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UK scientists differ on Covid-19 vaccine tests

LONDON

SCIENTISTS fear there could be major delays in producing a Covid-19 vaccine with current UK infection rates remaining low, requiring lengthy waiting times to show if candidate products are working.

Some researchers are now taking the view that UK authorities ought to consider radical alternative measures to speed up the development of vaccines.

In particular, they argue that Britain should consider accepting volunteers to be infected as part of vaccine-testing projects.

Such a proposal would be in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) proposals to set up human challenge trials, experts assert.

Earlier this month, WHO headquarters issued a 19-page set of guidelines on how Covid-19 vaccine trials ought to be organised.

But some UK scientists are horrified by human challenge trials for a Covid-19 vaccine, causing serious illness and possibly deaths of volunteers deliberately infected with the virus.

The dilemma was summed up by Jonathan Ives of the Centre for Ethics in Medicine at Bristol University. He said that

“Earlier this month, the WHO issued a 19-page set of guidelines on how these trials might operate

healthy people would be putting their lives at risk for the good of society at large.

As taking that risk could speed up vaccine development and save lives, “there could be grounds for going ahead with challenge trials, though it would be based on a very finely balanced argument.”

Figures released last week suggest about 7 per cent of the UK population was infected with the Covid-19 virus, which scientists say is a relatively low level of infection that poses problems for testing vaccines.

“A big enough number of volunteers has to be exposed to the virus to see if a vaccine protects them or not. But if their chances of being in contact with an infected person are low, it will take a long time to demonstrate the efficacy of a vaccine candidate,” researchers assert.

Human challenge trials could thus be introduced to test a vaccine quickly. “Levels of infection in the community are already low, and if this virus behaves like other respiratory diseases and coronaviruses, there may be even lower levels over the summer,” said Professor Lawrence Young of Warwick University Medical School.

“There will not be enough people

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COVID-19 measures dominate Eid el-Fitr



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa speaks during Eid el-Fitr prayers at Gaddafi Mosque in Dodoma city yesterday. More photos on Page 4. Photo courtesy of PMO

By Guardian Reporters

OBSERVANCE of Covid-19 preventive measures was the key message in yesterday's series of addresses after prayers to mark Eid el-Fitr.

The festival prayers at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan was graced by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa, held at national level at the Gaddafi Mosque in the capital, Dodoma.

This year's Eid el-Fitr festival was rather low key as apart from prayers, the usual family feasts and shopping were clouded by reduced activity and fear of gatherings.

In his message, the premier emphasized that people continue adhering to directives issued by health experts including proper hand washing, wearing face masks, ensuring social distancing and avoiding gatherings to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus.

He said the number of Covid-19 cases in the country has sharply dwindled, an indication that most Tanzanians are adhering to protocols of hygiene and other preventive measures issued by the government and health experts.

He said data from the office of the Dar es Salaam Regional Medical Officer show that Amana regional referral hospital has just one Covid-19 patient, Mloganzila also has one and Aga Khan Hospital had 11 patients at present.

There were 16 patients admitted at Covid-19 treatment centre at Kibaha in Coast Region and three at Mkonze Hospital in Dodoma.

“We recognize the important role played by religious leaders during this battle. We

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Zanzibar mulls easing COVID-19 restrictions

By Guardian Reporter

FOLLOWING a decline in the number of Covid-19 cases across Zanzibar and Pemba, the Isles authorities are considering easing stringent containment measures in place to mitigate the spread of the virus.

As of early last week, Zanzibar had remained with 34 Covid-19 patients in treatment centres, the lowest number recorded in around three weeks. There were 134 coronavirus patients on May 1, on

the basis of Zanzibar Health ministry data.

Addressing Muslim faithful yesterday during prayers to mark Eid-el-Fitr at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan, Zanzibar President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein said all the patients are in good health. They are progressing well with treatment, he stated.

“We will soon ease some restrictions,” he said, noting that the government is satisfied with the positive response from residents on Covid-19

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NCAA opens doors for coming tourism season

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Ngorongoro

NGORONGORO Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) officials have said they are finalising the rehabilitation of roads inside the crater, ready to receive visitors as a long-anticipated new tourism season is expected to start in a week's time.

The NCAA's Commissioner of Conservation, Dr Freddy Manongi, inspecting the work in the caldera over the weekend, said he was confident that visitors from abroad would like to take well deserved vacations.

This will be a bout of fresh air foreign visitors as most countries are lifting up the lockdown

on routine economic activities well over three months after they came into force in many places. A crater teeming in all manner of wildlife, Ngorongoro is Tanzania's most visited destination, billing 600,000 tourists annually in recent years, close to half of the total tourist traffic that the country handles each season.

Generating over 157bn/- annually, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area can also be described as the nation's top goose laying the golden eggs.

“Before the outbreak of Covid-19, Ngorongoro was facing the challenge of torrential rains

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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 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 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 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](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19)



Zanzibar mulls easing COVID-19 restrictions

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prevention measures. This has contributed to the decreasing number of new infections," he said.

The Isles authorities first announced the outbreak of the virus on March 19, imposing various containment measures to halt its spread.

In his remarks, the president underscored the need for people to continue working with government agencies in fighting the spread of the virus.

He praised the work of Ambassador Seif Ali Idd, Isles Second Vice-President who is also the chairman of the Zanzibar National Covid-19 Committee, as well as Union Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa for leading the war against Covid-19.

He also paid tribute to health workers for being on the frontline against Covid-19, ensuring rapid treatment for patients and educating people on hygiene in combating the virus.

These protocols are first social distancing, not shaking hands, wearing face masks and regular hand washing with soap and running water or using alcohol-based hand rubs.

Dr Shein applauded the media for its pivotal role in educating the community on the disease even before it was reported in the country. He urged journalists to always prioritize the national interest and adhere to professional codes of conduct.

Last week, President John Magufuli announced an end to the ban on international passenger flights, thus allowing foreign tourists to come into the country. The visitors will only require medical proof on their Covid-19 status, as per newly announced Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Tourism sector players including tour guides, service providers and

airport attendants will be put to regular Covid-19 tests to ensure only those testing negative attend to visitors.

Dr Magufuli also ordered reopening of universities, colleges and Form Six classes effective June 1 due to decreased cases of Covid-19 countrywide.

Updating the country on Covid-19 cases, the president said that at mid-May the city's Amana regional referral hospital had 12 from 198 admissions previously.

Mloganzila Hospital earlier had 30 patients but it remained with six while Lulanzi centre in Kibaha district, Coast region had 22 patients, different from the 50 admitted at the centre in previous weeks.

Other Covid-19 treatment centres with fewer patients are Agha Khan (31), Hindu Mandal (16), Regency (17), TMJ (7), Rabinisia (14), Moshono (Arusha) (11), Buswelu (2), Bugando and Sekou Toure (2) and Dodoma (2).

The Covid-19 tracking John Hopkins University in the United States and the Africa Centers for Disease Control affirm that every African country had recorded infections, with the mountain kingdom of Lesotho the last to report an infection.



In his remarks, the president underscored the need for people to continue working with government agencies in fighting the spread of the virus



Agriculture ministry permanent secretary Gerald Kusaya (L) speaks at Kwitanga Prisons Farm in Kigoma District yesterday on efforts the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute has made in producing and distributing improved citrus seedlings. Others are representatives of the institute and other agricultural institutions. Photo: Correspondent Ashton Balaigwa

COVID-19 measures dominate Eid el-Fitr

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commend them for their support. I am sure that apart from other measures to tackle the disease, prayers have served us a lot," he stated, urging clerics and the people at large to continue maintaining peace and unity.

"Tanzania has remained a model country in Africa when it comes to peace and stability. We have for years maintained our peace, love and solidarity; this should continue to be promoted and strengthened for future generations," he appealed.

Dodoma Regional Sheikh Alhaj Mustapha Shabani urged Muslims to

celebrate the big day in good manner by pondering the mighty acts of God and not by indulging in unnecessary pleasures that might ruin the whole concept of the fasting month of Ramadan.

"We should also continue directing our prayers to the Almighty God to completely eradicate Covid-19 infections in our country. We should also be thankful for having gone through the pandemic and protecting the majority of us," he said.

Sheikh Omari Salim Itara at Nughé Mosque called upon the public to continue adhering to guidelines given by health experts to effectively protect

themselves from the virus.

"All the good things we were doing during the month of Ramadan should not stop. We should avoid going back to bad ways," he declared.

In his message, Zanzibar President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein said the outbreak of Covid-19 has partly changed the lifestyles of Muslims, enabling them to take up the fasting in a different way.

"This year's Eid el-Fitr celebrations will be observed differently as there will be no Idd Baraza - one of the important events in the history of Zanzibar residents," the Isles leader noted.

He reminded the public on the need

to continue taking precautions against Covid-19 while safely celebrating the day at their homes.

"Despite the fall in number of cases Covid-19 still exists. It is better to continue taking precautions," he said, noting that the government had taken a number of containment measures to battle the pandemic.

He said that until May 20 the whole of Zanzibar had 34 active cases compared to 134 cases on May 1.

People continue with routine economic activities while adhering to preventive measures since the economy has been shaken by the pandemic, he added.



Tanzania Prisons Commissioner General Suleiman Mzee cuts a ribbon at Bwawani Secondary School in Morogoro Region at the weekend to inaugurate two houses earmarked for use by Prisons officers. Photo: Correspondent Frank Kaundula

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

Activists push for swift measures to curb GBV incidences amid Covid-19

GENDER equity activists have suggested the need for the government and other players to put in place practical measures to address violence against women and girls, which are on the increase amid Covid-19 pandemic.

They made the call over the weekend in a joint statement by the Coalition against Gender Based Violence (MKUKI) and Data Driven Advocacy-Working Group Two (DDA WG2) on GBV amid Covid-19 outbreak.

Delivering the statement, Director of Women in Law and Development Africa (WILDAP), Anna Kulaya said that the pandemic is being spurred by economic and social stresses as a result of lockdowns, restricted movements and calls to stay home even in countries with no lockdown measure.

Anna said crowded homes, substance abuse, limited access to services and reduced peer support are exacerbating these conditions are the reasons behind the increase of GBV.

She said while MKUKI and WG2 are struggling to collate the current official data on the current Gender Based

Violence (GBV) particularly violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), emerging data shows that the incidents have intensified.

"For instance, France has reported 30 percent increase in domestic violence since the onset of the lockdown in March 2020, similar cases have been reported in Argentina, Cyprus and Singapore by 25 percent, 30 percent and 33 percent respectively," she narrated.

Anna said based on current case studies and historical trends, Tanzania is of no exception and has related cases which may even double if sound interventions are lately or not integrated within the current Covid-19 response mechanism to curb the situation.

"For instance, according to the latest data reported by MKUKI and DDA WG2 during this period of the said pandemic, 176 Girls and 76 Boys aged

below 18 years have been exposed to violence of varied nature, 474 women aged between 18 and 49 years have gone through both sexual and physical violence as compared to their 144 male counterparts who also experienced gender violence," she said.

Anna explained that MKUKI and DDA WG2 have also realized that 73 women and 23 men of 60 years and above were also intimidated during this reporting period, making a total of 796 female and 289 male GBV cases adding that GBV incidents is increasing from Dar es Salaam, Rukwa, Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Kigoma, Tanga, Tabora and Singida regions as well as from Zanzibar Island.

She said: "It is sad to also learn from Mara Region of recent that 40 girls have run out of their families to escape female genital mutilation and two girls have reportedly been subjected to FGM during this period when schools are closed due to the pandemic."

Anna explained that it is undoubtedly clear that violence in war torn countries is more obvious and easier to notice, Tanzania is relatively a peaceful country where one would expect peaceful and none violent homes but, it is already confirmed that violence is not just on the battlefield, it also happens at homes.

"Before the pandemic, it was estimated that one in three women will experience violence during their lifetimes. Many of these women are now trapped in their homes with their abusers," she said.

Anna said: "It is very unfortunate that abusers are taking advantage of inability of women to escape as they risk being thrown out on the street with no or inadequate supporting systems as most of them might have shifted their focus or might be facing circumstances of being overwhelmed or are otherwise unable to help.

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falling for over nine months since last September. The rains caused massive flooding and destruction of infrastructure," he pointed out.

That has placed tourism in difficulties as hundreds of thousands of tourists visit the crater annually and these ride in an average of 400 vehicles daily during the peak of the season.

TCAA thus embarked on extensive road repair works and used the worldwide travel hiatus to accomplish the task. A visit to the site revealed some domestic tourists visiting the crater as the Eid holidays started.

Officials in hotels operating inside the NCAA say there are visitors who

have confirmed bookings from mid-June.

Ngorongoro Crater is among UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the only place in the world where endangered black rhinos can be seen grazing freely in their natural environment.

The Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO), an umbrella organization for stakeholders, is yet to come up with an outlook for foreign visitors booking their travels in the next three months.

Tanzania had attained around 1.5m tourist visits per year and was gearing to reach two million visitors this year, before the Covid-19 outbreak clouded matters.

UK scientists differ on Covid-19 vaccine tests

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secretory the virus to be in contact with volunteers in vaccine projects. It is just not going to work."

Young argues that human challenge trials should be intensively considered for the UK. These would involve giving volunteers either a placebo or a vaccine, with scientists infecting them with the Covid-19 virus to quickly show if a vaccine works or not.

"Only very healthy young people - around the age of 25 - who have given informed consent would be used," the medic underlined.

Such trials have already been used to test the efficacy of vaccines for flu and the common cold, he pointed out.

However, these ailments pose relatively low risks to volunteers. Covid-19 can have serious side-effects, mainly for the elderly but also in a few cases of young, apparently healthy people.

This point is acknowledged by Young. "Before we go ahead with challenge trials, an effective therapy is required that could be used in the few cases where something goes wrong," he further proposed.

WHO guidelines for human challenge trials said that those aged 18-30 years can be targeted, as only 1% of this group was hospitalised with Covid-19, and

fatality rates are around 0.03%.

Challenge studies require specialised facilities, with especially close monitoring and ready access to early supportive treatment for participants, the UN agency noted.

The idea of carrying out human challenge trials for a Covid-19 vaccine was also backed by Professor Arpana Verma of Manchester University. "Vaccines give us the ability to protect the most vulnerable people in society. That is one of their key strengths. So I think it would be entirely justifiable to go ahead with such trials."

But the proposal was firmly opposed by immunologist Professor Eleanor Riley of Edinburgh University, saying that the virus should be really well studied and its clinical behaviour understood in detail.

"It should also be incapable of causing severe illness in healthy individuals, or there should be a highly effective drug to clear such infection. None of these criteria are met for Covid-19, and I would be very concerned to hear challenge studies were being planned."

Professor Young was keen that the human challenge trials issue be cleared. "We shouldn't wait until we have a vaccine candidate on our hands and not know what to do with it," he pleaded.



Kiteto district commissioner Tumaini Magessa (2nd-L) leads various other officials at the weekend in witnessing the havoc recent rains have caused on road infrastructure in the district. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

By Guardian Reporter

PM launches campaign for improving of oil palm seeds

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has officially launched planting campaign of improved seeds of oil palm of tenera variety for the farmers in Tanzania.

He vowed to completely end the problem of importing edible oil in Tanzania which he said costs the nation between 445bn/- and 470bn/- annually.

Speaking at the launching ceremony held at two different locations of Kwitanga Prison and Bulombora 821 KJ in Kigoma over the weekend, he has directed researchers from Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI), Military Institutions and district councils to effectively and efficiently play their key role of speeding up production and dissemination of the improved seeds to reach all farmers in the country.

So far a total of 1.8 million seedlings have been produced and according to the Prime Minister, they will be distributed free of charge to the registered farmers who have farm plots. "I ask you farmers to secure the loans from Tanzania agricultural development bank (TADB) you will use your farms as collateral to enable get the loans to develop the crop, he said.

He also urged the farmers and other stakeholders to approach the TADB to get capital and buy oil palm processing plants and machines to increase profit.

Presenting the oil palm seedlings to the farmers, he said the oil palm producing giants like Malaysia took the oil palm seeds from Kigoma and improved them and now they have found lucrative market in Tanzania and elsewhere leaving behind Tanzania despite its large potential land that can produce locally and meet the requirement with produce surplus.

He said that in the past the crop did not register greater success because of poor seeds and there were no proper

plans and strategies to sensitize, supervise and educate the farmers on the importance of the crop and agricultural best practices, but now, the 5th phase government has vowed to revamp the crop and end the problem of importing the edible oil in the country.

One of the strategy of the 5th phase government to revamp the crop is that first the government transferred the oil palm research activities unit from Mikocheni Agriculture Research Institute (MARI) in Dar e salaam to Kigoma where you have TARI Kihinga centre.

"The centre is already doing a great work of research, production and dissemination of improved seeds of oil palm of Tenera variety. The government will continue improving and capacitating the centre to produce more desired results," he said.

He said the second step of preparation to revamp the crop is that the government has shifted agriculture officers from the district office to the villages so that they can educate and work direct with the farmers on agriculture best practices.

He called for the farmers to prepare their farm and register for the new improved seeds of oil palm of Tenera variety.

"You will be required to replace the new improved seeds of oil palm of Tenera variety gradually in all the farms where you have grown old oil palm trees. You should therefore go and sensitize other farmers to use this

government opportunity," he said.

He commended Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI) under director general Dr. Geoffrey Mkamillo and Agriculture Seed Agency (ASA) under Sophia Kashenge for the good work of production of improved seeds of oil palm of Tenera variety.

Earlier on, the deputy Minister for agriculture Omary Mgumba called on the oil palm farmers to make sure they speed up uptake and manage them well saying although they are given for free but the government had incurred the cost of research and production.

"I am told that if you buy from the private sector, one oil palm seedling is sold at 6,000/- and some go up to 10,000/- therefore, for these 1.8 million produced seeds, the government has paid for you Kigoma farmers more than 10.8 bn/-, he said.

He said in the cause of revamping the crop, the government will continue paying the seedlings cost for the farmers who have zeal and determination to plant and produce the oil palm.

"The government has directed the Ministry of agriculture to set aside 2.9bn/- to develop and capacitate TARI-Kihinga to enhance research and production of the improved seeds of oil palm of Tenera variety.

He said the current Ministry's direction is to put more emphasis on the most needed strategic crops such as edible oil, sugar and wheat to rescue foreign currency. In Kigoma the government has helped to organize the farmers and so far there are more than

12 registered AMCOS with more than 2,030 members have already been established to enhance production of the crop.

Bulombora JKT Commander Major Victor Faustin and the Officer in-Charge of Kwitanga Prison, Senior Superintendent of Prison (SSP) Dominic Kazimil whose camps have produced thousands of seedlings promised to work around the clock to achieve the government's goal.

Tunduru District gets building for its primary court

By Guardian Correspondent, Tunduru

RUVUMA regional commissioner Christina Mndeme has opened a new primary court building at Nakapanya in Tunduru District, a move which will see more people accessing legal services while improving delivery of justice.

