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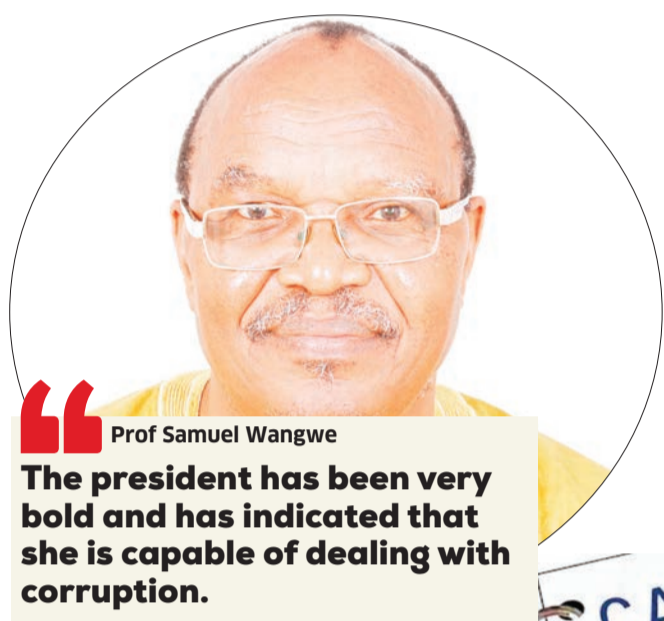


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**Prof Samuel Wangwe**  
**The president has been very bold and has indicated that she is capable of dealing with corruption.**



**Onesmo ole Ngurumwa**  
**Misuse of funds is a result of weaknesses of civil society organizations and the media in doing their work.**



**Prof Honest Ngowi**  
**The report is a good step for the government to see where to start in rectifying what has gone wrong**



**Prof Haji Semboja**  
**Losses in the 2019/20 financial year a result of weak laws and systems to run institutions where everything is done within the law**

# CAG report: Experts urge uplifting of institutions

By Henry Mwangonde

ELEVATING the role of oversight institutions is sorely needed in the wake of the annual report of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) indicating massive misappropriation of public funds, experts believe. Speaking to this paper yesterday, veteran economists and activists recommended that to prevent such wastage of taxpayers' money, the government must shift from depending on "strong personalities" to fight graft in favour of strengthening institutions of governance. Senior economist Prof Haji Semboja said the loss of billions of shillings in the 2019/20 financial year was a result of weak

laws and systems to run institutions where everything is done within the law. "This is a result of lack of competitiveness in appointing people in key positions, and as a result some laws were ignored, though he (late President John Magufuli) had good intentions but practically it went the opposite direction" he said. "There was in a sense a lack of professionalism in people who were appointed to lead some of these institutions because some people took advantage of his passion to fight graft to misuse public funds," he stated. Prof Honest Ngowi, Principal of Mzumbe University Business School at its Dar es Salaam campus said the report is a good

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## 'Credible business plan lacks in ATCL'

By Henry Mwangonde

THE loss-making Air Tanzania Co. Ltd (ATCL) was hastily revived in 2016 without a proper business plan which must be put in place before the national carrier takes to the skies again, stakeholders have advised. The latest audit report by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) released in Dodoma on Thursday shows that the government had until June 2020 used up 1.028trn/- on purchasing eight aircraft it then handed on credit to ATCL. However, CAG Charles Kichere said the national carrier had recorded a

**Do not hesitate to start a factory for fear of being branded shady. Whether you are employed, an MP or religious leader, if you have some money just open a factory**

cumulative loss of 153.542bn/- in the past five years with a 60.246bn/- loss suffered in the 2019/20 financial year alone. Reacting to the report in an interview with The Guardian yesterday, Prof Samuel Wangwe, a leading researcher, said the government must now go back to the drawing board to see what should be done with ATCL. "And this time we should consider involving the private sector. For example, we can merge Precision Air and ATCL," he said. "This can make a big change because it will bring practical experience that ATCL lacks. We should stop cheap politics on business matters. Public-private partnership has worked in many other places," the veteran policy adviser intoned. He said the president can form a team of experts on aviation to advise on the way forward, noting that the government

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## Low investment in agriculture irks MPs

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

MEMBERS of Parliament yesterday raised concerns on the poor commitment and low investment level in the agriculture sector, warning that the trend could affect the national industrialization drive. Debating the 114.8trillion/- Third Five Year Development Plan (FYDP-III), the legislators urged the government to take effective measures to improve the sector. They said the country's agricultural sector has been hit by a number of challenges with the government failing to show its commitment to address the setbacks.

West Singida MP Elibariki Kingu said the government should invest heavily in modern irrigation schemes so as to lure more Tanzanians to engage in farming. He said the government should also offer incentives to sunflower farmers to encourage them to venture into cultivating the crop thus saving the billions used to import edible oil. "Sunflower is grown all over the country, mostly by small-scale farmers. Therefore the development of the sector has a great potential for improving livelihoods and the welfare of poorer households...what is needed mostly here is determination

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## Cabo Delgado chaos: CSOs call for SADC intervention

By Guardian Reporter

CIVIL Society Organisations and social movements in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) have urged the bloc to intervene and end the ongoing lawlessness in Cabo Delgado province of northern Mozambique where an estimated 3,000 people have lost their lives and 700,000 displaced. A statement released yesterday by the regional council of the CSOs said this joint appeal was agreed upon during an extraordinary SADC Peoples Summit held virtually on Thursday. The summit urged SADC leaders to urgently deploy a high-level team of envoys to engage all stakeholders and inform a comprehensive SADC regional response to address the conflict, it said. CSOs represented underscored the need for an inclusive national dialogue process aimed at achieving lasting peace through resolving the root and underlying causes of the conflict in the zone. However, the CSOs are opposed to the ongoing military response employed by the Mozambican authorities, arguing for change of approach for a different result. The summit called for an end to military hostilities and removal of mercenary security companies, foreign insurgents

regional council of the CSOs said this joint appeal was agreed upon during an extraordinary SADC Peoples Summit held virtually on Thursday. The summit urged SADC leaders to urgently deploy a high-level team of envoys to engage all stakeholders and inform a comprehensive SADC regional response to address the conflict, it said. CSOs represented underscored the need for an inclusive national dialogue process aimed at achieving lasting peace through resolving the root and underlying causes of the conflict in the zone. However, the CSOs are opposed to the ongoing military response employed by the Mozambican authorities, arguing for change of approach for a different result. The summit called for an end to military hostilities and removal of mercenary security companies, foreign insurgents

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Zanzibar President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi attends the Southern African Development Community (SADC) meeting on Security and Safety in the Mozambican capital, Maputo, yesterday. He was representing President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Behind him is Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation minister Ambassador Liberata Mulamula. Photo: State House





Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa exchanges views with Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament, Employment, Youth and People with Disabilities) Jenista Mhagama (C) and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (Labour, Youth and Employment) Patrobas Katambi in the National Assembly in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: PMO

## CAG report: Experts urge uplifting of institutions

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step for the government to see where to start in rectifying what has gone wrong, as indicated by the CAG.

"The CAG has done a good job by indicating areas of revenue losses and misuse of funds," he said, elaborating that those responsible should take recommendations by the CAG as providing room for fixing the loopholes to avoid misappropriations next time.

The report has simply shown that there is a long way to go in the management of public funds and in fighting corruption, he stated, underlining that it is shocking to see that misuse of public funds was deep rooted in a government vowing zero tolerance of corruption.

Prof Samwel Wangwe, a veteran researcher, said the report must be acted upon because the president has already directed what should be done.

"The president has been very bold and has indicated that she is capable dealing with corruption," he said.

"There is no country which has wiped out corruption completely, even those ranking number one (in sensitivity to corruption) have some elements. However, we can do better as a country."

Onesmo ole Ngurumwa, the national coordinator for the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) said accountability and good governance cannot be maintained in the government without democracy, enabling the presence of independent oversight bodies.

"We cannot continue create accountability if we refuse democracy to flourish. In the past these things were not happening because people were afraid as there were many watchdogs, but this was not the case in the previous administration," he said.

"Previously political parties were very strong and nobody could dare; most of the people in oversight committees were very strong," he declared, insisting that misuse of funds is a result of weaknesses of civil society organizations and the media in doing their work.

"It is not easy for a single individual to fight corruption as there will be less oversight. We need to create strong institutions and systems to do this job," he said.

"We need to address corruption by using all our institutions and the private sector should also be involved," he added.



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## Low investment in agriculture irks MPs

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and commitment to transform its cultivation," he said.

If the country could wake up and decide to invest in research, quality seeds and technology, millions of Tanzanians could enjoy a better life and forget the hurdles of poverty, he stated.

He cited sunflower as among crops which the country needs to focus upon, underlining that many farmers were still locked away from the potentials that comes from the crop because they lack quality seeds.

Available statistics show that Tanzania spends over 400bn/- per

year to import edible oil, an amount which exceeds annual expenditure on agriculture, he said, pointing at the huge potential to produce edible oil from sunflower, cotton seeds and several other plants.

Nominated MP Humphrey Polepole hinted in a similar direction calling for greater commitment by the government to invest in commercial agriculture, pointing out that as the



**He urged that durable measures be taken to connect farmers directly with market opportunities inside and outside the country**

country is implementing the industrialization drive, investing in agribusiness and agro-processing was crucial.

He urged that durable measures be taken to connect farmers directly with market opportunities inside and outside the country.

The government has to make efforts and invest in information and communication technologies so as to

ensure that farmers and traders have access to accurate market information to be able to sell their produce and adequately benefit from the sector, he said.

Dr Charles Kimei (Vunjo) urged the government to establish a National Credit Guarantee Scheme so as to enable more Tanzanians to access loans and capital at low interest rate and thus initiate income generating activities for the country's development.

The government needs to stop borrowing much in the local financial institutions as this hinders those institutions from effectively extending credit to the public, he added.

## 'Credible business plan lacks in ATCL'

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can use capacity within the private sector to make the airline profitable,

Prof Haji Semboja, formerly lead researcher with the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) sympathized with the national carrier, saying the losses were largely as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic as is with many other airlines.

Still he advised that some things must be looked at before embarking on reviving an airline. "If things go the same the way we are going, we won't go far. This is a problem that we need to address because ATCL must operate as a corporate body and not the way we are going. We need to know that this is a global business and that it has standards to follow," he asserted.

"Making losses is not something accidental. It is something that has been prepared because we were wrong in the first place with our plan to revive it."

Prof Honest Ngowi of the Dar es Salaam Business School of Mzumbe University said the revelation that the company

had board members who have no experience in aviation was shocking.

"There is need for the new government to shake-up the board to initiate deliberate efforts to save the national carrier from collapsing, which is also tricky," he affirmed.

Human rights activist Onesmo ole Ngurumwa said in order to change the situation at ATCL, the president should form a team of experts from within the aviation industry preferably with local and foreign experts.

"The government needs help on this. It must seek help from people who have the know-how," he emphasised.



**It is something that has been prepared because we were wrong in the first place with our plan to revive it**



Arusha regional commissioner Idd Kimanta (L) welcomes United Arab Emirates Defence minister Lt Gen Mohammad Abdulrahim Al Ali (2nd-L) shortly after the latter's arrival at the Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) on Thursday for a private visit to the region. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

## Cabo Delgado chaos: CSOs call for SADC intervention

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and other destabilizing forces in the Cabo Delgado region, the statement underlined.

Delegates to the meeting recommended the immediate declaration of a humanitarian emergency to facilitate the mobilization of necessary humanitarian interventions.

SADC Heads of State and government need to prioritize economic emancipation of the region by reversing harmful resource extraction contracts and sovereign debts arrangements.

Additionally, SADC needs to strengthen and implement regionally binding frameworks to regulate operations of extractive

industries and ensure compliance with international human rights standards, the CSOs emphasised.

The meeting urged the government of Mozambique to comprehensively address the historic marginalization of the Cabo Delgado region through the devolution of power and authority from Maputo to the hinterlands.

The summit urged SADC leaders to send a fact-finding mission to investigate and ascertain claims of massive human rights abuses particularly rape and sexual violence against women, the statement noted.

The People's Summit received verified reports on the humanitarian, human rights and economic impacts of the

conflict showing that nearly 3 000 civilians have died so far and a further 700, 000 civilians displaced, while overall at least one million people are in urgent need of humanitarian support.

CSOs expressed concern over the absence of a robust SADC intervention mechanism or process since the onset of the conflict in 2017.

The summit rejected the thesis that the Islamic State, Al Shabaab Mozambique or other foreign militias are solely responsible for the conflict, highlighting the combusive interplay between unresolved local grievances and the collusion of native elites and foreign cartels in stripping Cabo Delgado resources, the statement added



National Assembly Speaker Job Ndugai (C) has an audience in Dodoma city yesterday with a delegation of four Ugandan legislators. The visiting MPs are team leader Jacqueline Amongin (R), Bangirana Anifa Kawooya (2nd-R), Elijah Okupa (L) and Felix Okoto Ojong. Photo courtesy of National Assembly

# CAG talks of massive rot in govt, public agencies

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE 2019/2020 Controller and Auditor General (CAG) report has revealed enormous rot in the Central Government and Public Entities, causing the nation billions in loss.

In the report tabled in the parliament on Thursday, CAG Charles Kichere said almost every ministry and other public entities had financial mismanagement.

In the ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the CAG report found out that there was poor supervision of tourism development levy which occasioned loss to the government amounting to 34.985bn/-.

He said investigation found out that about the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) disbursed about 500m/- to the Tanzania Tourist Board illegally without being deposited to the tourism development levy.

"There was weakness on the establishment and operationalization of the famous Urithi Festival which occasioned loss of about 2.1bn/-," he noted.

The report also shows that TANAPA and Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) dished out 172m/- to sponsor a festival for climbing mountain Kilimanjaro, while it was out of the allocated budgets for the two authorities.

The then minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Minister also issued directives to NCAA and Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) that 148.23m/- be paid to him to run his office businesses.

In the Ministry of Home Affairs, about 261.4 was channeled through an account for retirement of the Fire and Rescue Force. According to Kichere, the money could not be accounted for, meaning it ended in the pockets of some individuals.

At the National Identification Authority (NIDA), there was poor supervision of the projects for national IDs which caused loss to the government of a whopping 3.4bn/-.

At the Tanzania Government Flight Agency, the CAG report found out that on February 16 and 26, 2018 respectively the agency disbursed 3.9bn/- for repairing a big airplane-Fokker 28-5H-CCM of 1978.

"During my working tour at the parking lot of state aircrafts on August 19, 2020, I found out that the said repaired aircraft was not operating and it had been dumped since 2015," said the CAG.

At the Tanzania Electrical, Mechanical and Electronics Services Agency (TEMESA),

the report found out that about 81.2m/- was collected from passengers using the Magogoni ferry but the money was never taken to any of the government bank accounts.

Also at Magogoni ferry about 2.6bn/- was lost because of a poor system in electronic tickets, meaning the money might have ended in the pockets of some scrupulous officials.

At the Rural Energy Agency (REA), the CAG report revealed that poor electricity poles were mounted in Lindi Region, occasioning loss to the Ministry of Energy of about 1.1bn/-.

The CAG report further found out that several ministries took loans from three different funds-Empowering Mining Development Fund (EMDF), Roads Fund and National Water Fund totaling 4.1bn/- but they never cleared their outstanding debts.

The CAG said his investigation also found out that there were 13.1bn/- that were disbursed by different ministries without supporting documents, contrary to Public Funds regulations.

The report also showed that there was a stunning 29.7bn/- that was spent by different public entities outside the allocated budget.

On procurement, the CAG report revealed that about 15.1bn/- was spent to procure several items within the Public Entities contrary to procurement laws.

Retirement accounts of five Public Institutions from four ministries were also found to have weaknesses occasioning loss of 6.9bn/-, according to the new report. The accounts are of the Ministry of Trade and Industries, ministry of Minerals, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and that of the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government.

The government also spent 15bn/- in paying contractors after it failed to pay them on time as provided for in the contracts for executing various projects.



**There was weakness on the establishment and operationalization of the famous Urithi Festival which occasioned loss of about 2.1bn/-**

By Getrude Mbago

## Govt due to cut importation of medicines and medical supplies

THE government is planning to attain a 60 per cent internal production capacity of pharmaceutical products in the country come 2025, a move which is aimed to reduce importation of medicines and medical supplies, the House heard yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade Exaud Kigahe said this when responding to a basic question by Singida Urban MP Musa Sima (CCM) who sought to know the government's strategies to establish pharmaceutical factories in the country in order to reduce importation of the products.

The lawmaker claimed that the government has been spending a lot of money for importation of pharmaceutical products.

Responding, the deputy minister acknowledged that currently the country procures 80 per cent of pharmaceuticals requirements from overseas.

He said that although the country has several pharmaceutical factories, their production capacity is low to meet the country's demand.

The deputy Minister said that currently, the country has fourteen pharmaceutical factories of which twelve produce human medicines and two veterinary factories and one which produces medical supplies.

"The ministry is taking various actions to boost domestic production of pharmaceutical products by creating an enabling environment to attract more investors," he said.

He said that the government intention to boost domestic production of pharmaceuticals also goes in line with increasing efficiency of the available factories.

Kigahe said that other measures being taken include the formation of a national committee to deal with pharmaceutical factories, creating an enabling environment that will attract local and foreign investors to invest in the industry.

He said the government has scrapped VAT on medical packages produced

within and outside the country, and reduced income tax by 30 percent which has helped to attract new investments and expansion of factories in a period of two years.

"The government has also given special priority on medicines produced within the country through Medical Store Department (MSD)," he said

He said that the government was still making follow up on eleven investors whose construction of their factories is in progress.

"The aim is to reduce the cost incurred for procuring medicines and medical supplies from overseas by facilitating production of the products in the country which will also create employment to Tanzanians," he said.

Available statistics from Tanzania Local Pharma Strategy Paper of 2016 show that the market need for medicines, medical devices and lab reagents for the country reached 457 million US dollars (about Itri/-) annually.

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

## State readies to supply power to 1,900 villages

THE government has assured that all the 1,900 remaining villages will be connected to power during the implementation of the forthcoming Rural Energy Agency (REA-III) Phase II project which has already commenced.

Deputy minister for Energy Stephen Byabato told the House yesterday the government is well prepared to supply power in all areas and households so as to stimulate individual income and the country's development.

He was responding to a question by Kunti Yusuph (Special Seats, Chadema) who wanted to know when the government would send power to the wards of Handa, Lalta, Sanzawa and Mpendo in Chemba District, Dodoma Region.

The deputy minister said that all villages in the named wards of Chemba District will be connected

to power by December 2022 under the ongoing REA project

"A total of 27.3bn/- will be spent to implement the power connection project in Chemba District. In this, a power line of 33KV covering 681.4 kilometers as well as 0.4KV covering 50 kilometers will be constructed whereby 1,100 customers will be among initial beneficiaries," he explained.

According to him, the state owned power utility has so far connected the majority of residents in rural and urban areas it is now working to ensure that it reaches all the remaining areas within the next few years.

He said as the nation is building an industrial economy, one of

the government's strategies is to ensure that electricity projects reach every corner of the country.

The deputy minister urged the people in the villages and suburbs in the region that are yet to be reached by electricity projects to stay calm as the firm's goal is to ensure that every household is supplied with electricity so as to promote economic activities.

"Under REA project, the government has also been connecting households with power at a very low cost with some households getting the service for free, the major objective to support the government's efforts which aims to reach all people with power services and thus stimulate economic development," he said.



Communication and Information Technology minister Dr Faustine Ndugulile opens a meeting of the ministry's workers' council in Dodoma city yesterday. He is with deputy minister Kundo Mathew (R), permanent secretary Dr Zainab Chaula (2nd-L) and deputy permanent secretary Dr Jim Yonazi. Photo courtesy of C&IT ministry

# '124 audited financial statements had unqualified opinion reports'

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

THE Controller and Auditor General (CAG), Charles Kichere has revealed massive financial irregularities in different Local Government Authorities (LGAs), recommending serious interventions.

Tabling his Annual Audit Report for the year ending June 2020 in Dodoma on Thursday, he said his office handed over 900 audit opinions to all entities out of which 243 were handed over to the central government.

Others are LGAs (185), Public Corporations (165), Development Projects (290) and Political Parties (17). Out of these 800 were unqualified opinion, being 89 per cent, 81 were adverse opinion equivalent to 9 per cent, 10 were qualified opinion (1per cent) and nine others were disclaimers of opinion (1per cent).

In LGAs, he said, out of 185 audited financial statements, 124 received unqualified opinion reports, 53

received adverse opinion reports, while eight of them were slapped with qualified opinion.

He named the eight LGA which received qualified opinion reports include Shinyanga District Council (DC). Others are Itigi DC, Singida DC, Igunga DC, Sikonge DC, Urambo DC, Momba DC and Tabora Municipal Council.

In the shocking 2019/2020 report, the CAG report shows that about 18.8bn/- was collected by different LGAs but was never taken to any government owned bank account.

In about 22 LGAs, the CAG report shows that about 1.34bn/- was collected without considering or outside the Local Government Revenue Information System (LGRICIS). "Revenue collection outside the official system is likely to be squandered by unscrupulous officials and it increases chances for corruption acts," he noted.

The CAG's audit report further shows that there were transactions

amounting to 4.8bn/- that were removed from the revenue system without supporting documents and that sometimes the removal of the transactions was not verified by accounting officers.

The report also indicates there was uncollected money amounting to 30.9bn/-." "I went through various reports of revenue collection in the LGRICIS and realized that 30.9bn/- was not collected by 124 LGAs from sales of land plots," he said.

In a dramatic turn of events, the CAG report shows that about 179.5m/- which was collected from various sources of four LGAs was spent even before being banked.

Another 2.3bn/- was collected by different agents in 18 LGAs but the money was never submitted to the said authorities, the CAG report further reveals.

Kichere who spent over two hours briefing journalists on the report revealed also that there were also

transactions of 36bn/- that had several disputes which until June 2020 were yet to be incorporated in the revenue system of 67 different LGAs. LGAs are also charged with a task of providing loans to women, youth and Disability groups. However, the 2019/2020 CAG report shows that about 37.8bn/- was yet to be repaid.

The report further showed that there was another 34bn/- that was disbursed to 95LGAs for implementation of various development projects but until June 2020, the money was yet to implement the targeted projects.

Contrary to section 55 of the Tax Administration Regulations, there was 5.5bn/- that from 58 LGAs that was disbursed but during the CAG's auditing there was no proof for electronic receipts.

In the report, nine LGAs were confirmed to have made dubious transactions, amounting to 614.5m/-, the money which ended in the pockets of unscrupulous public officials.

JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA  
KATIKA MAHAKAMA KUU YA TANZANIA  
TANGA  
SHAURI LA MIRATH NA 1 LA 2021  
MIRATHI YA MAREHEMU PETER MATHEW  
KIANGI  
DHIDI YA  
AIDA NANGUMA  
KIANGI.....MWOMBAJI WA USIMAMIZI  
WA MIRATHI  
KWA YEYOTE ANAYEHUSIKA NA MIRATHI HII

Mwombaji wa usimamizi wa mirathi ya marehemu Peter Mathew Kiangi amefungua shauri la mirathi mbele ya Mahakama Kuu ya Tanzania - Tanga. Shauri limepangwa kutajwa tarehe 5/5/2021 saa tatu asubuhi. Hivyo basi kwa kupitia tangazo hili kwa yeyote anayehusika na mirathi hii popote pale, fika Mahakamani kwa tarehe tajwa hapo juu. Endapo hutahudhuria shaurini, shauri hili litasikilizwa na mwombaji atasikilizwa na kupewa usimamizi litasikilizwa upande mmoja na kutolewa uamuzi. Imetolewa na kutiwa saini na muhuri wa Mahakama Kuu ya Tanzania - Tanga leo tarehe 16/3/2021

## BoT satisfied with the country's economic growth - Prof Luoga

By Guardian Reporter

BANK of Tanzania (BoT) governor Prof Florens Luoga said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has expressed satisfaction with the country's economic growth against the world's economic slump caused by the outbreak of COVID-19.

