 18:15 Mapishi 18:45 Kesho leo 19:00 Afiya ya Jamii 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Dakika 45 22:00 Insta Moja 22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 02:00 DWTV</p> <p>TUESDAY 18 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Shamsam za pwani 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Shamsam za pwani 11:20 Shangweka rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Afiya ya jamii rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Kipindi maalum: KTMDA 13:30 Shamba lulu rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Yu wapi 18:15 Mapishi rpt 18:30 Uchumi na biashara 19:00 Jarida la wanawake 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Tanzania yetu</p>	<p>21:35 Chetu ni chetu 22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 19 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Korean drama: The great Queen Seondok 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Korean drama: The great Queen Seondok 11:20 Uchumi na biashara rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Dakika 45 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 18:30 Igizo rpt: Dhoruba 19:00 Ijuzi Sheria 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Aibu Yakol! Hata wewe? 21:10 Kipindi Maalum: Tanesco 21:40 Kipindi Maalum: Watumishi Housing 22:15 Ripoti Maalum 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 2:00 DWTV</p> <p>THURSDAY 20 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto 10:30 Igizo: Mkaguzi 11:00 Igizo: Mkaguzi 11:15 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Watumishi housing rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Ripoti Maalum rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Ripoti Maalum Rpt 13:30 Tanzania yetu 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Jagina 19:00 Usafiri wako</p>	<p>19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Malumbano ya hoja 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>FRIDAY 21 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Hawavumi lakini wamo 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo 11:30 Usafiri wako 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Jagina rpt 13:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 17:30 Ibadu ya kislamu 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mizengwe rpt 18:30 Shamba lulu 19:00 Kipindi Maalum: TMDA 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipima Joto 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>SATURDAY 22 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto wetu 10:00 Mjuzi Zaidi rpt 10:45 Usafiri wako rpt 11:15 Shamba lulu rpt 11:45 Mapishi rpt 12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:40 Igizo rpt: Dhoruba 15:15 Igizo: Mkaguzi 16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe 16:20 Igizo: Mtego 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Igizo: Dhoruba 19:00 Art and lifestyle 19:25 Jungu Kuu 20:00 Habari 21:00 Shangweka 21:30 Kesho leo rpt 22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja 22:15 Hawavumi lakini wamo 23:00 Isidingo rpt 01:30 DWTV</p> <p>SUNDAY 23 Feb</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI</p>	<p>6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 09:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Isidingo 11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 12:00 Bongo Movie rpt: 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:00 Mwangaza 16:00 The Great queen Seondok 16:45 Igizo rpt : Mkaguzi 17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matuku ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Mtego 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko 21:10 Mizengwe 21:30 Mjuzi Zaidi 22:15 Bongo Movie: 00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost</p> <p>CAPITAL</p> <p>Tues 18 Feb</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Leta Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Series rpt: Stars & Scars 16:30 Capchat rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Innovation 19:30 Jagina rpt 20:00 Series: Stars & Scars 20:45 Telenovela: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 21:30 Capital Prime 22:00 Turning the spotlight rpt 22:30 Eco@Africa 23:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Wed 19 Feb</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Leta Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Series rpt: Stars & Scars 16:30 Culinary delight rpt 17:00 Innovation rpt 17:30 Meza Huru 19:00 Sports Gazette 19:30 Chetu ni chetu 20:00 Series: Stars & Scars 20:45 Telenovela: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Dakika 45: 22:45 The Décor 23:15 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Thurs 20 Feb</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Leta Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Series rpt: Stars & Scars 16:30 Business edition rpt 17:00 In good shape</p>	<p>17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Turning the spotlight 19:30 Tanzania yetu 20:00 Series: Stars & Scars 20:45 Telenovela: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Capchat rpt 23:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Frid 21 Feb</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Leta Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Series rpt: Stars & Scars 16:30 The Monday Agenda rpt 17:30 Meza Huru 19:00 Drive it 19:30 Eco@Africa 20:00 Aibu yako 20:15 Local Pgm: Business Edition 20:45 Telenovela: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Malumbano ya hoja rpt 00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Sat 22 Feb</p> <p>08:00 CNN International 09:00 Drive It rpt 09:30 Turning the Spotlight rpt 10:00 Culinary delight rpt 10:30 Innovation rpt 11:00 Out n' about rpt 11:30 Sports Gazette rpt 12:00 Usafiri wako rpt 12:30 Eco@Africa 13:00 Business edition rpt 13:30 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae 14:30 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 17:15 Tanzania Yetu rpt 17:45 Bundesliga kick off 18:15 Capchat rpt 19:15 Mizengwe 19:30 The Decor 20:00 Korean Drama: Ilijimae 21:00 Out n' About 21:30 Movie: Back to business 23:00 The other side rpt 01:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Sun 23 Feb</p> <p>08:00 CNN International 09:00 In good shape 10:00 Capchat rpt 11:00 Sports Gazette rpt 11:30 Korean Drama rpt: Ilijimae 12:00 Jagina rpt 12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt 13:00 In good shape rpt 13:30 Series rpt: The other side 15:15 Aibu yako 15:30 Drive it rpt 16:00 Dakika 45 rpt 16:45 Mizengwe rpt 17:00 The Decor rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt 19:30 Cookery pgm: Culinary Delights 20:00 Korean Drama: Ilijimae 21:00 Shift 21:15 Capchat live 22:15 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 00:00 Al Jazeera</p>
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WORLD

Stone sentenced to 3-1/3 years, Trump signals no immediate pardon for adviser

WASHINGTON

A FEDERAL judge on Thursday sentenced President Donald Trump's long-time adviser Roger Stone to three years and four months in prison and said his lies to lawmakers investigating Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election posed a threat to American democracy.

After U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson sentenced the veteran Republican operative in Washington, Trump indicated he has no immediate plans to pardon Stone and would let the legal process play out, while adding that "at some point I'll make a determination."

"I personally think he was treated very unfairly," Trump said in Las Vegas.

In a stern lecture during a 2-1/2-hour sentencing hearing, Jackson delivered an implicit rebuke to Trump, who has attacked her along with the jury and prosecutors in the high-profile case.

"There was nothing unfair, phony or disgraceful about the investigation or the prosecution," Jackson said, citing words that the Republican president has used.

Stone's lawyer had asked that he get no prison time. The 67-year-old Stone,

who has been a friend and adviser to Trump for decades, was convicted on Nov. 15 on all seven counts of lying to Congress, obstruction of justice and witness tampering.

"He was not prosecuted - as some have complained - for standing up for the president. He was prosecuted for covering up for the president," Jackson said.

"The truth still exists. The truth still matters," Jackson added. "Roger Stone's insistence that it doesn't, his belligerence, his pride in his own lies are a threat to our fundamental institutions - to the very foundation of our democracy."

The judge also said Stone "knew exactly what he was doing" when he posted an image on social media last year with a gun's cross-hairs placed over her head.

"The defendant engaged in threatening and intimidating conduct toward the court," Jackson said. "This is intolerable to the administration of justice."

Stone declined to speak at the hearing. Clad in a dark gray pinstripe suit with a polka dot handkerchief in the pocket, Stone stood at a lectern as the judge delivered the sentence.

After leaving, Stone - still subject to a



Roger Stone

judicial gag order - told reporters, "I have nothing to say." In a chaotic scene outside the courthouse, Stone walked through a throng of people with a slight smile on his face and climbed into a waiting vehicle.

Stone's lawyers have asked Jackson for a new trial, and his allies have complained that some of the jurors have expressed anti-Trump sentiments on social media. Some Trump's allies have urged him to pardon Stone.

At a Las Vegas event for rehabilitated prisoners, Trump praised Stone as a "good person" and "smart guy" while repeating his claim that the trial's jury forewoman was "totally tainted." Trump said he would not use the presidency's "great powers" as Stone seeks a new trial, but left open the possibility of a pardon.

"I'm going to watch the process. I'm going to watch it very closely," Trump said.

Democrats said a pardon would be a green light for others to break the law to further Trump's interests.

"To pardon Stone when his crimes were committed to protect Trump would be a breathtaking act of corruption," Democratic Representative Adam Schiff, who led the impeachment drive against Trump that ended in his Senate acquittal this month, wrote on Twitter.

On Tuesday, Trump granted clemency to prominent convicted white-collar criminals including financier Michael Milken and former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich.

