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Pope celebrates sad Easter Mass at empty St Peter's Basilica

VATICAN

POPE Francis yesterday celebrated Easter with a Mass held behind closed doors at St Peter's Basilica.

This year's Holy Week events were modified to take place without the public. The Pope also replaced his traditional address to crowds at St Peter's Square with an online message.

Last year, more than 70,000 people joined the celebrations. Italy, one of the countries worst hit by coronavirus, remains in lockdown with the entrance to the Vatican sealed off by police.

On Saturday, the Pope urged people not to "yield to fear" over coronavirus, calling on them to be "messengers of life in a time of death".

Easter is a time of joy for Christians as they celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection. But the site in Jerusalem where Jesus is believed to have been crucified and rose again was closed on Easter Sunday, for the first time in more than a century.

A small number of priests gathered at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Sunday, while a few worshippers gathered in the inner courtyard. A man in an immaculate white gown prayed in front of the closed door.

"Easter is a time for life," said Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa. "Despite the signs

If unwell please don't come to church, Christians urged

By Guardian Reporters

RELIGIOUS leaders yesterday asked worshippers who feel unwell with flu-like symptoms not to attend services as this could further spread the coronavirus.

In a statement read out after Easter Mass at the church of Saint Paul of the Cross in Dodoma, led by Fr Erasto Kamugisha, the Catholic Church appealed to worshippers to play their role in the fight against Covid-19 by observing social distancing and hand washing.

"If you feel sick, please don't come to church; just stay at home to avoid spreading the disease," the statement emphasized.

Unlike previous Easter services, holy water sprinkled on worshippers was not observed, a unique feature among other Catholic traditions. Also, worshippers washed their hands before entering the church.

In his homily in the first mass, Archbishop Beatus Kinyaiya called upon Tanzanians to take precautionary measures against the disease, saying the coronavirus is a major public health challenge that everybody must help to fight.

"Spiritually, the church offers special prayer against coronavirus; however, we must part out physically to avoid further spread of the disease," he said.

In his homily at the Central Tanganyika Diocese of the Anglican Church, Bishop Dickson Chilongani called on Christians and Tanzanians in general to pray but also observed precautionary measures as advised by the government and health experts.

"Let's change our ways. It's safe to stay at home to avoid unnecessary gatherings," he emphasized.

Rev Chilongani also urged Tanzanians not to



Bishop Amon Kinyunyu of the Dodoma Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania blesses a child with an Easter baptism yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

“On Saturday, the Pope urged people not to ‘yield to fear’ over coronavirus, calling on them to be ‘messengers of life in a time of death’.”

of death everywhere, life will prevail as long as someone is giving life out of love for others.”

At the Western Wall, a small group of Jewish worshippers prayed to mark Passover.

The Old City in Jerusalem is largely empty as Israel follows strict social distancing measures.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged people to “not let fear dominate” and to look after one another during the coronavirus crisis.

Justin Welby said churches had to set an example on how to behave during “challenging times” - adding that it was “not complicated.”

“We’ve gone through so much, and we’re seeing such common spirit and an attitude to the common good coming through by the vast majority of people - we mustn’t lose that,” he told the BBC’s Andrew Marr Show.

The head of the Church of England **TURN TO PAGE 2**

Heavy, disruptive rains to hit six regions - TMA

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) has said six regions in the country will experience heavy rains with adverse effects from yesterday to April 15th.

Its five-day weather forecast released yesterday indicated high probability of adverse effects from the rains to hit Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, North Lindi, Tanga, Zanzibar and Pemba.

In the statement, TMA warned of strong winds at some coastal areas along the seashore, urging people to take precautions as significant destruction could occur.

The four days of rain are likely to cause disasters like flooding, destruction of infrastructures and affect transport services, plus disruption of some economic and social activities, it said.

The rains are also expected to disrupt fishing activities and carry threat on the danger of fishing activity as the sea will be troubled.

However, following the downpour in the country’s commercial capital Dar es Salaam yesterday, Bus Rapid Transit (DART) system had a section of the busy Morogoro Road closed at Jangwani from noon.

In a statement, DART said it would continue **TURN TO PAGE 2**

RC: Stay home if elderly, or having chronic illness

By Guardian Reporter, Simiyu

SIMIYU Region now wants its elderly residents, people suffering from chronic diseases as well as parents with infant children to stay at home to avoid being infected with the novel coronavirus.

Speaking to religious leaders here yesterday, regional commissioner Anthony Mtaka appealed to residents of the region to desist from attending functions that draw large gatherings during

Easter. “I call upon people with a compromised immune system including senior citizens, those suffering from diabetes, asthma, low or high blood pressure, heart conditions as well as obesity to stay at home because they are more susceptible to Covid-19,” he said.

The RC called upon people taking care of the elderly as well as patients with those conditions to **TURN TO PAGE 2**

SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT 1 Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

FACT 2 For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19.

FACT 3 Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC’s coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

FACT 4 There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

FACT 5 You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you

- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

cdc.gov/COVID-19



If unwell please don't come to church, Christians urged

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stigmatize those who have contracted and recovered from Covid-19 but instead welcome them warmly back into social life as symbols of hope against the viral disease.

Meanwhile his message to faithful and other Tanzanians at the Holy Trinity Church in Arusha, Rev Father Peddy Castelino urged parents to keep their children at home instead of wandering about as schools remain closed.

"Schools have been closed because of coronavirus. As children cannot observe social distancing ensure that they stay at home. Do not bring them even to church," he said.

The clergyman asked Tanzanians to avoid unnecessary movements, recommending staying at home as the safest way of avoiding the disease that is currently wreaking havoc in the world.

Bishop Blaston Gavile of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

Tanzania, Iringa Diocese, asked Tanzanians to humble themselves before God to end the coronavirus and also play a part in the physical fight against the disease.

He called on everyone to not only pray but heed appeals for precautions from the government and other health authorities, namely practicing social distancing and the regular washing of hands.

"We are celebrating this Easter as the whole world is battling coronavirus; we should do everything possible to avoid plunging into the worst crisis," he declared.

Tanzania has so far confirmed 32 cases of the novel coronavirus with three fatalities and five recoveries. As of yesterday, there were more than over 13,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus across Africa, with a number of countries imposing prevention and containment measures like enforced lockdowns, to check the spread of the disease.

RC: Stay home if elderly, or having chronic illness

FROM PAGE 1

ensure that they stay indoors until the coronavirus situation in the country improves.

He said experience shows that the elderly as well as people with chronic illnesses are more likely to develop serious symptoms if infected with coronavirus compared to other groups, with the only way to avoid loss of life being to avoid contracting the disease, chiefly by staying at home.

"Let's also wash our hands with running water and soap; observe social distancing and stay away from crowds to avoid contracting the disease," he elaborated.

Mtaka called upon Simiyu residents and Tanzanians not to take the matter lightly, saying the Covid-19 pandemic is now a reality in the country and the disease is spreading locally among people didn't travel anywhere recently.

The RC urged parents to ensure that their children study at home at this time when schools remain closed to

avoid infections.

"Monitor your children especially those waiting for final exams; ensure that they study instead of loitering around so that they don't fail their tests," he said.

Pastor Amos Ndaki of the African Inland Church appealed to Christians to abide by guidelines issued by health experts to avoid contracting the disease.

"As we pray, let's also religiously observe guidelines given by health experts to minimize the risk of contracting the disease," he emphasized.

Tanzania has so far confirmed 32 cases of the novel coronavirus with three fatalities and five recoveries.

Figures by the Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children indicated that affected regions are Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, while Arusha's two reported cases and a Kagera patient had recovered from the disease.



Works, Transport and Communications minister Isack Kamwelwe moves to board a Tanzania-Zambia train at Iyunga station in Mbeya Region. He has been in the region to assess the damage the ongoing rains have inflicted on transport and other infrastructure. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa.

Heavy, disruptive rains to hit six regions - TMA

FROM PAGE 1

with transport services on other routes, that Kimara, Kivukoni and Kimara - Gerezani buses would take the Kigogo route to reach those destinations.

Ongoing rains in different parts across the country have resulted in

floods, deaths and destruction of infrastructures like roads and bridges.

Mid last month, around 3,500 houses and 6,600 hectares of farms were swept away by floods in one week in Rufiji district in Coast Region.

In January, three people were reported dead and 60 rendered

homeless following downpour that hit Iringa district. Pawaga and Idodi were the more affected divisions in the district.

Early March, heavy downpour swept away the Kiyegeya Bridge in Kilosa district, Morogoro region cutting off communication between Morogoro

and Dodoma. Motorists were advised to use the prohibitively long Morogoro-Iringa-Dodoma route.

Reports show that since the start of the year, heavy rains have caused deaths of more than 40 people, destroyed an estimated 1,750 houses and displaced over 15,000 people.



Easter mass well under way at a church in the Dodoma Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Pope celebrates sad Easter Mass at empty St Peter's Basilica

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earlier led the first national digital Easter Sunday service from his kitchen at Lambeth Palace.

As of yesterday, overall cases reported globally surpassed 1.7m with over 110,000 deaths and over 411,000 recoveries. The number of daily reported deaths from coronavirus in

Spain rose by more than 100 yesterday following a nearly three-week low on Saturday.

Spain's health ministry reported 619 deaths, up from 510 on Saturday as a three-day run of declines came to an end. The country's total death toll from the virus climbed to 16,972 from 16,353, the ministry said in a statement. Overall cases rose to 166,019 from 161,852.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson left hospital yesterday after being treated for coronavirus, but will not immediately return to work, Downing Street said.

Johnson, 55, was taken to St Thomas Hospital in London last week - 10 days after testing positive for the virus.

He had three nights in intensive care before returning to a ward on Thursday.

Downing Street said the PM would continue his recovery at his country residence, Chequers.

"On the advice of his medical team, the PM will not be immediately returning to work. He wishes to thank everybody at St Thomas' for the brilliant care he has received. "All of his thoughts are with those affected by this illness," the statement added.

Several African countries complain about treatment of Africans living in China

NAIROBI

SEVERAL African countries have demanded that China address their concerns that Africans in Guangzhou city are being mistreated and harassed amid fears there of a potential spread of coronavirus from imported cases.

In recent days, Africans in the city have reported being ejected from their apartments by their landlords, being tested for coronavirus several times without being given results and being shunned and discriminated against in public. Such complaints have been made in local media, and on social media.

In a statement on Saturday, Ghana's minister of foreign affairs Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey said she had summoned the Chinese ambassador to express her disappointment and demand action to address the "inhumane treatment."

"I regret and highly condemn this... ill-treatment and racial discrimination," the minister said. She said she had summoned Ambassador Shi Ting Wang to "register my disappointment and call for his government to immediately address the situation and bring their officials to order."

There was no immediate response from the Chinese Embassy in Ghana to a request for comment on this.

In a tweeted statement on Saturday, the Chinese embassy in Zimbabwe dismissed the accusation of Chinese deliberately targeting Africans and suggested reports of racial discrimination and harassment were being sensationalized.

"It is harmful to sensationalize

isolated incidents," the statement said. "China treats all individuals in the country, Chinese and foreign alike, as equals."

China has ended its more than two-month lockdown in Wuhan, the city where the coronavirus infections began, after containing the outbreak there but authorities are now worried about a potential second wave of infection from imported cases.

At the peak of the outbreak in Wuhan some African nations refused to evacuate their students from China, expressing confidence in Beijing's ability to handle the outbreak.

In a press statement on Friday the Kenyan government said the "stringent testing of foreigners" that China had undertaken had "precipitated unfair responses against foreigners particularly of African origin."

In the foreign ministry statement about the treatment of Africans in Guangzhou, Nairobi "officially expressed concern." It added that government was working with Chinese authorities to address the matter.

On Friday, Nigerian legislator Akinola Alabi tweeted a video of a meeting between the leader of Nigeria's lower house of parliament, Femi Gbajabiamila, and Chinese Ambassador Zhou Pingjian. In it, Gbajabiamila demanded an explanation from the diplomat after showing Zhou a video of a Nigerian complaining about mistreatment in China.

The ambassador said in response to the questions from the house leader that he took the complaints "very seriously" and promised to convey them to the authorities back home.



Bishop Augustine Ndeliakyama Shao of the Catholic Church's Diocese of Zanzibar writes an Easter message on the candle shortly before leading Easter mass yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba

Tax body impounds smuggled cigarettes worth 275 million/-

By Guardian Correspondent, Tarime

TANZANIA Revenue Authority (TRA) has seized smuggled consignment of cigarettes worth 275m/- at Sirari border.

Mara region TRA manager Wallace Mnkande said the officers were on patrol along the border at the weekend. The impounded cigarettes were in a vehicle with Reg T 789 DKR whose owner was one Esther Rhozi.

He said the 'Supermatch' brand cigarettes had no label of the country of origin, saying the goods were often manufactured in two neighboring countries, Kenya and Uganda.

"Had the cigarette been legal import went through authorised entry points more than 50m/- in duties would have been paid thereon," said Mnkande.

He said the smugglers mixed the cigarettes consignment with bags of cereal husks to mislead.

The TRA manager named the suspected owner of the consignment was Ibrahim Marwa and that investigations were still ongoing and once complete legal action will take its

course in accordance of TRA laws and regulations.

He cautioned traders in border districts against smuggling into the country goods that are not only deny the government of its much needed revenues, but sometimes are of substandard, thereby undermining domestic markets.

Had the cigarette been legal import went through authorised entry points more than 50m/- in duties would have been paid thereon

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

Mbeya Region residents respond well to handwashing, calls health ministry

MBEYA region is amongst regions whose people had well responded to wash their hands with running water and soaps according to directives of the health experts from the Health ministry in efforts to fight the spread of Covid-19 infections.

A team from the Ministry of Health led by head of water and environmental cleanliness department Anyitike Mwakitalima also involved artiste Mrisho Mpoto recently visited Mbeya region with the aim of educating people on preventive measures against the

pandemic.

In addition, the team mobilised people to understand the importance of washing hands using running water and soap every time.

Mwakitalima said the ministry will cover 13 regions which are more prone to Covid-19 infections, including

Songwe, Rukwa, Katavi, Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Tanga and Dar es Salaam regions.

"This campaign aims to fight the pandemic and make Tanzania safer hence I request cooperation from all Tanzanians," he said.

The ambassador of the campaign,

Mrisho Mpoto, through his lyrics said he can reach people in various areas and cautioned that the pandemic should not divide Tanzanians, and instead should unite them against it.

He appealed to various stakeholders to support government's efforts in eradicating the disease.

Some residents of Mbeya City expressed their views on the importance of washing hands.

Issa Mwanjala said the habit of washing hands from time to time is new to them but due to the pandemic they are forced to do so even though there is also the need for more sanitizers,

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Daniel Kochocho of Lorngoswani in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region, airs his views at a village meeting at the weekend. The thrust was on a dispute over land allegedly occupied illegally by 500 residents of the village. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Mwanza RC calls for team to probe seizure of 1.5bn/- illegal fishing nets

By Guardian Correspondent, Mwanza

MWANZA regional commissioner John Mongella has ordered the formation of a special committee that will incorporate defence and security organs, PCCB, police and fisheries office to investigate the issue over seizure of illegal fishing nets valued at more than 1.5b/-.

The nets were seized at Nyhasaka Centre in Ilemela district in the region from a house of one woman and were destined for transport to various areas in the lake zone.

Speaking at Nyakato Police station accompanied by the regional defence and security committee, Mongella said the issue that involved one suspect named Juma should be thoroughly investigated.

He said his worry is that the team involving fisheries officers is overburdened as the people are well organised and if it is appropriate for the suspect to be fined and it should be made public.

Fisheries officer from fisheries resources management Boniface Shatila said the consignment of about 447 bales were seized from a room

of a house at Nyansaka centre in the absence of the owner who was later nabbed in Rorya district, Mara region.

"We seized the nets on April 4 after we received a tip off from good citizens, we collaborated with the police," Shatila said.

The acting senior fisheries resources Officer for Mwanza Zone Jacquimina Ntundu said we made efforts to arrest the suspect in Royra district and the following day he was taken to Mwanza where after he contacted his lawyer, saying he was ready to pay the fine.

In 2018 the government through the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries launched a special operation against illegal fishing as a protection for marine resources.



We seized the nets on April 4 after we received a tip off from good citizens, we collaborated with the police

Covid-19 sees reduction in number of buses on the road

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

SEVERAL bus owners in Tanga region have decided to cut down the number of the buses that travelling to other regions due to lack of enough passengers as many people fear

Covid-19 infections.

They have also asked for removal of various levies charged by council authorities particularly at bus stands and road blocks.

Reporters who visited Kange bus stand - the main bus stand in Tanga

found very few buses for regional trips because bus owners have reduced the number of their buses on the roads for fear of incurring losses.

The director of Rahala Leo bus company Saidi Seleman said in the past they used to make 18 regional journeys

every day, but now they are making only six.

"We sometimes get only 14 passengers in a bus, the situation that makes us incur huge losses," he said.

He said apart from the low number of passengers, they are

also incurring more expenses in the purchase of preventive gadgets for passengers.

"One bus has a capacity to carry 52 passengers hence for one week we spend more than 700,000/- to purchase the items including sanitizers," he

added.

Athumani Saidi, a bus driver said as of now they remain idle for over six days before they get a trip, adding "the situation makes our lives hard due to absence of travelling allowances."

African Union now appoints ex-Credit Suisse boss as envoy for support on virus

JOHANNESBURG

THE African Union (AU) has appointed former Credit Suisse boss Tidjane Thiam and several other dignitaries as a special envoys to solicit international support to help the continent deal with the economic impact of the coronavirus.

The envoy team, which was named by the AU chairman, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, also includes former Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, and Donald Kaberuka, former president and chairman of the African Development Bank.

Manuel is now chairman of insurer Old Mutual. Ivory Coast-born banker Thiam left Credit Suisse in February this year after a scandal over the surveillance of another executive.

The envoys will be tasked with "soliciting rapid and concrete support" pledged by the G20, the European Union and other financial institutions,

the AU said in a statement.

"These institutions need to support African economies that are facing serious economic challenges with a comprehensive stimulus package for Africa, including deferred debt and interest payments," Ramaphosa was quoted as saying.

Thiam is one of several prominent Africans who has called for a standstill on debt to private creditors amid the outbreak of coronavirus, which threatens many African economies already facing headwinds from factors such as plummeting oil prices.

In just two years from 2015 to 2017, African external debt payments doubled from an average of 5.9% of government revenue to 11.8%. At 32%, the proportion of debt owed to private lenders is almost equal to the 35% owed to multilateral institutions.

Private creditors include Thiam's former employer Credit Suisse, which is currently fighting Mozambique in court over a \$622 million loan.



SHOWING THE WAY: Arumeru East legislator Dr John Pallangyo washes his hands with soap at the weekend after donating 120 buckets and 124 bottles of liquid soap to CCM in Meru District in support of the war on COVID-19. Photo: Correspondent Cynthia Mwilolezi

Minister: Food security assured with bumper harvest

By Guardian Reporter, Songwe

AGRICULTURE minister Japhet Hasunga has assured Tanzanians of food security and bumper harvest in the 2019/2020 season.

Speaking shortly after inspecting farms in Songwe region over the weekend, Hasunga said farmers have well responded to the government call to increase crops production.

At Idiwili and Iyula village, the minister linked the good

harvests to good weather and favourable conditions for almost all the cultivated food and cash crops. He said the government has for three consecutive years ensured increased productivity of agricultural products whereas it had also enhanced performance of its agricultural institutes.

He said the country's food production dropped in 2019 compared to 2018 where food production reached 16.8 tonnes. He said the production of food

crops is expected to be higher this harvesting season.

He directed the Tanzania Fertiliser Regulatory Authority (TFRA) to ensure timely availability and distribution of UREA fertiliser which is currently scarce in most parts of the country.

Minister Hasunga said the government is determined to enhance pyrethrum farming insisting to come up with a strategy to encourage more farmers to venture into cultivation

of the crops. He said the government will establish a pyrethrum farm at Idiwili village in Songwe region which will specifically be used for seeds production.

Over 85 of the cash crop are produced in Mbeya Region where the country has the capacity of producing 2000 to 3000 tonnes annually.

The cash crop came in the country from Kenya in 1930s, being cultivated in estates in the southern and northern

highlands of Mbeya, Kilimanjaro, Iringa, Arusha and Tanga regions. Pyrethrum research in Tanzania began in 1963 at Igeri substation in Njombe, later in 1973 was moved to ARI-Uyole headquarters.

According to the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute, Uyole centre (TARI Uyole), Tanzania is one of the leading producers of highest quality pyrethrum despite its low production due to lack of modern technologies.

Researcher and National Coordinator of pyrethrum research from TARI Uyole, Billes Nzilano said the improved varieties and other technologies would help to increase the production of pyrethrum crop in the country.

In Tanzania, pyrethrum is cultivated in Mbeya, Songwe, Njombe, Iringa, Arusha, Manyara and Kilimanjaro. "Mbeya rural district in Mbeya region is leading in pyrethrum cultivation."

Tanzania feels Covid-19 heat, timber exports at massive risk

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

THE outbreak of Covid-19, a disease has started to affect exportation of forest products including timber and logs.

According to the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) the country may lose a substantial amount of foreign currency due to declining export of forest products.

The agency attributes the decline to closure of boundaries in many countries as a measure to contain the spread of the virus.

Briefing the TFS northern zone manager, Edward Shilogile, TFS manager in Tanga region, Laurence Brighton said the business has been affected following closure of boundaries and lockdowns in European countries and United States of America who are the main buyers.

Brighton said: "We are struggling with the business, exports of timber and logs have declined to between 10 and 20 containers per month".

He said normalization of the business depends on how fast the pandemic will be contained.

TFS Northern Zone Chief, Edward Shilogile said in the 2019/2020 fiscal year the agency surpassed its revenue collection targets by 2.6bn/-. He said

the target was to collect 4bn/- but it has managed to collect 6.6bn/-.

"We target to collect more revenues in the coming financial year", he said.

Shilogile said they are working hard to control illegal export of forest products calling upon TFS staffs in the northern zone to avoid engaging in corruption as well as assisting traders to illegally export logs without paying government taxes.

He also warned the staffs to stop engaging in economic sabotage by aiding illegal harvesting and exportation of forest products and theft of seedlings and seeds.

Meanwhile, the agency seized logs worth 240m/- in Tanga city during the 2018/2019 financial year. The logs were auctioned after the court ruling.

Mkinga district TFS manager, Arcadio Ngumbala said they are planning to establish an 8,979 hectares tree plantation at Mwakijembe.

He added that the agency has already established a 10 hectares tree plantation at the area.

TFS is a government agency established to develop and manage forest and bee resources sustainably in collaboration with stakeholders in order to deliver sufficient and quality goods and services to meet local and international socio-economic and environmental needs.