In statement, the central bank governor said that MPC met in April 6th 2021 to evaluate the banks performance as well as implementation of the financial policy.

Prof Luoga said the committee deliberated to reduce policies to further facilitate economic growth and increase lending to the private sector as part of measures to control and maintain inflation at between 3 and 5 percent in the 2020/2021 financial year.

He said that MPC was worried on the global economic recession caused the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak that it might affect the country's economy. He said despite the pandemic outbreak there are hopes of increased exports and investments.

"The committee observed that our economy grew at 4.7 percent in the first quarter of 2020. The growth was mostly due good performance of the construction, agriculture, transportation and mining sectors," he added noting that with the good growth progress of other sectors, the country is likely to achieve its economic growth target of 5.5 percent.

In 2021, the economy is projected to grow by 5.7 percent or more due to continued investments, business formalization as well as the various measures taken to improve investment and business environment and increased bank lending to the private sector.

"The country's inflation rate remained low at between 3 and 5

percent," he said.

In its Thursday report, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) stated that annual headline inflation rate for the month of March, 2021 has decreased to 3.2 percent.

Releasing the statistics, the Acting Director of Population Census and Social Statistics, Ruth Davison said, "The decrease of the headline inflation explains that, the speed of price change for commodities for the year ended March, 2021 has decreased compared to the speed that was recorded for the year ended February, 2021"

She noted that the decrease in annual headline inflation rate for the month of March, 2021 is mainly attributed to the decrease of prices for non-food items for the year ended March 2021, compared to the prices recorded in March, 2020.

Some of the non-food items that shows a price decrease for the month of March, 2021 compared to the prices for the month of March, 2020 includes, diesel by 17.7 percent, kerosene (13.5), petrol (8.0) and gas (4.1).

According to the acting director, food and non-alcoholic beverages inflation rate has increased from 3.6 percent in February, 2021 to 4.3 percent in March, 2021.

Minja noted that in comparison with other East Africa countries of Kenya and Uganda, the annual headline inflation rate in Kenya for the year ended March, 2021 has increased from 5.78 percent recorded for the year ended February, 2021 to 5.90 percent for the year ended March, 2021.

In Uganda, the annual headline inflation rate for the year ended March, 2021 has also increased from 3.8 percent for the year ended February, 2021 to 4.1 percent for the year ended March, 2021.



Arusha Regional Police Commander Justine Masejo (L) shows journalists yesterday cannabis he said police officers impounded during a crackdown earlier this week. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

## Tanzania embarks on fresh bid to up cotton production

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

TANZANIA has embarked on a fresh bid to revamp production of cotton—a key economic cash crop which has seen a lacklustre performance in its production for some years.

During the 2019/2020 financial year, the government mandated the Agricultural Seed Agency (ASA) to coordinate a strategic project for the production of improved seeds for the crop.

In a successful result, the state-owned agency (ASA) in cooperation with the Tanzania Cotton Board (TCB) has so far managed to produce at least 8,270 tonnes of cotton seeds.

ASA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Sophia Kashenge told The Guardian in an interview that the seedlings were produced in 38,000 hectares areas.

"Through the new program, we have also managed to reduce seeds production cost from 96m/- to 42m/-," she detailed.

She said the agency was

currently packaging the seeds in special sachets, the new packaging system which has enabled the agency to serve at least 25 tonnes of seeds that used to be misplaced.

A previous research by the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) revealed grim statistics that performance of the key sub-sector continued to shrink annually due to diverse factors.

Poor technology in grinding cotton seeds, packaging, weight cheating among sellers as well as poor quality of cotton seeds stands tall among key factors said

to fuel for lacklustre performance of the cotton industry in Tanzania.

Despite being a key cash crop in improving the economy, in Tanzania cotton is still a smallholder crop with most farmers maintaining small farms, ranging between 0.5 and 5.0 hectares, yielding at 550 to 750 kilogram per one hectare.

Tanzania stood amid best cotton producers in the continent as the country used even to outsmart Burkina Faso who are currently dominating the continent's cotton production.



Motorists have a tricky time on Thursday negotiating their way through a flooded section of Dar es Salaam's Chang'ombe Road following a downpour. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## World Bank commends debt service suspension initiative

By Guardian Reporter

WORLD Bank Group President David Malpass has commended the decision by G20 to extend the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) through 2021 saying the bank is working closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to support implementation of the G20 common framework.

Malpass made the remarks recently at the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting.

"I urge all G20 countries to disclose the terms of their financing contracts, including rescheduling, and to support the World Bank's efforts to reconcile borrower's debt data more fully with that of creditors," he noted.

He said participation by commercial creditors and fuller

participation by official bilateral creditors will be vital.

G20 countries should instruct and create incentives for all their public bilateral creditors to participate in debt relief efforts, including national policy banks and to act decisively to incentivize the private creditors under their jurisdiction to participate fully in sovereign debt relief efforts for low-income countries.

"Debt relief efforts are providing some welcome fiscal space, but IDA countries need major new resources too, including grants and highly concessional resources," he said.

From April to December 2020, the first DSSI period, net transfers to IDA and LDC countries were close to \$17 billion, of which \$5.8 billion were on grant terms. New

commitments were almost \$30 billion, making IDA19 the single largest source of concessional resources for the poorest countries and the key multilateral platform for support.

Malpass however noted that to recover from COVID-19 the G20's support for advancing IDA20 by one year is more needed.

In 2020, the World Bank achieved a record 65% growth in commitments; and a rapid doubling of trade and working capital finance to help fill the banking vacuum that hit private sectors.

In 2020, Bank-wide commitments topped \$100 billion for the first time, and we expect new vaccination operations in 50 countries by mid-year.

COVID-19 will leave lasting scars on developing countries,

from closed schools and physical stunting of children to lost jobs, the depletion of savings and assets, and growing debt overhangs.

The crisis came on top of persistent development challenges, including stagnant median incomes, fragility and violence, and damage caused by climate change.

In this context, I welcome the G20's work on supporting the most vulnerable countries and commend the Italian Presidency for prioritizing people and the planet.

On climate change, the WB President underscored the need for ambitious new targets for climate financing and steps to have impact in improving the trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions and saving lives and livelihoods through adaptation.

## Govt to adopt smart irrigation systems, says deputy minister

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

IN efforts aimed to improve agriculture and food security in the country, the government has unveiled commitment to adopt smart agriculture irrigation systems and increase irrigational hectares of land 1.2 million by 2025.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture Hussein Bashe told the National Assembly yesterday when responding to a question from Timotheo Mnzava (Korogwe Rural, CCM).

In his basic question Mnzava sought to know the government's plan to rehabilitate irrigation infrastructures at Mkomazi river basin in Korogwe District, Tanga Region.

He said that the government had promised to construct a modern dam at the Mkomazi basin to improve irrigation farming in the area but it hasn't done it for years.

"To combat the effects of climate change, we need integrated strategies and one of them is investing in sustainable irrigation that recognizes the role of farmers and the challenges they face, so it was important for the government to invest its efforts and improve irrigation infrastructures at the Mkomazi scheme," he said.

Responding, the deputy minister said that the government has been taking several measures to ensure that it improves irrigation and expands irrational hectares across the country including the Mkomazi basin.

"Mkomazi Basin is located at Manga Mikochoeni village in Mkomazi ward, Korogwe District in Tanga.

This scheme has a total of 750 hectares that are suitable for irrigation farming and the government has improved irrigation infrastructures in 300

hectares among the 500 hectares which are currently under irrigation," Bashe said.

The deputy minister said that a total of 6.4bn/- is needed to improve irrigation infrastructures at the Mkomazi basin of which 4.04bn/- is for the construction of a dam and 2.34bn/- for the improvement of various infrastructures at the basin.

Bashe further said that the government was also planning to purchase more modern irrigation equipment so as to improve irrigation

In a supplementary question Rashid Shangazi, (Mlalo, CCM) sought to know the government's plan to improve irrigation infrastructures in the Pawaga and Ruaha Mbuyuni irrigation schemes.

According to him, the two schemes have been badly affected with floods but the government is yet to rehabilitate infrastructures, something which affects irrigation activities in the area.

Responding, Bashe acknowledged that heavy rain pounded last year and this year affected badly infrastructures the Pawaga and Ruaha irrigation schemes.

"The government has already taken measures and is now working to ensure that all infrastructures in the schemes are restored to allow farmers to continue with their activities," he said.

Reports show that the country has 29.4 million hectares suitable for irrigation with different levels of development potentials categorised in three potential areas, high, medium and low potential. The National Water Policy (2002) set out the future direction for the water sector in achieving sustainable development and utilization of the nation's water.



Iringa regional commissioner Ally Hapi (L, foreground), Iringa's Tanzania National Roads Agency (Tanroads) regional manager Daniel Kindole (C) and Iringa Municipal mayor Ibrahim Ngwada (R) pictured yesterday having an eyewitness account of the implementation of the project involving the expansion of Iringa Airport. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya

## 4 fishermen reported dead as boat capsizes in Lake Victoria

By Guardian Correspondent, Bunda

AT least four fishermen have died after their boat capsized in Lake Victoria, police said yesterday.

Speaking to this paper yesterday, Mara Regional Police Commander, Daniel Shilla confirmed the incident saying three other fishermen survived after they managed to swim.

RPC Shilla said the fishermen drowned on Wednesday night.

"I have been informed on the deaths of fishermen in Lake Victoria, they all died after their boat was hit by strong storms," said the police commander.

Neruma ward councilor, Michael Maungo and the ward

executive officer, Shinji Shinji mentioned the deceased as Kenedy Lukundo (25), a resident of Mwiluluma village, Jophuley Mazigo (19) residing at Kisorya village, Zacharia Ruhumbika (17) and Masalu Mafuru (22) all residing at Kenkombyo village in Bunda District.

Maungo explained that there were seven fishermen in the fishing boat, but three among them cheated death after they managed to swim.

"We have lost four people; we received information on their deaths from the three fishermen who managed to swim to a safer area," said the Neruma ward councilor.

Maungo added that soon after

they received information on the incident, they organized villagers as well as the ward rescue team which managed to recover all three bodies.

He said the deceased were buried on April 8th 2021.

In November last year, three Tanzanian fishermen were killed after their boat capsized in Lake Victoria.

Richard Abwao, the Simiyu Regional Police Commander, said the drowned fishermen were residents of Busega District.

Boat accidents are increasingly common on East Africa's major lakes, including Lake Victoria, which is surrounded by Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

By Yvonne Mkondani

THE United Nations (UN) has called on the international community to make tangible improvements in the face of injustice and poor governance to create a better future for young people across the world.

Leaders across the world need to "move beyond platitudes" about young people, and deliver a better future for them all, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the 10th Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, which kicked off on Wednesday.

The UN chief underscored that "tangible improvements" are required in education, employment, environmental protection and digital connectivity - "through a just, inclusive, green and sustainable recovery."

"The UN's first-ever system-wide Youth Strategy, Youth2030, is our commitment to strengthen our work with and for young people," he said, referring to the UN monitoring platform on how it is responding to the needs of youth in the Covid-19 crisis and its work in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Yet more must be done (and) we need you to continue showing the way on critical issues, such as racial justice and gender equality. And we need you help us make peace with nature and forge a transition that takes us beyond fossil fuels into a world of renewable energy and net

## UN pleads for efforts to create better future for young people

zero emissions," he told the participants.

The UN Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake said that more than 11,000 young people from all over the world had converged virtually for the forum, making it the largest gathering of youth at the UN in the organisation's history.

She underscored it as an opportunity to celebrate their "resilience, drive, creativity, and leadership in building a more sustainable, just, and inclusive world for all, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

"We need to show the generations before us that those of us who are Millennials and Generation Z are walking the talk when it comes to inclusivity and equality," said Wickramanayake, urging everyone to "hold decision-makers accountable for their actions" and to advocate for more youth representation where decisions are being made.

The youth envoy said that over 1.8 billion youth face issues "that no other generation has encountered," including the climate crisis, conflicts and systems of inequality that "pose a threat to young people's lives and futures."

"We are at an intersection. Despite the hardships of the past year, we have an unprecedented

opportunity to recover better together, reimagine the status quo and build a new normal based on values of justice, equality, intersectionality, and sustainability - with young people front and center," she said.

The ECOSOC President Munir Akram saw the forum as a time to reflect on a decade filled with crises, as well as achievements.

To address the challenges, he outlined the need to defeat the Covid-19 by equitably vaccinating "everyone, everywhere," and maintained that efforts must be made to recover from the pandemic-induced recession and "revive the prospects" of achieving the SDGs by 2030.

"The future belongs to you, the youth," he said. "We need your energy, your ideals, your boldness, your imagination, your innovation, to build the structure of a peaceful, prosperous and equal world order."

The two-day event features plenary sessions, interactive thematic and regionally-based discussions, and provides an opportunity for a rich exchange of views and ideas on innovative solutions to issues of relevance to young people on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and also on the SDGs under review in the ECOSOC and the High-level Political Forum in 2021.



Custard apple vendor Robert Magawa (L) attends to a customer, Godfrey Swai, along Dodoma City's Sango Street yesterday. He gave the going price as 1,000/- per three apples. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

## Govt gets set to hire 6,000 teachers for primary, secondary schools by this June

By Getrude Mbagu, Dodoma

THE government yesterday said it will hire 6000 teachers in primary and secondary schools by June 2021, so as to address shortage of teaching staff in various public schools in the country.

Deputy Minister, the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, David Silinde made the statement yesterday when responding to a question by Deodatus Mwanyika (Njombe Town, CCM).

"This is to implement the recent directive issued by President Samia Suluhu Hassan who directed for the immediate deployment of enough teachers in schools to address the huge gap of the professionals in various primary and secondary schools in the country," the deputy minister

said.

Silinde said that during the hiring process teachers who are currently volunteering in various public schools will be given priority.

In his basic question, Mwanyika wanted to know the government's plan to address shortage of teachers in various schools so as to improve provision of education.

Responding, Silinde said the government recognizes the challenges facing the education sector in the country and it was working hard to address all of them.

He said that most of the teachers will be allocated to the schools with critical shortage of the professionals especially in rural areas.

"The government is still working on the shortage of teachers, there are more than 6000 teachers who

will be dispatched to various areas in the country by June, this year as an effort to address the problem" he said.

Silinde said that in efforts to address shortage of teachers, the government hired 10,666 teachers and deployed them in various primary schools and 7,515 secondary school teachers in the period between December 2015 and September 2020.

"In Njombe District Council where MP Mwanyika comes from, the government hired 21 teachers in primary schools and 111 secondary school teachers in the period between December 2015 and September 2020," the deputy minister said.

He also said that the government has been transferring teachers to the areas which are in dire need of the professionals especially in rural areas.



### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Madrasa Early Childhood Programme – Zanzibar (MECP-Z) is an Early Childhood Development (ECD) organization supported by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). MECP-Z has been implementing ECD programs in Zanzibar for over 25 years. MECP-Z received full registration as a pre-primary Teacher Training Institute and is working in partnership with the government and other local and international ECD stakeholders to support early childhood development and care for child development in Tanzania.

MECP-Z has secured grants from Global Affairs Canada and Armstrong Foundation, through Aga Khan Foundation to support Early Childhood Education in Zanzibar and Lindi in the next four years. The project is aimed at strengthening delivery of quality, gender-responsive, and inclusive education, early childhood development, and other sustainable development services in Zanzibar and Lindi

To help achieve the goals of the project, MECP-Z is looking for the well qualified personnel to fill in the following positions.

#### 1. TEACHER TRAINER (2 Positions in Pemba and 1 Position in Unguja)

##### a) Roles and Responsibilities

- Participate in the identification of new teacher trainees, verification of document and admission of students into teacher training college.
- Facilitate delivery of high-quality teacher training assigned to them, in charge of lecture rooms, in charge of students in the room allocated to them, in charge of resource rooms.
- Ensure high-quality learning in different subject assigned, participating in discipline and examination committees when called upon.
- Work closely with principal to ensure timely preparation and administration of examinations at the teacher training college and ensure high quality record keeping and reporting.
- Carry out support, mentoring and assessment of teachers undergoing training.
- Work closely with principal to ensure proper student record such as attendance and examination result are always kept.
- Support marketing effort undertaken by MECP-Z to increase enrolment of students at Teacher Training College.
- Support program teachers to establish effective parental involvement in school activities and children's learning.
- Collect and collate data and statistics pertaining to the nature of the task/assignment.
- Attend school management and other meeting relevant to the program whenever the need arises.
- Attend staff development courses, seminars, and conference when the need arises.
- As member of team, participate in joint activities organized by the MECP-Z from time to time within the organization and outside the office.
- Provide consultancy services when needed.
- Develop success stories of the faculty and communicate within the organisation.
- Undertake studies and research on early childhood development.
- Always ensure safeguarding.

##### b) Qualifications and Experience

- At least Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Development or Degree in Education, Masters is an added advantage.
- Experience working as a facilitator of participatory learning and active grassroots engagement.
- Experience with technologies and best practices for instructional manuals and teaching platforms
- Possesses social organization skills and experience in Educational chains.
- At least 2 years previous experience as a trainer, corporate training specialist or related position.
- Able to multi-task, prioritize, and manage time efficiently.
- Strong in computer skills (Ms. Word, Excel, and PowerPoint)
- Good communication skills in speaking and writing both English and Kiswahili.

#### 2. PROJECT OFFICER (1 Position -Lindi)

##### a) Roles and Responsibilities

- Conducting project activities at field level, according to the laid-out project objectives, targets, and timelines as assigned by the Academic Manager.
- Supporting community mobilization, engagement, and assessment of needs to ensure achievement of project objectives.
- Coordinating a diverse range of community level stakeholders, including local government authorities, for the successful co-implementation of activities at field level.
- Facilitating engagement of target communities by technical partners as needed.
- Participating in strengthening the MERL function through improved collection and effective use of data, including facilitating and reporting on community response to activities.
- Developing timely and quality progress reports, public information items and/or publications for the project.
- Providing up-to-date information on the progress of the project implementation at the field level including successes, risks, and challenges with sound recommendations for responses.
- Promoting gender-sensitive, inclusive, and active community participation in the development and implementation of the project activities.
- Maintaining a good working relationship with the local government authority and other community leaders as well as key local partners.
- Ensure safeguarding at all time.

##### b) Qualifications and Experience

- A Degree in social studies, education, community development, or any other relevant qualification.
- Minimum 5 years' experience working in community development field tapping into community resources and linkages.
- Experience working in Professional Development of Teachers
- Experience working in Integrated Early Childhood Development
- Demonstrated ability to manage and facilitate community partnerships.
- Competent in the use of MS Office software (Excel, Word, Access, PowerPoint, etc).
- Knowledge of digital data collection tools and digital financial services is an advantage.
- Proven ability to design community mobilization, sensitization, awareness raising and action activities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills - proficiency in English and Kiswahili is mandatory.
- Self-motivated, good organization and management skills including a demonstrated ability to prioritize workloads.
- Ability to work with multiple tasks, demands and deadlines, with a positive and constructive attitude under minimal supervision.
- Able to learn from and adapt to complex situations.
- Able to work independently, remotely, and within a team.

#### 3. OFFICE ATTENDANT (1 position- Pemba)

##### a) Major roles and responsibilities

- Cleaning and maintain the sanitary of the premises which includes Offices and College along with surrounding environment. This goes along with ensuring the maximum hygiene of all office premises facility including kitchens, toilets, boardroom, and offices.
  - Attend to Guests of the Office in a maximum hospitable manner.
  - Maintain Stores and record of the inventories.
  - Control the supply of office supplies and office utilities.
  - Safeguard the Organization's fixed assets.
  - From time to time, take charge of petty cash float and purchase of office supplies and utilities.
  - Ensure safeguarding at all time.
- ##### b) Qualifications and Experience
- Completed Secondary Education (Form 4), a Certificate (NTA level 4) of Office administration or related field is an added advantage.
  - Excellent written and verbal communication skills - proficiency in English and Kiswahili is mandatory
  - Competent in the use of MS Office software (Excel, Word, Access, PowerPoint, etc)

##### All applications should be sent:

- Via email to: [recruit.mecpz@akdn.org](mailto:recruit.mecpz@akdn.org)
- The deadline for application is 18th April 2021 16:30.
- Applicants should send their Application Letter and CVs to:

Programme Director  
Madrasa Early Childhood Programme – Zanzibar  
P. O. Box 3716 – Zanzibar  
Kiponda – Zanzibar

##### Note:

- All emails should bear a heading of the post applied for and the location.
- MECP-Z provides equal employment opportunities for all. Women and People with Disabilities are highly encouraged to apply.

## Livestock ministry embarks on strategy set to improve quality of hides and skins

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THE Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has embarked on a strategy to improve quality and quantity of animal skins and hides within the country.

The on-going strategy has already seen establishment and registration of at least 17 modern skins and hides storage premises (warehouses) for professional storage of the vital animal-based raw materials.

Acting Director, Production and Marketing, at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Stephen Michael told this paper that the government has also identified, registered and trained 113 skins and hides inspectors in 13 regions.

"Apart from the inspectors, we have also picked and trained a number of skin graders from across the country. Their role is to grade the skins and hide as per required quality standards," he said.

Michael added that throughout the strategy a total of 1,154 skimmers have been trained on recommended skinning methodologies.

"We have also supplied them with modern equipment, including more than 500 special skinning knives to help them execute their role more professionally," he added.

Michael added that the parent ministry in partnership with the Prime Minister's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) was also conducting a country-wide training to veterinary officers and pastoralists on skinning, skin processing and storage.

The training, according to him, targets to capacitate the pastoralists to avert and mitigate numerous livestock skin-based diseases, but also empower the

pastoralists to adopt best hybrid livestock with needed skin and hides potentials.

"For instance, last year the government spent at least 3bn/- to distribute anti-bacterial sprays, including paradox to livestock keepers across the country," he detailed.

He informed that despite being the second country in the continent with large livestock species Tanzania has yet to benefit from the leather sector as at least 45 percent of skin and hides are being ruined at preliminary stages, often at skinning and processing.

"We have decided to implement this strategy following the fact that at least 90 percent of home-based skin are still of sub-standard, the situation which thwart few available leather plants to produce at their capacities, he unveiled.

The official noted that Tanzania was currently producing a total of 11.77 million pieces of hides and skin in a year which suffices to produce 60 million pairs of leather shoes. He said the country's annual demand for leather shoes was at 54.5 million pairs.

However, he revealed that the economic sector was facing myriad challenges including massive exportation of pieces of skin and hides, mostly in Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana.

During 2018/2019 financial year, Tanzania fetched 6bn/- from exportation of skins to the country, whereby during last year the figure rose to 9bn/-.

"Despite earning the country lucrative profits, the major challenge is that in most parts of the country the animal skins are used for meal purposes, hence no need for processing, this weakens efforts among local stakeholders in adopting best practices on skinning, processing and storing," he added.



Karatu district commissioner Abbas Kayanda (L) has a word earlier this week with Dofa Health Centre staff when inspecting healthcare delivery activities. Photo: Correspondent Allan Isack

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development ministry has said it is working on ways to enable taxpayers to pay part of their debts in phases and electronically instead of paying the entire debt at once.

