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2023 Presidential elections: President Bio, Samura Kamara nominated



BioJuldeh for 2023



SamuCoco for 2023

Man jailed six months for destroying SLPP billboard

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

On Monday May 1st, the main opposition All People's Congress (APC) Presidential Candidate, Dr. Samura Kamara together with his running mate, Hon. Chernor Maju

Bah, officially went through the nomination process at the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) Headquarters on Tower Hill in Freetown and subsequently approved to contest the June 24 elections.

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Bail restored to former APC councilor

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EDITORIAL APC, SLPP, where are your 2023 manifestos?

The political lens is zooming in on Sierra Leone as the country will hold its next presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for June 24th 2023.

The political atmosphere is heating up as the two leading parties, the ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and the main opposition All Peoples Congress Party (APC) are poised to winning this year's presidential and parliamentary elections.

The incumbent administration, the Sierra Leone Peoples Party, has nominated President Bio to run for the next election, whereas the All People's Congress nominated Dr. Samura Kamara as their flagbearer.

On that note, we at Concord Times want to know why up till now the two giant parties; APC and SLPP are yet to make their manifestos public.

Inasmuch as we at Concord Times are of the view that, year in year out, the content of the two major political parties' manifestos will seemingly remain the same, there is need for the public to know what packages the political parties have for them going forward, to

enable the public make informed decision.

We believe that citizens are starved of actual messages from the two major political parties and we view that as a disservice to the public because elections are just around the corner and people shouldn't be ambushed with messages that they will not be able to digest in a speed.

While President Bio is campaigning on the platform of fulfilling his 2018 manifesto promises, Samura Kamara of the APC is busy hitting at the ruling government with messages of the current economic hard-hit and no clear message as to how he could handle the situation, if elected into office come June 24.

In April this year, the Institute of Governance Reforms, IGR, together with the Review Committee of the Citizen's Manifesto Steering Committee, launched the Assessment Report on the Citizen's Manifesto in order to develop citizen's capacities as decision-makers in selecting the type of leader they wish to elect and to make political leadership more responsible through persistent dialogues between

citizens and political leaders.

According to IGR'S Executive Director, Andrew Lavalie, the idea of Citizens' Manifesto is to place citizens at the forefront of shaping a democratic and accountable political system in Sierra Leone, adding that the initiative is a collaborative action of several established civil society agencies, media outlets, formal and informal institutions' that are dedicated to improving good governance in Sierra Leone.

The importance of political manifesto cannot be underrated as it is the prerequisite for development. As the political drama unfolds, civil society organisations (CSOs) have been busy traversing the length and breadth of the country, running advocacy campaign to educate young people about the power of their vote, as well as conducting needs assessment when a new government is inaugurated in June 24th 2023.

For a country that is ranked at the bottom of the human development index, the "Citizens' Manifesto" is useful because it

gives direction to aid development and reduces prospects for conflict at a time when political parties are preparing their campaigns. We believe that this year's manifestos are yet to be publicized largely because politicians do not have anything new they might want to include in it and their guilty consciences for not living up to their manifestos continuously haunt them."

Concord Times therefore believes that the Citizens' Manifesto attempts to address institutional challenges within the country's political setup by presenting an opportunity for political parties to embrace reforms.

The manifesto pushes for reforms that "disarm the tools for violent mobilization as we count down. As the elections loom, ordinary people remain eager to see whether the Citizens' Manifesto will be adopted and its recommendations taken seriously, regardless of the fact that our two giant parties, APC and SLPP are yet to make public their political manifestos.

LOCAL NEWS

From Cover

Yesterday, May 2nd, was the turn of the incumbent, President Julius Maada Bio and his running mate, Vice President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, who also went through the nomination process and approved.

The ECSL Commissioner, Mohamed Kenewui Konneh said May 1st has marked the start of the nomination process for parties as part of preparations for the June polls. Konneh also praised the APC party for adhering to protocols of the process and pleaded with them to continue along the same path.

Commissioner Konneh also commended President Bio and his Government for his relentless support to the commission. President Bio in turn commended EC-SL for presiding over several elections, most of which were seriously contended.

During the process, both President Bio and his running mate and Dr. Samura Kamara and his running mate were asked for their voter ID Cards, while the

2023 Presidential elections: President Bio, Samura Kamara nominated



BioJuldeh for 2023



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ECSL confirmed their applications were submitted online and also confirmed that the two political parties have endorsed Dr. Samura and his running mate.

The ECSL approved the SLPP and APC

Presidential Candidates' presentation after going through their documents and ID cards.

Also in attendance for the APC were the Secretary General, Lansana Dumbuya and Chairman, Minkailu Mansaray.

Dr. Kamara will contest against the incumbent SLPP Julius Maada Bio who defeated him five years ago. Political analysts say the election will be closely contested despite both of them claiming to win the elections in first polls.



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LOCAL NEWS PPRC receives office equipment from development partners

By Yusufu S. Bangura & Elizabeth Kamara

In order to support the work of the commission, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Union (EU) and Irish Aid on Tuesday, 2nd May, donated some office equipment to the Political Parties Regulations Commission (PPRC).

The donation ceremony took place at the Commission's conference room, Lamina Sankoh Street in Freetown.

The donated items include 16 laptop computers, 1 all-terrain vehicle, internet connectivity equipment, 75 conference chairs and table, 1 generator, 2 air conditioning units, 8 sets of tables and chairs for the new PPRC offices.

Executive Secretary for PPRC, Olushogo A. David, welcomed and thanked the partners for their continued support and said the items given to them will make their work easier.

He said the mandate of the commission is to regulate, monitor and supervise the conduct of political parties, adding that they will make sure that they deliver on their mandates and continue contributing to peaceful, credible, inclusive and multi-party elections in June.

"I will not be afraid to mention here that the commission now has one of the biggest conference rooms with more furniture and IT equipment in

Freetown," he said.

While handing over the items to PPRC on behalf of development partners, Resident Representative from UNDP, Pa Lamin Beyai said as the general elections are fast approaching and preparations are gathering momentum, they are fully committed to supporting the elections management bodies in the 24 June elections in a peaceful, transparent, and inclusive environment.

He said they are also committed to supporting institutional stakeholders like the PPRC so that they can discharge their duties in optimal and efficient conditions. He added that as per their Electoral Assistance Project, they have worked to strengthen the PPRC's capacities.