Small traders hunt for customers for oranges and boiled groundnuts, as captured in Mbeya municipality yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

I'm pleased with my talks with JPM - ELCT Bishop Shoo

By Guardian Correspondent, Moshi

THE Head of Tanzania Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCT) Bishop Dr Frederick Shoo has expressed his pleasure with talks he had with President John Magufuli yesterday who insisted upon him to mobilize the Church's

followers to take extra care against Covid-19 infections.

In his Easter message yesterday at the Moshi main Parish Church for ELCT Northern Diocese, Bishop Dr Shoo said in the talks President Magufuli wanted him to convey his Easter greetings to all followers of the Church in the country.

"I have talked to President Magufuli and wish you goo Easter and insisted upon us to continue taking precautionary measures against the pandemic.

"God knows our endeavours, don't be afraid. Codvid-19 is present and real, we must take care, but also Jesus Christ is with us," he said.

In his Easter sermon Dr Shoo told his congregation that Jesus' resurrection is the gist of the Faith they have.

He said: "As of now, the world is distressed, people have lost their loved ones, many of us have been gripped with fear, but we must overcome our fear."



Clesensia William, a member of the Morogoro municipal militia, ensures that this young man washes his hands as appropriate before entering the municipality's Kikundi general goods market yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Frank Kaundula

By Gareth Willmer

Refugees face double coronavirus emergency

THE novel coronavirus will disproportionately impact the world's 70 million displaced people as it spreads, while states exacerbate the risk by turning their attention towards their citizens.

So says a report by advocacy organisation Refugees International, which underlines how refugees, asylum seekers and the internally displaced must be included in national responses to COVID-19.

These populations, which may already lack access to healthcare, clean water and reliable information, often live in cramped refugee camps and informal settlements where the virus could spread rapidly, it says. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees could catch COVID-19 within a year if it takes hold in Bangladesh's refugee camps, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University.

Nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees live in Cox's Bazar, close to more than 400,000 Bangladeshis. As of 7 April, Bangladesh has recorded 17 coronavirus disease deaths, according to official figures.

Devon Cone, senior advocate for women and girls at Refugees International, tells SciDev.Net there is

no easy solution to the global problem given the vast differences in national circumstances, border closures and government-imposed restrictions. She says displaced people must be included in prevention and mitigation efforts for the sake of everyone's health.

"I think being inclusive is the main point," says Cone. "Yes, there need to be restrictions, but restrictions shouldn't be more burdensome on refugees and asylum seekers than anyone else."

The report suggests a series of recommendations for humanitarian response, including stopping deportation of asylum seekers, prioritising hygiene and decongestion in camps, and enhancing communication.

More migration expected Millions of people who have fled Venezuela since 2015 are already struggling to access healthcare in neighbouring Colombia, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. More Venezuelans, faced with a collapsed health system and a lack of basic amenities, such as water for hand-washing, are likely to try to flee as the situation deteriorates, according to the Refugees International report.

Once borders are closed, people may resort to dangerous unofficial routes.

"While a lot of those Venezuelans have rights... even before the virus they often couldn't access those rights," says Cone. She adds that border lockdowns risk a huge number of people congregating as they attempt to migrate.

In Bangladesh's cramped refugee camps, a major concern is that food supply lines could be cut off, according to Mabru Ahmed, co-director and co-founder of UK-based humanitarian organisation Restless Beings.

He says that an absence of information on the science behind decisions spreads anxiety among already vulnerable groups, a concern echoed by Refugees International, which highlights the restrictions on phone and internet access imposed by the Bangladesh government in September - causing rumours and false information to spread.

While Ahmed believes there is no "ready-made answer" for such complex situations around the world, he agrees that inclusivity should be the main goal. And he thinks that as travel and access for international organisations

are hampered, there is actually an opportunity for aid to forge closer links with local actors.

Inclusion essential

Others agree that inclusion is key. "For refugees and major host countries... there is a real threat that COVID-19 becomes an emergency on top of an emergency," says Matthew Saltmarsh, senior external relations officer at UNHCR in the UK. "To effectively combat any public health emergency, everyone should be able to access health facilities and services in a non-discriminatory manner."

Aurélie Ponthieu, an advisor on forced migration at Médecins Sans Frontières, adds: "It is clear that there will be no winning against this outbreak without inclusion of all populations in the response. Any form of discriminatory treatment of refugees and migrants or other vulnerable groups will be counterproductive and dangerous."

And while Cone agrees that it is not easy to balance the need for continued humanitarian aid with the risk of spreading coronavirus further, she says it is crucial to find ways to do this.

Counterfeit products on the rise through online retailers

By Guardian Reporter

ONLINE business in the country is said to experience several challenges including flooding of counterfeit products which not only erode consumer confidence but also create an uneven playing field for retailers.

In a recent interview with "The Guardian", operations manager of Libazon Tanzania—an online retailer, Daniel Gaudence said counterfeit products impose an artificial downward pressure on price.

According Gaudence, the other biggest challenges e-commerce is experiencing in Tanzania is overcoming the skepticism surrounding online transactions as both sellers and consumers are known to have lost money to unscrupulous individuals or businesses trading online.

He added: "The Fair Competition Commission (FCC) is addressing this challenge but a lot more still needs to be done to eradicate the problem or at least minimize the problem. The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) and of course the Tanzania police force had been commended for taking concrete steps to curb malpractices associated with mobile money transfers which are an important component in the success of e-commerce".

Another challenge that Libazon is taking head on, is accessing rural communities which are more often than not neglected in the conversation of e-commerce, he said.

He said Libazon Tanzania has launched its operations in the country with an ultimate goal to make online shopping or retailing reliable and reverse the negative stigma that is often associated with online businesses in the country. "Libazon Tanzania was established to make it possible for people to buy or sell online in an easy, convenient and secure way. Customers can shop from our catalogue of over 10 million products, including from local sellers," said Daniel Gaudence, firm's operations manager.

He asserted that the firm's 2020 strategic plans includes expanding the services to reach rural areas because they cannot easily access products and materials present in urban centers such as Dar es Salaam.

"Rural areas are in need of a service like ours. We have taken this into account and we are spearheading rural

market penetration as a key pillar of our 2020 strategic plan and we are therefore looking into the future with a lot of optimism" said Gaudence.

According to Gaudence, the company handles shipping and customs clearance for international products so the price at checkout is the price a customer pays. He said there are no additional shipping or customs charges.

"Customers can pay securely through mobile money, credit or debit card, bank transfer/deposit or by cash. Libazon also provides a "no questions asked" refund guarantee so that customers can shop online with peace of mind," Gaudence said in an interview with "The Guardian" recently.

He described the firm as a subsidiary company of Libazon Holdings of UK, which is an online platform, caters to sellers across the entire spectrum such as distributors, retailers, or individual sellers, allowing them to easily list new or used products.

He said the simplicity in the listing process means that any party can have online selling products on the platform within minutes.

"Our online platform is actually like a virtual market that allows businesses or individual sellers the possibility to reach out to more customers across Tanzania, without the need of investing in more shops, sales people or their own websites which is a big advantage to them. In addition, we provide to retailers other services such as payment collection, sales information, packaging and delivery and we arrange for returns if any," explained Daniel.

To make purchases through Libazon customers should go to its website under www.libazon.co.tz or through its App which can be downloaded from Play Store or APP Store.

In the recent past, e-commerce has gained prominence around the globe with sales last year reaching nearly \$4 trillion, with Amazon leading the pack. However, like in many other African countries, online shopping in Tanzania is still in its infancy stage.

Nonetheless, with a population of more than 50 million people, a growing middle class, increasing internet penetration and globalisation which has exposed people (especially the youth) to the western culture and products, the Tanzanian market offers huge potential to develop and popularize online shopping.

Ministry of Lands: Arrest bureaucracy

By Guardian Reporter

MARY Makondo, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, has called upon the ministry's workers across the country to end bureaucracy hence strive to offer better services to the people.

Speaking during training for land officers which was held in Dodoma, the PS called upon the officials to make sure those seeking services at their offices are assisted accordingly.

"Let's stop bureaucracy, our target should be to serve customers instead of threatening and disappointing them. You should also abide by the codes of ethics for civil servants as well as the country's laws and guidelines", she said.

The PS however called upon regional land commissioners to prioritise resolving land disputes since they are among the major challenges facing the sector.

Makondo directed land officers to speed up issuance of title deeds so that many Tanzanians own their land plots legally. She added that provision of title deeds would enable them to use the documents as collateral when accessing bank loans.

Chief government land valuer, Evelyn Mugisha said the training will go a long way into reducing land conflicts and improve service provision in the country.

Land conflicts have been a common

feature of economic livelihoods in Tanzania.

The conflicts have been on the increase and one among the causes for the increasing conflicts over land resources are due to human population.

Land-use conflict is not a new phenomenon in Tanzania with murders, the killing of livestock and the loss of property as a consequence of this conflicts feature in the news for many years now.

Various actors, including civil society organisations, have tried to address the farmer-pastoralist conflicts through mass education programmes, land-use planning, policy reforms and the development of community institutions.

The main other causes of the challenge have been nomadic farming and double allocation.



Let's stop bureaucracy, our target should be to serve customers instead of threatening and disappointing them. You should also abide by the codes of ethics for civil servants as well as the country's laws and guidelines



Saanane Island National Park tour guide Aloyce Mang'ee (L) welcomes students of Mwanza city's Paul Bomani Secondary School to a tour of the game sanctuary at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Sabuni

Put up strategies for increased participation of women in leadership - Speaker

By Guardian Reporter

DEPUTY Speaker of Zanzibar House of Representatives Mgeni Hassan Juma has appealed to political parties in the country to put in place and implement policies that will offer opportunities to women to contest leadership posts in the coming October elections.

Speaking in Zanzibar at the weekend,

Hassan said there are still big challenges in the political parties that do not give equal opportunities to their members who need to contest for leadership posts. She said even though the parties often foster such policies remain on papers only.

The deputy Speaker said the Special Seats positions for women is the opportunity for the women to fight

for membership in constituencies and not to remain idle believing they will not succeed. "In order to succeed we, women, must have aims before contesting so that we defeat our opponents," she said.

The CCM representative for Kiwengwa constituency Asha Abdallah Mussa said women who want to contest for leadership posts should conduct

research as well as instill physical influence among members within the decision making organs of the party.

She advised Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) in Zanzibar that when time comes it should mobilise women who believe they are acceptable in the society.

She however admitted that there is a big problem in Zanzibar especially

for many women failing to come out for fear of contesting against men in elections.

CHADEMA Women Organization in Zanzibar North Region Mwanamrsho Abama said there is a need of making amendments of the Political Parties Act to allocate elective seats for women in constituencies in addition to special seats posts.

Halima Ibrahim from ACT-Wazalendo said there is a need for women from their parties to make sure they become members of the panels that issue final decisions in the parties.

She said in many parties' sittings which make final decisions the number of women therein is very small and in case of a vote, these women fail to defend their fellow women.



Mohammed Mgat, a smallholder farmer at Magulilwa in Iringa District, sprays his maize field with a pesticide late last to get rid of fall armyworms. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya

Congo records second Ebola death in days - WHO

BENI

DEMOCRATIC Republic of Congo recorded a second Ebola death in days following more than seven weeks without a new case, the World Health Organization said on Sunday.

Congo had been due on Sunday to mark an end to the second-deadliest outbreak of the virus on record, until a case was confirmed on Friday in the eastern city of Beni.

The outbreak has killed more than 2,200 people since August 2018 in

an area of the country where militia violence hobbled efforts to contain it.

The latest victim was an 11-month-old girl, who was treated at the same health centre as the previous case, a 26-year-old electrician, said Boubacar Diallo, deputy incident manager for the WHO's Ebola response.

Officials say it is not yet clear how the electrician contracted Ebola. He had no known contacts with other Ebola patients and was not a survivor of the virus who could have relapsed, the government said on Friday.

Flare-ups or one-off transmissions are common towards the end of Ebola outbreaks, and a new case does not necessarily mean that the virus will spread out of control again.

Ebola causes fever, bleeding, vomiting and diarrhoea and spreads among humans through bodily fluids. During this outbreak it killed about two thirds of those it infected.

The WHO has identified 215 people who came into contact with the electrician, including 53 health workers at three facilities the man visited before

he died, Diallo said. All but one of the health workers had already been vaccinated, he said.

Two new vaccines have helped contain the virus, though public mistrust and militia attacks prevented health workers from reaching some hard-hit areas.

On Saturday, a group of angry young men threw stones at a team of WHO workers and Beni's deputy mayor as they attempted to decontaminate the electrician's home and trace his contacts, Diallo said.

COVID-19: Unity for survival in Africa

By Arlene J. Schar and Dr. David Leffler

Most of us are desperately seeking positive changes in our lives and yet we feel overwhelming powerlessness in terms of effecting these changes. And now we have the additional threat of a viral pandemic ripping apart the seams of our society. We ask: what can we do in these challenging times to restore sanity not only to our day to day living but to our political structures as well?

The answer to our current dilemma lies within us rather than outside of ourselves. Inner peace is the basis of outer peace. By going within, one gains clarity and is able to come up with positive solutions that work for everyone.

A proven way of utilizing this inner wisdom is through Transcendental Meditation. There is a powerful brain-based technology known as Invincible Defense Technology (IDT) in military circles. Militaries worldwide are beginning to use IDT as a ground-breaking and effective means to help solve supposedly insurmountable problems and create lasting peace.

IDT utilizes the non-religious Transcendental Meditation (TM) program and its advanced techniques. Hundreds of independent research studies on TM have found major increases in calmness, clarity of mind, happiness, creativity, and energy. This evidence-based approach is highly effective for stress-related conditions, brain function, and cardiovascular health.

In particular, the more advanced TM-Sidhi program is akin to using a laser instead of ordinary light; the effects are far more powerful. Scientific research has demonstrated over and over that this advanced IDT practice raises the consciousness of all those within its field. Positive solutions to ongoing problems occur naturally and society more readily shifts from division to unity.

How can this be? While it seems too simple to be true, sometimes the simplest approach is the most effective. Consider: IDT was utilized

in Washington D.C. over a two-month period in the summer of 1993, where 4000 meditators gathered for an experiment to lower crime. The result, as documented by an independent board of criminologists, was a 24 percent reduction in criminal violence. This profound reduction in social stress also influenced the public approval of the US president, which suddenly changed from a negative trend to a positive trend, as predicted.

A global experiment to assess the influence of the advanced practices of advanced TM on world trends was conducted December 1983 for three weeks. While a group of over 7,000 TM experts assembled in Fairfield, Iowa: international conflict decreased 32%, terrorist casualties decreased 72%, and infectious disease rates fell by 33% in US and Australia.*

A study published in May 2019 in Studies in Asian Social Science, found that IDT implementation by students trained in advanced TM resulted in a 96% decline in sociopolitical violence in war-torn Cambodia as compared to violence in the preceding three years.

Extensive peer-reviewed scientific research repeatedly confirms that large groups of TM experts meditating in unison twice a day generate a powerful field effect which affects the surrounding population by raising the collective consciousness of all within its field. This results in measurable decreases in war deaths, terrorism, and crime.

For those who remain skeptical, we recommend the following book: An Antidote to Violence: Evaluating the Evidence, by Barry Spivack and Patricia Anne Saunders which details in depth the scientific research supporting this approach.

COVID19 may be an opportunity for Africa to re-evaluate its approach to societal issues and try something new. Africa has no time to lose: as the Coronavirus impacts its citizens and its economy during this stressful time, Africa needs to come up with immediate and effective solutions to this virus and societal issues in general before it is too late.

Africa cannot go back to 'business as usual' when COVID-19 pandemic is over

By Babatunde Omilola

LIKE every other pandemic that the world has experienced in the past, coronavirus will eventually come to an end. It will be defeated, and life will return to normal. But it will teach us an important lesson: the need to invest in health infrastructure across the world, and particularly in Africa.

For centuries, global and national agendas have given premium to wealth creation and less attention to healthcare. Indeed, the pursuit of wealth has even come at the expense of the environment. Budgetary allocations for health have been woefully inadequate compared to other sectors.

Just imagine this: if what we are experiencing today was a virus that attacked machines and not human beings, normal life would go on - handshakes, kisses and hugs would still symbolise friendship, love and comfort and not the threat of infection. From now on, we must prioritise human health collectively, not individually.

Globally, as of April 6, 2020, there have been 1,174,866 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 64,541 deaths, reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

We may not have reached the apex of this pandemic, and what we have seen so far from other countries suggests that Africa is a ticking time-bomb.

If advanced economies like Italy, Spain, the United States and France are struggling to contain the wrath of this pandemic, then it has a devastating potential in poor countries like Uganda, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Senegal, where lifestyle, beliefs, culture and economic conditions offer fertile grounds for disease to thrive.

One would have thought that the Ebola outbreak, which began in 2014, would have opened the eyes of key stakeholders in Africa to consider the strengthening of health systems as a key priority. But this has not been the case.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic, fear and panic prompted some African governments to pay attention to the shoring up of their health systems. Yet, when the grip of the epidemic loosened, 'business as usual' continued.

Africa cannot afford to go back to business as usual when the COVID-19 pandemic is finally halted. Such an attitude would be akin to settling down to sleep while our roof is on fire.

There are too many health issues to be fixed - from an inadequate number of healthcare professionals to a lack of health infrastructure.

At present, Africa is home to more than 1.3 billion people and bears one-third of the global disease burden - yet it accounts for only 3 per cent of the global health workforce.

The average physician density in sub-Saharan Africa stands at two doctors per 10,000 people. This ranges from 0.6 in Burkina Faso to nine doctors in South Africa.

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, has a physician density of three doctors to 10,000 people. Ethiopia has just one doctor per 10,000 people, even though it has the second largest population on the continent.

In contrast, Italy, France and Spain, where COVID-19 is taking its heaviest toll, have physician densities of 40.9, 40.6 and 32.3 doctors per 10,000 people, respectively.

There is also a huge health infrastructure gap. An assessment by the WHO regarding the status of health infrastructure across the continent revealed woefully inadequate physical health infrastructure. Dispensaries and health centres are limited in supply.

The shortage of these facilities makes access to primary healthcare a challenge to most rural residents. For instance, total hospital density per 100,000 people across the continent ranges from 0.06 to 0.17.

The number of hospital beds, including intensive care unit (ICU) beds, is limited. South Africa, even with its advanced public health systems, has fewer than 1,000 ICU beds. In Malawi, 17 million people rely on only 25 ICU beds. Countries like Zimbabwe and Liberia have none.

Laboratory capacity in most African countries is equally bereft of modern facilities. The emergency medical systems across many countries in Africa can only deal with a fraction of those needing care.

In some deprived communities in Burkina Faso, women requiring emergency care are sometimes transported on bicycles to health centres. Similar conditions can also be found in Chad, Central African Republic, northern Ghana and some rural parts of Nigeria.

At the moment, the United States is battling with a limited supply of ventilators for COVID-19 patients. In Africa, very few countries can talk of having even 100 ventilators. There is an urgent need, therefore, to pay attention to the strengthening of health systems in Africa.

Investing in quality health infrastructure makes sense from both economic and social perspectives. Indeed, there is ample evidence that investments in health infrastructure create an avenue for resilient societies and drive inclusive growth.

Development partners have a role to play. They can prevent the collapse of health systems in Africa by establishing special funding schemes to support the health expenditures of African countries.

These must, however, be targeted and well defined. The support should seek to avoid overstressing existing health infrastructure while strengthening human resource capacity.

The starting point should be investments in digital health tools. Breakthrough innovations such as telemedicine, mHealth and drones are transforming healthcare in advanced countries, while, meanwhile, their adoption in Africa have been rather slow.

Supporting the scaling up of these technologies in Africa could help governments deal effectively with epidemics and the growing burden of chronic diseases.

Supporting the construction of health posts, the purchasing of personal protective equipment and equipping medical centres with modern facilities can follow.

There is no time to waste: while finding ways to battle the current pandemic may be daunting, it also presents an opportunity to focus on the strengthening of Africa's health systems by adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach based on each country's individual needs.

Let us not go back to business as usual after this pandemic.

Babatunde Omilola is the Manager for Public Health, Security and Nutrition Division at the African Development Bank, and filed this dispatch from the bank's headquarters in Abidjan.



Arumeru district commissioner Jerry Muro washes his hands with a sanitiser just outside his office yesterday. Photo: Woinde Shizza

Stay, worship at home, clerics tell congregants

By Guardian Reporter

AFRICAN and Indian faith leaders have encouraged congregants to imbibe a culture of worshiping at home through TV and radio live broadcasting services to avoid crowds during coronavirus pandemic.

They made call over the weekend when speaking during the special online webinar on the important role of faith leader in Africa and India in responding to Covid-19.

The online forum dubbed: "Proactive Faith Leadership in Times of Crisis in Africa & India" was hosted by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, in partnership with UNICEF Tanzania.

Dr Charles Kitima, Secretary General, Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) said: "As Catholic Church, we've a national wide radio - Radio Maria and TV station. So, we're encouraging our members to use those media outlets and listen and watch live sermons."

He said faith leaders are positioned to reach a lot of individuals, and keeping their congregations safe and healthy ensures they are ready to respond to the pandemic.

According to him, home worshiping has now a new way to hold on to faith - even if it's not within the physical church walls.

He also said that faith leaders have the responsibility to educate people on how to get out of the disease, noting that many countries have adopted a number of measures including lockdown, which for developing countries like Tanzania isn't

possible.

"Our societies are different from that of developed world. Our people are hand-to-mouth. So people need to go out and work to get something to bring bread on their tables. That's why we're encouraging people to adhere to the recommendations made by health experts and World Health Organisation (WHO)," Dr Kitima said.

Catholic Church, according to Kitima, has reduced time and number of services, because of the pandemic, which has so far killed more than 100,000 people and infected at least 1.69 million worldwide.

Dr Frederick Shoo, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) said that every religious leader has a big role to encourage members to educate them on what they need to take to contain the spread of pandemic.

"We've the moral responsibility to ensure that the disease is not spreading of this disease," he said, adding: "We try to make the people aware that it's everyone's moral responsibility to slow down or stop the spread of the virus," he said.

"Our role is to remind everybody on the importance of adhering to various recommendations made by health experts such as hand washing, using sanitisers, and physical distancing."

Dr Shoo also vowed that faith leaders will continue providing counseling to people, who stay home by using different media platforms at this critical time.

According to him, religious leaders have a big role to play in protecting people against the pandemic as more people

believe them in almost everything.

Rev. Canon Moses Matonya, secretary general, Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) described physical distancing as one of the important tool when it comes towards addressing the pandemic and "as clerics this is serious message we're taking to make people free the silent killer disease."

"We're organizing joint prayers on April 16, this year...to pray to God to phase-out the pandemic. Our role is to ensure that members stay far from one another to at least two meters. To us, this will help to address the pandemic. Every time in churches people are informed on the need to ensure their children stay home all the time. Washing hands all the time and sanitize"

Archbishop Dr Maimbo Mndolwa: Primate of Tanzania; Bishop of Tanga said: "We're working closely with the government and other players to contain the disease. As religious leader, we believe that working together is a solution to the challenge."