Jackson's sentence fell well short of the seven to nine years initially recommended by the case's original prosecutors before they were overruled by the Justice Department after Trump complained publicly. Those prosecutors quit the case. Jackson, appointed by Trump's Democratic predecessor Barack Obama, said the department's reversal did not influence her sentencing decision. The judge also fined Stone \$20,000.

"This was still a very substantial sentence, especially for a non-violent, first-time offender of his age," said Mark Allenbaugh, a consultant who formerly worked for the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Stone was one of several Trump associates who were convicted or pleaded guilty to charges stemming from former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation that detailed Russian meddling in the 2016 election to boost Trump's candidacy.

He was convicted of lying to the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee about his attempts to contact WikiLeaks, the website that released damaging emails about Trump's 2016 Democratic election rival Hillary Clinton that U.S. intelligence officials have concluded were stolen by Russian hackers.

'A HUMAN BEING'

Defense attorney Seth Ginsberg said Stone's career as a self-described "dirty trickster" overshadowed other aspects of a spiritual man who has served as a mentor, loves animals and is devoted to his family.

"Mr. Stone is, in fact, not simply that public persona, but a human being," he said.

The judge noted Stone was not charged with or convicted of having any role in conspiring with Russia. But Jackson said Stone's effort to obstruct a congressional investigation into Russian election meddling "was deliberate, planned - not one isolated incident." The investigators were not some "secret anti-Trump cabal," Jackson said, but lawmakers on a committee led at the time by Republicans.

Stone's career has stretched from the Watergate scandal era of the early 1970s to Trump's campaign four years ago. Stone has labeled himself an "agent provocateur" and famously has the face of former President Richard Nixon tattooed on his back.

Agencies

Democrat Warren, worried campaign will run out of cash, taps \$3 million loan

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren raised more money than most of her Democratic presidential rivals in the weeks before the Iowa caucuses, but spent so heavily that her campaign took out a \$3 million loan fearing she would run out of cash.

Warren raised \$10.4 million in contributions in January - more than former Vice President Joe Biden's \$9 million and former South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg's \$6 million - but ended the month with only \$2.3 million in cash, according to disclosures filed on Thursday.

All of the presidential hopefuls were required to submit financial

disclosures on Thursday, public documents that offer insights into how they are managing their multi-million campaign operations. The ability to raise cash and manage allocations is an important test for candidates to remain competitive as the nominating contest drags on for weeks.

At least two of the candidates are enjoying comfortable cash positions. Billionaire Michael Bloomberg is self-funding his campaign, contributing more than \$460 million of his own wealth. U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders raised \$25 million in January and finished the month with \$17 million in cash.

Democrats who are still competing for their party's nomination have raised \$1.2 billion so far this



election, both in donations and from their own money.

Warren became the first candidate in the top tier to turn to borrowing money after having spent nearly 97% of her war chest - the highest rate in the field.

Her campaign said while she took out a \$3 million loan, she only

accessed \$400,000. Her fundraising in February has been more robust, spokesman Chris Hayden said.

"Our January end-of-month grassroots fundraising push was very successful and February has been even stronger for us, shattering our monthly record already with more than \$17 million raised in the first 20 days of the month," Hayden said.

Warren eked out a third-place finish in Iowa and fourth-place finish in New Hampshire. Her widely praised performance in a debate this week buoyed her fundraising.

That may be in part thanks to her decision to increase her spending on payroll in January. While other campaigns were ramping up tele-

vision advertising, Warren instead spent on staff.

She increased her payroll by 83%, hoping to turn her fortunes around by flooding Iowa with organizers instead of television ads. She spent \$3.2 million on staff in December and \$5.9 million in January, giving her the largest payroll.

New York media mogul Bloomberg was still ramping up his staff in January after launching his campaign in November. He spent \$1.2 million in December and \$5.7 million in January.

Sanders had a January payroll of \$3.9 million, up 19% from the previous month. Biden had the smallest increase, raising his payroll by only 6.8% from \$1.9 million to \$2 million.

Agencies

Assange's fate hangs in balance as UK court considers US extradition bid

LONDON

ALMOST a decade after his WikiLeaks website enraged Washington by leaking secret U.S. documents, a London court will begin hearings on Monday to decide whether Julian Assange should be extradited to the United States.

A hero to admirers who say he has exposed abuses of power, Assange is cast by critics as a dangerous enemy of the state who has undermined Western security. He says the extradition is politically motivated by those embarrassed

by his revelations.

The 48-year-old is wanted by the United States on 18 criminal counts of conspiring to hack government computers and violating an espionage law and could spend decades in prison if convicted.

Now, some 10 months after he was dragged from London's Ecuadorian embassy where he had been holed up for seven years, Judge Vanessa Baraitser will hear arguments as to why he should or should not be sent to the United States.

Jennifer Robinson, Assange's



lawyer, says his case could lead to criminalising activities crucial to investigative journalists and his work

has shed an unprecedented light on how the United States conducted its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We are talking about collateral murder, evidence of war crimes," she said. "They are a remarkable resource for those of us seeking to hold governments to account for abuses."

WikiLeaks angered Washington by publishing hundreds of thousands of secret U.S. diplomatic cables that laid bare critical U.S. appraisals of world leaders, from Russian President Vladimir Putin to members of the Saudi royal family.

Assange made international headlines in 2010 when WikiLeaks published a classified U.S. military video showing a 2007 attack by Apache helicopters in Baghdad that killed a dozen people, including two Reuters news staff.

The hearing at London's Woolwich Crown Court will not decide if Assange is guilty of any wrongdoing, but whether the extradition request meets the requirements set out under a 2003 UK-U.S. treaty, which critics say is stacked in favor of the United States.

Agencies



A medical worker thumbs up at the Diagnostics Virology and Transformation Center of the Guangzhou KingMed Diagnostics Group Co., Ltd. in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, on Wednesday. (Xinhua)

For better or worse, humanity shares common destiny

BEIJING

IN an era of globalization, the interests of countries across the world are closely intertwined, and no one can be immune to common challenges such as the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

By taking decisive measures and making great sacrifice, China has achieved notable progress in preventing and controlling the spread of the virus both domestically and internationally.

Global manufacturers, from automakers to mobile phone producers, are breathing a sigh of relief as the world's second largest economy gradually reopened its factories that were temporarily closed to help contain the epidemic without causing significant damage to the global supply chain.

China does not stand alone in its fight. So far, leaders of more than 160 countries and international organizations have expressed their solidarity with China and provided assistance. They also voiced confidence in the prospect of China's economic development and its role as a driving force for world growth.

On the packages of medical supplies donated by the Japanese people to China, such Chinese-language poetic lines were written as "lands apart, destiny shared." It exemplifies the spirit of helping each other in the global village in the face of common challenges.

However, global efforts and solidarity to combat the COVID-19 outbreak are sometimes undermined by rumors and even slanders.

On Thursday, leading health experts from multiple countries endorsed China's efforts to stop the virus from spreading on a worldwide scale as well as its high degree of openness and transparency, and voiced concerns that such a remarkable effort is being threatened by rumours and misinformation.

Just as they stressed in a statement published by The Lancet, conspiracy theories do nothing but create fear, rumours, and prejudice that jeopardise the global collaboration in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

Cooperation, unity and solidarity across borders are vital for a world sharing a common destiny.

The epidemic reminds mankind again that no country can prosper in isolation or meet all challenges on its own, as the world is a community with a shared future.

Xinhua

South African gov't vows fresh move to address energy crisis

CAPETOWN

THE South African government on Thursday vowed to take "swift and decisive action" to address the prevailing crisis of energy supply.

South Africa has to urgently address the negative impact that power outages are having on the daily lives of the people and the economy, Deputy President David Mabuza said as he convened the inaugural meeting of the Eskom Task Team, formerly known as the Eskom War Room, in Cape Town.

The meeting came as electricity utility Eskom resumed a new round of rolling power blackouts earlier in the day. The Eskom Task Team, chaired by Mabuza, was established by President Cyril Ramaphosa to provide political oversight and address the Eskom power generation crisis as well as look at effective implementation mechanisms of the National Emergency Response Plan.

The team brings together various strategic role players with the aim of developing a comprehensive approach and coordination of efforts to ensure that the power utility is supported in its implementation of a turnaround plan.