Worth 55m/-, the construction of the court building is an implementation of President John Magufuli's directive he gave on April 4, last year in his tour in the region.

Speaking soon after launching the building here, RC Mndeme said that the construction of the new court commenced immediately after President Magufuli's directives.

"We commenced construction of this court far from the old one which was situated near people's settlements and market, when President Magufuli passed here last year, some people raised concern wanting the old court to be evacuated to another area to enable traders conduct their activities in the market which was nearby the court, a move which pushed President to direct construction of a new court in another area," she explained.

According to her, in facilitating the construction, President Magufuli contributed 10m/-.

Mndeme directed the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (Tarura) to immediately construction the road heading to the new court.

"Tanzania Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO) and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) to send power and water services in the area," she added.

Julius Mtatiro, Tunduru District Commissioner said that the project commenced on May 2019 and it was estimated to cost 69m/- to completion but the expenses gone down to 55m/-.

"In the project, President Magufuli contributed 10m/-, RC's office (29m/-), the Constituency Fund (3m/-) and citizens (3m/-). The building has four office rooms, two rooms for remandees as well as three standard latrines," he said.

He said that the new court benefits residents in the wards of Nakapanya, Namakambale, Tinginya, Ngapa, Mindu, Namiungo, Majimaji and Muhuwesi.

For his part, Judge in charge of the High Court for Songea zone Isaya Alfian commended President for blessing the construction of the court at Nakapanya saying that more people will be able to access justice which is one of the essential services in life.

"We are still having some challenges of power and water as well as furniture so as to officially commence provision of service to the people, the Judiciary department is ready to cooperate with the government to ensure that all challenges are immediately tackled," he said.

Completion of the building brings the number of primary courts in Tunduru District to seven, the official said.



Tanzania Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO) and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) to send power and water services in the area



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa waters an improved oil palm seedling of the Tenera variety at Bulombora 821 JKT in Kigoma Region at the weekend shortly after planting it. The seedlings are meant for wider distribution and planting to trigger a boost in palm oil production. Photo: Correspondent Gerald Kitabu

APPRECIATION

We the family of Late Dr. Patrick Nubi Mwanukuzi would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for all assistance, comfort and generosity afforded to us following the death of our beloved mother, Mrs. Patricia Fortunata Mhoja Mwanukuzi which occurred on the 13 May 2020 after an illness and consequently laid to rest on 16th May 2020 at Kinondoni cemetery.

Our special gratitude goes to the doctors and nurses of Massana Hospital and Hitech Sai Hospital where our beloved mother was briefly admitted for treatments; Hindu Mandal Hospital and its staff where mother Patricia was getting her diabetic treatment for many years under the abled guidance of Dr. Kaushik Ramaiya and Dr. Aidan Banduka who supported her in her last days.

We appreciate spiritual services we received from the Most Eminent Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, fathers of both St. Peter's and St. Gaspar Parish, and the Society of Missionaries of Africa, fathers and nuns who were her sons and daughters in Christ, His eminency Bishop of Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, Jude Thaddeus Ruwaichi and Bishop Eusebius Nzigilwa for leading the last sermon of our beloved Mother.

Indeed it is not possible to mention all by names the way you comforted us during this difficult and challenge time after the demise of Mother Patricia Fortunata Mhoja Mwanukuzi, we can just say thanks to everyone for your kind words, generosity and offers of help during a very difficult time. Your acts of friendship and love have not gone unnoticed. It is comforting to know that we are not alone in our grief.

We pray our gracious Lord to grant us strength to celebrate the life of our Mother, as we know she has accomplished her course in this world as scripture says in 2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

May our gracious Lord Jesus bless you all.

Rest in peace our beloved Mother
 Patricia Fortunata Mhoja Mwanukuzi.

Dodoma, Tanga and Zanzibar mark first Eid el-Fitr day



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa exchanges greetings with Muslim clerics shortly after arriving at Dodoma city's Gaddafi Mosque yesterday for prayers on the first day of Eid el-Fitr celebrations. The celebrations continue today. Photo: PMO



Zanzibar President Dr Ali Mohammed Shein delivers Eid el-Fitr address at Zanzibar State House. Photo: Zanzibar State House



Muslim faithful take part in Eid el-Fitr prayers at Nughe Mosque in Dodoma city. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Eid el-Fitr prayers in progress in Muheza town. Photo: Correspondent Steven William



Sheikh Omari Salim Itawa of Dodoma city's Nughe Mosque speaks during Eid el-Fitr prayers. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph



Zanzibar Second Vice President Seif Ali Iddi (C, foreground) joins other Muslim faithful in Eid el-Fitr prayers at Kiombamvua's Friday Mosque in Zanzibar. Photo: SVPO - Zanzibar



Eid el-Fitr prayers well under way at Tangamano grounds in Tanga city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Oscar Kasimiri



Residents of Muheza town in Tanga Region pick cassocks after Eid el-Fitr prayers yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Albinism society establishes skin cancer clinics

By Beatrice Philemon

TANZANIA Albinism Society (TAS) has established skin cancer clinics in seven regional referral hospitals, which will provide treatment for people with albinism (PWA) across the country.

TAS's Secretary General, Mussa Kabimba said this over the weekend when speaking ahead of the 40th Anniversary of the association, which advocates the rights and dignity of people with disabilities that will be held on June 13.

He said those regional hospitals

are in Mara, Singida, Tanga, Iringa, Morogoro, Lindi and Unguja in Zanzibar.

So far, TAS has already distributed Brymil dermatology set of cryogenic equipment that comprises Cryogun, Liquid Nitrogen Container, Cryoplates and Withdrawing tube in all seven regional referral hospitals that will be used to treat skin cancer.

"Our main goal is to extend health services to people with albinism especially those living in rural areas, reduce death for them because right now majority of albinism are dying due to skin cancer and lack of funds to

travel in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Kilimanjaro for medical treatment," he noted.

The equipment will be used to patients in accordance with the skin cancer stages they have and prevention.

"We expressed thanks to development partners who has donated funds to TAS so that we can buy Cryogenic equipment for skin cancer treatment for people with albinism," he said

He also expressed thanks to the government through the district councils for providing doctors and

rooms to ensure patients access high quality medical treatment in those regions.

Apart from that he called on the district councils in those regions to allocate enough budgets to help skin cancer clinics which have been established in those regions be more sustainable and help more albinism access high quality medical services.

Kabimba further said that currently violence against PWA is on the decline, noting: "People are now aware of this group."

"We thanks to the government and other stakeholders for taking serious

measures to improve safety of people with albinism," he said.

"Right now we are very happy because parents are now educated on the importance of education to children with albinism and have begun to send their children to school because safety for people with albinism is very high right now," he added.

He however cited lack of proper data on PWA in Tanzania, lack of employment opportunities, lack of inclusive health services as among the key challenges facing the group.

On the 40th anniversary, TAS official

called on individuals, government institutions, private companies including religious institutions to join them to mark the important day.

He said they still need Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30, wide-brimmed hats, sun grass, brochures, books that has education about Albinism, how they can combat with COVID-19 including personal protective equipment (PPE) such as mask, sanitizers and others for people with disabilities.

They need support because most of them are coming from poor families and they don't have cash to purchase

Wildlife foundation champions biological diversity conservation

By Guardian Reporter

THE African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) joined the world to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity celebration, leading the African youths in conservation of nature.

This year, most if not all campaigns will be held online due to the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic guided by the theme "Our Solutions are in Nature" AWF said in its statement.

Since its inception in 1993, the International Day of Biological Diversity event has been commemorated on May 22 of every year.

With the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), AWF organized a webinar discussing the topic titled "Africa's Future Lies in Innovative Nature-Based Economies: What Role Can Youth Play?" the Foundation said in its statement.

AWF and GYBN seek to steer the webinar conversation around the need to re-examine their relationship to the natural world, reflect on challenges and accomplishments, and renew determination in overcoming the environmental challenges facing the world today.

"As we close out on the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011 to 2020, this super year for nature and biodiversity provides us an opportunity to find solutions to the coronavirus pandemic in nature itself and possibly prevent future outbreaks. It gives us a chance to work together and rethink policies around the protection of the world's biodiversity," the AWF said.

The 90-minute webinar aimed to share experiences and learn from each other the best nature-based solutions that are working in different landscapes within Africa and propose solutions to existing challenges.

Similar to the rest of the world, Africa is looking for long-lasting solutions to sustain economies post COVID-19. Focusing on nature-based solutions should be paramount to national recovery plans as a majority of the continent's economy relies on wildlife and tourism.

About 70 percent of Africa's population is under the age of 30 making it the youngest continent. Therefore, it is vital to engage the youth in conversation around the conservation of Africa's biodiversity, AWF said.

"AWF recently launched a 10-year strategic vision that focuses on the importance of engaging the youth and ensuring that they are part of the conservation narrative from the on-set," Fred Kumah Kwame, Vice

President of External Affairs at AWF and one of the panelists, emphasized.

"This webinar is one of the many steps we are taking to ensure that the youth are empowered and well-equipped with the skills and knowledge that will advance nature-based solutions," he said.

Panelists are looking then discuss how the African youth can drive the conservation forward given that conservation is not considered in most nations especially during these COVID-19 pandemic days.

Additionally, the panelists will be providing suggestions or proposals as to how the youth can access the money and the investors of that fund nature-based activities and innovations.

The panel will consist of environmental specialists from across the board including Christina Marie Kolo who is a social entrepreneur, an eco-feminist, and a climate activist from Madagascar. She is the founder and Coordinator of the Green N Kool, a thriving social business, along with Lucy Warungu who has been working with the African Conservation Centre (ACC) for over 20 years. She has had a long interest in the management and interpretation of biological and environmental data for decision-making and informing initiatives that enhance local livelihoods in rich biodiversity areas.

Fred Kumah Kwame leads the AWF's engagements with government and multilateral institutions across Africa as Vice President of External Affairs.

Waihiga Muturi, one among the panelists, is a serial social entrepreneur and Communications for Development Specialist with over 10 years of experience in Pan-African socioeconomic innovation while working as the Creator of Opportunities at the award-winning, B-Corps certified "Let's Create Africa."

AWF's partnership with GYBN dates back to 2018 when the 2 organizations partnered to host the very first GYBN Africa Workshop that trained national chapter leaders that have since imparted their knowledge and skills to others with an elevated voice for nature.

AWF has been working in partnership with African governments and international wildlife conservation organizations to protect and develop wildlife sector and nature in the African continent.

Wildlife is the leading source to tourist revenues in Africa, pulling international tourists from all corners of the world for wildlife safari expeditions.



Water deputy minister Jumaa Aweso (R) inspects the Kintinku-Lusilie water project during a tour of Manyoni District at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Jumbe Ismailly

World Vision donates Covid-19 protective gear to Kagera Region

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast,

Bukoba

WORLD Vision Tanzania has donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worth 37m/- to Kagera region to support health workers and community contain the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

The equipment which were handed over to Kagera Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS), Prof Faustine Kamuzora during the weekend include 200 bottles of sanitizers, 6000 pairs of gloves, 198 megaphones, 100,075 pairs of surgical gloves, 500 pairs of face masks, 45

buckets and chlorine tablets.

Speaking during the event, Kagera World Vision Officer, John Potino acknowledged that health workers are working under hard and risky circumstances saving lives with passion, and professionalism as doctors, and even risking their lives in order to save and protect the lives of many Tanzanians.

"We promise to continue working closely with the government to ensure that the pandemic is totally contained, World Vision Tanzania has so far donated protective gear worth 61m/- in various parts of the country. I am pleased to say as a community we have

come together to show our support for healthcare workers who are at the frontline protecting the lives of many Tanzanians," he said.

For his part, Prof Kamuzora commended the charity organization and all other stakeholders for supporting the government's efforts to combat the pandemic and in particular helping health service providers by supplying them with PPE general gowns and surgical masks.

"We appreciate all contribution given by stakeholders and companies, the donations are highly needed this time when the country is struggling to contain the spread of the infections,"

He added that the regional government is planning to meet development stakeholders to request them extended their support especially in the islands of Lake Victoria and market places.

According to him, Kagera Region is said to have 26 inhabited islands of Lake Victoria which are also in dire need of the supportive gear.

"We will allocate these donated items to the places with great demand, islands and market places are one of them. This are then places that of high risk due to fishing and several businesses," he noted.



Tunadoto Programme chairman Godlisten Koka (2nd-L) symbolically presents 500 saplings to Monduli district executive director Anderson Ulaya in Monduli at the weekend. It was a donation by the programme, which is implemented in collaboration with the Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza



As we close out on the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011 to 2020, this super year for nature and biodiversity provides us an opportunity to find solutions to the coronavirus pandemic in nature itself and possibly prevent future outbreaks. It gives us a chance to work together and rethink policies around the protection of the world's biodiversity

Containment measures to curb spread of COVID-19

By Guardian Reporter

AS part of containment measures to curb the spread of Covid-19, the online buy and sell company—Kupatana has linking its activities with mobile money services.

A statement by Kupatana.Com Executive Director, Philip Ebbersten said the company is determined to ensure Tanzanians continues selling and buying various commodities during the pandemic outbreak. He said the firm aims at making ensuring successful businesses by coming up with innovative ideas.

“The world is now experiencing the outbreak of Covid-19, but businesses must continue since people still need to buy and sell goods. We are facilitating the purchasing of goods online as health experts insists on social distancing”, he said.

Ebbersten said that to facilitate payments, they have linked their services with Vodacom M-pesa whereas customers using M-pesa will be able to make direct payment and make use of Premium Ads. He said with Premium Ads sellers are likely to reach a good number of customers as well as quick sell of their products.

“Vodacom users will now be part of the fastest growing business network”,

he said noting the company has also approved an 80 percent discount on its advertising charges.

He said the advertisement fee reduction is only valid during the pandemic outbreak aiming to promote online selling and buying of commodities as people observe social distancing and avoiding gatherings.

Ebbersten said the company's decision to reduce advertisement charges is aimed to help customers with limited budget to continue getting the service during the pandemic. He said free advertisement will only last for one week.

“Customers may get an additional 10 percent discount on our advertising charges if they are recommended by our agents”, he noted.



Customers may get an additional 10 percent discount on our advertising charges if they are recommended by our agents



Anna Kulaya, Director of the Tanzania Chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), briefs journalists at Dar es Salaam at the weekend on statement prepared by members of the Coalition against Gender-Based Violence (MKUKI) and Data Driven Advocacy incidence of gender-based violence amid the Covid-19 pandemic. She is flanked by MKUKI members Janeth Mawinza (R) and Israel Ilunde. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has said that investigations on the national health laboratory showed several shortcomings, including a faulty machine for testing samples of Covid-19.

Mwalimu, the Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, said at the weekend when announcing investigation results released by a probe team, which was appointed early this month to work on the matter.

Minister: Probe committee has detected flaws in Covid-19 testing at national lab

She said that the management of the national health laboratory at the National Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) did not repair a faulty machine.

Other shortcomings, according to Mwalimu, identified by the probe team included lack of technical supervision for testing of Covid-19 samples, poor

quality assurance of results and poor storage of tested samples for the Coronavirus.

Mwalimu added that the probe team also revealed that the laboratory established in 1968 was facing shortage of professionals in biotechnology and molecular biology, according to the statement.

According to her, the Ministry of Health has moved the testing of the virus samples to a newly built national health laboratory at Mabibo area in Dar es Salaam.

The newly built facility has a capacity to test 1,800 COVID-19 samples within 24 hours compared to the old laboratory at NIMR that tested 300

samples within 24 hours.

The new national health laboratory whose construction was completed in May 2020 has been equipped with high-tech facilities manned by competent laboratory professionals, the Minister said.

On May 4, Mwalimu formed the 10-member probe team headed by

Eligius Lyamuya of the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences to investigate the collection of Covid-19 samples at the laboratory.

She also suspended the director of the national health laboratory, Nyambura Moremi, and the quality assurance manager Jacob Lusekelo over allegedly questionable Covid-19 test results.

The suspension of the two officials followed concerns raised by President John Magufuli about the accuracy of Covid-19 test results released by the national health laboratory.



Singida regional commissioner Dr Rehema Nchimbi (C) presents second batch of entrepreneurs' national identity cards for this year to Ikungi district commissioner Edward Mpagolo at the weekend for onward handing over to those eligible for the documents. With them is Singida regional administrative secretary Dr Angelina Lutambi. Photo: Correspondent Dotto Mwaibale

By Caitlin McFall

COUNTRIES across East Africa and the Horn of Africa are witnessing a “triple threat” from overlapping disasters as the coronavirus, locusts and flooding inundate communities across the region.

The International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) said that widespread flooding across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda has led to the displacement of more than 500,000 and killed nearly 300 people.

But the floods have also increased the potential spread of Covid-19 and slowed intervention operations against the most severe locust crisis in the region has seen in decades.

“The ongoing flooding crisis is exacerbating other threats caused by Covid-19 and the invasion of locusts,” Dr.

East Africa fears ‘triple threat’ from coronavirus disease, floods, locusts

Simon Missiri, IFRC's regional director for Africa, said Wednesday. “Travel and movement restrictions meant to slow down the spread of Covid-19 are hampering efforts to combat swarms of locusts that are ravaging crops.”

The floods have forced hundreds of thousands of people to seek temporary shelter, and people there are frequently unable to practice social distancing measures. Officials are worried there could be an increase in coronavirus cases in Africa.

“We are worried that the number of people who are hungry and sick will increase in the coming weeks as flooding and Covid-19 continue to

severely affect the coping capacity of many families in the region,” Missiri said. “Harsh weather conditions are having a multiplier effect on an already difficult situation, and this could potentially lead to worrying levels of food insecurity in the region.”

Acute food insecurity is already affecting more than 20 million people in the Horn of Africa, and officials from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and worried that soon West Africa could be seeing swarms of locust.

400 hectares of land have been protected due to efforts by the FAO, according to Dominique Burgeon,

FAO's director of emergencies.

But the FAO has requested over \$150 million for “rapid response and anticipatory action in 10 countries.”

The World Bank on Thursday announced a \$500 million program to help countries in the Middle East and Africa fight the locust swarms.

“Together, this food supply emergency combined with the pandemic and economic shutdown in advanced economies places some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people at even greater risk,” David Malpass, president of the World Bank Group, said in a statement last week.

African experts stress need to place premium on energy over response to COVID-19

By Special Correspondent, Addis Ababa

African experts and policymakers attending a high-level virtual dialogue on Saturday emphasized the need to place energy transition at the heart of Africa's Covid-19 response.

They made the call as the African Union (AU) Commission and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) held a virtual high-level dialogue to discuss Africa's needs in responding to the Covid-19 crisis and the role of the energy transition in the post-pandemic recovery.

AU and IRENA host ministers and intergovernmental leaders to discuss continent's roadmap to recovery.

The dialogue brought together a number of ministers and high-level participants from Africa, Europe, the European Union, as well as Vice Presidents of the World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB), the UNDP Administrator, the Director-General of IRENA as well as representatives of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL).