Archbishop Dr Thabo Makgoba, South African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town called on faith leaders to encourage their adherents to stay home, use different media outlets to get biblical messages.

"It's high time for faith leaders to propagate innovative ways to make people safe from Covid-19; and at the same time get spiritual services.

Archbishop Makgoba cited solidarity as one of the solutions towards addressing the pandemic. "I commit to pray like I never played before for this pandemic;

discouraging stigma for people who have contracted the virus."

James Elder - Chief of Communications, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF suggested the need for parents to ensure that children remain at home at this time when the world is grappling with the pandemic.

He said that parents and guardians should talk to their children to know whether they actually understand the pandemic. "Parents should tell children on the dangers of the virus and what needs to be done including hand-washing, social distancing and other related measures in place."

Commenting on areas where there is scarcity of food and water, Elder urged parents to encourage their children to eat first because they are more in need of building their immunity.

He also encouraged parents to ensure are protected from the disease - at this time when African health system is overwhelmed/stretched with the spread of Covid-19.

Puja Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Muniji, president, Parmarth Niketan; Co-Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) stressed the need for people to take precautionary measures against the pandemic. He encouraged clerics in Tanzania and Africa safe from Covid-19; to encourage people to stay home during this critical time

The online meeting was moderated by Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswati, Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance; President, Divine Shakti Foundation.



Morogoro municipal engineer Archard Ruhangisa (R) pictured at the weekend instructing a contractor overseeing the construction of a 600m/- business centre under a project funded by local governments. Photo: Correspondent Michael Sikapundwa

Empowering women can help end poverty in Africa

FOR far too long, women and girls in Africa have faced discrimination and inequalities in the workforce which have not only hurt them, but their families, communities and their countries as a whole. One thing is clear: we will not reduce poverty without working to achieve gender equality.

While most governments in Africa acknowledge that empowering women and girls is a key contributor to economic development, the fertility transition in Africa, an important factor in sustained economic growth, has been much slower than in other regions of the world.

Access to family planning and maternal health services as well as education for girls typically results in improved economic opportunity for women and lower fertility. Some governments in Africa are seeking innovative ways to accelerate the demographic transition.

African women had reason to expect change following a much-heralded global conference that set ambitious targets to transform the lives of women across the world which marked the 10th anniversary of that milestone event, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, African women are taking stock of progress and asking to what extent promised reforms have been implemented. They are also examining why progress has been limited in many countries and are seeking ways to overcome the obstacles.

There have been moves to implement the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). In Africa specifically, women have made significant strides in the political arena over the past few years. The continental political body, the African Union (AU), took a major step by promoting gender parity in its top

decision-making positions.

We are all aware that despite achievements and progress made, African women face major challenges and obstacles. Primary development policies in many countries, known as poverty reduction strategies, still do not take into account differences in income and power between men and women, hampering efforts to finance programmes that reduce inequality. The majority of African women are still denied education and employment, and have limited opportunities in trade, industry and government.

A UN Food and Agricultural Organisation study on Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe shows that women rarely own land. When they do, their holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than those of men. Studies also show that if women farmers had the same access to inputs and training as males, overall yields could be raised by between 10 and 20 per cent.

But perhaps the most inhibiting factor is that women in Africa continue to be denied an education, often the only ticket out of poverty. Disparities between girls and boys start in primary school and the differences widen up through the entire educational system. In total enrolment in primary education, Africa registered the highest relative increase among regions during the last decade. But given the low proportion of girls being enrolled, the continent is still far from the goal of attaining intake parity by the end of this year. By 2000, sub-Saharan Africa was the region with the most girls out of school, 23 million, up from 20 million a decade earlier.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that girls' enrolments rise relative to boys as the proportion of female teachers increases.

Quality health care is a human right and surely not a privilege

HEALTHCARE quality is a level of value provided by any health care resource, as determined by some measurement. As with quality in other fields, it is an assessment of whether something is good enough and whether it is suitable for its purpose.

The goal of healthcare is to provide medical resources of high quality to all who need them; that is, to ensure good quality of life, cure illnesses when possible, to extend life expectancy, and so on. Researchers use a variety of quality measures to attempt to determine healthcare quality, including counts of a therapy's reduction or lessening of diseases identified by medical diagnosis, a decrease in the number of risk factors which people have following preventive care, or a survey of health indicators in a population who are accessing certain kinds of care.

Healthcare quality is the degree to which health care services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes. Quality of care plays an important role in describing the iron triangle of health care, which defines the intricate relationships between quality, cost, and accessibility of health care within a community. Researchers measure health care quality to identify problems caused by overuse, underuse, or misuse of health resources.

While essential for determining the effect of health services research interventions, measuring quality of care poses some challenges due to the limited number of outcomes that are measurable. Structural measures describe the providers' ability to provide high quality care, process measures describe the actions taken to maintain or improve community health, and outcome measures

describe the impact of a health care intervention. Furthermore, due to strict regulations placed on health services research, data sources are not always complete.

Assessment of health care quality may occur on two different levels: that of the individual patient and that of populations. At the level of the individual patient, or micro-level, assessment focuses on services at the point of delivery and its subsequent effects. At the population level, or macro-level, assessments of health care quality include indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rates, incidence, and prevalence of certain health conditions.

Quality assessments measure these indicators against an established standard. The measures can be difficult to define in health care. Quality assurance is distinct from quality assessment and is based on the principles of total quality management (TQM). It is a method of using quality assessment measures in a system-wide manner to deliver high-quality care that is continually improving.

The multi-layered crisis of the coronavirus epidemic has been a dramatic shock to everyone. But, to communities affected by HIV and AIDS, the crisis has not only brought a further shock to already vulnerable people, it has brought other reactions too - a troubling sense of déjà vu, and a passionate, empathetic, fierce solidarity with all those affected by Coronavirus.

No two pandemics are the same. All require a specific, tailored, response. But we also have a duty, when dangerous, unjust and unsustainable structural weaknesses are exposed by one pandemic, left unresolved, and then jeopardize the fight against a second pandemic, to ensure that we don't wait for the third.

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COVID-19 adds urgency to trans fat elimination

By Olakunle Atoyebi

APRIL 7 was World Health Day, and as we celebrate nurses and other health professionals for keeping us healthy, let's remember, now more than ever, we must play our part, too, and do all within our power to keep critical healthcare workers safe.

The best way to do so is by staying healthy ourselves.

Health workers here at home and across the globe serve as our first line of defence against diseases and other health threats like the novel coronavirus, which continues to spread in Nigeria.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to plain sight the burden these caregivers carry as they work to ensure the rest of us enjoy good health.

People of all ages can be infected by

the new coronavirus. But people with pre-existing conditions appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Those with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, as well as diabetes and cancer, are at particular risk.

Nigerians with pre-existing conditions should follow medical advice, quit smoking, avoid alcohol and drugs, and pursue a healthy lifestyle. A key component of a healthy lifestyle is a healthy diet. One harmful food component to avoid is trans fat.

Trans fat occurs naturally in small, safe quantities in milk and meats, but it is added in unhealthy quantities to many cooking oils that are used in packaged, processed and fried foods.

Consumption lowers good cholesterol, raises bad cholesterol, and increases the risk of coronary heart

disease, Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other cognitive diseases. Trans fat consumption is estimated to have killed more than 500,000 people in a year, including 1,261 Nigerians.

The World Health Organisation has called for the elimination of industrially produced trans fat from the global food supply by 2023. The spread of COVID-19 lends new urgency to this call.

Almost 17 years ago, Denmark became the first country to lower the amount of trans fat in food to a level that is not expected to be harmful. Last year, the European Union took similar steps, and dozens of countries have done the same, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil and South Africa.

Now more than ever, Nigerians are at risk of suffering severe health problems due to trans fat consumption - and they are largely flying blind: Food labels

currently are not required to show trans fat content. Lockdowns in Lagos and other cities are curtailing access to food for millions of Nigerians; the rise of junk food also increases the risk of exposure to trans fat.

Nigerian leaders have taken note, and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) is working on regulations to keep Nigerians safe from toxic trans fat.

It is vital for NAFDAC to finalize and implement these regulations expeditiously, in accordance with international best practices endorsed by the World Health Organisation.

Swift and strong trans fat regulations will be a gift to every Nigerian. They will also help to safeguard our fragile health system, and keep our beloved health workers safe. That's not only the right thing to do: We owe it to them - today, and every day.

Another big lesson Covid-19 has taught us: Science matters

By David Glassom

THE Covid-19 pandemic gives us all the opportunity to become more scientifically literate, to learn to filter fact from fiction, to trust rigorous science instead of celebrities, snake-oil salesmen, politicians or corporate advocates promoting vested interests.

The coronavirus is playing havoc with economies and societies the world over. Its full cost will not be known for months or years to come, and possibly not even then. However, there are also opportunities to be grasped. They are not opportunities which we welcome, nor will they compensate us for the impacts of the pandemic, but we should grasp them nonetheless.

Many of the opportunities will arise in the scientific field, for this pandemic is a giant, uncontrolled experiment. Virologists and epidemiologists are studying the virus and the way it spreads. Medical experts may learn about the human immune response to new pathogens. Research on vaccines and treatments is proceeding at an almost unprecedented pace. New tests are being developed for the virus and whole factories and production lines are being refitted to produce vital equipment. Beyond the immediate impacts of the pandemic, climate scientists will gather data on changes resulting from the drop in pollution and CO2 emissions.

Yet, a more profound lesson may be learned from this pandemic. For some years there has been a growing tendency to disregard the opinions of scientists in favour of political expedience or so-called "alternative" forms of knowledge. Examples abound - from climate change denial, to the crowds of people who turn to celebrity websites for health advice.

Global biodiversity and entire ecosystems, such as coral reefs, are

threatened by governments' refusal to heed scientific advice. In the run-up to an election in the UK in 2016, a member of the Conservative Party even opined that people had "had enough of experts".

The reasons for this trend are manifold and include deliberate disinformation strategies by some industries, politicians who would rather pander to their electorate than make hard choices, conspiracy theorists and simple ignorance, combined with the inability to tell truth from misinformation.

Pharmacies line up unproven remedies and supplements alongside tried and tested medicines while the media commonly mixes science-based stories with celebrity advice. There is rarely a consistent message that scientific evidence is more than "just another opinion". Years of the conflation of scientific evidence with an untested opinion have made it more and more difficult to distinguish fact from fallacy.

This has been brought into focus with the proliferation of coronavirus-related messages, many of which are false, from a variety of sources. Often these messages mix misinformation with some facts, making it even more difficult to separate one from the other. In some cases, such misinformation is deeply harmful, if not outright dangerous.

There have been reports, for example, of arsonists burning cellphone towers due to a rumour linking the spread of the virus to 5G technology and of deaths caused by people trying to self-medicate with chloroquine phosphate. Arguably, the global lack of preparedness for this pandemic is partly attributable to an anti-science narrative propounded by political leaders in the past several years.

The "anti-vax" movement is a prominent part of this narrative. While a

debate about the safety of vaccination is as old as vaccines themselves, vaccines have managed to eliminate smallpox completely and polio might have gone the way of smallpox by now, if not for resistance to being vaccinated in a few countries. However, the movement has been renewed by the false controversy over the MMR vaccine, exponents of which claim that it is associated with bowel disease and autism. Although this idea has been repeatedly disproved and the doctor who first advocated it has been struck from the register in Britain and despite the deaths of thousands of people - the vast majority of whom are unvaccinated - from measles each year, the anti-vax movement has persisted.

All this must surely change with the outbreak of Covid-19. Now we see what a highly transmissible virus can do in the absence of a vaccine or other effective treatment. Little is heard now of how people are sick of experts, of the dangers of vaccines causing autism, or of alternative remedies providing answers to the pandemic.

Instead, people are learning about enveloped vs naked viruses, the distance that the virus can be transported in droplets, how long it can last on different surfaces, why soap and water are more effective against coronavirus than alcohol-based sanitiser and the difference between PCR and antibody tests for the virus. Epidemiology is a common topic of conversation.

It is difficult to remember a time when so much conversation centred on a single, science-based topic. Moreover, it is largely recognised that scientific knowledge and advice is the key to solving the problem. Governments that have been quickest to heed this advice have been most successful in containing the virus. The focus on developing vaccines and effective antiviral treatments is further evidence of our

reliance on science.

Of course, there are always exceptions. A leader of the Zionist church was quoted as saying, "This Covid-19 is Satan who is attempting to stop Christians from going to praise God as we wish," while the Zimbabwean defence minister reportedly ascribed the pandemic to God taking revenge on the West.

The attempts by two prominent world leaders, in the UK and the US, to circumvent scientific consensus, in one case by claiming the threat was exaggerated as a political ploy, along with a "hunch" that the mortality would be much lower than WHO projections, and in the other by trying to institute a policy of "herd immunity by mass infection" were strongly resisted and soon failed. Fortunately, such views seem to be vastly outnumbered by those who recognise the validity of a scientific opinion.

The question now is what will happen after the lockdowns have ended and Covid-19 has been brought under control? Will this new consciousness survive, or will we see a return to the recent anti-scientific propaganda? Will evidence-based views hold sway or will industry lobbyists still be given equal credence to career scientists?

I hope a lesson will be learned from this - that in an age of climate change, mass extinction, new diseases and other emergent threats to health and society, science matters. It is undoubtedly the best method we have of producing new knowledge and improving peoples' lives. Science does not always have quick solutions to our problems, nor is it always right. But we should bear in mind the words of Carl Sagan: "Science is not perfect. It is often misused; it is only a tool, but it's the best tool we have. Self-correcting, ever-changing, applicable to everything. With this tool, we vanquish the impossible."

The United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC) promotes global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations.

The coronavirus pandemic presents an opportunity for the human family to act in solidarity and turn this crisis into an impetus to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

"The United Nations - and our global network of country offices - will support all Governments to ensure that the global economy and the people we serve emerge stronger from this crisis," said Secretary-General António Guterres in his recent statement, expressing his firm determination to prevent the crisis from derailing sustainable development efforts while laying out a vision for the affected to build back better.

Here are some examples of how the United Nations is fighting back against the threat of the COVID-19:

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

The World Health Organization (WHO) is leading the global fight against COVID-19. While WHO medical experts supporting Government responses, the health agency today announced the launch of the "Pass the message to kick out coronavirus" campaign by teaming up with FIFA, the international governing body of football. At today's press briefing, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that more than 300,000 cases of COVID-19 have now been reported to WHO from

UN working to fight COVID-19 and achieve global goals



almost every country in the world. It took 67 days from the first reported case to reach the first 100,000 cases, 11 days for the second 100,000 cases and just 4 days for the third 100,000 cases. "You can't win a football game only by defending," he said. "To win, we need to attack the virus with aggressive and targeted tactics - testing every suspected case, isolating and caring for every confirmed case, and tracing and quarantining every close contact."

Goal 4: Quality Education

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), roughly 1.25 billion learners, or 72.9 per cent of total enrolled learners, worldwide have been affected by the coronavirus outbreak as of 20 March. "In this crisis, which

is first and foremost a public health crisis, our thoughts are of course with the sick and all those who are suffering today and struggling against the coronavirus," says UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, adding that "We must, however, remain mobilized, because this crisis also tells us several things that are very dear to UNESCO's mission." UNESCO is supporting Governments for distance learning, scientific cooperation, and information support.

Goal 5: Gender Equality

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has issued a checklist for COVID-19 response that includes 10 asks for Governments. Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér says that

women carry countries' well-being on their shoulders and that right now, they are working day and night holding societies together, through health care, maternal care, elderly care, online teaching, child care, in pharmacies, in grocery stores and as social workers. It is UN Women's job to support Governments in upholding the rights of women and girls. "This is no less, and perhaps even more true, in times of crisis," she said.

"The United Nations - and our global network of country offices - will support all Governments to ensure that the global economy and the people we serve emerge stronger from this crisis"

Goal 6: Water and Sanitation

One of the most effective ways to slow down transmission is to

wash or sanitize hands. However, globally three billion people do not have access to even basic hand washing facilities at home. Lack of access to clean water affects vulnerability to disease and ill health. It is for this reason that UN-Water members and partners are committing to the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, which will unify the international community and deliver fast results in countries at an increased scale as part of the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Almost 25 million people could lose their jobs due to a coronavirus-induced economic and labour crisis, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has

projected. In her blog, ILO Senior Economist Janine Berg warned that people in informal employment would not have social protection they need in times of crisis. She noted that the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) said that countries should guarantee at least a basic level of social security to all, and progressively ensure adequate levels of protection to as many people as possible, as soon as possible. "In light of the COVID-19 crisis, now is a good time to heed this advice and restructure and rebuild the systems we have in place," she emphasized.

Goal 10: Reduce Inequalities

In crises, the most vulnerable, including women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalized and the displaced, pay the highest price. At a press briefing today, the Secretary-General said that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration have been working hard to have a plan, working with the host countries to prevent the arrival of the virus in refugee camps or in settlements. He appealed for the international community to fully support those measures, which will be included in a \$2 billion humanitarian appeal that the United Nations will launch on Wednesday.

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in his latest

statement on COVID-19, expressed a concern that measures adopted by some countries that could block altogether the right to seek asylum. All states must manage their borders in the context of this unique crisis as they see fit. But these measures should not result in closure of avenues to asylum, or of forcing people to return to situations of danger. If health risks are identified, screening arrangements can be put in place, together with testing, quarantine and other measures. These will enable authorities to manage the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees in a safe manner, while respecting international refugee protection standards designed to save lives, he said.

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

This goal is about finding ways to make sure everyone lives in a peaceful society. The Secretary-General today made an urgent appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world and for a united international effort to combat the pandemic ravaging the world. "The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war," he said at a virtual press conference. "It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives."

Goal 17: Partnerships

To make all the goals a reality will require the participation of everyone, including Governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and people around the world. The fight against COVID-19 is no exception.

The search for safe and effective treatment of covid-19: A look at Ivermectin

By Victor Bhoroma
Dr. Edward o. Amporfol

I saw something very interesting recently in relation to the treatment of COVID-19 (SAR-CoV-2). It is Ivermectin, a drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of parasitic infections. Ivermectin is a semisynthetic derivative of avermectin BI and consists of an 80:20 mixture of the equipotent homologous 22.23 dehydro BIa and BIb.

This is an antiparasitic agent, developed by Merck & Co., and frequently used in veterinary medicine, due to its broad spectrum of activity, high efficacy and wide margin of safety. The first formulation destined to humans was launched in 1987, when Merck Laboratories had enough data to register ivermectin for use against onchocerciasis. The company announced that the drug would be provided at no cost to treat onchocerciasis, anywhere in the world, for as long as it was needed. Yes, I saw this early in my practice and many colleagues were highly appreciative of Merck & Co for the intervention.

To control onchocerciasis, the Onchocerciasis Control Programme in West Africa was launched in 1974. The main goal of this program was to interrupt the parasite transmission cycle. Since 1987, the use of ivermectin in combination with aerial larviciding has had a remarkable impact on the transmission of the disease and greatly reduced the effect on humans. This led to the development, in 1992, of the Onchocerciasis Elimination



Programme in the Americas, launched in 6 countries and, in 1995, of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control, both based mainly on distribution and treatment with ivermectin. In 1998, the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis, based on the regular mass administration of albendazole with either ivermectin or diethylcarbamazine, was initiated, confirming the safety and efficacy of the drug combinations.

There is an intense search by the scientific community for an effective and safe treatment of COVID-19. As a result, old molecules with proven antiviral activity are being tried. In a News Release in EurekAlert on 3rd

April 2020 by Monash University, a collaborative study led by Monash University's Biomedicine Discovery Institute (BDI) in Melbourne, Australia, with the Peter Doherty Institute of Infection and Immunity (Doherty Institute), has shown that an anti-parasitic drug, Ivermectin, already available around the world kills COVID-19 within 48 hours. The Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute's Dr Kylie Wagstaff, a member of the study, said the scientists showed that the drug, Ivermectin, stopped the SARS-CoV-2 virus growing in cell culture within 48 hours. Even a single dose could essentially remove all viral RNA by 48 hours and that even at 24 hours there was a really sig-

nificant reduction in the viral RNA.

Ivermectin is an FDA-approved anti-parasitic drug that has also been shown to be effective in vitro against a broad range of viruses including HIV, Dengue, Influenza and Zika virus. The caution here is that the tests conducted in the study were in vitro and that trials needed to be carried out in people. There is the need to determine dosing regimen, for example, in humans. The author adds that in a time of a global pandemic and with no approved if there is a compound already available around the world, then that it might help people sooner. He adds that realistically it is going to be a while before a vaccine is broadly available.

The mechanism of action of Ivermectin is likely, based on its action in other viruses, that it works to stop the virus 'dampening down' the host cells' ability to clear it. Dr Leon Caly of the Royal Melbourne Hospital and a Senior Medical Scientist at the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) at the Doherty Institute where the experiments with live coronavirus were conducted, is the study's first author. He is a virologist who was part of the team to first isolate and share SARS-CoV-2 outside of China in January 2020. He is excited about the prospect of Ivermectin being used as a potential drug against COVID-19. It seems the scientific community maybe

onto something significant with Ivermectin, because Dr Wagstaff herself made a previous breakthrough finding on Ivermectin in 2012 when she identified the drug and its antiviral activity with Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute's Professor David Jans, also an author on this paper on its effect against COVID-19. Professor Jans and his team have been researching Ivermectin for more than 10 years with different viruses. The team started investigating whether it worked on the SARS-CoV-2 virus as soon as the pandemic was known to have started.

The abstract to this study captures the mood of the scientific community on the search for treatment for COVID-19. Although several clinical trials are now underway to test possible therapies, the worldwide response to the COVID-19 outbreak has been largely limited to monitoring and containment. The preliminary report is that Ivermectin, an FDA-approved anti-parasitic previously shown to have broad-spectrum anti-viral activity in vitro, is an inhibitor of the causative virus (SARS-CoV-2), with a single addition to Vero-hSLAM cells 2 hours post infection with SARS-CoV-2 able to effect about 5000-fold reduction in viral RNA at 48 h. Ivermectin therefore warrants further investigation for possible benefits in humans.

Ivermectin is an FDA-approved broad spectrum anti-parasitic agent HYPERLINK "https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166354220302011" | "bibli" 1 that in recent years,

along with other groups, have shown to have antiviral activity against a broad range of viruses in vitro. Importantly, Ivermectin, has been demonstrated to limit infection by RNA viruses such as DENV 1-4, West Nile Virus, Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus (VEEV) and influenza. Ivermectin has similarly been shown to be effective against the DNA virus pseudorabies virus (PRV) both in vitro and in vivo. Finally, ivermectin was the focus of a phase III clinical trial in Thailand in 2014-2017, against DENV infection, in which a single daily oral dose was observed to be safe and resulted in a significant reduction in serum levels of viral NS1 protein.