I am pleased to report that our partnership has been fruitful. We have already provided technical support for redesigning the PPRC corporate website. We have also helped to organize leadership, dialogue, and negotiation training programmes for women and youth political party leaders. With UNDP assistance, UN Women have also organized training courses for aspiring women candidates promoting public speaking, fundraising, management, and leadership skills. Today, we are convened to witness the handover of ICT material and office furniture to support the



PPRC Executive Secretary receiving one of the donated items from Ireland Ambassador, Claile Buckley

PPRC's essential mission further," he said.

He continued that with the expanded role of the PPRC, they consider it critical that the mandate is applied with the aim of ensuring a level playing field for all political parties and in a transparent manner to continue to foster and enhance public trust in the institution.

"We are confident that this contribution will help the PPRC fulfil its role and successfully meet these

elections' operational and logistical challenges. We intend to collaborate constructively and transparently with you as we near, during, and after 24 June," he said.

After receiving the donated items from development partners, the PPRC Executive Secretary said they will make sure that they take good care of the items and it will capacity their work, increase their access to so many areas.

VP Juldeh Jalloh wraps up two-day ECOWAS regional conference on ending human trafficking

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh has on 26th April, wrapped up a two-day Regional Conference of ECOWAS Member States to end human trafficking with an amusing messages.

The conference commenced on April 25th April at the Freetown International Conference Centre in Aberdeen, Freetown, on the theme "Charting a way forward for deeper cooperation in ECOWAS to end Human Trafficking."

"This two-day have been an excellent opportunity to bring stakeholders across ECOWAS together to discuss the implementation of their respective action plans and other frameworks to end human trafficking. Couple of years ago, when we took over governance in 2018, it was clearly articulated in that President Bio wants to move the country forward within the context of human capital development and we see our work in addressing trafficking in person as part of the vision of President Bio," VP Juldeh stated.

Vice President Juldeh Jalloh informed the gathering that the Bio-led Government has done a lot at the

national level, including the improvement of legislation, building of capacity and improvement of prosecution.

He said those efforts were only realised at the national level. He said for those efforts to be relevant and create the kind of intended impact that can be desired as country and as region so they should be transformed into a wider regional dynamics on which the conference vision's was built.

"I am personally happy that the government of Sierra Leone in collaboration with AAPPRIES, IOM and the US State Department for developing such a platform to amplify the effort to fight human trafficking. This conference would not have been possible without your support. We are also very hearty by the participation of ECOWAS Ministers and their various representatives," VP Juldeh stated.

He also recognizes the immense support of ECOWAS on all fronts to deliver the conference which has resulted in the Freetown Road Map that has been signed on that day.

He said the road map is another tool in the regional tool kits to deepen regional coordination and ensure the



Vice President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh

enhancement of all efforts to prevent, protect and prosecute and build more strategic partnership.

He thanked all delegates including the organizing committee and all.

"It has been a great opportunity for the Government of President Bio to host such an important conference. We are looking forward to the implementation of the road map and a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that we can measure the result of our joint

interventions in the coming months and years," VP Juldeh concluded.

The Minister of Social Welfare, Madam Baidou Dassa reads the road map developed on enhancing the combat of trafficking in persons in ECOWAS region and the well-written document which demanded actions to end trafficking in the region was unanimously signed

by all ministers responsible for combating trafficking in the sub region.

Statements were made by Kameldy Neldjingaye, Deputy Regional Representative United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) and a video message from Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid. Both of them expressed unwavering commitments in the fight against trafficking in persons in the ECOWAS sub region.

LOCAL NEWS

By Princetta Williams, Information Attaché, SLHC Accra

Sierra Leone High Commission in Accra, Ghana, in collaboration with Sierra Leonean Pastors in Ghana, on Thursday 27th April, held a prayer and thanksgiving session in observance of the Country's 62nd Independence Anniversary.

The event which was held at the Chancery in Cantonment, Accra, saw Sierra Leoneans from different areas in Ghana ranging from Pastors, School going pupils, young people, High Commissioner and staff of the Sierra Leone High Commission, among others.

Her Excellency Frances Virginia Anderson, High Commissioner of Sierra Leone in Ghana, appreciated everyone for honoring the High Commission's call to come together, spend time praying and worshipping God together as Sierra Leoneans

She encouraged everyone to be proud of the country and must always put Sierra Leone first. She called on them to be praying always, particularly for the country and those in authority.

Madam Anderson noted that because "we

IN GHANA, SIERRA LEONE HIGH COMMISSION HOLDS PRAYER SESSION, WHILE MARKING COUNTRY'S 62ND INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY.

love Sierra Leone, we should be mindful of our actions and to not in any way makes negative pronouncements against her."

Several prayer points were offered, including peaceful elections, recovery of anything that the nation might have lost, God's blessings, protection, and more.

Sierra Leonean pastors, which includes Rev. Paul Sayoh, Apostle Ben Ellie and Pastor Desmond Yarjah among others, thanked God for such an event bringing Sierra Leoneans together in Joy and in Love while encouraging all to make Sierra Leone their focus.

Musical Performances or contributions were made by different guests in which Sierra Leone's national Anthem was sang in Limba, Mende and Krio and a melodrama performance by School going Pupils of a Sierra Leonean School, Super Kids Academy in Ghana were beautifully done.

The Sierra Leone High Commission in Accra, Ghana is the Government's representation in Ghana, and calls on Sierra Leoneans to make a stop by at any time they are in Ghana as it is home away from home.



Sierra Leone rated high on reduction in corruption prevalence levels

By Hassan Gbassay Koroma

The 2022 Afro-Barometer Report has disclosed that Sierra Leone records huge reduction in corruption prevalence levels in key institutions.

The 2022 Afro-Barometer Round 9, Survey Report that was released by the Institute for Governance Reforms (IGR) on 25th April, 2023, also indicated a significant improvement in corruption levels in Sierra Leone.

The report stated that Sierra Leone has moved 20 places upwards in the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2022, and scored its highest of 34, above the Sub-Saharan average to be positioned at 110, from 130 in 2017.

Data from the same survey report indicates that trust in Sierra Leone's Anti-Corruption Commission has increased, from a 43% in 2020 to a 52% in 2022, making a 9 percentage point jump upwards.

According to a press release dated May 2, from the ACC, signed by the Director, Public Education and Outreach, Patrick Sandi, the recorded increase in trust is as a result of the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) robust posture on mainstreaming anti-corruption values in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the functionality of Integrity Management Committees.

He said the report also, more importantly, points that there is a remarkable decline in the public perceptions of corruption in the Presidency, from a 40% in 2012 to a 31% in 2022, showing a 9 point upward movement.

they have developed three curricula for children from 0-17 years which would help parents to know how they should take good care of their children for them to be good citizens.