The government views the process of ensuring security of energy supply as one of the critical prerequisites for investment, development and sustained economic growth, Mabuza said. The roadmap presented by Eskom gives an indication that there is now a focused approach to how South Africa responds to this crisis in a much more concrete manner, according to Mabuza.

Xinhua

Foreign Volunteers join China's battle against NCP

DONNING a blue vest, shielded with face mask, and gloves, Bethany Sootheran is a little busy these days. Though overwhelmed by the news of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the ballet and contemporary dancer from New York looks unfazed as she stepped out to serve as a volunteer in a community center in Suzhou, East China's Jiangsu Province, delivering fresh vegetables for her neighbors in self-imposed quarantine in Cheng-bang community.

"Noticing on WeChat that our friends at community center were working very hard to keep us all safe I was beginning to feel discontent at home unable to do anything to help.

I reached out to the center leader, asking if there was anything we could do," Sootheran told the Global Times.

Soootheran is among a dozen of foreign volunteers from Suzhou Industry Park, one of Jiangsu's most foreigner-populated areas. As of 2019 end the industrial park has issued 4,322 foreign working permits, including 1,675 tier-A working permits.

When novel coronavirus pneumonia (NCP) broke out many of them decided to stand with the Chinese and joined volunteer groups to contribute their bit to the community with efforts such as dispatching daily commodities to home quarantines and purchasing medical supplies overseas.

"People seem surprised to see foreigners out and about volunteering. Many have said 'haogandong(soft touched)'," she said. "But to us this feels like a small thing. I am inspired by the quiet strength and diligence of the people here. Everyone is cheerfully and carefully doing their part."

Goran Martinovic, a Croatian national, is a boxing trainer in Suzhou. When the NCP broke out his first thought was to go to Wuhan, the epicenter of the deadly disease, only to be discouraged by his Chinese friends.

Then idea struck and he managed to ship 20,000 protective masks from Croatia. "I didn't expect that it would be so tough to get the medical equipment.

Everywhere it has run out of stock," he told the Global Times. Martinovic managed to secure a shipment of 10 boxes of medical masks with the help of his friends and family in Croatia.

"They are sent from Croatia and currently in transit. Can arrive any minute," Martinovic said, using his expertise in sports and training he also developed a 30-minute home workout gymnastics for people to exercise at home during the epidemic. "Strong immunity system is the best prevention against all kinds of virus. So I would say there is no reason to panic. Just be normal," he said.

For both Sootheran and Martinovic, China is their second home.

Soootheran and her husband own an Arts Center in Suzhou that offers organized cultural events in the city. They have been living here for about 6 years. Her family in the US asked them to return to the US till the outbreak recedes yet they choose to stay in China and fight against the NCP together with the Chinese.

"Our families are concerned for us but they understand that China is our home. Our entire life is here. And our hearts are with the Chinese people. They are our second family."

Martinovic first came to China in 2015 with his elder brother to teach boxing at a charity boxing event. His brother left China after a few months

but Martinovic stayed ever since. He is currently running a boxing club and organizes charity boxing events twice a year to help promote the sport in China.

"Not many places can do the same under similar situations," he said adding that he is impressed by the transparency of information and strong management ability showed by the government to fight against the virus.

"Suzhou is my second hometown, China is also my home. Home is where the heart is. Together we will fight through this and win. Maybe we feel down now, but later we will bounce much higher," he said.

Global Times



Couriers sort packages at a handling station of a branch office of China Post in Xianju county, east China's Zhejiang Province, Feb. 10, 2020.

Chinese industries resume production in orderly manner

CHINESE local governments and departments are currently mobilizing enterprises to resume operation in a bid to suit production to demand, as it calls for not only prevention and control, but also development to defeat the novel coronavirus epidemic.

Many enterprises, responding to the call of the nation, have resumed production in an orderly manner, providing better guarantee for the prevention and control of the epidemic, and maintaining normal order of the economy and the society.

Chen Da, deputy director of the Department of Trade at the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China told a press conference on Feb. 9 that work resumption is taking place across China except for Hubei Province, the hardest-hit region.

By Feb. 7, about 73 percent of the country's mask production capacity had been recovered, and about 94.6 percent of the country's major grain production and processing firms have resumed production, Chen introduced.

The supply of natural gas, electricity and refined oil is sufficient, and the civil aviation, railway and water transportation sectors are on normal operation.

Impacted by the epidemic, many enterprises are facing insufficient labor, capital and raw materials. On Feb. 9, China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology issued a notice, unveiling a string of 20 measures to help companies resume production in an orderly manner and get through the difficulty, such as enhancing the guarantee for work resumption elements and intensifying credit support.

Besides, local governments in Zhejiang, Liaoning, Jiangsu and Guangdong have already issued relevant measures to help enterprises solve practical problems.

"Every infrared thermometer we produce represents our contribution, and we must race against the epidemic and finally help our country defeat it," said the chairman of board Liu Yi of Andon Health Co., Ltd., a producer of electronic thermometers based in Tianjin, in a recent speech mobilizing its employees to go to the production front.

Learning the severe shortage of disinfectants, chairman of board Yang Le of Anhui Jinhe Industrial Co., Ltd. immediately informed the company's production, supply and storage departments to load and send disinfectants to Hubei to support the province.

Masks, goggles, and disinfectants are all important materials for epidemic prevention and control. To guarantee supply, many enterprises had resumed production in advance during the Chinese New Year holiday.

The country has also made targeted arrangement from fiscal and finance perspective.

It is reported that the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the People's Bank of China (PBOC) for the first time jointly adopted the policy of special refinancing and government-funded interest subsidies, so as to give more credit support to key companies in epidemic control to combat the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The 300-billion-yuan (\$42.9 billion) special refinancing loans allocated by the PBOC, together with the government-funded interest subsidies, will lower the financing costs of key enterprises in the production to less than 1.6 percent.

It's noteworthy that the battle against the novel coronavirus outbreak has created development opportunities for new economy, new business models and new technologies.

Thanks to China's highly developed internet industry, at present, online meetings and working from home are becoming a prioritized choice for many enterprises when resuming production.

According to statistics released by DingTalk, an enterprise communication and collaboration platform developed by Alibaba Group, over 2 million enterprises have managed health information of their employees just days after the Chinese New Year holiday.

Nearly 100 million people are checking in with their companies via DingTalk's clock-in function, and around 200 million are working and having video conferences on the app.

In the consumption and circulating sectors, the special situation caused by the epidemic is also giving birth to greater demand on online delivery platforms. Relevant enterprises are actively responding to such demand and guaranteeing the materials supply for the market.

During the Chinese New Year, grocery retail platform Meituan Maicai reported a daily sales growth of 2 to 3 times in Beijing. On e-commerce platform JD.com, the transaction of grain products also surged by over 20 times from a year ago, while that of instant food and dairy products went up by 10 times and 300 percent, respectively.

People's Daily

Netanyahu announces plans to build 5,200 settlement homes in East Jerusalem

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday that he was promoting the building of some 5,200 new Jewish homes in highly sensitive areas of East Jerusalem, in a move likely to further escalate tensions with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu made the remark during a visit to Har Homa, a settlement neighborhood of Jerusalem, where he said 2,200 housing units would be constructed in the neighborhood and 3,000 in another one called Givat Hamatos in Jerusalem.

The Israeli leader also vowed to ex-

pand Har Homa to the equivalent of "an average-sized city in Israel" by drawing some 12,000 Jewish residents, bringing the total population of the neighborhood to around 50,000.

"We are connecting all parts of the united Jerusalem, the rebuilt Jerusalem," he said, referring to the eastern part of the holy city, which Israel captured along with the rest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Middle East war.

Shortly after the war, Israel annexed



East Jerusalem, claiming it part of its "indivisible capital," a move that had never been recognized by the international community until U.S. President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017. Both Har Homa and Givat Hamatos are located on some of the last lands connecting the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem which the Palestinians regard as the capital of their future state.

In the past, the expansion of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank sparked international condemnations, partly restraining Israeli construction there.

Xinhua

Africa CDC moves to effectively prevent novel coronavirus across Africa

ADDIS ABABA

AFRICA Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), a specialized agency of the African Union (AU), has stressed that it is undertaking healthcare capacity building initiatives as part of the continental novel coronavirus preparedness efforts.

The Africa CDC trained 16 African laboratories, comprising Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia from February 6 to 8 in Senegal, in which each of the trainees have received a kit that can run 100 tests for COVID-19, the Africa CDC disclosed in its periodic update issued late Wednesday concerning the state of novel coronavirus in the African continent.