The causative agent of the current COVID-19 pandemic, SARS-CoV-2, is a single stranded positive sense RNA virus that is closely related to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV). Ultimately, development of an effective anti-viral for SARS-CoV-2, if given to patients early in infection, could help to limit the viral load, prevent severe disease progression and limit person-person transmission. Benchmarking testing of ivermectin against other potential antivirals for SARS-CoV-2 with alternative mechanisms of action would thus be important as soon as practicable.

The use of Ivermectin to combat COVID-19 would depend on the results of further pre-clinical testing and ultimately clinical trials. I would not be surprised if Merck & Co offers to the global community for free again in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Roy Ilegbodu

Human coronaviruses, first characterised in the 1960s, are responsible for a substantial proportion of upper respiratory tract infections. Since 2003, at least seven new human coronaviruses have been identified, including the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) coronavirus, which caused significant morbidity and mortality. 229E, NL63, OC43 and HKU1 represent a group of identified group I coronaviruses that people around the world commonly get infected with.

These common human coronaviruses have long been identified and associated with both upper and lower respiratory tract disease. MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV are relatively new human coronaviruses, representing a group of identified group II coronaviruses which evolved from animals and have also been associated with both upper and lower respiratory tract disease. The SARS epidemic put the animal coronaviruses in the spotlight.

On 31 December 2019, a pneumonia outbreak in China, which was first noticed earlier in December 2019, was traced to a new strain of coronavirus. This new strain was given the interim name 2019-nCoV by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and later renamed SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.

This, now popular strain,



has been identified as a strain of coronavirus from group II with approximately 70 per cent genetic similarity to the SARS-CoV. As of 28 March 2020, there have been no less than 28,000 confirmed deaths and 600,000 confirmed cases of infection in the coronavirus pneumonia pandemic. As the days roll by and testing is intensified, these figures continue to climb, sometimes exponentially, indicating a present acceleration in the transmission of the virus.

While China has been accused of

complicity in withholding crucial data on the outbreak of COVID-19, the World Health Organisation also failed in its duty to adequately educate the world on the history and nature of coronaviruses in their initial report on the outbreak.

These two factors have contributed in no small way to the widespread transmission of the COVID-19 disease. The data available as of today suggests that at least 165,000 people were infected by the virus in China alone.

The resultant effect of this is that

many more people have been infected, over the months, by the virus than is currently being revealed through testing. Apart from this, judging by the lifecycle of the virus, it is instructive to assume that an equally large number of those infected by the virus would have had their infections resolved without even realising that they were afflicted by this particular virus.

Added to this is that many people seem to simply carry this virus without showing any signs or symptoms. If this is the case, then,

unless every single person is subjected to testing, the world is confronted with a colossal challenge in attempting to break the cycles of transmission. The foregoing likely accounts for why most of the forecasts made by countries and scientists have failed to be close to accurate to date.

One thing that clearly stands out is that, scientists need to urgently come up with a new algorithm that

employs some more radical assumptions to help determine the best approach to dealing with this ongoing pandemic.

What makes the present outbreak appear particularly bad, is the fact that it has touched all parts of the globe. Countries that prior to now, seemed less susceptible to communicable diseases, now find themselves in the forefront of the outbreaks. In spite of this, the reality is that the fatality numbers actually pale in comparison to what is witnessed in parts of Africa from other diseases, on an ongoing basis.

Africa has long been at the receiving end of the scourge of communicable diseases, with millions of lives lost annually without an end in sight. To briefly put things in context, before the advent of COVID-19, over 900,000 die in Africa every year, or 2,500 every day from lower respiratory tract infections which include those caused by other strains of coronaviruses. These already huge numbers do not include the over 4,000,000 people that die in Africa every year from Malaria, Tuberculosis, Diarrhea and other communicable diseases.

If the rest of the world had genuinely paid attention to these huge numbers that have been coming out of Africa over the years, enough would have been learnt on how to effectively manage such outbreaks and avoid

the uncertainty, panic and significant economic disruptions generated by this present outbreak.

The current developments suggest that the coronaviruses identified in human infections and responsible for causing respiratory disease are heterogeneous and quite widely distributed.

This clearly implies that additional human coronavirus strains will be discovered in the near future and stresses the need for more intense investigation into the virology and etiology of these and indeed other infectious organisms. Without any specific solutions in sight, if future strains of these viruses of even other pathogens have the potential to wipe out humanity, then we should all start counting our days.

With the full impact of this outbreak on global economies yet to be reconciled, the unfolding events provide the rare opportunity for world leaders to refocus their thinking, and allocate a much larger share of capital expenditure to global health concerns. High-income countries should take the cue and lead the battle by deploying appropriate and adequate technology and systems across the world, for collecting information on causes of death, with the ultimate goal of implementing a global strategy for improving the production of high quality cause-of-death data, enhancing research, improving health and reducing preventable deaths globally.

Will covid-19 lead to the next great American awakening?

By Greg Laurie

As the Coronavirus (covid-19) sweeps across our country, confining us to another month at home, some have asked me, "Are we on the verge of a spiritual awakening?"

There are some hopeful signs.

In many ways, we now are doing the very things we should have been doing all along: Spending time with our families, sharing meals, talking to our neighbors, helping one another and taking long walks outside (while maintaining social distancing of course).

And there are other hopeful trends. For example, some distilleries are stepping in and producing hand sanitizer instead of booze. It reminds me of the verse that says, "They will beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4). But instead it appears we are turning our scotch into sanitizer and our piña colodas into Purell!

I also have heard good news on several fronts: less abortions are being performed, and crime rates in some parts of the country have plummeted since the stay-at-home orders were issued.

These are all good things, but then there is the unthinkable tragedy of people dying every day from COVID-19. It is this very thing, the fear of death, the acknowledgement of the fragility of life, that has been a wake-up call for many.

In some ways the COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to consider the afterlife and their relationship with God by knocking down all our false gods.

For people that worshipped sports, the stadiums are closed and no games are being played.

For others who idolized musicians, the civic centers are closed and the concerts are canceled.

For those that had such fawning admiration for actors, the theaters are shuttered and no new films are coming.

For even others who bowed at the altar of money, the stock market is generally down and the economy is stalled.

If you do go out, you can see the fear, stress and worry on peoples' faces. People need hope. They are searching for a light at the end of the tunnel, and are finding that their usual heroes cannot get them out of this mess.

Hollywood can't save us. There is no blockbuster film or actor that will get us



out of this.

Technology can't save us either. Our smartphones and computer screens just feed us a barrage of information that heightens our stress and anxiety.

Our lawmakers in Washington can't save us from COVID-19. They will hopefully continue to work together and do what they can, but the outcome is outside of their control.

I think we finally are begin-

ning to realize we need God.

I recently came across an article for an academic journal that studied the role of religion and faith in the COVID-19 pandemic. The article found that Google searches about prayer skyrocketed when the coronavirus went global, and in fact, the search intensity doubled for every 80,000 new confirmed COVID-19 cases.

A recent Pew Research survey of American adults confirmed this trend, with 55% of

adults surveyed indicating that they had "prayed for an end to the spread of coronavirus." In another poll, nearly half of respondents said the pandemic was a "wake up call" from God.

We have noticed this trend of people searching for answers and hope at our church in Southern California. For the past 45 years I have pastored Harvest Christian Fellowship. We began as a small Bible study of young people and grew to around 12,000 people

attending every week at our campuses in California and Hawaii.

One day we were meeting, and the next day we had to literally lock our doors and turn people away.

Some were angry with us saying, "You can't lock the doors of the church!" But we did so out of concern for people spreading COVID-19 through close contact. (Christians love to shake hands and exchange hugs!)

A word to some churches who are still holding public services: Please stop.

You are endangering your people and the rest of us. You may think that what you are doing is an act of great faith, but in fact it is an act of selfishness. You are not "trusting the Lord" but rather testing Him, and He does not want us to do that (Matthew 4:7)

Although the doors of the church building are closed for the foreseeable future, the door of opportunity for the church has been flung wide open.

For example, we already had an online version of our church service that was beginning to grow. Before the COVID-19 crisis, around 8,000 people viewed it each week.

The first week we went exclusively online, that number skyrocketed to 250,000.

The following week 350,000 tuned in, and the one after 634,000.

Last Sunday we had 1.3 million people watching our livestream!

But here is the most significant indication we may be on the verge of a spiritual awakening: in those past four weeks, we have seen over 21,000 people indicate their desire to put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. This is unprecedented. We've only seen that kind of response through our crusades, which take months of planning and considerable expense.

I came to believe in Jesus Christ as a confused teenager at the age of 17 during the last great American revival known as the "Jesus Revolution" or simply the "Jesus Movement." That's what it was: Jesus moving in the hearts of a generation.

Is he doing it again?

Let's pray so, because that is the only real and lasting hope for America. We will get through this crisis. We just don't know how long it will take. But we know this: We are not alone. Hope has a name, and it's Jesus Christ who loves each and every one of us and longs for a relationship with us.

So, hold on to hope. Hold on to him.

Greg Laurie is the senior pastor of Harvest churches in California and Hawaii and the founder of the Harvest crusades. Visit Harvest.org to watch Greg's messages and movies, streaming live for free right now.

Australian scientists' eye new COVID-19 detecting technology, Africans in China complain of racism



The simple wearable patch Australian scientists are developing to detect which COVID-19 patients are most likely to develop a severe form of the disease and need a ventilator.

CANBERRA

AUSTRALIAN scientists are developing a simple wearable patch able to detect which COVID-19 patients are most likely to develop a severe form of the disease and need a ventilator.

Australian National University researcher Prof Mark Kendall has developed a microwavable sensor which attaches to the patient's skin and measures fluid in the skin containing markers of disease.

The device would be worn by the patients like a watch.

Patients who become severely ill with COVID-19 suffer when their immune system goes into overdrive releasing inflammatory factors called cytokines, which clog their lungs with fluid.

of these cytokines IL-6 is very low in healthy people and a German study has found higher levels of IL-6 can predict whether the patient is deteriorating and is likely to need a ventilator.

The device, being developed by the ANU and Brisbane based WearOptimo, will allow real time measurement of IL-6 levels in the patients.

"Real time testing of IL-6 in hospitalised COVID-19 positive patients is the game-changer we need to accurately identify those most likely to require precious ICU resources," respiratory and intensive care physician Professor Keith McNeil said.

"That will enable more effective planning of the need for and use of those resources, and signal those requiring more intensive early intervention potentially avoiding more severe deterioration."

It comes as Sarah Gilbert, professor of vaccinology at Oxford University, said that she was "80 per cent confident" the vaccine being developed by her team would work and could be available by September.

Human trials of the vaccine are due to begin in the next two weeks.

And the drug which led to the births of thousands of deformed babies, Thalidomide, has emerged as a potential treatment for COVID-19.

Although it is no longer used to treat nausea caused by pregnancy thalidomide is still being used as an anti-inflammatory to treat some lung conditions, skin lesions and throat ulcers in HIV patients and cancer.

Researchers at Wenzhou Medical University are trialling the treatment in combination with several hormones in a randomised trial on 100 patients with COVID-19 with the study due to report at the end of May.

Africans in southern China are becoming targets of suspicion and are being subjected to forced evictions, arbitrary quarantines and mass coronavirus testing as the city ramps up its fight against imported infections.

China has largely curbed COVID-19; however, a recent cluster of cases linked to the Nigerian community in Guangzhou has sparked an alleged discrimination by locals and virus prevention officials.

Authorities in the industrial centre of 15

million said at least eight people diagnosed with the illness had spent time in the city's Yuexiu district, known as "Little Africa".

Five were Nigerian nationals who faced widespread anger after reports surfaced they had broken a mandatory quarantine and been to eight restaurants and other public places instead of staying home.

As a result, about 2000 people they came into contact with had to be tested for COVID-19 or undergo quarantine, state media said.

Guangzhou had confirmed 114 imported coronavirus cases as of Thursday - 16 of which were Africans. The rest were returning Chinese nationals.

As a result, Africans have become targets of suspicion, distrust and racism in China.

Tony Mathias, a 24-year-old exchange student from Uganda who was forced from his apartment on Monday, told AFP: "I've been sleeping under the bridge for four days with no food to eat ... I cannot buy food anywhere, no shops or restaurants will serve me."

"We're like beggars on the street."

China has banned foreign nationals from entering the country, and many travellers are being sent into 14-day quarantines either in their own accommodation or at centralised facilities.

The US State Department has issued an alert advising African-Americans, or those with potential contact with African nationals, to avoid Guangzhou.

Lockdown has been leaving people lethargic, despite avoiding the commuters' crush, but there is hope for the sleep-deprived.

There has been a spike in reports of sleep problems since the lockdown started on March 23. Oxford University Sleep Medicine professor Colin Espie has revealed how to get 40 winks when coronavirus restrictions have thrown out routines.

"There's lots of talk about staying well in the day by staying home and looking after yourself, but it's also important to stay well during the night time," he said.

"Sleep is central to our lives and because it happens automatically we take it for granted.

"Now we are in one place (most of the day) it is easy for sleep and wakefulness to merge."

Prof Espie said putting an alarm clock on, getting as much sunlight as possible and doing exercise outside would help maintain sleep patterns.

Many people will get tired during the day under lockdown but he warned to avoid naps and instead do some exercise so you could sleep at night.

"People are getting less daylight and not getting up as early," he said.

"That loss of light and change of habit allows the body clock to drift and can lead to a sense of malaise.

"It's important to maintain a routine and to get daylight. This helps keep the rhythm, and do your exercise early in the day."

Two new generations of desert locusts are set to descend on East Africa again - 400 times stronger

By Neha Wadekar

THE locust WhatsApp hotline has been ping-pong nonstop as farmers and herders across large swathes of rural Kenya send in video clips of massive swarms flying overhead, blocking the light of the sun like a Biblical plague.

This infestation of desert locusts first arrived in East Africa last June, feeding on hundreds of thousands of hectares of crops and pastureland and chomping a path of destruction through at least eight countries (Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Sudan). Scientists say these devastating insects never left East Africa: in fact, favorable wet conditions due to above average rainfall this season means they are likely to achieve two generations of new breeding by June this year, increasing their population size up to 400 times.

East Africa already has 20 million severely food insecure people, who barely eat enough to fill their stomachs each day, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO), the body responsible for overseeing the locust response. This new wave of locusts poses a serious threat to food security in a region recently devastated by conflict and climate change shocks, including extreme droughts and floods, and now anticipating a sharp rise in novel coronavirus (Covid-19) cases.

"[Farmers and pastoralists] haven't gotten a break at all," said Keith Cressman, UN FAO's senior locust forecaster.

The desert locust is a winged insect that travels in swarms, consuming almost every leaf of green vegetation in its wake. A typical swarm can consist of up to 150 million locusts per square kilometer. These insects move with the wind, and can migrate as far as 150 kilometers in one day. Even a tiny, one-square-kilometer locust swarm is capable of consuming the same amount of food in one day as approximately 35,000 people.

EGG LAYING

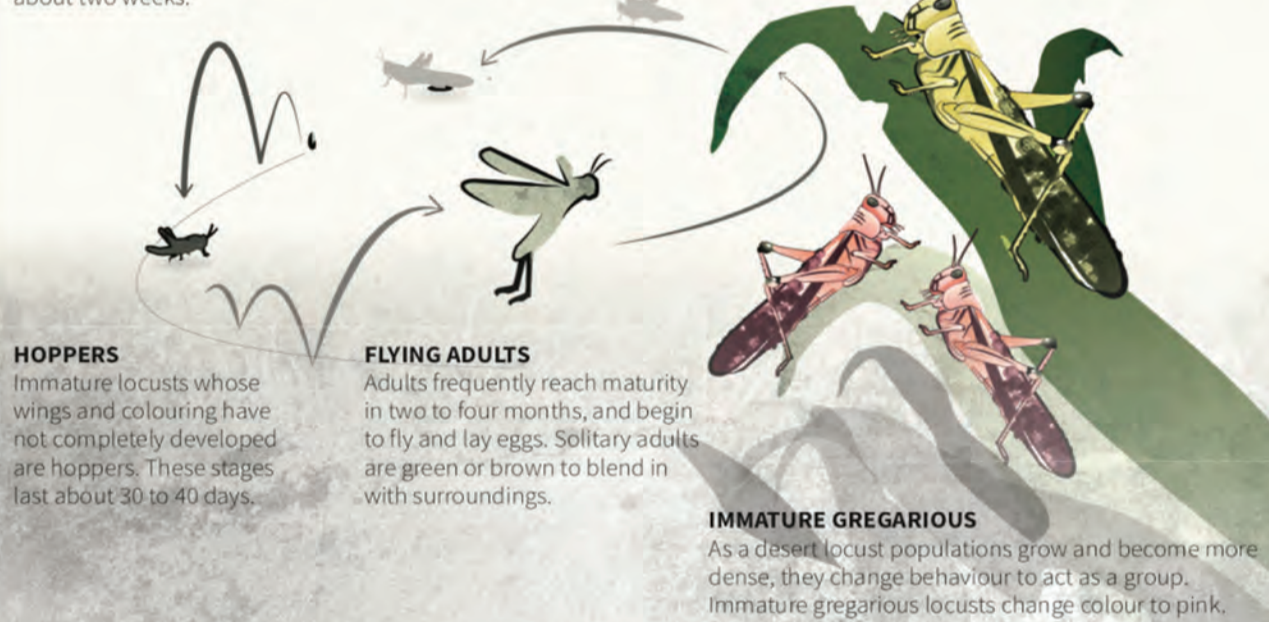
Female locusts drill holes 2 to 10 cm in the ground, laying 30 to 70 eggs within a single pod. With warmth and moisture, eggs hatch in about two weeks.

REPRODUCTION CYCLE

An unusually rainy season, lush vegetation and warm weather have encouraged locust reproduction in East Africa.

MATURE GREGARIOUS

Colouring changes again to yellow with when gregarious adults are fully matured. Each matured adult in a swarm can consume its own weight in green vegetation.



Sources: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations; Government of New South Wales; Victoria State Government; University of Minnesota

S. Granados, 27/02/2019

REUTERS

This locust infestation originated in the Arabian Peninsula. In 2018, two cyclones dumped heavy rain on an uninhabited portion of the Arabian Peninsula, creating the ideal wet, sandy conditions the desert locusts require to breed. Three generations of breeding occurred in nine months, causing locust numbers to increase by 8,000 times and forming the original source of the East Africa upsurge that is still plaguing the region today.

The swarms leapfrogged over the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to the Horn of Africa. In Somalia, Cyclone Pawan's landfall in December 2019 triggered widespread flooding. Coupled with above-average vegetation due to good rains, this contributed to another dramatic increase in the pest's numbers.

The locusts moved west and south, reaching their

zenith in Kenya in the early months of this year. Experts estimate they destroyed at least 30% of the pastureland they landed on in Kenya. Here, too, abnormally heavy rains wetted the sandy soil enough to allow the females to lay new eggs in January and February.

Locust eggs take just two weeks to hatch, and wingless baby locusts—referred to as nymphs or hoppers and as tiny as a pinky finger—cracked open their eggs on Kenyan soil during February and early March. The hoppers shed their skin multiple times, growing larger until they reach the size of a pinky finger, become adults and grow wings. They band together into devastating swarms that take flight and begin feeding on vegetation.

"That's what's been happening in Kenya this past month. More and more of those hoppers have become

adults," said Cressman. "So these are Made in Kenya."

These swarms are still immature, and take up to four weeks before they are ready to lay eggs. Kenya is more than halfway through this maturation cycle, and the new generation of locust swarms are expected to begin laying eggs within the week.

In Kenya, the locust maturation is coinciding with the onset of the rainy season. Farmers have been sowing crops of maize, beans, sorghum, barley and millet during March and April, in hopes that a favorable rainy season will allow for abundant growth during late April and May. With the locust swarms gaining size and strength, experts fear that up to 100% of farmers' budding crops could be consumed, leaving some communities with nothing to harvest.

"The concern at the mo-

ment is that the desert locust will eat under-emerging plants," said Cyril Ferrand, FAO's resilience team leader for Eastern Africa. "This very soft, green material, biomass leaves, rangeland, is, of course, the favorite food for the desert locusts."

FAO is working with governments and teams from non-governmental organizations to conduct massive aerial pesticide spraying campaigns throughout the region. It hopes the locusts can be controlled temporarily until southerly winds and the dry season pushes them north in June and July.

But Covid-19 poses a challenge to control activities. Disruptions to supply chains have stalled delivery of pesticide shipments, creating stockouts and shortages. Somalia is three weeks behind in receiving a shipment of biopesticides for locust control due to Covid-19 delays. Surveillance equip-



ment, such as helicopters from South Africa, cannot reach East Africa because of lockdowns in countries where they would normally stop to refuel on their journeys north.

If control activities fail and the locusts do not move out of the region, FAO fears that up to an additional 5 million people could become food insecure in East Africa by June of this year.