She added that during the two day workshop they would validate the three curricula which they have early piloted in



He said the report further states that, corruption declined in the Judiciary, mainly with Magistrates and Judges from a 50% in 2012 to a 34% in 2022 and in the Local Councils-mainly the Local Government Councilors from a "52% in 2012 to a 38% in 2022.

He said the report also stated that, citizens' perception of corruption about the Police increased from 69% in 2012 to 71% in 2022, 2 points upwards and in the same vein, in the last four years, Sierra Leone has also consistently scored high in other global, regional, and domestic anti-corruption rankings.

He said the Afro-Barometer is a Pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life.

He noted that Anti-Corruption Commission wishes to reassure the general public of its unwavering determination and relentless resolve to effectively control corruption in Sierra Leone.

five districts to make sure that they have a good document which they would take to various communities.

Madam Mariatu said the positive parenting workshop would create a huge impact in the lives of parent because parenting is not good in the country which affect children upbringing.

Our children should be protected

By Yusufu S. Bangura

Minister of Social Welfare, Baindu Dassama-Kamara has on Wednesday 26th April told stakeholders that children should be protected because they are the future leaders.

She made the above statement during a two-day validation workshop on positive parenting held at Bintumani Hotel, Aberdeen in Freetown.

"The positive parenting validation workshop has been long waiting because our children need to be protected as they are our future leaders. We should all work together to ensure that they are protected because it our responsibility of taking good care of them," she said.

She continued that positive parenting is about showing children love, warmth and kindness, encouraging and teaching them, and helping them thrive by sending powerful messages.

She admonished participants to speak about the program wherever they found themselves because the program was timely, adding that Sierra Leone has done well to protect children but the problems are still there because of poor parenting.

She said parent must create time to talk with their children by making them their friends so that they will not be afraid to let their parents know about their problems. "I want to encourage other agencies present here to help roll out the document because it's a very important document that can help parent build a good parenting relationship with their children.

Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF, Emma Vincent said they would continue to support the ministry to make sure that

-Minister of Social Welfare



Minister of Social Welfare speaking to participants during the workshop

there is good parenting, adding that she felt good seeing actors dealing with children during the workshop.

She said they were looking forward to the outcome of the deliberation from the various groups set-up during the validation workshop, because the curriculum they deliberate on are very critical.

She continued that they would launch the validation in September and that they were expecting partners to take the curriculum to their various communities by implementing them to other parents that were not part of the workshop.

She said currently they were using the Peace Building Fund to put the parenting program together for them to work with hotspot communities just to reduce violence during the election which they discuss during the validation for parent to be role models for their children.

Chief Director of Social Service at Ministry of Social Welfare, Mariatu Bangura said with support from UNICEF



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LOCAL NEWS FTL observes World Day for Safety, Health at Work

Freetown Terminal Limited (FTL) a subsidiary of Bollore Group has commemorated the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, which is celebrated annually on 28 April to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases. It is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international and local attention on the magnitude of the problem and on how promoting and creating a safety and health culture can help reduce the number of work-related deaths and injuries.

FTL's General Manager, Nicolas Escalin spoke on the local theme: "Don't be blind, have a safety mind", noting that the workers must always ensure they follow safety measures. "You must first know that you are humans and that you are always needed at home and the workplace. Safety is a commitment, which is why we provide the required tools for every worker's safety," he said and continued that "We have to make people respect safety rules. It is very everybody at all levels. Keep yourselves safe at all times and also ensure others are safe." The General Manager said FTL has clear safety processes and rules that must be followed. "Wrong initiatives may lead to accidents and high fatalities. Don't take unnecessary risks," he cautioned his workers and called on them to work together for a safe workplace. "Security and safety are not a game, but a commitment management of FTL, which everyone must follow," Escalin said.

Abu Bakarr Suma, Head of Health, Safety and the Environment at the Dangote Cement Company

admonished workers at the Port to work when given an assignment to do and continued that "We are working for our families and children, and that is why we must also think of our safety. Your safety is key. Don't please your supervisor in an unsafe workplace." "Let's work as a team and make our environment safe," Suma advised. "They are not paying us for fast operations but for safer operations. Safety is gainful, and the accident is painful," he said.

Ferdinand Valentine, President of the Sierra Leone Dock Workers Union underscored the importance of mind regulation. "We are unsafe because we don't try to regulate our minds. We must try to be safe and be conscious to make the workplace and the whole country a better place," he said.

Osman Kargbo, Laboratory Lead and Technical Head of National Safe Blood Services in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation spoke on the importance of saving and donating blood. "Our safety comes first. To have a safe mind, you need to have a stress-free mind. To have a stress-free mind, you need to donate blood regularly," he admonished the workers and pointed out that donating blood can reduce stress. "One unit of blood donated reduces 6 000 calories. Let's donate blood to save lives," he said.

Memunatu Turay, Station Officer and Head of Fire Prevention at the National Fire Force encouraged her audience to switch off their electrical appliances when leaving the homes and offices. Most of the fire incidents, she said, are caused by overloading of electrical circuits. "It is good to prevent fire accidents in our places of work and



homes. Make sure your presence is felt in the office so that others will know how to rescue you when a fire incident occurs," she advised and added that people should not be panicked when fire incidents occur. "It is important to have fire extinguishers in our homes and offices," Madam Turay said. A representative of the Sierra Leone Port Authority Environment Department spoke on the importance of having a sound mind in a sound body. "Our overall average is proper well-being. We should work towards achieving zero accidents," he said and furthered that the SLPA is in full support of ensuring a safe workplace environment. "Let me encourage my colleagues to contribute to the blood bank by donating blood to save lives. Let us work together to ensure the port is environmentally safe and secure. We want to see a port that will use

renewable energy," he said. FTL's Patrick Sannoh who moderated the event, earlier said the World Day for Safety and Health is an annual campaign observed by the United Nations International Labour Organization. "We must dedicate our effort to mind management, which involves controlling and organizing the activities of the mind. It creates optimism in the mind. It is important to control the mind to help to have a clear conscience and growth management. The focus is to have zero accidents this year," he revealed. He called for the need to avoid distractions, get enough sleep, and have maximum concentration. "Being productive is about mind management. We need to work as a team and show strong leadership in all institutions to have effective mind management," Sannoh said.

Man jailed six months for destroying SLPP billboard

By Mohamed J. Kargbo

22-year-old Claudius Roberts made his first appearance before Magistrate Mark Ngeba of Court No:1 for alleged malicious damage and was sentenced to the Male Correctional Centre on Pademba Road in Freetown.

The accused was standing trial on one count charge to wit malicious damage contrary Section 51 of the Malicious Damage Act of 1861.