The current system forces the taxpayers to pay all their debts at once, something which affects those who sometimes do not have enough money to pay at the time.

Deputy Minister for Land Angelina Mabula told the National Assembly here yesterday that the online payment system is simple and people can settle their dues without going to the ministry offices.

"This system is very simple the only challenge is that, it does not allow customers to pay part of their debts, the experts are currently working on it so that people can make payment of any amount they have in hands until they complete the whole amount

## Govt working on system to help taxpayers to pay debts in phases

to but in a scheduled timeframe," she said.

She was responding to a supplementary question by Special Seats MP Mwanaisha Ulega (CCM) who had wanted to know when will the ministry enhance its payment network to allow people to clear their debt without visiting the ministry offices.

The deputy minister, however, said that the government has no plans to scrap land ownership transfer fees because they were imposed to boost the country's revenue collections.

She was responding to a supplementary question by Mtama Legislator Nape Nnauye (CCM) who sought to know whether the government was ready to scrap the ownership transfer fee.

Mabula said that the

government operation depends on taxpayers thus the removal of the fee will affect some of its activities and what the ministry is doing is to make frequency reduction of the fees.

Elaborating further, Minister William Lukuvi said that more than 90 percent of Tanzanians who are being issued with customary title deeds are not paying either annual fee or ownership transfer fee adding that they have no limitation on ownership like other title deeds issued in urban areas.

In her basic question, Nyasa MP Stella Manyanya (CCM) had wanted to know the government plans to review land ownership transfer fees because the current charges are not friendly to poor Tanzanians.

Responding, Mabula said that land transfer ownership is being

done basing on the Land Act (chapter 113) Land Registration Act and other related laws.

She said that her ministry was responsible for overseeing land valuation fees, inspection fees ownership transfer fee and registration fee.

Mabula said that registration fee is affordable to all Tanzanians and the ministry has been reviewing these ownership transfer fees several times.

"In 2018/2019 premium charges were reduced from 7.5 per cent to 1 percent which is charged only once during the land ownership process in urban areas and 2.5 per cent in other areas," she said.

She added that the ministry has also reviewed land formalization charges from 250,000/- to 150,000/- while other district councils charge up to 50,000/-



A resident of Dar es Salaam's Goba suburb fetches water of suspicious quality from Tegeta River for domestic use earlier this week, citing lack of better and safer options. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

By Martin Mwitaa

## Women in Africa unveils 2021 entrepreneurs' programme

WOMEN in Africa (WIA) have hit the ground going for the 2021 women entrepreneurs' programme, aimed at boosting their businesses and confidence.

With a call for application, the intensive programme targets an initial 540 finalists who will benefit from continental and global visibility, group mentoring, networking with leaders and investors, and a virtual training camp.

The programme is crafted to help participants learn how to

pitch their business to potential investors, build a relationship with investors, write a business plan and brand their products.

The programme, WIA 54, is open to women from all African countries.

First launched in 2017, the programme promotes women entrepreneurs in Africa who are at the early stages of running a business.

The deadline for applications is May 5, with applications being

judged according to social impact, innovation, business plan, growth potential and the capacity of teams to implement their plan.

A jury of patrons and WIA representatives will select 54 stars from among the 540 finalists, whom will be invited for a customised support and training programme as well as individual mentoring. The African continent is reported to have the highest percentage of women entrepreneurs in the world.

Over a quarter of adult women in sub-Saharan Africa are entrepreneurs, according to industry data, with women said to invest up to 90 per cent of their income in education, health and food for their family.

Men only invest up to 40 theirs, according to WIA.

"Investing in businesses led by women can transform societies," said Aude de Thuin, founder of Women in Africa, "We are aiming to help women entrepreneurs

to succeed and to become role models for the next generation.

The WIA 54 programme was initially available to 54 women.

The goal is to offer the programme to 10,000 women by 2030. The programme is organised through WIA's Endowment Fund, WIA Philanthropy.

WIA Philanthropy's patrons are Société Générale, Roland Berger, Orange, Stop Hunger, AXA, Inetum, Meridiam, Honoris United Universities, DS Avocats and Total

Foundation. It is the foremost international platform dedicated to the economic development and support of African women entrepreneurs.

Its main programmes are WIA 54 - annual pan-African training programme for women entrepreneurs, WIA CODE - which focuses on digital skills' learning for the next generation and WIA YOUNG LEADERS - which identifies and supports the continent's young leaders.

## NGO provides financial education to 96 pupils

By Correspondent Crispin Gerald

BRAC Tanzania Limited has provided financial education to 96 pupils from Mapambano Primary School to highlight the importance of building financial resilience for their future.

The initiative implemented under the slogan 'Learn-Save-Earn' aims to convey key messages of the Global Money Week campaign and empowering pupils and youth to not only learn to manage their money wisely, but to help them transfer their knowledge to their families and the community at large.

Speaking during the event earlier this week, Rehema Salum BRAC Tanzania officer said the training was a great opportunity for pupils to learn about financial management and help them understand the best means of using money for development.

She said the event was conducted under the theme: 'take care of yourself, take care of your money' which highlights the importance of building financial resilience and staying healthy in the current context where the world is combating Covid-19," she said.

Mapambano Primary School teacher, Sharif Kalenga acknowledged BRAC Tanzania for empowering pupils with financial education, the knowledge which will help them to plan properly for their spending.

"This is a good foundation for pupils as it prepares them to have good management of funds to be able to achieve their future dreams," he said.

Global Money Week (GMW) is an annual financial awareness campaign initiative led by Child and Youth Finance International (CYFI) built to inspire children and young people to learn about money matters, livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

GMW takes place in March

every year where organisations across the world organise their own GMW events in keeping with the theme shared by the GMW Organising Team at Child & Youth Finance International (CYFI).

It is estimated that less than 1 percent of all children in the world have access to financial education and financial inclusion, and one billion children live in poverty. Financial illiteracy leads to many young people struggling with large amounts of debts, which results in negative repercussions to their development and well-being.

GMW believes that educating children and young people about their social and economic rights, responsibilities are key to creating a generation of capable adults, who can make wise decisions for their future.

Furthermore it is important for children and youth to build the best savings habits from an early age in order to cultivate key financial management skills for later in life while developing livelihoods skills or receiving entrepreneurial training.

Every year during the Global Money Week, BRAC takes the opportunity to be part of the awareness campaign by ensuring it plays its part in sharing financial education with children and youth so that they can learn to save and spend money responsibly when they are adults.



**This is a good foundation for pupils as it prepares them to have good management of funds to be able to achieve their future dreams**



The state of environmental hygiene at Dar es Salaam's Mabibo mixed-goods market, popularly known as Mahakama ya Ndizi, is fast deteriorating chiefly owing to mud induced by the ongoing rains. Correspondent Miraji Msala captured this scene yesterday.

## President Samia expected in Uganda for signing of oil deals

KAMPALA

THE long wait for Uganda's Final Investment Decision for oil and gas could come to an end this Sunday, following talks between government officials and industry leaders from Uganda and Tanzania.

Tanzania President Samia Hassan Suluhu is expected in Uganda for talks that should culminate into the signing of the deals on Sunday II, according to a top official from the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"President Samia will be on her journey in a few hours for talks, which will climax with the signing ceremony on Sunday," the official said.

This is President Samia's first

state visit since her elevation to replace the late John Pombe Magufuli, as the president of Tanzania last month.

"Something major is expected to happen this weekend, regarding Uganda's oil," confirmed Herbert Ssempeggo, Senior Corporate Affairs Officer at the Uganda National Oil Company, without giving details.

The late Magufuli was due in Kampala on March 22nd for the three-way signing of the crude oil export pipeline deal between the governments of Uganda and Tanzania and the French oil giant Total, the lead investor. However, he died a week before the due date.

Kampala then announced that the deal would be signed the early

half of April, to pave the way for the construction of the 1440km export pipeline from Western Uganda to the Tanzanian Indian Ocean Port of Tanga.

According to concluded discussions so far, construction of the pipeline will be completed within 36 months of the signing of the deal, and this will commence the commercial production of oil.

A six billion barrel-per-day refinery is also planned to process crude oil and the finished products will be consumed by the local and regional markets. President Magufuli had vowed that it would take as short as 18 months and wanted all the other processes fast-tracked. The project is due to cost USD3.5 billion.

The final talks before the final deal is signed touch on the crude oil transportation, the transport tariffs as well as the shareholding structure of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Company, EACOP.

According to the current structure, Total SA owns 45 per cent shares in the company, while China's CNOOC holds 35 per cent.

Another 15 percent is held by the government of Uganda through the UNOC, with the other 5 percent held by Tanzania through the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation. Uganda first discovered commercially viable oil deposits in 2007, but production dates have been postponed several times by legal and tax disputes.



Preparations for the construction of a sidewalk in progress at Ubungu in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

## CDC Africa boss urges AU member-states to fight Covid-19 vaccine misinformation

By Special Correspondent

THE Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said on Thursday that Covid-19 vaccines are safe, urging African member states to 'fight misinformation' and encourage uptake in vaccination.

Dr John Nkengasong's comments follows assessments of AstraZeneca's vaccine by the

European Medicines Agency released on Wednesday, citing a possible link between the vaccine and rare blood clots.

"Really a sincere request to countries and to the media and the community that we join forces to fight misinformation and inaccurate propagation of false information with respect to vaccines. There's plenty of that in the social media. And I think our

greatest concern and fear is that it becomes the predominant factor in this equation, which would not benefit anybody", he said.

Dr Nkengasong said the discovery is testament to the "strong surveillance systems" put in place by independent drug advisory bodies "that led to the identification of those rare events."

The EMA, the World Health

Organisation and numerous other health authorities have said repeatedly that the AstraZeneca vaccine is safe and effective and that the protection it offers against COVID-19 outweighs the small risks of rare blood clots.

Speaking to the African Union, he said: "Remember, vaccines plus vaccination equals life saved and economy saved."

## Elephants in Africa get more protection

By Special Correspondent

CONSERVATIONISTS across Africa have welcomed a recent decision to upgrade the African savanna elephant and forest elephant as "endangered" and "critically endangered" species.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is the global authority on the status of the natural world, on March 25, announced the upgrade on its Red List of Threatened Species. It said the elephant species face existential threats. It said their populations are declining due to poaching and habitat loss.

The latest IUCN Red List includes 134,425 species, 37,480 of which are threatened with extinction.

Over 8,000 species are listed as 'Critically Endangered' and over 14,000 as 'Endangered.' But it's the new status of the African elephants that attracted the most attention.

"The new report should attract more attention to forest elephants. Less visible and easily monitored than savanna elephants, they tend to be overlooked by the governments and donors, and their needs are overshadowed by those of their larger cousins," said Kathleen Gobush, the lead assessor of the African elephants and member of the IUCN species survival commission—the African Elephant Specialist Group.

"We welcome the upgrade and hopefully governments all around the world will take this seriously," said Bashir Hangi, the communications manager at the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

"Elephants are one of the most highly sought after species by wildlife traffickers and we must also upgrade the level of

protection." "Treating elephants like any other species puts their survival in danger and unless measures are taken by governments to narrow the space for operation by the traffickers, we will not achieve much," Hangi told The Independent.

"We support the IUCN decision at this time to update the African forest elephant to critically endangered and the savanna elephant to endangered, and believe it tracks with criteria in accordance with their red-listing process," Dr Philip Muruthi, the vice president of the Africa Wildlife Foundation in charge of species conservation and science said.

In order to establish the level of risk, experts at IUCN finally agreed that African elephants are actually two species. The savanna elephant is larger, has curving tusks, and roams the open plains of sub-Saharan Africa while the forest elephant is smaller and darker, has straight tusks and lives in the equatorial forests of Central and West Africa.

Bas Huijbregts, the African species director at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said the potential positive conservation impact of splitting forest and savanna elephants into separate species cannot be overstated.

"Challenges to both species are very different, as are the pathways to their recovery," he said.

The forest elephants' population has plummeted by 86% in the last 31 years while that of the savanna elephants has dropped by 60% in the last 50 years, according to the IUCN.

The IUCN noted that both species whose current population is estimated at about 415,000 have suffered sharp declines since 2008 due to a significant increase in poaching that peaked in 2011.

# The Guardian

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SATURDAY 10 APRIL 2021

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

## Congrats to centre meant to curb global human trafficking

**H**UMAN trafficking is the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labour, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others. This may encompass providing a spouse in the context of forced marriage, or the extraction of organs or tissues, including for surrogacy and ova removal. Human trafficking can occur within a country or transnationally.

Human trafficking is a crime against the person because of the violation of the victim's rights of movement through coercion and because of their commercial exploitation. Human trafficking is the trade in people, especially women and children, and does not necessarily involve the movement of the person from one place to another.

People smuggling (also called human smuggling and migrant smuggling) is a related practice which is characterized by the consent of the person being smuggled.

Smuggling situations can descend into human trafficking through coercion and exploitation. Trafficked people are held against their will through acts of coercion, and forced to work for or provide services to the trafficker or others.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), forced labour alone (one component of human trafficking) generates an estimated \$150 billion in profits per annum as of 2014. The Organisation has reported that child workers, minorities, and irregular migrants are at considerable risk of more extreme forms of exploitation. Statistics

shows that over half of the world's 215 million young workers are observed to be in hazardous sectors, including forced sex work and forced street begging.

Ethnic minorities and highly marginalised groups of people are highly estimated to work in some of the most exploitative and damaging sectors, such as leather tanning, mining, and stone quarry work.

Human trafficking is the third largest crime industry in the world, behind drug dealing and arms trafficking, and is the fastest-growing activity of transnational criminal organizations. Human trafficking is condemned as a violation of human rights by international conventions.

Each year, an estimated 800,000 people are trafficked globally, though the true number may be higher. In a quest to arm officials and stakeholders around the globe with more accurate and trusted data to better understand and address this global problem, the University of Georgia has established a new interdisciplinary centre to combat human trafficking through research, programming and policy development.

The Centre on Human Trafficking Research and Outreach will be housed in the School of Social Work, and David Okech, an associate professor at the school, will serve as the centre's first director.

This collaborative effort aims to identify better ways to measure the prevalence of trafficking while crafting real-world solutions to best equip nongovernmental organisations and policymakers with the tools and information they need to combat trafficking.

## Youth of Africa key drivers to sustainable food security

**S**USTAINABLE agriculture is farming in sustainable ways meeting society's present food and textile needs, without compromising the ability for current or future generations to meet their needs. It can be based on an understanding of ecosystem services. There are many methods to increase the sustainability of agriculture. When developing agriculture within sustainable food systems, it is important to develop flexible business process and farming practices.

Agriculture has an enormous environmental footprint, playing a significant role in causing climate change, water scarcity, land degradation, deforestation and other processes; it is simultaneously causing environmental changes and being impacted by these changes. Developing sustainable food systems, contributes to the sustainability of the human population. For example, one of the best ways to mitigate climate change is to create sustainable food systems based on sustainable agriculture. Sustainable agriculture provides a potential solution to enable agricultural systems to feed a growing population within the changing environmental conditions.

Africa has the ability to produce enough food to feed its population and beyond, and develop agribusiness that would offer decent employment to youth. There is a need to make sound investment to develop agro-processing so as to add value to farm produce and effectively linking primary producers to industries.

About 250 million Africans are hungry - almost 20 per cent of its 1.2 billion people - according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UNFAO).

According to information from the World Bank, Africa's agribusiness (food and beverage) market is projected to reach \$1 trillion per year by 2030 from \$313 billion in 2013.

There is a huge market within Africa that is yet to be exploited, indicating that the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) should be a mechanism to enable and ease the intra-Africa trade bottlenecks. The difficulties in trading in Africa are because of the colonial model, arguing that Africa was activated and motivated never to look to itself for self-reliance and relevance.

Indeed AfCFTA must really push Africa towards a mindset where it can build regional value chains; build research and development; invest in locally, nationally and regionally relevant technology for agricultural transformation - affordable, user friendly and accessible and durable.

Africa needs to improve market intelligence information and standards; in some countries, the danger is posed by middlemen that exploit primary producers; infrastructure, transportation, storage and logistics are as key as access to risk capital/finance and mentorship and support.

African businesspeople have been thinking that they cannot be successful without selling to Europe. There are Africans such as Nigerian businessman Aliko Dangote who became billionaires thanks to selling to Africa.

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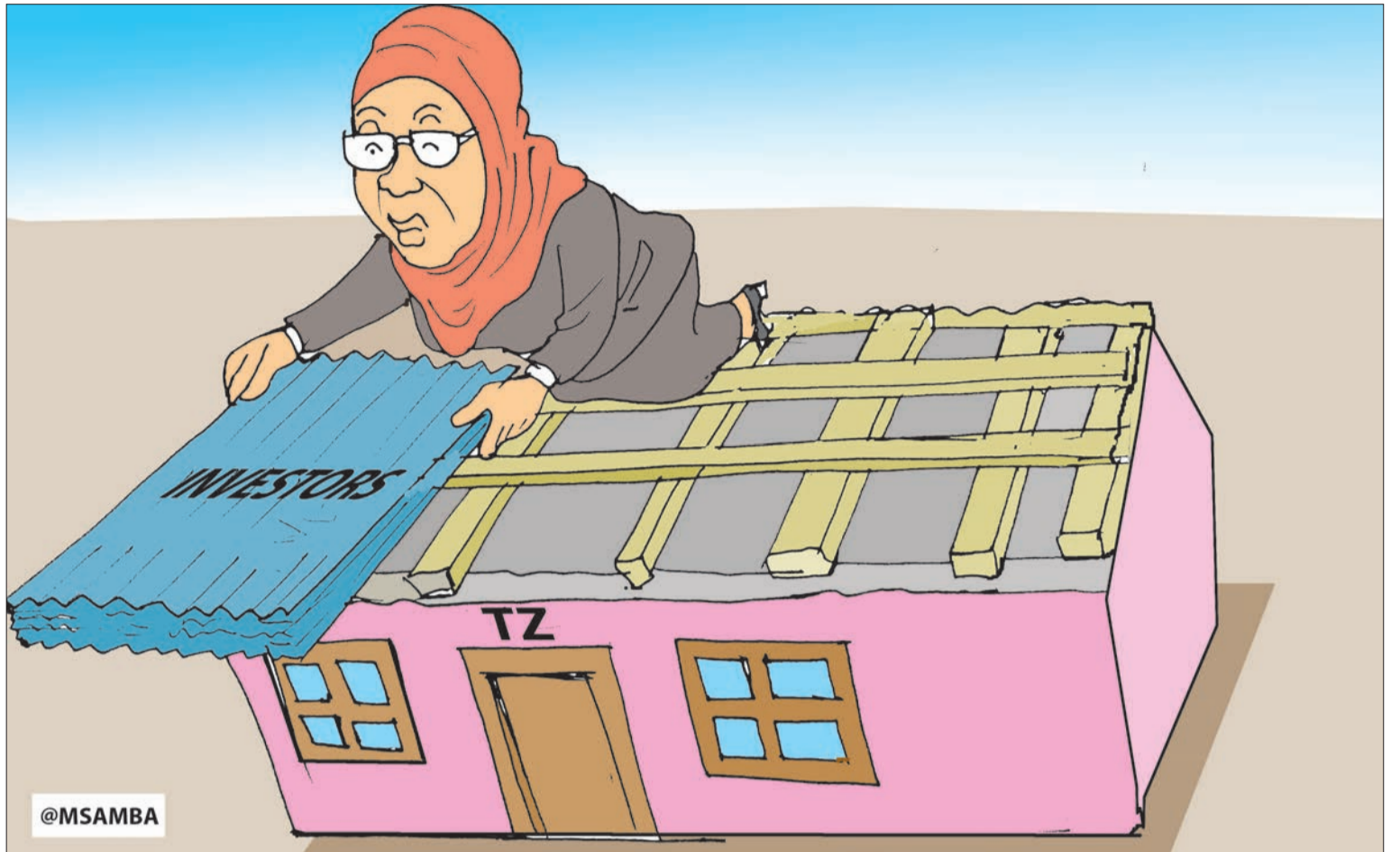
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## Used vehicles ban makes economic sense

By Special Correspondent

**T**HE new requirement to obtain individual import licences for all second-hand light vehicles that are 10 years or older from date of manufacture is not unreasonable although the details of what may be allowed and what will not be allowed are yet to be made clear, but presumably imports will be tough.

The main intention is to ensure that buyers directly, and Zimbabwe indirectly, get value for money and especially for the foreign exchange component.

Buying some semi-wreck with little life left is not value for money and can be dangerous. Spares are expensive, and for older cars are often difficult to find.

Breakers yards might have bargains from accident damaged vehicles that were smashed some distance from the part wanted, but recycling parts from one worn-out wreck to one just slightly less worn-out is not likely to benefit anyone except the car breaker.

A great part of the problem is the source of the cars, and what happens to them between the original owner selling them and the Zimbabwean buyer picking them up at a port or the border post.

In several developed countries, and especially a swathe of Europe and in Japan, cars older than five years come under new rules. These can vary.

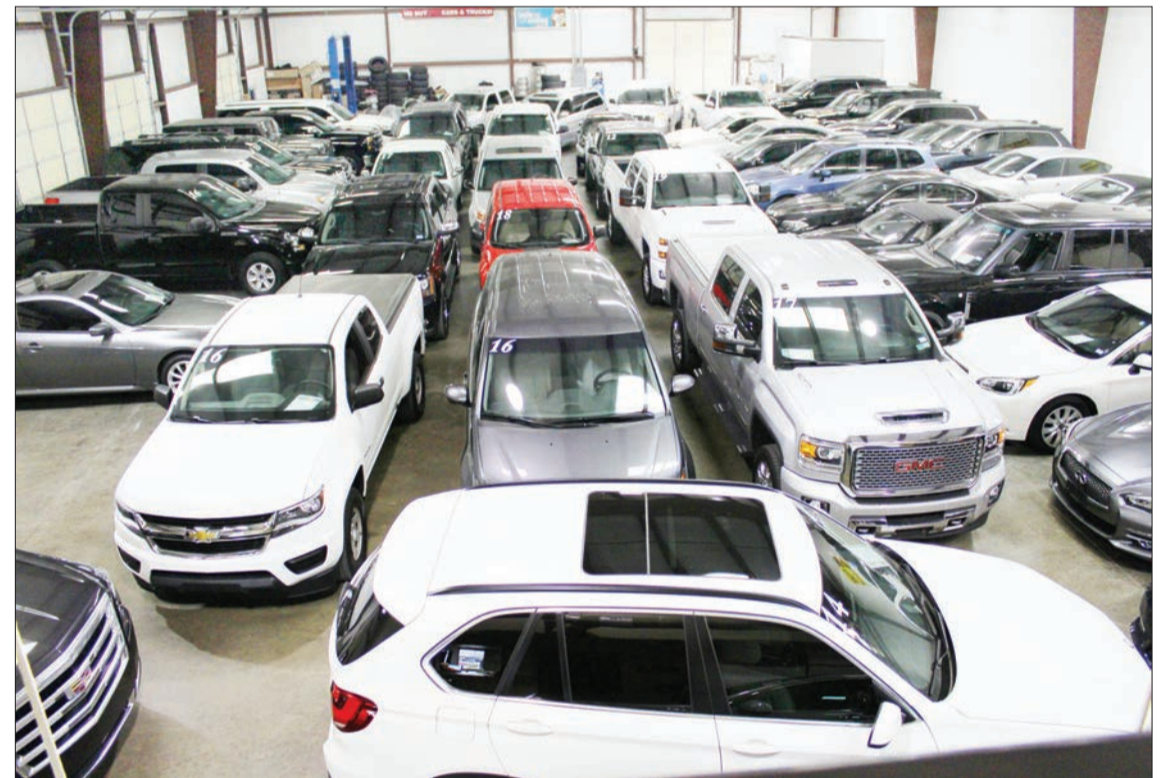
In Britain, for example, a car needs on its fifth birthday what is colloquially known as a MOT certificate, that is one required by the "Ministry of Transport".