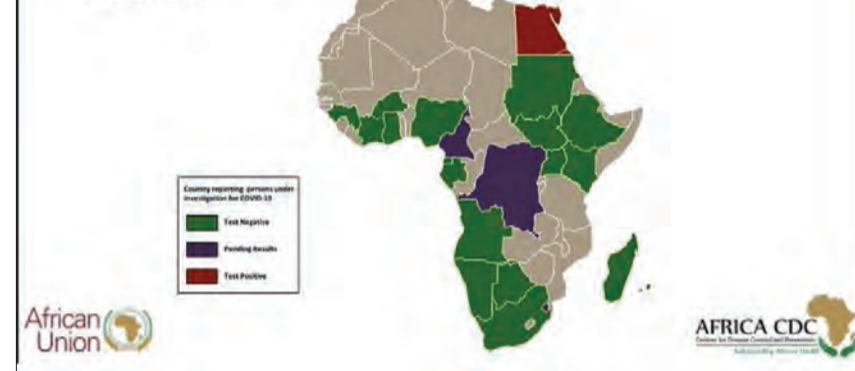
The AU Commission's specialized healthcare agency also disclosed that the second round training for 19 additional African laboratories is slated to be held from February 20 to 22 in South Africa in partnership with the country's National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

"Africa CDC is coordinating with partners to establish sequencing capacity in six African reference laboratories, as well as external quality assessment and proficiency testing for all laboratories with COVID-19 testing capacity," the report read.

The Africa CDC, which activated its Emergency Operations Center and its Incident Management System (IMS) for the COVID-19 outbreak on January 27, had also recently developed the second Africa CDC Incident Action Plan (IAP) for COVID-19 covering a one-month period from February 13 to March 12.

It also disclosed that activities are underway to train and deploy epi-

Map of African countries with persons under investigation for COVID-19



miologists at headquarters and within the Regional Collaborating Centers for daily event tracking, risk analysis, and generation of critical information to inform member states response and control efforts.

Noting that the Africa CDC has been working with Member States to build Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) capacities in healthcare facilities and with the airline sector to support screening of travelers, it also stressed that the first IPC training, targeting 15 member states, will take place from February 20 to 21 in Abuja, Nigeria.

It also indicated that it is holding weekly updates with national public health institutes in member states and has formed working groups for high priority areas of coronavirus control that include surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, infection prevention and control, clinical care, as well as risk communication.

The Africa CDC, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), had also recently provided training of trainers for participants coming from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius,

Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Zambia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia to enhance surveillance at points of entry for COVID-19. It also disclosed that it will collaborate with the WHO to provide the second round of training of trainers from this week.

Reiterating its resolve to provide updated and relevant information to member states as the outbreak evolves, the Africa CDC also stressed that "all AU member countries should enhance their surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) and to carefully review any unusual patterns of SARI or pneumonia cases. Examples of enhanced surveillance include."

It also called on all member states to activate their Emergency Operations Centers and rapid response teams for COVID-19, as well as exercise their emergency response systems for readiness.

The Africa CDC also advised all AU member states to use the WHO's existing specimen referral network for influenza to ship their specimens to laboratories with capacity to test for COVID-19.

Xinhua

Putin says Russia, Ukraine torn apart to prevent major rival from emerging

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN cooperation irks numerous countries because it creates a global competitor to challenge them, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

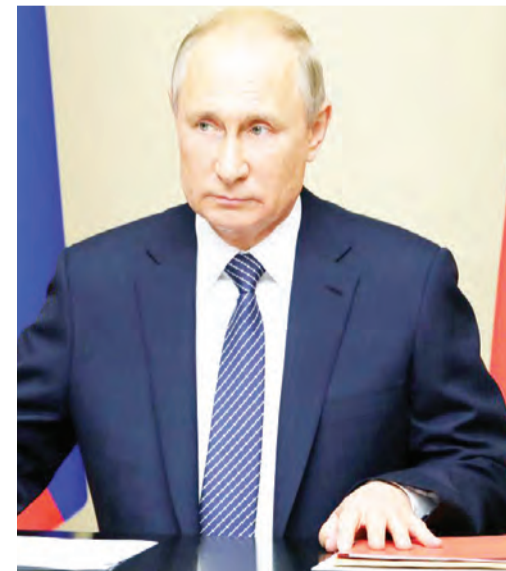
"Any integration of Russia and Ukraine, along with their capacities and competitive advantages would spell the emergence of a rival, a global rival for both Europe and the world. No one wants this. That's why they'll do anything to tear us apart," Putin told TASS in an interview for the project entitled "20 Questions with Vladimir Putin".

He refrained from mentioning the countries he had in mind.

"Those who took power pursued their self-interests. And what were they? Not even to get more from robbing the Ukrainian people blind, but hold on to what they had previously stolen. That was the main objective. So, where's the cold hard cash? Pardon my slang, where is the money? In foreign banks," he emphasized.

Putin stressed that the owners of the foreign accounts were keen "to show that they are serving those who hold that money." Hence, the only thing that they trade in is Russophobia. Because some like dividing Ukraine and Russia, they believe it's a very important goal," he added.

Agencies



WHILE the world is joining China's efforts in fighting the novel coronavirus and rooting for the country with great warmth, some U.S. politicians are smearing China again and again.

They attacked on the country and its system and sowed discord between China and other countries. They sabotaged the bottom line of morality and civilization, created ideological prejudice and spread the virus of Cold-War mentality. What they did has damaged international relations.

However, China's achievements in preventing and controlling the epidemic have drawn wide praise from the international community on the fundamental purpose of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to serve the people whole-

Ideological prejudice spreads virus in another form

heartedly, as well as the Party's governance capability to lead people of all ethnic groups across the country to cope with difficulties and challenges. This presents a stark contrast.

Such praise is like a thorn in the flesh for some U.S. politicians who are obsessed with zero-sum games. They have been making all kinds of evil remarks these days, harping on the same string.

What they have done, taking advantage of China's precarious situation and attacking the country when it is in a difficult time, has crossed the bottom line of human civilization and humanity.

What's more, some of them even

gloated over China's misfortune, blatantly claiming that China's losses in the epidemic may become the gains of the U.S. This has just revealed to the world their sinister mindset of taking profits from other people's losses.

To put it bluntly, these narrow-minded and paranoid politicians are afraid of China's economic and social progress, the wealth of the Chinese people, and the prosperity of the country. They stick to the absurd philosophy that the historical achievements and leapfrog development made by the Chinese people under the leadership of the CPC are a threat to the U.S.

Just like an empty sack cannot

stand upright, the endless ridiculous remarks of these U.S. politicians cannot become mainstream public opinion.

The international community acknowledges that over the past few decades, it is under the leadership of the CPC that more than 800 million Chinese have shaken off poverty and more than 400 million Chinese have joined middle-income group. This has brought tremendous development opportunities to the world.

Justice naturally inhabits man's heart. The CPC once again won wide respect and admiration from the world because of its effective actions to lead the people to fight

the epidemic.

The unprecedented safety precautions adopted by the CPC, the newly-built medical facilities under "China Speed" and the continuous improved prevention methods show the CPC's excellent governance capacity, said Aikyn Konurov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist People's Party.

Simon Compaore, acting chairman of Burkina Faso's People's Movement for Progress said the political decisions and health prevention and control measures taken by the CPC will be milestones in the history of human epidemic management.

The international community generally believes that under the strong leadership of the CPC, China has the confidence and capability to win the battle against the epidemic, and the responsible CPC is precisely the fortune of China and the world.

However, some American politicians are so stubborn that they are still seeking fulfillment in their misjudgment of the reality, which is totally absurd.

At a time when fighting the novel coronavirus has become an urgent task of the international community, these U.S. politicians are acting enthusiastically, believing it is a perfect time for them to spread



Moscow, Ankara in contact on Idlib, says diplomat

MOSCOW

MOSCOW and Ankara remain in contact on the situation in Syria's Idlib province, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said at a briefing on Thursday.

"We are in contact on a daily basis through various channels, particularly through diplomats and military experts. Consultations continue without interruption," she stated in response to a question.

"We maintain contact through embassies and military experts on the ground, the ministers hold telephone conversations, and so on. In addition, each party assesses the statements the other party makes.