The indictment was read out to him by the court registrar and he pleaded guilty as charged.

It was alleged that on Sunday, 2nd April, 2023, along Main Motor Road,

Brookfield's in Freetown, the accused maliciously damaged four pieces of billboards valued one thousand, five hundred new Leones each, and to the total value of six thousand New Leones, property of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP).

The abstract report indicated that on the 4th of the said above month and year at about 11:50 hours at Sanders Drive, Fayia Corner, Brookfield's in Freetown, Dauda Kamara arrested the said accused person, brought and reported him to the police.

Without wasting time, the magistrate sentenced the accused person to six months imprisonment.

Bail restored to former APC councilor

By Mohamed J. Kargbo

Seiku Gibrila Turay alias Ice Tee, former Councilor of Ward 408, Constituency 116, who was remanded during the last adjourned date, has gotten his bail restored again.

He was standing trial on one count charge of incitement contrary to the laws of Sierra Leone.

It was alleged that on a date unknown in 2021 that, the accused made an inciting message at a press conference that was held at the New City Hall in Freetown.

The defense council led in a witness, Unisa Kamara, who is also a former councilor at the Freetown City Council.

He testified in court that, he recognizes the accused as his former colleague at the council and recalls attending a conference sometimes in

2021.

He said that the said conference was for them the councilors to express their grievance and talk on the behaviour of the chief administrator, adding that most of the councilors were present, including the accused.

He affirmed that the accused made a statement expressing their burning issues and the speech was for the chief administrator and the supervising committee to intervene.

Meanwhile, the state prosecutor, Yusif Isaac Sesay couldn't cross examine the witness on the grounds that the accused was not in court.

He sought for a date to cross examine the witness.

The defense counsel applied for bail to be restored to the accused person.

The matter was adjourned to the 5th of May 2, 2023 for further hearing.



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LOCAL NEWS

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

In their quest to promoting girl's education and women empowerment, Chozen Generation-Sierra Leone has on April 26 launched their second National Girls Championship Debate.

The event was launched at the Africell American Corner on Bathurst Street on the theme: Break the Bias-creating a generation of women that speak up.

The maiden event was launched six years ago and was limited to Freetown but this year's event will be held at national level and over thirty secondary schools will be participating.

In his welcome remark, Cecil Charles Thompson noted that it was worthwhile to have a launch of another event that is not for boys or everyone, but for girls. He hailed Chozen Generation for leading the way in achieving such a remarkable event.

Giving an overview of the championship debate Tracy Jac-Dury, Deputy Coms Director and Project Lead, Chozen Generation said five years ago, she was one of the debaters- very nervous by then "and five years down the line, I am here as one of the project," she said, adding that the debate will be done at

CG-SL set to empower girls through national debating championship



Cross section of executive members of Chozen Generation and pupils intending to participate in the upcoming debate

national level and will be steered on the parliamentary system.

She said they will be targeting 32 schools in all, maintaining that if more schools opted to take part in the debate they will consider creating space for them.

Jac-Dury informed the gathering that the debate is to help young girls to fully unleash their potential, relating that the debate is scheduled to start in second week May and ends first week in June.

She said the quality debate will cover different topics around women empowerment and it will attract many prizes including cash, computers.

In her keynote message, Esq Linda Bull informed the young girls that to bridge the gaps and break the bias, they need to believe in their selves by simply challenging themselves that yes they can represent their schools, excel in the debate and win it.

"To empower yourselves, you have to be deliberate in all that you do, ignite the power in you, do not compromise your standard. Push harder to more research and ignore all distractors to achieve your dream," she urged the young girls.

She implores the young girls to help each other as women, stating that women have the power; therefore, they should support each other so that the world can be a better place.

The event was officially launched by Joel Abdulai Kallon, who speaks on the need of having a generation of women that speak up. Harry Henry Kargbo, National Coordinator of Chozen Generation gave the closing courtesies.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR SUPPLIERS

FCDO awarded Mott MacDonald to lead the implementation of the Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme (SSEIP) 2, which builds on the work of the first phase: Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme (SSEIP), also called Leh Wi Lan (Krio for "Let's Learn").

The programme will support the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) to improve learning outcomes for boys and girls at secondary level and to increase the enrolment, retention and well-being of girls and children with disabilities in school.

Mott MacDonald (S) Limited wishes to solicit applications from interested and eligible organisations and businesses to submit Expression of Interests (EOI) in the following business categories:

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Upon assessment of the EIOs, only shortlisted eligible organisations/businesses will be contacted to submit their proposals. Late submission will not be entertained. Please submit your interest by email with Subject: "Expression of interest for MMSL SSEIP2" latest by 11th May 2023 to MMSL.Procurement@mottmac.com.

Judgement awaits Aki-Sawyerr

By Jeneba A. Conteh

The former Mayor of Freetown, Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, yesterday made another appearance before Magistrate Mark Ngeba of the Pademba Court No.1, and the matter had been adjourned for ruling.

The Mayor was arraigned before the court on two count charges of obstruction of police duty and disorderly behaviour, which she was alleged of committing on 17 September, 2022, at the Lungi Police Division.

At the last adjourned date-Monday, 3rd April, 2023, Magistrate Ngeba ordered the defense counsel to serve the prosecution with their no case submission and asked the prosecution to reply to the written no case submission not later than the 28

April, 2023.

Whiles the matter was in progress, defense counsel, Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara, informed the court that he had served the prosecution in court and the magistrate with his no case submission.

State Prosecutor, Yusif Isaac Sesay, invokes Section 107 of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1965, urging the magistrate to discountenance the submission made by the defense counsel, indicating that the time given by the court for them to submit their no case submission had elapsed. Magistrate Ngeba however took note of the position of the prosecution and adjourned the matter to the 23rd May, 2023 for ruling.

Defense Counsel, however, applied for the matter to be adjourned after elections, but he was rejected.

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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

African celebrities that stunned at the Met Gala 2023



Nigerian singer Tems arrives for the 2023 Met Gala at the Metropolitan... - Copyright © africanews ANGELA WEISS/AFP or licensors



Anok Yai



Burna Boy



Adut Akech

The Met Gala 2023, a fundraiser for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, saw the arrival of African celebrities in stunning outfits that followed the theme of the night: Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty. The event's multicolored carpet featured celebrities and designers donning elegant and creative outfits with a touch of the unusual. The night paid tribute to Karl Lagerfeld, and many

attendees opted for monochromatic black and white looks, some with a retro flair that reflected the Chanel aesthetic. This is how the African stars Tems, Burnaboy, Anok Yai, Adut Akech, showed up for the event which took place on May 1 in New York.