This is the result of an extensive laid-down examination, although licensed private mechanics do the work, and all dubious or worn parts have to be renewed and the car made fully functional with all lights and the like.

This is not much different from what Zimbabwe's VID will do in a full work-over on a car. The certificate then needs to be renewed every year, but many older cars are kept on the road, especially if they are not used for a lot of long journeys since the cost of the required spares and other work is often cheaper than the payments on a new car.

In Germany, the system is a bit tougher and more expensive, so more people replace at five years although there are groups of car enthusiasts who are prepared to go through the processes for vehicles they particularly want to keep.

By the time we reach Japan the rules are probably the toughest in



the world. It is not impossible to keep a car more than five-years-old on the road, but the effort and the costs are so high that the car needs to something like a classic sports car or a limited-edition luxury model before anyone will take the great deal of trouble involved.

This five-year limit is regardless of the condition of the car, the mileage done, or any other factor. For most Japanese this means replacing their car at least every five years, although some might do this sooner while the older car still has a year or two left under the limit and so can be sold.

In many ways this has commoditised cars. A fair number of Japanese car owners simply sign a contract that includes the monthly payments, insurance and servicing, and just drive for the years of the contract and then replace with a new car and new contract.

One additional problem in Japan's high density cities, where most people live, is securing off road parking. In many you have to have the parking bay before you can own a car, and that means getting rid of the old one before you get the new one.

The result is a lot of five-year-old cars that have been serviced regularly and often have a lot of mileage left before they need to go to final scrap heap, but at the same time these cars have almost zero resale value in Japan. And they are all right-hand drive.

A business has arisen whereby a lot of suitable cars, five-years-old, are bought very cheaply and intended for export. The cheap price is in some ways a bonus for the original Japanese owner.

At least they do not have to pay someone to take it away for recycling and destruction as assorted scrap metal and plastics, or just get that scrap value, minus the cost of having someone dismantle the car and sort the scrap.

But the question must arise as to what happens to these cars between the five-year sale and the eventual export. Obviously they are stored somewhere and not necessarily under cover. And five years of storage, which brings the car up to 10-years-old, cannot do it any good, no matter how careful the dealer is. The car might have spent a bit of time at a showroom or factory when brand new waiting for a buyer and so starting the five-year clock, but this will not make much difference.

The new import regulations do make sense. For a start a Zimbabwean buyer needs to think why no one else bought the 10-year-old car in the previous few years. And if it is very cheap why is the dealer dumping it at that very low price after carrying it as stock for a few years.

While Minister of Finance and Economic Development Prof Mthuli Ncube announced what amounted to a ban on 10-year-old used cars in this year's Budget, Minister of Industry and Commerce Dr Sekai Nzenza, who has to implement the policy, is more nuanced using the import licensing rules.

She has taken these older cars off the open general import licence, so you cannot just pay the duty at the border post and drive away. You now need specific ministry permission for each and every car that is 10 years' old.

The minister and ministry have yet to give any detailed criteria of what might be allowed and what cannot be allowed. We hope there is a transition process, allowing in the older cars that are still in the pipeline between payment date and delivery, but that process should not take more than a month or two before that flow trickles to a halt.

We note that the ministry, on import licence applications, requires the payment details, so presumably can detect any cars that were paid form, but not delivered before April 2.

But then we think that the ministry needs to be very tough and basically turn off the tap. Buyers have now been warned with the precise date the new system started, so cannot complain.

The system still allows the exceptional cases, but we do not imagine there will be very many, especially as tractors, heavy trucks, earth-moving equipment and mining and construction equipment are not included in the new regulations.

That exemption of the heavy commercial vehicles makes sense. These are bought by business people who are able to make sensible commercial decisions over value, and in any case their heavy trucks are checked regularly for safety.

Government has been fair. It still allows imports of used cars, and many countries do not, and even allows bargain cars from the favoured Japanese sources that were sold several years ago. But the worst of the dead-beat cars can be barred and should be barred.



# Palestinians suffering from hunger, poverty, conflict and COVID-19

## UNITED NATIONS

**T**HE Trump administration's decision to cut off assistance to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) caused considerable hardship for Palestinian refugees during the coronavirus pandemic, particularly those in Gaza where a majority of the population are refugees and poverty is rampant due to Israel's blockade, Khaled Elgindy, a Senior Fellow at the Middle East Institute (MEI), told IPS.

Elgindy, also a Director of Programme on Palestine and Palestinian-Israeli Affairs at MEI, shared his insight with IPS following the U.N. event "Delivering Critical Assistance for Palestine Refugees: Challenges and Opportunities in a Complex Context."

At the panel, numerous speakers gathered to share the current situation Palestinian refugees are facing because of a combination of different issues: the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty, as well as the "protracted conflict" they were in before the pandemic hit.

The plight of the community at the intersection of a global pandemic and a massive conflict was articulated poignantly in a story shared at the panel by Philippe Lazzarini, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

Lazzarini said he saw "despair growing" in the refugee camps across the region and he was alarmed during his recent visits to camps in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

On one visit in south Lebanon, he met with a Palestinian refugee who said he constantly asks himself whether he would die from COVID, from hunger, or while trying to cross the Mediterranean on a dingy.

"People are struggling in their daily lives to make ends meet. People are struggling daily to ensure one meal for their family," Lazzarini said. "No one should be made to feel so desperate."

Gwyn Lewis, Director of UNRWA Operations in the West Bank, further highlighted the grave socio-economic issues Palestinians are facing.

"With the pandemic, we've seen quite a dramatic impact on the economy – 40 percent households on the West Bank kept seeing their income decline by more than half [and] unemployment increased in the camps, by as high as 23 percent. In Gaza, unemployment has hit 49 percent which is very, very dramatic," Lewis said.

Lewis' concerns were echoed by other experts who spoke with IPS following the event.

Yara M. Asi, a post-doctoral scholar at the University of Central Florida, said while Palestinians were

already in a precarious place even before the pandemic, the economic loss from the lockdown hit them hard.

"When the pandemic hit, the economy was essentially closed for weeks," she told IPS. "All gatherings were cancelled, including weddings, which is a huge industry in the summer months."

Lewis of UNRWA also pointed out that the socio-economic condition is "dire", while the community lives in parallel to the continuous issues with the occupations, including "settlement activities and demolitions."

There was also concerns for Palestinians not getting enough vaccines and how that might continue to affect their livelihoods.

"The pandemic isn't over yet and Palestinians do not yet have a significant vaccination campaign, so [the economic fallout] could be much greater," Asi told IPS. "Meanwhile, Israel has neglected its duties as an occupying power during the pandemic, only providing some shipments of masks and testing kits and then a nominal number of vaccines."

Hamada Jaber, from the Palestinian Centre for Policy & Survey Research, echoed this concern.

"The biggest challenge now is the ability of the Palestinian Authority to secure the vaccine for all citizens that are willing to take it," Jaber, a Palestinian who was born in Jerusalem, told IPS. "For now, it seems that the Palestinian Authority failed to secure the vaccine and failed to manage the little vaccines that it has in a transparent manner."

The panel took place on the same day that U.S. President Joe Biden restored a higher than \$200 million aid package to Palestine that former president Donald Trump had revoked.



When the previous US administration pulled its aid, the impact was enormous on the Palestinian people. As a result, funding for hospitals in East Jerusalem dropped, which would then go on to affect Palestinians during the pandemic. File photo

When the previous administration pulled its aid, the impact was enormous on the Palestinian people, Asi said. As a result, funding for hospitals in East Jerusalem dropped, which would then go on to affect Palestinians during the pandemic.

"Of course, during COVID, people are still getting cancer, and having high-risk pregnancies, and experiencing any other number of health ailments," she said. "So, un-

fortunately these cuts have really limited the ability for these hospitals to serve these patients."

But Elgindy of MEI doesn't believe the funding will do enough. He said the aid is "rather modest and is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Palestinian economy."

Going forward, Asi said the first priority is to make vaccines available to Palestinians.

She identified the importance of economic support that Palestinians will need, but said there is a long-term lesson as well.

"I hope the lesson learned from this is that occupation is not sustainable. Israel cannot choose to exer-

cise both maximum control over Palestinian life while assuming no responsibility for it, and limiting the ability of the Palestinian Authority to handle it themselves," she said.

Lazzarini summed up the issue in just a few words: "During a global pandemic, no one will be safe until the most vulnerable are safe."

IPS

## DHAKA

**A**LTHOUGH learning centres in Cox's Bazar Kutupalong Refugee Camp are closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mariom Akhter, a Rohingya mother of four, is grateful not only for the schooling her children have had but the training sessions she as a parent was able to attend. The skills she learnt has helped her assist her children with their education at home in a crisis.

It's something she's likely needed to help her children with over the last few weeks after a Mar. 22 fire spread through the camp, destroying the shelters of at least 45,000 people as well as important infrastructure, including hospitals, learning centres, aid distribution points and a registration centre. At least 15 people were reported dead and 400 missing.

"I have learnt many things from the sessions about the education assistance of the children that should be given in any crisis. The sessions played a significant role in ensuring education of the children during this crisis period when all the learning centres are closed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic," Akhter told IPS before the fire.

In 2017, Bangladesh became host to 1.1 million Rohingya when 750,000 people fled a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State. [Some 300,000 Rohingya had already taken refuge in the country after various insurgencies in earlier years.]

And as families settled in the Cox's Bazar Kutupalong Refugee Camp, the area had one of highest rates of primary and secondary age children out of school.

As the crisis escalated, Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the multilateral global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises, immediately allocated \$3 million to urgently scale up learning spaces for displaced Rohingya children. In 2018, the Fund increased its support with an additional \$12 million for the continuous learning of refugee and host community children. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, ECW provided partners with an additional \$2.1 million to support home-based and distance learning opportunities.

"Since 2017, ECW has continued to prioritise the learning needs and well-being of Rohingya refugees and affected Bangladeshi children in the district of Cox's Bazar. Yet, with no longer term solution in sight, we must not abandon these girls and boys to their hardship. The deadly recent blaze that ravaged parts of the camp and left 45,000 people homeless overnight is a stark reminder of the perilous and overcrowded conditions children endure in the largest refugee camp on Earth," said Yasmine Sherif, the Director of Education Cannot Wait.

"For a girl or boy living in such difficult circumstances, education is a lifeline, it is their only hope of a better future. ECW is committed to stand with them. We are preparing an additional multi-year allocation to support continuous learning opportunities for Rohingya children in 2021 and beyond, and I call on other donors to join our efforts to fill the financial gap of over \$100 million in coming years."

Akhter was grateful for the diversity of the curriculum offered to her children.

"Before coming to Bangladesh, our children did not

# Rohingya children find refuge in education



A Rohingya girl proudly holds up her drawing at a UNICEF school at Balukhali camp, Bangladesh. File photo

have the opportunity to study in this way. They only learnt Arabic from Maulavis (religious teachers). They did not have the opportunity to go far from home. They could [only] play around their houses," Akhter told IPS.

Nine-year-old Jouria never thought it possible that she would continue her education after fleeing Myanmar in 2017. Now she receives a broader education and has since learnt other languages.

"We learnt Burmese and English alphabets from the learning centres. Now we can read and write (in these languages). We learnt how to take care of ourselves through healthy and safe practices," Jouria told IPS.

## She loves school.

"We enjoy learning as these centres are equipped with educational and sports materials. The facilitators of our learning centres explain everything to us through songs and stories, writing, drawing and games."

Ten-year-old Asoma is in Grade 2. She told IPS that apart from conventional lessons, basic life-skills are also taught.

"We have learnt lessons on how to keep clean, on food habits and hygiene, when we should go to sleep and other life-skills. I enjoy learning at my centre," she said.

Asma said her learning centre was very clean, well-decorated with different colours and equipped with educational materials and toys.

"We get enough time to play at the learning centres and that's why I like my centre."

Children are also given mental health and psychosocial support and aided with behavioural and language development, among other things.

Seno Ara, a mother of three, told IPS: "Our children are being able to cope with mental trauma as they are busy making toys, drawing and playing at the learning centres."

"From the parenting education sessions, we also learn about the risks to children...how to prevent drug addiction, how to take care of our children with disabilities, and how to keep the children safe in times of crisis," Ara said.

In 2020, piloting of the Myanmar Curriculum began and is currently being scaled up.

The implementation of the ECW-funded multi-year programme is coordinated by various United Nations implementing agencies and partners, including the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Other partners include members of Cox's Bazar Education Sector, local administration, the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and the Cox's Bazar District Primary Education Office.

UNICEF Bangladesh Cox's Bazar Chief of Field Office, Dr. Ezatullah Majeed, said over 230,000 children were

reached through UNICEF-supported learning centres that received funding from multiple donors. Of these, 27,000 children – half of whom are girls – benefited directly from ECW funding. According to UNICEF, the recent fire damaged 141 of their learning centres.

"Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the learning centres have been the learning area for the children. The learning centres in the camps also provide a venue where the children get a sense of normalcy, joy, stability, and hope for the future. To date, the centres remain closed following the national directive on school closure in order to contain the COVID-19 pandemic," Majeed told IPS.

UNHCR Education Officer in Cox's Bazar, Selamawit Berhanu, said that ECW funds enabled UNHCR to reach 61,300 children and youth – both girls and boys – with home-based education during the COVID-19 pandemic. "UNHCR was able to support caregiver's in assisting learners to continue learning at home, with the support of teachers, who were conducting shed visits on regular basis," she said.

UNHCR also constructed a teachers' training centre. "The centre helps to ensure a continuous supply of well trained and qualified teachers and also allows both refugee and host community teachers to come together in one place to exchange ideas and learn from each other," she said.

UNESCO Programme Officer for Education, M. Shahidul Islam said that the agency supports parent education for community engagement and education system strengthening that benefits 88,500 children – half of whom are girls. UNESCO supports 40 learning centres in Rohingya camps and 78 host community government primary schools in the Cox's Bazar district. Since parenting education contributes greatly to the wellbeing and education of children, it is being scaled up by 15 implementing agencies through their own arrangements.

None of the UNICEF learning centres were damaged in the fire.

Nurul Islam, project manager of Plan International Bangladesh – the implementing partner of UNESCO – told IPS that parents were educated on how to care for their children as well as how to protect themselves and their families against COVID-19.

"About 3200 parents have already taken part in these parenting education sessions. Of them, 1,850 were mothers, while 1,450 were fathers," he added.

According to project officials, through educating parents, children are able to receive appropriate care from their family.

Children will continue with home-based and caregiver-based learning until COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

"The continuity in education services through the caregiver-led home-based learning has contributed positively in providing alternative learning opportunities among the Rohingya children. In doing so, it mitigates the psychosocial impact of the conflict and disasters by providing a sense of normalcy, routine, stability, structure and hope for the future," Majeed, told

IPS

# Newspapers emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic - 2

BY GRETCHEN A. PECK

ZELMAN said they regrettably had to lay off a few members of the staff and cut the freelance budget, but they were in "survival mode".

The entire newsroom began working remotely, writing exclusively for the paper's website and social media channels. Even the content of the newspaper was impacted. So much of the editorial had been devoted to the town's events and businesses - and those were shuttered, too.

The staff at the Cleveland Scene made a cultural and marketing shift, rethinking the digital platform and driving readers to it. They retooled some of the formerly in-person events and created virtual alternatives, including a popular culinary-themed series highlighting Cleveland's restaurants.

"We had always been reluctant to sell sponsored content on our sites, and we have started to do that," Zelman said, adding: "But we have strict standards; it has to be labelled as such. It's clear to our readers that it's sponsored content, but we weren't in a position to turn down the revenue."

The publisher also tapped two rounds of the Federal PPP funding. "This was company-wide, not just in Cleveland," he explained, adding: "In order to sustain our business, we felt that there was absolutely a need, and it allowed us to keep most of the employees we had and even bring back some employees. It was a lifeline in a lot of ways for us."

As a free publication that was historically supported by advertising alone, the paper had never asked much of its readers - but it became clear that it needed help this time around.

The Cleveland Scene created the Cleveland Scene Press Club, which allows readers to financially support the title, while enjoying some special perks and swag. The publisher replicated this membership model across all its titles, and it was particularly successful in the Cleveland market.

It was nearly three months before the Cleveland Scene was able to go to print again, but frequency was forever changed. Over the course of the paper's 50-year history, it had always been a weekly. Covid-19 changed that, too - now, the title is printed every other week.

For some news organisations, the losses suffered are



not merely measured in advertisement dollars or digital subscriptions. They're far more profound.

"Where do I start?" Lisa Cunningham, the editor-in-chief of Pittsburgh City Paper, pondered, noting: "I won't lie. It's been a really rough year."

As an alt-weekly, the paper doesn't merely chronicle what happens in the city limits, but it's an organic part of the community itself. Much of the content for the adver-

tising-supported title focused on the city's thriving arts, culinary and entertainment scene.

The coronavirus disease forced many of those businesses to shutter - at least temporarily - taking with them not only advertising support but also the content the paper typically covered. Still, they got the newspaper to the press each week.

"Although we increased our web stories online, we never wanted to stop printing altogether," Cunn-

ingham said, adding: "We did substantially cut our page count back just because of costs. We lost a substantial amount of revenue, so we had to figure out ways to cut costs. Page count was one of them, and cutting back on circulation, too, including the number of copies at each distribution point."

Without arts and entertainment to cover, Cunningham led the newsroom in a new direction: rebranding the newspaper as a reliable source of local hard news, primarily through its coverage of local social justice protests. One of their photojournalists covered at least 50 such protests over the course of the year.

"We found that our readers really turned to us as the

news source in town...We also broke an important story about local police lying about using rubber bullets and chemical munitions," Cunningham said.

"These are stories we'll cover even when the arts and entertainment come back," she said.

Like so many other publications, the Pittsburgh City Paper tapped the first round of PPP loans. This helped to retain staff until June, when furloughs became inevitable. Managing editor Alex Waters Gordon was one of six employees laid off. He died by suicide in October 2020.

"The heavy George Floyd and Breonna Taylor protests, in addition to Alex's suicide and the Covid-19 pandemic have taken a really heavy toll on the mental health of our reporters. It's important that we take care of them," Cunningham said.

For newsrooms and everyone else around the world, the story of Covid-19, after all, is its tragic legacy. Following the death of their colleague, Cunningham enlisted a therapist to help the staff cope with the grief.

"I try to be open, to let everyone know that they can talk to me," she said, adding: "The company set up an EAP (employee assistance programme), which we did not have before. I wish we did, but at least we're taking the right steps now to make that available."

**An E&P (editor and publisher) dispatch. Gretchen A. Peck is an independent journalist who has reported on publishing and journalism for more than two decades. We ran the first part yesterday. - Editor.**

## How worried should we be about links of blood clots to AstraZeneca's vaccine?

ZURICH

EUROPE'S drug regulator on Wednesday said it had found a possible link between AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine and very rare blood clots in adults who received the shot. Britain recommended people under 30 get an alternative COVID-19 vaccine if possible.

Here's what we know so far:

### WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

The EMA said its vaccine side effects monitoring system, as of April 4, had received 169 reports of cases of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), or clots in blood vessels exiting the brain, and 53 cases of splanchnic vein thrombosis (SVT), or clotting in veins in the abdomen.

That's out of some 34 million AstraZeneca vaccine doses administered in Britain and the European Economic Area since vaccinations started almost three months ago.

Its safety committee carried out a review of 62 cases of CVST and 24 cases of SVT, of which 18 were fatal.

Most of the cases reported have occurred in women under 60, though that could be misleading. Germany and Britain say many more women received AstraZeneca's shot than men.

Most cases occurred within 2 weeks of the person receiving their first dose.

German vaccination officials who recorded 29 cases of CVST in women aged 20 to 59 who got the AstraZeneca vaccine said the occurrence rate in that group was 20 times higher within 16 days of vaccination than what would have typically been expected.

Germany's health ministry has said 1 to 1.4 cases of CVST would have been expected during that time.

### WHAT HAS BRITAIN'S REGULATOR SAID?

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency reviewed 79 cases of rare clotting coupled with low platelets, with 19 fatalities - 13 women and 6 men. Eleven of the deaths in people under the age of 50 and three under 30.

All 79 cases occurred after a first dose of the vaccine.

### HOW DID REGULATORS COME TO THEIR DECISION?

British officials drew on statistics from the University of Cambridge's Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication to explain their recommendations that young people get an alternative shot while older people still get AstraZeneca's.

According to the Centre, vaccination with the AstraZeneca shot would reduce admissions to intensive care units by nearly seven in 100,000 people in the group aged 20-29 years old with high risk of exposure to the virus, while 1.1 people per 100,000 people in the same group were estimated as likely to suffer serious vaccine-related harms.

The risk of serious harm due to vaccination falls further the older people get, and ICU admissions prevented by vaccination rise sharply, boosting the AstraZeneca shot's benefit-to-risk ratio.

The Centre concluded only 0.4 people for every 100,000 in the 50-59 age group would suffer vaccine-linked harm, while 95.6 ICU admissions per 100,000



people would be prevented.

EMA investigators checked if the frequency of events was higher in the vaccinated population than normal background rates drawn from public health statistics or insurance records. This would be combined with a medical analysis of each case and insight from scientific literature.

In its findings, the EMA said on March 18 that, on average, just 1.35 cases of CVST might normally have been expected among people under 50 within 14 days of receiving AstraZeneca's vaccine, whereas by the same cut-off date 12 cases had been recorded.

By comparison, four women out of 10,000 would get a blood clot from taking oral contraception.

Key to the EMA's assessment that benefits continue to outweigh risks are its conclusions about likelihood of an increased risk from clotting, compared with the benefits of preventing COVID-19 and reducing hospitalizations

and deaths.

### WHAT'S THE EU DOING NOW?

The EMA said that unusual blood clots with low blood platelets should be listed as very rare side effects and countries should decide on how to proceed with their national COVID-19 immunisation campaigns.

These may vary from nation to nation, the EMA said, depending on factors like how quickly infections are spreading and whether vaccines are available. Its safety committee requested new studies, and changes to ongoing ones, to provide more information about the mechanism behind the rare clots.

AstraZeneca and European regulators have said concerns about blood disorders did not emerge during clinical trials.

### ARE THERE ANY THEORIES FOR WHAT MAY BE

### LEADING TO THE CLOTS?

Among possible causes for these rare cerebral sinus vein clots being investigated are that the vaccine triggers an unusual antibody in rare cases.

The EMA said the vaccine may trigger an immune response leading to the unusual clotting, though it acknowledged that scientists have yet to identify any risk factors that might predispose somebody to clotting combined with low platelets.

German scientists at Greifswald University concluded the vaccine is linked to the side effects, though their work still requires peer review. Andreas Greinacher, an expert on drug-induced immune responses, said specimens he has examined exhibited unusual antibodies that activate blood platelets, prompting the clots.

Greinacher is still seeking clues about why some people had clots and others did not.

## World food prices continue to soar, hitting nearly 7-year high

By Special Correspondent

WORLD food prices rose for a 10th consecutive month in March, hitting their highest level since June 2014, led by jumps in vegetable oils, meat and dairy indices, the United Nations food agency said on Thursday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 118.5 points last month versus a slightly revised 116.1 in February.

The February figure was previously given as 116.0.