As for joint visits by delegations, they take place when the need arises, and in fact, the need may arise at any time, as well as [they may] be postponed," Zakharova noted.

When commenting on the Turkish authorities' ultimatums to Damascus, she pointed out that Syria is a sovereign country. "A thing to remember is that the Syrian Armed Forces are on their own soil.

This is the main thing. The Syrian army certainly cooperates with the Russian military and servicemen from other countries, but the international community needs to remember this main thing," the Russian diplomat added.

Idlib tensions

The situation in the Syrian province of Idlib escalated after the Russian and Turkish militaries had made another attempt to ensure a ceasefire. In response, terrorists increased attacks, killing both Russian and Turkish military experts.

The Syrian army took action against extremists, seizing the town of Saraqib on February 5.

In the morning of February 11, Syrian opposition forces supported by Turkey launched large-scale attacks on Syrian government troops, particularly on Saraqib and the Nayrab settlement.

The fighting also involved supporters of the Jabhat al-Nusra terror group (outlawed in Russia). Syrian troops thwarted the attacks, while militants suffered substantial losses.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said earlier on Wednesday that Ankara was ready to tap all of its military capabilities in case of an operation in Idlib. He added that such an operation was only a matter of time as all preparations for it had been completed.

Two rounds of talks between Russian and Turkish officials took place in Ankara on February 8 and 10. The parties focused on tensions in the Idlib de-escalation zone.

The next two rounds of talks were held in Moscow on February 17-18. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that "if the Moscow negotiations produce no results, then talks between the presidents [of Turkey and Russia] may take place in the coming days."

Agencies

ideological prejudice and the virus of Cold-War mentality.

Some of them clamored that China has become the number one geopolitical foe of the U.S., and some used the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic to sow discord between China and its neighboring countries. Some even spread rumors to the media that China is planning for massive theft of genetic data from Africa by building a center for disease control there.

Sadly, such rumors will only destroy the image of these politicians and bring shame to the U.S. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center indicated that 45% of respondents believe that the U.S. is a major threat to the world.

People's Daily

James Harden, Rockets roll to 135-105 rout of young Warriors

SAN FRANCISCO

RUSSELL Westbrook vowed to better control his emotions down the stretch of the regular season. They sometimes get the better of him and he realizes he's under the watchful eye of referees because of his reputation, but he won't ever back down.

James Harden had 29 points and 10 assists, Westbrook added 21 points and 10 assists before being ejected, and the Houston Rockets beat the cold-shooting Golden State Warriors 135-105 on Thursday night in the teams' first game back from the All-Star break.

Things got testy with 6:04 to play when Westbrook tussled with several Warriors, including bumping Damion Lee but "it wasn't on purpose." After a replay review, Westbrook received his second technical of the night and was ejected.

"I'm always the one that gets painted to be a bad guy in the whole situation," Westbrook said, hinting he might review his technicals to see whether he has a case to get one rescinded.

"... I'm in a position of like, 'Oh well, Russ is being Russ,' which nobody knows what that means. But I've got to do a better job of holding myself accountable to a very, very high standard. I will make sure I leave no room for error to allow somebody and people to paint me out to be a guy that I'm not. I think it's unfair that after all that I'm the only one that gets a tech or kicked out. That's not fair."

P.J. Tucker scored 15 points. He made all five of his 3-pointers as the Rockets knocked down 25 total - a franchise record allowed by the Warriors. Houston set an NBA record with 27 3s in a win against the Suns last April.

Robert Covington added 20 points as the Rockets ran away with this one early after losing 116-104 at Chase Center on Christmas Day.

Andrew Wiggins scored 22 points in the Warriors' fifth straight loss and also their fifth consecutive at home. Draymond Green dished out seven assists after getting nine in each of his previous two games.

"He's one of those guys people have said he's overrated now for a couple years," coach Steve Kerr said of Wiggins. "He's become underrated."

The Rockets, missing guard Eric Gordon for a third straight game with a bruised left leg, raced to a 16-4 lead.

Westbrook was hit with a technical foul at the 7:38 mark of the first quarter, when the

Rockets made 8 of 12 3-pointers to take control. Harden shot just 6 for 16 from the field - 3 of 12 on 3s - but made 14 of 15 free throws.

Golden State started 5 of 16 and missed its initial 11 3-point attempts. When Jordan Poole finally connected from deep with 4:52 left in first half, Houston already had 13 3s.

THOMPSON UPDATE

Klay Thompson will not play the rest of the regular season as has been the plan all along, though the Warriors said it definitively before the game.

Thompson tore the ACL in his left knee last June 13 during the deciding Game 6 of the NBA Finals against Toronto and had surgery July 2. He was re-evaluated over the All-Star break and the team said Stephen Curry's Splash Brother is expected to be ready to go for training camp in late September.

"It's been a very frustrating year for Klay but I think he's almost out of the woods," Kerr said. "He's a couple months away from this season ending and him moving toward a summer of preparing for the next season with his teammates, so I think that's a much better place for him to be emotionally."

An update on Curry's recovery and progress from a broken left hand is planned for Feb. 28 and he expects to be back on the court in March.

Meanwhile, in Detroit, like many NBA coaches, Mike Budenholzer was worried about his Milwaukee Bucks needing a game or two to get back up to speed after the All-Star break.

It wasn't a concern for long Thursday night.

The Bucks had 70 points by halftime on their way to a 126-106 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

"That was a really impressive first half and I thought we did a lot of good things in the second half, too," Budenholzer said. "Our energy had been good the last two days, but that doesn't always equate to good play. There were a lot of positives for the first game after the break."

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points and 16 rebounds as the Bucks led by as many as 34 points in the second half. Detroit trailed 70-41 at halftime and could never get enough stops to mount any significant rally in the final two quarters.

"We came out and played our game and played with pace and aggression," said former Piston Khris Middleton, who scored 28 points. "That's how we have to play the rest of the way."

Eric Bledsoe added 19 points for the Bucks, who won for the 15th time in 17 games. Brook Lopez scored 18.

The Pistons have lost five straight since trading Andre Drummond to the Cleveland Cavaliers on Feb. 6 and were playing for the first time since buying out Reggie Jackson's contract.

"With a young team, it takes getting smacked upside the head a few times to wake them up a little bit," Pistons coach Dwane Casey said. "Tonight showed everyone how far we still have to go when it comes to building our roster and developing our young players."

Christian Wood, one of seven players in the game who has played for both teams, had 18 points and 11 rebounds. Bruce Brown finished with 16 points and 10 rebounds.

"Those guys are like family, but once we touch the court, it is for blood," Wood said. "I'm going to go right at Giannis and he's going to go right at me."

The game was lopsided early, with the Bucks leading by 14 at the end of the first quarter and 29 at the half. Detroit's 41 first-half points were only two more than Middleton (20) and Antetokounmpo (19) had on their own.

"It was big to come off the break and play good basketball and be up by almost 30 at the half," Antetokounmpo said. "We picked up right where we left off."

Milwaukee also had a 14-0 advantage in points off turnovers, many coming after Pistons drove into the lane before throwing away an attempted kick-out.

"That's the No. 1 team in the league when it comes to protecting the paint, so you have to have a plan before you get in there," Casey said. "They have such unbelievable length that once you get in there, everything closes up in a hurry. You either have to get to the rim or know where you are passing the ball."

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

ONE thing that music analysts never really examine is why some countries produce good music and many others do not, and indeed how it comes for instance that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is by far and away Black Africa's inimitable music country, with some kindred music in neighbouring Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon - much less Nigeria or far away Senegal. Owing to proximity there was plenty of imitation of Congolese songs in the first decade of independence but often just a faint copy.

In contrast, when Congolese musicians shifted to East Africa, some of the best lyrics in Kiswahili were produced at that time, and for reasons of a better artistic and economic environment, Nairobi became a music capital of the region. It also has a thriving film industry along with its Mombasa coastal strip environment, while in Tanzania only Zanzibar had a noticeable unified cultural tradition, not Bagamoyo or Dar es Salaam. The music also followed this cultural pattern, to wit.

After nearly 20 years of often rowdy Bongo flavor hits, where the shouting far outdid the rhythm, with instrumentation at times merely a rather faint background, some discipline started creeping into Bongo flavor. It would still be helpful to hazard or obtain an explanation why a completely lopsided way of playing the music has for the better part of two decades than hold of Bongo flavor. One likely explanation is artistic, that it was really the words the 'rappers' were trying to sell chiefly to youthful audiences were the words and the supposed style, not rhythms.