Japan and Ghana aligned in the pursuit of reforms at the UN Security Council

The Japanese Prime Minister, Kishida Fumio, arrived in Ghana on Monday on the second leg of an African tour. Fumio met Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo and both vowed to continue to pursue reforms at the UN Security Council. Japan and Ghana are serving as non-permanent members of the Security Council. The Ghanaian President added that the current Security

Council permanent members does not reflect the current reality adding that reform must be promoted. Both heads of state also agreed to closely coordinate on the issue of Sudan, where military clashes continue for a third week. The Japanese Prime Minister said he hopes his latest visit will boost cooperation between the two countries across a range of fields, such as the economy, development and human resources.

Anxious evacuees wait for flights out of Sudan



A picture taken on April 30, 2023, shows members of the US military assisting US nationals fleeing war-torn Sudan in boarding an evacuation vessel in Port Sudan - Copyright © africanews -AFP or licensors

More UK citizens gathered in Port Sudan on Monday to board British military planes travelling to Larnaca, Cyprus. Many of the evacuees looked exhausted after fleeing days of fighting in Khartoum. "I feel very selfish and privileged, it's like a mix between guilt and relief to be on this flight," medical student Mishkat told British broadcaster, Sky news. Mishkat was flying to the UK to be with her parents, but had to leave her cousins behind. Rescue missions were moved to Port Sudan from Wadi Seidna military air base after a Turkish military plane

came under fire as it was about to land. The plane was targeted after straying from the planned flight route, a senior military commander told Sky News. Evacuees said the journey to the airfield was already dangerous as the route from central Khartoum passed through many Rapid Support Forces checkpoints. A group of Turkish students and residents braved the journey to the air base, but to no avail. They slept at the at the airport mosque for three nights waiting for a flight. Turkish student Raid Jaafar called on the embassy to "clarify their plans for further evacuation".

Kenyan police clash with anti-government protesters

The Kenyan police on Tuesday used tear gas to disperse a delegation of opposition politicians who wanted to visit the president's office in the capital Nairobi, in a day of anti-government protests without major incident. Elected officials from the opposition Azimio coalition wanted to petition about the "unacceptably high" cost of food, fuel, and electricity. After being denied access to the presidential building, they were dispersed with tear gas, according to a video shot by local media. After a one-month break, the historic opponent Raila Odinga called for a resumption on Tuesday of the "maandamano" (demonstrations) against President William Ruto, whom he accuses of "stealing" the August 2022 presidential election and of being unable to curb the current price hike. A previous series of protests in late March led to clashes, looting, and vandalism. Three people, including a policeman, were killed during these rallies banned by the authorities. Tuesday morning was generally calm in the country, with some isolated clashes and incidents. In some slums on the outskirts of Nairobi, scuffles broke out between police and youths who blocked streets with

burning tires. An empty bus and a goods truck were also set on fire in the south of the capital. In Kisumu, an Odinga stronghold in the west, roads were blocked with burning tires and rocks. On Sunday, Nairobi regional police commander Adamson Bungei announced a ban on the protests, as previous ones had been "marred by violence". The days of action had been suspended to allow for discussions between the two sides, but the process has stalled, notably over the composition of the various delegations. Despite the rejection of his appeal by the Supreme Court, Raila Odinga, who was running for the fifth time, is still contesting the results of last year's presidential election, one of the closest in the country's history. Elected as the champion of the "resourceful" poor, William Ruto has since faced criticism, especially after removing costly subsidies on fuel and maize meal, the prices of which have risen in the wake of the election. Kenya, the economic powerhouse of East Africa, is facing skyrocketing inflation, which reached 9.2 per cent year-on-year in February. Food prices alone rose by 13.3%. The country is also battling a depreciating Kenyan shilling and an unprecedented drought in parts of the country.

Moroccans rally against soaring food prices

Hundreds of Moroccan trade union activists rallied in the capital, Rabat, on Monday to protest against declining purchasing power, soaring inflation and rocketing food prices. The unions are demanding, among other things, a ceiling on fuel prices, a reduction in taxes on basic products and a reduction in income tax to support purchasing power. "Today we are celebrating May Day at the UNTM (National Labour Union of Morocco, Ed.) to defend the citizens' eroding purchasing power. We are here to defend every citizen, every employee, and every civil servant", said Adra Idrissi, vice-President of the National Labour Union of

Morocco. Abdelali Hamieddine, member of the General Secretariat of the Justice and Development Party, added "today we are demanding social justice, freedom, and a reorganisation of the socio-economic conditions in Morocco, given that we are facing a very serious situation". Inflation in Morocco hit 8.2% in March, including a 16.1% rise in food prices, according to official statistics. The agricultural sector, which is crucial to the Moroccan economy, is also facing a chronic rainfall deficit, which is further straining food prices.

Ugandan lawmakers pass new version of tough anti-gay bill



Ugandans take part in the 3rd Annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and ... - Copyright © africanews Rebecca Vassie/AP

Uganda's parliament on Tuesday passed an amended version of an anti-LGBT+ law that had sparked outrage from many NGOs and Western governments in which it maintained harsh penalties for same-sex relationships and the "promotion" of homosexuality. Faced with the international outcry, President Yoweri Museveni asked parliamentarians on April 26 to "re-examine" the text, urging them to clarify that "being homosexual" was not a crime but that only sexual relations were. The elected officials heard him on this provision. The new version of the text, consulted by AFP, stipulates that "a person who is presumed or suspected to be homosexual, who has not committed a sexual act with another person of the same sex, does not commit the crime of homosexuality. In this country where homosexuality is illegal, "acts of homosexuality" are still punishable by life imprisonment. This penalty has existed since a law dating back to British colonization. Parliamentarians also maintained, against the advice of the head of state, a provision making "aggravated homosexuality" a capital offence, which means that repeat offenders can be sentenced to death. The death penalty has not been used in Uganda for years. A provision on the "promotion" of homosexuality also worries gay rights organizations. According to the law, anyone - individual or organization - who "knowingly promotes homosexuality" can be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison. If it is an organization, it risks a ten-year ban. - "Culture to be protected" - Parliamentarians also amended a provision on "the duty to report acts of homosexuality" which, according to Yoweri Museveni, presented "constitutional challenges and could be a source of conflict in society. The reporting requirement, which carries a penalty of five years in prison, is now limited to suspected sexual offences against children and vulnerable persons. "We have a culture to protect. The western world will not come and rule Uganda," said the Speaker of Parliament, Annet Anita Among, after the vote on the text, which was