During the two-hour virtual event led by the African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Amani Abou-Zeid, and IRENA Director-General, Francesco La Camera, participants highlighted that energy potential in Africa can turn the Covid-19 crisis into an opportunity for the continent and its population.

The experts and policymakers agreed that energy transition is critical to both the response to the crisis and to the post-pandemic recovery.

“The energy sector cannot sit back and only react, it has to join in the fight as well while at the same time positioning itself to play a pivotal role in the recovery after the crisis. Through this forum, we hope to share the actions taken by various countries and organizations and the results they have had. This will provide lessons that will be instrumental in shaping the response and preparing for recovery,”

AU Commissioner Amani Abou-Zeid said.

The AU commissioner also highlighted the measures that the AU had taken including conducting wide consultations with regional and global stakeholders and developing an emergency, resilience and recovery action plan, which was adopted by the Bureau of African energy ministers on May 12.

IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera hailed the collaboration with the AU, noting that their commitment to work together in the wake of the pandemic was starting to yield results with the high-level dialogue as a milestone.

“Accelerating the energy transformation can help Africa respond to Covid-19, while allowing the continent to meet its medium and long-term objectives of a decarbonized, just and prosperous society,” Camera said.

“IRENA will continue to work closely with the African Union and partners to create pathways for accelerated renewable energy deployment in Africa, to bolster resilience in the face of the current pandemic while building a future of health, wealth and opportunity for millions of people across the continent,” he said.

UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner, who emphasized the role of renewable, also stressed that “the impact of Covid-19 on African economies is a major setback. Rapid policy responses across the continent have helped to mitigate the health crisis but socio-economic impacts could erode development gains of recent years.”

“Expanding access to electricity through a bold expansion of ‘on-grid’ and ‘off-grid’ renewable energy is a major opportunity in the context of national stimulus and recovery programmes. They are economic, fast, shovel ready options to address energy poverty and accelerate Africa's transition towards a clean energy economy of the 21st century,” Steiner said.

Uganda's export of 1st batch of locally produced cellphones headed for Morocco

By Special Correspondent, Kampala

UGANDA has flagged off the exportation of the first batch of locally made mobile phones, a minister announced.

Evelyn Anite, state minister for Finance, Investment and Privatization, said in a tweet on Saturday she witnessed the flag-off of mobile phones made by a Chinese-owned company.

"This morning, I had the pleasure of flagging off the first batch of Ugandan made mobile phones manufactured by Uganda's first phone manufacturing plant (SIMI Technologies) to Morocco," Anite said.

"This is a step towards reducing Uganda's import bill on ICT products and boosting export earnings," she added.

According to the minister, the company currently provides employment to over 400 youths.

"This is as a result of the government of Uganda prioritizing investment in industrial parks to support industrialization and create quality jobs," the minister said.

Anite said the plant was not only contributing to the economic growth and development of the

country but it was immensely helping in building local capacity through transfer of ICT knowledge and skills.

"In addition to manufacturing phones and laptops, SIMI Technologies has also started manufacturing protective eyewear and affordable Digital Temperature Guns which will go for as low as 50,000 Ugandan Shillings (about 13 U.S. dollars) in an effort to help fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," Anite said.

She said SIMI phones have already hit the Ugandan market.

The five-million-US dollar factor which is under Chinese electronics company Engo Holdings Group Limited, was launched by the country's President Yoweri Museveni in November last year to manufacture phones and laptop computers.

SIMI is the first phone and laptop making factory in Uganda. It already has a factory in Ethiopia targeting markets in Cameroon and Morocco.

According to National Information Technology Authority, a state-owned agency, there are about 22 million mobile phone subscribers in Uganda. It says the sector is growing at 27 percent per annum.



Tusonge CDO director Agnatha Rutazaa (2nd-R) pictured at the weekend presenting a set of personal protective equipment to Benedict Mrina of Moshi District's Njia Panda Himo Cross Road, who has disability, to help in keeping Covid-19 infections in check. Photo: Godfrey Mushi

By Georgia Wilson

Google and Ecobank Group build digital SME solutions for Africa

IN collaboration with Google, Ecobank Group delivers digital solutions for the bank's SME customers.

The aim of the collaboration is to equip African small to medium enterprises (SMEs) with the necessary digital tools to remain relevant and fulfil their potential by embracing digital capabilities, by having the digital skills to navigate the rapidly evolving

business world.

"As a longstanding pioneer in providing cutting-edge digital solutions for African businesses we are delighted to collaborate with Google to offer timely and relevant solutions, including Google My Business and Google Ad products. These are specifically tailored to meet the needs of our SME customers," commented Josephine

Anan-Ankomah, Ecobank's Group Executive for Commercial Banking said:

"Our objective is to be the partner of choice for SMEs, by meaningfully supporting their success and growth. It is therefore a natural step for us to work with Google to help improve the capabilities of our SME customers. We are focused on helping them

thrive by adopting technology, which is becoming increasingly essential for survival of businesses today." Added Anan-Ankomah.

As the impact of the outbreak of COVID-19 continues to affect the region, with African Union Member States reporting 92,348 COVID-19 cases, Ecobank's eBanking product suite have been increasingly relevant amidst the

lockdowns and physical distancing due to the pandemic.

With its robust platform, cobank provides 24/7 access for customers, helping businesses with convenient solutions to the evolving cash management, payment and collection needs.

"It is essential that African SMEs take full advantage of the commercial

opportunities having a digital presence provides. It will ensure comprehensive engagement between SMEs and their customers as well as potential new customers," commented Ecobank in a company statement.

Ecobank's digital packages for its SME customers across sub-Saharan are expected to be available in May 2020.



Foreign tourists in safari riverboats observe elephants along the Chobe river bank near Botswana's northern border where Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia meet.

Namibia goes culling 10 'dangerous' elephants to protect farmers, crops

WINDHOEK

WILDLIFE authorities in Namibia culled ten elephants over the past month after they moved into farming areas and destroyed crops during harvest season, a spokesman said on Saturday.

The animals were shot after they endangered human lives in the north of the country and were marked as dangerous, said Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism spokesman Romeo Muyunda.

He said the decision was necessary to protect farmers and their crops. The carcasses have been given as compensation to community members whose harvests have been damaged.

"Normally during this season people are terrorised by elephants. We had no choice but to be proactive," Muyunda said, adding however that problematic elephants can only be put down if no other solution can be found.

Like a number of other African nations, Namibia has grappled with balancing protection for species like elephants with managing the danger they pose when they encroach on areas of human habitation.

The country has enjoyed international support for a conservation drive that has seen its elephant population grow from just over 7,500 in 1995 to 24,000 last year, according to government figures.

The search for effective measures to deal with human-elephant conflict is one of the most significant challenges for elephant management. The AfESG meets this challenge through the work of its Human Elephant Conflict Working Group.

The conservation of the African elephant, a "flagship" species of global significance, provides

tremendous opportunities for simultaneously conserving biodiversity and increasing benefits to local communities. The full range of such benefits is extensive and includes improved access to natural capital; improved livelihood opportunities; improvements to social capital; greater food security and reduced vulnerability to ecosystem degradation. Owing to their role as "keystone" and "umbrella" species that help maintain biodiversity of the ecosystems they inhabit, the contribution of elephants to achieving overarching global biodiversity conservation objectives can be significant. The cultural and aesthetic values of elephants are also important, not only to African societies, but to the world at large.

However, as African elephant range becomes more and more fragmented and as elephants get confined into smaller pockets of suitable habitat, humans and elephants are increasingly coming into contact and in conflict with each other.

Elephants impact negatively on local communities in many ways e.g. by raiding crops, killing livestock, destroying water supplies, demolishing grain stores and houses, injuring and even killing people. The costs of such conflict can be significant.

In most African nations today, the real and perceived costs of human-elephant conflict (HEC) greatly outweigh the potential benefits and, subsequently, elephants are increasingly being excluded from many parts of their former range. Once the elephants are gone, however, the local communities will have lost a valuable asset, while at the same time contributing to the loss of biodiversity and overall degradation of the ecosystems on which they depend for their livelihoods.

FAO to focus on seaweed farming biosecurity

ROME

GOVERNMENTS from around the world are considering how best to safeguard the rapidly expanding global seaweed industry, following advice from researchers at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS).

Worth around \$5 billion annually, the seaweed industry is largely based in Southeast Asia, China and West Africa, sustaining coastal communities in many developing countries. Seaweed production more than doubled in size globally, from 13.5 million tonnes in 1995 to 30 million tonnes in 2016; as a food, seaweed is a rich source of micronutrients (iron, calcium, iodine, potassium and selenium), vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids.

The UN's Food and Agriculture

Organisation (FAO) now intends to include seaweed alongside marine animals, such as finfish and shrimp, in producing advice on biosecurity, which aims to prevent the spread of disease and pest species.

Seaweed had not been included in the initial biosecurity planning until a presentation made at a recent FAO-led meeting in Paris by SAMS scientist Prof Elizabeth Cottier-Cook, the leader of the GlobalSeaweedSTAR project - a UK-funded research effort to improve the sustainability of the global seaweed growing industry.

FAO is currently developing a management framework for aquaculture biosecurity, the so-called progressive management pathway, alongside representatives of the World Organisation for Animal Health

(OIE), the World Bank, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and more than 25 other countries.

Eaweed aquaculture biosecurity is now the subject of a side-meeting at the FAO's sub-committee on aquaculture (COFI/AQ) in Trondheim from August 22 - 26. From this meeting, Prof Cottier-Cook and her team are hoping to produce a technical document on seaweed biosecurity for FAO approval.

Prof Cottier-Cook, who has previously authored an international policy brief for the seaweed cultivation industry, said: "Although a traditional means of cultivation in many parts of the world, production of seaweed has grown exponentially over the past 30 years.

"The inclusion of seaweeds in the FAO progressive management pathway is a huge step forward for the industry, which currently suffers from pest and disease outbreaks.

Dr Iona Campbell, who also attended the meeting in Paris along with Prof Cottier-Cook, said: "The GlobalSeaweedSTAR presentation summarised the importance of the seaweed industry in global aquaculture, the similarities in biosecurity challenges that the industry is facing, and the significance of including the industry in such a globally driven strategy.

"This is the first time that the seaweed industry has been represented in the process of the consultation, and it will continue to be formally included in the global action plan as a result."

The Guardian

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MONDAY 25 MAY 2020

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

Africa shall have its day

AFRICA, the continent from which humanity fanned out and which begat modern civilisation, is marking its Day on today, May 25. It is Africa's most significant day for it was on that day in 1963, they consciously came together as a people after centuries of divisions, enslavement and colonisation. The meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was no mean achievement for a people newly emergent from colonialism, with strings of self-doubt and disunity being pulled by colonialists perching all around, like vultures waiting for carcasses.

Even in those days, many parts of Africa were still under the blood soaked talons of European colonialism. Apartheid was waxing strong, and young liberation fighters, like Nelson Mandela, were receiving military training in countries like Algeria. That was a unique country that just a few years before had been courageous enough to reject French Assimilation. For this, Algeria was almost drowned in rivers of blood; about two million Algerians were killed in the liberation war for independence from France.

Also in attendance at that meeting was Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, whose country, like Algeria, had fought a quite bloody anti-colonial war against attempts by Britain to turn it into a White Settlement like Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South-West Africa (Namibia) and Apartheid South Africa.

Absent at the meeting was the tall, elegant, uncompromising pan Africanist, Patrice Lumumba who had on June 30, 1960, led the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, to independence from blood-thirsty Belgium.

As part of attempts to subject Africa to perpetual servitude, the secret services of Belgium, Britain and the United States had with the assistance of the United Nations (Yes, the same UN!) detained and later executed Lumumba by a firing squad commanded by Belgian soldiers in a forest on January 17, 1961.

UN peacekeepers facing one of greatest challenges yet - the COVID-19 pandemic

PEACE is a concept of societal friendship and harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. In a social sense, peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict such as war and freedom from fear of violence between individuals or groups. Throughout history leaders have used peacemaking and diplomacy to establish a certain type of behavioral restraint that has resulted in the establishment of regional peace or economic growth through various forms of agreements or peace treaties. Such behavioral restraint has often resulted in the reduction of conflicts, greater economic interactivity, and consequently substantial prosperity.

Psychological peace such as a peaceful thinking and emotions) is perhaps less well defined yet often a necessary precursor to establishing behavioural peace. Peaceful behavior sometimes results from a "peaceful inner disposition." Some have expressed the belief that peace can be initiated with a certain quality of inner tranquility that does not depend upon the uncertainties of daily life for its existence. The acquisition of such a peaceful internal disposition for oneself and others can contribute to resolving of otherwise seemingly irreconcilable competing interests.

UN Peacekeepers are facing one of their greatest challenges yet - the COVID-19 pandemic. Peacekeepers are assisting governments and local communities in the response to the pandemic and continuing to adapt their activities to execute their mandates, including protecting vulnerable communities.

Women peacekeepers are on the front lines in this fight and are an integral part of the COVID-19 response, as well as in implementing mission mandates, within current constraints

However, many African giants attended, including Egyptian President Abdel Gamal Nasser and Guinean President, Sekou Toure, a man of letters and courage who had been the only leader whose country voted against the French Assimilation Policy in West African countries. Leading the charge of African unity was the prophet, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who was such a great leader that many Africans including Nigerians in Europe and the United States claimed to be "from Nkrumah's country".

Nkrumah was so intellectually sound that he responded to the debate on African unity with a book: Africa Must Unite(1963). His proposal was the creation of a United States of Africa with a common economy, military, capital and leadership. He had convened the first Conference of Independent African States in April, 1958. It had only eight countries in attendance: Ethiopia, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Liberia and host, Ghana. Most of Africa was still under colonialism. Seven months later, Ghana and Guinea met to form the nucleus of a Union of African States.

Presidents Modibo Keita of Mali, Sekou Toure of Guinea and Nkrumah in April, 1961 met to merge their countries into a single Union of African States, UAS, with harmonised domestic and foreign policies, economy and defence. Nkrumah championed the convening of an All Africa Conference in Casablanca, Morocco from January 3-7, 1961. But only Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Libya attended. Given the city they met, this became known as the Casablanca Group.

At this meeting, Nkrumah warned: "I can see no security for African states unless African leaders, like ourselves, have realised beyond all doubt that salvation for Africa lies in unity... for in unity lies strength, and as I see it, African states must unite or sell themselves out to imperialist and colonialist exploiters for a mess of pottage, or disintegrate individually."

and while taking all precautionary measures.

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, 29 May, offers a chance to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel's invaluable contribution to the work of the Organization and to honour more than 3,900 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including 102 last year.

This year, the challenges and threats faced by our peacekeepers are even greater than ever, as they, like people around the world, are not only having to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, but also support and protect the people in the countries they are based in. They are continuing their operations to the best of their abilities and supporting the governments and the local populations, despite the risk of COVID-19.

The theme for this year's Day is "Women in Peacekeeping: A Key to Peace" to help mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

The principal forerunner of the United Nations was the League of Nations. It was created at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and emerged from the advocacy of Woodrow Wilson and other idealists during World War I. The Covenant of the League of Nations was included in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and the League was based in Geneva until its dissolution as a result of World War II and replacement by the United Nations. The high hopes widely held for the League in the 1920s, for example amongst members of the League of Nations Union, gave way to widespread disillusion in the 1930s as the League struggled to respond to challenges from Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Japan.

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By Edwin Cameron

THE Inspecting Judge of Correctional Services has called for prisoner releases to lower the risk of Covid-19 outbreaks as well as the risk of prisoner unrest. Archive photo: Ciaran Ryan

On 5 March 2020, South Africa officially joined the Covid-19 pandemic, when its first diagnosed case was declared. Less than two months later, we have more than 3,000 recorded cases and over 50 deaths. Countries have declared states of disaster - as have we. Stock markets have crashed. Lockdowns and curfews of varying severity have been imposed - ours among the strictest. The affluent have suffered severe depletion of wealth, while the less-resourced face hunger.

Prisons across the world have been roiled by uprisings and protests. In Bogota, a coordinated uprising against overcrowding and poor health services during Covid-19 spread to other centres, with resultant deaths and injuries.

Protests erupted also in Italian, Lebanese and French prisons. Experts have warned that a surge of violent protest is imminent in Mexican and Central American jails.

Their warnings could just as well be directed to us. Mr Golden Miles Bhudu has called for protest and resistance by inmates in South Africa. His call is dangerous. It risks repeating the horrors of 1994 when he also instigated protest. 37 inmates died, as the Krieger Commission grievously documented. There must not be a repeat.

Our correctional facilities are already chronically overcrowded. And many are in the grip of a gang culture and an enduring culture of organised violence. The system is plagued by severe problems in maintaining infrastructure, keeping up staffing levels (especially key nursing and pharmacy and counselling posts) and in sustaining morale.

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has reported 56 inmates and 43 officials testing positive for Covid-19. The virus is very likely to spread further, amongst both personnel and inmates. Add this to chronic dysfunction, and danger looms.

The crisis in our correctional system is decades-old. These problems are the very ones my predecessor Judge Hannes Fagan, the first inspecting judge, worried about twenty years ago - except they've become worse.

We incarcerate more people than anywhere else in Africa - and we are twelfth most on the world list. Our system is one-third overcrowded: we are cramming in 30% more inmates than capacity allows.

This affects especially awaiting-trial detainees, squeezed together into insufficient cell space - and is a central

Covid-19 and the perils of over-incarceration



frustration of the Judicial Inspectorate's (JICS's) work.

Worse during a pandemic - when contagion spreads, our correctional centres become ideal spaces for it to flourish. The close living conditions. The proximity of too many other human bodies. Poor ventilation. Inadequate hygiene. All these leave inmates with underlying health conditions - surely the great majority - exposed and vulnerable.

What is JICS's role?

The Inspectorate's complaint mechanisms remain active. But our access for oversight has been severely impeded. JICS's functioning heavily relies on independent correctional centre visitors (ICCVs). They need physical access - which the national lockdown has precluded. (Our ICCVs are not banned as "members of the public", but they are not "correctional personnel" who enjoy exemption as "essential service" employees.)

Paradoxically, at a moment of collective fear, while police patrol our streets to ensure our safety, we tell our inmates, who may be most at risk, that the mechanisms securing their basic rights are thwarted.

Instead, ICCVs should be afforded continued access, even if limited, for instance, to administrative blocks.

The greater and underlying worry is DCS's failure over the past five or more years to comply with the reporting obligations the statute imposes upon it. The statute requires that every single death, natural or unnatural, must be reported to the inspecting judge. Every use of force must be reported. Every time an inmate is put in solitary confinement or shackled, this must be reported.

Over the last years, mandatory reporting has fallen into disarray. In some cases, the reporting fall-off is as high as 84%.

JICS doesn't seek to police officials' behaviour. It aims to protect both prisoners and officials. And it serves as an early-warning system when trouble is brewing.