Much of the music of that period was being shown live and soon enough computer recordings started, which allowed a widening of scope and a change in rhythms. A new strand of 'rhythms and blues' entered the market which depended more on less dramatic radio audiences, along with more thoughtful buyers seeking cool products from the

Wilder, Fury, to answer questions in big heavyweight rematch

LAS VEGAS

THE best fights come with questions, and there are many surrounding Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury as they meet in a rematch that is arguably the biggest heavyweight title fight since Lennox Lewis destroyed Mike Tyson 18 years ago in Memphis.

The best fighters usually end up providing the answers, and that's what makes Saturday's showdown must-see TV even for those who are only casual fans.

Can Fury outbox Wilder again like he did in the first fight, which ended in a draw? Can Wilder land the same kind of devastating punches that left Fury flat on his back in the 12th round of that fight, seemingly for good, in the 11th defense of his title?

Can one heavyweight rule the roost and give boxing the champion - and division - the sport has been thirsting for all these years?

Tune in to the \$79.99 pay-per-view to see those questions answered in a heavyweight fight so big it got a shout-out this week from Amy Klobuchar in the Democratic presidential debate.

"Boxing is back," promoter Bob Arum crowed. "And as a really important sport, not a niche



Popular 'Singeli' artiste, Amani Khamis, nicknamed 'Man Fongo'.

market. That is how the likes of Judith Wambura, alias Lady JD, blossomed, softening the market hold of those premised on feisty live audiences with their rap performances. That is how the Bongo flavor scene was changing gradually, between unrelenting 'macho' performances on stage and purchases done as a complement to live shows, versus more rhythmic and balanced music, from lady 'blues' singers or masculine artists.

The latter, when not doing traditional Bongo flavor as it was gradually getting out of fashion, slowly started mixing it with taarab rhythms, and a decidedly careful pattern of taking up American rapping. The key reason was that intended audiences were less and less those coming to live shows and more of those who purchase after hearing on radio or gradually, by online performances. So the commercial part of the music started putting on hold the shouting and impressionistic careering, often a paroxysm of thinly veiled political activism, which has stridently declined.

That didn't come up without a show of force on the part of

some authorities, thus making it less likely that the non-willed would venture into shouting just to please the crowd. Instead the 'daredevils' shifted their guns to scrubbing the outer limits of official morality in their lyrics, where a couple of artistes would have clashed with authorities, briefly. On the whole a fine balance has been maintained between the wish to entertain and respect for public decency, and those incidents aren't being overly repeated. Still the wish to say something socially or politically provocative is often tied up with throbbing and shouting, while painful expression of sentiment privileges softer styles like current Bongo blues or traditional rumba.

Curiously, the penchant to disturb social calm is finding an outlet not in proper blues rhythms for they accommodate thoughtful pieces laced with worrying for the sense of security and goodwill of the mover of the lyric. What the Bongo flavor agents provocateurs actually want is to be able to say something about others, for instance in

the lyric that authorities may altogether restrict as it is the manliness that stands out. It is not 'the pain of loving you' that basically animates blues as an effort at explaining to the other, seeking to restore diminishing attachment, at all.

There is a clear diminution of the 'talking only' mentality that consigns real beat and instruments to the background, and the singer occupies more than half the stage. Rap in the traditional 'Wanaume' style is being eclipsed, more thoughtful music coming up, even if traditional dances are being modified to provide an alternative to 'rapping' as it developed two decades ago. In that case real beats and danceable rhythms are being formed around the 'singeli' model (seemingly sewn out of 'single khang' provocative image in Kiswahili) and it looks like it can hold its position for a time as style. But rappers who aren't coast-bred may fail to put up, in which case other modes can come up like Saida Karoli, an ally of reggae, etc which made its day in 'Gospel flavor.' These days they have also taken to blues.



Brooklyn Nets' Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot (9) goes up for a shot past Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (21) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020, in Philadelphia. 76ers won 112-104. (AP Photo)

AP

AP

SOCCER NEWS

Messi demands calm after chaotic 2 months for Barca

BARCELONA, SPAIN

BARCELONA has been hit recently by a series of setbacks on the field and conflicts inside the club.

And Lionel Messi has had enough of it.

"We have only had problem after problem since January. What we need is some calm and to think about soccer, to think about the games, and to try to improve," Messi told Spanish sports daily Mundo Deportivo in an interview on Thursday. "At least we need to isolate ourselves (from the noise) because, if not, there are going to be complicated months ahead. We must be patient and hopefully we can turn this around."

Since the start of the year, Barcelona has lost the Spanish Super Cup, been eliminated from the Copa del Rey, and ceded the lead in the Spanish league to Real Madrid.

The run of poor results has not been stemmed by a coaching change. Quique Setien replaced Ernesto Valverde and so far the team has struggled to adapt to the physical demands of his high-pressure playing style.

Injuries have also played their part. Striker Luis Suarez is out for several weeks and winger Ousmane Dembele for the rest of the season, forcing the club to make the curious signing of Denmark forward Martin Braithwaite to give it fit bodies in a depleted attack.

But the rest of the chaos has been created by the club.

Messi himself has been embroiled in a public spat with sports director - and former teammate - Eric Abidal, who has accused some players of not playing hard for Valverde. Messi responded on social media by demanding that Abidal name names and to take full responsibility for the firing of Valverde.

Two weeks later, Messi maintained his position that he had felt "attacked" by Abidal as a member of Barcelona's squad and its captain.

"It bothered me that a club official, a sports director, had put the squad in middle of the firing of coach. That seemed crazy to me," Messi said. "He takes the decisions. That's why I decided to clarify things. I knew that I couldn't let the sports director attack me like that."

Abidal said Thursday he shouldn't have talked publicly about the

team's problems.

"I've learned that internal issues need to be resolved within the club, not in the media," the former player said.

Then came the oddest of all the Barcelona maladies when earlier this week the club severed its contract with an Internet services company that made negative comments on social media about people within the club. Reports by Spanish radio Cadena SER said those online comments included Messi, fellow player Gerard Pique, as well as former coach Pep Guardiola.

Messi said that he was still not sure what had happened.

"The truth is that I find it strange that something like that could happen," the Argentine said. "But they (Cadena SER) also said there was evidence. We will have to wait to see if it is true or not."

Barcelona President Josep Bartomeu said Thursday an investigation remains open and the club will publicly talk about the results when it's completed.

"We are working internally and analyzing everything," he said. "When we have anything else to say, we will let everybody know."

Messi made the call for his club to put its house in order ahead of an important stretch of matches for the defending league champions. After hosting Eibar on Saturday, Barcelona travels to Italy to face Napoli in the Champions League on Tuesday. It will then visit Real Madrid on March 1 in a "clasico" that could determine who leads the league.

Messi, however, also sent a message to Barcelona's fans that he has no plans to abandon the club that has been his home since he was 13 years old.

"I have said many times that my plan (is to finish my career at Barcelona) and as long as the club and our fans want the same thing there will never be a problem," Messi said. "I have also said many times that I would like to be here and for all of us, the club, and our fans to be happy with the team we have and for us to be winners."

The 32-year-old Messi is Barcelona's all-time leading scorer with 622 goals. He has helped it win more than 30 trophies, including four Champions Leagues and 10 Spanish league titles.

AP

Swiss indict PSG boss, ex-FIFA number two in bribery case

GENEVA

PARIS Saint-Germain chief Nasser Al-Khelaifi and FIFA's disgraced former secretary general Jerome Valcke have been indicted in Switzerland for alleged corruption in the attribution of football broadcasting rights.

The Swiss attorney general's office (OAG) said in a statement on Thursday that the two had been charged "in connection with the award of media rights to various World Cup and FIFA Confederations Cup tournaments."

A third, unnamed suspect in the case -- described by Swiss prosecutors as "a businessman in the sports rights sector" -- was also indicted, the statement said.

Al-Khelaifi, who is also the boss of Qatari television channel BeIN Sports, is suspected of giving inappropriate gifts to Valcke -- including rent-free access to a luxury property -- in order to secure broadcast rights to prestigious events, including the World Cup.

Valcke, formerly ex-FIFA boss Sepp Blatter's right-hand man, is suspected of awarding those rights in exchange for bribes.