The Rome-based FAO also said in a statement that worldwide cereal harvests remained on course to hit an annual record in 2020, adding that early indications pointed to a further increase in production this year.

FAO's cereal price index fell 1.7 percent month on month in March, ending eight months of consecutive gains, but still 26.5 percent higher than the same period last month.

Among major cereals, wheat export prices dropped the most, declining 2.4 percent on the month, reflecting good supplies and encouraging production prospects for the 2021 crops, FAO said.

FAO's vegetable oil price index surged 8 percent on the month to reach its highest level since June 2011, lifted by higher prices for palm, soy, rape and sunflower oils.

Dairy prices rose for a 10th month running, registering a 3.9 percent increase. FAO said one of the drivers in the sector was milk powder, which was boosted by a surge in imports in Asia, especially China, due to concerns about short-term supplies.

The meat index climbed 2.3 percent, but unlike all the other indices, it was still slightly down on a year-on-year basis. FAO said poultry and pig meat quotations increased, underpinned by a fast pace of imports by Asian countries, mainly China.

Sugar prices dropped 4 percent month on month, but was still up 30 percent on the year. March's decline was fuelled by prospects of large exports from India, FAO said.

FAO raised its forecast for the 2020 cereal season to 2.765 billion tonnes from a previous estimate of 2.761 billion, pointing to a 2 percent increase on year.



Looking ahead, FAO said it expected global cereal production to increase for a third consecutive year in 2021.

Global wheat production was seen hitting a new high of 785 million tonnes this year, up 1.4 percent from 2020 levels, driven by an anticipat-

ed sharp rebound across most of Europe and expectations of a record harvest in India, FAO said.

Above-average outputs were also expected for maize, with a record harvest forecast for Brazil and a multiyear high predicted for South Africa.

For the current 2020-21 marketing season,

global cereal utilization was forecast at 2.777 billion tonnes, 2.4 percent up on the previous year, driven largely by higher estimates of feed use of wheat and barley in China, where the livestock sector is recovering from African swine fever.

## UNICEF: One in 8 countries spends more on debt than on education, health, social protection

By Guardian Reporter

AROUND 1 in 8 countries globally spend more on debt than on social services, according to a recent report by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

COVID-19 and the Looming Debt Crisis shows that 25 countries globally - the majority of them already burdened by poverty and deprivation - spent a higher proportion of total government expenditure on debt service in 2019 than they did on education, health and social protection combined.

UNICEF Executive Director

Henrietta Fore said that children living in countries with high debt burdens and limited resources for social protection, education and health are unlikely to ever break free from poverty and deprivation.

Fore said: "The personal and public costs are enormous, leaving children, their communities and their countries with little hope for sustainable economic and social development."

"The pandemic has caused a global education catastrophe that desperately needs addressing to avoid the COVID-19 generation from becoming a lost generation. Yet, due to COVID-19 and the debt

burdens faced by these countries, we are already seeing a contraction in education budgets at a time when countries need to be investing in improving schools and education systems," said Fore.

According to Fore comprehensive debt relief and restructuring is essential to ensure a recovery that is both inclusive and sustainable so that children do not bear the double burden of reduced social services now and increased debt in the future.

He said it is imperative that international agencies, creditors, and national governments act together to reduce the debt burden and di-

rect savings towards inclusive social investments.

Global efforts are needed to protect social spending, and with it the right of every child to social security, education and health services, says the report.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, countries with the highest levels of debt service - including Chad, The Gambia, Haiti and South Sudan - were spending at least \$3 dollars on debt for every dollar going to essential social services, according to the report.

The report indicates that a quarter of low- and middle-income countries - home to 200 million

children - are currently debt-distressed or at risk of debt-distress.

While the G20 nations agreed a Debt Service Suspension Initiative covering April 2020 to June 2021, only 1 in 3 eligible countries have participated. The initiative has helped maintain spending on health and social protection in 46 participating countries.

However, education spending has already contracted over the past year. Indebted countries have also reportedly cut spending on child protection, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene services, the report says. The report said that global

response to the debt crisis is too small in comparison to the overall fiscal response to COVID 19. The debt standstill does not currently cover debt to commercial creditors, leaving middle-income countries increasingly exposed.

A new international debt restructuring architecture - that includes greater concessional support for heavily indebted poor countries, transparency on debt as part of national budget processes and coordinated action on the part of creditors is crucial to protecting children's rights in the wake of COVID-19.



## Less than two percent of COVID-19 vaccines administered in Africa

YAOUNDE, Cameroon

LESS than 2 percent of the 690 million COVID-19 vaccine doses administered to date globally have been in Africa, the World Health Organization (WHO) office has said.

African countries started to receive vaccines only five weeks ago and in small quantities.

"Although progress is being made, many African countries have barely moved beyond the starting line. Limited stocks and supply bottlenecks are putting COVID-19 vaccines out of reach of many people in this region," Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO regional director for Africa, said during a virtual news conference on Thursday.

"Fair access to vaccines must be a reality if we are to collectively make a dent on this pandemic," she added.

Some 45 African countries have received COVID-19 vaccines, 43 of them have begun vaccinations, and nearly 13 million of the 31.6 million doses delivered so far have been administered, according to the WHO.

Despite supply challenges, Moeti said COVAX deliveries are expected in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Cameroon, and Comoros in the coming week.

"Africa is already playing COVID-19 vaccination catch-up, and the gap is widening. While we acknowledge the immense burden placed by the global demand for vaccines, inequity can only worsen scarcity," Moeti warned.

She said manufacturers along with the WHO, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, African countries, development partners, and the African Vaccine Manufacturing Initiative are working hard to sustainably scale up COVID-19 vaccine production, "but this cannot be achieved overnight."

At least 114,000 COVID-19 patients have died, while more than 4.3 million cases have been registered across the continent.

Kenya is experiencing a third wave and the pandemic is showing an upward trend in 14 other African countries, including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mali, Rwanda, and Tunisia, according to the WHO.

## UNDP report: COVID-19 spurs innovation in Africa

ADDIS ABABA

DESPITE making millions sick and its terrible death toll, the COVID-19 pandemic has also presented opportunities for innovation, says a new report by the African Union and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

"Throughout the course of the pandemic, Africa has seen an increase in innovative solutions, including virus-testing robots, contact-tracing apps, non-invasive testing kits, foot-operated hand-washing stations, oxygen machines, drone medicine delivery ser-

vice, genome sequencing, AI-powered healthcare chatbots and much more," said the report, released late Tuesday.

The report titled 'Through the Pandemic and Beyond' is a work of the African Union Commission, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and the UNDP.

"These are among the 50 life-changing innovations from across the continent - and by inventors as young as age 9 - that were spotlighted by the UNDP in its inaugural edition of Africa Innovates magazine," the report said.

It said: "Many of these and other innovations were made by micro, small,

and medium-sized enterprises [MSMEs]. The economic impact of the pandemic has been especially hard on such enterprises, many of which face potential closure or bankruptcy. As MSMEs account for 90% of all businesses on the continent and 85.8% of all jobs in the informal sector, closures could lead to massive job losses and drops in consumer spending."

"Throughout Africa, people are looking inward for the innovations that will move the continent forward. We're looking ahead, to anticipate the needs of the next generations and envision a better future. And we're look-

ing to each other, to build the communities, the countries and the continent that we all know is possible," the report quoted Ahmed Ogwel Ouma, deputy director of the Africa CDC, as saying.

The African Union was one of the first regional institutions to adopt a joint continental strategy for the outbreak. Under the strategy, and in consonance with the UNDP's corporate offer to help countries prepare for, respond to, and recover from COVID-19, the Regional Bureau for Africa established a strong partnership with the Africa CDC, the report said.

# Fairer, healthier world needs no vaccine nationalism

BEIJING

**W**ORLD Health Day 2021 was commemorated globally on Wednesday, under the theme of building a fairer, healthier world.

In contrast to its previous themes, which typically focused on some specific types of disease or health threats like diabetes and food safety, this year the World Health Organization (WHO) chose a more general and abstract theme for the yearly event.

It's not that the WHO has run out of choices of disease types, or the world was free from specific health threats; it is just the still-ravaging pandemic has attested to the fact that unfairness and inequality, especially in addressing such global challenges as COVID-19, are actually more lethal than any specific disease.

## WORSENING SITUATION

The pandemic that poses equal threats to all is another litmus test for the unfairness and inequality in human society. As some developed countries have been rapidly rolling out their vaccination programs, making progress in clinching a full recovery, people in many other countries are suffering from the latest resurgence of COVID-19 infections.

In Argentina, Health Minister Carla Vizzotti warned that a second wave of COVID-19 infections "is already a fact" in the country. While in its neighboring Brazil, the national count of COVID-19 cases has just crossed the grim milestone of 13 million.

Hospitals are being overrun by patients; intensive care units in some worst-affected cities are more than 90 percent full.

The same plight prevails in other countries like Turkey, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Worldwide COVID-19 deaths are also rising once again, hurdling towards a new threshold of 3 million, with some countries and cities like Brazil, Bangladesh, and India's Mumbai having just recorded their highest number of daily deaths.

According to a tally from the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, it took more than one year for the global COVID-19 death toll to reach 2 million, but the next 1 million deaths would be added in just about three months.



A local resident receives a shot of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi on March 5, 2021. (Xinhua)

## FALSE DAWN

As most people thought that they have finally got to see the light at the end of the tunnel as the COVID-19 vaccines have been rolling out, inequality and unfairness in vaccine distribution are waking those in poor countries up to the cold truth that it is just a false dawn amid the gloom.

"COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities both between and within countries," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at a press briefing on Tuesday. "It's a travesty that in some countries health workers and those at-risk groups remain completely unvaccinated."

While some developed countries have hoarded vaccines far in excess of their needs, many people in developing countries are waiting in desperation for their first doses.

In Kenya's capital Nairobi, people have to wait in long queues and jostle for jobs, with some elderly people reportedly getting up as early as 6 a.m. to get inoculated, only to return home to try their luck again the next day.

The latest data from the Duke Global Health Innovation Center Launch and Scale Speedometer, which monitors COVID-19 vaccine purchases, finds that high-income countries already own more than half of all global doses purchased, and it is estimated that there will not be enough vaccine doses to cover the world's population until 2023.

"Many high-income countries have hedged their bets by advance purchasing enough doses to vaccinate their population several times over," it said in a study.

None of the middle- and lower-middle income countries have enough to vaccinate their entire populations. At the same time, Canada has purchased enough to vaccinate its population five times over,

said the study.

"We are fighting a very primitive organism, something between alive and dead, very organized, functioning as one, so I think we need to function as one on a global level," said Jelena Begovic, director of the Institute of Molecular Genetics and Genetic Engineering of University of Belgrade. Unfortunately, I am not seeing this, particularly in events concerning vaccination," she noted.

## MORAL FAILURE

The "inequitable" vaccine distribution was a "catastrophic moral failure" and a "failed opportunity," Michael Ryan, executive director of WHO Health Emergencies Program, said in March.

Actually, many of those developed countries have once made announcements calling for equality and fairness in the global fight against the pandemic.

However, it is easier to make the pledge to ensure equal access of all countries, rich or poor, big or small, to the COVID-19 vaccines than put it into practice, especially when the vaccines are in short supply.

"Solidarity is only expressed in media declarations. In the talks behind the closed doors, there is not any," Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis told journalists, criticizing some countries' monopoly on vaccine distribution.

tion.

According to Leon Laulusa, executive vice president of Paris-based ESCP Business School, at least 75 percent of the world's population must be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity, or nearly 6 billion people, which would take at least 12 billion doses for a double injection.

To achieve the final victory in this global fight, all countries need to take real actions to ensure fairness and equality, rather than just make empty talks and hollow promises. After all, in such a closely linked world, no one would keep safe until everyone is safe.

In this sense, China has taken more than its due responsibility. According to the latest data, China has been providing vaccine aid to 80 countries and three international organizations, exporting vaccines to more than 40 countries, and cooperating with more than 10 nations in vaccine research, development and production.

As noted by some analysts, unfairness and inequality revealed in the process of vaccine distribution are just another embodiment of the social gaps and discrimination that have long been existing in some Western countries.

And by the same token, to win the global anti-pandemic fight, and build "a fairer, healthier world," those countries need to do more. **Xinhua**

## All of humanity now belongs to one community with shared future

“COVID-19 did real damage to the global economy. The world should send a thank you note to China for succeeding in achieving positive economic growth in 2020. China saved the world economy in 2020.” Kishore Mahbubani, a Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and author of the book, *Has China Won?*, told the *People's Daily* in a recent written interview.

“Covid-19 has had a massive impact on humanity,” Mahbubani noted, adding that the pandemic reinforced the message: All of humanity now belongs to one community with a shared future.

As he documented in his book “The Great Convergence”, before modern globalization, when humanity lived in 193 separate countries, it was like living in 193 separate boats. But now, “we no longer live in 193 separate boats. Instead, we live on 193 separate cabins on the same boat. It would be suicidal for us to only take care of our cabins only. We also have to take care of the boat as a whole because if the boat sinks, our cabins will sink,” he said.

Mahbubani praised China's efforts to integrate with the world. China has continued to join the Free Trade Agreements, like the Regional Com-

prehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It has also indicated that it may join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). “This is the best contribution that China can make to uplifting and improving the human condition: to keep its economy open and continue integrating with the world,” he said.

Mahbubani believes that countries around the world should uphold and strengthen multilateralism to address global challenges. “It was a huge mistake for the US (with the complicit support of some European countries) to progressively weaken the UN multilateral system, especially by depriving it of funding,” he said.

In his new book, *Has China Won?*, Mahbubani concluded that a rational and objective analysis of the core interests of the US and China will show that there are at least five non-contradictions between the US and China. “For example, if the core goal of the US government is to improve the well-being of the American people (as it should be), and if the core goal of the Chinese government is to improve the well-being of the Chinese people (as it should be), there is no contradiction between American and Chinese interests here. Similarly,



A student receives the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine at the Beihang University in Beijing, March 24, 2021. (Xinhua)

both US and China share common interests in dealing with common global challenges like Covid-19 and global warming,” he said, hoping that his book will help to improve mutual understanding between the US and China.

However, “the Biden Administration has not worked out a coherent and sensible balance between competition

and cooperation in managing relations with China,” Mahbubani said, adding that the US should halt the trade war and withdraw all the trade tariffs and sanctions to improve the livelihoods of the American workers.

As Covid-19 is still raging across the world, Mahbubani found that some countries, including China, have handled

the pandemic well and competently, while others have not. Mahbubani believes China's success lies in its quality of governance.

“China, learning from its East Asian neighbors, regenerated a culture and system of meritocracy in its government agencies. Hence, the quality of mind of government administrators in China has been going up,” he

explained.

“The best formula for any country to apply to improve its governance was to implement meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty (MPH). This MPH formula explains Singapore's extraordinary success. It is also being implemented in China. Hence, I am optimistic that the quality of governance in China will continue to improve,” he

believes.

A rigorous academic study of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government has documented how support for the Chinese government has gone up from 86% in 2003 to 93% in 2016.

Similarly, last May, an Edelman Trust Barometer trust and credibility survey showed that trust in government in China has surged to 95 percent.

Mahbubani quoted from a Stanford University psychologist, Jean Fan, saying “China's culture, self-concept and morale are being transformed at a rapid pace - mostly for the better”.

Mahbubani believes that China will play an even more important role in the coming decade. “Countries all over the world, especially in the poor developing countries, will be looking for export markets to boost their economic growth.

This is where China can play an important role. It can open its markets faster, especially for poor developing countries. History has taught us that trade is more effective than aid in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty.

The world will be truly grateful if China can import more from the rest of the world,” he said.

## INEFFICIENCY

## Over 84pc issued with National ID numbers but only 26pc have ID cards

By Guardian Reporter

ONLY 26 percent of over 21.6 million Tanzanians who have been issued with national identification numbers have been issued to national ID cards, Controller and Auditor General, Charles Kichere has said.

In his latest audit report released this week, the CAG said since the commencement of a national registration exercise in 2012/13, only 5,621,350 registered citizens out of the 21,692,122 equivalents to 26 percent had received national identification cards by June 2020.

"In addition, as of June 2020, 18,187,698 (84 percent) out of 21,692,122 Tanzanians had been issued with national identification numbers, but had not received the respective national identification cards," the CAG's report said.

It further added that national ID cards are essential and helpful in achieving many of the goals and targets related to Sustainable Development Goals and helping the eligible citizens access various services such

as financial, health and education.

The CAG stated that the objective of the audit which was to assess performance of the Ministry of Home Affairs through the National Identification Authority, said however that there was an increase in registration of citizens from eight percent in 2013/14 to 75 percent in 2019/20 as per the National Bureau of Statistics projection.

"Although NIDA managed to register 75 percent of citizens, only 19 percent of these citizens have been issued with the NID Cards. Generally, NIDA has not managed to register all eligible Tanzanians and issue them with ID cards as targeted in the Tanzania National Five-Year Development Plan (2016/17-2020/21)," the CAG noted.

The report added that NIDA was unable to meet the registration targets in all years covered by the 2020 audit report. "The lowest performance was in year 2016/17 whereby NIDA managed to register only four percent of the targeted population and the highest performance was



Models display a national identification card bearing the name of former president John Magufuli.

registered in 2017/18 when 79 percent of the targeted citizens were registered," the report stated.

Among other bottlenecks, the CAG's report named inadequate mechanisms for issuance of national ID cards as per Section 7(1) of the Registration and Identification of Persons Regulations 2014, which requires that upon registration of a person, the registration officer shall, within six months, issue a national ID card.

"Only 19 percent of Tanzanians have NID Cards at national level initially, NIDA planned to ensure that all targeted 27 million Tanzanians have national identification cards by June 2021, however, the Authority managed to issue cards to only 5,621,350 eligible citizens, equivalent to only 19 percent of the target.

Similarly, NIDA did not issue NID cards to 16,107,483 citizens equivalent to 74 percent of the

registered 21,728,833 citizens, as of June 2020," the report added.

"It was noted that the rate of issuance of national ID cards had decreased from 38.4 to 26 percent in 2019/20, apparently due to the increase in registration and decrease in production of the cards," the CAG report noted while recommending that more resources be allocated while necessary infrastructure be deployed to regional and district levels.

"There were several reasons that led to ineffective and untimely issuance of national identification cards to eligible citizens including; low pace in production of national identification cards due to lack of first-generation raw cards for production of the cards, inadequate maintenance of NIDA production machines and lack of second-generation raw cards, which consequently made NIDA cards production machines unutilised," the report explained.

## ACTIVISM

## Activist opposed to IMF loans is spared detention after bail

NAIROBI

KENYA'S Milimani Senior Resident Magistrate Jane Kamau has declined a prosecution request to remand activist Mutemi wa Kiama for 14 days, saying there are no compelling reasons to warrant his detention. Mr Kiama was granted Sh500,000 cash bail.

He is accused of being behind a poster circulating on social media indicating that President Uhuru Kenyatta is not authorised to act or transact on behalf of Kenyans. The poster emerged as Kenyans expressed diverse opinions on the government's decision to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund.

State prosecutor Joseph Irungu Gitonga pressed for Mr Kiama to be detained for 14 days to enable cybercrime officers to examine the published graphic before deciding what charges to file against him. "The presidency is a symbol of unity and any attack on him on the institution is contemptuous," Mr Gitonga submitted.

Mr Kiama is accused of contravening various provisions of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, including false publication. Police said preliminary investigations had shown that two Twitter handles which made the publication of the poster are linked to Mr Kiama.

The publication was to the ef-



Activist Mutemi wa Kiama at the Milimani Law Courts on Thursday.

fect that "this is to notify the world at large that the person whose photograph and names appear above is not authorised to act or transact on behalf of the citizens of the Republic of Kenya and that the nation and future generations shall not be held liable for any penalties of bad loans negotiated and/or borrowed by him."

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned Kenyans protesting its loans to the government that they face job cuts, tax increases and expensive loans without its assistance.

Meanwhile the IMF has released a statement following public outcry over the government's growing appetite for debt after it approved a \$2.34 billion (about Sh257 billion) loan to Kenya, saying its bailout has saved the country from a debt crisis in the mid of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The IMF said the loan would help Kenya tackle Covid-19 in the short run and balance its books in the long run by replacing expensive bank loans with concessional financing from bilateral countries and multilateral institutions.

"The arrangements with the IMF – together with additional financing from development partners and capital markets and G-20 support under the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) – will help meet Kenya's significant medium-term financing needs including to support their Covid-19 response.

The alternative to this financing is much sharper fiscal consolidation or much more expensive borrowing on commercial terms," the IMF said in a frequently asked questions on Kenya.

The pandemic has hit Kenya's revenues and limited access to commercial loan markets, forcing the country to turn to the World Bank and the IMF seeking direct budgetary financing.

## ATHEISM

## America is losing its religion – and the effects will be long-lasting

WASHINGTON

NEW surveys show Americans' membership in communities of worship has declined sharply in recent years, with less than 50% of the country belonging to a church, synagogue or mosque.

Why it matters: The accelerating trend towards a more secular America represents a fundamental change in the national character, one that will have major ramifications for politics and even social cohesion.

By the numbers: A Gallup poll released last week found just 47% of Americans reported belonging to a house of worship, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% as recently as 1999. The shift away from organized religion is a 21st century phenomenon. U.S. religious membership was 73% when Gallup first measured it in 1937, and stayed above 70% for the next six decades.

Context: The decline in membership is primarily driven by a sharp rise in the "nones" – Americans who express no religious preference. The percentage of Americans who do not identify with any religion rose from 8% between 1998 and 2000 to 21% over the past three years, while the percent-



Faithful inside an American mega church.

age of nones who do not belong to a house of worship has risen as well.

The big picture: The story of a more secular America is chiefly – though not entirely – one of generational change. Membership in houses of worship is correlates with age, with the oldest Americans much more likely to be church members than younger adults.

But while church membership is lower among younger generations, the dropoff

is particularly stark among millennials and Gen Z, who are about 30 percentage points lower than Americans born before 1946, compared to 8 points and 16 points respectively for baby boomers and Gen X.

Children who grow up without organized religion are less likely to join houses of worship when they become adults, so it stands to reason that the secularization trend will only continue in the future, barring major

demographic or cultural changes.

Yes, but: Generational replacement – the idea that society-wide changes in values between the young and the old can be attributed to their different circumstances growing up – doesn't tell the entire story.

Even the oldest Americans have seen a slight rise in the percentage of nones, while 20% of Gen Xers report no religious affiliation, up from 11% in 1999. Details: Whatever their religious practices, Americans are increasingly rejecting many of the moral precepts found in most major religions.

A 2017 Gallup poll found a significant majority of Americans believe practices like birth control, divorce, extramarital sex, gay and lesbian relations are all morally acceptable.

In a piece last year for Foreign Affairs, the political scientist Ronald F. Inglehart argued that as birthrates have dropped thanks in part to contraception and falling infant mortality, modern societies have become less observant "because they no longer need to uphold the kinds of gender and sexual norms that the major world religions have instilled for centuries."

The catch: Just because conventional reli-

gious practice is on the decline doesn't mean Americans will have no need to fill what the journalist Murtaza Hussain calls the country's "God-shaped hole."

While the earlier phases of the civil rights movement were built on the strength of the Black church, today many young people are flocking to campaigns like Black Lives Matter that aren't religious in nature, but often adopt the language of religion, spirituality and justice.

"Political debates over what America is supposed to mean have taken on the character of theological disputations," Shadi Hamid, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote in a recent Atlantic essay. "This is what religion without religion looks like."

What's next: As religion decreasingly becomes something Americans practice, it may instead become another identity, subsumed into the ongoing culture wars. The trend may also shake up the electorate.