Earlier this year I warned that without a functioning reporting system we are at risk of a surge of institutional violence that could imperil both inmates and officials. Covid-19 has sharply increased this risk.

DCS has a sound and carefully-thought Covid-19 operations plan. It is to be congratulated on formulating it. The test, though, as always, is practical follow-through. How is the plan being implemented?

Just when mandatory reporting is crucial, the plan prescribes no duty to report, to JICS, how the virus is seeping through our correctional centres. This is a gaping omission.

The department remains obliged to report every case where a prisoner is segregated. That includes all medical segregations, including Covid-19 isolations.

Yet, just when this is more crucial than ever, segregation reports to JICS have sharply fallen off, down to 67 during Covid from a monthly average of about 300. The betokens severe under-reporting.

More worrying, the statute grants inmates an appeal to the Inspecting Judge against segregation. But I have received no appeals. Why not? Are inmates still practically able to exercise this right?

Crisis times make oversight bodies more crucial. They ensure that the

vulnerable do not go unheard. But JICS is unable to ensure that inmates' rights are respected, let alone that Covid-19 is properly managed.

Covid-19 has exposed deep structural rifts in our society. And it forces us to witness how vulnerable we've let our inmate population become. And it draws our gaze to the dysfunction in our correctional system, which has left JICS unable to manage the ordinary - let alone the exceptional.

Urgently restoring mandatory reporting is a priority. But a more effective way to deal with overcrowding in an epidemic is carefully-screened, carefully-considered releases.

Globally, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has urged governments to reduce prison populations and to prevent uncontrollable outbreaks of Covid-19.

Around the world, governments are allowing the emergency release of inmates. Iran, India, certain states in the US, Chile, Morocco, Uganda, Nigeria have all taken significant action to decongest prisons through Covid releases.

In keeping with international trends, I have urged Minister Ronald Lamola to consider careful releases within these categories -

elderly inmates over 60 years old, petty offenders and non-violent offenders, including all offenders convicted of drug offences in nonviolent circumstances, inmates with sentences of less than one year, inmates eligible for medical parole plus those approaching their parole date, and inmates imprisoned instead of paying a fine.

Today (24 April) I have released a letter that I signed jointly with the Detention Justice Forum and its members; it calls upon the Minister to act urgently toward this.

Covid-19 has upended our world. Nothing is the same. We must adapt, or we will suffer, all of us. We cannot separate our fate from those we incarcerate. The security of all, inside and outside prison, depends not on lock-up, but on providing healthcare, beds, running water and protective and preventive equipment for all.

Social welfare and security are not separate imperatives. Our collective safety now depends on how well we manage to secure the social welfare of all our citizens -including those in prison.

Edwin Cameron is the Inspecting Judge of Correctional Services.

Religion as Africa's Trojan Horse

By Osmund Agbo

IT'S impossible to have an honest discussion about Africa's underdevelopment and poor performance in the global stage without recognising the ignominious role played by religion. Although the two major religions practiced in the region originated from outside the continent, our practice of these religions are so remarkably different that you begin to wonder if we imported counterfeits.

There is no reason not to eulogise Western civilisation, having saved Africa from her primitive pre-colonial past. An Africa which though still trapped in a nonremedial cycle of crippling poverty and excruciating underdevelopment, no more kills her twin children or sacrifices her people to the gods. The one little problem was that at a time when the colonial powers were working really hard to save us from those vices using the instruments of religion, they held the strongest of our young men and women with arms and feet bound in chains, thrown into the middle of the ocean, while waiting to ship them to a land far removed from home. So in the end, Africa's children still managed to get dehumanised and brutally murdered. Just that the killing fields were located under the scorching sun in the plantation fields of Europe and the Americas. This begs the question: Was religion introduced to Africa for its spiritual value or was it just an effective tool that helped the colonialists in their conquest?

I, for one, don't have all the answers but what is not in doubt is that countries that escaped colonialism and weren't 'gifted' with the Western-style religion tend to fair much better in today's world. If in doubt, just look around, and I'm not even talking about faraway China. You just have to look at Ethiopia close by and compare her to the rest of the nations of Africa. Same African people with different mindset and yes, very different results.

One of the reason why the Nigerian government is unable to contain the virus that is the Boko Haram insurgency remains largely due to the existence of an inexhaustible supply of uneducated, jobless, hopeless and hungry people called Almajiris. The Almajiranci is an Islamic educational system that encourages parents to give up their responsibilities by sending their children to be attached to Islamic schools. Even if you were to concede that the goal is to raise pious kids who will follow in the footsteps of Prophet Mohammed, you still find that the working of the system is a study in unconscionable child abuse and neglect. The system unleashes thousands of young people unable to count



the first ten letters of the English alphabet and who move about in the streets daily, begging for what to eat.

I have often wondered where that concept originated from, given that we are not aware of its existence in countries where Islam is even the state religion. If such practice does not exist in Saudi Arabia, whose idea was it to raise an army of homeless people with a limitless capacity to be exploited for evil in the name of religion? Of course we know the answer. But today, it's not just about Almajiris and the Boko Haram. It's about a continent that has turned religion on its head in a self-defeatist mindset.

In the book of Genesis, the Bible reminds us that God created us in his own image and likeness. If you believe that to be the case, then you should know that he expects us to live not just in any kind of way but in a manner that reflects a sense of peace and purpose. In order words, it was the almighty's grand design to make his children spiritual beings.

Today, we must challenge Africa to a new cultural paradigm. There is no better time than now to cut loose from

the shackles of religion and join the rest of the civilised world in emphasising spirituality. A renewed African spirituality will change our mindset, as well as define a new set of goals and values.

Religion, on the other hand, is a totally different matter and God in his infinite wisdom didn't find it necessary to create one. Humans did. The very essence of religion is to fulfill humanity's aspiration to unite as a group of people under the same values and belief, in other to facilitate their collective and individual communication with a superior being. Fact.

The problem is that there is a disingenuous effort on the part of some faith leaders to try to equate religion

with spirituality and nothing could be further from the truth. The later is your destination, whereas the former is a vehicle designed to take you there. Religion, therefore, is meant to facilitate our spiritual experience.

The bigger question is if indeed that promise holds true in today's world. Well, maybe in some cases but I will submit that there is nothing spiritual about the murderous religious sect called ISIS.

You must know that the world has witnessed too much deception, stealing and savagery by men that dress up in immaculate white robes preaching prosperity on Sunday mornings. We are all too familiar with folks who lost their lives in the hands of those that

answer to the muezzin's salat calls five times a day. Those are all religious people.

It's impossible to have an honest discussion about Africa's underdevelopment and poor performance in the global stage without recognising the ignominious role played by religion. Although the two major religions practiced in the region originated from outside the continent, our practice of these religions are so remarkably different that you begin to wonder if we imported counterfeits.

In spite of all the issues raised above, there is no denying the fact that, in many instances, religious bodies have played a significant role in shaping our society as forces for good. Both Christian and Muslim charities have lifted the downtrodden and attended to sick and dying children all over the world during times of war or peace, which is highly commendable.

But that could be put to human spirituality at work and not necessarily because of religion. There are atheists and agnostics who have done more and even gone ahead to adopt the service of others as a creed of their very own existence.

Of course I am pretty sure that the topic of this discussion may sound very controversial to many or is even outrightly scandalous to some. But I am lucky enough to reside in a space where my safety and freedom to pen my thoughts are not in the least threatened. I do not have to worry about a certain Sheikh issuing a fatwah over my head or face the vitriol of "Men of God".

Today, we must challenge Africa to a new cultural paradigm. There is no better time than now to cut loose from the shackles of religion and join the rest of the civilised world in emphasising spirituality.

More pain for Nigeria's children living under difficult circumstances

By Udora Orizu

SINCE the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, the federal and state governments have taken various measures to curb its spread including closing national and local boundaries, restricting movement. Not only has this pandemic proven the country's 'failed system'. It has also shown various flawed decisions by government in the believe that it was helping to curb the spread of the virus.

One of those measures is the move by Nigerian governors from the 19 Northern states to end the Almajiri system. In order to execute the decision, there has been a rash of transfer of Almajiris back to their states of origin. The controversial ban of the Almajiri from states in the north is one of those terrible decisions, a clear proof of policy without social content.

The Almajiri crises have been age long issue. However, recently the move by the Northern governors to ban the Almajiri system as part of efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria triggered the latest crisis. The decision had Islamic clerics, the National Assembly, lawyers and other stakeholders calling for its halt, with some describing it as inhumane and a violation of human rights.

With the ban also, some have questioned, how the host states were able to know that the parents of those children are from the states to which they are being forcefully moved. Where are the records? Who keeps an accurate data of the Almajiri. What part of the constitution gives the governors the right to embark on such an action?

Almajiri may be described as children who live under difficult circumstances. They grow up on the streets without the love, care and guidance of parents; their struggle for survival exposes them to abuse. Most of them are used as slaves, brainwashed and recruited for anti-social activities and used for destructive and violent activities.

In the northern part of the country, they usually move in groups, begging for or scrambling over a small plate of food. At times, they move from house-to-house, singing begging songs, and calling on people in the house for help.

Historically, Almajiri, formally called Tsangaya, is a migratory system of Islamic education that emerged in the pre-colonial era from the Kanem-Borno town of Northern Nigeria. Almajiri was inspired by Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina and is derived from the Arabic word Al-Muhajirun, which means



a person who leaves his home in search of Islamic knowledge.

Young boys would leave their homes to be taught by an Alarama (Teacher) for up to six years, starting with understanding basic Arabic alphabets to memorising the Qur'an. The schools were established as an organised system of learning Quranic education and Islamic jurisprudence, a replica of Islamic learning centres in Muslim countries like the Madrasah in Pakistan, Egypt, etc.

These schools were primarily funded by scholarships from the Emirates system, though members of the community and parents also contributed through Sadaqah (Giving of alms). However, the British side-lined the Almajiri system after their 1904 invasion as they did not recognise it as a standard educational system, ceased official funding and established a new system of Western education called Boko. Though funding went down, interest in Almajiri remained the same. As contributions from parents and community members were not enough to sustain the practice, the students started begging.

The Almajiri system of education are Islamic schools with a longstanding tradition in northern Nigeria, dating back to

the 11th century. The Islamic revolution of the 18th century solidified the Almajiri system under the Sokoto Caliphate. This system of education focuses on Quranic and Islamic education, where students also learn a trade for livelihood. Under the Sokoto Caliphate, schools were regulated and teachers reported directly to the Emir of their province. Students in the school were raised by teachers, parents, leaders and the community at large. To supplement the Almajiri system, students would farm and bring food for the school. Like Western education, it was a course in the society and culture of the region where students were taught the Islamic and northern Nigerian way of life.

Under British colonization, however, British rulers deliberately dismantled the Almajiri system, killing most of the Emirs of the region and abolishing state funding of the system. The dismantling of this system directly created the structural problems facing Islamic schools in Nigeria today.

A 2014 UNICEF report estimated that there are 9.5 million Almajiri children in Nigeria, making up 72 per cent of the nation's out-of-school children. Estimates

reveal that Nigeria presently has between 13.2 million and 15 million out-of-school children, most of them in northern Nigeria.

The Northern governor's Forum reached an agreement last month to ban the Almajiri system as part of efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

The governors agreed to evacuate the children back to their parents or states of origin to minimise their exposure to the disease that has infected over four million people across the world.

One of the Northern Governors, Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano State recently described the Almajiris as the breeding ground for Coronavirus because of their vulnerability as a result of lack of hygiene, lack of shelter and lack of proper sanitation.

He said, "Because they stay in a congested environment, they have no defined place for them to sleep, no prescribed food for them to eat, no provision for sanitation and therefore they are vulnerable. Based on these we decided to pay special attention to them by establishing the special response team to examine and protect them under the climate of COVID-19.

Those found to be negative will be taken back to their parents while those found to be positive will be retained, isolated and treated. When they recover, they will then be taken back to their states with certification from the NCDC."

"We decided to examine all the Almajiris in Kano state. Our intention is to protect them and those who are negative, we take them back to their parents, back to their states to ensure that they are free from Coronavirus. Those who are positive, we are not taking them back to their states of origin. We are putting them in isolation centres until they are cured and are confirmed negative. For those Almajiris from Kano, we have an adequate arrangement for their education and for those who cannot find where to go, we are their parents and we are ready to cater for them. Our intention is to ensure that the Almajiri system is fully integrated with the conventional system of education. Our children have the right to education and Almajiris have right to education."

Also the Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, recently said the Northern States Governors Forum was determined to end the Almajiri system of education in the north, amidst the spread

of COVID-19 among the children.

El-Rufai said the COVID-19 pandemic provided the opportunity to determine the state of Almajiri education.

He said the decision has been a subject of deep deliberations in the Northern States Governors Forum under the chairmanship of the Plateau governor, Simon Lalong, for the past 12 months.

"We've been looking for the ways and means to end this system because it has not worked for the children, it has not worked for Northern Nigeria and it has not worked for Nigeria. So, it has to end and this is the time."

He said his state has been expanding the capacities of schools in Kaduna with the hope of accommodating the subsequent integration of these children as the best alternative for them.

"You know, it is better to count 200 children in a primary school classroom and give them some kind of modern education than to allow them to waste their lives away, roaming about the streets begging for what to eat under this system. Anything is better than this system and we're determined as Northern governors to end it," he said.

The Governor also said if other Northern governors are treating the issues with levity, that is their own business, but that in Kaduna State, the Almajiri system is dead.

He revealed that he has reviewed a law that will formally prohibit such a system in his state, noting that all parents of the children have been tracked and would be properly trained on parental responsibilities, in order to efficiently and effectively enforce the proposed model for the children.

"We are not just abolishing the system, we're not just telling the parents of the children, but we've let them know that the children must go to school once school is open and we've tracked each and everyone of their parents and we're going to counsel them on parental responsibilities. It is a long process, but the children must go to school," he added.

Following the ban by the Northern governors, there has also been speculations of influx of Almajiris in the South-east. Recently, apex Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo and traditional rulers in Anambra, Imo and Abia States, raised the alarm over the increasing number of youths from the northern parts of the country, being dumped in the South-east, calling on governors in the zone to take a serious stand on the issue without further delay.

Coronavirus holds up a mirror to hidden gaslighting abuse

BY ROBIN STERN

SINCE the new coronavirus took over our lives, mixed messages over the risks have left many people feeling confused, unmoored, doubting their decisions and second-guessing their thinking about how to react. It's like living in a gaslight culture, a term coined nearly a century ago to describe a kind of psychological manipulation or abuse of people - particularly of women.

The rising numbers of reports of domestic abuse during the global lockdowns has countered a widespread view that people with greater resources, greater access and education don't abuse each other.

Abuse can happen in all strata of society and this particular method of abuse - gaslighting - is just as common among people with more resources. I worked as a therapist with well-heeled clients on Manhattan's Upper East Side for 30 years and saw that this dynamic was prevalent among my clients - and many friends. It's a form of manipulation that can hide behind a veneer of social acceptability when one person in the relationship is more powerful.

The term "gaslight" was introduced almost a century ago in Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play "Gas Light" that was made into

a film of the same name starring Ingrid Bergman. The play and movie tell the story of a man who carefully and gradually (and diabolically) manipulates his wife into believing she has lost her sanity.

After the release of the film, psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists began using the term "gaslight" to refer to countless clients who had begun to question themselves and their realities after receiving repeated false information or personal accusations. These statements were designed to psychologically disorganize their reality and distance them from their partners, colleagues, friends, and even family members.

Almost all circumstances are the same. The victim begins to question small things - such as if they misheard or misremembered a detail of a story, or misrepresented something about themselves in some way. It then becomes bigger things - like if what they heard or saw actually happened, or if their memories reflect actual events or if even if they are sane and OK. This series of persistent lies erodes their confidence in themselves and their worlds, until they have lost all touch with their own reality.

To be clear, gaslighting is more than deception. Gaslighting is the follow-up to the lie that punctures the confi-

dence the victim has in how she understands herself, daily life and other people. It gets the victim not only to believe the misrepresentation but to question their own resistance to the lie. It stops that victim from leaving or seeking help.

Gaslighting is a theme of the HBO series "Big Little Lies" - the show based on the Liane Moriarty novel that continues to make news even though the last episode aired in 2019 and it is not yet known if another season is in the pipeline. "Big Little Lies" is about a wealthy community in Monterey, California, where child abuse, rape, insider trading, infidelity and homicide play out against a backdrop of Teslas, infinity pools, and over-the-top, costumed birthday parties.

As the title suggests, virtually every character tells a lie at least once; their motivations vary. But the biggest lies revolve around the death of the glowing Perry Wright who, unbeknownst to friends and family, beat his wife Celeste routinely.

There's another assumption about gaslighting, that it happens only between spouses or romantic partners. It can happen intergenerationally, too. Psychology 101 tells us that children always seem to know the truth their parents seem to hide. They are listen-



ing when we don't think they are, they are seeing the emotions in our micro-expressions, ones we try to hide; they are reading our body language.

Through most of the two seasons, we think Celeste and Perry Wright's children do not know about their father's violence but we realize in the last episode that

they not only knew about it but filmed it.

These are examples of how gaslighting isn't always maliciously motivated although it's still harmful. We see how important it is in Monterey to keep up appearances, to keep the story going. The gaslighting here isn't necessarily designed to drive someone crazy

or undermine their character, but to cover up the reality so that anyone looking on, suspecting, knowing another view, would need to second-guess themselves based on what they see and hear from the people involved.

Feeling flummoxed by mixed messages as public health experts employing trial and error

through the pandemic is one thing, but doubting one's sanity or reality is another. The best way to avoid both being a gaslighter or a victim of it is to know about it, recognize it, regulate emotions - in other words, develop the skills of emotional intelligence - and, above all else, maintain one's reality.

Rethinking concept of African Unity: Why proper education is first place to begin

By Jerry B. Tarbolo

MANY academics that I spoke with had limited faith in the possibility of an "Africa Unity", in fact to many; African Unity is an illusion that may never be realized. One of the simple reasons for such an extreme disbelief is because of "Mis-education". The African Union may change its objectives as many times as possible, it may even change its nomenclature as it did from the Organization of African Unity-OAU to the African Union-AU, the problem shall continue to persist. Changing nomenclatures and objectives are just mere attempt to treat the symptoms of an acute problem.

It may interest some of you to know that the concept of African Unity was not clearly conceptualized by our forebears; thus, leading to the formation of the Organization of African Unity. For example, the Casablanca bloc,^[1] shared a vision of the future of Africa as a confederacy which is planked on the doctrine of Pan-Africanism. The group was composed of seven states led by radical, left-wing leaders-- Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Tanzania, Guinea, Libya, Mali, and Morocco. The doctrine of Pan-Africanism for them was the complete political unity of Africa; especially beginning with those states that gained their independence in the early 60s. On the other hand, the Monrovia bloc shared a vision of the future of Africa as nationalism, a doctrine, which promoted the creed that, each nation of Africa should be self-governing over Pan-Africanism, the belief that the entire continent of Africa should seek integration of their politics, economy and so forth.