Tale of seldom remembered national milestones: Nyerere's birthday and death of Edward Sokoine

By Ani Jozeni

HARDLY any of us has noticed that that birthday of the country's founder president, Julius Nyerere falls on the next day from a grim anniversary - that of the death of the country's second prime minister (if one excuses the brief prime minister period of Nyerere himself for a month after independence, December 1961). What Nyerere did at the time of independence had a way of being repeated in a different way in later years, in the dialectic of giving in to change or putting his foot down to stop something he sensed would be going the wrong way. In January 1962 he resigned so that changes that he couldn't easily move to declare himself actually take place, and thus Prime Minister Rashid Kawawa had a relatively free hand with 'Africanisation'. Towards the end of his long stewardship at the State House, Nyerere once or twice allowed the wind of change to take place against his better judgment, at times regretting what happened later. One instance was removing chiefs early 1963 to undercut the sense of tribes and build that of the party



and the regions (not the provinces of late trusteeship period), and he later (nearly a decade after retirement) admitted that the move had watered down civil restraints in people's behavior like men abandoning families and there is no one to ask them. He refused to express regret on the Leadership Code in a leading interview 1998, saying he could scarcely change a 'comma' in the document, evidently the most valuable contribution he made to discussion on political morality. At the time that President

Nyerere appointed Edward Moringe Sokoine on February 5, 1977 to the post of prime minister - a bombshell in a country used to just two people at the helm - apart from Zanzibar where a change had occurred in the wake of President Karume's assassination five years earlier - there was change taking place that the president wasn't actually in control of its outcomes. 1976 had been a mixed year, both of a good coffee global price and substantial foreign exchange earnings, and chaotic administration where orders

were paralyzing the work of the government - like an infamous 'Operation Maduka' where private shops were supposed to be closed and cooperative ones be opened instead! This led to Nyerere applying the broom for once. It was something like the end of an era when Defence Minister Sokoine exchanged places with Kawawa, the latter moving to Upanga while the former went to Magogoni, and legend had it that the outgoing premier hesitated, or sought to refuse the offer, definitely unlikely to settle

easily as just minister. But there was no choice about that as he was far too important and for many years had been in highest level of government, to just step aside and be receiving guests at home and bad mouth the government, and the president for that matter. At that time the law of Preventive Detention was being routinely applied if a threat to national security turned up; he saw the point. In that case Sokoine entered the premiership for the first time early 1977 on the background of excess in-

itiative on the part of the former prime minister, and his own style was that of firm intervention to get things going. But as there were bottlenecks arising from supply shortages in many things given the foreign exchange controls and lack of private investment in many areas, he couldn't achieve so much. The government sought an IMF loan to cater for a balance of payments deficit, and a kind of 'glasnost' error came in, where IMF wanted freeing of imports to a considerable extent, which actually ruined the savings in forex earned from coffee surpluses. The wind of earnings was short-lived and by 1978 when Ugandan dictator Idi Amin imposed a war on Tanzania, what there was still available was ruined. By the time the country reached new general elections late 1980 it was unclear whether the problem with the prime minister was in actual fact diabetes as it was being said (he still was youthful, reaching his mid-40s at that time) or it was pressure of the job. Whatever the case he went for treatment in Yugoslavia and did not return to the cabinet, and the more lukewarm figure of Cleopa Msuya came in, an administrator of the old school,

calm and composed, following procedures, scarcely any proclamations, etc. This format of work wasn't going to last long as the litany of problems was rising after the war and troubled occupation of Uganda that followed it, and scarcely any economic bearings even as the president invited an economics professor to take over Planning, placing it under the office of the First Vice President for greater authority, and Treasury to follow those priorities. Still it wasn't east as the country had failed to recover from the effects of the war, given that there was no investment boost arising from the huge demand for goods and services, now that no property could be bought or sold. After severe shortages set in, army coup plot discovered, Nyerere acted. It was the second tenure of Sokoine which was eventful and troubled, unlike the feisty but non-eventful - and longer - first tenure which has largely been erased from memory. Right from the word go he was going to put his mark on the job, announcing 'a five point plan of the new CCM government' in January 1983 as he took office. Prof. Gelese Mutahaba, responding to a question on the 'anti-

smuggling campaign' that Sokoine started thereafter, remarked that this issue was point number five in his January program but two months later it was the anchor of the whole of the government's policy and administrative action. Nyerere soon stepped in, stopped the drive, and called a meeting of CCM elders at Arnatougulu for a hearty conversation, where it was clear his move to stop the campaign was unpopular. Nyerere knew the economy would grind to a halt. He didn't quite say so but remarked "I am the driver, I know where there are potholes," which was to reassert his role as president, much more than to criticize the work Sokoine was doing. But by this time bureaucracy was immersed in soul searching as to who would take over from Nyerere, who had declared in 1980 it was his last term. Confusion on the union started at that point (early 1983) after Isles President About Jembe failed to obtain assurances from Nyerere that he would work to ensure he succeeds him. It was clear Sokoine was the most important other leader apart from Nyerere so when he met an accident on April 12 1984, the rumour wheel set in

By Laura Angela Bagnetto

Grassroots solidarity as Covid-19 information translated into various African local languages

As the spread of Covid-19 grips the world, health officials on the African continent have called for help for essential supplies such as masks and ventilators. While some are trying to fill the physical gap, a grassroots effort to get out the information on how to prevent the virus - washing hands, keeping a distance from others, coughing into your elbow - has been effective in communicating vital information. Journalists, filmmakers, graphic designers, and those who can speak or write effectively in one of the estimated 3,000 local languages on the African continent have mobilized to get the message out on how to prevent the deadly virus that is spread by breath droplets as they are coughed

or sneezed. Coronavirus can also be transmitted when a person touches their face after touching a contaminated surface. The virus can be absorbed through mucus membranes. While some governments and health ministries have launched local language information, journalists like Elia Ntali and Kudzanai Gerede, who both work for the Harare-based Zimbabwe newswire 263Chat, translated information on Covid-19 in Shona and Ndebele, respectively. For Gerede, a business journalist originally from Bulawayo, it was second nature to get the information out in Ndebele, a local language spoken by many who feel marginalized in the



south of the country. "Very few people think about translating information into Ndebele," Gerede tells RFI. He put forward the idea to write stories in Shona and Ndebele during an editorial meeting where journalists were discussing how to make the Covid-19 information as clear as possible for their audience. "I suggested to do a write up in Ndebele and asked my other colleague if he could do the same in Shona. The editor liked it and then we just took a government statement written in English and paraphrased it in local languages since we realised there wasn't any literature in these languages," he says. Although he grew up speaking Ndebele, he said that he had to think about how to translate words such as quarantine and social distancing. "Of course, that was a little challenging, but it wasn't that difficult because the language is broad, there are words that also mean the same as distancing oneself from others," the journalist says. "I managed to put it across the best way possible, using phrases to describe one word," he adds. The news portal received good feedback in more ways than one. "I'm happy to say a few days later I saw government also trying to do the same in indigenous languages," says Gerede, adding that they also received positive feedback on their WhatsApp groups.

how to protect themselves from coronavirus. Confusion about the similarities and differences between Ebola and Covid-19 is rife, says Laure Venier, a community engagement program coordinator for the DRC with Translators Without Borders (TWB). "A lot of people are expressing that they feel safer because they know how to take care of themselves because of the hygiene measures put in place for Ebola," she tells RFI. Venier says that rumors have already begun that this is another disease intended to make money. During Ebola, some Congolese believed that the fatal hemorrhagic fever was created for international non-governmental organisations to make money. "That's a really sad aspect and we need to communicate about this. I think the good thing would be to do it openly and honestly," she says. Ensuring that people have the vital information in their own language will stem the spread of misinformation. Venier says that rumors such as drinking tea will prevent Covid-19 has been flagged in TWB media monitoring, and the misinformation such as the tea cure is spreading internationally, too. The Congolese authorities have created a helpline in nine different local languages that is open from 8h00 to 20h00, which Venier says is useful, acknowledging that creating a helpline in all 400 local languages would be a near-impossible task.

Akinmolayan, famous in his own right for directing The Wedding Party 2, the highest-grossing Nollywood movie of all time, used his skills to create a short video that he then dubbed into a number of Nigerian languages, including Igbo, Pidgin and Hausa. Akinmolayan has been promoting them on social media to ensure everyone knows about how easily Covid-19 is spread. The United Nations, which usually operates in six official languages, has expanded their public information campaigns to include posters in Hausa, Kanuri, Yoruba, and Igbo, and have included a misinformation feature as well. One woman produced a video in Fulfulde, a language spoken by the Fulani people mainly in Adamawa state in Nigeria, in addition to two northern provinces of Cameroon. The video was shared on the US Embassy in Yaounde's Facebook page. Information is available across the length of the continent. South Africa is tackling misinformation regarding Covid-19 by running a WhatsApp helpline in five of the country's 11 official languages - English, Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans. South Africa's News24 reported that although the helpline initially only took questions in English, the Health Department added four more to accommodate more South Africans. It has also created a number of videos, including this one in Zulu. In Morocco, it was the initiative of yet another journalist, Hammou Hasnoui, and graphic designer Aissam El Nehali who created a video with subtitles in Tachelhit and Tarifit, two Moroccan Tamazight (also known as Berber) dialects. They have posted their videos on Youtube and Facebook in order to get the word out to the Berber minority in the country. Nigerian filmmaker Niyi

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 79 00--

In this puzzle you have no clues, only a list of words that all fit into the grid. The Guardian have given you a head start

																	S
																	H
																	A
																	R
																	E
																	S

1					3								5
2					6								
7					8								
10					9								
13					11								12
16					14								
19					15								
					17								
					18								
					16								
					20								

- 3 Letters: ASS,
- 4 Letters: YULE, MASS, OMEN, WASH, PASS, SPAN, REEF, HEED, TRAP,
- 5 Letters: MONEY, SKILL, DAILY, MAYOR, HAMAS, WATER, SHADE
- 6 Letters: MOSCOW, NOISES, UGANDA, SHARES, ASMARA, CAREER, REMAIN
- 7 Letters: SANGOMA, ENGLISH,

- CLUES: Across
- Tanzania's Capital
 - Nation created in 1948
 - Christian festival celebrating the resurrection of Christ
 - turn away
 - Second largest city in Tanzania
 - step in a process
 - mischievous person
 - skilful
 - large round citrus fruit
 - sell goods by going from place to place
 - utter words
- Down:
- images seen while you sleep
 - a place far away
 - the mixture of gases surrounding the earth
 - personal, secret
 - beloved
 - consisting protein that is produced by a living organism
 - an off break bowled with an apparent leg-break action
 - a surface which is higher on one side than the other
 - keep away from someone
 - demonstrate by evidence
 - a donkey

WORD-FIT SOLUTIONS

R	E	A	D	Y	S	C	O	P	E
S	E	A	H	A	R	A	S	A	M
T	E	A	Y	A	H				
S	N	A	K	E	I	R	A	Q	
M	A	S	T	E	R	E	A	S	T
G	T	A	R	K	I				
T	A	N	A	P	A	I	P		
L	C	F	R	O	S	P			
M	A	S	H	E	R	H	A	Y	
E	A	S	O	W	L	N			

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

F	A	R	M	E	R		R	A						
R	A					L	E	A	S	E				
I	S	L	A	N	D	P	K							
D	L	O	I	L	E	R								
A	N	Y	O	N	E	A	T	L	A	M				
Y	M	E	D	D	L	E								
C	L	A	N											
P	L	A	N	T	A	T	L	O	N	S				
O	E	R												
L	A	G	T	A	C	E	T	A	G					
O	N	E												
Y										S	U	E		

BUSINESS

FALLOUT

Forum threatens to take ban of alcohol sales to Constitutional Court

GAUTENG

The Forum, which represents 20,000 tavern and shebeen owners, said the extension of the lockdown from the initial 21-day period to the end of April will "most likely ruin" businesses of its members.

President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the extension of the lockdown on Thursday by another two weeks, saying preliminary evidence showed that keeping people at home slowed the spread of the virus to around 4% new infections a day compared to over 42% before the lockdown.

"We are not against the lockdown. We've been supportive of everything that the President has initiated and we fully agree that he should have taken measures to slow down the spread of the virus," said the forum's spokesperson, Thabo Modise.

"But, our members were never even considered in any relief that has been spoken about to help small businesses." The forum wrote a letter to the President threatening the court action on Saturday. Modise said shebeen and tavern owners are not registered under the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission but get their licenses from the Gauteng

Liquor Board instead, and as such are not recognised under the relief given to small business owners.

At the time of publication, FIN24 wasn't able to get comment from the Ministry of Small Business as well as Police. Representing the forum, Eric Mabuza of Mabuza Attorneys said alcohol traders in the township are not getting the relief because either their taxes are not in order or the requirements to get the relief are too stringent.

"Even in times of crisis, we must reflect and be sober about how we deal with issues," he said, adding that if the government had consulted with the industry before instituting the ban, the issue of relief would have come to light and perhaps a special scheme put in place.

Restrict sale of alcohol instead of a complete ban

Mabuza said less restrictive measures that the industry would welcome include restricted trading hours, limiting sale quantities and even prohibition of on-site consumption where people buy and drink at home. "Just like people go out every day to buy groceries, people can go out to buy alcohol to take home on limited quantities and specified types," he said.

CRISIS

IMF foresees negative economic growth for 170 nations this year

WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Thursday that the multilateral lender now projects that over 170 countries will experience negative per capita income growth this year.

In her curtain raiser speech ahead of the Spring Meetings next week, the IMF chief said in a video that countries across the globe "are confronted with a crisis like no other." "COVID-19 has disrupted our social and economic order at lightning speed and on a scale that we have not seen in living memory," Georgieva said.

The IMF managing director said it is already clear that global growth will turn "sharply negative" in 2020. Georgieva, however, noted that the crisis is expected to hit vulnerable countries hardest. "Emerging markets and low-income nations - across Africa, Latin America, and much of Asia - are at high risk," she said.

In the last two months, portfolio outflows from emerging markets were about 100 billion U.S. dollars, more

than three times larger than for the same period of the global financial crisis, she noted. Noting that the IMF estimates the gross external financing needs for emerging market and developing countries to be in the trillions of dollars, the IMF chief said "they urgently need help."

Georgieva said: "We anticipate the worst economic fallout since the Great Depression. Just three months ago, we expected positive per capita income growth in over 160 of our member countries in 2020. Today, that number has been turned on its head: we now project that over 170 countries will experience negative per capita income growth this year."

"If the pandemic fades in the second half of the year - thus allowing a gradual lifting of containment measures and reopening of the economy - our baseline assumption is for a partial recovery in 2021. But again, I stress there is tremendous uncertainty around the outlook: it could get worse depending on many variable factors, including the duration of the pandemic."

ADVICE

CAG for setting up of money laundering regulatory bodies

By Francis Kajubi

THE government should establish regulatory bodies to assess money laundering risks in some key economic sectors to save the estimated 2.27trn/- lost annually through cases.

Controller and Auditor General, Charles Kichere said in his maiden annual report since taking charge at National Audit Office last year, said the country is losing a lot through money laundering cases hence the need to arrest the situation.

Kichere said in his report for financial year 2019/20 submitted to parliament last week that high threat offences related to money laundering in the country are corruption and misappropriation of funds tax evasion, poaching, drug trafficking, illegal mining and illegal trading in precious metals and counterfeiting of goods.

He asserted that about five sectors that are highly affected with incidences of money laundering have no regulators and thus are not assessed for money laundering risks.

"These highly affected sectors cover dealers in precious metals and stones, motor vehicle dealers and lawyers, notaries and other independent legal professionals where the incidence is medium high. Regulatory bodies for these sectors should be formed," the CAG stated in his report.

He further noted that factors that limit the government's ability to combat money laundering can be categorized into three areas namely; deficiencies in the country's policy, regulatory and institutional framework; non-adherence to AML requirements by implementing agencies and deficiencies in the co-



CAG Charles Kichere.

ordination framework.

The report of the high-level panel on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) noted that African countries were losing more than US\$50 billion annually through illicit financial flows. The CAG admitted that on average, each African state including Tanzania is losing up to US\$1 billion annually through money laundering.

Lack of policies and legislations to govern informal value transfer, dealers in precious metal, motor vehicles and other independent legal profession sectors stand as main reasons for the non-compliance to AML requirements.

"The absence of policies, strategy

and legislation has resulted into lack of a regulatory body for the respective sectors hence most of the providers of the services in these sectors remain unregulated alongside lack of a well-defined reporting mechanism of the cases," the CAG report added.

"These unregulated sectors may therefore launder money without being detected. Such dealings could lead to loss of income that could have been detected had the transactions passed through proper channels" reads part of the report.

He warned that the potential negative effects of unchecked money laundering

on macroeconomics include increased volatility in international capital flows and exchange rates due to unanticipated cross-border asset transfers.

However, he noted that there was an increase in the number of dissemination to law enforcement agencies. The number of disseminations increased from 41 to 59 in the financial years 2015/16 and 2018/19 respectively.

Through conducting of inspections and training to reporting persons, the Financial Intelligence Unit managed to increase the detection and reporting of suspicious transactions.

INVESTMENT

Visa commits \$200 million to support SMEs led by women in five-year plan

NEW YORK

The Visa Foundation has announced a commitment of two programs totalling \$210 million to support small and micro businesses (SMEs), aligning with the foundation's long-term focus on women's economic advancement and inclusive economic development, and to address an urgent need from local communities following the spread of COVID-19.

The first program of \$10 million is designated for immediate emergency relief to support charitable organizations on the frontlines responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as public health and food relief, in each of the five geographic regions in which Visa operates: North America; Latin America and the Caribbean; Europe; Asia Pacific; and Central Europe, Middle East and Africa.

"As COVID-19 continues to unfold, communities are feeling the effects and need our immediate support," said Al Kelly, CEO and chairman of Visa. "As a global company that operates a very local business, we recognize this need. We're also committed to the long-term recovery and will continue to explore ways we can accelerate economic activity in line with our mission to help individuals, businesses and economies thrive."

The second program is a five-year, strategic \$200 million commitment to support small and micro businesses around the world, with a focus on fostering women's



Al Kelly, CEO and chairman of Visa.

economic advancement. This action expands the Visa Foundation's long-standing support for small and micro businesses globally. The funds from the Visa Foundation will provide capital to non-government organizations (NGOs) and investment partners supporting small and micro businesses.

SMEs are the backbone of the global economy, accounting for more than 90 percent of worldwide businesses and contributing 50 to 60 percent of global employment

according to the UN. There is a \$300 billion annual credit deficit in funding for women-owned small and micro businesses, which is expected to grow given the recent economic turmoil unfolding due to COVID-19.

"Now more than ever, we must accelerate our support for small businesses on the frontlines driving economic growth," said Kelly. "As many small and micro business owners are women, there will be a ripple effect supporting women's

economic advancement, which we believe is one of the most important ways to achieve gender equality, reduce poverty and foster inclusive economic development."

Through the \$200 million small and micro business program, the Visa Foundation will provide \$60 million in grants to NGOs dedicated to supporting small and micro business owners, many of whom are women, in every region where Visa operates. The Visa Foundation will also allocate \$140 million with investment partners that generate positive social and financial returns for small and micro businesses.

"Two hundred million dollars in new financial resources demonstrates our continuing commitment to support small and micro businesses, with a focus on women's economic advancement globally" said Graham Macmillan, President of the Visa Foundation. "When women thrive, communities thrive. We know this matters now more than ever as the global economy seeks to recover and rebuild."

The Visa Foundation seeks to support inclusive economies where individuals, businesses and communities can thrive. Through grant-making and investing, the foundation prioritizes the resilience and growth of SMEs that benefit women. The Foundation also supports broader community needs and disaster response in times of crisis.

INVESTMENT

Ethiopia to press ahead with Africa's biggest hydropower dam

ADDIS ABABA

Ethiopia's government vowed to continue work on a massive dam that's stoked tensions with Egypt, even as the Horn of Africa nation contends with the growing spread of the coronavirus.

Completing what would be Africa's largest hydropower reservoir, filling it

and producing electricity is a top priority for Ethiopia, State Minister for Finance Eyob Tekalign said on a conference call Thursday. The government on April 8 declared a state of emergency over coronavirus, which has so far infected 56 Ethiopians.

"We might reprioritise projects because of this crisis, but the GERD, I

assure you, is not one of them," Eyob said. "We are going to keep the timeline. We will fill the dam and start generating power."

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has been under construction since 2011 and is already five years behind schedule. Egypt and Ethiopia's government are at odds over how

quickly the dam is filled because the reservoir will tap the main tributary of the Nile River, which Egypt relies on as its only source of fresh water. US-mediated talks between the two countries and Sudan to end the dispute broke down in February.

Egypt and Ethiopia - both with populations of about 100 million people

and the fastest-growing economies in their respective regions - say the future of the Nile is a matter of national security, though they've previously dismissed any concerns that the dispute could trigger a war.

In recent weeks, the Ethiopian military has said it's willing and able to defend the dam from any attacks,

as it showcased its military prowess near the site of the dam in images broadcast on national television. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will generate about 6,000 megawatts once completed. Ethiopia plans to export some of the electricity it produces to neighbouring states.

GROWTH

Company seeks permission to invest in coal-fired power station at Ngaka

By Guardian Reporter

COAL mining company at Ngaka in Tunduru district is seeking government approval to invest in coal fired power station to feed southern regions of the country.

In its half year results for December 2019, Intra Energy Corporation which owns Tancoal jointly with National Development Corporation said, "IEC continues to investigate partnership arrangements for the development of a mine-mouth power station, however, the government has not given an approval for a coal-fired power station for southern Tanzania at this stage."

The company which increased production capacity at the mine during the period to 80,000 tonnes per month, said the amount is enough to meet customer demand when it increases. "Sales began strongly at the start of the half-year but the imposition of the royalty on transport, the startup of some smaller competitor mines, lower sales to some major customers undergoing

refurbishment of their plants and the rainy season reduced sales during the period," the report stated.

The coal mining company paid over 27bn/- to Treasury and Ministry of Energy and backlog taxes and royalty dating back to 2011 when it started production at Ngaka.

Meanwhile the company also assisted Mbalawala Women's Organisation to grow their businesses as part of its corporate social responsibility. "MWO has worked very hard and with the increased production and sales at the mine their catering and accommodation service business has achieved financial independence, the company will continue to support them with technical and other ongoing support that they need," the report stated.

The MWO has received a tested product certificate from Tanzania Bureau of Standards which is a licence for them to manufacture coal briquettes. "These briquettes from coal fines mixed with clay, have the potential to reduce the use of charcoal in cooking fires and hence reduce the environmental devastation



Tancoal mine at Ngaka in Tunduru district.

caused by the charcoal industry," the Australian based company added in its report.

Tancoal also donated funds to local village organisations

to support their activities within the community and has donated funds for new classrooms and a project to construct a well capable of

delivering 7,000 litres per hour of potable water at the Ntunduwaro village close to the mine site.

"Tancoal has submitted its

corporate social responsibility plan for 2020 to the government as required," the IEC report noted.

GENEROSITY

BrighterMonday Kenya offering a free listing for corporate bodies and job seekers

NAIROBI

Recruitment firm BrighterMonday Kenya has launched an initiative dubbed 'Unity In Adversity' that offers free job listing services for individuals or companies seeking to hire as the country battles Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The campaign seeks to boost the continuity of businesses efforts by enabling organisations to recruit the right people to steer them during and beyond the current challenging times. "For the next 60 days, we will give organisations seeking to recruit professionals across different industries countrywide free job listings on our website. This will enable county hospitals, healthcare facilities and other essential services providers at the frontline in the fight against COVID-19 to hire qualified candidates in the shortest time possible," said Emmanuel Mutuma, the CEO of BrighterMonday Kenya.

Under the initiative, employers will be able to fast track the recruitment process with some of BrighterMonday's innovative products like the firm's newly launched proficiency Assessment Tool that tests a candidate's core competencies and hard skills required for a specific role beyond what is captured on their CVs during the hiring process.

Additionally, hiring managers will be able to view a candidate's scores alongside other filters like education and experience levels with the use of BrighterMonday's Applicant Tracking System (ATS), a back-end filter that augments the Assessment Tool. This way they will be able to compare a candidate's proficiency, qualifications and experience levels at a glance.

This comes days after the government issued a directive to recruit at least 5,000 health workers across the country. Hospitals are also expected to hire an additional 1,000 in the coming days.



For the next 60 days, we will give organisations seeking to recruit professionals across different industries countrywide free job listings on our website. This will enable county hospitals, healthcare facilities and other essential services providers at the frontline in the fight against COVID-19 to hire qualified candidates in the shortest time possible

ALMS

More banks' executives to donate to Solidarity Fund

JOHANNESBURG

More banking executives are coming forward to donate portions of their salaries towards efforts aimed at combat the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) in South Africa.