The journalist Matt Yglesias noted that when a white person switches from being Christian to non-affiliated, they are more likely to become a Democrat, "but when a Black person makes the same switch, the correlation goes in the other direction."

## UNIQUE

## Five boys who rescued abandoned Labrador rewarded with special surprise during Easter

CAPE TOWN

FIVE boys who rescued an abandoned Labrador they found lying in the bushes in Philippi East, Cape Town, eight months ago received a special surprise recently.

Dubbed the "Magnificent Five", the boys - Zubenathi, Luniko, Onke, Angcobile, and Sibabalo - from Sweet Home farm, an informal settlement near the Animal Welfare Society of South Africa (AWS) in Philippi, found the malnourished dog, which was unable to stand, in bushes.

They managed to find an old leather belt and used it as a collar to lead the dog to the shelter for help. The dog appeared to be accustomed to wearing a collar because as soon as one of the boys put the belt around his neck, he managed to get himself off the ground, ready to accompany

his new friends.

After several hours, the boys managed to get the dog to the shelter, where it was examined and admitted for treatment. Champs' story was shared on social media. The shelter staff promised the boys they would be rewarded for their good deeds and said they would make sure Champ found a loving home.

True to their word, an awards ceremony was held recently where the boys received certificates of bravery. Local stores Spar and Pick n Pay joined in on the celebrations by donating food and clothing for the boys' families.

The highlight of the ceremony was when Champ made a dramatic appearance looking much healthier and happier. He apparently immediately recognised the boys and trotted straight to seven-year-old



Dubbed the "Magnificent Five" - Zubenathi, Luniko, Onke, Angcobile, and Sibabalo - from Sweet Home farm.

Zubenathi, the youngest of the group.

It was a moving moment when Zubenathi placed his hands on Champs' head and bent down to kiss him on the nose. Speaking to News24,

Allan Perrins, the head of communications, resource development and fundraising at AWS SA, said the society had been waiting for an opportune time to present the boys with the gifts flood-

ing in for them. Because of lockdown restrictions, it could not deliver on its promise soon as it would have liked.

The AWS team handed them boxes gifted by the Santa Shoebox Project,

and a donor from the UK donated a hamper of nutritious food for the boys. "The Easter long weekend presented us with an ideal opportunity to surprise the boys who were super excited to receive their spoils from animal care centre supervisor Lawrence Nkotha and trainee inspector Sivuyile Kilwa," said Perrins.

Sueanne McLachlan said they over the moon after adopting Champ as he had brought much joy and light to the family. "Champ has been an absolute pleasure; all he wants is love and attention. He's very intelligent and learned very quickly to sit and wait for his food," McLachlan said.

Champ is set to star in a Netflix documentary called *It's a Dog's Life - From Pavement to Palace* which is set to be released mid-June as filming has already wrapped up. "I was gobsmacked when they approached me to be in a Netflix documentary, but the film crew was lovely, and filming was quite a nice experience," said McLachlan.

## INNOVATION

## A couple's passion blossoms into bamboo toothbrush firm

NAIROBI

WHEN Atiff Ibrahim Khalid and his wife Natasha Lakhani took a trip to Thailand in November 2019, their entrepreneurial spirit was born.

As an environmentally conscious couple, they were awed by how in a world choking with plastics, the Thai people were using bamboo in everyday products to make their little space in the globe better.

"We got inspired by a trip that we made to Thailand. We saw these people making utensils, toothbrushes and home appliances from bamboo," Mr Khalid says adding that the positive impact of the switch to the eco-friendly material was evident in the pristine beaches.

The couple knew they had to utilise their new found knowledge to improve their environment and after doing some research, last year founded Ecosmile Limited, a company that manufactures biodegradable toothbrushes using bamboo and DuPont bristles, which are made out of nylon but can biodegrade under certain conditions.

So far they have invested Sh5 million into the company which has a factory in Vipingo, Kilifi and an office in Parklands, Nairobi. The toothbrushes are stamped out of bamboo with a specialised machine, according to different sizes. They source bamboo from Globe Tech, a company that



Workers inside a maize milling factory in Nairobi.

grows bamboo commercially in Kilifi.

"Every bamboo cut down is replanted and excess material is used to heat up the factory," says Mr Khalid. Their toothbrushes are beautiful artistic pieces in themselves but for good oral hygiene, Mr Khalid advises they should be replaced after every three months.

Demand has been rising as they step up their online marketing. They have increased production from 1,000 toothbrushes when they began, to 10,000 pieces per month to meet orders as word spreads about their products.

Mr Khalid says they are forced to import the bristles (from China) as

locally few factories make them and the ones that do, sell them costly. "Our toothbrushes have BPA-free nylon bristles, which are effective in removing plaque and tartar without damaging the gums," says the Bachelor of Commerce graduate of University of Nairobi.

Their toothbrushes Sh299 for adults

and Sh249 for children. Besides toothbrushes, the couple also makes organic toothpaste tablets, which they store in recyclable glass jars and biodegradable boxes on mint and coconut flavours.

"They are free from fluoride, SLS and glycerine," says Mr Khalid. Fluoride, SLS and glycerine are some of the toothpaste ingredients long blamed by activists for harming the environment.

Mr Khalid says they source the toothpaste tablets from Thailand but plans are afoot to localise production in the country once they get appropriate machineries. "All our toothpaste tablets are made from organic ingredients such as coconut oil and xylitol. If a child swallows he or she will be safe. They do not have preservatives or additives."

They also make teeth whitening products from charcoal and coconut powders with 300 grammes going for Sh399. Another product that they make is organic dental floss made out of starch. It goes for Sh299 for 30 metre.

They also make cotton buds out of bamboo sticks and biodegradable cotton. For 100 pieces, it cost Sh199. He says they are in the final process of finalising a deal with Goodlife Pharmacy that will see their products displayed on their countrywide outlets. They are also targeting Carrefour Supermarkets in the country.

## EXCELLENCE

## African businessman seen making waves in the international petroleum industry

HARARE

MALVIN Chiwanga is the founder and CEO of Matrix Petroleum, an international petroleum company based in Guernsey, where he is responsible for leading the development and execution of the company's strategies.

He also serves as chairperson of Matrix Group, providing leadership to the board and is responsible for the board's composition and development. Moreover, the businessman, entrepreneur, and philanthropist has transformed Matrix Petroleum into a successful multi-million-dollar company with a strong financial performance, built upon strategic transactions.

Matrix Petroleum distributes petroleum products around the world then sells them to third-parties, such as independent retailers and commercial and industrial companies. The company, which was founded in 2018, provides a full range of fuel products. Matrix Petroleum currently has a market net worth of £150m sterling and deals with companies in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana among others. Matrix Petroleum's main base is in Guernsey. They also have offices in London and Manchester.

Chiwanga, who has previously been in the media eye after being convicted of a crime and serving his sentence, has since transformed his life through self-introspection, hard work and a personal commitment to do better.

Through this journey and reflection, he has worked hard to turn his life around to become who he is today - a successful entrepreneur who runs a multi-million-dollar company, and is passionate about giving back and sharing his experiences in order to inspire the youth to make better decisions. "Work in silence and let your success make the noise." He is often heard saying to the many people under his employ, as well as the youth he mentors.



**Matrix Petroleum currently has a market net worth of £150m sterling and deals with companies in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana among others. Matrix Petroleum's main base is in Guernsey**

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## How one woman quit her job to start design brand

KIGALI

AIMÉE Claudine Uwamahoro did something that many may consider a risk - leave a well-paying job to go into business.

The 43-year-old is the CEO of the Kigali-based Cocomod Limited, a company that tailors and sells African clothing, known as 'kitenge,' with a blend of other materials such as cotton, denim, and silk, among others.

She started her company in 2017 after putting some savings aside. Having worked for a number of companies for years, she needed something she could not only earn from, but also have a passion for. Uwamahoro believes that the mixture of 'kitenge' compliments an attire and brings out its richness and appearance.

Although she now has expertise in fashion, she basically watched fashion tutorials on YouTube and shows from West Africa, and that is how she gained her skills. She does, however, plan to enrol for an online fashion course in April.

Uwamahoro has expanded her business to interior decor, as this is



Aimée Claudine Uwamahoro

something her clients requested for. She then bought a book from Europe about making interior design with a

meaning and learned the basics from it.

She decorates houses with a number of accessories such as lighting, curtains, beddings, chairs, table cloths, and also adjusts paintings to create new meaning. The interior designs also have a touch of African print. Her three-year-old business has gained clients and grown financially, and she is grateful that she's been able to do all this without a bank loan.

In 2018, she started exporting her designs to the US, Canada, and with time, to Belgium, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. She has hopes of expanding even further. So far, she has five permanent workers. Uwamahoro, a graduate of Social Work at Kigali Independent University (ULK), developed passion for 'kitenge' at a young age.

While in primary school, she would steal her mother's 'kitenge' and take it to school and wear it while cleaning the classroom every Friday afternoon. Even when her mother noticed this and punished her, she didn't stop. Her mother then decided to buy her a 'kitenge' of her own, intensifying Uwamahoro's love for the African fabric.

Having worked for almost five years at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), six months at Department for International Development (DFID), and one year at Aberdeen Hotel, she felt it was time to start a business of her own. A table cloth she designed.

When she had just started her business, the African fabric was mostly seen as an attire for mature people, or a cloth to wear for traditional functions, but she needed to prove to Rwandans that 'kitenge' can be styled in many ways and even be worn to work, or any other event, depending on how one accessorises and blends it.

NATURE

What is friluftsliv? Why the latest Norwegian lifestyle trend could boost mental health

OSLO THE latest Scandinavian term to gain popularity is Norway's "friluftsliv." As people in virtually every corner of the globe continue to adapt to the effects of the global pandemic, the concept has emerged as a currency for the body and mind. Friluftsliv directly translates to "free-air life" and refers to a love of the outdoors. Norwegians are known to be passionate about nature, whether they live in cities or smaller towns. "We Norwegians regard friluftsliv as a wide range of outdoor activities in nature," says Berte Linde, general secretary of Norsk Friluftsliv. "This includes walking, cycling, berry and mushroom harvesting, fishing and, of course, cross-country skiing." Incidentally, before we talk, Linde had completed a round of skiing. The term friluftsliv was popularised by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, in 1859. However, the concept of being in nature for purely recreational purposes is much older, and played an important part in building a unique Norwegian national identity. You see, in Norway, there's no such thing as bad weather.



A Norwegian friluftsliv

Only bad clothing. Friluftsliv - and the idea of embracing outdoor activities - has been an important coping mechanism for many Norwegians during the pandemic. Last year, one in three of the country's citizens increased the time they spent outdoors. A study last August by French research company Ipsos found that over the summer, more than 1.5 million Norwegians went camping - an impressive statistic in a country of about 5.4 million people. Being outdoors offers a sense of peace and quiet, and allows you to embrace the silence you find in nature, says Linde. "To us, going outdoors is always nice. Cold or rainy weather is never an excuse for staying indoors," she says. Research published on medical database ScienceDirect.com high-

lights how being in nature has clear positive mental benefits in reducing anxiety and improving cognition, and the positive effects can be felt in a matter of minutes. This affinity with nature is perhaps one of the reasons why Norway ranks as one of the happiest countries in the world. "It is fair to say that friluftsliv is an important factor in Norwegians feeling as happy as we do, because being outdoors brings happiness," Linde says. "Nature is open 24/7; it is an escape room, and a place for disconnecting from all corona worries." And, Linde says, this is a lifestyle trend that can be enjoyed almost anywhere. "The most important thing is to keep it simple. There is no need for a fancy expedition; going for a walk in the park or the beach is enough."

HOOLOGANISM

Mrs World arrested on charges of assault after yanking crown off Mrs Sri Lanka

COLOMBO COLOMBO police on Thursday arrested the current Mrs World on charges of assault over an on-stage fracas in which she pulled the crown off the head of the new Mrs Sri Lanka. Caroline Jurie yanked the crown off Pushpika de Silva minutes after she was declared Mrs Sri Lanka 2020 in

a Sunday gala at Colombo's Nelum Pokuna theatre. Jurie was the previous year's Mrs Sri Lanka and had gone on to win the Miss World competition organised by a California-based company. De Silva needed hospital treatment after the incident, and stunned spectators in a packed venue as well as a live social media audience. "We have arrested Jurie and

(her associate) Chula Manamendra in connection with a charge of assault and causing damage to Nelum Pokuna (theatre)," senior police official Ajith Rohana said. De Silva told reporters outside a police station in Colombo Thursday that she was ready to drop the charges if Jurie made a public apology, but she had refused. "I tried to end this out of court, but she

has refused," de Silva said. "I can forgive, but not forget." Police said a court hearing was fixed for 19 April and Jurie and her associate who crashed the stage on Sunday were released on bail Thursday. Neither of them nor their lawyers spoke to reporters outside the police station. Towards the end of Sunday's ceremony, Jurie had claimed that de Silva was di-

vorced and therefore ineligible for the prize. Her surprise announcement sparked unruly scenes minutes after the chief guest, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's wife Shiranthi, had left the theatre. To qualify for the title, contestants must be married. De Silva is estranged from her husband, but they are still legally married. The local franchise holder for the pageant,

Chandimal Jayasinghe, said they were "deeply disturbed and sincerely regret" the behaviour of Jurie. Jayasinghe said they were claiming compensation from Jurie for damages to the stage and backstage dressing rooms where several mirrors had been smashed. The rumpus also meant the event dragged on two hours longer and theatre manage-

ment demanded an additional fee of half a million rupees, Jayasinghe added. Jurie has also been accused by organisers of bringing disrepute to the event. Social media calls have been mounting to strip Jurie of her Mrs World title, with one meme calling for her to be rebranded as "Mrs Under World."

INCENTIVE

US government now launches US\$500,000 competition for innovative face mask designs

WASHINGTON FACE masks have become a part of everyday life over the past year, and it's unlikely that will change any time soon. Naturally, brands have used this essentiality to their advantage, moving away from the disposable medical masks that were rife at the start of the pandemic to offer reusable, fashionable and statement masks. There have been questions, however, about the safety of fashion masks. So, in a bid to find a more sustainable and effective solution, the US government's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority has announced a competition to design "the next generation of masks", with a potential \$500,000 in total prize money for the winners. The idea is to create a mask that people will want to wear, but will also offer the appropriate level of medical protection. Created in partnership with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (an organisation under the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention), it is hoped the designs will address some of the common issues with masks, such as causing glasses to fog up, making it difficult to communicate and irritating the skin. The contest will be held in two phases. The first will focus on design, and will be split into two segments. One will look at the redesign of existing masks, and the other will be focused on new technologies and materials. Submissions will need to include detailed plans for making the proposed designs, which could lead to test builds in the future. This stage of the competition will select up to 10 winners, who will each receive \$10,000 to help make their mask idea a reality.

The second "proof-of-concept" phase will require contestants to produce physical mask designs not based on an existing style, and which are capable of responding to a hypothetical scenario. There will be up to five winners from this phase, who stand to split a total prize pool of \$400,000. More details on the second phase will be released at a later date. When judging entries, panellists will be grading designs on technological feasibility, innovation, barriers and overall design. The deadline for submission to phase one of the Mask Innovation Challenge is Wednesday, April 21.



Face masks have become part of everyday lives.

ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM. A large promotional banner for the ISIDINGO TV show, featuring a group of diverse people and a detailed TV PGM SCHEDULE for Saturday 3 April through Sunday 4 April. The schedule lists various programs and their start times across different channels like Maombeloze, Habari, and DWTW.

## WORLD

# Britain's Prince Philip dies, spent seven decades at Queen Elizabeth's side

LONDON

Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth's husband and a pivotal figure in the British royal family for almost seven decades, has died aged 99, Buckingham Palace said yesterday.

The Duke of Edinburgh, as he was officially known, had been by his wife's side throughout her 69-year reign, the longest in British history. During that time he earned a reputation for a tough, no-nonsense attitude and a propensity for occasional gaffes.

"It is with deep sorrow that Her Majesty The Queen announces the death of her beloved husband, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh," the palace said in a statement.

"His Royal Highness passed away peacefully this morning at Windsor Castle. Further announcements will be made in due course. The Royal Family join with people around the world in mourning his loss."

A Greek prince, Philip married Elizabeth in 1947. He went on to play a key role in modernising the monarchy in the post-World War Two period, and behind the walls of Buckingham Palace was the one key figure the queen could turn to and trust.

"He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years," Elizabeth said in a rare personal tribute to Philip, made in a speech marking their 50th wedding anniversary in 1997.

"I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know."

Philip spent four weeks in hospital earlier this year for treatment for an infection and to have a heart procedure, but returned to Windsor in early March. He died just two months before he was

to celebrate his 100th birthday.

Flags at Buckingham Palace and at government buildings across Britain were lowered to half-mast. No details about his funeral were disclosed yet, but ceremonies are likely to eschew the grand displays of pomp that often follow royal deaths.

That would reflect Philip's well-known aversion to drama, and it is unlikely there will be a state funeral or that his body will lie in state.

The prince's charm and disinclination to tolerate those he regarded as foolish or sycophantic earned him a position of respect among some Britons. But to others, his sometimes brusque demeanor made him appear rude and aloof. He was a delight to newspaper editors keen to pick up on any stray remark at official events.

The former naval officer admitted he found it hard to give up the military career he loved and to take on the job as the monarch's consort, for which there was no clear-cut constitutional role.

"Like the expert carriage driver that he was, he helped to steer the royal family and the monarchy so that it remains an institution indisputably vital to the balance and happiness of our national life," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said.

## HEAD OF THE FAMILY

In private, the prince was regarded as the unquestioned head of his family, but protocol obliged the man dubbed "the solo hand" to spend his public life literally one step behind his wife.

"There was no precedent. If I asked somebody 'what do you expect me to do?', they all looked blank - they had no idea, nobody had much idea," he said in an interview to mark his 90th birthday.

After completing more than 22,000 solo appearances, Philip retired from



public life in August 2017, although after that he occasionally appeared at official engagements.

His last appearance was last July at a military ceremony at Windsor Castle, the royal palace west of London where he and the monarch have resided during COVID-19 lockdowns.

"On the occasions when I met him, I was always struck by his obvious joy at life, his enquiring mind and his ability to communicate to people from every background and walk of life," Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said.

"He was a master at putting people at their ease and making them feel special."

## QUEEN WITHOUT PHILIP

The queen, who is 94, came to the throne in 1952 and the couple, who were third cousins, married at Westminster Abbey on Nov. 20, 1947.

They had four children, Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, Princess Anne, and Princes Andrew and Edward.

They celebrated their 72nd anniversary on the same day that Andrew stepped down from public duties over the controversy surrounding his association with the disgraced late U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein, one of a number of recent crises the family have faced.

The death of the queen's husband

and closest confidant will raise questions over whether she might consider abdication, but royal commentators say there is little or no chance that this will happen.

In recent years, the queen has cut the number of official engagements she carries out and has passed many royal duties and patronages onto Prince Charles, his son William and other senior royals. But she still carries out the most symbolic of the monarchy's state duties, such as the opening of parliament.

While he officially played second fiddle to his wife, Prince Philip regarded as the private head of the family.

Some royal watchers have said that his absence from this role in recent years with declining health has played a role in some of the monarchy's recent travails, such as the crisis of Charles' younger son Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, and the decision that saw them give up their royal roles.

"The main lesson that we have learned is that tolerance is the one essential ingredient of any happy marriage," Philip said in a speech in 1997.

"It may not be quite so important when things are going well, but it is absolutely vital when things get difficult. You can take it from me that the queen has the quality of tolerance in abundance."

Agencies

## Fabricated 'databases' mislead international public opinion, says Xinjiang spokesperson

BEIJING

THE so-called Xinjiang-related "databases" fabricated by some anti-China forces have spread rumors and seriously misled international public opinion, a spokesperson with the government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region said yesterday.

Spokesperson Xu Guixiang told a press briefing in Beijing that anti-China forces in the United States and other Western countries have concocted three "databases" to smear China, which are full of disinformation, rumors and false evidence.

Xu said that in the three so-called "databases," 12,050 people were involved. After careful research and verification, the local authorities have verified 10,708 of them, finding out that 6,962 of them are living a normal life, 3,244 were sentenced for committing violence, terrorism or other crimes, 238 died of illness and 264 are living overseas.

"And 1,342 figures mentioned in these 'databases' were fabricated," said Xu.

Taking the so-called "Xinjiang Data Project" as an example, Xu said that the "database" was established by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a think tank that has long received financial support from relevant U.S. government agencies and arms dealers and fabricated various anti-China rumors.

"It is not difficult to find that the three so-called Xinjiang-related 'databases' were set up by some international anti-China organizations, personnel or even terrorist organization 'East Turkistan Islamic Movement' members," Xu said, adding that behind them are anti-China forces from the United States or other Western countries.

A large amount of data and facts have shown that the three so-called "databases" are fake and full of rumors and perjuries, he said.

"It is absolutely absurd that politicians, organizations, and media in some countries believe in these so-called 'research results' or 'witness testimony'," Xu said. **Xinhua**



Children play with snow in the Ancient City of Kashgar scenic area in Kashgar, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Nov. 21, 2020. (Xinhua)

## IMF: US-China cooperation vital for faster global recovery

WASHINGTON

COOPERATION between the United States and China, the world's two largest economies, would be vital for a faster global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva said on Thursday.

"What we see today is the US and China being the two engines that are powering up the world economy. They are the first to be able to reach their pre-COVID levels among the large economies," Georgieva told Xinhua at a virtual press conference after a meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the policy-setting body of the IMF.

"Like the engines on a plane on which we are all passengers, it is important that they work in sync. Then we can fly faster, and



International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva

we can get farther," she said. Georgieva noted that she was "very encouraged" to see a

consistent view expressed by the United States and China on prospects for the recovery and

their recognition of the responsibility they have for positive spillover impacts, as well as to

recognize their significant roles.

"Other economies are also coming up, and that global cooperation, paying attention to who may be falling behind, is what has been at the center of our meetings," she said.

The IMFC also pledged to work together to end the pandemic everywhere and "strengthen multilateral cooperation" to ensure an inclusive and resilient global economy.

In its latest World Economic Outlook released Tuesday, the IMF projected that the global economy will grow by 6 percent in 2021, 0.5 percentage point above its January forecast.

The US economy is expected to grow by 6.4 percent this year after a 3.5-percent contraction in 2020, while the Chinese economy is projected to expand by 8.4 percent in 2021 following a growth rate of 2.3 percent last year, according to the IMF. **Xinhua**

## Russian ambassador to Austria points to 'dirty games' around Sputnik V supplies to Europe

VIENNA

A CONTRACT to ship the Russian Sputnik V vaccine to Austria is almost ready but "dirty games" are being played around the topic of supplies of the Russian vaccine to Europe, Russian Ambassador to Austria Dmitry Lyubinsky said yesterday.

"There are problems with supplies of other vaccines and we are ready to help Austria. But dirty games are being played around this topic. Interests of giant pharmaceutical concerns are involved.

Millions and billions are at stake," he said in an interview with Salzburger Nachrichten.

According to the Russian diplomat, if Austria signs a contract next week, it will be able to receive first batches of the vaccine by late April. "It may receive one million doses by late June," he noted.

He slammed lobbyism against Sputnik V.

Austria's Federal Chancellor said in late March that Vienna was in talks with Moscow on possible purchase of one million Sputnik V doses to vaccinate 500,000 people.

The vaccine can be received in three takes - in April, May, and June 2021. The sides have already signed a non-disclosure agreement during the exchange of confidential documents. **Agencies**

## Smart services help Chinese citizens live more comfortable life

SINCE last year, it has become the norm that people are asked to show a digital health QR code that demonstrates their health condition before entering shopping malls and office areas. However, the requirement posed quite a challenge to senior citizens who don't really know how to use smartphones.