The Monrovia bloc was composed of twelve states including Liberia, Nigeria, and most of the francophone African countries such as Senegal, Cameroon, etc. The Monrovia bloc ideas ultimately prevailed, and in 1963 both groups joined to establish the Organization and African Union. As I problematized the concept of "African Unity", I have realized that the issue was not only about clarity of the concept, but also of "Identity Crisis". You would record that most of the African States were gaining their

so-called independence from their colonial masters after many years of misinformation and mis-education. They were made to believe that their slave masters were always superior human beings and they-Africans were inferior human beings. History is replete with such ill-conceived framing by those slave masters about Africans. This "identity Crisis" of who we really are as Africans; especially for those of our compatriots we sold into slavery still hunts our continent today.

Our compatriots came back with a slave-master mentality, and that is why they had to borrow everything from their slave masters ranging from their political system-democracy, to their masters' culture and religion. Additionally, some of the African States were not totally independent as they could realize. For example, most francophone states in West Africa, excluding Guinea, still pay taxes to France, and the French government decides how much these states borrow from their own reserve in the French Federal Bank. As a result of these facts and many more, I got to realize why many of my colleagues in academia still see "African Unity" as a mirage and that Africa is million miles away from achieving the said objective.

As I sat not giving up on my continent, I had a renew thought that there is a need to rethink the concept of "Africa Unity" through properly educating the new generation. I then began by asking myself, why proper education is the first place to begin? What's the strategy we must engender to properly educate our emerging leaders in the new generation? As these questions began to resonate in my mind, I then started to probe for solutions. I realized that our school systems in most parts of West Africa have curricula that teach our pupils and students to appreciate Europe, Northern America, rather than appreciating Africa. Hence, the strategy in properly educating the new African generation would be to teach them more of African history including African civilization and teach them little or no history of the West. This strategy is not a new one (as nothing is new under the sun), but it is fascinating, because that was the same strategy used by the slave masters in mis-



educating our folks yesterday as well as transmitting those same lesson plans to us in our school systems today.

In his book, the "Mis-education of the Negro", Dr. Carter G. Woodson indicated that... "Of the hundreds of Negro High Schools recently examined by an expert in the United States Bureau of Education only eighteen offer a course taking up history of the Negroes, and in most of the Negro colleges and universities where the negro is

thought of, the race is studied only as a problem or dismissed as of little consequences".^[3] Today such strategy has an added value on their educational system as well as their society. Why must we teach our pupils and students to appreciate the Greeks, and Hebrew? We need to teach them more on concepts of Marcus Garvey, Sheik Anta Diop, Dr. J. Henry Clark, Kwame Nkrumah, and many more great African revolutionaries and progressives. Let us

embrace their strategy of teaching less of Aristotle and Plato, and teach our kids more about the "Stolen Legacy", by George G.M. James. Knowledge is power and education is the key to acquiring knowledge. When they are properly educated they shall have the power to clearly understanding what it means to be integrated and then the "Identity Crisis" shall also vanish.

French and English languages would be of the past if we go back and start to teach "Swahili or Kiswahili" which is the second largest language in Africa after Arabic. French and Eng-

lish cannot be our first languages in Africa and we expect to be integrated. We see today in our region the language has become a barrier. We go to our meetings we have interpreters before we can understand ourselves, yet we are yelling about "African Unity" when we have lost our identities as Africans. When we are properly educated, we would stop referring to ourselves as Francophone and Anglophone, but Africans.

I shall conclude by stating that "African Unity" is still very possible if all states in Africa could go back to the basis by using the strategy the West use in educating their generation about their greatness and contribution to the world, and teach less of Africa. If we must attain "African Unity", then proper education of our new generation and emerging leaders should be the first place to begin.

ARI underlines integration as key to building more resilient economies

By Special Correspondent, Addis Ababa

THE second Africa Regional Integration Index has been launched by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC), with a call to action to African economies to deepen their integration.

The 2019 Index, which builds on the first edition published in 2016, provides up-to-date data on the status and progress of regional integration in Africa. It also helps to assess the level of integration for every Regional

Economic Community (REC) and their member countries.

The report observed that although 20 countries score above average, no African country can be considered well integrated in its region. Even the most integrated country, South Africa, scores 0.625 less than two-thirds of its potential on the scale.

The report found that much more needs to be done to integrate regional economies to make them more resilient to shocks such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the Index shows that levels of integration on the continent

are relatively low with an average score of 0.327 out of 1.

"Whereas the Index edition we are releasing today has data cut off points in 2019, the present COVID-19 pandemic has reopened the question of whether enough is being done in advancing regional integration as a means to help Africa withstand systematic shocks such as the one being experienced today," said Stephen Karungi, Regional Integration Division Director at the ECA.

"This index is both a measurement exercise and a call to action; to build resilient economies through integration," he

added. "It will identify the solutions needed to truly build an integrated Africa."

Jean-Denis Gabikini, Acting Director of the AUC's Economic Affairs Department, welcomed the collaboration in producing the Index. He noted that the Index covers issues of intellectual property, competition policy, investment and digital trade which are critical to the successful negotiations of Phase II and III of AfCFTA.

"To achieve an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, representing a dynamic force in the concert of nations", this ARI report will

support AU Member States and RECs to address industrialisation and value addition priorities for the development of the continent," Gabikini said.

With the establishment of RECs and their creation of AfCFTA, Africa has reinforced regional integration as a major development priority for the continent under the 2012 Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) Action Plan.

The Index ranks the level of integration of African countries within their respective RECs and also with the rest of the continent. It scores across five key dimensions: trade,

productive capacity, macro-economic policy, infrastructure, and free movement of people.

Among the eight RECs recognised by the AU, the East African Community (EAC) scored highest for overall integration, with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) coming last.

The African Development Bank's Director for Regional Development and Regional Integration, Moono Mupotola, said the Index was a useful tool for tracking progress on the regional integration front and would help countries identify priorities to improve integra-

tion.

"The crippling effects of COVID-19 illustrate the need for enhanced production of African finished goods and services that can readily be traded across the continent," Mupotola said.

David Luke, coordinator of the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) at the ECA pointed out that the productive and infrastructure dimensions of regional integration are intricately linked. Tackling these two dimensions along with implementing the AfCFTA would be a massive boost for trade, he said.

'Concern over food security might be blessing in disguise for African farmers'

By Gavin du Venage

HUNGER stalks Africa again, and at a time when the world's capacity to help is greatly diminished. For the continent's long-neglected agriculture sector, this may be a blessing in disguise.

Africa has about 60 per cent of the world's available but unused farmland, according to World Bank figures. It also has around 80 million people that need emergency food aid right now.

While food poverty has long been an issue, many governments have neglected their farming potential, instead investing their energy in high value mineral or oil and gas production.

Food is mostly produced by subsistence farmers while imports of staples such as rice, wheat and maize bolster supply. Any shortfall because of drought or conflict is usually met by the global community.

With the world's logistic supply chain locked down amid the global pandemic, and many food producers such as India and Vietnam banning rice exports, this is no longer the case.

"Across sub-Saharan Africa, we see a trend for governments to want to move away from food imports," says Liz Whitehouse, managing director of research company Africa House in Johannesburg.

"Countries are beginning to introduce incentives to improve agriculture, agro-

processing and food, and to encourage beverage manufacturing locally."

Cameroon and Nigeria are among those who have an expanding list of import restricted foods, while others such as Uganda continue to explore free trade zones for agriculture that provide tax-free access for outside agro-investors.

Angola, meanwhile, recently said that the UAE is investing \$200 million (Dh734.6m) in agriculture technology centres across the country.

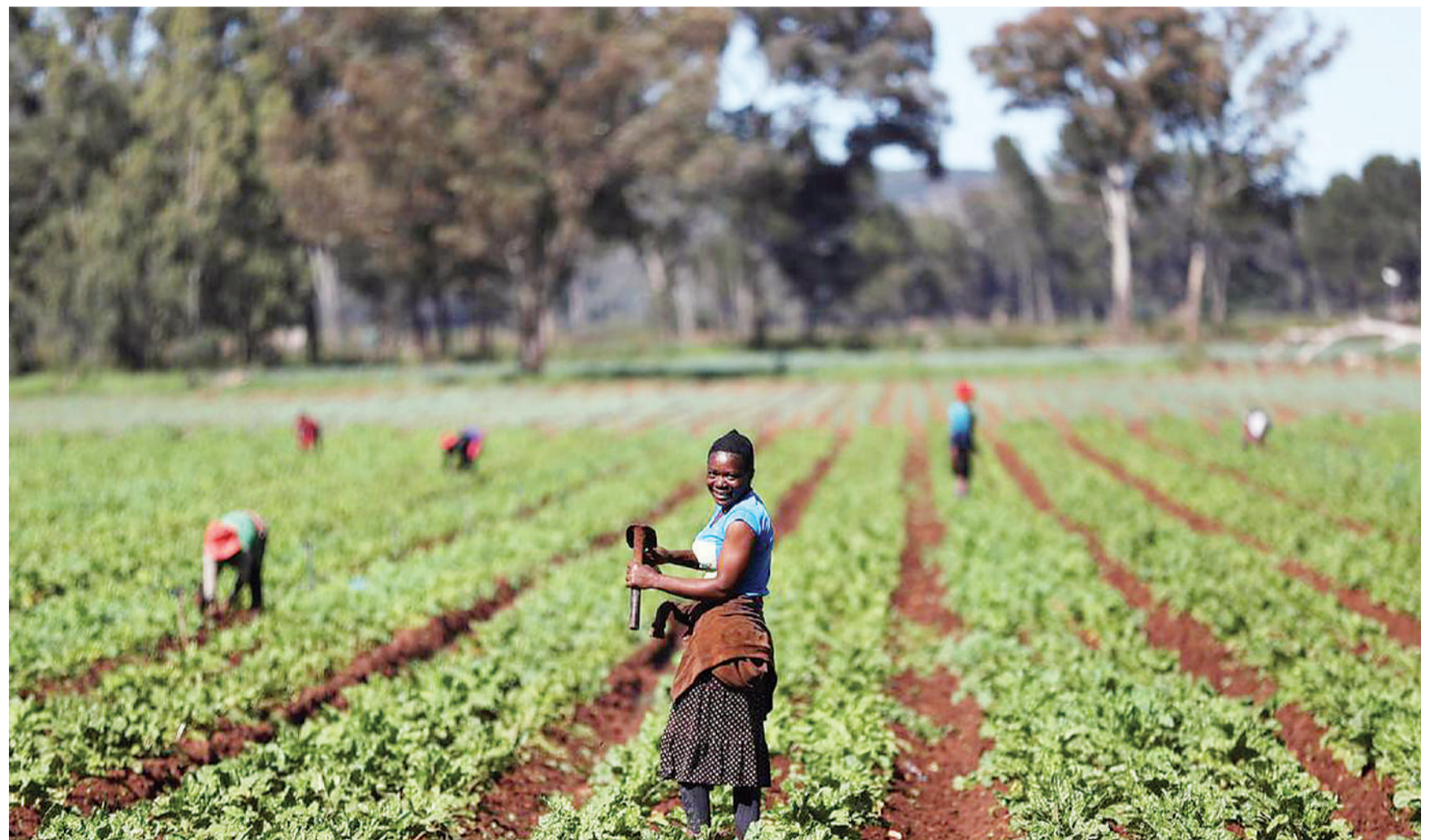
Even Zimbabwe, where more than seven million people need food assistance, wants to rebuild a modern agriculture economy.

The country's experiment with land reforms, centred around the eviction of white commercial farmers, has been a disaster, leading to the destruction of the once productive industry.

Ever since the ousting of former president Robert Mugabe in late 2017, the incumbent administration under Emmerson Mnangagwa has tried to lure back skilled farmers, technicians and even financiers.

"The president personally asked me if I'd take the job, so I said yes," says Marc Holtzman, a US banker appointed chairman of the country's largest private lending institution, the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe, late last year.

Mnangagwa has been recruiting



skilled technocrats to help restore the country to nutritional independence and eventually once again become a net exporter of food. CBZ has assets of around \$1 billion, and will partner with the government to provide finance for machinery, fertiliser and other essential inputs.

For instance, the bank is backing the return of US tractor manufacturer John Deere to Zimbabwe, after a 20-year absence. A \$50m loan facility will pay for 1,800 tractors to be imported and assigned to emerging farmers.

"After being economically shackled for 40 years, the economy is now ready to finally achieve its full potential," Holtzman says.

Nigeria, Africa's most populated country and its largest economy, has begun enforcing restrictions on food imports and the use of precious foreign exchange to pay for it.

It is on track to be the world's second-largest consumer of rice behind China. In spite of a large sector of subsist-

ence farmers growing rice, the country still depends on imports to meet demand.

"Why doesn't Nigeria mill rice at an industrial scale? Because it's cheaper to import," says Kalu Aja, chief executive of AfriSwiss Capital Assets in Abuja. "This is because power supply is weak, infrastructure non-existent and the local currency is still too strong."

Right now, supermarkets in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi stock butter from Belgium and chicken eggs from France can be found in Accra, Ghana. Canned tomatoes from China and Italy are commonplace across the continent.

Growing these products would be entirely possible in Africa's fertile soil but agriculture is every bit as dependent on roads, ports and electricity supply as mining, oil and gas - Africa's primary source of foreign exchange.

Without a reliable way to store and move fresh produce,

commercial farming for export becomes impossible.

Likewise, the vague laws many African countries have around land title also make long-term investment difficult. Until recently, African governments have been reluctant to address these issues, which require money, and the political will to subvert traditional tribal land ownership laws.

Yet, the dependence on global raw material and energy markets now makes reform imperative.

As the global pandemic shuts down demand for minerals and energy, African countries might now be compelled to develop agriculture to lessen their dependence on raw material sales.

Shrinking forests need bold action to safeguard their biodiversity

ROME

URGENT action is needed to safeguard the biodiversity of the world's forests amid alarming rates of deforestation and degradation, according to the latest edition of the State of the World's Forests.

Published on the International Day for Biological Diversity over the weekend, the report shows that the conservation of the world's biodiversity is utterly dependent on the way in which we interact with and use the world's forests.

The report was produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership, for the first time, with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and technical input from the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

It highlights that some 420 million hectares of forest have been lost through conversion to other land uses since 1990, although the rate of deforestation has decreased over the past three decades.

The COVID-19 crisis has thrown into sharp focus the importance of conserving and using nature in a sustainable

manner, recognizing that people's health is linked to ecosystem health.

This report shows that forests contain 60,000 different tree species, 80 percent of amphibian species, 75 percent of bird species, and 68 percent of the Earth's mammal species.

FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 report found that despite a slowing of the rate of deforestation in the last decade, some 10 million hectares are still being lost each year through conversion to agriculture and other land uses.

"Deforestation and forest degradation continue to take place at alarming rates, which contributes significantly to the ongoing loss of biodiversity," FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu, and the Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, said in the foreword.

The report presents a comprehensive overview of forest biodiversity, including world maps revealing where forests still hold rich communities of fauna and flora, such as the northern Andes and parts of the Congo Basin, and where they have been lost.

In this report, a special study from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and the US Forest Service

found 34.8 million patches of forests in the world, ranging in size from 1 hectare to 680 million hectares. Greater restoration efforts to reconnect forest fragments are urgently needed.

The report notes that the Aichi Biodiversity Target to protect at least 17 percent of the Earth's terrestrial areas by 2020 has been achieved for forests, although progress is still required to ensure the representation and effectiveness of such protection.

A study conducted by the UNEP-WCMC for this report shows that the largest increase in protected forest areas occurred in broadleaved evergreen forests - such as those typically found in the tropics.

Furthermore, over 30 percent of all tropical rainforests, subtropical dry forests and temperate oceanic forests are now located within protected areas.

Millions of people around the world depend on forests for their food security and livelihoods. Forests provide more than 86 million green jobs. Of those living in extreme poverty, over 90 percent are dependent on forests for wild food, firewood or part of their livelihoods.



UN report: Urgent action needed to safeguard biodiversity of world's forests

We must protect women from sexual violence during Covid-19 lockdown and beyond

By Nadia Murad

WOMEN are often on the frontlines of those most vulnerable during crisis situations. They are targets of gender-based violence (GBV) in war, conflict, economic crises, disasters, pandemics, and in their everyday environments. GBV is a result of systemic inequalities between men and women that pervade all societies. As a survivor of sexual violence, I have used my voice to call out injustice for many years and in all parts of the world. I will use it once again to say that COVID-19 is negatively impacting women globally and we are not doing enough to address it.

We must recognize the threat COVID-19 poses to victims of sexual violence and respond accordingly. Women will fall victim to sexual violence in horrific numbers if we don't act now to put systems in place respond to their needs. Collectively, we need to provide extra support to protect those experiencing domestic violence through specializing training of first responders, additional emergency shelters for survivors, immediate removal of abusers, and increased support for helplines.

According to UN Women, 243 million girls and women globally between the ages of 15 and 49 experience sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner annually. This number has significantly increased due to the global lockdown.

COVID-19 is severely undermining efforts to end GBV through reduced access to prevention and protection, such as social services and care, and increased incidences of violence. Fears around security, health, and finances lead to heightened stress and

anxiety and intensify domestic tensions in already confined living spaces. While the current economic downturn is affecting both men and women, past evidence shows that domestic violence against women increases during periods of high unemployment. In a lockdown, a women's home may become the most dangerous place she can be - it presents abusers with an increased opportunity to inflict harm, while victims have reduced access to support networks.

In my home country of Iraq, domestic violence is an ongoing and serious problem. According to the Iraq Family Health survey, 1 in 5 Iraqi women are subjected to domestic violence. All forms of violence are expressly prohibited in the Iraqi constitution, but Iraq's criminal code does not mention domestic violence. Only the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has a law on domestic violence. Recent efforts to draft a similar law in Iraq have stalled in the Iraqi parliament.

As in many other countries, COVID-19 has exacerbated instances of domestic violence in Iraq, with an average increase of 30% since the country-wide curfew began, and some regions seeing an increase as high as 50%. These statistics illustrate the immediate need for domestic violence to be criminalized in Iraq through the codification of law.

For survivors of violence and women displaced in Iraq and globally, the consequences of COVID-19 lockdowns often mean limited access to life saving services. It is now difficult for these women to access psychosocial support, health, and security. Many safe shelters have been temporarily suspended, closed, or repurposed, leaving them in a heightened vulnerable



state. We must recognize the threat COVID-19 poses to survivors of GBV and respond accordingly. Collectively, we need to provide extra support to protect those experiencing GBV through specialized training of first responders, additional emergency shelters for survivors, immediate removal of

abusers, and increased support for helplines.

My organization, Nadia's Initiative, advocates for survivors of sexual violence and rebuilds communities in crisis. During COVID-19, our work encompasses both emergency response initiatives and projects that will provide long-term mitigation measures

to COVID-19. Our emergency response work includes providing thousands of vulnerable women and families with food and sanitation kits. Our long-term programmatic work is focused on investing in the development of the healthcare sector and women's empowerment in Sinjar.