Standard Bank has become the latest to announce that its top executives based in South Africa will make their own contributions to the Solidarity Fund set up early in March to support vulnerable South Africans by providing care for ill individuals and buying protective gear for medical personnel among other things.

Standard Bank said it will set up a mechanism to enable its executives to make donations, over the next three months, to the Solidarity Fund and any other initiatives in support of efforts to curb the spread of coronavirus. Standard Bank SA Chief Executive, Lungisa Fuzile said the bank believes that contributions should be made on a voluntary basis and with accommodation for confidentiality where preferred.

However, its peers and



Standard Bank SA chief executive Lungisa Fuzile.

other JSE-listed companies have taken the route of revealing who is taking salary cuts. Nedbank which was the first to follow on the footsteps of the national executive on Friday said CEO, Mike Brown will be donating a third of salary to the Solidarity Fund for three months. He also encouraged other executives in the bank to follow suit. FirstRand also announced on Saturday that its CEO, COO and CFO as well as and the CEOs of its largest businesses, FNB, RMB and WesBank, will forego 30% of their salaries for three months.

The donations by banks' executives comes after President Ramaphosa made a parliament, public officials and company executives to also take pay cut and contribute to the Solidarity Fund.

The president said that his and cabinet members' salaries would be cut by a third for the next three months, with the proceeds donated to the Solidarity Fund. Outside of the banking industry, a number of institutions and individuals, including Old Mutual, the EFF, IFP among others have also pledged to donate a portion of their salaries to the fund for at least three months.

CHARITY

Huawei to offer \$30,000 worth of Cloud resources to fight Covid-19

BEIJING

Huawei has launched a global action plan to help customers around the world to fight COVID-19 with its Cloud and AI services. As part of the international action plan against the coronavirus, HUAWEI CLOUD will be providing free AI and Cloud services and will be recruiting partners around the world to help fight the pandemic together.

Deng Tao, President of HUA-

WEI CLOUD Global Market, stated: "HUAWEI CLOUD has been working with partners in China to use innovative technologies such as cloud and AI to fight the pandemic, and has accumulated practical experience with AI-assisted CT scan analysis, drug discovery, online education, and telecommuting technologies. Now, we are launching this international action plan to share our practical experience to the international market. We will make every

effort to leverage technology to help our customers around the world cope with challenges faced in the midst of this crisis."

In the healthcare domain, HUAWEI CLOUD provides E-Health free of charge, which includes services such as viral genome detection, Antiviral drug in silico screening, and AI-assisted CT patient screening service. In the education sector, HUAWEI CLOUD works with partners to provide on-

line education services for schools and other educational institutions.

They are also helping enterprises migrate businesses to the cloud to ensure continuous operations while the pandemic continues. HUAWEI CLOUD is now offering up to 1,500 hours of free cloud resources for each newly registered user, complete with 24/7 professional support on the HUAWEI CLOUD (international) website.

HUAWEI CLOUD has also released the Anti-COVID-19 Partner Program, a program focused on five main scenarios: remote office, AI support, enterprise assistance, smart healthcare, and online education. Partners who participate in the program will not only obtain comprehensive business, technological, and market support, but will also have the opportunity to benefit from free cloud resources worth up to \$30,000.



Deng Tao, President of HUAWEI CLOUD Global Market.

REPRISALS

Pressure piles on China to rethink relationship with wild animals

WASHINGTON

As the coronavirus pandemic swept through the US in early April, China readied to re-open in its controversial wet markets.

Senior US congressmen began to threaten trade reprisals, and there have been renewed demands that Beijing pays reparations for the fatal delay in warning the outside world of the coming crisis.

The calls for China to face financial penalties have been echoed by some politicians in other countries including Britain and Australia. There has been widespread condemnation of what is seen as Chinese subterfuge, which allowed the pandemic to spread so wide, so virulently. The latest criticism came from the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, which accused Beijing of "manipulation and

disinformation."

Wet markets are where traders sell fresh produce, fruit and vegetables, but also wild and domestic animals, dead and alive: there have been regular complaints of some of them operating in unsanitary conditions. Dry markets sell non-perishable goods, including packaged food.

The Independent is calling for global action to create tighter restrictions surrounding the trade in wild animals, to help prevent reduce the risk of zoonotic diseases such as coronavirus. The Stop the Wildlife Trade campaign asks that governments work together to impose stricter controls on the trade, sale and consumption of wild animals.

The accusation now is not just that China is culpable for the current pandemic but that it is the incubator for another devastating contagion in the future. The great risk comes from its



United Nations' biodiversity chief, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema.

wet markets - the one in Wuhan is believed to be the source of Covid-19 and also its huge and highly lucrative trade in wildlife. Official Chinese figures for wildlife trade and consumption shows that it was worth more than \$74bn and has provided work for 14 million over the past decade.

In Washington senator Lindsey Graham has launched a campaign in congress to get China to close wet markets once and for all. The Australian prime minister, Scott Morrison, has urged the United Nations and World Health Organisation to ensure that Beijing does not reopen them.

The United Nations' biodiversity chief, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, has said that she would support a global ban on wildlife markets, and there is also support for the measure from senior conservationists within China.

Writing for The Independent on Friday, Ms Mrema said: "Global wildlife trade and live animal markets, where live fish, meat and wild animals are sold, are important risk factors for zoonotic disease spillover.

Accordingly, measures taken by countries to reduce the number of live animals in food markets can significantly reduce the risk of disease

outbreaks. Stricter controls on the sale and consumption of wild species, and implementation of the International Health Regulations, must also be scaled up globally."

Senator Graham asked: "What can China do to help the world? Shut those markets down. The source of this virus is the Chinese wet markets. They are absolutely disgusting, selling exotic animals that transmit viruses from animals to human beings. About the last three or four pandemics have come from the Chinese wet markets."

It is indeed the case that some of the most lethal viruses that have spread beyond borders have come from contact between wild animals and humans. The H2N2 Asian flu in 1957-1958 came from a mutation in wild ducks: it killed 1.1 million people worldwide. The H5N1 bird flu in 1997 came from Chinese geese, leaving around 460 dead.

The Sars epidemic of 2002-2003 is thought to have come from bats or civet cats and killed around 780 people. The H7N9 Bird Flu in 2013 came from poultry at live bird markets with 610 dead. And now there is Covid-19, with more than 103,000 deaths so far and rising daily.

RELIEF

Dirtiest air in the world gets cleaner after India lockdown

NEW DELHI

As India went into the world's biggest lockdown to combat the deadly coronavirus, trains, planes, automobiles and factories came to a halt. And the skies in some of the most polluted cities on the planet turned blue.

Cities across the country, which was home to 14 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world last year, are breathing some of the cleanest air after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a three-week nationwide lockdown, starting March 25. On April 8, the country's financial hub, Mumbai, was the only Indian city in the top 20 most polluted places, according to data from IQAir.

"The low AQI and blue skies prove beyond doubt that a lot of the air pollution" is a result of human activity, according to Jyoti Pande Lavakare, co-founder of the Indian environmental organisation Care For Air. "Obviously slowing down the economy to such a degree isn't the ideal way of bringing down air pollution but at least it proves that it can be done, if the intention is there."

Modi's unprecedented move to impose the lockdown may have been the only way to enforce social distancing in the densely populated nation of 1.3 billion people, where cases have surpassed 5,300 and experts fear that number could increase dramatically over the next few weeks as testing increases.

The lockdown improved the air quality index to satisfactory levels in nearly 90% of the 103 cities monitored by the country's Central Pollution Control Board on March 29, according to data on the environmental agency's website. In contrast, about half the cities it monitored in the middle of last month had satisfactory air.

The clean air could aid the country's battle against the pneumonia-like virus as air pollution makes people more vulnerable to lung disease. The World Health Organisation estimates that dirty air kills 7 million people globally primarily through increased mortality from diseases including acute respiratory infections. In India, it's also leading to a sharp drop in complaints from people with respiratory problems, according to Delhi-based pulmonologist Pankaj Sayal.

"We are now able to treat asthmatic patients with minimum medications," Sayal said. "Right now, in this season, I'm getting only 20% to 30% of the calls" he would get earlier. Still, the clean air has come at a cost and is likely to be short-lived. India is set to focus on getting its factories and businesses going again after the lockdown forced hundreds of thousands to flee cities in a mass exodus unseen since India's independence in 1947. The economy is poised to shrink this quarter and full-year expansion set to suffer markedly due to the standstill.



The India Gate monument in New Delhi shrouded in smog, November 5, 2019.

STRANGE

New Zealanders purchase 3 times as many sex toys during lockdown

WELLINGTON

On April 8, The Guardian published an article that said in the 48 hours before New Zealand went on national lockdown on March 25, sex toy sales tripled at Adult Toy Megastore.

New Zealand's handling of the coronavirus by trying to eliminate rather than contain the coronavirus was praised earlier this week by The Washington Post. Adult Toy Megastore spokesperson Emily Writes, who also spoke to The Guardian, told Insider that sales had boomed internationally too, and she thought it was because of New Zealand's media coverage.

"Hygiene protocols are really strict here

for us so it might be reassuring to people wanting to order," she said. The sex store remains open in New Zealand after the government deemed it an essential service because it sells medical items and condoms. All staff are working from home.

Writes said the beginner range of toys were very popular. She told Insider: "It seems like women, in particular, are thinking 'well, I'm at home, alone, so there's no better time to try something new'." Writes said she expected an increase in sales for sex toys that can communicate with each other. "Some of our toys have the ability to connect through an app, Bluetooth or by video so that couples can use them even if they're not together," she said.



ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM

ITV	CAPITAL
<p>MONDAY 13 March</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Soap: Isidingo the need 10:00 Watoto wetu 11:00 ITV Top 10 rpt 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Igizo Mtego rpt 13:00 Mjue Zaidi 13:45 Art and Lifestyle rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 15:00 Movie: Identity card 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Aibu yako rpt 18:15 Mapishi 18:45 Kesho leo 19:00 Afiya ya Jamii 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Dakika 45 22:00 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 02:00 DWTV</p> <p>TUESDAY 14 March</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Jungu Kuu rpt 11:00 The Base rpt 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Afiya ya jamii rpt 13:00 Kipindi maalum: KTMDA 13:30 Kipindi maalum rpt: Wizaru ya viwanda na biashara 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Yu wapi 18:15 Mapishi rpt 18:30 Uchumi na biashara 19:00 Jarida la wanawake 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Tanzania yetu 21:35 Chetu ni chetu 22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 15 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto 10:30 Shamba lulu rpt 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 The Base rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Ijue Sheria 13:00 Ripoti Maalum rpt 13:30 Tanzania yetu 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 19:00 Usafiri wako 19:30 Uchumi na biashara 20:00 Habari 21:00 Malumbano ya hoja 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>THURSDAY 16 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto 10:30 Shamba lulu rpt 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 The Base rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Ijue Sheria 13:00 Ripoti Maalum rpt 13:30 Tanzania yetu 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 19:00 Usafiri wako 20:00 Habari 21:00 Malumbano ya hoja 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>FRIDAY 17 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Usafiri wako rpt 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 The Base</p>	<p>11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Jagina rpt 13:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 17:30 Ibada ya kislamu 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mizengwe rpt 18:30 Shamba lulu 19:00 Kipindi Maalum: TMDA 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipima Joto 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>SATURDAY 18 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto wetu 10:00 Shika Bamba 5 10:30 Mjue Zaidi rpt 11:15 The Base rpt 11:45 The Great Queen Seonduk 12:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt 13:15 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 15:30 Igizo rpt: Mapito 16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe 16:20 Igizo: Mtego 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Igizo: Mapito 19:00 Art and lifestyle 19:25 Jungu Kuu 20:00 Habari 21:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo 22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja 22:10 Kesho leo rpt 22:40 Isidingo rpt 01:30 DWTV</p> <p>SUNDAY 19 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Isidingo 11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 12:00 Bongo Movie rpt 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:00 Mwangaza 16:00 The Great queen Seonduk 16:45 ITV Top 10 17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matukio ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Mtego 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko 21:10 Mizengwe 21:30 Mjue Zaidi 22:15 Bongo Movie: 23:45 ITV Top 10 00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost</p>

WORLD

Guangzhou treats all inbound personnel equally, says official

GUANGZHOU

AUTHORITIES in southern China's largest city, Guangzhou have said that the city treats all foreign personnel equally while urging foreign residents to abide by the local epidemic prevention regulations.

"Guangzhou is an open international metropolis and treats all foreign personnel equally. We oppose all forms of differentiation for a specific group of people," Liu said.

"We also hope that foreign residents in Guangzhou can strictly abide by local epidemic prevention regulations and work together with us to do a good job in epidemic prevention and control



African men in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, Aug. 14, 2018. (Xinhua)

and work resumption," said Liu.

Cai Wei, spokesman for the Guangzhou Municipal Public Security Bureau, said all foreigners in Guangzhou should strictly comply with Chinese laws and are obliged to accept the examination of their passports and other identity documents by public security organs.

Since March 27, Guangzhou has demanded all arrivals from overseas undergo a fortnight

quarantine and nucleic acid testing (NAT).

quarantine and nucleic acid testing (NAT).

By Saturday, a total of 4,553 people from high-risk countries had undergone NAT in Guangzhou, 679 people were under centralized medical observation and 3,771 were isolated at home.

Guangzhou had reported a total of 119 imported cases of the novel coronavirus disease as of midnight Saturday, according to Guangzhou mayor Wen Guohui.

Of the 119 imported cases, 25 were foreign nationals and 94 were Chinese nationals. Of the 25 foreign patients, 19 were from Africa, accounting for 76 percent of the total.

Official data showed that as of April 10, there were 30,768 foreigners living in Guangzhou.

The five countries with the largest population in Guangzhou were the Republic of Korea, Japan, the United States, Canada and Russia. A total of 4,553 African nationals, or 14.8 percent of the total number of foreigners, lived in the city. (Xinhua)

'Be messengers of life in a time of death,' pope says on Easter eve

VATICAN CITY



POPE Francis urged people to "not yield to fear" and focused on a "message of hope" as he led an Easter eve Mass in an empty St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday amid the coronavirus pandemic and called for an end to wars.

The vigil, which normally takes place in a church packed with about 10,000 people, was attended by only about two dozen, including a few altar servers and a smaller-than-usual choir.

Because of the coronavirus outbreak, it was scaled back to eliminate several traditional features, such as the baptism of adult converts and a long procession up the main aisle of Christendom's largest church.

Francis (pictured) drew a comparison between the Gospel account of the women who found Jesus' tomb empty on the day Christians believe he rose from the dead and the uncertain state of the world today because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Then too, there was fear about the future and all that would need to be rebuilt. A painful memory, a hope cut short. For them, as for us, it was the darkest hour," Francis said in his homily.

In countries around the world Catholics followed the papal service or Masses said by priests in their own empty churches and broadcast on television or over the internet.

"Do not be afraid, do not yield to fear: This is the message of hope. It is addressed to us, today. These are the words that God repeats to us this very night," Francis said.

He encouraged people to be "messengers of life in a time of death," again condemning the arms trade and urging those better off to help the poor.

"Let us silence the cries of death, no more wars! May we stop the production and trade of weapons, since we need bread, not guns," Francis said.

"Let the abortion and killing of innocent lives end. May the hearts of those who have enough be open to filling the empty hands of those who do not have the bare necessities," he said.

All of the pope's Holy Week activities were modified, taking place with no participation by the public.

It was the same for the culminating event on Easter Sunday, when Francis says Mass and delivers his "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) blessing and message.

The Easter Sunday Mass usually attracts up to 100,000 people in St. Peter's Square. This year, was held inside the church with a symbolic congregation of fewer than 20 people. (Agencies)

US becomes country with most Covid-19 cases, highest death toll

NEW YORK

THE United States has surpassed Italy in the total number of deaths from COVID-19 on Saturday, becoming the country with the most confirmed cases and fatalities worldwide.

According to a running tally kept by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University, the United States has reported 529,951 cases with 20,608 deaths as of 2 a.m. (0600 GMT) yesterday.

Italy has reported 152,271 cases with 19,468 deaths in total and Spain recorded 163,027 cases with 16,606 deaths, according to the tally.

U.S. President Donald Trump approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Wyoming state on Saturday. So far, all 50 states, Washington D.C., the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico have received the declaration for the same reason, the first time in U.S. history, as local media reported. The designation allows state and local governments to gain federal funds and resources such as the Army Corps of Engineers to help combat the pandemic.



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo

California and New York, the two hardest-hit states, have seen the curve of COVID-19 infections flattening in their states during the past few days due to staying-at-home orders and social distancing protocols, and both governors urged residents to keep doing so.

Meanwhile, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said at his daily briefing that he wants to "make sure any decision we make to open the economy is based on what we've learned from our own experience and from other places around the globe."

"Staying at home is literally saving lives. This isn't over yet. We have to keep it up," California Governor Gavin Newsom tweeted on Saturday.

The Empire State has seen 181,825 cases with 8,650 deaths by Saturday night, according to the Johns Hopkins tally. Over 98,000 cases and more than 6,300 fatalities were reported from New York City.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Saturday that all public schools in the city will remain closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year, adding that the decision was not an easy one.

The social distancing strategies have been working, and we cannot risk a resurgence of the virus," the mayor tweeted.

The city is also rapidly moving homeless people from crowded shelters to hotels for better isolation. Seniors and anyone who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 is being prioritized, said the mayor.

Our homeless neighbors living on the street are going through a lot right now, and we're working to bring more and more of them inside," he said. (Xinhua)

From factories in east China to hospitals across Africa, Chinese help boosts confidence in COVID-19 fight

ADDIS ABABA

SOLOMON Ayele, a nurse at an Ethiopian hospital, is defying fear on the frontline of the war against COVID-19, while Africa is bracing for its most difficult time.

The novel coronavirus continues to spread unabated in Africa and a more troubling crisis looms due to a lack of medical supplies on the continent.

Fortunately, leaders of African countries have already proactively implemented prevention and control measures such as allocating funds, locking down cities and mobilizing medical resources to slow the virus spread.

And the international community has also stepped in to help. More and more medical supplies from China and other countries have been distributed to health workers like Ayele to help them fight the common enemy and safeguard their shared future.

UNIFIED EFFORTS

"African countries are fighting the coronavirus against all odds," Ayele said, emphasizing that COVID-19 prevention and control "greatly requires adequate financing and well-built capacity." A lack of medical equipment and experience had restricted his capacity to deal with the



An airport staff offload a consignment of medical equipment donation for COVID-19 that was donated by Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundations to Kenya, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya, March 24, 2020. (Xinhua)

increasing caseload. As a major transit hub in Africa, Ethiopia is among more than a dozen countries the World Health Organization considers as top priority for preparedness against COVID-19.

Since the first confirmed case was reported last month in the country, Ethiopian health authorities have been increasing epidemic response coordination, surveillance, diagnosis and public health education. The government has also set up quarantine centers and equipped Eko Kotebe Hospital in the capital Addis Ababa where Ayele works to house COVID-19 patients.

Ayele is among some 350 healthcare personnel recently trained to

help respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. To alleviate the shortage of medical supplies in Africa, the Chinese government and private sector have stepped up cooperation with African countries.

China's Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation announced on Monday that they had sent the second batch of aid to Africa including ventilators, and the shipment is expected to arrive in Addis Ababa soon. With the help of the Ethiopian government, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and World Food Programme, these supplies will be delivered to each of the 54 African nations.

The first donation, including

masks, test kits, protective suits and face shields and guidelines on tackling COVID-19, was distributed to Ayele and his colleagues two weeks ago. Ayele hailed the help of the Chinese government and the foundations, saying the critical medical supplies will greatly contribute to Africa's fight against the coronavirus.

"The materials would help fill the existing gaps in terms of the pressing shortage of preventive materials and testing kits in Ethiopia and beyond, while the guideline will also help us respond to the epidemic with latest knowledge based on China's experience," he said.

Ethiopian Airlines, the continent's largest carrier in terms of passenger turnover, will distribute the much-needed donation across the 54 African countries. Tewolde Gebremariam, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group, said that the Chinese donation is an exemplary move, demonstrating collaboration and joint efforts in the battle against the epidemic.

"The message is very important. It is a very good example for all over the world that feel panic and blame is not the answer. The answer is organizations, countries, institutions, and governments bringing their resources together to team up to provide

vide this kind of medical supplies for the protection of the people. So, this is a very good example," Gebremariam said.

SOLID SUPPORT

Although China has made progress in containing the COVID-19 epidemic, its medical supply remains tight. However, its government and people believe that it is imperative to extend a helping hand to friends in Africa to help them overcome their difficulty.

Liu Hongjun is running a clothing factory in China's eastern Zhejiang Province, which has turned to manufacture medical equipment such as masks and protective suits.

Not long ago, Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation contacted Liu. "I know how important these materials mean to African people, thus I accepted it without any hesitation," he said.

Two shifts have been arranged for key posts, such as protective clothing and mask production lines, in order to ensure the delivery and the quality of the protective materials," Liu added. Tens of thousands of miles away, Ayele and hundreds of Chinese doctors are using the masks and protective suits produced by Chinese factories like Liu's to help African patients. (Xinhua)

PM Johnson says he owes medics his life as alarm grows over soaring UK death toll

LONDON

PRIME Minister Boris Johnson said he owed his life to hospital staff, in his first comments since leaving intensive care for coronavirus treatment, while his government came under mounting pressure to explain why the death toll was rising so fast.

Britain has reported two days in a row of hospital deaths increasing by more than 900 people. Friday's death toll of 980 surpassed the highest recorded in a single day in Italy, the hardest hit country in Europe so far.

The British government has had to defend its response, which has included carrying out far less testing than in some other European countries and ordering

a lockdown that came comparatively late. Ministers have also resisted apologising for a shortage of protective gear for hospital staff.

Johnson, 55, was taken to St Thomas's Hospital in central London on April 5, suffering from persistent symptoms of the disease caused by the new coronavirus. On April 6 he was moved into intensive care, where he remained until April 9.

"I can't thank them enough. I owe them my life," Johnson said of the staff of Britain's state-run National Health Service at the hospital, in his first comments since being moved back to a regular ward. The comments were released to journalists and confirmed by his office yesterday.

His Downing Street office said Johnson "continues to make very good progress". In his absence, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab is deputising for him. In a sign of the gravity of the emergency, Queen Elizabeth issued her second rallying message in a week, telling the nation that "coronavirus will not overcome us".

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, spiritual leader of the worldwide Anglican communion, delivered an Easter Sunday sermon from the kitchen of his London flat, recorded on his computer tablet.



"WE DO HAVE A PLAN"

Meanwhile, ministers were facing uncomfortable questions about whether the alarming rise in the death toll was due to the relatively late decision to impose a lockdown on March 23.

"Well, different countries have different cycles in terms of where they are in terms of the spread of this pandemic," business minister Alok Sharma told Sky News yesterday when asked to explain the reason for the poor UK numbers.

