

The Guardian Post

DAILY

Cherished by many, haunted by some, read by them all



Anglophone crisis:

US Congress accuses France of double standards

● *Also pushing for fresh, tougher sanctions on gov't, separatists*

By Macwalter Njapteh in Yaounde

The United States, US Congress has criticized France over what it rates as the former colonial master of Cameroon

with considerable influence in the country's affairs not doing enough to address the bloodletting in the North West and South West regions.

France's supposed double standards in handling the crisis going by the reading from Donald

Trump's country surfaced Friday January 1.

This was during a joint sitting of the US Senate and House of Representatives. As part of a decision contained in its Resolutions 684, adopted during the sitting, the

US congress expressed concerns over France's pressure to see the armed conflict in the North west and South West is brought under control. It urged France to do more to help solve the problem.

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As NW dialysis machines break down:

Delegate, hospital director playing 'politics' while patients' lives in danger

By Macwalter Njapteh in Yaounde

The lives of kidney patients across the North West region are on the line as the lone dialysis centre in Bamenda has shutdown owing to dysfunctional machines.

Rather than providing answers to the issue at hand North West regional delegate of public

health, Dr Kingsley Che Soh and the Director of Bamenda Regional Hospital, Dr Denis Nsame are giving confusing explanations which have been interpreted as playing politics while patients' lives are on the line.

According to Dr Nsame, the centre was closed down following an "acute breakdown of the machines in the dialysis centre." *Cont'd on page 3*

End-of-year feasts:

Felix Mbayu donates, fetes with B'da Old Town community

From Wainchia Cynthia in Bamenda

The minister Delegate to the Minister of External Relations in charge of Relations with the Commonwealth, Felix Mbayu, has once more demonstrated his kindheartedness, love and indiscriminate generosity for his native Ntambang community, Old Town, in the Bamenda II municipality.

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Minister Felix Mbayu: Hailed for indiscriminate generosity

Nation Investment Trust Credit Union board chair takes office

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NITCCUL new board chair, Prof Elizabeth Tamanjong with credit union officials at handing over ceremony

Rights commission top official rubbishes regional councils

● *Argues won't solve crisis, speed up development in NW, SW*

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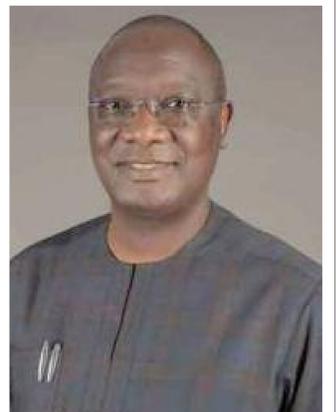
Why Nigerian Consul General for NW, SW won Most Dynamic Diplomat Award

By Solomon Tembang in Yaounde

H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir, Nigerian Consul General for the North West and South West regions, has been singled out and awarded as the "Most Dynamic Diplomat" in Cameroon.

This was on December 23, 2020 in Buea during an award ceremony organised by the media organisation, Dream Network.

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H.E Ibrahim M. Bashir: Merited recognition

Issues of the moment

By Cyprian Ntiamba Obi Ntui
in Yaounde

What's new in a new year?

We woke up on January 1, 2021 to a new year as humanity would want us to believe. The enthusiasm of welcoming the New Year was unprecedented and the reason was obvious.

For many, 2020 was a year like no other; everyone longed to see its end and for those who saw the end, and 'crossed over' into the new year, it was a celebration like no other. To many Christians and their denominations, Saint Sylvester night has come to carry a special significance – that of crossing over body and soul into a new year of spiritual renewal and revival.

This generation had the 'honour' of witnessing a pandemic which the majority hitherto read only in history books. Living it through and not being a casualty was indeed a great favour from the gods; or God Almighty, depending on what you choose to believe.

But what actually changed in the New Year that we can really hold tangible? The sun still rose and set as ever; we ate and drank like we have always done. Though may be with a little celebration added to the eating and drinking as people met in groups; visited as families or received guests in festive mood.

Without the singularity of the religious perspective, these are all activities we carried out and will carry out at anytime of the year when opportunity demands. To many people, every event that brings joy, calls for celebration.

Nothing in my home actually changed apart from the heavier clutter of dirty dishes in my kitchen sink; accumulated stains on the floor tiles everywhere around the house and the sleepy atmosphere that enveloped every member of my family. Just the same atmosphere that characterizes any other celebration be it born house, marriage, community reunion or any other.

Nothing looked new apart from the fact that many more street walkers dressed in cleaner clothes and many more people trooped into worship houses; obviously to thank God for allowing them see another year.

Time is the actual author of change which affects us both within and without and both for good and for bad. We can effect change in real terms only from within. Many life style changes can be orchestrated from the individual as we progress in time to mature to the reality of the emptiness of life without a divine vision; one that transcends immediate time and uncelebrated change.

During the year ended, those we never expected to die passed away against our will; those we thought would be no more survived and continue to hang on, to our greatest disappointment.

Time has a way of taking its toll on mortals whether we like it or not. Consequently, as time passes, we age and get uglier to our chagrin. We get more and more of those people who despise us than those who want to go into long standing relationships with us. We see how people's attitudes change towards us. Whether we like it or not, those we loved us start deserting us and we have to make do with doing it on our own or all alone; or else.

This is where terminal diseases could set in for those who cannot cope and adjust to change that is brought inadvertently on them by time. That is the lot of those who cannot manage drastic and unexpected change. Any change for good comes only as we consciously strive to be better persons despite the havoc that the passage of time brings on our physique.

Cameroonians woke up to the same turmoil and uncertainty that has reigned in the Anglophone regions of the country for four years running. We woke up to ghost towns and threats of kidnaps and extortion by angered youth who have taken the law in their own hands and now call the shots in what is now euphorically referred to as 'Ground Zero'.

The year may be new but nothing new can happen except within us as we make new resolutions to be a solace rather than a burden to humanity. Crime and anger bring the bitter and angry no good as no individual is responsible for ruling your fate.

Work hard for your self-fulfilment as long as you have breath, irrespective of the passage of time, for that is our lot in life. There is nothing new under the sun as the Holy Scriptures say.

NW rights commission boss rubbishes decentralisation strides

-Says Regional Councils won't solve crisis in NW, SW

By Giyo Ndzi in Yaounde

Delegates recently voted into the Regional Councils have assumed their positions but the dust is yet to settle over their role in enhancing the decentralisation process as well as contributing to an end to the armed conflict that has paralysed the North West and South West regions of the country for four years now.

The head of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms for the North West Region, Hon Chief Paul Nji Tumasang, has lashed out at the Regional Council, stating that its importance was overemphasised by government as compared to the actual function and impact of its members.

Speaking to *The Guardian Post* at the 28th Ordinary Session of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, NCHRF, he said government efforts to attain decentralisation were not sufficient.

"The decentralisation as far as I am concerned is not really decentralisation. It is decongestion. They are decongesting the powers that they have at the centre. We are still in an extreme Jacobean centralised state. Everything in those regions is referred back to the centre," he explained.

Noting that he was one of those who fought against the adoption of the bill at the National Assembly, the SDF politician said he is of the opinion that it is only legislative assemblies with true powers that can bring about effective decentralisation.

He said: "I am not saying that the region should legislate on matters that concern the country. They can legislate on matters that concern the regions. They will not legislate on the army, the police force and things like that but can legislate on things that are local".

On the contrary, Hon Chief Paul Nji Tumasang went on: "... we are talking of deliberative assemblies. What is a deliberative assembly? They carry out deliberations which can be cancelled by the representative of the state. The DO, the SDO, the regional governors are still there to effectively be the real rulers. So this whole business of regional elections and the like is in my view fake and is not going to solve the problem. And of course, we are seeing only the same old people resurfacing, so what is it all about?"

Regarding the House of Chiefs which saw its first members voted into office weeks back, the North West rights commission boss was of the opinion that the structure as well as their powers could be better than what obtains at the moment.

"... The House of Chiefs, what do they do? What are their powers? Look at the law, it says they give an opinion on things that concern chieftaincy matters. What is that? Is that what they call House of Chiefs?" he questioned, adding that: "If they are to really put the House of Chiefs they should go to the archives and really see how the House of Chiefs



Hon Chief Paul Nji Tumasang/“The person who has the yam and knife ... is the head of state...”

was managed in the days of the Southern Cameroons. Why can't we go back to what used to happen in the Southern Cameroons and move from there? Maybe not replicating it completely but move from there".

Deplorable human rights situation in NW

Speaking in his capacity as head of the North West chapter of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, Hon Chief Paul Nji Tumasang confirmed the assertions made by the acting Chairperson of the commission, Prof James Mouangue Kabila, on the human rights situation in the North West region.

The acting chairperson had explained that the year 2020 was a very difficult one in terms of human rights, especially in the crisis-hit North West and South West regions of the country.

"The situation is absolutely deplorable," Hon Chief Paul Nji Tumasang noted, adding that "... It is a daily occurrence of people being beheaded, corpses lying everywhere, you cannot go 5km without seeing a corpse lying somewhere. People pass by corpses now as they used to pass by dead dogs. So, the human life now is just like the life of a dog. That is the situation".

Contrary to the picture painted by some politicians, he said: "The war is not ending. Anybody who says that they have put things under control is lying. They are lying to the Head of State. They should tell the Head of State that things are not moving well. People cannot come to their villages in armored cars and leave in armored cars and say that everyday life in those villages is under control. It is certainly not under control".