In an effort to solve the problem, Caoyangxincun residential community in Putuo district of Shanghai took the lead in piloting an integrated detection system developed through efforts initiated by China's Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

The integrated detection system can realize interconnection be-

tween a person's ID card information and health code information, and display on screen the person's health status whenever his/her ID card is put on a certain area of the detection device of the system.

Since it was put into use in public spaces much frequented by senior citizens, such as community affairs service center, cultural activity center and canteens of the community, the integrated system has won unanimous praise from residents.

In Yuzhong district, southwest China's Chongqing municipality, smart services have made some residents to solve their everyday problems simpler and easier.

Huang Jie, a resident who has lived in a residential complex in Baixiangjie subdistrict, Yuzhong district, since last August, once used a dedicated mobile phone app designed for owners of the houses in the residential complex to report on a broken switch in his home. Just 10 minutes after he reported the situation, a technician came to his home to repair the switch.

"It's so convenient. I didn't expect the problem could be solved so fast," Huang said.

The app Huang used is in fact the mobile service platform adopted by the residential complex he lives in. It allows residents to seek help

with problems in everyday life, like making requests for repair and inquiries about relevant affairs.

Besides, designated members of the management team of buildings in the residential complex can check the schedules for and progress in various cases, and collect information about the results of cases and residents' evaluation of the services they received and other information through the platform, in a bid to ensure that residents' problems are solved timely.

In addition to the mobile service platform, the residential complex has also introduced security monitoring devices to prevent high-rise littering. These devices have effec-

tively reduced the occurrence of high-rise littering and other uncivil activities and made the living environment of residents safer.

More residential communities in Yuzhong district have introduced such smart facilities. In many communities, each residential building has an access control system, which allows house owners to talk to visitors to confirm their identity before opening doors for them.

Yuzhong district has witnessed residents benefit from many more intelligent devices.

For instance, people who live alone can press a button to turn on their video intercom and ask help from the central control office; and

the central control office of residential complexes can spot unextinguished cigarette end in time through smart management system and immediately send people to deal with it.

"This year, we will urge enterprises to make more efforts to improve and install smart devices in communities, such as preventing high-rise littering and optimize the design of owner service platforms, so that residents can feel more carefree and comfortable," said Zhao Chuan, secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) committee in Baixiangjie subdistrict.

People's Daily



## Putin offers condolences to Queen Elizabeth II over her husband's death

MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has offered his condolences to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II over the death of her husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the Kremlin said yesterday.

"The name of His Royal Highness is associated with numerous milestone events in recent history of your country. He was rightly respected among the British people and enjoyed international prestige," the Russian president said in a message.

According to the Kremlin, Putin wished Queen Elizabeth II fortitude and moral resilience in the face of this grave and irreparable loss and asked to convey the worlds of his sincere sympathy to all members of the royal family.

Putin knew the Duke of Edinburgh personally. One of their meetings took place in 2003 when the Russian president paid a state visit to the United Kingdom.

Buckingham Palace informed earlier in the day that on Friday morning Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, passed away at the age of 99 at Windsor Castle.

## Biden calls US gun violence 'international embarrassment' while announcing executive actions

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden on Thursday called gun violence an "epidemic" and an "international embarrassment," as he delivered a speech from the White House introducing new executive actions aimed at addressing the issue.

"Nothing I'm about to recommend in any way impinges on the Second Amendment," Biden (pictured) said in the Rose Garden during an event also attended by Vice President Kamala Harris and Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Further pushing back the idea that tighter gun control amid a recent surge in mass shootings will infringe Americans' right to bear arms, the president said "no amendment to the Constitution is absolute," the president said.

"So the idea is just bizarre to suggest that some of the things we're recommending are contrary to the Constitution," he added. "Gun violence in this country is an epidemic. And it's an international embarrassment."

Laying out a set of executive actions, Biden said he wanted to tighten regulations for the so-called "ghost guns," homemade weapons or firearms that are assembled from parts without serial numbers so that they are more difficult to track.

The president wanted the Department of Justice (DOJ) to propose rules requiring that the gun kits be treated as firearms, so that they must bear easy-to-trace serial numbers, and that background checks are required for people purchasing them.

He also directed the DOJ to propose model "red flag" legislation for states that could help keep firearms out of the hands of potentially dangerous people, and to reclassify pistols modified with stabilizer braces to be subject to the National Firearms Act, meaning owners would have to register and pay a fee for the modifications.

The DOJ is also expected to issue a report on gun trafficking, and federal agencies will be paying more attention on using grant programs to intervene in community-based gun violence.

Biden is set to nominate David Chipman, a gun control advocate, to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Increasingly under pressure to take action after the back-to-back mass shootings earlier this month in Boulder, Colorado, and the Atlanta area in Georgia, Biden urged Congress to move legislatively, especially calling on the Senate to pass the House-passed bills closing gun control loopholes and expand background checks.

The House-passed bills, however, face slim prospects in the evenly-divided Senate, as Republicans are almost unified in opposing most of the proposals.

"Enough prayers, time for some action," Biden said in his plea with lawmakers, conceding that stricter gun restriction proposals that have so far been to no avail even in the face of perpetuating gun violence are making it seem "like our entire political process is broken."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters later in the afternoon that "there will be more" executive actions by the administration on gun safety.

Xinhua



# Scars of 'patriotism' cut through as racism rises

By May Zhou

AS a longtime official of West Chester Township, an affluent suburb north of Cincinnati, Ohio, Lee Wong has found himself being questioned if he's "American enough" or "patriotic enough" more in the past few years than at any other time.

Then came the shootings in the Atlanta area of Georgia in which six Asian-American women were gunned down last month. Wong couldn't remain silent anymore.

He spoke of patriotism and revealed scars he received while serving in the US military, at a March 23 meeting of the board of trustees. The video of the meeting has since gone viral worldwide.

"People question my patriotism, that I don't look American enough. They can't get over this face. I want to show you something; I don't have to live in fear, intimidation, insults," Wong said while unbuttoning his shirt to show his scarred chest.

"I am 69 years old and I want to show you what patriotism looks like. This is my proof. This is sustained from my service in the US military. Now, is this patriotic enough?"

Wong, who is the chair of the township board of trustees a position equivalent to mayor told China Daily of the racial discrimination he has experienced since coming to the US in the 1970s from Malaysia.

The worst was in the 1970s, when he was studying pharmacy in Chicago. A white man, mistaking him as Japanese, kicked him, punched him and choked him. Wong ended up in hospital as a result.

In the 1970s and 1980s, heavy industry in the US was waning, and workers were experiencing widespread layoffs just as corresponding businesses in Japan were making major inroads into US markets, especially in the auto industry.

The anti-Japanese sentiment manifested in the US with occasional public destruction of Japanese cars and the murder of Chinese American Vincent Chin, who was mistaken for a Japanese.

### Criminal complaint

Wong filed a criminal complaint and went to court. The defendant continued to call him a "Jap" in court and was given a one-year term of nonreporting probation.



This undated file photo shows Lee Wong, chair of West Chester Township Board of Trustees, Ohio. Wong spoke of patriotism and showed his chest scars while giving a speech at a meeting in West Chester Township, Ohio, on March 23. (File photo)

Wong said the experience steered him away from medicine. "I was confused, and I needed to learn about America," he said.

He decided that the army would be a good place to start, joining as a military police officer. Wong eventually got into the army police force's elite Criminal Investigation Command.

"I stayed in the army for 20 years and served the country all over the world," Wong said.

When he retired from the army in 2005, Wong decided to run for office to serve the community; he got elected and has been reelected since.

As an Asian American, Wong said he stood out in the military as well as in his current community.

"There is discrimination everywhere. It's not so blatant. You can feel it, but you cannot see it, touch it," said Wong. "Like opportunities for promotion, you are always the last

one to be considered sometimes."

Sometimes it's jokes told by people around him. However, those jokes are "demeaning and dehumanizing to any Chinese American", Wong said.

When he first started campaigning for township office, Wong, a Republican, said he sometimes had doors slammed in his face.

"I am the first Asian American in the state to run for public office and be elected," Wong said.

In the past couple of years, Wong noticed that he has experienced more vocal and expressive racial discrimination than ever before.

With hate crimes against Asian Americans rising, Wong has begun to respond differently.

"I spoke up and I said what needed to be said for the first time to the public like that."

Agencies

## Time-honored Rongchang pottery in China full of new vitality

RONGCHANG pottery, a famous traditional craft originated in Anfu subdistrict, Rongchang district, southwest China's Chongqing municipality and dates back to the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD), is brimming with fresh vigor.

With a history of over 2,000 years, Rongchang pottery has been acknowledged as one of the four most noted ceramic crafts in China, and has been listed among China's national-level representative intangible cultural heritage (ICH) programs.

Today, visitors can see a shop making or selling Rongchang pottery every few steps they take in Antao tourist town, a characteristic town in Anfu subdistrict.

As the cultural heritage is known by more people, the studio of Lv Jicheng, an inheritor of Rongchang pottery at the district level, is often crowded with tourists. They have shown increasing interest in both Lv's works and the techniques and steps in making Rongchang pottery.

Liang Xiancai, a national-level inheritor of Rongchang pottery, has spent his entire life working on the cultural heritage, which involves 24 production procedures, including selecting clay, making greenware, polishing, carving and glazing.

In the 1970s and 1980s, when Rongchang pottery witnessed booming business and was a pillar industry of Rongchang district, almost every household in Chongqing and its neighboring cities used pots and jars made through the craft of Rongchang pottery to store rice and vegetables or preserve pickles.

Meanwhile, ceramics produced in Rongchang district were also exported to Southeast Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America and other regions, with the average annual export volume exceeding 100,000 pieces.

However, at the end of the 20th century, the once popular pickle jars fell flat on the market, as producers of Rongchang pottery failed to transform and upgrade their products timely when competitors' tastes had also changed.

To break the stereotype of Rongchang pottery as pickle jars, craftsmen started to make innovations, and enrich the varieties of their products by shifting to artware, such as tea sets and vases.

At the same time, many young people have been attracted to the intangible cul-



Guan Yongshuang, an inheritor of Rongchang pottery, works with his wife Li Yunshan in their studio located in Rongchang district, southwest China's Chongqing municipality. (File photo)

tural heritage, injecting fresh vitality into Rongchang pottery and bringing the traditional craft to more and more people. Guan Yongshuang, who runs a studio in a quiet yard in Rongchang district, is one of them.

After graduating from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing, Guan and his wife rented the yard to dedicate themselves to inheriting Rongchang pottery.

Over the past five years, they have innovated various ceramics that are different from traditional pottery products, such as small trays with orange skin-like patterns for washing brushes, life-like seedpods of lotus flowers, and plates made of both red and white clay.

Lv has hosted live-streaming shows to introduce pottery-related knowledge to netizens. "Rongchang pottery can be baked both in wood-fired kilns and electrical kilns, but the luster of the finished products made with the two kinds of kilns are different," Lv said to his audience.

During the baking process, the heat and wood ashes would leave unique marks on unpainted clay pots, something that couldn't be created through handwork, Lv added.

To help more people get to know Rongchang pottery, Rongchang district has shown via live-streaming the exact moment when freshly baked ceramic products are taken out of kilns, allowing netizens to appreciate carefully baked and elaborately designed ceramics, such as teapots, tea cups and vases.

While demonstrating the making of Rongchang pottery via live-streaming, craftsmen have refreshed the memory of people for the glorious history of the pottery and won likes and complimentary remarks from netizens.

On a site near the Antao tourist town, a cultural and creative pottery industrial park is gradually taking shape. It will serve as a practice base for students of colleges and universities, an extracurricular practice base for primary and middle school students, and a center where ceramic artists can make innovations.

With more than 70 high-tech enterprises settling in the ceramics industrial park in the high-tech industrial development zone of Rongchang district, the time-honored traditional craft have been brought closer to emerging technologies.

Pottery enterprises in Rongchang now see an annual output value of nearly 8 billion yuan (about \$1.2 billion). Last year, the district was acknowledged as "the ceramic capital of western China" by the China National Light Industry Council.

People's Daily

## UNHCR proposes new resettlement plan for refugees in Kenyan camps

NAIROBI

THE United Nations refugee agency said Friday it has shared with Kenya a proposed set of sustainable and rights-based measures aimed at identifying solutions for refugees living in camps in Kenya.

The Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps, located in northern Kenya, host some 430,000 refugees and asylum-seekers of more than 15 nationalities.

Fathia Abdalla, the UNHCR representative in Kenya, said the UN agency has proposed enhanced voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity, while taking into account the movement restrictions related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have heard the concerns expressed by the government of Kenya and hope that these measures will be a significant step forward in accelerating sustainable solutions for all those concerned," she said in a statement issued in Nairobi.

The UNHCR supports speeding up the issuing of national identity cards to more than 11,000 Kenyans who have previously been identified as registered in the refugee database, and continuation of the vetting process for others in similar circumstances, Abdalla said.

She said the UNHCR recognizes the tremendous generosity that the people and Kenyan government have demonstrated towards refugees for many decades and the need to resolve situations of longstanding displacement.

The UNHCR has suggested the provision of alternative-stay arrangements to refugees from the East African Community (EAC), which groups Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

This would represent a major opportunity for refugees to become self-reliant and contribute to the local economy, the UNHCR said. The UN agency also proposed resettlement to third countries for a small number of refugees who are not able to return home and face protection risks.

"We believe that through joint renewed actions we can put in place measures that respect refugee rights and lead to sustainable solutions," Abdalla said. "We look forward to continuing our dialogue and collaboration with the Kenyan authorities and partners on this important matter."

On March 23, the Kenyan government announced its intention to close the two major camps, creating uncertainty for more than 400,000 refugees.

Nairobi told the UNHCR said that there is no room for further negotiations on the closure of Dadaab refugee camp, which mainly hosts refugees from Somalia, and Kakuma camp, which hosts refugees from South Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda.

However, the High Court on Thursday temporarily blocked the closure of two refugee camps for 30 days pending the hearing and determination of a petition filed by a local politician.

Kenya, which hosted protracted negotiations that culminated in the formation of the transitional federal government of Somalia, says the refugee situation continues to pose security threats to Nairobi and the region, in addition to humanitarian challenges.

Xinhua

# SPORT



The Mr. UK Marathon's coordinator, Nelson Mrashani (2nd L), speaks to the press in Dar es Salaam recently during the race's launch. The race, organized by Mr. UK Sports Agency, has been scheduled for July in the city. Sitting (R-L) are Mr. UK Sports Agency's accountant, Magreth Leonce, the firm's Planning and Marketing Manager, Abdul Nchahaga, and the firm's digital section's official, Adam Shoo. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT SABATO KASIKA

## Sports agency out to unearth sports talents, promote tourism

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

A local sports agency, Mr UK Sports Agency, says it is committed to unearthing sports talents, promoting local tourism and taking sports and arts in the country to great heights.

The Operation Manager of Mr UK Sports Agency, Seif Abdul, issued the comments in a recent interview.

He said the country has a lot of talented youngsters and his company is committed to working hard in unearthing and promoting local tourism, arts and sports to another level.

He said Mr UK Sports Agency was launched in 2020, but after registering with National Sports Council (NSC) and Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA), the firm became fully operational in January this year.

Abdul said his company first event is Mr UK Marathon slated for July at Leaders Club in Dar es Salaam and plans are underway to promote local sports internationally.

The marathon will be the first in the country to use International Timing System which will put runners' results online immediately after the race.

The Mr UK Sports Agency top official said although the country has many sports agencies his company is extremely unique as it will combine promoting local tourism, sports and arts.

"Mr UK Sports Agency is under a local company specialized in selling electric

gadgets and equipment, our uniqueness is that we will strive to unearth talents, promote them and we will further be organizing events and sports competitions," he stated.

"Currently many sports agencies in the country are concentrated on sports only, but we will be organizing tourism and sports promotion events which will be accompanied by arts performances and products and service exhibition," he said.

He said for his company to achieve its set targets, it has set up partnership with Touchroad Investment of China and South Africa-based 1000 Medals Limited who are both top and intentionally known companies.

He disclosed: "We are working with Touch Road Investment, this is a Chinese company which brings more than 200 tourists into the country annually, and 1000 Medals Limited of South Africa, this company ranks top in manufacturing of medals and trophies for various sporting events."

"We are of the view that working with them will help us achieve our goals of promoting Tanzania's tourism and sports to another level," he said.

Abdul said the Mr UK Sports Agency targets to for the coming five years be a platform for seeing to it youth talents are noticed.

He noted the firm further aims at seeing to it other sports organizers come to it for equipment, material and knowledge for improving sports.

"We want local and international sports associations to recognize us as the leading sports agency in competitions. And our utmost goal is to get international recognition in sports competitions especially athletics," the official stated.

## Athletes enter camp to shape up for Olympics' qualifying events

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

FOURTEEN local athletes enter camp today at Arusha College of Forestry, Wildlife and Tourism to prepare for qualifying events for Tokyo Olympics.

Athletics Tanzania (AT) Vice-President John Bayo said the athletes, under the tutelage of Anthony Mwingereza and Thomas John, are camping in the area known as Olmotonyi in Arusha.

Bayo pointed out the camp runs up to the mid of July when the athletes who will qualify for the Games will enter Tanzania Olympics Committee (TOC)-organized camp.

Initially, AT and coaches wanted to have more than 30 athletes in the camp, but Bayo said due to financial constraints the association is facing they have settled for 14 athletes for the camp.

The AT official maintained the runners have potential to qualify for Tokyo Olympics slated for July 23 to August 8.

"We wanted to have more athletes in camp but due to economic problems we are facing, we thought it wise to have only 14 athletes who have potential to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics," he

said.

He could not issue names of the athletes that are camping, saying he is outside the camp.

The AT budget for Olympics qualifying and trial events was 56m/-, but yesterday Bayo could not say how much the association will spend.

Currently only two athletes Alponce Simbu and Failuna Matanga qualified for the games.

Bayo, however, conceded that with the Second Phase of COVID-19 hitting hard around the world, many qualifying events have been cancelled or postponed.

He, nevertheless, expressed optimism that there will be some Tokyo Olympic events soon.

He noted: "Of course many qualifying events have been suspended and others cancelled, but we are optimistic that soon they will be some events which will be used as qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics."

He added: "What we want to do is keeping our athletes ready for qualifying tournaments."

Some of the sports disciplines which will have athletes representing the country at the Tokyo Olympics are athletics, judo, boxing, swimming and beach volleyball.

## SPORTS

# Hemed 'Morocco' and the future of Namungo FC, locally and outside

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

MIDDLE ranking Premier League soccer side Namungo FC haven't done badly in the CAF Confederation Cup tourney of the continental federation, as at least they succeeded to enter the group stage, and hence were middle ranking in that competition as well, with an outside chance of excelling.

That could happen if they return to the competition, and that means repeating the feat where they reach the final of the Federation Cup, locally with Simba SC quite likely to do a repetition of their double. Not an easy goal to follow, this.

While the relatively little known side in Tanzania, with exception of their featuring in the continental tourney this year, it is likely to remain middle ranking in the premier league, with the federation tourney as usual being toss of coin.

It is entirely unpredictable whether it is here or elsewhere, sometimes won by top sides like Simba SC, but entering the final with unremarkable sides like the Namungo FC we used to know - until they reached the final.

Chances of repeating the feat are minimal, as they can't plan it so.

Still this experience will not be of no significance in the club's experience, as an unparalleled experience for a middle ranking premier league club, in which case it ought to help with their local league outlook, how to win matches.

Their performance in the continental tourney may not look that good but they were up against powerful sides like Nkana FC, and team of its size or resources can't be blamed for not having been able to tame the famous Zambian side.

The issue is whether they can use this experience for growth of their team, or will take it as a chancy experience, a passing episode, and that is the end of it all. In one sense it depends on who starts tackling the matter, whether it is the coach or the team leadership, and in particular the team sponsor, but the trouble is that he may simply be depending on the technical bench and has no ideas of his own.

When that happens chances of the team stagnating are quite high as it



Namungo FC

needs a different set of ideas for a team to rise higher, and at times the first step is to change the coach and look for someone with a more impressive record.

Hemed 'Morocco' came to Namungo FC on that basis, given his experience in various teams in the country, but is he still the right person for their new situation?

The issue here is imagination, in the sense of figuring out what a team like Namungo can achieve, at the local or international level, since it has been able to achieve some big things in precisely the situation in which it is, if in terms of sponsorship or the technical bench.

If the two sides are satisfied with that the club side has done so far, they will just seek to repeat the scenario, if not this year then the next, perhaps the following one, until the goal itself slips out of their minds. That comes to stagnation, relying on hope.

Due to its achievements in the CAF Confederation Cup run, it is clear that this is a team that can be developed for greater sights in local and international competition.

Those who watched its games could by and large notice how a few things need to be straightened out, but it isn't a matter of rendering this or that sort of technical advice but changing the football culture that envelops the club.

There are a few good elements, scattered efforts at linking up especially at high midfield where the midfielders seek a path into goal area, as at that moment they make an effort of practicing some good bit of football, trying to pass accurately....

That kind of effort or method is hardly noticed at the rear where the mode of attack is supposed to be built and then carried forward to low midfield and then to goal area approaches.

The high midfield zone appears to be the only area where the head coach has been informing the players of the need for a measure of technique on what to do,

while in other areas they appear to rely on rough instincts.

They stick to high balls and can't use goal kicks to build an attacking formation as they just kick a 60-meter ball into the other side of the pitch for the tussling to start, in which case they make no effort at consistent possession.

While there is plenty of noise about the number of foreign players that clubs can register, looking at the Namungo side for even ten minutes in a high level game as with Nkana shows that plenty could still be done with the same players.

The problem is the football philosophy, and one wonders if it is adequate for the club leadership or sponsor to whisper into the ear of the veteran local coach to adopt possession soccer as a mode of play that is in tune with professionalism.

More often than not, a real professional is needed.

## Dar dance music artiste laid to rest today



King Giovanni

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

DAR ES SALAAM artiste, King Giovanni, who passed away in the city early this week, is set to be laid to rest today.

The prominent guitarist, who hails from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), had worked for various Tanzanian dance music troupes which include the now defunct Chu-chu Sound Band.

The artiste will be laid to rest at Sinza in the city, as plans for transporting his body to his home country for burial did not come to fruition.

The Lubumbashi-born King Giovanni had recently participated in composition of a song for paying tribute to Tanzania's fifth phase President, the late John Magufuli.

The Chairman of a union of DRC musicians based in Tanzania, King Dodoo, said the deceased's body was placed at Mwananyamala Hospital as procedures for his burial were taking place.

"We had earlier planned to transport his body to Lubumbashi but we opted to lay him to rest here, given we could not fulfil the plan for reasons which are out of our control," he noted.

King Dodoo pointed out they had as of Thursday planned to prepare information on a place where people will pay their last respect to Giovanni's body.

"I appeal to Dar es Salaam residents to join us in this difficult period so that we can lay our fellow to rest at Sinza," he disclosed.

King Dodoo stated people who were ready to join mourners were supposed to head to Vijana Social Hall in Kinondoni, a place where members of a committee tasked with overseeing burial ceremony met.

He stated King Giovanni had, during his life, served as Chu-chu Sound Band's leader.

The band rose to prominence in dance music circles domestically in early 2000s, winning music fans' hearts with its popular 'Mduara' style.

He noted: "He is one of the Chu-chu Sound Band's artistes that have already passed on, namely Gabby Katanga, Muddy Terminator (drums), Ladislaus Manyama and Waziri Sonyo (vocalists) and Mao Santiago (rapper)."