Health minister Matt Hancock suggested during a BBC radio interview on Saturday that Britain's daily death toll had exceeded Italy's because it had a bigger population. The UK population is about 66 million while Italy's is 60 million.

When asked why Germany, with a population of about 83 million, had much lower numbers, he said: "The German situation is one I look at a lot."

Ministers have insisted that the government took the right steps at the right time, guided by scientific advice.

NHS doctors and nurses across the country are complaining about a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE). About 20 frontline medical staff are reported to have died of the disease after treating patients.

Asked yesterday whether he would apologise over the loss of life in the NHS and the lack of PPE, Sharma replied: "I said I was sorry for the loss of any life in this pandemic but we are facing an unprecedented situation."

"We do have a plan, we are putting that in place, we're making sure that there are millions of PPE kits going out to the frontline, and of course we need to be doing even more."

The new leader of the opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, said the government should acknowledge failings more openly. (Agencies)

Globalization remains irreversible, even amid epidemic

By Yan Yu

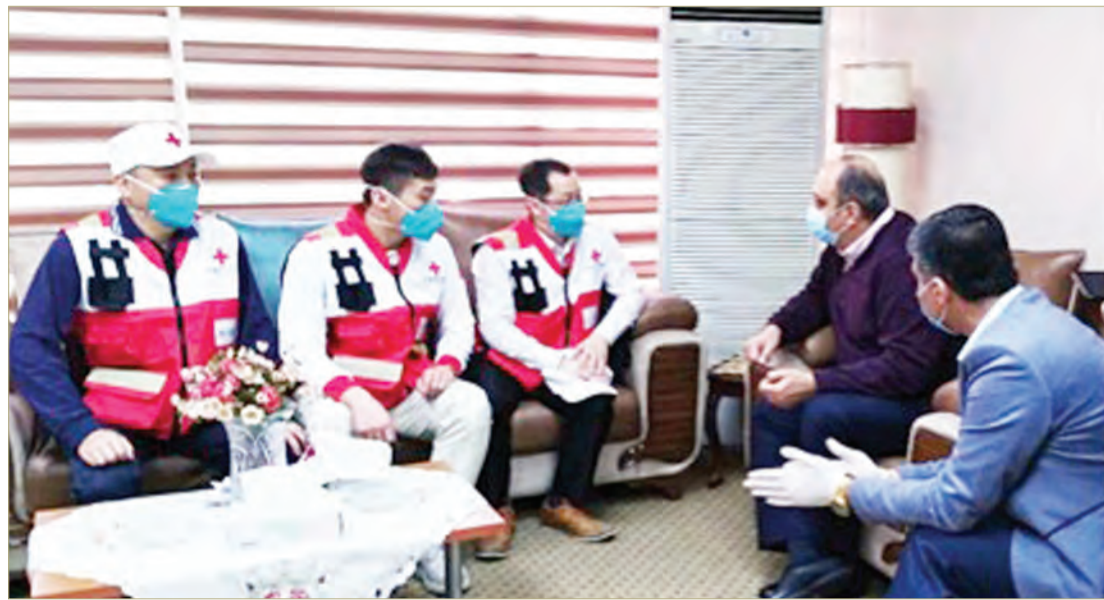
VOICES of anti-globalization spiked despite the global efforts to contain the COVID-19 which is currently spreading to more and more countries.

Some accused globalization for exacerbating the spread of the virus, while some tried to build barriers in the "global village" by instigating tension between races. Some became pessimistic, taking the epidemic as the last straw breaking the back of globalization.

It is true that the prevention and control measures taken by countries have to some extent slowed the transnational flow of personnel, materials and capital, and inevitably brought a temporary impact on the world economy. However, being pessimistic over globalization or discarding it is by no means the right thing to do for the moment.

Take a look at China's interaction with the world since the onset of the COVID-19, you'll find that globalization and international cooperation are exactly an efficient tactic in fighting the epidemic.

The exchange of information remained functional. After the outbreak, China timely informed



Assisted by the Chinese Embassy in Iraq, a group of experts from the Red Cross Society of China discuss COVID-19 prevention and control with officials from Iraq's Ministry of Health and Environment in Baghdad, before making a field trip to Medical City for exchanges of experience, March 9 local time. (Photo from the official website of the Red Cross Society of China)

the international community, and shared the genetic sequence, primer and probe at the first opportunity, laying an important foundation for the world to carry out studies on the virus, researches on test reagent, development of medicines and vaccines, as well as prevention and control efforts.

What remains active is also the flow of materials. Many countries and international organizations donated tremendous prevention materials to China when the lat-

ter was on short supply. Similarly, China also donated \$20 million to the World Health Organization (WHO) to help the global health authority better conduct international cooperation on combating the virus as the epidemic is rapidly penetrating the borders of more and more countries. Besides, China also donated emergency medical supplies to affected countries and organizations including Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, Iran, and African Union.

In addition, exchanges of experience and mutual learning have been running smoothly. The WHO sent a joint mission to China for field inspection in early February, providing China and the world with advice on prevention and control.

On the other hand, China, while working hard to fight the disease at home, shared multiple technical documents with over 100 countries and a dozen of international and regional organiza-



The People's Government of Zhejiang Province holds a delivery ceremony for its donation to Japan and South Korea at Yiwu Airport, Zhejiang, March 12, 2020. Photo by Qian Xusheng/People's Daily Online

tions, such as plans on epidemic prevention and treatment. It also conducted 20 technological exchanges with international and regional organizations and relevant countries through teleconference and other channels.

Cooperation between China and the world has never been impeded by the epidemic. In fact, it is the international cooperation that helps all countries better cope with epidemic, and once again proves that globalization is the

general trend of the times.

The world is a community with a shared future. As the epidemic concerns all, solidarity and cooperation remain the most powerful weapon to prevail over it. All countries should work together, and take it as a new opportunity to promote global governance system featuring cooperation, rather than allowing the forces of anti-globalization and protectionism to grow wild and defame globalization. "This is not the time to give

up. This is not a time for excuses. This is a time for pulling out all the stops," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Globalization will not be reversed, and no country can develop in isolation from the rest of the world. To get around the rampant epidemic, all countries must hold the vision for a community with a shared future for mankind and resort to international cooperation on all fronts, so as to jointly safeguard the shared planet.

China launches active international cooperation to combat Covid-19

By Wu Gang

THE State Council Information Office of China held a press conference on March 26, where officials from the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and National Health Commission (NHC) shared the development on international cooperation in fighting COVID-19 and answered questions from journalists.

According to the press conference, China has offered multilingual prevention and therapeutic plans and held a video conference to share COVID-19 control experiences with the international community. Besides, it also timely shared scientific data, technical results and prevention strategies, shared Chinese experiences and technologies, and rendered assistance and technical support for other affected countries and regions.

So far, the country has offered assistance in 4 batches to 89 countries and 4 international organizations to combat the novel coronavirus, and a fifth batch is currently under planning.

The virus knows no borders or ethnicity, and it can only be defeated by the concerted efforts of all mankind. And that's why the G20 Extraordinary Virtual Leaders' Summit on COVID-19 attracted global attention.

Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui introduced at the conference that the summit was the first major multilateral diplomatic activity joined by Chinese President Xi Jinping since the COVID-19 outbreak. China has achieved prominent results in epidemic prevention and control, and is actively helping other countries in this regard, receiving high reputation from the international society, he said.

After the outbreak of COVID-19, China shared the completed genome sequence of the novel coronavirus with the WHO at the first opportunity, laying an important foundation for global scientists to conduct medicine, vaccine and



Staff members of the Indonesian government count the supplies donated by China at the Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta, March 26. Photo by Xu Wei/People's Daily

therapeutic researches.

Vice Minister of Science and Technology Xu Nanping said global scientists coped with the pandemic together, conducted joint researches, and shared the results. According to him, Chinese scientists, having done substantial researches on medicine development and clinical treatment, have preliminarily formulated a relatively complete technical plan. China will further share the results, conduct international cooperation, and actively launch and join international clinical researches, he added.

Many countries gave China valuable support when the country was at a critical moment of combating the virus. Now, when COVID-19 is basically controlled at home, China is willing to reinforce the pandemic control for these countries by dispatching

medical experts and other forms, upholding the vision of building a community with a shared future, and conveying the confidence to defeat the virus, said Zeng Yixin, deputy director of the NHC.

Zeng said China will take the initiative to share its experiences in treating the disease, and actively share with the international society the latest therapeutic and prevention plans in accordance with the demands in different countries.

In-depth technical exchanges have been conducted by the NHC. It held a video conference to share China's experience with representatives from 77 countries and 7 international organizations who attended, which was viewed by over 100,000 people online, Zeng said. Besides, the NHC also established an online knowledge center



China's National Health Commission convenes an expert meeting on COVID-19 response with Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population, March 26. Photo courtesy of Chinese Embassy in Egypt

of epidemic prevention and clinical treatment, as well as an international expert database, conducting nearly 30 technical exchange conferences with over 100 countries and regions.

It timely responded to the demand of foreign countries and realized precise docking between Chinese and foreign prevention and treatment plans, Zeng added.

So far, China has offered assistance to 89 countries and 4 international organizations. Deng Boqing, deputy head of the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) noted that to actively offer foreign assistance within its capability is an inevitable requirement for China to uphold the right approach to justice and interests and practice the vision of

building a community with a shared future for mankind.

It is also a responsibility of a major country, and a duty bound for a country that had received assistance from its partners during hardships, he added. He said the foreign assistance will also control and lower the risk of imported infections for China.

When COVID-19 is exacerbating and spreading around the globe, the urgent need for the international society is to launch effective joint prevention and control, said the deputy head of the CIDCA, adding that only solidarity can help human beings overcome difficulties, and only joint efforts can help them defeat the virus.

To dispel dark clouds of Covid-19 with solidarity

By Guo Jiping

THE global spread of the novel coronavirus pneumonia is constantly amplifying the importance and urgency of international cooperation.

As the world grapples with COVID-19, a special video summit was convened on March 26 by the Group of 20 leaders.

Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the meeting in Beijing and delivered an important speech, showcasing China's responsibility as a major country, and its resolution to push for joint efforts to combat the virus and stabilize global economy.

China deeply understands the significance for the world to defeat the disease as a country that has been directly threatened. It has taken the most thorough, strict and complete measures to fight the outbreak with the resolve and courage to make painful sacrifices, which is not only responsible for the lives and health of the Chinese people, but also fulfills the country's duty for

global public health. It is an internationally recognized consensus that China's efforts have earned valuable time for the world.

On the first day of the Chinese New Year, the most important traditional festival of China, Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, chaired a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC, making further study of and new arrangements on epidemic prevention and control, and once again mobilizing the country to fight the epidemic.

On Feb. 10, Xi inspected the novel coronavirus pneumonia prevention and control work in Beijing, Calling for stronger confidence, firmer determination and decisive measures, he said the country must rely on the people, resolutely contain the spread of the epidemic and win the battle against the epidemic.

In the fight against COVID-19, all Chinese have been mobilized. Hubei province's capital Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, is



Patients wave goodbye to medical staff before leaving the Huoshenshan Hospital, March 14. Eight patients were discharged from the second ward of the sixth infection department of the hospital on that day. Photo by Liu Yibo/People's Daily Online

a major battlefield where heroic people served the overall interests of the country and fought indomitably against the virus. Over 40,000 medical staff went to Hu-

bei for assistance; 19 provinces offered partner assistance; and makeshift hospitals Huoshenshan and Leishenshan were built within days. Such miraculously

effective actions demonstrated the institutional power of the super large country.

Thanks to the relentless efforts, China's epidemic prevention and

control showed positive signs and achieved initial progress.

At the critical moment of the fight against the virus, Xi had an inspection tour to Wuhan on March 10, calling on the city to stay cautious as it had in the beginning, make persistent efforts and take prevention and control of the novel coronavirus outbreak as the top priority and most important task. Besides, he also urged the city to stay focused and keep strict implementation of measures, so as to secure a victory for Hubei and Wuhan.

Hailing that the high speed and massive scale of China's moves are rarely seen in the world, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the experience of China is worth learning for other countries.

Bruce Aylward, team leader of the China-WHO joint mission on COVID-19 noted that China's strong measures of intervention have significantly altered the curve of the spreading virus on diagrams, and every difference

and every line represent a powerful decision by policymakers and tremendous efforts benefiting a large number of Chinese people.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres also hailed China's efforts to contain COVID-19. He said that with resolve and resilience, China will not only defeat the epidemic soon, but also achieve a quick economic recovery. This will be in the interest of the Chinese people and a strong contribution to the world, he added.

The fight against COVID-19 further enriched and deepened the world's understanding of China. Both the powerful and effective organizing and mobilizing capabilities of the Chinese government, as well as the cohesion and readiness of the Chinese people in the face of the crisis explain to the international society why China is able to defeat the virus.



Billie Jean King

King says women athletes should stay focused on fight for equality

NEW YORK

TENNIS great Billie Jean King on Saturday said that despite the myriad of setbacks facing female athletes due to the coronavirus pandemic, they should not lose sight of the need to continue their push for equality.

Speaking on an online panel event titled #WeKeepPlaying hosted by King's Women's Sports Foundation and Yahoo Sports, the American said she hoped to provide comfort and encouragement to the thousands who tuned in to view it.

"But I also want them to think about the future as well," said King, the 12-time Grand Slam champion who famously waged a decades-long battle for equal pay in professional tennis.

King said her early goals for women's tennis were to make sure all girls would have a place to compete, that women would be valued more for their accomplishments than their looks, and to ensure female athletes earned enough to make a living.

"Many of these athletes still do not have the dreams and the opportunities that they deserve," she said.

While strides have been made toward pay equality in tennis, women's ice hockey still has a long way to go, said Kendall Coyne Schofield, a forward for the United States women's national team.

"Right now the professional landscape of women's hockey is a disaster," said Coyne Schofield, an Olympic gold medalist who

played for NWHL's Minnesota Whitecaps.

"Until we can show young girls the dream of growing up to be a professional athlete who can make a living doing it, our goal has not been met," she said.

The formation last year of the Professional Women's Hockey Players Association is a good step that will help the players speak with one voice as they fight for a sustainable professional women's league that pays living wages, she said.

U.S. national team soccer midfielder Carli Lloyd said her World Cup-winning squad's ongoing lawsuit against their federation over allegations of gender discrimination and lower wages is already having a positive ripple effect.

"Obviously we've been very successful over the years on the field but more importantly what we're doing off the field has been so powerful," she said.

"We are empowering so many other women across the globe to fight to make things better.

She said some international players are pushing to get better collective bargaining agreements and are starting to see more investment in the women's game.

"When you hear about that investment, you are seeing the product on the field," she said.

"So we need to continue to do that for women's soccer."

REUTERS

Sports events around the world hit by coronavirus pandemic - 1

LONDON

MAJOR sports events around the world that have been hit by the coronavirus pandemic:

OLYMPICS

* The postponed Olympic Games will now begin on July 23, 2021 and run until Aug. 8.

* World Athletics has suspended Olympic qualification until December.

PARALYMPICS

The postponed Paralympic Games will run from Aug. 24-Sept. 5, 2021.

OLYMPIC TRIALS

* U.S. trials for wrestling (April 4-5) were postponed.

* U.S. Rowing postponed its team trials.

* U.S. diving trials (April 3-5) were postponed. All USA Diving events postponed for next 30 days.

WORLD GAMES

* The 2021 World Games have been pushed back by a year to avoid clashing with the Tokyo Olympics.

COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

* The Court of Arbitration for Sport said all cases were being put on hold until May. No in-person hearings will be held before May 1.

NORTH AMERICA

* The NBA suspended its season.

* The NHL suspended its season.

* The MLB further delayed its 2020 season's opening day of March 26 after CDC calls for gatherings of 50 or more people to be cancelled or postponed for eight weeks.

* Boston Marathon organisers postpone the race from April 20 to Sept. 14.

* The National Hockey League told players, including those from outside North America, that they can return home and should self-quarantine through March 27, lengthening the period the NHL had said it was pausing its season.

SOCCER

* Aleksander Ceferin, the head of European soccer's governing body UEFA, said that the current season could be "lost" if it is unable to re-start by the end of June.

* Euro 2020 and Copa America were postponed. The two tournaments will now be staged from June 11 to July 11, 2021.

* FIFA has agreed to delay the first edition of its revamped Club World Cup due to be held in 2021.

* UEFA put all club and national team competitions for men and women on hold until further notice.

* The men's and women's Champions League finals and Europa League final originally scheduled for May have been postponed.

* Europe's top leagues remain suspended but German Bundesliga clubs have returned to training with tight restrictions.

* The Scottish FA have extended the suspension of all levels of the game to at least June 10.

* South America's two biggest club competitions, the Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana, were suspended until at least May 5.

* CONCACAF suspended all competitions, including the Champions League and men's Olympic qualifiers.

* U.S. Major League Soccer suspended its

Marijani Rajabu, music and image of the family among Tanzanian youth

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL ENEZA

MUSIC critics on radios at times dwell on the need to look intensely into the work of artists who have gone by, where the emphasis is once in a while on the person himself, but gradually one starts to get the feeling that it is an epoch that is involved. For once, the lines separating what one could call meaningful music about what one expects in life or in forging relationships, different from frivolous music where only enjoyment appears to be pushing the music, also relate to what is modern and what is traditional. It is difficult to hear frivolous traditional music which merely talks about women's appearance or one's purely manly sentiments about that, and conversely.

At present it is hard to hear a straightforward song that relates to intimations where not only is the purpose marriage, but where the parents are also substantially involved. That was the principal anchor of songs by Mbaraka Mwinshhehe for instance, who despite having the cool town of Morogoro as his working station. The flavor of what he was singing sounded distinctly coastal, and biographers or critics generally have underlined his coastal moorings of birth and upbringing, but went to school in Morogoro. He then found a sanctuary to develop his career.

Having the parents and society as a whole around the purpose of forming relationships isn't just a Mbaraka preserve but characterizes Tanzania's classical dance music. It was when the old rumba music characterized by a cool and slow beat, as well as singing that wasn't different in pace from ordinary conversation



The late Marijani Rajabu

and thus easy to follow for adults, still dominated, before what is known as 'kavasha' or it is better spelt as 'cavasha' took the scene gradually in neighbouring Congo. And in Tanzania it was Marijani Rajabu who appeared to pioneer rather fast singing, which he was doing already as the new style emerged in the mid-1970s but this intensified.

At the time that Marijani Rajabu was rising to the stage, first with Dar International and then reaching heights of fame with Safari Trippers, a change seemed to start being noticed - with plenty of hindsight, of course. It is a change from the classic village setting where youths were still obedient to and often arranged marriage issues from that location and then the wife comes to town, a thematic element in musical imagination that appears to dissipate as time

went on. It was key to several compositions of Mbaraka Mwinshhehe, who was on the scene earlier than Marijani.

What musicians do in life or when they move from one part to another is a mixture of personal fortunes and collective environments, for instance interminable crises in the Congo forced out many musicians, but some especially talented ones cultivated favor with the powers that be. Franco, or Luambo by his later designation greatly succeeded in this orientation, if some may call it opportunism, such that a campaign song for General Mobutu (Nobiso candidate, Mobutu Sese - Our candidate, Mobutu) has always been seen as a great example of electoral propaganda. Many others opted to go Paris, or at times Belgium, but their success was by and large gradual.

When one compares that period to the later decades, when the giants of African and Tanzanian classical music were out of the stage a long time ago - Marijani Rajabu for instance died at the age of 40 in 1995, a legend despite a youthful age as yet, current musicians were toddlers. Their environment has few of the legacies of village obedience, obtaining a wife via a middle person (as in Mbaraka's famous song of dowry not coming three months after the middle person was given the cash), etc. Their environment if one where one to one romances abound in the city, the village has been totally forgotten, and parents are nowhere to be seen in songs like 'Moyo...'

Where there appears to be something like a family environment it is really a neighbourhood of sorts where there are stories of cheating rather than procedural consultation if there is a problem as was the case with Mbaraka, Marijani and a few others. When for instance one compares the image of 'shemeji' (either neighbor or brother in law) in one recent song and in Salum Abdullah, in the latter it was a reprimand, that one can't be a brother in law and put off the lights, while in the recent song the young or perhaps poorer fellow admits to have lost the contest. Grudgingly...

While it is easy to say that music 'evolves' there are problems that can't easily be sorted out, for instance what or if there is a next stage in Tanzanian popular music, if dance music shall be with us once again (there is a form of it, in rhythms and blues, and their compositions are serene, much less wild than Bongo flava). In a sense society is acclimatizing to this situation by replays or inviting bands to weddings where classical dance music is what people wish to hear, not this frivolity and disrespect from youthful stars of the current generation. We don't lose hope, do we?



FILE PHOTO: The Olympic rings are pictured at dusk through a steel fence, at the waterfront area of the Odaiba Marine Park, after the postponing of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, due to the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Tokyo, Japan March 25, 2020. REUTERS

season.

* Asian and South American qualifying matches for 2022 World Cup postponed.

* New seasons in the Chinese, Japanese and South Korean leagues were postponed.

* Asian Champions League: Matches involving Chinese clubs Guangzhou Evergrande, Shanghai Shenhua and Shanghai SIPG were postponed. The start of the knockout rounds was moved back to September.

* The Asian Football Confederation postponed all AFC Cup 2020 matches scheduled for March and April.

* The Brazilian football Confederation suspended all national competitions until further notice.

* The CAF postponed the African Nations Championship, a national team tournament for home-based players only

(Cameron; April 4-25).

* Semi-finals of the CAF Champions league (May 1-3) and CAF Confederation Cup (May 8-10) were postponed.

* The Mauritius FA have cancelled the remainder of the football season.

* This year's International Champions Cup, a pre-season tournament featuring Europe's leading clubs, has been cancelled.

ATHLETICS

* The World Athletics Championships scheduled for 2021 in Eugene, Oregon have been postponed to the summer of 2022 because of the Olympic Games rescheduling.

* The Diamond League postponed its first five meetings of the 2020 season due to be held in April and May in Qatar, China, Stockholm, Naples and Rabat.

* The World Athletics Indoor Championships (Nanjing, March 13-15) were postponed. They will be held in the same city from March 19-21, 2021.

* The London, Paris and Barcelona marathons were postponed.

AUSTRALIAN RULES

* The Australian Football League's attempt to forge on with the season despite the virus outbreak lasted one round before it was shut down on March 22.

BADMINTON

* The Badminton World Federation (BWF) cancelled the last five tournaments in the qualification period for the Olympics, making the All England Open played from March 11-15 the final event to count towards qualification.

* The Indonesia Open (June 16-21) was among a host of bad-

minton events that have been cancelled while tournaments over the next three months were also suspended in Australia, Thailand and Russia.

* The BWF is seeking clarification from Danish authorities on how the ban on large gatherings will affect their ability to stage the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals in August.