"The few children who go to school are those who go to school in big towns. In the villages, in the hinterlands the children are not going to school. Killing of teachers is almost on a daily basis. And kidnappings of course you know..." he stated.

The deplorable situation, the head of the NCHRF for the North West noted, has been a great hindrance to the work of the commission, civil

society organisations and humanitarian groups seeking to provide care to victims of the crisis.

To him: "... we can only manage what is happening in Bamenda town. How do I get to Nkambe? Can I send my staff to Nkambe or Njinikom or to Kumbo? How do they get there? By helicopter? How do they come back? So, there is a problem and we think that the actions taken so far to resolve these problems have been just face-saving. We have been deceiving ourselves. It is like somebody has a wound on his or her leg and is pretending that there is no wound".

Head of state alone can resolve crisis

Questioned about the next possible course of action to quell the violence in the English-speaking regions of the country, Hon Chief Paul Nji Tumasang was categorical in his response: "We are in a situation where we have to sit down and resolve this problem. If we think that it will be resolved by some people from some other planet, it will not happen".

He also called on government to be more flexible in its approach, as killing separatist fighters will not necessarily kill their ideology.

"... The person who has the yam and knife to sit and say enough is enough, let this problem be finished, is the Head of State. There is no way we can say that these people will be neutralised any day soon. You can kill all of them who are there now, it will just hibernate, it will just calm down to resurface with vengeance in five or ten years time," he asserted.

Noting that the same course of action has been followed for the past years today with dire consequences, he said: "... it is obvious that if we continue in that direction, we'll fall into an abyss ... This whole business or Regional Council and the like, as far as I am concerned as a human rights person is not going to solve our problems. We need patriots. We need people who are patriotic to sit down and say 'now we have this problem, how are we going to solve it?'"

Delegate, hospital director playing 'politics'

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Dr Nsime Denis: Bamenda
Regional Hospital Director



Dr Che Soh:
NW Public Health Delegate

In a release, Dr Nsime stated that "...dialysis patients in particular, should note that due to unforeseen acute breakdown of the machines in the dialysis centre, the haemodialysis centre has been temporarily closed and patients transferred to other general and regional hospitals of the country pending a lasting solution to the machines of the centre."

The director urged the patients to seek medical assistance in other regions. The announcement Sunday, left hundreds of patients whose lives depend on the dialysis, in a state of panic and confusion.

"I don't understand how a government can be so careless about the lives of people to a point that all dialysis machines will breakdown without any replacement," a patient in Bamenda lamented.

With the observation of the traditional ghost town yesterday, some kidney patients complained they could not travel out of the region to seek medical assistance elsewhere.

There have been questions of how possible it will be for kidney patients, frail in their health conditions, to mobilise the necessary resources and have the strength to travel to other regions to seek the life-support medical assistance.

Regional delegate contradicts hospital director

The public has been put in a fix following another outing of the Regional Delegate of Public Health for the North West, Dr Kingsley Che Soh who contradicted the Director of the Bamenda Regional Hospital.

Contrary to early announcement by the Director of the hospital, the regional delegate denied any closure of the centre.

"The population of the North West region is hereby informed that...the Haemodialysis centre of the regional hospital has not been closed," the communique signed by the delegate, Dr Kingsley Che Soh read.

"Rather, the haemodialysis machines which have been serving patients for more than eight years now are progressively being replaced... and new machines shall go operational in the days ahead," it further stated.

Viral news of the breakdown had kept patients worried about their survival in the days ahead as no alternative means of treatment was proposed.

The Bamenda haemodialysis centre hosts hundreds of patients suffering from especially kidney infections and such patients are in need of delicate and intensive care needing to undergo haemodialysis at least twice weekly to enable their urinary system to function.

The frustrated patients whose survival depend on dialysis risk dying if the dialysis machines are not replaced soon, medics say.

The Guardian Post gathered that one of patients who left Bamenda for Yaounde Sunday to continue treatment died on the way

A similar breakdown of machines at the Buea Regional Hospital haemodialysis centre was registered in 2019 and was only reinstated weeks after patients threatened to protest.

Mismanagement and lack of maintenance services have been blamed for the frequent breakdown of such intensive care machines, though the government advanced different reasons.

US Congress strikes France over double standards on Anglophone crisis

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"...France maintains considerable interests in Cameroon, including significant economic and security cooperation, but has not used its influence sufficiently to stem the atrocities committed in the English-speaking regions or to support stronger international action to seek a resolution in the conflict region," it said.

The sitting called on key partners of Cameroon, "particularly France, to help foster a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon."

It also talk of the need to "...implement a mutually agreed-upon programme to address long-standing grievances and marginalisation".

UN Security Council, AU, ECCAS urged to discuss problem

The Congress also urged other bodies such as the African Union, AU the Economic Community of Central African States, ECCAS and the United Nations Security Council to discuss the ongoing crisis.

It advised on the need for such discussions to result in the imposition of a cessation of violence, investigation and prosecution of human rights abuses and crimes committed against civilians.

Congress to sanction gov't, Separatists

The Congress during the same gathering urged the different US government services to "consider imposing targeted sanctions on individual government and separatist leaders responsible for extra-judicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognised human rights".

It also challenged the US Department of State, Department of the Treasury, and United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with other rel-



United States Congress in session during adoption of resolution 684

evant Federal departments and agencies, to press the government of Cameroon to provide unfettered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations in the Anglophone regions.

Gov't must safeguard citizen's rights

Condemning the abuses allegedly committed by state security forces and armed groups in the North West and South West regions, the resolution 684 affirmed that the United States continues to hold the Cameroonian government responsible "for safeguarding the security and constitutional rights of all its citizens, regardless of their region, religion or political opinion".

Previous US sanction

In November 2019, the Trump administration denied Cameroon privileged access to the US marked within the scheme of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA.

The sanction which came over what the US government affirmed were human rights violation within the context of the

Anglophone crisis went into effect January 1, 2020.

In a message to Congress before the sanctions went into effect, President Donald Trump said Cameroon has failed to look into concerns of military excesses in the North West and South West regions.

Trump then cited extrajudicial killings, unlawful arrests, detention and torture among others as having prompted the decision.

Created in the year 2000 for some 49 privileged countries, AGOA offers duty free access for some 1,800 products into the US market. Among other conditions, the benefit is strongly linked to a country's human rights record.

Casualties of crisis

According to international NGOs, the crisis in the English-speaking regions, which is in its fifth year, has already caused more than 3,000 deaths and displaced about 700,000 persons.

It has also left some three million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance and around 855,000 children are out of school.

Why Nigerian Consul General for NW, SW won Most Dynamic Diplomat award

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The Consul General was awarded for the outstanding services he is rendering in performing his diplomatic mission in Cameroon. The dynamic, level-headed and easygoing Bashir, since his appointment at the helm of the Nigerian Consulate, we gathered, has turned things around in properly addressing the worries of his compatriots in the North West and South West regions and in providing other diplomatic services in the regions.

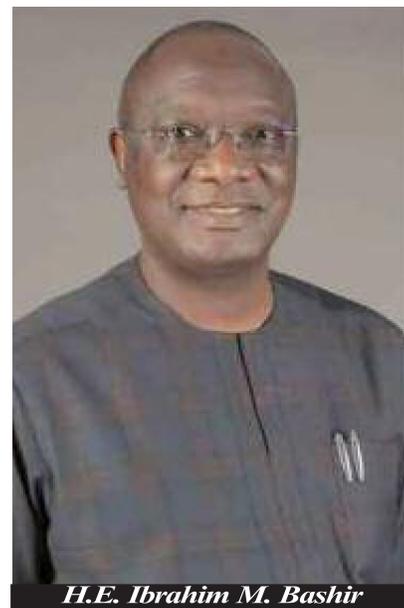
The Chairman of the Award Organising Committee, Fah Elvis Tayong, in his address during the award ceremony, said the committee sent out agents to the various diplomatic missions and administrative institutions in the country to observe how they rendered services to users.

It was through this means that the agents singled out the meritorious performance of H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir.

"H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir stood out as the most available, most open and most receptive. He would receive anyone even at short notice. These are the attributes that earned him the award," FahTayong disclosed.

On his part, the Station Manager of Dream FM, which is part of Dream Network, Christopher Chigozie, said the award is not only aimed at distinguishing outstanding persons, but also to encourage them carry on with their laudable works.

"This award is in recognition of H.E.



H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir

Ibrahim M. Bashir's openness and readiness to solve problems and give assistance, not only to Nigerians but also to Cameroonians," Chigozie stated.

He continued that the award to the diplomat was without any strings attached.

The Head of the Chancery of the Nigerian Consulate in Buea, Samuel Teve, in appreciation, opined that H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir merited the award because of his attitude to work and people.

"I have served in other missions before, but I have not witnessed what I have been

witnessing here since I was assigned to this mission. No head of mission is open and plain like His Excellency here," Teve said

"As a young man, I have learned a lot and I am learning a lot from him. Thank you, Your Excellency, for the training you are giving me and I will continue to learn. I am very happy and proud of you, Your Excellency, for this award. This is a well-deserved award," he added.

Meanwhile, H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir said: "This award is not for me alone. I dedicate it to all the staff of the Consulate. When I was appointed and took up office, I told the staff that I want us to work as a team - as one happy family. I am a team player".

Speaking to journalists after receiving his award, H.E. Ibrahim M. Bashir said: "My relationship with the press has been very cordial. The press has a very important responsibility, especially now with the security and the health crisis".