approved unanimously minus one vote. The bill must now go back to the president, who may or may not sign it into law, if he were to send it back to parliament again, a "super-majority" of two-thirds would allow legislators to validate the text definitively. Frank Mugisha, executive director of Sexual Minorities Uganda, a gay rights organization whose activities were suspended by the authorities last year, is not reassured by this amended version. "There is a contradiction because the legislation says you can be gay but you should not say anything about it," he told AFP. The unanimous vote of the text "shows how extreme and homophobic the deputies are and puts LGBTQ people in even more danger," he stressed. The law enjoys broad popular support and opposition reactions have been rare in this country ruled with an iron fist since 1986 by Yoweri Museveni, where repression against civil society, lawyers and activists has increased in recent years, according to many human rights organizations. - Economic "consequences" - Homophobia is widespread in Uganda, as it is across East Africa. While there have been no prosecutions for homosexual acts in recent years, harassment and intimidation are a daily occurrence for homosexuals in Uganda, where an evangelical Christianity has developed that is particularly vehement against the LGBT+ movement. After the vote of the first version of this law on March 21, the UN, Amnesty International, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the EU had urged Museveni not to promulgate this text. The White House warned Uganda of potential economic "consequences. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, denounced the text as "discriminatory - probably the worst of its kind in the world. In a resolution on April 20, MEPs deplored "President Museveni's contribution to the rhetoric of hatred towards LGBT+ people", adding that "relations between the EU and Uganda will be threatened if the President enacts the bill". Credit: Rédaction africanews with AP



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Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV) Expression of Interest (EOI) for Service Providers to support 190 SMEs with media service delivery and specialized training.

PN: 3010339

1. Background of Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV)

The Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV) co-funded by European Union (EU) and the Federal Republic of Germany. The programme is being implemented by German International Cooperation Sierra Leone (GIZ-SL) has as its overall goal *"promotion of youth employment through local economic development and vocational training"* In order to achieve this goal, EPP IV works through the private sector and in particular Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country. Agriculture and Finance Consultants (AFC) is a third-party consulting firm supporting GIZ in the implementation of EPP IV. The programme is to be implemented from June 2021 to January 2024 for AFC Interventions.

2. Districts / Areas of implementation

The programme is being implemented with a key focus on three Districts where GIZ-SL operates, namely: Koinadugu/Falaba, Kailahun and Kono. The interventions for the Facility for Growth and Facility for Innovation are extended to other Districts as deemed necessary by the programme. Consequently, interested Service Providers should be prepared to work in other Districts not mentioned in this Expression of Interest (EOI).

3. Our strategy / approach

The Private Sector Department (PSD) is one of the work areas within EPP IV and is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that 190 SMEs are capacitated with in-kind support, such as branding, labelling, jingle creation and broadcasting, designing of logos, signboards, and specialized training within the life cycle of the current programme using a methodology known as **"Facility for Innovation (F4I) and Facility for Growth F4G"** in Sierra Leone.

4. Purpose of consultancy

AFC is requesting Service Providers to build the capacity of 190 SME's who need business skills improvement in order to operate profitably. This is done through specialize training, development of jingles, branding and labelling, erection of signboards, basic business entrepreneurial training, coaching to develop and sustainably operate their businesses.

5. Specific objectives

- a) To conduct assessment of the current status of business needs for selected SMEs in the selected geographical areas
- b) To develop individualized concepts and brands for jingles, branding, labelling and logos
- c) To provide specialized trainings for the selected SMEs owners.

d) To support beneficiaries in formalizing their businesses

e) To report on tangible results achieved by MSMEs as a result of the in-kind support and specialized training / coaching and its contribution to the accomplishment of the objectives for F4I and F4G, of EPP IV.

f) To set targets and monitor progress along the achievements of the In-kind support and specialized training of the 190 selected grantees.

There are geographical zones of implementation under this offer. Each zone covers a District of EPP IV: **Zone 1:** Kailahun; **Zone 2:** Kono and **Zone 3:** Koinadugu and Falaba: Zone 4 Makeni, Bo and Kenema Districts. Interested Service Providers (SPs) applying for the assignment will be given the task to service all assigned beneficiaries.

6. Timeframe

The assignment delivery will be in batches of SME's from June 30th until 31st October 2023.

Eligibility / Expertise / Documents to be submitted.

- a) The Service Provider gives poof of good standing, commercial qualification, payment of taxes and social benefits: **Clearance certificate of NRA and NASSIT**
- b) The Service Provider is based and registered in Sierra Leone: **Certificate of Business Registration.**
- c) The Service Provider should have minimum of three (3) years' experience in the tasks outlined for the assignment and should have experience in working in the targeted areas in Sierra Leone and show a wide understanding of the assignment.
- d) **A brief company profile that details the experience in delivering similar tasks**

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Service Providers should submit their "Expression of Interest" in a plain sealed envelope in the Tender Box situated at the GIZ Country Office Reception -37 Fraser Street, Freetown **not later than 15th May 2023, 5:00 PM** local time, **clearly marked with "EOI FACILITY FOR INNOVATION (F4I) AND FACILITY FOR GROWTH (F4G) NUMBER- 83434060"**

Only shortlisted SPs will be contacted with detailed Terms of Reference and tender documentation for submission of technical and financial bids

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BUDGET ADVOCACY NETWORK

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR CONSULTANT TO UNDERTAKE REVENUE AND BUDGET CREDIBILITY ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) in partnership with Christian Aid Sierra Leone, with support from the Irish Aid Programme Grant III, would like to contract a consultant to undertake a **Revenue and Expenditure Credibility Analysis**.

Rationale—Every year, the Government of Sierra Leone prepares a Government Budget and Statement of Economic and Financial Policies (Budget Speech) that is enacted into law by the legislative arm of government and thus becomes a legal instrument that gives power to the government to collect revenue and incur expenditures. This process is a legal requirement (Part VI of the 1991 Constitution and Parts IV and V of the Government Budgeting and Accountability Act, 2005), the latter of which has now been replaced with the Public Financial Management Act of 2016. Given this light, the Government's Budget and Statement of Economic and Financial Policies is a document that explains how the Government plans to collect and spend money for a given period, usually three (3) years with indicative ceilings and budgeted figures for one (1) year. Budget figures, especially revenue and expenditure projections, should be based on reliable projections and the proposed revenue and expenditure priorities of the government. This analysis is intended to spot-check the credibility of the Government's Revenue and Expenditure figures in the budget, and how that affects service delivery.