Yazidi women have survived sexual

violence, genocide, and displacement. They live in a constant state of vulnerability. The need to support Yazidi survivors is exponentially higher when their access to healthcare, psychosocial support, and safe shelter is greatly reduced. The Iraqi government must step up to do more to protect vulnerable groups like Yazidi survivors.

It is more important now than ever to support women - to listen to them and take their stories seriously. Violence against women is ongoing, it is global, and it has only been exacerbated by COVID-19. Governments worldwide need to prioritize their efforts to reach women in distress and provide safe spaces when needed. Women's health and safety is at risk. Too many lives have already been lost to COVID-19 - governments and civil society must do everything they can to protect women who are now doubly vulnerable.

Women and girls who are displaced and stateless are most vulnerable during this pandemic. Critical services for survivors of GBV must be designated as essential and accessible to those displaced. Survivors must have access to healthcare, security, psychosocial support, and safe shelter.

We must not forget that at the heart of GBV is systemic gender inequalities within society. In order to change this, we need to tackle these inequities both on a policy level and a local level. This systemic change requires the involvement of the public and a strong political will. Men are as much a part of the solution as they are a part of the problem.

Those most vulnerable should not be forgotten during this pandemic. Women and girls have the right to live free from all forms of violence - now and forever.

Here's how Africa can fight the COVID-19 pandemic

By Special Correspondent

THE COVID-19 death toll is still mounting in the developed West, but the pandemic's impact on Africa could be much worse. African and international leaders must act boldly, decisively, and immediately to prevent a catastrophe.

Many African countries were ill-prepared to tackle the Ebola epidemic that erupted in 2014. And COVID-19 presents a much graver danger because it can spread exponentially, including via asymptomatic carriers, while African governments remain constrained by weak health-care systems, limited resources, and economic and spatial constraints on social-distancing measures.

Since Egypt reported Africa's first confirmed case of COVID-19 on February 14, the number of cases has risen to more than 10,000, with Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa each recording over 2,000. The continent's death toll already exceeds 500, implying a mortality rate well above the global average. This high death rate, together with the low number of

confirmed cases, may reflect Africa's very low rate of COVID-19 testing.

Many African governments have signaled a readiness to respond to the pandemic. But designing measures that reflect reality, and ensuring that they are effective, will be difficult. Under South Africa's national lockdown, for example, the country's most vulnerable social groups are struggling to feed their families, cannot wash their hands regularly because they have no access to clean water, and cannot self-isolate if they live in crowded slums.

Other African countries - with far less developed social-welfare systems than South Africa - face even bigger challenges. According to the World Health Organization, the continent has just 1.06 nurses and midwives for every 1,000 inhabitants. And current evidence suggests that the belief that Africa's tropical climate will help to suppress the coronavirus is a myth.

In the coming weeks and months, millions of Africans may become infected with COVID-19. Researchers at Imperial College London recently estimated that, even under the most optimistic scenario, the virus would kill 300,000

people in Sub-Saharan Africa - not to mention the immense economic costs it would impose, owing to lost export revenues, severed supply chains, and plummeting demand.

African governments therefore must make COVID-19 their top priority, and urgently design and implement ambitious, well-informed policies to combat it. After all, international support - although much-needed - is no substitute for resolute national action.

What is the World Economic Forum doing about the coronavirus outbreak?

A new strain of Coronavirus, COVID 19, is spreading around the world, causing deaths and major disruption to the global economy.

Responding to this crisis requires global cooperation among governments, international organizations and the business community, which is at the centre of the World Economic Forum's mission as the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.

The Forum has created the COVID Action Platform, a global platform to convene the business community for collective action, pro-



tect people's livelihoods and facilitate business continuity, and mobilize support for the COVID-19 response. The platform is created with the support of the World Health Organization and is open to all businesses and industry groups, as well as other stakeholders, aiming to integrate and inform joint action.

As an organization, the Forum has a track record of supporting efforts to contain epidemics. In 2017, at our Annual Meeting, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) was launched - bringing together experts from government, business, health, academia and civil society to accelerate the development of vaccines. CEPI is currently supporting the race to develop a vaccine against this strand of the coronavirus.

For starters, African leaders must learn from countries that have already experienced the pandemic, in the way that South Africa is drawing lessons from South Korea. Furthermore, it is vital that governments collaborate effectively, share their experiences of tackling the virus, mobilize experts - both local and from the diaspora - and strengthen their coordination with the WHO.

Indeed, every African government should coordinate action by private and public actors and civil society, but without resorting to force. And

while governments should establish wartime-like organizational structures and seek to maximize coordination among national and local agencies, they should not use the crisis as an excuse permanently to constrain or remove individual freedoms. Rather, political leaders should encourage the public to hold them accountable for their management of the public-health crisis, and accept checks and balances on government power.

Africa has just 1.06 nurses and midwives for every 1,000 inhabitants. Managing the coming economic crisis also will be critical. This means reducing the damage to the most dynamic sectors as much and as early as possible, because more productive activities have bigger spillover effects and are crucial for recovery and large-scale employment. The biggest mistake would be to place all economic activities on an equal footing and try to make everyone happy.

Instead, policymakers should focus on export industries, which are vital to ensure foreign-exchange liquidity, ease balance-of-payments constraints, and generate employment. Encouraging services exports and high-value service activities is also critical, as is ensuring affordable food supplies.

Current and former African leaders, prominent interna-

tional figures such as former UK prime minister Gordon Brown, and organizations such as the International Monetary Fund have called for greater international cooperation to support Africa. But if the virtual G20 meeting in March is any indication, governments' current appetite for such efforts appears limited.

Nonetheless, international action is essential and must be guided by several critical principles. First, any support needs to focus on emergency health measures to help African countries to control the pandemic. Second, international cooperation must include development assistance to help countries manage economic crisis and humanitarian needs. It should also include support for foreign-exchange liquidity in order to limit insolvency and protect essential economic activities. And an economic-stimulus package, including a large new issue of IMF Special Drawing Rights and favorable terms for developing countries, is essential to a faster recovery.

Third, debt relief is indispensable. With their exports hard hit, African countries will not be able to afford the \$50 billion of debt payments that fall due this year. IMF and World Bank shareholders therefore should take the lead in waiving debt service for the coming years, not just for 2020.

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 89 00--

WORD-FIT

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

SOLUTIONS

3 LETTERS: FEW, ADD, ANA
 4 LETTERS: MEAN, TAME, NOSE, NEWS, REAP, DINE, MINT, (7 WORDS)
 5 LETTERS: LEAST, AWASH, POEMS, TAPES, EGRET (5 WORDS)
 6 LETTERS: CAREER, STRIVE, ANSWER, AMORAL, ASSETS (5 WORDS)
 7 LETTERS: MALINDI
 8 LETTERS: ADAPTORS
 10 LETTERS: TYRRHENIAN

CROSSWORD

S A L V A T I O N S S H O P S O I L E D
 L A S U T B D R
 P R O A F L O A T A M I D U L A M A
 E S C O R E N R T R I B E I
 S M A C C M S U U A N T
 C A R E E N S H A M A N E
 L C A E T P
 A V O W E M E N D F R A T U N D E R
 A I L D I R I
 U G A N D A N S I A F F E C T E D N
 S E N D E C I F F Y C C
 E T S E T S E T L U S E N E T

CROSSWORD

1 2 3 4
 5 6 7
 8 9 10
 11
 12
 13 14 15 16
 17 18
 19
 20

CLUES: Across

1 Printed publications
 5 a female servant
 7 plural form of ass
 8 sliced bread broiled to make it crisp
 10 Creator of heaven and Earth
 11 edema
 13 submit to the authority of
 15 an organic compound made by replacing the hydrogen of an acid by an alkyl or other organic group an indirect reference
 17 make a bleating sound
 20 apparition of dead people

Down:

1 to specify
 2 a time for anticipation
 3 sending mail through the post office
 4 a small South African antelope
 6 a roof that resembles a half circle
 7 to make ashamed
 9 a hollow ball of perforated metal to hold tea leaves
 12 the mark or line left by a fold
 14 an adolescent
 16 a sudden cry in a loud voice
 17 syrian cloth
 18 to move at a slower pace to stay behind the others

By Maggiezi: 0755429240 telxmaggezi@gmail.com

RELIEF

TAHA praises presidents Magufuli, Kenyatta over resolution of border row

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

AN agreement over the handling of truck drivers crossing the Kenya, Tanzania common border by President John Magufuli and Uhuru Kenyatta has won praises from Tanzania Horticultural Association's Group CEO.

Taha Group CEO, Jacqueline Mkindi said over the weekend after the two leaders ended a stalemate involving truck drivers in relation to testing them for the coronavirus before crossing into each other's territory that had caused long queues of cargo trucks last week.

"We are very grateful to our two governments for amicably resolving the border dispute occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic to allow a seamless cross-border movement of cargo," Dr Mkindi who represented the private sector at last week's ministerial bilateral talks at Namanga border ordered by Magufuli and Kenyatta.

She said that the border row had put Tanzania's multi-million dollars horticulture industry into the cross fire, as a lion's share of exports go through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) and Mombasa Port.

"Had the border dispute continued, the horticulture industry would have been the first casualty as we heavily rely on JKIA and Mombasa Port as main gateways for exports of our perishable commodities to the overseas markets," Dr Mkindi

noted.

Latest data from Ministry of Agriculture shows that horticultural exports value has surged to a staggering \$779 million in 2018/19 from \$412 million in 2014/15, becoming the growth driver of the entire agricultural sector with contribution to overall agricultural exports at 38 percent.

"The Dar and Nairobi's truce leaves everyone a winner because it keeps the shelves of Kenya's supermarkets stocked with our fruits and vegetables while earning us foreign currency but also saves our jobs," she added. The dollar earning horticulture industry employs an estimated four million people with at least a million farmers allied to Taha.

The Taha boss said the two heads of state intervention has ensured the smooth flowing of cargo trucks cross borders but also called on authorities to remove any other sort of cargo restrictions and operating curfews to allow cross border trade growth.

"We shouldn't allow cargo trucks filled with life-saving horticultural foods delayed at border crossings due to cumbersome and bureaucratic processes relating to Covid-19 testing. Not in our time, not into our great East African region," the Taha chief pleaded while noting that keeping trucks carrying vegetables, fruits or flowers at border crossings for one or two days is tantamount to deliberately



Taha Group CEO Dr Jacqueline Mkindi (C) with Mwanza with Mara regional commissioners John Mongella (L) and Mara RC Adam Malima shortly after attending a Tanzania and Kenya ministerial meeting for Tanzania and Kenya held at Namanga border post in Arusha at the weekend. Photo courtesy of Taha.

destroying the perishable commodities worth millions of dollars.

In their final communiqué, Tanzania and Kenya delegations agreed that vehicles should not be compelled to offload at the border as part of a wide deal to end the recent border dispute over coronavirus testing between the two countries.

Farmers on either side of the border will be allowed access to their farms across the border after being identified by the local authorities.

Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Transport, James Macharia said the two countries must unite to protect their trade interests and address the health concerns of citizens.

The two East African Community members have an annual trade turnover of more than US\$500 million. "We have reached an agreement that Tanzanian and Kenyan drivers will be subjected to the WHO standard Covid-19 testing in their territories and issued with clearance certificates," said Macharia after the meeting.

Speaking at the event, Communication Works and Transport Minister, Isaac Kamwele said after finding a breakthrough, the two countries must now honour the agreement to allow free movement of goods across the border. "Our drivers will only enter Kenya armed with a Covid-19 clearance certificate," Kamwele said.

Horticulture is one of the most vibrant agriculture sub-sectors of the Tanzania's economy. Growing at 12 percent rate per annum, it is one of the fastest growing industries and in fact has become the growth driver of the entire agricultural sector in the country.

Exportation of horticultural crops from Tanzania mainly depends on passenger flights which have since been suspended as many countries take measures to curb the spreading of COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of the restrictions by governments, availability of cargo planes has declined by 80 percent in Europe, 100 percent in the US, 95 percent in Canada while Asia has declined by 80 percent.

Owing to the massive cancellations of majority of flights to Tanzania, local producers use Kenya's JKIA and Mombasa port as alternative gateways for exports to international markets.

A fortnight ago, President Kenyatta caused mayhem after closing his country's common border with Somalia and Tanzania blaming the two nations for doing very little to test drivers and citizens against COVID-19.

In retaliation, Tanzanian officials also blocked entry of Kenyan cargo trucks while subjecting drivers to COVID-19 testing in a tit-for-tat showdown prompting the Magufuli/Kenyatta phone conversation to end the blockade.

GOOD-NEWS

MNOs reduce voice standard tariffs in Q1 2020

By Francis Kajubi

VOICE tariff per minute popularly known as pay as you go or standard tariff declined across all mobile network operators in the market so too was internet connection tariffs.

Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority said in its latest report for the first quarter of 2020 that there has been a gradual decrease in charges for making direct calls without subscribing to a bundle.

"Vodacom Tanzania charged its subscribers 113/- per minute on net as of end March this year which was down from 270/-; Tigo

charged only 77/- down from 261/- while Airtel charged 51/- down from 219/- during the same period," the TCRA report stated.

It further explained that for off net voice tariff, last year Vodacom charged 330/-, Tigo charged 348/- and Airtel charged 330/- per minute but the charges have decreased to 113/-, 77/- and 51/- respectively," reads part of the report.

Meanwhile internet traffic slowed down both to and from the East African region, the TCRA report indicated with internet traffic falling to 2.81 million from 3.25 million during the period under review. However, overall



TCRA director general, engineer James Kilaba

traffic from the EA region fell to 4.22 million this year compared to 5.98 million during the corresponding quarter of 2019.

The TCRA first quarter report further unveiled that mobile money value of transactions increased in the quarter to 9.02trn/- from the 7.82trn/- registered during the corresponding period last year.

The report shows that mobile money accounts increased to 27.13 million from 22.8 million over the same period with M-Pesa registering an increase by 0.10 million to 9.08 million, making Vodacom Tanzania Plc

continue leading the market with a subscription share of 37 percent.

On network performance categorization, TCRA shows that the state owned Tanzania Telecommunication Company Limited (TTCL) has been improving in attracting more new mobile money subscribers who increased to 825,888 from 385,053 during the period.

Halo Pesa increased the number of subscribers to 1.85 million from 1.34 million while Zantel's EzyPesa lost nearly half of subscribers to 388,523 from 538,063.

SURVEILLANCE

Rwanda investigates safety of baby powder

KIGALI

RWANDA Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) is investigating Johnson & Johnson's talc baby powder amidst the product's safety concerns in the US and Canada among other markets.

"Rwanda FDA is aware that one batch of Johnson & Johnson baby talcum-based powder was reported to be contaminated with a cancer organic agent," Charles Karangwa, Director General of

Rwanda FDA.

Thousands of lawsuits have been filed against the company, and in April 2018, Johnson & Johnson was found guilty in a trial accusing the company of selling contaminated talc powder products with cancer-causing asbestos.

However, Karangwa says that in Rwanda, they haven't found that batch on the market yet, but investigations were ongoing. Baby powders are often used to prevent or treat diaper rash around baby

buttocks and genital areas. They are also usually used by men and women to prevent bad odours.

On Tuesday, Johnson & Johnson announced the discontinuation of talc-based Johnson's baby powder sales in the US and Canada, but that the powder will continue to be sold in other markets around the world. The company, however, "remains steadfastly confident in the safety of talc-based Johnson's baby powder," according to a statement.



Johnson & Johnson's baby powder products on a shelf in a supermarket. Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) is investigating the company's talc baby powder amid the product's safety concerns in the US and Canada, among other markets.

INNOVATION

TymeBank and digital peers thrive in online shift prompted by coronavirus

JOHANNESBURG

WITH 1.6 million customers and 850 000 active accounts and counting, TymeBank's growth in the first year of its launch surpassed its own projections. But can the bank maintain this momentum as the novelty of trying new things wears off for digitally savvy early adopters?

The bank, which is owned by Patrice Motsepe's African Rainbow Capital, started off its second year on a bumpy ride as the coronavirus lockdown caused new customer acquisition through supermarket kiosks to slide 20% in April, said CEO Tauriq Keraan on Tuesday.

"It's quite difficult with what's happening now in the market, because we have an unprec-

edented health crisis which has led to people's movements being severely restricted. But not withstanding that, we've seen certain transactions shoot up," he said.

TymeBank was just warming up to the possibility of mass customer acquisition at the Zion City Moria in Limpopo following a partnership with the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) that the

bank announced in February. It was also in the middle of rolling out kiosks outside Moria to serve the congregants in other provinces before South Africa went on lockdown.

But while the tragedy of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen fewer people opening bank accounts through branches and kiosks, it has proven to benefit banks that can issue new ac-

counts without needing people to visit branches.

Spike in digital banking transactions

Keraan said TymeBank, which saw value-added services like airtime and electricity sales shoot up 50% in April, will now be aggressively promoting online registration of new bank accounts, something that the bank

has had for a while. Motivating the bank is the fact that when people were locked indoors in April, it saw average balances per active customer increase 25% and send money transactions climb 20%.

The other new banks, Discovery Bank and African Bank's MyWorld also have the same capability, and so do the big four incumbent banks, which Avior

Capital Markets analyst, Harry Botha, says will set winning banks apart in this period of physical distancing.

"I wouldn't dismiss the other banks' digital capabilities though," he said. "Capitec will probably shift more transactions to digital channels fairly soon, like account opening, because of the lockdown conditions," he added.

PLEA

Lockdown: Informal traders alliance pleads with NCCC to lift tobacco ban

JOHANNESBURG

THE South African Informal Traders Alliance (SAITA) has written to the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC), calling for the ban on tobacco products to be lifted.

In an open letter, dated 18 May, SAITA stated that it under-

stood the need for extraordinary measures to be put in place to fight Covid-19, but that its sector had been hit the hardest by the regulations.

"Our spaza shops and traders, according to statistics provided by them, depend to a very large degree on the sale of tobacco products, and in some instances

it accounts for up to 50% of total sales," SAITA president Rosheda Muller said. The ban on the sale of tobacco products has been in place since the initial lockdown on 26 March.

President Cyril Ramaphosa previously announced that the sale of tobacco products would be allowed under Level 4, but this

was changed days later when Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma announced that the sale of tobacco products would remain prohibited. Dlamini-Zuma said the U-turn came after the government received more than 2 000 submissions from the public opposing the sale

of tobacco products.

The NCCC, however, allowed spaza shops and informal traders to trade essential goods with a permit, in a bid to allow them to earn a living during the pandemic. SAITA - which conducts business in communities as traders - claims that smokers are now risking their lives by travelling

outside their communities to seek tobacco products.

"This unnecessary movement, more often than not, results in the acquisition of [illicit] cigarettes, thereby further fueling crime and gangsterism. "Frustrations within our communities run high when smokers are unable to source cigarettes and domestic violence be-

comes an inevitable by-product thereof," Muller said.