As to what netted him the award, Bashir said: "I don't only reach out to my people; I reach out to Cameroonians also. I tell my people to respect the laws of their host country. As head of this mission, I have the responsibility to make the relationship between my country and my host country better. This will encourage me to work harder, not to earn awards, but because it is my responsibility to be of service to my community".

Nation Investment Trust Credit Union board chair takes office

By Ngah Junior Great in Yaounde

Prof. Tamanjong Elizabeth has officially taken over as Chairperson of the Board of Directors, BOD, of the country's fastest-growing, reliable and customer-friendly micro-finance institution, Nation Investment Trust Cooperative Credit Union Ltd., NITCCUL.

Though voted into office on November 30, 2020, she officially took over the reins of command during a January 2, 2021 ceremony at the enterprise's Chapelle Nsimyong headquarters in Yaounde.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony, the outgoing BOD chair, Akenji Joseph, called on the new Board Chair and her team to remain conscious of how important it is to keep the flames of the credit union burning and even strive to make it grow to a better position.

According to Akenji, it was time to give room to new leadership, as it was obvious that he and his team had ran a good race but had to hand the relay baton to a fresh team to continue from where he and his team ended.

He expressed optimism that NITCCUL would attain higher heights, given that the new BOD chair and team would improve sensitisation by reaching the masses and telling them more about the credit union. He further urged staff to maintain team spirit and learn to keep the secrets and weaknesses of the credit union "within the family".

With regards to the introduction of new members into the NITCCUL family, Akenji Joseph explained that it will bring in new ideas and create a stronger working bond.

The new NITCCUL board chair, the ever-dynamic and results-oriented Prof. Tamanjong Elisabeth, on her part, expressed gratitude to those present at the ceremony which coincidentally fell during the festive period. The new BOD chair told staff the time for laxity was gone as everyone is expected to become serious so as to take the credit union to higher heights.

She said, though still a baby, NITCCUL is destined to grow at a geometric rates, citing the credit union's customer-friendly attitude, reliability, enticing and unmatched interest rates on savings and loans. The rate of growth, she said, will depend on its staff who must intensify competition with other credit unions and have the thirst to occupy the first position in the country's micro-finance sector.

She further expressed her readiness to work with the former team she took over from as she believes the credit union belongs to everyone who has toiled and made it get to the level it is today.

Prof. Tamanjong Elizabeth equally instructed her new team to meet as early as possible to strategise for the year ahead, as the credit union's growth will depend only on how much the members are ready to give in.

Talking to The Guardian Post later, the new BOD chair said sensitising the masses won't be a problem as she and her team are up to the task.

"We must sensitise if we really wish to grow. We are going to go to schools, 'Njangi' groups, the media, offices and



Outgoing NITCCUL Chairman (L) hands over command to Prof. Tamanjong



Prof. Tamanjong Elizabeth takes office



NITCCUL executive after handing over ceremony

even to those on the roads. Many should know the benefits of being part of our credit union. We will grow. I have that feeling in me that by the end of the year 2021, our growth will be visible and significant," she stated.

A number of representatives from the Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League, CAMCCUL, at the ceremony, also encouraged the new team to step up their game and stand up to the ever-rising competition in the sector.

At the end of the ceremony, Prof. Tamanjong Elizabeth received the keys to the NITCCUL Yaounde and Bamenda offices, signifying transfer of authority.

About NITCCUL

NITCCUL is a savings/lending Credit Union that started operations in

2016 with 250 members. With membership open to all, NITCCUL is registered under the Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League, CamCCUL. With a membership fee of just 5000 FCFA and shares as cheap as 10, 000 FCFA, the credit union has been lauded for its competitive rates.

NITCCUL members have among other benefits, a security on savings and Loans through risk management scheme, surprisingly at no extra cost. More so, members have access to a free financial counseling, advice and business planning, and have the rights to attend and participate in decision-making at General meetings.

The credit union also boasts of granting loans at very low interest rates, with highly trained staff ready to help members find a solution to financial problems. Members also have the

option to save daily via the mobile daily collection scheme and also benefit from the new housing scheme at special rates.

The Nation Investment Cooperative Credit Union also provides a series of options, with each adapted to its members according to their individual needs. For savings accounts, interest is credited at the end of the year. The savings in this account and the frequency with which members save, it notes, forms a base which determines their eligibility and amount for a loan.

With deposit (current) accounts, NITCCUL keeps its members savings, and pays them back on demand, even without notice of withdrawal. The enterprise also provides group accounts reserved for legalised groups like meetings, associations, NGOs, churches etc., and accounts for minors. Yielding interest, it serves for their future needs in education, healthcare and others.

Several workers of the private sector are already receiving pay through the credit union which also permits members to save and repay their loans through other banks by the use of standing orders.

Other services

With a mission to improve the economy and social well-being of its members, NITCCUL makes available overdraft facilities, contract financing, meeting group ('njangi') financing, money transfer services and micro credit schemes which permit small scale traders and artisans to save through a collecting agent within the daily saving scheme. In this scheme, one can be given four times his or her total savings.

Through the union's plot financing plan, a fixed asset investment product whereby, a member can acquire a piece of land through the credit union which acts as a third party between them and the landlord. The union pays the seller at the union's office and keeps the document of the land and only hands them over to the member when he or she completes the payment of the agreed sum in several installments.

As part of its services to its members, the Nation Investment Trust Cooperative Credit Union, through its outreach service, collects and makes payments to members and would-be members residing at the peripheries of the cities where its offices are located such as, Bujong, Ntaafi, Menkah, Banshie etc. This service, it adds, also extends to members who are hospitalised, handicapped or bedridden within the branch environment.

Other facilities include institutional school fees accounts, credit and assistance for quick removal of goods in order to avoid profit-killing penalties or cut-throat interest rates from private money lenders, as well as money withdrawal through a third party.

Four Cameroonians drown in Gabonese beach

By Morine Tanyi in Yaounde



Victims' bodies on beach

Four Cameroonians living in Gabon whose names, The Guardian Post got as Ghislain Wamba, Anderson Feudjio, Nasser Ningha and Vidricare said to have died during a swimming exercise in Gabon.

The tragic incident is said to have taken place on the beach of Cap Lopez in Port-Gentil, Ogooué-Maritime province of Gabon Sunday, January 3, 2021.

Local sources are quoted as haven said the boys, six in number aged between 25 and 30 came to the beach to swim before the tragic incident occurred.

"They tried to rescue one of their friend that was swept off by the waves in the beach and he was drowning before the irreplaceable took place," an onlooker is quoted to have said, adding "... unfortunately four people died instantly and information reaching us revealed that three are members of the same family that came to visit their elder brother before they decided to go to the beach. One of them is currently on oxygen and the other person is yet to be seen."

After news of their death went viral on social media,

many Cameroonians took to their social media platforms to express their sympathy "...I know them all personally. They were living with a great friend of mine who is an elder and brother-in-law and that's where they decided to go enjoy the beach which happens to be a stone throw from the house. My friend thus loses 3 brothers and a brother-in-law. Really sad..." wrote Franck Manfouo.

"The beach at Cap Lopez where they drowned is very dangerous. They were probably in the wrong place and surely it happened when the tide went out. In addition, swimming is not yet authorised because of the COVID-19 and the measures put in place by the government like confinement and compulsory curfew...condolences to the bereaved families" added Luc Ngon, another social media user.

In another tragic but not related incident, a Cameroonian living in Algeria is equally reported to have died in a ghastly car accident that took place on December 31.

He is reported to have left the town of Tamanrasset and was headed for Gadhaya when the tragic incident took place.

Solution to crisis in NW, SW:

Kamto calls for release of Ayuk Tabe & Co., ceasefire, political dialogue

By Maxcel Fokwen in Yaounde

The leader of the opposition Cameroon Renaissance Movement, MRC, Prof Maurice Kamto, has identified freeing all arrested in connection to the crisis in the North West and South West regions, among them Sisiku Ayuk Tabe and Co., a ceasefire and political dialogue as the only path to end the Anglophone crisis.

Kamto projected this argument in his end-of-year message Thursday December 31, 2020. The politician lamented that the Anglophone crisis, which he considers as a civil war, continues to drag on whereas there are known proposals to arrest the situation.

Beyond blaming the Biya regime over what he claims is its unwillingness to end the crisis, Kamto highlighted what he believes are "concrete solutions" to end the bloodletting in the two English-speaking regions.

"... I have continuously proposed a concrete solution for the resolution of this crisis, which has become a detestable fratricidal war. This solution comes in three main points: The immediate establishment of a ceasefire. The immediate release of all prisoners of the Anglophone crisis, including Sisiku Ayuk Tabe and his comrades," the MRC leader argued.

He posited that: "The opening of an inclusive political dialogue involving all the actors to discuss all issues, including the form of the State and the consensual reform of the electoral system to enable people to have legitimate leaders" is what Cameroon needs to do urgently to solve the crisis.

Kamto said: "Indeed, there is a need for dialogue with all Cameroonians without exception, including those who defend, for the time being, the thesis of secession". Disapproving measures which President Biya has taken to solve the Anglophone crisis, Kamto lambasted the regime for engaging among others "...



Separatist leaders serving life jail in Kondengui prison

even pseudo-attempts to open negotiations with leaders of the Anglophone cause," claiming that with Biya, "everything goes, except the seriousness and the will necessary to solve problems as a statesman".

He said Biya "prefers politicking which, at this level of responsibility, can only be a source of misfortune for the country".