## Union braced for Bayern Munich backlash after PSG defeat

BERLIN

UNION Berlin are steeling themselves for a challenging trip to Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga on Saturday as the European champions look to shake off their midweek defeat by Paris Saint-Germain.

Bayern's Champions League defence is under threat after PSG striker Kylian Mbappe inspired the French giants to a 3-2 victory in Munich on Wednesday, leaving Hansi Flick's side up against it heading to the Parc des Princes next week.

Union are just outside the top six in Germany and bidding to qualify for Europe next season for the first time in the club's history, but their Swiss coach Urs Fischer expects a tough time at the Allianz Arena.

"I assume that they will try to make up for the (PSG) defeat against us," Fischer said Thursday. Bayern are seven points clear at the top of table and on course for a ninth straight league title.

"They've shown more than once this season that they can handle setbacks well."

Even with Bayern's top scorer Robert Lewandowski sidelined by injury, Fischer knows his side need a "perfect day" to take points in Munich, but sees cause for hope in the fact Bayern converted only two of their 31 chances against PSG.

Union punched above their weight by holding Bayern to a 1-1 draw last December in Berlin, where they have beaten both Borussia Dortmund and Bayer Leverkusen this season.

Bayern have left-back Alphonso Davies suspended while Germany pair Leon Goretzka and Niklas Sule picked up knocks against PSG.

Having lost 1-0 at home to Bayern in last weekend's top-of-the-table clash, second-placed RB Leipzig are desperate for victory at Werder Bremen.

Spanish left-back Angelino, who racked up eight goals and 11 assists before injury struck in February, could return with defenders Dayot Upamecano and Nordi Mukiele both suspended.

Leipzig also face Bremen away in the German Cup semi-finals on April 30 and Nagelsmann wants to throw down a marker.

"We don't have time for experiments," said Nagelsmann, who is set

to name his strongest team.

"You can make a statement towards the cup in terms of the way you perform."

Eintracht Frankfurt, in fourth and edging towards Champions League qualification for the first time, host third-placed Wolfsburg on Saturday.

Frankfurt head coach Adi Huetter is facing repeated questions about rumours he will replace Marco Rose at Borussia Moenchengladbach next season.

Eintracht backed up a 5-2 thrashing of Union with a 2-1 win at Dortmund last weekend, giving them a seven-point cushion in their quest for Champions League football.

One to watch: Marco Reus

The 31-year-old Dortmund captain scored what could prove a vital goal in Tuesday's 2-1 defeat at Manchester City in the Champions League after a superb pass from Erling Braut Haaland.

After struggling with injuries and a loss of form, Reus is rediscovering his touch at a critical juncture with Edin Terzic's side fighting to salvage a disappointing season.

Dortmund go to Stuttgart on Saturday hoping to avenge December's 5-1 home defeat, in a tune-up for Wednesday's return leg against City in Germany.

Key stats

305 - Appearances made by Reus for Dortmund since his 2012 transfer from Gladbach. He has contributed 134 goals and 93 assists in that time.

22 - League goals scored by Eintracht Frankfurt striker Andre Silva this season, putting him second only to Lewandowski (35).

22 - Consecutive Bundesliga matches in which Frankfurt have scored, their longest run since 1977.

Fixtures (all times 1330GMT unless stated)

**Today**

Bayern Munich v Union Berlin, Eintracht Frankfurt v VfL Wolfsburg, Hertha Berlin v Borussia Moenchengladbach, Werder Bremen v RB Leipzig, VfB Stuttgart v Borussia Dortmund (1630)

**Tomorrow**

Schalke 04 v Augsburg, Cologne v Mainz (1600)

**Monday**

Hoffenheim v Bayer Leverkusen (1830)

## Leeds's Bielsa prepares for Guardiola's bag of surprises

LONDON

LEEDS United manager Marcelo Bielsa expects a tough battle at runaway Premier League leaders Manchester City on Saturday, calling Pep Guardiola's side one "full of surprises."

Bielsa's team have garnered a lot of praise of their own for their free-flowing style on their return to the Premier League and are presently in 11th spot.

However, City present a daunting challenge not least because Leeds have beaten only one of the top six this season, Leicester in January.

Leeds and City shared the spoils in their first meeting, a 1-1 draw in October but that was before Guardiola's team really hit top form.

Guardiola is a very public admirer of Bielsa but it was the 65-year-old Argentine's turn to praise his opposite number on Thursday.

"The games against teams who have the capacity to have answers or do the unexpected make the games full of surprises," he said at his press conference.

"When I classify Guardiola's team as magical, I wasn't calling him a magician.

"What I was trying to say was that in the process, he creates so many surprising attacks."

Bielsa said Guardiola is able to do this because his side is packed with talent capable of providing the surprises from Belgian star Kevin de Bruyne to England forward Raheem Sterling.

"Of course, this (surprising attacks) is supported by the quality of his players," he said.

"There is a method which stimu-

lates what they do.

"This is the difficult thing to expect.

"From the outside it looks as though the managers has done something magical."

Bielsa said even if one is at the receiving end such play is beneficial to the game as it excites the spectators.

"There's a method that unites individuality with what he proposes," said Bielsa.

"This creates football full of surprises.

"There's nothing nicer for a spectator than to see something they did not expect.

"To say the opposite is when you know what's going to happen. It creates boredom."

Unfortunately for Bielsa one of his most effective contributors to his attractive style of football will be missing, Jack Harrison.

The winger is in his third season on loan from City and under the agreement cannot face his parent club.

"We would have hoped to have counted on him," said Bielsa.

"Especially as his last performances have been good, but we knew about the rule that impeded him from playing."

Bielsa says he hopes they will beat one of the top six by the time the season comes to an end on May 22.

"It's a reality," he added. "It's our objective to modify this.

"There're a lot of teams in a similar position to us who have been able to beat the top six. That's to say it's possible and we haven't managed to achieve it yet."

AFP

# Messi happy again but Barca wonder if this Clasico will be his last

MADRID

LIONEL Messi's 45th Clasico on Saturday could also be his last as Barcelona look to rubberstamp their progress under Ronald Koeman by beating Real Madrid and claiming top spot in La Liga.

The reward for the winners at Valdebebas will be knocking Atletico Madrid out of first place for the first time since December, before they mounted a run that saw them go 10 points clear with a game in hand at the start of February.

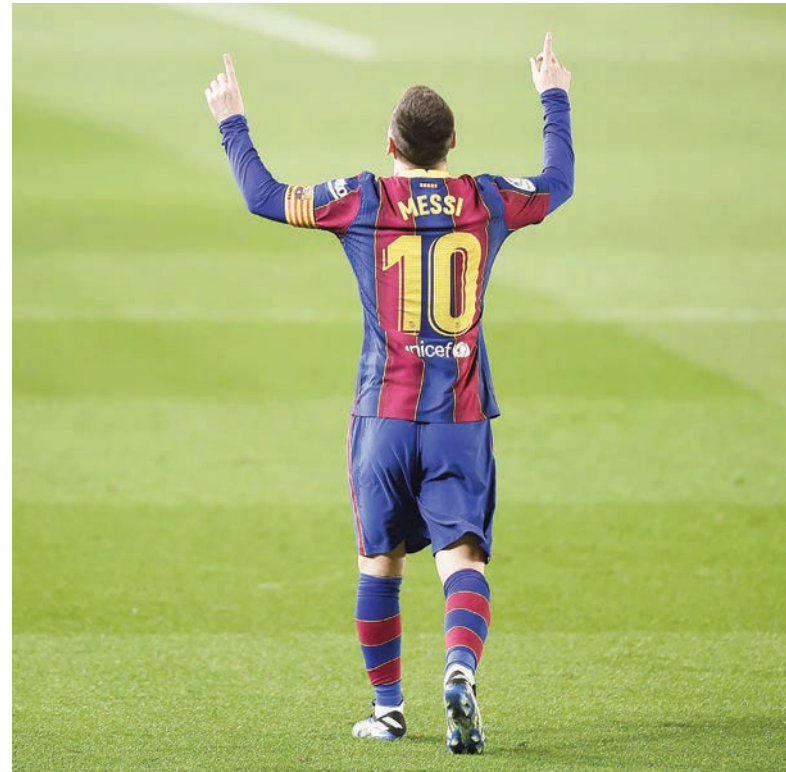
But Atletico's recent struggles, combined with a surge in momentum for Madrid and Barca, has seen that advantage evaporate, the question now whether Diego Simeone's team can recover and regroup to even stay in the race through the final stretch.

Who Atletico have to hold off or, more likely, catch in the last nine games could depend on this weekend's result at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium, where both clubs will be hoping for the ultimate vindication of recent improvement.

Success for Barcelona would be another significant check-point too in what has been an uplifting few months, the start of a recovery that has run alongside the on-going uncertainty of what Messi will decide this summer.

Messi's every goal and glance this season has been analysed for possible indications as to the 33-year-old's thinking but what is clear is how the atmosphere at Barca has changed since he asked to leave for free last August.

Joan Laporta's election as club president, replacing Josep Maria Bartomeu, has brought enthu-



Lionel Messi

siasm and, crucially, a sense of direction again, even if the financial problems from the last regime are still very much the problems of the new one.

Messi is not expected to consider offers to renew his contract until the end of the season but Laporta has been pulling hard on the heartstrings.

"Today was the 20th anniversary of a boy named Leo Messi who debuted in the youth teams of Barca," Laporta said in his victory speech last month.

"To see Leo come to vote, the best player in world soccer, with his son for me, is an example of what we've said, that Leo loves Barca and how we are all one big family."

- Messi nurturing Barca's young

talents - More persuasive might be what Messi has seen and felt on the pitch, witnessing a team that was broken a year ago gradually piece itself back together under Ronald Koeman.

Koeman has trusted the club's youngsters and Messi has nurtured them. Pedri, Ronald Araujo, Sergino Dest, Oscar Mingueza and Ilaix Moriba have flourished.

Mingueza, Ilaix, Trincao and Dest have all scored their first La Liga goals, all of them assisted by Messi.

And Messi has thrived too, reclaiming his place at the top of the league's scoring charts with 23 goals so far, and 19 goals in 20 games since the turn of the year.

It may not be enough, given Barcelona were also convincingly beat-

en by Paris Saint-Germain in the last 16 of the Champions League, the competition Messi centres round more than anything else.

Beating Athletic Bilbao in the final of the Copa del Rey or even Real Madrid and Atletico to the title in La Liga could still see Messi bid farewell.

But if this is to be his last Clasico, 16 years after his first, 44 games that have included 26 goals and two hat-tricks, Messi might see it now as an extra season well spent, the sense of deflation and bitterness gone, and his own place in the revival secure.

"There is only one person who can decide his future and it is him," Koeman said in February. "I would like him to stay for many more years and I just try to make sure he is happy, like he is at the moment."

Whatever the result, Atletico will have the chance to go back to the top of the table on Sunday when they play Real Betis.

But they will have to do it without their two star players, Luis Suarez and Marcos Llorente, who are both suspended. Sevilla in fourth, play away at Celta Vigo on Monday.

Fixtures (GMT)

**Today**

Getafe v Cadiz (1200), Athletic Bilbao v Alaves (1415), Eibar v Levante (1630), Real Madrid v Barcelona (1900)

**Tomorrow**

Villarreal v Osasuna (1200), Valencia v Real Sociedad (1415), Real Valladolid v Granada (1630), Real Betis v Atletico Madrid (1900)

**Monday**

Celta Vigo v Sevilla (1900)

AFP

## Milan desperate to cling on as Inter race towards Serie A title

MILAN

AC Milan travel to relegation-threatened Parma desperate to cling onto second place in Serie A this weekend and stay on course for the Champions League as city rivals Inter can tighten their grip on top spot against lowly Cagliari.

Seven-time European champions Milan have taken four points from their last three games to drop 11 points behind Inter who are closing in on a first Serie A title in over a decade.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic's Milan had been leading at the winter break as they target a first 'Scudetto' since 2011, but have faltered since January.

Champions Juventus are just one point behind Milan in third before hosting 13th-placed Genoa with Atalanta a further point adrift ahead of their trip to Fiorentina, who will be without suspended midfielder Franck Ribery.

Despite their poor home form, Milan have lost just once on the road and take on 19th-placed Parma who have won just three games this campaign.

"We're heading into the decisive part of the season," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli as they seek a return to the Champions League for the first time since the 2013-2014 season.

"But it's a bit premature to be doing these (Champions League) calculations, especially as we still have a lot of games against direct rivals still to play."

Antonio Conte's Inter are riding high with 10 consecutive wins and take on Cagliari, who are in the relegation zone, and on a three-game losing run.

"Every time we win, it's another big step forward, it also weighs heavily on those who are pursuing us," said Conte.

"We're now much more mature and solid than we were in the past. It'd be great to win a trophy again after such a long time and end Juventus' streak."

The race for Champions League football next season remains tight.

Napoli are two points off fourth after losing their midweek clash at Juventus, and next travel to mid-table Sampdoria.

Juve's win against Gennaro Gattuso's side gave novice coach Andrea Pirlo some breathing space as the



Zlatan Ibrahimovic

champions' nine-year reign looks set to end.

"Mistakes? Yes, there are things that I messed up, but the first year of a coach is not easy. It will serve me well in the future," said Pirlo.

"We must learn from these mistakes as we want to play our last 10 matches as best we can and get ready for the Coppa Italia final."

Lazio, in sixth, play away at Hellas Verona without coach Simone Inzaghi, who tested positive for Covid-19.

Behind in seventh, city rivals Roma host Bologna looking to end a three-match winless league run boosted by their 2-1 Europa League quarter-final,

first leg win at Ajax.

One to watch: Paulo Dybala

Juventus can again count on Paulo Dybala who returned after three months out with a knee injury to score against Napoli.

"When you have a player like him, you try to play him as much as possible, he raises the level," said Pirlo.

The Argentina international has scored 99 goals in 245 appearances for Juventus since joining in 2015 from Palermo.

**Key stats**

25 - Top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo's goals

10 - Inter Milan's league winning run

8 - AC Milan's wins in 15 league games in 2021

4 - Juve's points from their last three games

Fixtures (times GMT)

**Today**

Spezia v Crotone (1300), Parma v AC Milan (1600), Udinese v Torino (1845)

**Tomorrow**

Inter Milan v Cagliari (1030), Hellas Verona v Lazio, Juventus v Genoa, Sampdoria v Napoli (all 1300), Roma v Bologna (1600), Fiorentina v Atalanta (1845)

**Monday**

Benevento v Sassuolo (1845)

**Gwiji** by David Chikoko



# SPORT

Messi happy again but Barca wonder if this Clasico will be his last

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Alaf Aces cricket outfit's Ali Mpeka (R) is presented with a man of the match prize by Alaf Ltd's official, Shailesh Tripathy, as the cricketer showcased stellar overall performance in the 2021 Kazim Nasser Memorial League (KNML) Division A tie pitting Alaf Aces against Upanga SC, which took place in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday. Harab Motors Company sponsors the prize. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DC

## Alaf Aces outclass Upanga SC in 2021 Kazim Nasser Memorial tourney

By Guardian Reporter

ALAF Aces Cricket Club has moved to the top spot in this season's Kazim Nasser Memorial League (KNML) Division A's Group A, cruising to 13-run victory over Upanga Sports Club in a thrilling clash, which took place in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday.

The eventual winners' youthful performers that include Salum Jumbe and Acrey Paschal put solid displays, which proved to be crucial to their team's win.

Alaf Aces batted first in the clash, played at Leaders Club venue, notching 100 runs for the loss of nine wickets in 20 overs.

They, largely, found it difficult to put their virtuosity to show because of the rain which to some extent affected the venue's wicket.

Alaf Aces experienced a shaky start to their innings, which witnessed openers Ankit Baghel and Jumanne Mohamed face early dismissals.

Experienced all-rounder, Waheed Mushtaq, and Ejaz Aziz later put some good knocks that saw the club slowly attempt to stay in control.

Mushtaq, slotted in at number three, went on to notch 16 runs which consisted of a boundary and a six.

Aziz posted 10 runs, clearing the boundary once, in a rather short spell.

Alaf Aces' all-rounder, Ally Mpeka, helped his club pile more runs in yet another encouraging performance, which boosted their confidence.

He scored 16 runs which consisted of two fours. They later had to deal with a slight setback, given there was three quick dismissals of key players.

Jumbe, Mohammad Ali and skipper, Bhavesh Govind, did not have time to make their presence felt, as Upanga Sports Club bowlers put pressure on the former.

Govind was four runs short of two-digit figure, Jumbe and Ali were dismissed much earlier.

Kibwana Salum, Emmanuel Peter and Paschal later on put impressive displays which saw to it their team end with the respectable total.

Paschal, recently recruited by the outfit to boost their campaign, gave a good account of himself, ending with 13 runs.

Peter, as it was the case with Salum, displayed their virtuosity and ended with bats in hand.

Salum notched unbeaten 10 runs, clearing the boundary once, Peter chipped in with nine runs not out.

Upanga SC's experienced player, Ashish Kamania, had the best bowling showing given he posted four wickets leaking 14 runs in four overs.

Needing 101 runs to post victory, Upanga SC surprisingly failed to prove their worth during their innings, managing 87 runs for the loss of nine wickets in 20 overs.

They were dealt an early blow whereby experienced all-rounders, skipper Kishen Kamania and Vikram Rathore, faced early dismissals, leaving their team with seven runs after the first two overs.

Prem Thakkar, slotted in at number three, sought to step up his club's quest for successful chase, notching 39 runs, which included four fours.

## SportPesa rewards Jackpot game winner

By Guardian Reporter

SPORTS betting firm, SportPesa, has presented cash prize to Abdulaziz Mussa, who emerged as winner of the company's game, known as 'Jackpot', in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

Mussa, a Tabora resident, won after placing right bets on 13 soccer games in the betting game.

SportPesa handed over the cash to Mussa, the sixth round winner, to fulfil the firm's responsibility.

Mussa, an employee at a pharmacy in Sikonge, noted: "I'm very happy given after waiting for the scheduled time I have officially received my cash prize."

He stated: "I want to thank God for guiding me given I had earlier tried several times but I did not succeed to emerge as winner."

"In the day I won, I had placed 10 odds with each of the odds costing me 2000/- . The odd number seven ultimately helped me emerge as winner."

"I'm England's Manchester United fan and in Tanzania I'm a Yanga fanatic. When I placed my odds I had Manchester United losing to Leicester City, the odd contributed to my victory."

Director of Administration and Compliance at SportPesa Tanzania, Abbas Tarimba, expressed regards to journalists for attending the function for handing over cash prize to Mussa.

He said: "This is the day we had eagerly looked forward to, given we have completed our procedure. This winner was made public on March 22 but we had to wait for the 21 days of national mourning and thereafter host the presentation ceremony."

"In his win, Abdulaziz has 417,177,488/- after paying tax totalling 104,293,872/-."

"We are seeking to improve young Tanzanians' lives, we have witnessed the way Mussa is going to improve his life through his participation in the Jackpot."

"We are everyday doing our best to be creative in a bid to see to it that we improve our services and make our customers feel happy to participate in SportPesa games."

"The Jackpot cash prize has moved to 218,361,140/-, whereby a person who will place right bets on 13 football matches will emerge victorious. People who will place right bets on 10 to 12 matches will get weekly bonus."



SportPesa Jackpot game winner, Abdulaziz Mussa (3rd R), receives a dummy cheque from Director of Administration and Compliance at SportPesa Tanzania, Abbas Tarimba (L), Simba SC winger Miraji Athuman (3rd L), and Yanga players, Farid Mussa (2nd L), Bakari (2nd R) and Carlos Fernandes, after Mussa had placed right bets on 13 soccer matches in the betting game, conducted by SportPesa Tanzania. Mussa received cash prize totalling 521,471,360/- for his win. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

## Coach: Namungo FC ought to work hard

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

NAMUNGO FC head coach, Hemed Suleiman, has conceded that his team have a long way to go to become a force to reckon with both domestically and internationally.

The Lindi-based outfit currently anchors Group D of this season's CAF Confederation Cup without a point from four games.

Namungo FC is moreover placed 10th in the 2020/21 Vodacom Premier League with 28 points from 19 games.

Speaking after the team's 1-1 draw with Ihefu FC in a top flight match, which was played at Majaliwa Stadium in Lindi two days back, Suleiman said he has a long way to go to build a strong team.

According to the tactician, the side is lacking power upfront, defense and transition departments are moreover not playing well.

Suleiman, however, added he needs to work hard to turn Namungo FC into a strong side.

He stated: "We are not playing well, we are failing to score, the defense and midfield are also not doing well, that has been our problem both in domestic and international games."

"I can simply say we are far from being a force to reckon with both domestically and internationally, but we have a room to improve, all we need is working hard," he said.

In the game, monitored on a local Television station, Namungo, who were at home, created a lot of scoring chances but they failed to utilize them as Ihefu FC defense was very solid.

Ihefu FC midfielder, Raphael Loth, netted the goal for the visitors on the 23rd minute of the first half, slotting in from within the area.

The goal saw Ihefu FC take control of the proceedings up to the recess.

After the break the hosts made some changes which paid off on the 63rd minute as they equalized through Ibrahim Ali who volleyed in a Steven Sey cross.

Ihefu FC head coach Zubeir Katwila, whose side sits 17th in the top flight's table with 21 points, hailed his charges for playing well in the game.

## Mwambusi in spotlight as Yanga take on KMC FC



Yanga players take part in training session in Dar es Salaam recently to prepare for the 2020/21 Vodacom Premier League. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

ALL eyes will be on coach, Juma Mwambusi, as Vodacom Premier League's table leaders Yanga will be eager to keep their spot at the top with a sizeable gap when they host Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC in a top flight match at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam tonight.

The former Mbeya City FC, Prisons and Azam FC coach replaced Burundian Cedric Kaze, who was sacked by Yanga after a dismal return of seven out of a possible 18 points in the second round.

Mwambusi has been tasked with leading the all-time league winners until the end of the season.

Now as the league returns from the 21 days of national mourning for Tanzania's fifth phase President, the late John Magufuli, it is time for Mwambusi to start showing he has what it takes for the job.

His side, Yanga, hold a four-point lead over second placed Simba who have three games in hand due to continental engagement in CAF Champions League.

Yanga won the reverse fixture against KMC FC, posting 2-1 win over the latter in a game played at CCM Kirumba Stadium in Mwanza last year.

Said Ntibazonkiza, Fiston Abdulrazak, Deus Kaseke and Yacouba Sogne will be key for Mwambusi's charges.

The KMC FC will rely on former Simba striker, Charles Ilanfy, Hassan Kabunda and Matheo Anthony for inspiration.

At Nelson Mandela Stadium in Rukwa, Prisons hosts Dodoma Jiji FC, targeting a league double over Mbwana Makata's side.

The wardens are currently unbeaten in their last six fixtures, having recorded a morale-boosting 1-0 victory over JKT Tanzania after back-to-back 1-1 draws against Simba and Mbeya City FC.

Newcomers Dodoma Jiji FC are without a win in two games, since beating Ruvu Shooting 2-0, having posted draw with Kagera Sugar and Mbeya City FC in their last two games.

They come into this tie with 34 points from 24 games.

In Misungwi District, Mwanza, Gwambina FC who have not won a league game in their last eight home fixtures will entertain Coastal Union.

The hosts however, take some encouragement from Coastal Union's recent away record.

Coastal Union have not won on the road in their last five games.

The two teams are level having both collected 27 points. They are one point above Kagera Sugar who sit in the relegation zone.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