BAN is implementing the "Action for Inclusive, Transparent and Accountable Budget System for Effective Service Delivery Project", in 3 Districts across Sierra Leone (Western Area Urban, Western Area Rural District, Bombali District Council, and the Kailahun District Council). As the title is self-explanatory, the overall purpose of the project is to contribute towards an inclusive, transparent, accountable, and peaceful Sierra Leone where citizens claim and enjoy rights.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of Analysis

The consultancy service aims to examine the extent, nature, causes, and consequences of deviations from approved budgets and policies.

The overall objectives include:

- To track the implementation of revenue proposals in 2020, 2021,
- To conduct credibility of the government's revenue and expenditure for the period (2020, 2021 and 2022) using the PEFA methodology
- To conduct ministerial budget credibility for health, education and Agriculture budget and expenditure
- Come up with specific recommendations on how to improve both the overall budget credibility and also that of the selected ministries.

1.3 Specific Task for the Consultant

The consultant is expected to undertake the following tasks/activities:

1. Track the implementation of the revenue proposal in the budget speech for 2020, 2021 and 2022
2. Analyse overall revenue and expenditure credibility for 2020, 2021, and 2022,

comparing against performance in the recent PEFA assessment.

3. Give an update on the revenue collected as a % of GDP for 2020, 2021 and 2022
4. Carry out sector-level analysis of disbursements made to health, education, and Agriculture, highlighting linkages between budget disbursement/credibility and key health/education deliverables (e.g. free school provision).
5. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders about the above issue to gather views on why the variance especially the sectors mentioned
6. Share the final Excel files with BAN
7. Produce a detailed report stating the policy action to be taken to address any budget credibility issues highlighted in the report.
8. Develop a four-page policy brief.

1.4 Scope

This analysis is expected to cover the implementation of 2020, 2021, and 2022 budgets. It will also look at the revenues collected and expenditures incurred by the government from January to December for each quarter in the period under review.

Timeline and Deliverables

The analysis is expected to last for 3 weeks.

In summary, the expected deliverables of the assignment include:

- Short inception report
- Draft report
- Final report (following comments from the consortium)
- Policy Brief
- PowerPoint presentation of the summarized final report

1.6 Qualification and Experience of the Consultant/Firm

The Budget Advocacy Network is looking to hire a consultant with the following qualifications:

- **Master's degree or an equivalent in Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences, etc.**
- **Minimum 5 years experience in the field of Public Financial Management (PFM) and budgeting.**
- **Experience in budget preparation and analysis of the PEFA indicators/reports and other similar areas**
- **Very good written and communication skills, with examples of published work desirable.**
- **Ability to manage and analyze large datasets in Excel**
- **Experience in conducting similar assignments, either in Sierra Leone or elsewhere**

Interested persons or firms should forward their Expression of Interest (EOI) to:

BAN office 96B Off Wilkinson Road Freetown or via email to info@ban-sl.org on or before 9th May 2023. Please include your CV and copies of the certificate.

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO PAPER APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Only shortlisted applicants will be notified. Women are strongly advised to apply

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Public Notice

Increase in Advert Pricing for Newspapers

24th March, 2023.

The general public is hereby informed that the Guild of Newspaper Editors - Sierra Leone (GoNE-SL) has reviewed the advert pricing for newspapers as follows:

Black & White

No.	Description	Old Price (NLe)	New Price (NLe)
1	Quarter Page (¼)	700	800
2	Half (½)	800	1,200
3	Full Page	1,000	1,500
4	Centre Spread	2,000	3,000

Coloured

No.	Description	Old Price (NLe)	New Price (NLe)
1	Full Page	2,500	3,000
2	Centre Spread	5,000	6,000

The cover price remains the same.

Please note that the new pricing takes effect on Monday, 3rd April, 2023.

Your cooperation is highly solicited.

Signed:
Donald Theo-Harding
Chairman, GoNE-SL.

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PRESS RELEASE

INCREASE IN COST OF RADIO COMMERCIALS

Mile 91 Town, 25th March 2023

The National Executive and General Membership of the Sierra Leone Broadcasters Association (SILBA) wish to inform the public that the Association has unanimously resolved to increase the cost of radio commercials.

The decision was reached at a national consultation meeting held at Mile 91 Town, Tonkolili District, on Saturday, 18th March 2023, as part of the efforts to meet the current inflation rates and other statutory obligations in the country.

This decision will enhance quality in service delivery and sustainability in the operations of radio stations across the country.

It should be recalled that this is the only increment in commercials announced by radio stations in 12 years.

The Association therefore craves the understanding and patronage of the public.

The new commercial quotation which will take effect on 1st May 2023 shall be as follow:

FREETOWN

1. Jingle - Jingle slot - NLe 35.00 per minute
2. Public notice - NLe 30.00 per 50 words
3. (a) Cost for 30 minutes airtime, between NLe 750.00 and NLe 1,250.00 (Depending on the coverage of the Radio station)
(b) Cost for 1hr airtime, between NLe 1,500.00 and NLe 2,500.00 (Depending on the coverage of the Radio station)

PROVINCIAL

1. Jingle - Jingle slot - NLe 20.00 per minute
2. Public notice - NLe 20.00 per 50 words
3. (a) Cost for 30 minute airtime: between NLe 500.00 and NLe 750.00 (Depending on the coverage of the particular Radio station)
(b) Cost for 1hr airtime: between NLe 1,000.00 and NLe 1,500.00 (Depending on the coverage of the particular Radio station)

SILBA regrets any inconvenience this may cause.

END

Signed:

Daniel M. Amara
Secretary General

Approved By:

Stanley Bangura Jr
Chairman

INT'L SPORT

Lionel Messi has decided he wants to return to Barcelona

Barcelona will submit their financial projections to La Liga in the next couple of weeks and those projections WILL include a contract they plan to offer to Leo Messi who they have been assured DOES want to return to the club this summer. One of the most extraordinary football homecomings will then be in the hands of the Spanish League who are desperate to welcome back the World Cup winner because of his commercial benefit to the competition, but have reiterated on various occasions that they cannot bend the rules for just one club.

Barcelona's vice-president of marketing, Juli Guu said this week that La Liga president Javier Tebas would be 'very stupid not to help the club' re-sign the Argentinian.

But Tebas has been clear no favours will be done and that Barcelona must take plenty of steps to put their finances in order first before they can be given the green light to offer Messi a new deal.

The first thing that needs to happen is that La Liga rule on whether the contract the club plan to give Messi can be permitted – he can't play for free, even if he pledges too which is unlikely.