It should be recalled that, Kamto is not the only political leader who holds the opinion of freeing all arrested in connection to the crisis, ceasefire and political dialogue to solve the problem.

Similar calls have since 2017 been echoing across the globe as the way out of the impasse. Even after the Major National Dialogue of October 2019 which government said was to search for a solution to the crisis, similar calls are still being made.

In July 2020, reports emerged of government having engaged discussions with separatist leaders serving a life sentence at the Kondengui prison to ease the tension in the two English-speaking regions.

While many were already taking interest in the development, Communication Minister and Government's Spokesperson, Rene Emmanuel Sadi, issued a release debunking such a move. He said then that such reports were not "consistent with reality".

After harmonising retirement age:

PCRN spokesperson urges Biya to increase age limit for public service recruitment

By Maxcel Fokwen in Yaounde

The spokesperson of the opposition Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation, PCRN, Anne Féconde Noah, has appealed to the Head of State, Paul Biya, to increase the age limit for recruitment into the public service.

Noah's appeal surfaced shortly after a December 31, 2020 decree of Biya harmonising the retirement ages of civil servants. The decree harmonised the retirement age for category A and B civil servants at 60 years and 55 years for category C and D civil servants.

While hailing the move, the PCRN official argued that for the purpose of fairness and to tie with Cameroon's realities, Biya should also extend the age limit for recruitment into the public service.

"The age for recruitment into the public service should also be harmonised, for the sake of fairness," Noah stated.

To her, just as some people work in the public service for long, others too should have the possibility of writing public service recruitment exams for long.

"While some can work in the public service longer, others should have access



Members of North West judicial family

to it for longer," the politician maintained.

"Thirty-two years as the age limit to access the public service is not too fair given the socio-economic realities of our country, and the configuration of the edu-

cation system, and the new retirement ages," Noah further analysed.

She appealed to the Head of State to review the age limit to gain access into the public service as a way to do justice to the youth.

The opposition political party official recalled that when Biya ordered the special recruitment of 25,000 youth into the public service, government adjusted the age limit to be at 40 years. Such changes then, she further opined, fit into the realities of the country.

Millions of youth in Cameroon usually miss out on competitive entrance exams into the public service owing to age limit. Currently, 32 years is the age limit for recruitment into the public service.

The limitation, human resource experts have repeatedly argued, partly accounts for the reasons why most people are believed to reduce the ages.

Context of decree

Biya's decision came after years of complaints from civil servants over disparity in retirement ages. Some corps are on record as having staged sit-down strikes to express their indignation over the issue.

A source in the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, who did not want to be named because he was not authorised to speak, hinted that at least 15,000 civil servants, who were due retirement January 1 this year, would benefit from the decision.

Njinikom:

SII-UK empowers disabled persons with entrepreneurial skills

By Deng Eric in Yaounde

Self-reliance Initiative International, SII-UK, registered as a charity organisation in the United Kingdom has empowered persons living with disabilities in Njinikom, Boyo division of the North West region on entrepreneurial skills.

The beneficiaries learned skills in soap and vaseline production as well as the fundamentals of starting a business within the framework of a project dubbed; building self-esteem and providing support to vulnerable people in Njinikom, in commemoration of the International Day of Persons Living with Disability.

According to the founder of SII-UK, Emmanuel Paul Chiati, himself a native of Njinikom and a Social worker based in the United Kingdom, the training was intended to build the income generating skills of this group of persons and enable them deal with the realities of their disabilities.

He pointed out that the ongoing crisis and the novel coronavirus has further compounded the already difficult situation of these vulnerable persons.

The organisation had identified 40 vulnerable persons in Njinikom whose living conditions had become even more preoccupying due to the present crisis and the covid-19 but could only train 10 due to the limited resources.

To Bih, one of the beneficiaries of the project, she will use the knowledge acquired to start up a business. She suffered from an accident and one of her legs was later amputated.

"I will now use this knowledge to start up a business for myself. I need to be strong to take care of myself and my six



Beneficiaries brandish certificates at end of training workshop



Person with disability carrying out demonstrating of soap production

children. I cannot do any farm work again because of my disability but this soap production is good for me as I do not need to move or strain myself", she said.

Ndzi Heronimus who also benefitted from the training hailed initiative, saying it was exactly the time of intervention they needed. To him, such efforts needed to be replicated in other communities to reduce the challenges they face.

The soap and vaseline produced during the training was shared amongst the participants. This will first of all improve on their hygienic conditions and support them combating the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

SII-UK hopes to ensure accessibility to the required chemicals and the requirements for production of soap and Vaseline to ensure their business runs smoothly, with the hope one of them could run such a retail that provides these chemicals.

The trainees were given basic start up material at the end of the training to enable them put their skills gained into practice.

"The program has further built on SII-UK's motivation to remain of outstanding service these persons with disabilities and other vulnerable persons, building on their self reliance through socioeconomic and psychological empowerment and enabling them to realise their full potentials despite the numerous challenges they have to deal with" Chiati pointed out

SII-UK works to ensure that people living with disabilities and in poverty realize their full potentials and live more fulfilling lives by promoting their economic empowerment, education, physical and psychosocial support.

Bamenda III DO vows to end ghost town phenomenon

From Ndimbe Usman in Bamenda

The Divisional Officer, DO, of Bamenda III Subdivision in Mezam Division of the North West Region, Bassilekin Georges Magloire, has vowed to kill the ghost town phenomenon in his jurisdiction.

In communique issued recently, the DO told business operators of his area of command that he shall be sending a control team on the field on Mondays to control their business establishments. He warned that no absence shall be tolerated.

Observers have concluded that this is one of the moves taken by him to kick out ghost town phenomenon from that subdivision.

He started by sealing some bars and drinking spots in Nkwen on Christmas, tagging its owners as ghost town propagators as they used to lock their business premises on Mondays.

It should be noted that in the past weeks the City Mayor of Bamenda, Paul Achobang, has been rallying businessmen and women of the town and telling them that 2020 has died and gone with ghost towns, adding that 2021 is a new dawn,

during which ghost towns will no longer prevail.

Though this has been considered as a voice crying in the wilderness, given that those calls have not been heeded to, in 2021 the administration of the North West Region believes that things will no longer remain the same. From all indications they are bent on putting an end to ghost town in 2021.

This frantic move by the administration to kill Monday ghost towns, many think, is because the phenomenon has put the economy of the region on its knees.

The Monday ghost towns and lockdowns, it should be recalled, have been put in place by Anglophone activists since January 2017 as a form of peaceful protest against what they called annihilation, marginalisation and subjugation by the Yaoundé government.

This phenomenon has contributed enormously to the pains local inhabitants of the North West and South West Regions in particular and Cameroon in general have been facing.

OBITUARY

Heaven has again loosened on us as we undeniably admit you are gone. The news of your demise came as a shock to us your children, Nephews, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and the entire family of Bih and Binka. Though grieved by your departure, the memories legacy you left behind will never quit us Grandma. Mami Munchoh Cecilia Njeshu was born in 1923, into the family of Pa Tata Tantoh and Ma Munsaa in Binka-Nkambe. She later got married to late Pa Philip Njeshu in Bih. The couple was blessed with several kids namely Tantoh Manasis, Martha Munshi, Jiti Emanuel (L), Ephrem, Nchanji Godlove, Tata Dickson, Mispaline and Ndi Jackson. She brought up all her children and related nephew in a purely Christian home.

As a devoted Baptist Christian she was amongst the pillars of the implantation of the Bih Baptist Church in the middle of the 50's. In the church she held several positions in the church and participated actively in community development. Even at her age, she would not fail attending church service every Sunday. She has left an indelible mark of greatness in the Bih Baptist Church and one of her dreams which has left unaccomplished was to see an olive branch of the church in her quarter at Mbu Tuh.

Of late, while in Bamenda, Mami Cici offered a thanksgiving service at the Menda Baptist church to thank God for everything



she has had in life (Children, grandchildren and great grandchildren). She was a Wikipedia for the family who will forever be remembered. She etched her name on the pillars of history as her simplicity and actions will continue to echo across our generations as she left behind 7 children, 35 nephews, forty-six (46) grandchildren and fifty-five (55) great grandchildren to mourn her. A Voice, a Mother of mothers and Mother of fathers is Gone. A woman servant leader and in fact an Iconic church leader who will be missed. Mama Cici's demise is a big lost to the Baptist Church, the entire Bih/Binka zone and her families in Bih and Binka for she was such a great woman that words alone can't describe. To sum it all, she was enthusiastic and hard-working

North West administrators commit to re-build region in 2021

From Wanchia Cynthia in Bamenda

Administrative authorities of the North West region have taken the commitment to rebuild the region in 2021.

This was during a crossover ceremony organised by Bamenda City Council. The event took place at the esplanade of the Governor's office on Tuesday December 29, 2020.

Amidst thousands of denizens present, the City Mayor of Bamenda, Paul Achobang, unveiled his action plan for the year 2021. He appreciated the collaboration of administrative authorities, security forces and the population of Bamenda throughout 2020.

"Being in office for eight months, we want to examine our achievements, failures and declare the way forward come 2021. We are looking forward to having the best academic institutions in Bamenda which produce a turnover of 500billion FCFA a year, an agro-industrial sector which will produce gainful employment, industries such as the tomatoes factory, improve medical health facilities, roads, other infrastructure, guarantee employment opportunities to Bamenda city youth, ensure constant water and electricity supply are all plans Bamenda City Council board has for the population of Bamenda come 2021," Achobang affirmed.