She called on the NCCC to act now to save the sector. "Please, save our sector and our economy by doing the sensible thing - unban the sale of tobacco products and allow us to return to some semblance of normality and sustainability."

GENEROSITY

QNET honours Z'bar's Mazizini Orphanage, to grace end of Ramadhan

By Guardian Reporter

AS Moslems in the country mark the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan, leading Asian direct selling company, QNET has donated an assortment of food items including gallons of cooking oil, toiletries and sanitizers to Mazizini Children's Home in Zanzibar.

Commenting on the donation, QNET Regional General Manager for Sub-Saharan Africa, Brian Fall said, the month of Ramadan charity campaign has been one of the company's key campaigns every year.

"It is indeed a very meaningful, heart-warming and fulfilling initiative for QNET. Such campaigns promote empowerment of the community and are also very inspiring for our staff and our Independent Representatives," Fall said.

He said the donation during the Holy Month was an initiative aimed at enriching lives of many and is aligned with the company's philosophy code named, Raise Yourself to Help Mankind (RYTHM).

"This marks the third year in succession that the company has implemented its Ramadan CSR activities in Tanzania.

In previous years, such donations including financial support to orphanages were made in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma respectively," the QNET Regional Manager added.

The Asian company made similar Ramadan donations in over 15 countries around the world including Kenya, Ivory Coast, Mali and Cameroon on the African continent.

Receiving the donation on behalf of the orphanage, Zanzibar's Deputy

Minister for Labour, Empowerment, Elders, Women and Children, Shadia Mohamed called on other organizations and individuals to emulate QNET's gesture.

"I thank QNET and encourage other corporate entities to replicate the humanitarian and kind act particularly during this time as we fight against the spread of COVID-19.

We indeed welcome all the support and assistance from well-wishers during these difficult times," Mohamed said.

QNET is a direct selling company operating for over 20 years and offers a wide range of products in the area of health, wellness, lifestyle and education through an e-commerce platform. QNET products are designed to help people live healthier and improve their lifestyle and livelihood.



Zanzibar's Deputy Minister for Labour, Empowerment, Elders, Women and Children, Shadia Mohamed (L) receives a donation of food and groceries worth over 5.4m/- from a representative from QNET's Rythm Foundation, Mukrim Abdalla Jaffar on behalf of Mazizini Children's orphanage in Zanzibar at the weekend. Photo courtesy of QNET

COVID-19

Electricity prices to drop 10pc as of June, parliament approves exemptions on VAT

MAPUTO

THE Minister of Economy and Finance of Mozambique, Adriano Maleiane, announced today in the Assembly of the Republic a 10% reduction in the price of electricity as of June, in the context of mitigating the impact of the pandemic of Covid-19.

"Starting next month, all general rate consumer customers, all of them, will have a 10% reduction in the bill," said Adriano Maleiane. The move is yet another contribution to try to mitigate the effects of the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus, he added, without providing further details about the decision.

Within the scope of measures to soften the impact of the Covid-19, the Mozambican parliament approved today by consensus, in general, the exemption of 17% Value Added Tax (VAT) on sugar, cooking oil and soaps, aiming to mitigate the cost of goods essential in view of the negative impact of the new coronavirus. The exemption will last for a period of



Mozambique's Economy and Finance minister, Adriano Maleiane.

one year, explained the Minister of Economy and Finance, Adriano Maleiane, who presented the proposal in parliament.

Within the scope of support measures, the Prime Min-

ister, Carlos Agostinho do Rosário, announced a week ago that the National Institute of Social Security (INSS) will provide around 600 million maticais (7.9 million euros) for financing small and medium-sized enterprises - without, however, specifying the nature of the support or the conditions of access.

Also within the scope of support vis-à-vis Covid-19, on March 22 the Bank of Mozambique announced measures to support companies and families that suffer from the impact of the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus on the economy, after an extraordinary meeting of the board of directors.

The central bank announced the "introduction of foreign currency lines of credit for banks and relaxation of the conditions for restructuring bank customers' credits to mitigate the effects" of Covid-19.

"These measures reinforce the decisions previously taken and aim to provide liquidity in foreign currency and in national currency to support companies and families to honour their commitments, following the worsening of the risks resulting from macro-economic impacts," he justified.

The measures consist of "introducing a foreign currency financing line for the institutions participating in the Interbank Foreign Exchange Market, in the global amount of 500 million dollars [467 million euros], for a period of nine months."

It was also authorised "the waiver of the constitution of additional provisions by credit institutions and financial companies in cases of renegotiation of the terms and conditions of the loans, before their maturity, for customers affected by the pandemic."

APPROVAL

Kenya's SWVL transport firm finally gets the nod

NAIROBI

AFTER months of conflict, on-demand mass transport company, SWVL has finally been given the green light on compliance from the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA).

The company clashed with the regulator over accusations of non-compliance with public transport license criteria - the same accusation was levelled at Little Shuttle and halted its operations.

SWVL Kenya General Manager Dip Patel said: "We have continued to engage with the NTSA to arrive at a framework that will support technology enabled transport solutions and take Kenya to the next level. This is because, at the end of the day, our goals are the same. We both

endeavour to develop an efficient transportation system for commuters, that is safe, reliable, convenient and affordable."

He added: "We are excited to be able to continue our operations and we are very pleased about the consideration of the regulatory framework to incorporate technological developments coming up in the industry." The NTSA said it has no objection to SWVL providing digital vehicle hailing services as long as they comply with its guidelines.

SWVL Kenya is looking to up its business post-Covid-19 by restarting its passenger bus service and using this network to distribute food and medical supplies to various hospitals and medical centres.

A statement from the company reads: "The company has cur-

rently paused all its rides due to the pandemic situation, however it is very ready to resume operations again once an exit date is confirmed for the current pandemic lockdown. Post lockdown, SWVL will begin onboarding existing bus owners and public transport Saccos, in their bid to benefit the entire ecosystem with a more inclusive approach."

It also has plans to grow its corporate transport services. Digital hailing services have become important in the COVID-19 restrictions. Little Cab has introduced new services on its app, including food delivery and airtime purchase, to ensure as little physical contact as possible to curb the spread of the virus. The company has also introduced short-cuts as part of its airport transfer service, once air travel resumes.



SWVL Kenya general manager Dip Patel.

GREEN-ECONOMY

Coronavirus: Clearer skies to boost UAE's solar power plans

ABU DHABI

CLEARER skies prompted by a dramatic drop in air and road traffic have offered an unexpected boost to solar power production. Scaled-back industry brought pollution relief to many areas of China and much of Europe due to coronavirus-enforced restrictions.

A similar impact is being felt in the UAE with solar power set to reap the rewards, according to one expert. "With flights grounded, schools and universities closed and many people working from home, this has resulted in less air traffic and cars on the road and has led to fewer pollutants in the air," said Yousef Al Ali, executive director of clean energy at Masdar, the government-backed renewable power specialists.

"In principle, having less pollution in the air will have a minor increase in solar power generation. This will happen in cities due to two reasons: the improvement of the irradiation received by solar panels and the reduction of the soiling on the surface of the photovoltaic panels and concentrated solar power mirrors."

According to Environment Agency Abu Dhabi, there has been a significant reduction in air pollution since the UAE announced safety measures to help combat the spread of Covid-19. The latest agency data showed a 50 per cent reduction in the average nitrogen dioxide levels usually seen at this time of year. A similar pattern has been experienced in Germany, Spain

and the UK where the nation's solar output record was broken on April 20.

According to research by the University of Sheffield, solar power generation peaked at 9.68 gigawatts, almost 30 per cent of the UK's electricity demand. New records were also set in Germany on April 20 and in Spain on March 26.

Reduced air pollution means solar panels require less cleaning, reducing maintenance costs and boosting power generation. Despite the noticeable improvements in power generation elsewhere, experts said a quantifiable improvement in the UAE could be hard to assess.

Solar energy provider SirajPower provides solar energy panels to residential communities across Dubai. "In general, the level of pollution due to industrial activities in the UAE is much less than in most other parts of the world," said Laurent Longuet, SirajPower's CEO.

"The only main source of emission that may affect the weather in the UAE



The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park is set to have a capacity of 5,000 megawatts by 2030.

is car traffic. "Due to its geographic location next to the Arabian Gulf and the desert, the sky in the UAE is much less sensitive to the pollution that may come from vehicles than the locations in Europe where significant improvements have been observed.

"Since the beginning of the lockdown, we have not observed any significant change in terms of the quantity of energy we receive daily from the sun radiation compared to last year." A drive towards more sustainable sources of energy is accelerating in Dubai where it is hoped renewable power will make up 75 per cent of the emirate's requirements by 2050.

To aid that, the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority is building the world's largest solar energy park in the emirate's desert. The 900-megawatt fifth phase of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park will be commissioned in stages, starting from the third quarter of next year.

"We strongly believe that pursuing the efforts made to grow the share of renewable energies and especially solar is needed," Mr Longuet said. "The UAE has been pioneering the efforts in that respect by developing the largest solar plants in the world and allowing private consumers to do so with the net-metering policy in Dubai. "When it comes to car traffic, electric and hydrogen vehicles are definitely solutions to be further developed."

CRISIS

As beer market collapses, prime barley risks becoming pig food

LONDON

BARLEY farmers like Brett Askew can't wait for pubs to reopen, but it's not the pints they're missing most.

Like many European farmers whose wheat plans were thwarted by a wet autumn, the Brit waited for weather to improve and turned to later-planted spring crops like barley, which he plans to sell to maltsters. The timing couldn't have been worse.

Closing pubs and restaurants and cancelling sporting events and festivals like Germany's Oktoberfest has hurt demand for malt used to make beer and whisky. Brewers and malt producers have shuttered or scaled down plants, just as European barley stockpiles are set to hit a decade-high. That means farms may have to offload crops more cheaply for animal feed.

"What happens and how it plays out, I have no idea," Askew said by phone from his farm in northern England. "The crop's in the ground, we have to see it out for the harvest. But who's going to buy it?"

About a sixth of the world's barley is used in malt, though the share is higher in regions with intensive beer and whisky sectors. Stockpiles in the European Union, the largest grower, will jump 14% to 6.6 million tons next season, US government data show, and French malting barley prices recently hit the lowest since at least 2015.

Malting barley needs to be stored in specific silos to maintain its quality, and with the next harvest starting around June, many growers won't have room to keep supplies at their farms until demand recovers.

Belgium's Boortmalt, the world's top malt maker, expects to cut purchases from farmers, while Malteurop temporarily shuttered four North American plants. "There's really no trade in malt crops because there's no demand," said Brent Atthill, managing director at RMI Analytics AG. "In fact, it's the reverse with maltsters trying to get rid of barley that they can predict with good accuracy they don't

need.

They know there's another crop being grown at the moment."

Malting barley's premium over the feed variety has narrowed on lower demand, and overall prices could drop further, he said. The US government expects next season's global barley inventories to swell almost 7% to a five-year high.

In the US, small brewers have seen most of their market dry up, and draught beer stuck at breweries or delivered to retailers that soon shut is being dumped, turned into hand sanitiser or being composted, the Colorado-based Brewers Association said. In Europe, maltsters are trying to delay or cancel barley deliveries, German industry group Brauersten Gemeinschaft said.

"All those arenas shut down, concerns, restaurants, that's a lot of beer not being consumed," said Wade McAllister, vice-chair of the Alberta Barley Commission. "You can't drink that much beer at home to keep up."

It's not just a beer slowdown worrying farmers. The Scotch Whisky Association said there's been a drop in grain demand as operations are scaled back, though it hopes there's a quick recovery when restrictions are eased. Last year in Scotland, more than half of spring barley went into malt production to help supply the highest concentration of whisky producers in the world.

"In four to five months from now, or even before then because of winter barley, grain will be seeing the combines and needing to find a home," said Peter Loggie, crops policy manager at the National Farmers' Union Scotland. "It's a big problem."

For farmer Askew, even if the drinks sector starts getting back on its feet this year, the barley market will remain sluggish for much longer. "There will be a large carryover of this product into next year," he said. "The impact is going to be felt for far more just the next six months. It will be more like 18 months to two years."



Malt bushels being transported to a brewer in England

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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	21:00 Tanzania Yetu	21:30 Chetu ni chetu	22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost	23:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	00:30 DWTV	WEDNESDAY 27 May	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	6:00 HABARI	6:40 Kumekucha	7:30 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	8:55 Habari za saa	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	9:30 Isidingo	09:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	10:30 Uchumi na biashara	10:55 Habari za saa	11:00 The Base rpt	11:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Dakika 45	13:45 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Utawala bora na utumishi	13:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	14:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	16:30 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	18:00 Jiji Letu	18:15 Mizengwe rpt	18:30 Kipindi Maalum: Ewura	19:00 Ijue Sheria	19:30 Mjue Zaidi	20:00 Habari	21:00 Kipindi Maalum: Tatu 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WORLD

'Political virus' spreading in US, says Wang Yi

BEIJING

A "political virus" of losing no chance to attack and smear China is spreading in the United States, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said yesterday.

Wang made the remarks at a press conference on the sidelines of the annual national legislative session.

Some politicians ignored the basic facts and made up countless lies and conspiracy theories concerning China. Such lies have been recently compiled into a list and posted on the internet, Wang added.

"The longer the list, the more it says about how low the rumor-mongers are willing to go and the more stains

they will leave in history," Wang said.

Epidemic a 'common enemy'

The COVID-19 epidemic is the common enemy of China and the United States, and it is the shared wish of both peoples to support and help each other, Wang said.

China and the United States should share experience of epidemic fight and learn from each other to boost their respective responses, Wang said at a press conference on the sidelines of the annual national legislative session.

Both countries should follow the expectations of the global society to participate in and promote multilateral cooperation against COVID-19 and

十三届全国人大三次会议
记者会

Press Conference for the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (2nd left) attends a press conference on China's foreign policy and foreign relations via video link on the sidelines of the third session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. (XINHUA)

play a positive role in the global response, Wang said.

"As we are getting prepared for a long-term and regular fight against the disease, the two countries should start as early as possible to coordinate and communicate over macro-policies to mitigate the impact of the disease on both economies and the world economy," he said.

He also said that it is totally nonsense to claim that China is using COVID-19 to expand its presence in the South China Sea, adding those who always seek to label China hegemonic are precisely the ones who refuse to let go of hegemony themselves.

On Taiwan issue, Wang urged the United States to ditch its illusions and political calculations, and not to make any attempt to challenge China's red line on the Taiwan question.

WHO plays central role

On fighting the pandemic, Wang said the World Health

Organization has played its central role in coordinating global public health efforts.

Facts have shown that those countries that heeded and followed WHO advice are more successful in bringing the virus under control, while those that ignored or rejected its advice are paying a heavy price, he said.

As for WHO's international standing and its place in history, clear-eyed people the world over will reach a fair conclusion, one that will not be altered just because some country does not like it, he said.

Those who throw mud at the WHO will only leave a stain on themselves, Wang said.

Xinhua

Israel's Netanyahu goes on trial for corruption

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's long-awaited criminal trial is set to begin in a Jerusalem courtroom on Sunday, marking the first time Israel will see an incumbent prime minister stand trial.

Netanyahu will face the opening hearing of his corruption trial at the Jerusalem District Court at 3 p.m. local time (1200 GMT), after a three-judge panel rejected last week his request to skip the opening hearing.

His charges on bribery, fraud and breach of trust in three separate cases will be read and he will be requested to announce his understanding of them, as part of the regular procedure in Israeli proceedings.

Even before its opening, the trial has become a clashing point between Netanyahu and his supporters and Israel's legal system.

Netanyahu and his allies frequently lash out at the legal system over the trial, with much of the fire focusing on Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit.

The 56-year-old official was a close ally of Netanyahu when the prime minister nominated him as the attorney general in 2016, but after he took the unprecedented move and pressed charges against a sitting leader, he became a frequent target of attacks by Netanyahu's supporters.

On Thursday, Minister for Cyber and National Digital Matters, David Amsalem, a close ally of Netanyahu, slammed Mandelblit, calling him an "alleged criminal."

In an interview for Israel's Army Radio, Amsalem called on to launch an investigation against Mandelblit, charging the attorney general was involved in illegalities around the appointment of the military's chief 10 years ago.

Yariv Levin, Likud's speaker of



the parliament and Netanyahu close associate, said in a statement on Sunday that the opening of the trial "will be remembered as one of the low points of the Israeli legal system."

"Likud voters don't believe the premise created by prosecutors," Amir Ohana, public security minister and one of the ministers who plan to accompany Netanyahu, told Channel 12 TV news.

Channel 12 TV reported that "thousands" of Netanyahu's supporters plan to rally outside the

court and in several locations in Jerusalem to protest against the opening of the trial.

According to the indictment, in a corruption affair dubbed "Case 4000," Netanyahu allegedly took bribes from Shaul Elovitch, a former control-holder of Bezeq, Israel's largest telecom company, by giving Bezeq financial and regulatory benefits. During the alleged offenses, Netanyahu was the communication minister in addition to his capacity as prime minister.

In exchange, Elovitch, a close

friend of Netanyahu, allegedly required Walla, a news site controlled by Elovitch, to provide favorable coverage of the Netanyahu and his wife Sara.

In "Case 1000," Netanyahu and his family allegedly received expensive cigars, champagne, and jewellery worth about 1 million new shekels (268,200 U.S. dollars) from the Israeli businessman and Hollywood tycoon, Arnon Milchan, between 2007 and 2016.

In "Case 2000," Netanyahu and Arnon Mozes, the publisher of Yedioth Ahronoth, one of Israel's largest newspapers, allegedly held talks over an exchange deal, in which Netanyahu would receive favorable coverage in Yedioth Ahronoth. Netanyahu, the first prime minister in Israel's history to stand trial while in office, denies the allegations, charging they are part of "a witch hunt." The trial, including the expected appeals, could take several years.

Xinhua

Biden apologises for 'ain't black' remark about voters

WASHINGTON

FORMER Vice President Joe Biden apologized on Friday for telling a black radio host that he "ain't black" if he was still weighing whether to support him or incumbent Donald Trump in the Nov US presidential election.

The likely Democratic nominee's remarks to "The Breakfast Club" co-host Charlamagne tha God in an interview broadcast on Friday drew a swift rebuke from the Trump campaign and Republican supporters, as well as some black Democrats on Twitter.

"I shouldn't have been such a wise guy," Biden said on a subse-

quent call with the US Black Chambers Inc, an African-American business group. "I shouldn't have been so cavalier."

Biden, who served eight years as No 2 to President Barack Obama, the first black US president, added he has never taken black voters for granted and that no one should have to vote for somebody.

During the radio interview, recorded on Thursday, the popular host had challenged Biden over his long history on race issues.

As Charlamagne pressed Biden about whether he would select an African-American woman as vice president, a campaign aide could be heard trying to end the inter-



view.

"You can't do that to black media!" the radio host said.