It will be enough of a stretch that he accepts an offer for around four times less than he is being paid in France. He is prepared to do so because his family wants to return to their home in Barcelona and because he knows

beyond the financial bubble of Paris nowhere else in Europe – where he is adamant he wants to continue playing – will offer him anywhere near his PSG money as he approaches 36th birthday. Messi will be offered a two-year deal at 12m euros net a season. That ought to be deemed within the range of the 'going-rate' for a player of his age and pedigree based on it being around 2m more than Barcelona pay Robert Lewandowski.

The club will then need to explain how they can fit the new deal into their financial fair play calculations when a current shortfall of an estimated 200m euros is preventing them from registering new deals for Gavi, Alejandro Balde and Ronald Araujo.

They believe they can pull another economic lever by selling off a percentage of their licensing and merchandising arm. President Joan Laporta has been on a charm offensive all week stopping off at the Spanish League headquarters to make peace with Tebas and then visiting UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin to ask him not to ban Barcelona from next season's Champions League.

La Liga has changed the rules on the amount of money a club can count as income from non-sporting assets but if the goalposts were to be moved back a little in Barça's favour it would make another asset strip worthwhile.

Most of the rest of the money would come from players but this is where the



projections invite a leap of faith. El Mundo Deportivo gleefully speculated on Friday morning that the club could raise 100m euros from selling Ferran Torres, Franck Kessie, Eric Garcia, Raphinha and Ansu Fati.

It's optimistic in the extreme to believe the figure. Fati has had a tough season coming off the back of last year's injury problems. He might get a loan somewhere in the Premier League with Barcelona taking him off their wage bill for a season and earning around 10m euros in the process. Of the rest only Raphinha is likely to bring in big money with Chelsea his suitors last summer perhaps tempted if they offload.

Multiple departures will also have to mean players coming in – Barcelona can't sell five and only sign Messi. Athletic Bilbao centre-back Inigo Martinez will arrive on a free (although he has an escape clause in his contract if Barça sign him but then can't register him). Other freebies are being pursued but even if the likes of Ilkay Gundogan

and Pierre Emerick Aubameyang come without a transfer fee they will still command a wage.

It's a balancing trick and Barcelona are leaving no stone nor couch cushion un-turned looking for money. Next July they will play Real Madrid in Dallas as part of another US tour. That will be more lucrative still if they can take Messi with them.

The player himself has still not said publicly that he wants to go back to Barcelona. He needs Paris Saint Germain as his fallback option because as yet no other club in Europe has come forward with a similar offer to the one being prepared by Barcelona.

Unless Todd Boehly tells Behdad Eghbali: 'hold my coat, I'm going in', then it's Barcelona or PSG and Messi knows Paris is a lot worse than nothing, should Barça disappoint him again as they did two years ago, telling him his new contract was ready to sign and then withdrawing it.

The path back to Barcelona will not be paved with the same amount of gold Messi is used to, but it's a road he is willing to walk. It just needs Barcelona to convince La Liga that they can carry out the operation in an economically viable way.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football>

Brighton 0-0 Man Utd (6-7 on pens): Erik ten Hag's side reach FA Cup final after Victor Lindelof scores winning penalty



Solly March's missed penalty saw Manchester United edge past Brighton to reach the FA Cup final with a 7-6 shoot-out win after a goalless semi-final draw at Wembley.

The Brighton winger was left inconsolable with the only miss of 14 spot-kicks, following a tense 120 minutes where either side could have felt they would have been worthy of returning to face Manchester City on June 3.

Brighton flew out of the blocks and saw Alexis Mac Allister pull David De Gea into an early fingertip save from a free-kick, but United improved as the half wore on and Bruno Fernandes and Anthony Martial both missed presentable chances in added time.

The Seagulls were inches from finally opening the scoring in the second period but Julio Enciso, the hero at Chelsea last weekend, was denied again by a flying De

Gea stop before Danny Welbeck nodded wide from a corner. Substitute Jadon Sancho could have won it for Erik ten Hag's side late on, but lifted a curling effort just over the goalframe.

In extra-time, Marcus Rashford flashed an effort past the post with only Robert Sanchez to beat before Kaoru Mitoma's heavy touch denied him what seemed a certain last-minute winner - and after each of the first 12 penalties in the resulting shoot-out were scored, March's miss left Victor Lindelof to score the winning spot-kick and set United up for a shot at a second trophy this season.

Brighton were looking to reach the FA Cup final for just the second time, after losing to Manchester United 40 years ago in a replay in their only previous appearance.

United, meanwhile, had the added motivation of bouncing back from their chastening Europa League exit in Seville on Thursday night, but were slow out of the blocks at Wembley and needed the fingertips of De Gea to deny Mac Allister

from an early free-kick.

A succession of injury stoppages dented Brighton's early momentum, but Man Utd could only force Sanchez into a routine stop from Fernandes' curling effort.

Roberto De Zerbi would have been the happier manager until the closing minutes of the half, when United suddenly upped the pressure and nearly broke the deadlock. First Fernandes found himself clean through but shot wide, before a Martial lob, with Sanchez off his line, drifted agonisingly wide.

Antony's driving run and cut-back towards Martial moments after the interval might have signalled an improvement for the previously-anonymous Brazilian, but the game soon settled into the pattern of the first half, with Brighton pulling the strings.

A half-cleared corner fell for Enciso whose crisp, venomous first-time drive was tipped over by a springing De Gea save, before Welbeck nodded the second corner over from a matter of yards out when he really should have scored.

As had been the case before the break, United grew into proceedings helped largely by the introduction of Fred, whose industrious work finally helped them begin to control the midfield battle for the first time in the match.

Even so, they had only substitute Sancho's curler which just cleared the bar,

and a tricky, low 20-yard effort from Antony to show for their new-found dominance.

There was little surprise there was no winning goal to be found, with the game level after 90 minutes just as Brighton's FA Cup final with Man Utd had ended four decades earlier.

The parallels continued but grew more cruel. Gordon Smith had missed a glorious chance in the final minute of added time in Brighton's first game that year, and this time Mitoma's heavy touch with only De Gea to beat denied him and the Seagulls the jubilation of a last-gasp winner at Wembley.

That was as close as either side came in the additional 30 minutes. Rashford should have done better after shaking off Joel Veltman but mis-hit a powerful drive well wide, while Marcel Sabitzer nodded a Sancho cross past the post.

With semi-final replays scrapped over 20 years ago that was to be the end of the similarities, bar the final result. After 12 perfect penalties, March blasted his spot-kick over the bar leaving victory in United's hands.

Up stepped Lindelof to send his side into their second final of the season, and repair some of the damage done by their limp Europa League exit to Sevilla on Thursday night.

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