"The investigations revealed that Valcke had received undue advantages from both co-accused," the OAG statement said.

It found that Valcke was refunded a down payment of around 500,000 euros that he had made to a third party on the purchase of a villa in Sardinia, after Al-Khelaifi purchased the villa through a company instead of Valcke.

AFP

Hagi stars while Jota and Kamada hit Europa League hat-tricks

PARIS

DIOGO Jota of Wolves and Daichi Kamada of Eintracht Frankfurt hit hat-tricks, but the man at the heart of the most remarkable Europa League display on Thursday night had a familiar name: Ianis Hagi, who inspired an unlikely Rangers fightback.

In the first leg of the round-of-32, Wolves beat Espanyol 4-0, Eintracht beat Salzburg 4-1 and Rangers beat Braga 3-2 at Ibrox.

Arsenal won 1-0 at Olympiakos and, in early games, Manchester United drew 1-1 away to Club Brugge and Celtic's visit to Copenhagen finished with the same score.

In a battle between two European heavyweights Bayer Leverkusen held off Porto 2-1.

Jota, who hit three in the last pool game in November and had not scored since, struck the first from close range, the second from a narrow angle and the third from outside the area. Ruben Neves hit a typically spectacular volley and Wolves crushed the club struggling at the bottom of La Liga.

"We competed well and we were clinical," said Nuno Espirito Santo, the Wolves coach. "For me, the organisation and another clean sheet is important. You know my view that everything starts from there."

In Frankfurt, Kamada, a 23-year-old Japanese midfielder, hit the first after 12 minutes. Two minutes before the break he broke from the halfway line to score a second. He added a third with a header in the 53rd minute.

He then turned provider, starting the move which ended with Filip Kostic netting Frankfurt's fourth.

Kamada has not scored in 17



Manchester United's Harry Maguire heads the ball clear under pressure from Wolverhampton Wanderers' Romain Saiss during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Wolverhampton Wanderers, at Old Trafford, in Manchester, England, Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020. (AP)

Bundesliga games this season, but Thursday's hat-trick gave him six in the Europa League, all in his last three games and scored over a span of 178 minutes.

He becomes the third highest Japanese scorer in European club competition behind Shinji Kagawa, who scored 11 for Borussia Dortmund and Manchester United, and Liverpool's Takumi Minamino who has so far also scored 11, all for Salzburg.

In Glasgow, Braga dominated the first hour and led with goals by captain Fransergio and Abel Ruiz.

Hagi started the fightback in the 67th minute, cutting in from the right and shooting in off the post. His father Gheorghe, who won the UEFA Cup, from which the Europa League evolved, with Galatasaray in 2000, celebrated in the stands.

Joe Aribo then scored a remark-

able second, weaving and barging through the massed Braga defence and when he finally burst clear, the Nigerian international finished with composure.

With eight minutes left, Rangers won a free-kick. Hagi stepped up. His shot hit the wall and then arced slowly into the corner of the Braga net just out of reach of goalkeeper Matheus.

Rangers had saved themselves with three goals in 15 minutes.

"I think we've rediscovered ourselves, certainly from the second-half performance," Rangers manager Steven Gerrard told BT Sport.

"We showed unbelievable character, we ran hard for each other, we were more compact, more organised, we had a better shape and we were on the front foot more in the second half."

- Late strike -

Arsenal also struck late in Greece. In the 81st minute, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang chased a long ball and kept it in play before passing inside to Bukayo Saka. The youngster hit a hard, low cross which Alexandre Lacazette turned in from close range.

Olympiakos had seven strikes on target to six by the Gunners but Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno stopped everything.

"It's my job to make saves," said the German. "At the end when you have a clean sheet, I'm happy. We won this game and we have the away goal so we're happy."

Anthony Martial struck a crucial away goal as Manchester United came from behind against Belgian league leaders Brugge.

Nigerian forward Emmanuel Dennis lobbed a stranded Sergio Romero from 30 yards to give Brugge the lead on 15 minutes at a chilly, rainswept Jan Breydelstadion.

Martial though hauled United level before half-time with an excellent run and finish after pouncing on a defensive lapse from Brandon Mechele.

"It was a difficult game against a well-organised team, under difficult conditions. I don't think it was one of the best games anyone has seen," said United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

"It was a bit sloppy in terms of concentration but conditions with the pitch and ball makes it hard."

"We got an away goal, we got a draw and we're at home next week. Hopefully we can finish the job."

Elsewhere, Celtic keeper Fraser Forster saved a late Jens Stage penalty in a 1-1 draw away to FC Copenhagen after Odsonne Edouard's opener was negated by an effort from Senegalese striker Dame N'Doye. **AFP**

For Napoli fans, the team is a religion and Maradona is god

NAPLES, ITALY

WHEN Lionel Messi climbs up the steps from the moat surrounding the field at the San Paolo Stadium on Tuesday and emerges into the Champions League spotlight, he'll be stepping onto sacred ground.

The ground where fellow Argentina great Diego Maradona achieved some of his most memorable exploits and where the player he is often compared to is still revered with god-like status.

Just ask Alcide Carmine, the owner of a coffee bar in downtown Naples that features an altar dedicated to Maradona.

"For us, Maradona is more than a man. He's a god. We Neapolitans love soccer and live for soccer," Carmine said in an interview over an espresso. "We can never forget what he did for us."

The altar inside Bar Nilo features what is claimed to be a strand of Maradona's hair inside a rotating, transparent box. It's labeled "miraculous hair."

Carmine took possession of the hair in 1990 when he found himself on the same airplane as Maradona while returning from a Napoli away game.

"When he got up some of his hair was left on the headrest," Carmine said. "I kept it and then I had the idea to do this."

After leaving Barcelona -- where Messi now plays -- Maradona led Napoli to its only two Italian league titles in 1987 and 1990, plus the 1989 UEFA Cup. He also led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title, scoring a goal with his first against England in the quarterfinals that became known as the "Hand of God."

Napoli had never won anything significant before Maradona's arrival, and he was treated as a savior by a city lacking in basic social services.

"We saw with our own eyes the miracles that he created," Carmine said. "Other miracles are just stories."

Carmine got the idea of creating a shrine to Maradona from the vast array of small altars lining the dark alleyways of Naples -- the candles of which used to help people find their way before the advent of electrical lighting.

Carmine wasn't the only Napoli fan inspired to express his devotion to Maradona by religious rites. A short walk from Bar Nilo lies Via San Gregorio Armeno, a narrow road lined with shops selling handmade figures for nativity scenes. Alongside baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph are figurines



A bar tender prepares an espresso coffee inside the Bar Nilo where a makeshift shrine of soccer legend and former Napoli player Diego Armando Maradona is displayed, in downtown Naples, Italy, Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2019. Maradona achieved some of his most memorable exploits and in Naples is still revered with god-like status. (AP Photo)

of Maradona and current Napoli standout Dries Mertens.

"One of the first figurines we made was of Diego Armando Maradona and you can imagine how many we sold. Still today, it sells a lot," said craftsman Marco Ferrigno, who runs the most prominent shop on the street.

"Diego left an indelible mark on the history of this city -- in terms of both soccer and beyond soccer. He was someone 'sui generis,'" Ferrigno added, using the Latin term for someone in a class by himself. "We're still talking about him 30 years later."

While he doesn't like to admit it, the player whose figurine Ferrigno sells the most these days is that of Cristiano Ronaldo.

"There are a lot of Juventus fans around here," Ferrigno said. "They

live in hiding."

Among current Napoli players, the best seller is Mertens, the crafty Belgium forward known locally as "Ciro" -- the most popular of Neapolitan names.

"Ciro has really carved out a place in Neapolitans' hearts. He's like a 'scugnizzo' (Neapolitan dialect for a street kid) who was born in Belgium. Then he had second thoughts and returned to this city and now he's having the time of his life," Ferrigno said. "You have to understand that it's lucky being born in Napoli but it doesn't happen to many people. But then there are those people who discover, even if they were born in New York or in Belgium, that they belong here. Like (former Napoli captain Marek) Hamsik, too."

"Ciro's personality is really Neapolitan."

Gwiji by David Chikoko



AP

SPORT

Hagi stars while Jota and Kamada hit Europa League hat-tricks

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Simba SC ready for Biashara United



Simba SC players celebrate a goal the squad netted in a recent Vodacom Premier League clash.