BASEBALL

* The final qualification tournament in Taiwan for the Olympics was put back from April to June 17-21, while the March 22-26 qualification event in Arizona was postponed.

* Japan's professional league postponed the start of the season.

BASKETBALL

* The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) has postponed the start of its 2020 regular season, originally scheduled to run from May 15-Sept. 20.

* The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has postponed the men's Olympic qualifiers, European Championship and the Americas Championship by a year.

BOXING

* The European, American and final world qualifying boxing tournaments for the Tokyo Olympics were suspended on March 16. The European qualifier in London that was underway and due to run to March 24, ended after the evening session on March 17.

* Anthony Joshua's world heavyweight title defence against Bulgarian Kubrat Pulev at Tottenham Hotspur's stadium on June 20 has been postponed.

CANOING

* All events originally scheduled for May, including the Paracanoe World Championships, canoe sprint Olympic qualifiers, and the ICF canoe sprint World Cup have been cancelled.

* Pre-Olympic canoe slalom training camps in Tokyo in May, June and July have all been cancelled.

* The opening two ICF canoe slalom World Cups, set for June in Italy and France, have been postponed.

REUTERS

Auba told to leave Arsenal for more ambitious club

LONDON

PIERRE Alain Mounquengui, the president of Gabon's football association (FEGAFOOT), has questioned whether Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will win the honours that his talent deserves if he remains at Arsenal, and has urged him to "secure a contract with a more ambitious club."

The 30-year-old striker is the reigning equal top scorer in the English Premier League after netting 22 goals for the Gunners last term, but he is yet to clinch any silverware since swapping Borussia Dortmund for the Emirates Stadium in 2018.

For Mounquengui, the Londoners' ambition cannot match that of some of Europe's biggest clubs, where he says the forward may be better placed to win major honours. "I don't want to say that Arsenal aren't ambitious, but Arsenal don't have ambitions as high as some other clubs as far as Europe is concerned," Mounquengui told ESPN.

"So if Pierre could secure a contract with a more ambitious club, he'd definitely find his place there."

"On an individual level, we all consider him to be among the best players in the world, but the advice I give to him is to continue to work and to attract the attention of the biggest clubs and the most ambitious clubs."

Despite netting double figures in each of the past nine seasons across France, Germany and England, Aubameyang has only a German Cup, a German Super Cup, and a French League Cup to show for his im-

mense talent and consistency in front of goal.

Since signing for the Gunners in 2018 -- as the reigning Bundesliga top scorer -- he's been a defeated finalist twice, in the Carabao Cup final in 2018 and the Europa League last season.

He has been linked in transfer talk this year with Inter Milan and most recently with Barcelona.

"Aubameyang is a world-class player," Mounquengui said, "but for him, or anyone else in Europe who hasn't won a major honour, football is a collective sport."

"Right now, he's at Arsenal, and he's won nothing here, so it's a collective failing."

Aubameyang, who had scored 17 goals in the Premier League before the campaign was suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak, is approaching the final year of his contract at the Emirates, and Mounquengui insists that it's not too late for the striker to find a club where he can secure one of the game's big prizes.

"All Gabonese people see Aubameyang at this level, where he can now end his career at a major club," the FEGAFOOT chief said, "and, above all, beyond individual trophies, to bring home a major competition."

"Auba has the habit of saying that if club honours could come, that wouldn't be bad, but that he could also settle for the personal accolades he's won. As I said, he's a world-class player."

(Agencies)

Dalglish hails 'brilliant staff' after positive coronavirus test

LONDON

LIVERPOOL legend Kenny Dalglish was discharged from hospital on Saturday after testing positive for coronavirus and hailed medical staff as "absolutely brilliant."

Dalglish, 69, found he had the virus after being admitted to hospital on Wednesday for treatment for a separate infection which required intravenous antibiotics.

"They (the hospital staff) were absolutely brilliant," Dalglish told the Sunday Post.

"As a nation, we are all very fortunate to have them and I wish them all well as they work tirelessly to help the country through this pandemic."

He added: "People may think my name got me the best of care but every patient in the National Health Service gets the best of care."

On Friday, Dalglish's family said that he had tested positive for COVID-19 despite having previously displayed no symptoms of the illness.

Earlier Saturday, Dalglish's son thanked the world of football for the "truly humbling" messages of support.

Paul Dalglish, also a former player, tweeted: "It's not my place to comment on my old man, he can do that for himself in due course."

"Truly humbling messages from supporters of all teams."

"I'm sure we can all agree this is more important than football and that we are all united to support the NHS. Stay safe everyone."

Dalglish's daughter, Sky Sports presenter Kelly Cates, also shared a

message of thanks to fans for their kind words and well wishes.

"Thank you so much for your lovely messages and I'm really sorry I can't reply to them all," she tweeted.

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker said on Twitter: "Love from Becker family to Sir Kenny Dalglish!!"

Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher tweeted: "Hopeful Kenny will be rid of the virus ASAP."

Ian Rush formed a prolific partnership with Dalglish during their playing days at Liverpool and the Welshman took to Twitter to give his old team-mate his best wishes.

"Wishing a speedy recovery to the best... Sir Kenny Dalglish. Get well soon," he wrote.

Dalglish won the Scottish league title with Celtic as a player on four occasions before signing for Liverpool in 1977.

At Anfield, he captured eight English league titles, two FA Cups, five League Cups and three European Cups as a player and in two managerial spells.

In his Liverpool playing career, he scored 172 goals in 515 games.

As well as his role in Liverpool's golden era in the 1970s and 1980s, Dalglish received plaudits for supporting victims' families after 96 fans died in the 1989 Hillsborough stadium disaster.

He also coached Blackburn to the 1995 Premier League title.

Almost 10,000 people in Britain have so far died as a result of the coronavirus.

AFP

Pogba 'hungry to come back' from injury

LONDON

MANCHESTER United star Paul Pogba said he is eager to return from a lengthy spell on the sidelines when football resumes following the coronavirus pandemic.

The World Cup winner has been limited to just eight appearances for United this season after battling a nagging ankle injury.

"I'm already training and touching the ball," Pogba, who hasn't played since December 26, told the United Podcast.

"I've been frustrated, a long time ago. Now I'm almost there, so I'm just thinking about getting back and training fully with the team and ev-

erything."

"You think bad but I've never had something like this in my career, so I always take it in a good way. It makes me more hungry to come back and do well. And, yeah, it just shows me as well how much I love football."

Pogba's agent Mino Raiola has hinted the 27-year-old could leave Old Trafford if he is unhappy at the end of the season.

However, the Premier League has been put on hold indefinitely due to the spread of the deadly virus.

"You have to be very patient because, well my injury, I don't know if people really know what happened," Pogba added. AFP

Football and rap, a perfect match in working-class Marseille

MARSEILLE

MARSEILLE has the flow. Rap resonates at the Velodrome and references to OM infiltrate the airwaves, but why are the links with urban music and the club stronger here than anywhere else in Ligue 1?

"The marriage between OM and rap was obvious," Sat l'Artificier, a former member of Fonky Family, one of the region's most prominent rap groups in the 1990s and 2000s, tells AFP.

"A working-class city, with a working-class sport and working-class music like rap."

To illustrate the point, other than the timeless classic "Jump" by Van Halen, hip hop accounts for the rest of the soundtrack pumping out at the Velodrome, the club's 67,000-capacity stadium in the Mediterranean port city.

The evening begins with Bouga's "Belsunce Breakdown" as the players shuffle out for warm-ups, then just before the teams are announced images of the city and its fans are projected against a backdrop of "Bad boys de Marseille" by Akhenaton, a singer with IAM, Marseille's biggest rap group.

After home wins, the sound system blasts out "A la bien" by Soprano, another Marseille native and supporter.

"Rap and football, we're in two very similar universes," says Herve Philippe, the club's chief marketing and media officer as he reflects on the electric atmosphere, currently on hold during the coronavirus pandemic.

- City ambassador - "Marseille is a rap city," adds Kheops, the "musical architect of the group IAM, the first on the Marseille rap scene at the start of the 1990s.

Listing the likes of Soprano and



Local boy Boubacar Kamara (C) is a product of the Marseille academy (AFP Photo)

Jul, Kheops says all these artists have "OM in their blood".

"All the youngsters in the north and south stands listen to rap," he adds.

Marseille is without question "a rap stronghold", but Sat is keen to highlight the club's role in it all, with OM long upholding the link through various collaborations.

The emblematic Akhenaton designed the club's European shirt for the 2012-13

campaign and Soprano, in 2007, filmed the clip for his "Hallah hallah" hit at the Velodrome.

The end of the video shows the musician returning the stadium keys to the late former president Pape Diouf.

Soprano was even named a club ambassador.

"It's no small achievement," says Sat. "Imagine, a little Marseille boy with Comoros roots and from Plan d'Aou, one of the

poorest neighbourhoods, on the outskirts of the city, an ambassador of the biggest French club. It sends a strong message!"

More recently, Alonzo, alongside Soprano formerly part of the Psy 4 de la rime group, another pillar of Marseille rap, has worked with sportswear giant Puma, shooting a commercial alongside Diego Maradona to promote the club's home kit.

- Social media presence -

Sat himself has recently been sharing the microphone with longtime stadium announcer Dede Fournel.

Soprano concerts have filled up the Velodrome three times, and Jul was expected to do the same in June.

Marseille's newest rap sensation has featured players in his music videos, including ex-France international Remy Cabella.

The club itself also organises 'OM Sessions' -- working with budding artists to produce a series of freestyle videos.

"We offer our platform, which is international, to local artists who are not yet very well known, for an OM freestyle," explains Philippe.

The clips are shot at the Velodrome or La Comanderie, the training centre, interspersed with shout-outs to players and specific catchphrases. They generate hundreds of thousands of views on the club's YouTube channel, such as "A la Boli" by Ilies.

"For more than 10 years OM have maintained very strong links with the rappers in the city," says Sat.

The connection remains strong with the younger generation too, with Drime's "Bouba Kamara" song a tribute to the rise of Boubacar Kamara from the working-class area of La Soude to the Marseille first team.

AFP

Belarus soccer continues amid virus anxiety and empty stands

MINSK

BELARUS is the only country in Europe still playing soccer amid the coronavirus pandemic but a growing number of fans are boycotting league matches, anxious about catching the disease.

In the western city of Grodno, local team FC Neman Grodno drew with FC Belshina Bobruisk on Friday in front of almost empty stands. Just 253 people attended, compared to last year when Neman's games drew crowds of around 1,500 people.

The league has proved an unlikely draw for fans overseas who are starved of matches in their own countries. In choosing to stay open, it took its cue from President Alexander Lukashenko, who has resisted imposing strict lockdown measures.

"Of course, it is the main problem," said Belshina coach Eduard Graboyev, when asked about the lack of fans.

"Because football is for spectators. And when you come to a absolutely half-empty stadium, especially such a good one like here in Grodno, it is a bit uncomfortable."

Even Neman Grodno's own fans urged people to keep away.

"Let's stay home, reduce the risks associated with the spread of coronavirus, protect ourselves and our loved ones," they said in a statement.

Before the match started, the Neman players applauded the empty stands in support for spectators staying away.

The Belarus football federation initially explained its decision to continue because only a small number of coronavirus cases had been recorded in the eastern European country, but more recently they have declined comment.

The latest figures show Belarus has 2,226 cases, with 23 deaths.

The clubs say they must comply with the federation's decision.

"The federation decided to play - so we play," Neman's coach Igor Kovalovich said, adding the club was taking appropriate safety measures like using hand sanitizers and making sure that fans do not sit close to each other.

Supporters like Vladimir, who came



Belarus soccer continues amid virus anxiety and empty stands. Reuters

to the stadium, had few concerns.

"Am I worried or not worried? I guess most likely not," he said. "Because first of all there are

not many people coming to watch football, there are no crowds. And all measures are taken at the stadium."

But others are not so san-

guine. Nikolay Zolotov is a Belarusian who plays for Russian club Ural Yekaterinburg.

In an interview with tribuna.com, he compared

the situation to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident in the former Soviet Union, where the authorities concealed the scale of the disaster to the general public for a long time.

"No one really knows how many people are sick, where they are sick, how they are treated," he was quoted as saying. "I thought: has nothing really changed in 34 years?"

Zolotov lives in Vitebsk, which ranks second, after Minsk, in the number of coronavirus cases.

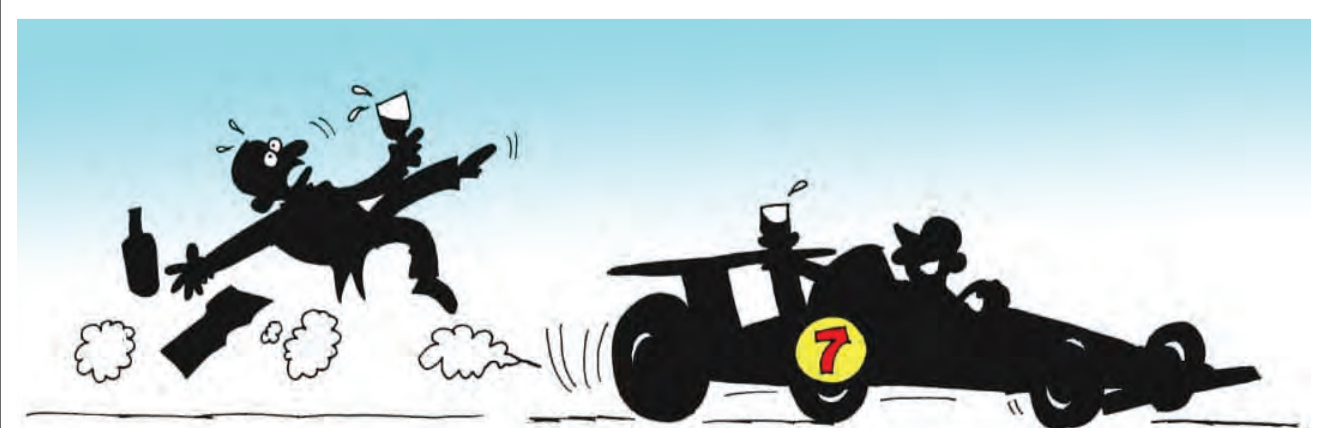
Lukashenko, who has ruled the country with an iron fist since 1994, has called fears about coronavirus a "psychosis", prescribed drinking vodka and going to saunas to battle the disease, and said he was more worried about the economy.

At a meeting with officials on April 7, he said he could easily introduce quarantine measures within 24 hours.

"But what will we eat?," he added.

REUTERS

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Football and rap, a perfect match in working-class Marseille

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

TONIGHT @ 9:00

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 S5ELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNews
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 5SPORTS LIVE
22:30 Bongo Hits

TONIGHT @ 9:00

UJENZI

TONIGHT ON EATV
Find out how using glass blocks from Canghui Traders Limited can improve your home decor

And Tanfix Quality Choice has an innovative solution for wall fungus

It's all on Ujenzi at 9PM

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM
DAR ES SALAAM

Zambian sports fans urged to abide by Coronavirus measures

LUSAKA

FOOTBALL Association of Zambia (FAZ) Technical Director, Lyson Zulu, has urged his fellow countrymen to observe the measures that have been put in place to halt the spread of the coronavirus in the country.

Zambia currently has seen 40 cases of the virus in the country with two deaths recorded so far, with the best defence against the spread of the pandemic being the World Health Organization (WHO) regulations around social distancing.

"I want to encourage everybody to follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization with regards the prevention of the coronavirus," Zulu said in a video posted to the Zambia Soccer Pundits Facebook page.

"Remember to wash your hands regularly, use hand sanitizer, observe social distancing, avoid crowded places and stay at home."

Youth coach Aaron Kawanga says it is frustrating for everybody to have to sit on the sidelines, but it is the right thing to do.

"We need to observe as much as we can social distancing. I know my colleagues are eager to start coaching again, but I would like to advise everybody to stay safe. Zambia needs all of us," he said.

National handball team goalkeeper Richard Mulenga says corporates and those that can afford to should play a leading role in helping the poor in the country to navigate through the pandemic.

"COVID-19 is real, let's stay safe," Mulenga said. "Let's follow the important measures that the government and minister of health have put in place. I am appealing to the well-wishers to come on board to help and donate hand sanitizers for those who cannot manage to buy."

"There are many in the community who cannot afford masks or hand sanitizers, come on board and help us. If we work as a team we shall overcome COVID-19."

Zambian fans should adhere to the guidelines laid out by WHO in the bid to combat the coronavirus outbreak, which include:

Wash your hands frequently: Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

Maintain social distancing: Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth: Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

Practice respiratory hygiene: Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early: Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

Dar arts center hosts quarantine residency project



Visual artist, Safina Kimbokota, one of organizers of a recent art exhibition, which took place at Chinese Cultural Center in Dar es Salaam gearing towards celebrating female visual artists, poses for a picture with one of her works at the event.

By Guardian Reporter

DAR ES SALAAM's arts center, known as Nafasi Arts Space, is, in collaboration with several international partners, hosting an artist residency project, dubbed 'Quarantine Residency'.

Sporting activities and other gatherings in Tanzania have been suspended as per the directives by the government with a view to curbing Coronavirus disease pandemic.

The center disclosed in a statement the project invites artists to submit work made in quarantine.

The artists should as well present a photo of their working space, and a reflection on what it means to create in quarantine.

"As more nations decide to impose quarantines on their citizens or those arriving from abroad, many

people will find themselves stuck inside their homes, in hotels or other designated quarantine facilities," the statement said.

"We invite artists (or anyone who wishes to participate) to use this period of imposed quarantine as a 'residency' opportunity, to create artwork emerging from this experience of quarantine."

"If you are in a country or locality that has not yet had such a quarantine imposed upon you, we nevertheless invite you to participate."

"While this is a moment of great difficulty

for many, there are already many stories of people using this time creatively."

In this otherwise challenging moment in human history, the statement disclosed, the coronavirus and associated quarantine is providing something like a common or unifying experience.

In addition to the artwork that is made during the period of quarantine, the statement added, the project hosts would also like to collect the stories of this experience.

"We would like to collect a short bio of the

artist/participant, a photograph of the space of quarantine, and some short description of the time in quarantine."

The elements- the artist, the artwork, space and experience of quarantine- will be combined to create an exhibition, initially online.

"We are in discussions with a number of galleries to present a physical exhibition of selected work at a later date," the center disclosed in the statement.

"We accept submissions of any form of artwork, provided it was created during a period of quarantine or self iso-

lation."

"Our project is not an artist residency in a traditional sense, but a conceptual one."

The center moreover disclosed it is inviting artists to treat the current moment, when they are under quarantine, as they would an artist residency.

"For some artists this period will mean they are unable to access their studio spaces, others will be working at home, where perhaps much of their art is already made."

"Others will be in quarantine in other spaces, in hotels or specific quarantine facilities."

"Almost everyone will be experiencing a significant change to their usual life, and perhaps will experience a change in perspective as a result. That is why we chose to name this project in this way."

As part of the residency, the center noted, it will choose a group of artists each week throughout the submission and selection period to participate in online discussions, artist talks and critiques of their work with the other artists and curators.

"Right now the global situation means it is difficult to give a definite location or time for the gallery exhibition, but we are in discussion with our exhibition partners about how and when the show will happen no fee submissions," the center said.

The center had early this year hosted solo exhibition by Zanzibar's visual artist, Raza Mohamed, dubbed 'Reflections'.

More than 500 people visited the exhibition over the two weeks it was on display in Nafasi Arts Center's great hall.

In his curatorial note, curator Jesse Gerard Mpango said: "The singular advantage we have over time is patience, that change of attitude that can in one moment turn inaction into harmony, unite motion and stillness."

"With a career of over forty years and hundreds of works to his name, Mohamed Raza's brush strokes are filled with patience and attending stillness."

Ian Chappell on cricket and pandemics

SYDNEY

THE current testing times are demanding a lot of citizens round the world. I have learned that rules that apply to athletes prospering at sport are also helpful in living life.

With the Covid-19 pandemic biting hard, citizens of all countries are being asked to display - among other attributes - patience, determination, and a bit of initiative.

These are qualities essential to playing Test cricket at a high level. To highlight the point I have chosen two particularly influential innings.

The first one is a Sachin Tendulkar masterpiece in Chennai in 1998. His brilliant second-innings 155 won the Test for India, but it wouldn't have happened without the initiative displayed by Tendulkar in the lead-up to the series.

Tendulkar asked tall former India allrounder Ravi Shastri how he should cope with champion Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne if he went round

the wicket to bowl into the rough.

Shastri's reply was tinged with common sense. "Because of my long reach," he replied, "I had a defensive antidote to Warne bowling in the rough, but you don't. You'll have to devise an attacking option to combat Warne bowling in the footmarks."

Following that sound advice, Tendulkar spent time at the MRF nets - where he deliberately scuffed an area outside leg stump - facing the wristspin of for-

mer Indian leggie Laxman Sivaramakrishnan.

Fast forward to the fourth day of a tightly contested match where India are in trouble.

Tendulkar, having been dismissed cheaply by Warne in the first innings, strides to the crease with his team two down and only 44 runs in front. The ball is spinning sharply and Warne, boosted by a four-wicket haul in the first innings, is confident.

Tendulkar struggles to assert any authority early

on and Warne, sensing his opponent is vulnerable, opts to come round the wicket.

It's rare that a Test match is so finely balanced on the fourth day with the champions of each team doing battle with each other. At that moment the result was on the line.

Tendulkar's determination and initiative were rewarded when he put his well-thought-out plan into operation.

He immediately attacked deliveries pitching in the

footmarks, and after a series of electrifying shots reached and cleared the boundary. Warne reluctantly went back over the wicket.

Tendulkar had won the battle and India would go on to win the Test.

The other innings that highlights patience and determination for me was played by Australian opener Ian Redpath at the MCG in 1976.

It was late January, a steaming hot day with temperatures in excess of 38 C, and Redpath was charged with the job of subduing the West Indies pace attack.

Redpath is around 184 cm and 70 kilos, so he didn't have any excess weight to shed out in the middle of this steaming cauldron.

His team-mates joked that it was easy for him to handle the West Indies bouncers because all he had to do was turn side on and they had virtually no target to hit.

On this occasion Redpath swayed, ducked and bobbed his head to avoid

the bouncers.

He patiently picked off any loose deliveries and defied the West Indies pacemen for all but the last half-hour's play.

He scored a century and when he was finally dismissed in the shadow of stumps, he was red-faced and exhausted but he had done his job.

Australia were eventually dismissed for a challenging 351. When Redpath scored a follow-up 70 in the second innings the target was too distant even for a strong West Indies batting line-up that included Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards. Australia duly completed the victory.

Redpath claimed the Man-of-the Match award, but more importantly he won the respect of his team-mates for his patience and determination in trying circumstances.

Combine Tendulkar's initiative and determination with Redpath's patient courage and you have some of the qualities required to survive this devastating pandemic.

AGENCIES

Flexibles by David Chikoko