Men and women of God prayed for the return of peace to Bamenda and blew the trumpet of triumph as they got into 2021.

The city council, as part of its action plan, hopes to combat ghost town with the opening of business places.

The city council, as part of its action plan, hopes to combat ghost town with the opening of business places.



Governor Lele L'Afrique preaching peace



Paul Achobang unveiling 2021 action plan

"The ghost town has never benefited anyone and has no profit. Why should businessmen close down because they want ghost town?" Paul questioned.

The Governor of the North West Region, Adolph Lele L'Afrique, affirmed the new nature of Bamenda come 2021 and reassured the City Mayor of administrative support from every angle.

"We are going to witness the rebuilding of the North West region come 2021. From the ashes we are regretting, we can build back a better region. The Chairman of the rebuilding committee will soon be here to launch the operational face of the programme," he said.

"The City Mayor of Bamenda, along with the administrative authorities, supported by the security forces, have drawn a plan to fight against the ghost town in Bamenda come Monday January 4, 2021. Lord Mayor

I want to reassure you of the support of administrative officials. A new page will be opened in the life of Bamenda come 2021. It's time for action not declaration" Lele added.

Though the nature of the year was tough, the region administered some success.

"Despite the odds, in the educational sector, we brought our children back to school. Economically, the implementation of the investment budget is close to 50% of realization. In the security domain, insecurity has reduced with Operation Keep Bamenda Clean. In the cultural sector, activities are resuming gradually. In sports, PWD came up as champion in the nation. Though COVID-19 made the year rougher, our medical and traditional personnel were able to put the situation in order," Governor Lele stated.

440 million FCFA council budget to transform Idabato in 2021

From Frank Lyonga in Limbe

The Idabato Council in the Bakassi peninsula, Ndain Division of the South West Region will run on a 440 million FCFA budget for the 2021 financial year.

This budget was unanimously adopted by councillors during the 2nd ordinary council session to examine and adopt the 2021 budget.

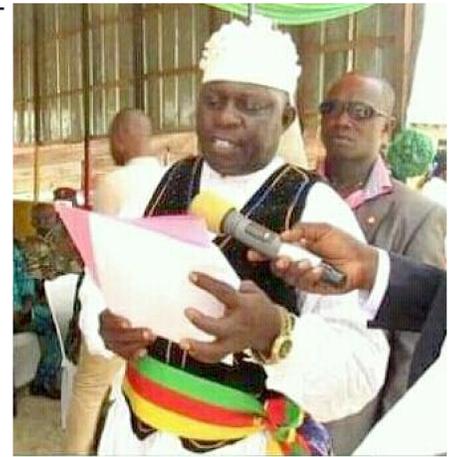
The Mayor of the Idabato Council, Etongo Efang, said the priority project will be sand-filling and construction of an embankment to prevent encroachment from the sea.

The Mayor equally presented other projects such as construction of a bridge that will link Idabato I and Idabato II, purchase of a new speedboat to ease movement around the peninsula, construction of public toilets amongst others.

According to the Secretary General of the Council, Akamah Sheli, the Idabato Council will witness a budget drop of 10 million FCFA in 2021 as compared to the 2020 budget which stood at 450 million FCFA.

This drop, according to the Secretary General, is as a result of drop of credit sent to the Council. He used the opportunity to call on the business community to carry out their civic responsibilities by paying their taxes as only through this can the council raise revenue to carry out meaningful development in the Sub-Division.

On his part, the Senior Divisional Officer of Ndain division, Fowang Lawrence, called on the mayor to put health at the heart of council projects by



Mayor Etongo Efang speaking during council session

constructing public toilets. This, he said, is a major solution to fight cholera which claimed the life of dozens and over 100 affected in November 2020.

The SDO called on the councillors to be true ambassadors in their respective communities and preach unity.

"Also sensitise members of your communities to close their ears to the separatist doctrine which is a farfetched dream. Only through a one and indivisible Cameroon can we be able to archive emergence by 2035," Fowang said.

"There is lack of public toilets, potable water, there is no hospital, people defecate anyhow in the sea and under their houses, making it a favourable climate for cholera outbreak," a resident told us.

Idabato Council is one of the five Councils in the Bakassi peninsula with an estimated population of 50,000 inhabitants mostly Nigerians, with fishing and petty trading as principal activities.



Part of area destroyed by sea encroachment

Religious leaders call for ceasefire, normalcy in NW, SW

By Macwalter Njapteh in Yaounde

Religious leaders have called for a ceasefire and dialogue to end the armed conflict in the North West and South West regions as well as other crises in the country.

This was during an inter-religious service organised in Yaounde Saturday.

The inter-religious service that brought together spiritual leaders from both Muslim and Christian faith was intended to assemble worshippers to intercede on behalf of the nation regarding the several challenges it is facing.

Speaking at the end of the service, the Imam of the Yaounde Central Mosque, Cheikh Oumarou Mallam said: "... We are calling on the actors for a ceasefire and silencing of the guns to end the violence, massacres and so on... throughout our country and we have prayed for the nation, its people and all our leaders, for peace and harmonious living together".

He emphasised that for any meaningful development and justice to exist, peaceful means to solving crises in homes, church and nation must be sought through dialogue.



Worshippers during ecumenical service



Clergy, some worshippers in group photo at end of peace service

Backing up the Muslim leader, Rev Emmanuel B. Masok of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, PCC, said the gathering at such a time of the year was strong indication of the churches' determination to see a return to peace and normalcy in the restive Anglophone regions and the rest of the country.

"...it shows that the churches are united in their pursuit of peace. The churches are calling on all their faithful to join in this crusade and let the government, our leaders see us as representing the suffering aspirations of our people and their desperate desire for peace," Rev Masok said.

"We are doing this at the start of the year. This shows that this is our main agenda for 2021," he added.

While declaring 2021, the year of peace in Cameroon, the General Superintendent of Full Gospel Mission, Rev E. Daniel Mbiwan, called on "all compatriots, young like old, to continue praying as the ball has been set rolling and peace will return to us. Cameroon will return to the level where it used to be called the island of peace. So our eyes are turned to He that is capable of restoring peace to us as people and servants of God".

He added that: "We believe that the church is the hope of the whole nation and having suffered for close to six years of attacks from Boko Haram, incursions in the East, and armed conflict in the North West and South West regions, the church has invoked the Lord. To have done this at the start of the year, we are sure that we have put this peace appeal in the

hands of God who gives peace".

Meanwhile, the Parish Priest of the Mokolo Anglican Church, Fr Remi Jules Alumona, added that: "We have come together in unity as religious body to preach peace and to pray for peace. Our message to everyone is that, in our different spheres let's start preaching peace, quench the fire when it is still small so that it will not escalate".

Prayers for refugees in the East region, against Boko Haram attacks and COVID-19 pandemic as well as sustainable peace in other regions of the country with seeming peace, were also made during the service. Similar ecumenical services were held simultaneously in Buea, Bamenda, Maroua and other towns across the country.

Going by Rev Bessala Mbesse, Vice President of the Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon, CEPCA, and Secretary General of the Eglise Presbyterien du Cameroun, EPC, the peace crusade is an initiative born from a CEPCA-organised workshop in Buea last November with the objective of ensuring the return of peace in Cameroon as a whole.

To cut cost, boost growth:

Douala port to nationalize major operations

By Cyprian Ntiamba Obi
Ntui in Yaounde

The management of the Douala port has taken steps aimed at nationalizing major operations at the facility. This is in line with ongoing efforts to cut costs and create brighter opportunities for local economic operators.

Consequently, and as a major outcome of the end of year meeting of the Board of Directors, management decided to create what it calls a delegation charged with carrying out towing operations for vessels using the port.

Officials reveal that the decision was taken after a stormy end of the contractual relationship with Bolloré-APM Terminals in late 2019. The operators had handled this activity for over 15 years; a concession contract on the container terminal, that the Port Authority of Douala created with Régie du terminal à conteneurs, RTC that has been managing the terminal since then.

At the end of a meeting the PAD's administrative board explained that despite the difficult context in which RTC started operations at the container terminal on January 1, 2020, it successfully fulfilled its missions by offering users quality services following the performance and outcome goals it was required to carry out.

However, after his reelection as the head of GICAM; the largest employers' grouping in Cameroon, Célestin Tawamba wondered why the duties required from users suddenly soared up just after the change in the management of the container terminal.

Meanwhile, in 2020, the PAD also created a delegated management authority for the man-



Douala port area of the economic capital

agement of dredging activities that were previously entrusted to Belgian company Jan de Nul and recently to Chinese firm CHEC. On October 13, 2020, Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute inaugurated and officially commissioned the equipment acquired by the PAD; thanks to over 45 billion FCFA of investment for that purpose.

With that equipment, the PAD expects substantial cost reductions that will strengthen the port's cash position. As the PAD management explains, the average yearly cost of dredging operations at the port of Douala over the past five years was 17.16 billion FCFA. However, with the new delegated management, the operations will cost about 6.7 billion yearly over the coming five years. This means that the port will save about 10 billion FCFA yearly on dredging.

We learnt that at the end of the board meeting on December 22, the Port Authority was authorized to set up a delegated management for towing services at the autonomous Port.

These services which generated an average of 3.6 billion FCFA for the port yearly over the past five years consist of towing vessels from the entrance or exit of the port when the said vessels are unable to

berth or sail on their own.