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

VODACOM Premier League defending champions, Simba SC, have said they are well prepared for today's league encounter with Biashara United at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Patrick Rweyemamu, Simba SC Manager, said his charges are ready for today encounter and they are looking forward to collecting maximum points in the hands of the Marabased side.

"We are ready for Biashara United, the morale in our camp is very high as our aim is to collect maximum points, we know it will not be easy to beat them (Biashara

United) but we are prepared for them," he said.

The manager also said in today game Simba will have a full squad which include midfielder Mzimiru Yassin, who had been missing for more than a month due to an injury.

"The good thing is that so far all the players who were injured are back with the team, Yassin is now fit, so far only Miraji Athumani is the player who is still injured," he noted.

"I'm very sure tomorrow (today) our fans will be entertained by good, classic football on the pitch and results at the end of the 90 minutes," he said.

Simba are occupying the top position in league table with 59 points from 23 games.

The league leaders' head coach, Sven Vandembroeck, who prefers 4-4-2 formation, is

likely to use experienced keeper Aishi Manula between the posts today.

The defense is expected to include Paschal Wawa, Shomari Kapombe, Erasto Nyoni, Mohammed Hussien, the midfield will likely have Clatus Chama, Francis Kahata, Jonas Mkude, Hassan Dilunga and Deo Kanda while the striking force will comprise captain John Bocco and Meddie Kagare.

The two teams last met in a league match in Mara, with Simba winning 2-0.

Biashara United have been placed ninth with 32 points from 23 games.

The Mara squad's information officer Shomali Binda said they are as well ready for Simba.

He said his side's head coach, Francis Baraza, has done his homework on Simba's strengths

and he has instructed his players on what to do on the field of play.

"It will be a difficult game, but we are well prepared, we have come here (Dar es Salaam) with the aim of getting good results and I'm sure of that," he said.

Coach Baraza whose side is coming from goalless draw with JKT Tanzania, is likely going to depend on the services of veteran and experienced players, Ramadhan Chombo, Joseph Kimwaga, Ally Kombo, Novatus Dismas, Atupele Green, Captain Abdulmajid Mangalo, Aidan Mwasote and Innocent Edwin.

Another entertaining premier game today will pit second-placed Azam FC against third-placed Namungo FC, with the match set to take place at Mafali Stadium in Lindi.

Azam FC and Namungo FC

have all played 23 games and they are separated by five points.

Azam FC have 45 points while Namungo have 40 points.

The visitors' technical panel must devise a better strategy to inspire their charges ahead of this afternoon's crucial Premier League assignment.

Azam FC assistant coach, Iddi Cheche, conceded that today encounter will not be an easy task but said they are prepared for the game.

He said after their last week's 1-1 draw with Ndanda FC in the league clash which took place in Mtwara, their focus is now on this afternoon assignment.

"We know our opponents, they are a good team especially at their backyard," Cheche noted.

"They play good football, they have got young and experienced players who are very quick in terms of their attack and they are also good in defense, but as a team we are well prepared and looking forward to a win," he said.

Namungo FC is coming from a 2-1 win over KMC FC in a league game and the former's head coach Thierry Hitimana said his charges have prepared well for a clash with Azam FC.

He, however, said that his players will not be carried away by their opponents' recent performance in the league.

"We also need to be cautious against Azam FC, they are coming from a one-all draw and I'm sure today they will come out flat in search of points," he disclosed.

"But my players should at all cost play with their lungs out to collect the maximum points," he said.

TONIGHT @ 9:30

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Warawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELECT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 #News
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 5SPORTS LIVE
22:30 Bongo Hits

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
21:00 The Cruise

Poonam Yadav bewitches Australia to give India opening win

SYDNEY

A bewitching spell of wrist-spin bowling from Poonam Yadav sank Australia on the opening night of the T20 World Cup at the Sydney Showgrounds, underlining India's status as genuine contenders to win a tournament that has heaped untold pressure on the world No. 1-ranked hosts.

In front of a crowd of 13,432 - the best for a stand-alone women's cricket match in Australia - the Indians began with familiar bombast at the top of the order before the loss of three wickets for six runs lowered their expectations. Deepthi Sharma was not daunted, reverting to plan B of running as many singles as possible and guiding India to a competitive 132.

While Alyssa Healy made a much-needed return to runs and confidence at the top of the Australian order, the rest struggled for timing on a slow, dry surface that proved to be ideally suited to Yadav's art. A legbreak and three wrong'uns delivered her the wondrous figures of 4 for 19, and with the strong support of Shikha Pandey, Australia were confounded. Having entered 2020 as the world's undisputed T20 dominators, the hosts have now lost three games out of six and are no guarantee to make the semi-finals.

India boom, then bust

If it was a surprise to see Molly Strano go from missing Australia's World Cup squad to bowling the first ball of the tournament a couple of days after she was a late inclusion for the injured Tayla Vlaeminck. India's top-order approach after blocking out the offspinner's exploratory first over was not.

After she was dropped by Strano at midwicket, Smriti Mandhana found the boundary off Ellyse Perry, and Shafali Verma found her range against Megan Schutt, pinging four boundaries as the Indians vaulted to 0 for 40 from four overs.

The Australians knew they needed to maintain composure, and did so through the intervention of the in-form Jess Jonassen, who pinned Mandhana lbw on the slog sweep and was later to be the beneficiary of a foolhardy dance down the pitch by a keyed-up Harmanpreet Kaur and then a fortuitous stumping as the ball rebounded off Healy's pads. That after Verma had pulled her 15th ball straight to mid-on off Perry to depart for 29 off just 15 balls. Three wickets down for six in 15 balls made the rest of the innings a salvage job.

Sharma keeps her cool

A decidedly sluggish surface at the Sydney Showgrounds recalled some of the desperately slow pitches the Sydney Thunder men's team had played on at the neighbouring Sydney Olympic Stadium in the early years of the Big Bash League. This meant that it was fiendishly difficult to force the pace against anything but the longest of half-volleys, something Sharma recognised as she sought to pull the innings back from the brink.

AGENCIES

National Relay Championships pushed back

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE National Relay Championships, which was slated for today at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam, has been pushed back to tomorrow at the same venue, Athletics Tanzania (AT) announced.

Tullo Chambo, AT information officer, yesterday said the postponement aims at seeing to it that all athletes arrive in Dar es Salaam in time for the event as most of them (athletes) are expected in the city today.

He said the championships will involve athletes from nine regions who will compete in 100x4m and 400x4m events.

Chambo mentioned relay athletes who are expected to compete at the championships, as Winfrida Makenji, Emmy Hosea, Ali Khamis Gulam, Hassan Khamis Ali, Naima Ali Musa, Abdallah Issa Khamis, Mohammed Ali Mshamba and Simai Kombo Haji, who all come from Zanzibar.

Dodoma athletes are Binamunzi Katunzi, Ismail Tossil and Diana Matem, while Daniel Mussa, Elisha Mac-hungwa, and Japhet Kitungu are from Mara.

Arusha athletes are Boniface Inalo, Benjamin Michael, Jumanne Chacha and Andrea Robi.

Hosts Dar es Salaam have Elias Sylvester, Selemani Sabin and Jeremiah Baruti.

Singida will be represented by Ramadhan Omary, Fahadi Juma, and Petro Joseph, whilst Jacob



A section of local athletes take part in training session at National Stadium in Dar es Salaam recently to shape up for the national relay championships, to be held at the venue this weekend. Athletics Tanzania, the event's organizers, use the race to select athletes set to represent the country at international competitions, which will be held in future. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Lugaila and Bora Hassan are from Mwanza and Tabora respectively, Simiyu athletes are Matondo Magembe, Rose Lucas, Theresa Bernard and Rahel Nilla.

Coast Region will be represented by Benedictor Mathias, Regina Mpingachai, Pili Mipawa and Amos Charles.

He said the athletes were selected after performing well at regional trials.

This is the first time in more than many years for AT to host relay championship as in the past the association's emphasis was on long distance races.

Chambo said at the end of the event AT technical panel will select a team which will represent the country at future events.

"We are of the view that regions adhered to set standards (qualifying time) which we put, we ex-

pect a very good and entertaining championships so that at the end of the day," he noted.

"We will have a good team which can represent the country at future events, we are asking Dar es Salaam residents and those from surrounding areas to come to the National Stadium in big number to watch this very entertaining event," he said.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