With the creation of the delegated management authority, the port is thus preparing to take over services it was till now hiring foreign companies to provide. The management is being created after a tender procedure launched in June 2020 proved unsuccessful after the negotiations with provisional winner Boluda France hit a dead end.

According to credible sources at the port, the winner deemed the conditions set up by the PAD for the concession contract too restrictive; such as requirement of competitive prices, the geography of the company's capital to be set up, investments, among other demands. Sources at the facility inform that the main issue was the investment required by the PAD in the framework of that contract.

For instance, the PAD asked Boluda France to purchase three new tugboats. Two were to be ordered within three months after the contract had become effective and operations were to start by the second year of the parties' relationship. The third boat was to start operations by the 8th year of the parties' relationship. However, Boluda France was willing to buy only used tugboats, sources close to the case indicate.

Online trade operations begin at Yaounde-Nsimalen airport

By Cyprian Ntiamba Obi Ntui in yaounde



Business going on in part of the Yaounde-Nsimalen Int'l Airport

Online trading operations can now be carried out at the Yaounde-Nsimalen international airport. This is thanks to the putting in place of a unique one stop counter by both government and private sector collaborators.

The Guardian Post learnt that the effort required the working in synergy of institutions like the Cameroon Postal Services, CAMPOST; the National Shippers' Council, CNC and a local bank, Societe Generale Cameroon.

Operators say importers and exporters can now perform external trade operations online right inside the Nsimalen international airport; adding that the innovation is the result of a partnership between the National Single Window for Foreign Trade, GUCE and the other partners cited above.

Working with the Cameroon Postal Services, the National Shippers' Council and Société Générale Cameroon, the E-GUCE was inaugurated at the airport on December 29.

According to the concerned parties, with the online platform, importers and exporters can carry out all trading formalities online, while economic operators can have an enhanced support system and import-export revenues can be secured right from and within the airport.

Thanks to the E-GUCE platform, operators say, importers and exporters active at the airport can pay customs and tax duties using the online payment methods provided by CAMPOST, YUP, and Société Générale; obtain cargo tracking forms and even launch pre-clearance procedures like import declaration, bank domiciliation, among other transactions on the spot.

Apart from its benefits to economic operators, the E-GUCE platform, observers say reduces the influx of people into the airport during this coronavirus pandemic period and helps secure the government and partners' revenues, reduce time spent in carrying out operations, favours traceability, and the sharing of reliable information between stakeholders.

According to GUCE officials running the E-GUCE, the launch of this platform at the Yaounde-Nsimalen airport is in line with the action plan led by the Prime Minister's office and aimed at dematerializing foreign trade procedures. In the framework of that plan, E-GUCE will be set up at all of the country's international airports and border posts.

France delays launch of West African Common Currency

By Cyprian Obi Ntui in Yaounde

The launch of the West African Common Currency, the ECO scheduled for this New Year will not take place after all because France is yet to nullify agreements with her former colonies that led to the putting in place of the FCFA.

According to a foreign news agency, ECOFIN, France and French speaking countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Community, WAEMU made the announcement recently as other WAEMU member states who are not former French colonies; especially Nigeria and Ghana were gearing up for the launch of the common currency.

ECOFIN reveals that to date, only the procedures initiated by France for the launch of that common currency are known. On December 10, 2020, the French parliament approved a special bill for the amendment of its monetary cooperation agreements with the WAEMU.

In an article published on its website on December 10, the Directorate General of the French Treasury (DG Trésor) informed that the adoption of the special bill was a decisive step in the implementation of the reform initiated by the signature of a mon-



Franc CFA used by French speaking African countries: to be or not to be?

etary cooperation agreement in Abidjan in December 2019.

Yet, that step is not enough for the issuance of ECO currencies in the WAEMU region. As a matter of fact, according to article 10 of the new monetary cooperation agreement referred to by the French Directorate General of the Treasury, the agreement will enter into force once the guarantee agreement becomes valid and it is subject to a notification from all the signatory states of the completion of their ratification procedures.

Meanwhile, there is currently no sufficient information on the state of the signatory countries' ratification processes. This

could be on the agenda of those countries but the press releases from the ministers' councils have not confirmed it.

As for the guarantee agreement; which is the backbone of the new agreement, it is known from a French parliamentary report that the Macron government is working on it in consultation with officials of the Central Bank of West African States, BCEAO.

However, in the latest monetary policy report published by the regional institution in December 2020, there is no mention of any such consultations.

A final but not the least challenge is that Nigeria, the leading economic power of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, a sub-regional organization of which the countries of WAEMU are individual members, has almost threatened to crack down on any unilateral adoption of the ECO.

All these considered, it becomes obvious that the new currency project is at a standstill. According to Marc Le Fur, rapporteur of the French Parliament, who quotes WAEMU officials, the next probable dates mentioned are 2023 or 2025.

In the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, CEMAC a twin zone with the WAEMU, the monetary

reform discussed is still not clear. On August 1, 2020, anonymous investors revealed to ECOFIN Agency that France and CEMAC member states were also preparing a revised monetary cooperation agreement. This statement was confirmed by Le Fur, the French Treasury official.

"Admittedly, the agreement binding us to Central African countries will be different because France will still be represented in their Central Bank and they will still be subject to the deposit requirement. For the time being, our relationship with those countries will not change. But, we will go in the same direction as we are in now with West Africa if they explicitly request it," he said.

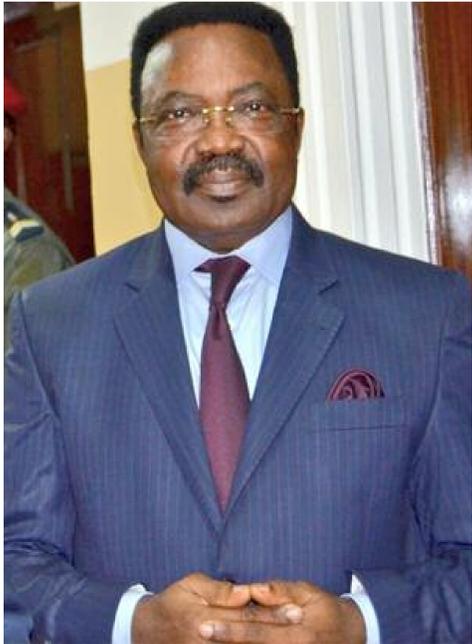
But experts say that even without a formal agreement, small changes are taking place in the CEMAC region. One of them is the tightening of conditions for money transfers outside CEMAC zone. There are even restrictions on country-to-country electronic transfers within the sub region.

Finally, the Bank of Central African States, BEAC is set on implementing the rule where all foreign currency earnings should be repatriated and centralized at the central bank before part of it is deposited in the operations account at the French Treasury.

End-of-year feasts:

Felix Mbayu donates, fetes with Bamenda Old Town community

Cont'd from page 1



Minister Felix Mbayu: Hailed for indiscriminate generosity

As part of his annual end-of-year feasts philanthropy to his Old Town kith and kin, the member of government donated tons of gifts to scores of members of his community. He said the yearly gesture, is in honour of his late mother.

"We are indeed grateful to the minister for his indiscriminate, unending and unmatched gesture. We are not new to his largesse... His renewed promise just affirms a talk-and-do person he is," Angwa Joseph, the quarter head stated.

To Joko Frida, the second deputy mayor for Bamenda II Council who doubles as an elite of the area, Minister Felix Mbayu "...is a real man of the people, a man who has not forgotten the ladder that took him up. Many a time we find the contrary but he has stood true to his roots".

A similar observation was made by an elderly woman of the community who rained blessings on the politician for the gesture: "We thank we papa Mbayu for we fine fine tin them, make God bless yi because he no di ever forget all his people" she spoke with joy.

Despite the prevailing situation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the distribution exercise recorded no hitches. According to Philo Happi,

coordinator of the gesture, it was the Minister Delegate's own way of giving back to his native community which has always stood by him in good and bad times.

"These gifts are intended for everyone in the neighbourhood, Muslim and Christians alike," explained Philo Happi.

The recent gesture, it should be noted, was not the first from the ever-kind hearted and people-friendly minister, affectionately called Abakwa Boy. In 2019, Minister Felix Mbayu made available tons of food stuff including among others rice, cooking oil, and other compliments for members of his locality.

Months later, he championed the cause for school resumption in the region, making available didactic materials worth millions to school children of the Old Town community. Defying separatists propaganda and school boycott, he was categorical that the future of children was not to be sacrificed because of differences in political ideologies.

"We are witnesses to the turnout ... we will not use our children's education as shield. If we complain the institutions are not well governed, it is by educating the children who can quantitatively contribute to nation-building," he stated at the didactic donation ceremony.

Minister Felix Mbayu, it should be recalled, schooled at Catholic School Big Mankon-Bamenda; where he, like everyone else faced the challenges that came with the environment at the time. Much of his success was however inspired by the community in general and the upbringing given him by his late mother, Monica Nchumji.

Many who knew his late mother have attested that Minister Felix Mbayu is just following in the footsteps of her indiscriminate generosity. His mother, they say, always called out many to join her share the little she had whenever she could. Her best moment, others attest, was when she was sharing with others indiscriminately.



Real Issues With The States Lady

By Victory Marshal Ayafor Basang



20 things to do differently as a couple in 2021

1. Have a joint vision for your love

Don't just be together without direction. Agree on areas you will grow in, things that will define your year and projects you will pursue together. Marriage is for building life together. So don't just live life, "what will be will be"

2. Give each other eye contact more

This communicates love and attention. Unfortunately, the more some stay together, the less they show care. This year, we must learn to be more romantic. In our African context, romance is the missing ingredient in relationships. We don't really know how to spice our relationship with some romantic gestures. But we must determine this year to be intentional about that.

3. Complain, whine and nag less

Tone down the fault finding. The more you appreciate each other, the more you two will be inspired to do better. Don't be a nag in your relationship. Nobody loves to put up with a nag. Nagging is a total turn off for most people in relationships. So complain, whine and nag less if you want the best for your relationship this year.

4. Communicate better

Healthy communication is the bedrock of every great relationship. Work on your manner of approach if you have something to communicate to your partner. Send each other warmer texts, call each other more even if for just a brief conversation. Scroll down your messages and see love. Be each other's peace and solace.

5. Laugh more

Find things that bring you both laughter and happiness. Learn to catch fun together. Watch comedies, be each other's clown, share funny videos, smile more. It makes things warmer between you two

6. Support each other's dreams

None should feel like their progress is being curtailed. Find out your partner's dream and help to

achieve it

7. Increase your joint wealth

Analyse how you two make money and use money and maximize your earnings. Add or improve your revenue streams. Save. Invest

8. Find a person, a family or a cause that you can help together as a couple

Be a blessing to people as a joint force. When you are a blessing to others together, you will not focus on petty fights between you two

9. Listen to the concern your partner

This includes what your partner has about your friends or your habits and see if they are substantive. Don't hold on to friends and a lifestyle that pulls you down as a couple

10. Agree on joint approach

Agree on a joint approach to your parents and in-laws and ways you can be a blessing to them as a couple

11. Pray more together as a couple

Cultivate your individual relationship with God and your walk with God as a couple

12. Have your legacy as a couple in mind

What legacy do you want to leave behind to this generation and your children as a couple? Mentor your child/children. Make success stories out of 2020

13. Be more deliberate about listening to each other

This helps make each other feel special by custom making your love to love your partner the way your partner wants to be loved and vice versa. Know their love language.

14. Travel

Try out new experiences you have never been to or felt. Go out on dates more and make time for quality time. Companionship needs allocated time

15. Seek to please each other more sexually

Desire to give your spouse amazing sexual experiences

16. Touch each other more

Plant soft kisses on their cheek, lips or forehead, rub each other's waist and hug more even without sex being the agenda.

17. Listen less to gossip about each other from others

Be smart with your smart phone, don't let that small gadget come in between you two

18. If you do not do this already

Learn to say "Please" and "Thank you". Do not take each other for granted. Show and exercise courtesy at every opportunity you get. This will make your spouse feel more appreciated

19. Have some time alone

Do date nights; where it's just the two of you enjoying each other's company, and having intimate conversations.

20. Speak life and a blessing to your spouse every day.

Words carry a lot of power. They can uplift, encourage motivate, inspire and build someone

**VictoryMarshal Ayafor fondly called THE STATES LADY is a journalist by profession, motivational speaker, marriage counselor, life coach, relationship expert, self-actualisation consultant and certified Psychologist in private practice.*



Community Development, Peace & Social Transformer's Notebook

By Rosaline Akah Obah*

Nonviolent communication a strategic tool in times of crisis

Speaking peace is basically communicating without violence which could be psychological or physical. At the centre of Nonviolent Communication, NVC, lies two most important questions; what is alive in us and what can we do to make life more wonderful?

Our cultures and traditions have taught that there is always the good and the bad so we need to reward the good and punish the bad. Of course the systems of education in the world promote this with rankings and end-of-year awards. The concept of "right" and "wrong"; "we" against "them" keep growing and widening the margin that brings humans together. We have the powers to create our own world that we hope for when we shall like Rumi the poet assert that "Beyond the Ideas of right and wrong, there is a field I shall meet you".

In times of crisis like the moments in Cameroon where questions like who speaks French and who speaks English are a determining factor of who maybe

right and who needs to be given more empathy, there is great need for NVC, a strategic communication tool that we shall use to make life more meaningful to one another. It is communication from the heart that is void of judgments and evaluations; a communication that supports life and makes me bring out what is alive in me through my observations, feelings, needs and request.

I remember visiting Rwanda for a Nonviolent Communication Africa Retreat 2018 and a fellow trainer noted that each time he is in Europe or America, people come and ask him "Are you a Hutu or a Tutsi? Of course he is aware that they are about giving him "distorted empathy" which is connecting with him with an intention that will make him think of either Tutsi or Hutu as a "good" or "bad" tribe. In crisis moments like what is happening in Cameroon, Congo, Burundi and Nigeria, for empathic connection and meaningful relation, we need to go beyond the ideas of "wrong" and "right" as a step towards

social change that we all wish for.

For us to have this meaningful social change we need to have Mindful Hearts about the feelings and needs of others and also have Heart-Full Minds that will support others meet their needs and feelings.

Lewis Carroll once said "Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

We therefore need to believe the impossible the society has made us think and also learn to Sink and Swim for Mahatma Gandhi said "Real Education consists in drawing the best out of ourself-what better book can there be than the book of humanity?"

Connect with the people around you, see them as humans. Peace is Possible.

Nonviolence is a force for transformation, justice, and the well-being of all that is neither violent nor passive. It is a powerful method for challenging and overcoming violence without using violence; for creatively transforming and resolving conflict; and for fostering just and peaceful alternative.

In practice, nonviolence involves actively peaceful behavior in the midst of conflict, becoming an example of consideration to those around us and breaking the destructive cycle of retaliation when we believe we have been wronged. It also means awareness of our own inner violence, and eliminating its negative effects upon our own intentions. Applying these principles of non-violence can reduce conflict, anger and violence on personal, local, national and global levels.

Nonviolence has come to be recognised as a powerful strategy for students, communities, disenfranchised groups and whole societies in addressing and transforming conditions.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr said "Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him".

**With contributions from Dzebam Godlove Ayaba Bongwa*

Palm oil production:

Civil society push for institution of national strategy to boost output

By Macwalter Njapteh in Yaounde

Some civil society activists have called on government to implement a national sustainable palm oil production strategy to boost production and respect indigenous community rights.

The call was made in a declaration actors signed at the end of a recent workshop in Mbankomo in the outskirts of Yaounde.

It was organised by the non-governmental organisation known as Green Development Advocates, GDA.

According to the activists, the adoption and implementation of a sustainable national oil palm strategy is an imperative for the country to effectively reap its full production potentials.

This, they said can help strengthen the future of Cameroon given the steady increase in global demand for palm oil in recent years. The sustainable national oil palm strategy, the civil society organizations emphasised must be built on pillars such as creating partnerships between agro-industries and small producers; promote the regeneration of old plantations in order to intensify production on existing plantations, without increasing the cultivated areas; improve processing capacity and extraction rates in the oil mills of small producers; facilitate small producers access to finance and the setting up of incentives for small producers considering environmental issues in their development.

They also advised government to ensure that such a strategy is lodged



Members of civil society organisations during workshop

under supervision of the Prime Minister for better coordination.

Going by the organisers, the government, through its Rural Sector Development Plan which proposed an increase in palm oil production from 300,000 tonnes in 2005 to 450,000 tonnes in 2020, saw the installation of some agric companies like CAMVERT, SAFACAM, SOCAPALM which have initiated new plantations across the country and extension in other parts.

Most of this, actors said, is done at the expense of environmental requirements and the rights of local and indigenous communities in Campo and Nyété, South region.

The advocates also furthered that establishment of oil palm plantations were done generating many socio-environmental problems. Amongst these are lack of respect for customary land rights

of local and indigenous communities; the destruction of biodiversity; failure to take the climate aspects and pollution of waterways.

These damages, they observed violate international conventions Cameroon is signatory to, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Convention No. 169 of the international labour organization on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries of 27/06/1989; Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention to Combat Desertification; and Paris Climate Agreement.

Since inception in 2009, Green Development Advocates has been working towards contributing to the sustainable development of African tropical forests while respecting the cultures, rights, interests and needs of indigenous forest peoples called the "pygmies."

Kribi-Lolabe motorway:

Gov't, Chinese company seal construction deal

By Deng Eric in Yaounde

The State of Cameroon and Chinese company, China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd have sealed a public-private partnership deal for the design, construction, partial financing, operation and maintenance of the Kribi-Lolabe motorway in the country's South region.

Public Works Minister, Emmanuel NganouDjoumessi accompanied by his colleague of Finance, Louis Paul Motaze and the General Manager of the Chinese Company, December 30 signed the contract binding both parties with works on the 38.5 km long motorway expected to be fully completed October 2021.

The Kribi-Lolabe motorway section, the first phase of the Edea-Kribi-Lolabe motorway aims to improve the competitiveness of the transport chain from the Kribi Port, to ensure the attractiveness of the said Port as the link between the Kribi industrial-port hub and the inland urban areas. Works on the 2*2 lane facility are 89.4% completed.

To the minister of Public Works "the signing of this Public-Private partnership contract gives concrete expression to the very high directives of the Head of State, H.E Paul Biya for the exploration of alternative sources of financing for motorway construction works by private operators".

Minister Nganou Djoumessi said the delay in formalization of the partnership as well as the completion of the project is mainly due to treasury tensions and the current health crisis due to the novel



Ministers Motaze, Nganou Djoumessi and CHEC GM exchanging signed documents

coronavirus.

Concerning the funding of the road project, Finance minister, Louis Paul Motaze told reporters that "we had a change from one financing method to another. The first agreement which was signed in 2012... was a classic financing method. That is to say we have a project that has a cost and we go to donors. We found one, EXIM BANK of China which agreed to lend us 85% of the amount, which means there is a remaining 15%".

"We must congratulate the our Chinese partner, who despite the various crises has decided to trust the State of Cameroon by financing its 15% counterpart funds, which will be reimbursed. This testifies the mark of confidence enjoyed by the State of Cameroon with its various partners.

He said after negotiations, CHEC agreed to pre-finance Cameroon's 15% share given the financial difficulties the country has been going through.

For 30 years, the Chinese partner will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the highway.

The project financed at 15% by the State of Cameroon to the tune of 45 billion FCFA and 85% by EXIM BANK of China to the tune of 205 billion FCFA is at 88.8% completion for the first phase.

Feasibility studies for the second phase of the project are said to have been completed.

The construction of the Edea-Kribi-Lolabe motorway is part of government action aimed at strengthening the existing road network. It falls within the framework of linking the four major economic poles of the country which are Yaounde, Douala, Bafoussam and the port city of Kribi by motorways.

Government through the construction of the motorways seeks to contribute to the modernisation of transport infrastructure and the improvement of traffic and safety conditions on the routes concerned.

Journalist, Ngawe Jeffrey, rededicates self to God

From Ndimbe Usman in Bamenda



Jeff Ngawe receives flowers at dedication

Ngawe Jeffrey, North West Bureau Chief for The Reporter Newspaper, and two others Christian were recently rededicated into the fellowship of the Cameroon Baptist Convention Men's Department, CBCMD.

The dedication ritual that took place on Sunday December 27, at his local church, Gebuaer Baptist Church, Atuakom, Mankon Association in Bethel Field.

Pastor Ngala Godfrey, who carried the ritual, prayed and called on God to help them to submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God.

He equally enjoined the trio; Ngawe Jeffrey, Ateh Jacob and Munchuranchu Aaron to avail themselves for work in God's vineyard.

To Pastor Ngala Godfrey: "Dedication has to do with somebody with a full commitment and submission within self to the service of God. It is also a covenant and agreement to wholeheartedly serve God through the Men's Fellowship of the church".

He furthered that dedication serves as an example that encourages those who take the back seat in the church to move to the front bench and carryout the mission of God in the Church.

Earlier on in his sermon, titled "2020 in Focus", Pastor Ngala Godfrey gave a balance sheet of what the church did in terms of messages, projects and other activities in the year 2020 with inspirations drawn from the book of Jeremiah 32:19.

Looking forward to 2021, Gebuaer Baptist Church, it was disclosed, plans to put in place a Media ministry for a wider outreach.

Unlike last year which they had as theme of the year "Anchor on Christ," this year they have come up with the theme, "Our year of Divine Restoration".

They are trusting God for restoration from the challenges they have gone through especially with the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war rocking the two English-speaking regions.

Ahead of CHAN 2021:

Onana, Kameni boost Intermediate Lions morale

By Deng Eric in Yaounde

Cameroonian international goalkeepers, Andre Onana and Carlos Kameni have boosted the morale of the country's Intermediate Lions expected to represent the country in this year's Total African Nations Championship, CHAN that kicked off on January 16 in Yaounde.

The two players of the men's senior national selection paid separate visits to the team as they continue preparations for the continental event.

Onana was the first to visit the team Saturday January 2, after the boys of coach Ndtongou Mpile had just played a 1-1 tie with the Cranes of Uganda in their first game in the pre-CHAN competition taking place in Yaounde.



Onana in a warm chat with Intermediate Lions goalkeeper, Haschou Kerrido

The Ajax Amsterdam shot stopper visited the Lions in their dressing room, during which he had a tête à tête with his goalkeeping colleagues, Dande Junior and Haschou Kerrido.

According to the Team Media officer of the Intermediate Lions, Derrick Bakah, Onana encouraged his colleagues to be more

focused while on duty.

Onana and Haschou Kerrido have shared the dressing room a couple of times on duties with the Indomitable Lions. His visit and words of encouragement will definitely be a moral booster to the intermediate Lions goalies.

Kameni Idriss Carlos on his part paid a rare visit to the Under-17 Lions of

Cameroon as they continue their camp at the CAF Excellence Centre in Mbankomo.

The Sydney 2000 Olympic Gold Medallist visited the boys Sunday January 3, 2021 and urged them to make the most of the priceless opportunity to represent their fatherland, fecafoot-officiel tweeted.

It should be recalled that Carlos Kameni began his tenure in the Lions' Den in 2001, going on to make some 73 appearances for the Indomitable Lions. In the international scene, the goalkeeper has played across Europe for Le Havre, went on loan to Saint Etienne, played for Espanyol, Malaga and ended in Fenerbahce (2017 to 2019) where he made 9 appearances.

Nchout Ajara joins Atletico Madrid



Joel Matip: Liverpool defender

Indomitable Lioness of Cameroon forward, Nchout Njoya Ajara has joined Spanish top-flight side Atletico Madrid Ladies barely days after confirming her departure from Norwegian side Valerenga.

The player has agreed a two-year contract awaiting administrative formalities to complete the switch to the Spanish capital.

The 2019 African footballer of the year according IFFHS leaves Norway after a memorial four-year stint in which she scored with ease for Sandviken and later for Valerenga where in addition to scoring goals, she won an unprecedented double for herself and the Club.

Atletico Madrid are putting together a squad to challenge Barcelona of Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala after finishing runners-up to the Catalan ladies in the past two seasons in the domestic championship.

It is the first stop for Ajara in Spain after successful stints in Cameroon, Sweden, USA and Norway.

The native of the West Region of Cameroon was just as important for her Norwegian Club as she has been for country, therefore Atletico are investing on a proven scorer with over 100 career goals to her credit and hoping for quick returns.

Ajara joins Raissa Feudjo, Michaela Abam, Gabrielle Ngaska amongst other Cameroonians plying their trade in Spain.

Her recent move provides a chance to compete on the same platform with her immediate rival for the women's African Footballer of the year Asisat Oshoala.

Source:kick442.com

Matip, Kunde Malong ruled out for three, five weeks

By Deng Eric in Yaounde

Former Cameroonian international and Liverpool defender, Joel Matip and Lions midfielder, Pierre Kunde Malong are expected to be out of action for three and five weeks respectively due to injury.

Matip who suffered an injury during Sunday's 1-1 draw at home to West Brom has had fitness issues this season which has restricted him to just eight starts for Liverpool.

Last season Joel Matip started well for Liverpool but saw his appearances dwindling as he suffered a host of injuries. That led to Joe Gomez taking his place in the defence for most of last season.

With Joe Gomez missing out this year it would have been a perfect opportunity for Joel Matip his potentials that the former Lions players has continued to suffer from fitness issues as a result of multiple injuries

"The normal situation for this kind of injury is around 3 weeks. Joel told me he felt



Joel Matip: Liverpool defender

something in his adductor and that is not good," Jurgen Klopp said of Matip who helped his side take the lead against West Brom just 12 minutes into the game.

The 29-year-old played a forward pass to Sadio Mane who chested down and lashed it passed Sam Johnstone.

Jurgen Klopp will hope Matip can be back just in time for the crucial game against Manchester United on January 17.

It will be exactly three weeks since Matip suffered his injury, the deadline Klopp hopes to get his centre back on the pitch.

Liverpool thus season has been dealt severe blows



Pierre Kunde Malong: Mainz midfielder

in the Centre back position. Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez are already side-lined and may miss the entire season, though the former has been showing signs he might return before the season concludes.

For Mainz O5 and Cameroon International Pierre Kunde Malong, he will be out of activity for the next five to six weeks, his club has announced.

The versatile midfielder limped off injured in the 69th minute of his side's one-nil defeat against Weder Bremen at the weekend.

"Pierre Kunde Malong had surgery on his right

knee today. Depending on the recovery process, we will probably miss him for four to six weeks.

Get well soon, Kunde!" Mainz Tweeted.

Kunde underwent an operation on the right knee on and he is expected to be back in action in the third week of February 2021.

The midfielder has featured in 11 of his club's 13 Bundesliga games this season as they struggle to get their season off the mark.

The 25-year-old has no history of similar injuries thus making recovery relatively easier.

Kunde has been a key figure for Mainz since joining the Club in a 2017 from Atletico Madrid.

Karl Toko-Ekambi test positive for COVID-19

Indomitable Lions striker Karl Toko Ekambi has been confirmed positive for the COVID-19. The player tested positive on Friday when the Lyon players returned from the Christmas break, lequipe reported.

The striker had been hoping to be in action for his side this Wednesday, January 5 against Lens in matchday 18 of the French Ligue, but that is now impossible.

Olympique Lyonnais will miss the services of Toko Ekambi who is in isolation from his squad. The player has been invaluable for Coach Maxwel Cornet and Lyon this season.

Karl Toko Ekambi is currently the

club's top goal scorer in the Ligue with 9 goals, goals that have helped Lyon stay top of the Ligue with 36 points in 17 games played. This is a great improvement for a player that succeeded in scoring just 2 goals in the Ligue in 8 appearances.

Lyon is currently level on points with Lille and just one point ahead of last year's champions PSG.

Toko Ekambi will thus be hoping to add to his goal-scoring records when he returns to the squad. In 31 appearances for Lyon in all competitions, Karl Toko Ekambi has scored 11 goals.

Source: Mysoccer24.com