Biden responded, "I do that to white media and black media because my wife has to go on at 6 o'clock."

Charlamagne invited Biden back to the show, saying he had more questions ahead of the election.

"You've got more questions?" Biden replied. "Well, I tell you what, if you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't black."

Biden called his record on racial issues "second to none." He and Charlamagne agreed he would come back on the show another

time.

Before the apology, the Trump campaign organized a conference call with reporters where U.S. Senator Tim Scott, who is black, said Biden's comments were "arrogant and demeaning" and "negative race-baiting rhetoric."

READ MORE: Biden to keep US embassy in Jerusalem if elected
Biden adviser Symone Sanders said in a tweet that the remarks were made in jest.

"He was making the distinction that he would put his record with the African American community up against Trump's any day. Period," she said.

Agencies

China firm on achieving development goals of 2020, though setting no specific growth target

BEIJING

CHINA will work to ensure achieving the development goals of winning the battle against poverty and completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects this year, though setting no specific economic growth target for 2020, according to a government work report submitted to the national legislature for deliberation on Friday.

The decision of dropping a specific growth target was made because the country will face some factors that are difficult to predict in its development due to the great uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the world economic and trade environment, Premier Li Keqiang said when delivering the report at the opening meeting

of the third session of the 13th National People's Congress.

"Not setting a specific target for economic growth will enable all of us to concentrate on ensuring stability on the six fronts and security in the six areas," Li (pictured) said.

"We must focus on maintaining security in the six areas in order to ensure stability on the six fronts. By doing so, we will be able to keep the fundamentals of the economy stable," he said. "Maintaining security will deliver the stability needed to pursue progress, thus laying a solid foundation for accomplishing our goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects."

The six fronts refer to employment, the financial sector, foreign trade,



foreign investment, domestic investment, and expectations. The six areas refer to job security, basic living needs, operations of market entities, food and energy security, stable industrial and supply chains, and the normal functioning of primary-level governments.

China will give priority to stabilizing employment and ensuring living standards, with the report unveiling detailed targets, policies, and measures.

China aims to add over 9 million new urban jobs in 2020, and keep the surveyed urban unemployment rate at around 6 percent.

The country will ensure the elimination of poverty among all rural residents living below the current poverty

line and in all poor counties.

China plans to set its fiscal deficit above 3.6 percent of GDP, resulting in a deficit rise of 1 trillion yuan (about 141 billion U.S. dollars) from last year. It will also issue 1 trillion yuan of government bonds for COVID-19 control.

The country will further cut tax and fees for enterprises with an aim of reducing corporate burden by over 2.5 trillion yuan, while stepping up financial support for stable business operations.

"At present and for some time to come, China will face risks and challenges like never before," Li said. "However, we have unique political and institutional strengths, a strong economic foundation, enormous market potential, and hundreds of mil-

lions of intelligent and hardworking people."

"If we face challenges head-on, boost confidence in development, create strong impetus for growth, and preserve and make the most of this important period of strategic opportunity for our development, we will, without doubt, be able to make it through this challenging time," he said. "The horizons for China's development are full of promise."

China will redouble its efforts to minimize the losses resulting from COVID-19, and keep its policies forceful and sustainable.

"We have both the resolve and the ability to accomplish the targets and tasks set for this year," Li said.

Xinhua

Study: COVID-19 patients not infectious after 11 days

By Bloomberg

COVID-19 patients are no longer infectious after 11 days of getting sick even though some may still test positive, according to a new study by infectious disease experts in Singapore.

A positive test "does not equate to infectiousness or viable virus," a joint research paper by Singapore's National Centre for Infectious Diseases and the Academy of Medicine, Singapore said. The virus "could not be isolated or cultured after day 11 of illness."

The paper was based on a study of 73 patients in the city-state.

The latest findings may have implications on the country's patient discharge policy. The discharge criteria is currently based on negative test results rather than infectiousness.

Singapore's strategy on managing COVID-19 patients is guided by the latest local and international clinical scientific evidence, and the Ministry of Health will evaluate if the latest evidence can be incorporated into its patient clinical management plan, according to a report by the Straits Times.

So far, 13,882, or about 45 percent of the total 31,068 COVID-19 patients in Singapore have been discharged from hospitals and community facilities. Singapore reported 642 new COVID-19 cases as of noon on Saturday.

The government has been actively screening pre-school staff as it prepares to reopen pre-schools from June 2. On Friday, two pre-school employees tested positive for the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of confirmed cases among pre-school staff to seven, according to the Ministry of Health.

Agencies

African experts emphasise energy transition for Africa's COVID-19 response

ADDIS ABABA

AFRICAN experts and policymakers attending a high-level virtual dialogue on Saturday emphasized the need to place energy transition at the heart of Africa's COVID-19 response.

They made the call as the African Union (AU) Commission and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) held a virtual high-level dialogue to discuss Africa's needs in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and the role of the energy transition in the post-pandemic recovery.

AU and IRENA host ministers and intergovernmental leaders to discuss continent's roadmap to recovery. The dialogue brought together a number of ministers and high-level participants from Africa, Europe, the European Union, as well as Vice Presidents of the World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB), the UNDP Administrator, the Director-General of IRENA as well as representatives of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), and Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL).

During the two-hour virtual event led by the African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Amani Abou-Zeid, and IRENA Director-General, Francesco La Camera, participants highlighted that energy potential in Africa can turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity for the continent and its population.

The experts and policymakers agreed that energy transition is critical to both the response to the crisis and to the post-pandemic recovery. "The energy sector cannot sit back and only react, it has to join in the fight as well while at the same time positioning itself to play a pivotal role in the recovery after the crisis."

Through this forum, we hope to share the actions taken by various countries and organizations and the results they have had. This will provide lessons that will be instrumental in shaping the response and preparing for recovery," AU Commissioner Amani Abou-Zeid said.

The AU commissioner also highlighted the measures that the AU had taken including conducting wide consultations with regional and global stakeholders and developing an emergency, resilience and recovery action plan, which was adopted by the Bureau of African energy ministers on 12th May 2020.

IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera hailed the collaboration with the AU, noting that their commitment to work together in the wake of the pandemic was starting to yield results with the high-level dialogue as a milestone. "Accelerating the energy transformation can help Africa respond to COVID-19, while allowing the continent to meet its medium and long-term objectives of a de-carbonized, just and prosperous society," Camera said.

Xinhua

China to hedge against COVID-19 impacts with stronger policies

By Zhou Renjie

THE COVID-19 pandemic is currently exerting impacts all over the world, obstructing global production and demand.

Faced with the unprecedented challenge, the Chinese economy has withstood the test in the early phase, showing robust growth in the work resumption rate of major projects, as well as the purchasing managers' index in the manufacturing sector.

The country must give more sufficient consideration of the difficulties and secure its achievements, hedge against the impacts with stronger policies, and stabilize the economy with more forceful counter-cyclical adjustment, to realize the normal operation and high-quality development of the national economy.

Macro control calls for discretion, and shall be carried out in a forceful, well-controlled and effective manner. The regulations, which are expected to be forward-looking, well-targeted, and effective, must come from science-based analysis.

On the one hand, given the sustained sluggish international economic and trade activities, to offset the negative impacts from decreasing external demand, China should activate the potential of its domestic market, smoothen internal cycle and boost consumption.

On the other hand, its industrial and supply chains shall be fixed and stabilized as soon as possible, to cope with the operational difficulties of enterprises impacted by the disease, and the employment pres-



Cashiers of an IKEA store in Nantong, east China's Jiangsu province are busy working at check-out registers on May 2, the second day of the May Day holiday. (Photo by Xu Congjun/People's Daily Online)

sure of key groups.

Therefore, macro regulations shall be further enhanced to take forward employment, people's livelihood, the development of market entities, food and energy security, stable operation of the industrial and supply chains, and smooth functioning at the community level, and to keep employment, the financial sector, foreign trade, foreign and domestic investments, and expectations stable.

Besides, the country should also accelerate the restoration of economic and social orders to prevent the short-term impacts from developing into a lasting trend and safeguard the minimum requirement for economic development.

To enhance policy support, the regulation packages shall be rolled out in a more targeted way and fully implemented by regions and departments.

For instance, fiscal departments should make early allocation of special-purpose bond (SPB) quotas to local governments, and monetary policies should be rolled out to expand the re-loans and re-discounts, as well as targeted reserve requirement ratio (RRR) cuts for small and medium-sized banks, to cope with the sudden decrease of internal and external demand. For the tough coordination between upper and lower streams of industries, impeded microcirculation and rising losses of enterprises.

Local governments shall be proactive to enhance investment to bolster areas of weakness and support the upgrading of the manufacturing industry. In addition, they shall also ensure people-to-people and point-to-point employment service and expand input on human resource to increase the income and consumption capability of employees.

To enhance policy support, China should foster new growth points and growth poles, and turn crisis into opportunities with a well-planned strategy. For instance, the suburban areas of metropolises, the construction of digital cities and the expansion of internet-type urban agglomera-



Staff members of Jiangxi Huawu Brake Co., Ltd. in east China's Jiangxi province accelerate production of industrial brake systems to ensure on-time delivery, April 15. (Photo by Zhou Liang/People's Daily Online)

tion, as well as the renovation of shanty towns and old residential communities all offer supports for expanding domestic demand and have huge demand and space for development.

Furthermore, the principal role of enterprises and the coordinating role of government shall be brought into full swing in reshaping industrial chains, enhancing scientific innovation and import substitution, straightening the innovation and value chains of industry-university-research cooperation, and strengthening public health system.

However, stronger macro regulations do not equal a deluge of

strong stimulus policies, but shall be carried out with precise classification and targeted implementation, strike a balance between the role of the government and that of the market, give play to the decisive role of the market in resource allocation, and have the government play its functions better.

The reforms to delegate power, streamline administration and optimize government services, and the reform of the mechanisms and systems for the market-based allocation of factors both aim at maximizing the effect of policy stimulus, which enhances the risk resistance capability of enterprises with better business envi-

ronment and market mechanism, to achieve better risk control and reduce leftover problems of development.

Only by innovating macro regulations in reform and deepening reform in regulations can we better combine the advantages of mechanism and market.

Remaining committed to the underlying principle of making progress while keeping performance stable, adopting a new vision for development, and reacting calmly to the complicated external uncertainties, China will surely stabilize its economy, foster new growth points and poles, and take an active approach to development.

5G to reshape ecology of China's digital economy

By Yang Junfeng, Han Xin

THE peak of Mount Qomolangma (Mount Everest), the world's highest point at 8,848 meters above sea level, is now covered by 5G network.

On May 7, a team of Chinese surveyors re-measuring the height of the world's tallest mountain arrived at the advance camp with an altitude of 6,500 meters, and their movement was streamed to millions of people through the cutting-edge communication network established by China Mobile, the world's largest telecom operator by the number of subscribers.

Remarkable phased progress has been made in China's 5G construction. According to the latest statistics from China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), the country had established 198,000 5G base stations by the end of March, covering over 50 million users. Besides, over 20 million 5G terminals had been connected to the 5G network.

While the 5G network construction is picking up the pace, the development of related terminals is also flourishing. As of April 22, 96 models of 5G phones had been licensed to access the network, a big step forward than the 39 models at the end of last December. The price of 5G phones also went low, with models priced below 2,000 yuan (\$282) already hitting the market.

A string of 5G applications have been put into use in the consumption sector, including ultra-high definition videos, cloud gaming, virtual reality, and augmented reality. Besides, 5G is also being piloted in key areas such as internet of vehicles, industrial internet, and health care.

5G-based telemedicine enables health experts to offer "face-to-face" guidance to medical workers fighting on the COVID-19 frontline thousands of kilometers away. Such multi-party and multi-disciplinary consultation makes diagnosis more efficient.



Photo taken on May 8 shows an aerial view of the extra-large bridge over Tongjiang river in Bazhong, southwest China's Sichuan province. The bridge, which is a part of an expressway connecting Bazhong and Wanyuan, opened to traffic on May 5. (Photo by Cheng Cong/People's Daily Online)

Renowned Chinese respiratory specialist Zhong Nanshan, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Engineering, conducted remote diagnosis for critically ill COVID-19 patients in Yuxi, southwest China's Yunnan province on Feb. 21, through an HD teleconference system powered by China Mobile.

China Mobile, together with its two largest rivals in China, China Telecom and China Unicom, jointly published a white paper on April 8, declaring to launch a 5G-enabled messaging service.

With the 5G messaging service, users can have interactions in complicated scenarios without

having to install applications on their phones, a new model of human-machine interaction that is expected to release infinite potential.

For instance, by sending the date and destination of a trip to the ticket office of the railway service, a user will receive card-style information on the phone, and can complete a purchase by a simple click.

It also works with the booking of hotel rooms, restaurants and taxi service. Besides, the built-in payment function of the new service also allows them to pay without shifting to payment apps.

"5G construction not only involves huge investment in infrastructure including engineer-



Employees with China Telecom's Lu'an branch install and test a 5G base station in downtown Lu'an, east China's Anhui province, May 4, 2020. (Photo by Tian Kaipeng/People's Daily Online)

ing projects, base stations and power supply, but also spurs the upgrading of industries and guides factories' transformation, operation, system upgrading, and technology training," said Wang Zhiqin, deputy director of the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT).

Wang predicted that China will spend 1.2 trillion yuan on 5G network construction by 2025, which is expected to drive an investment of over 3.5 trillion yuan in relevant sectors.

The country's telecom carriers are projected to invest more than 220 billion yuan on 5G equipment this year, and the figure is expected

to hit 54 billion yuan for industries, according to a 2017 white paper published by the CAICT. The technology will generate 6.3 trillion yuan of direct gross output, 2.9 trillion yuan of economic value added and 8 million jobs by 2030.

Technology is the biggest trend in today's world, and 5G is the most typical one, said Lyu Tingjie, vice chairman of the China Information Economics Society and a professor at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

He believes 5G will reshape the ecology of China's digital economy, and even the social development in the next decade.

Jiangsu accelerates work resumption to guarantee supply chain

By Yao Xueqing

SCIENTIFIC personnel are racing against time to research on and develop COVID-19 vaccine at a lab of Suzhou Abogen Biosciences, east China's Jiangsu province.

The company fully resumed work on Feb. 3 to accelerate research and development of COVID-19 vaccine, on the heels of an anti-COVID-19 provincial program that encourages scientific personnel to carry out research on epidemic prevention and control, diagnosis and treatment, testing, and application of medical instruments.

As a major export-oriented city, Suzhou has rolled out a package of policies to help enterprises resume work and production and stabilize foreign trade and investment, including a 12-term package that aims to maintain stability of the foreign trade enterprises issued at the early phase of work resumption.

Ying Bo, CEO of Suzhou Abogen Biosciences, said the company received a two-million-yuan special fund on R&D of COVID-19 vaccine

only five days after application. Besides, it enjoys a three-month rent exemption offered by the bioengineering and pharmaceutical industrial park where it is located. The park also provides a place for the company to develop the mRNA vaccine.

"We've been given strong policy support to resume production," said Cai Qifeng, head of the operation department of Chunhua Technology (Kunshan) Co., Ltd. located in Kunshan, Jiangsu province.

Sending workers back to the company through a chartered train, Kunshan New & Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone, where the company locates, also issued an allowance of 546,000 yuan for the company to stabilize employment, subsidized the company with 34,600 yuan for its import and export businesses, and offered it with a three-month discount of social insurance contribution, Cai introduced.

The foreign trade companies in the province are also making efforts on their own parts to restructure and upgrade their businesses.



Photo shows an employee working on a production line of a company in Haian high-tech zone in east China's Jiangsu province for foreign orders, May 9. (Photo by Zhai Huiyong/People's Daily Online)

"The epidemic is a test to our ability to develop," according to Chen Xiaodong, president of Jianguo Guotai International Group based in Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu. Chen believes that his company must retain its customers, market and channels, focus on key clients, and maintain shares in

mainstream markets and supply channels. Besides, it also needs to improve its capabilities and reduce costs.

"The production of our manufacturing department has returned to a normal level, and the sales volume in March is expected to reach 80 percent of that before

the epidemic. We are affected by the epidemic in the short term, but our headquarters is still confident about the Chinese market," said Yang Ming, deputy general manager of Panasonic Industrial Devices Materials (Suzhou) Co., Ltd., adding that the company will expand its input in technological

reform so as to transform and upgrade its products.

Affected by the epidemic, the industrial, supply and value chains all face a new round of restructuring. As an important link on the global supply chain, Suzhou has found its niches and strived to maintain, complete and improve the supply chain.

After having a thorough investigation into the work resumption of the suppliers, OEMs, and distributors of major companies in the sectors closely related with epidemic prevention and control, production, and daily life, as well as other industries that concern national economy and people's livelihood, Suzhou made a list of alternative companies. As of March 15, the city had mobilized 3,582 enterprises to restart work.

Wistron Group located in Kunshan Comprehensive Bonded Zone, Jiangsu province which has about 500 suppliers found 47 first-tier suppliers in just a day thanks to the coordination of local government, said Zhou Hongren, general manager of the east China region of the company. These suppliers accelerated the

company's work resumption and secured its supply chain, Zhou added. As a major export-oriented province, Jiangsu has unveiled 22 measures to actively cope with the epidemic and stabilize foreign trade. A number of cities, including Suzhou, Wuxi, Taizhou and Nantong have all come up with policies to support foreign trade since February.

They've also proactively offered assistance to enterprises to resume production.

Statistics from the Bureau of Commerce of Jiangsu province indicate that by March 24, more than 94 percent of the province's wholly foreign-owned enterprises, 99.7 percent of enterprises above designated size, and nearly 90 percent foreign trade companies in the province had resumed production. Major foreign trade companies and those above designated size have all restarted operation. All of them are accelerating capacity recovery.



Mike Bass

NBA says it is talking with Disney about resuming season

By TIM REYNOLDS

THE NBA is in talks with The Walt Disney Company on a single-site scenario for a resumption of play in Central Florida in late July, the clearest sign yet that the league believes the season can continue amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The National Basketball Players Association is also part of the talks with Disney. Games would be held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, a massive campus on the Disney property near Orlando.

NBA spokesman Mike Bass said the conversations were still "exploratory," and that the site would be used not only for games but for practices and housing as well.

"Our priority continues to be the health and safety of all involved, and we are working with public health experts and government officials on a comprehensive set of guidelines to ensure that appropriate medical protocols and protections are in place," Bass said.

The ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex is a 255-acre campus with multiple arenas that could host games simultaneously and has been home to, among other things, the Jr. NBA World Championship in recent years. ESPN is primarily owned by Disney, one of the NBA's broadcast partners.

Space won't be an issue, even if Major League

Soccer - which is also in talks to resume its season at Disney - is there at the same time as the NBA. The entire Disney complex is roughly 40 square miles, with nearly 24,000 hotel rooms owned or operated by Disney within the campus.

The NBA suspended its season March 11, becoming the first of the U.S. major pro leagues to do so after it became known that All-Star center Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz tested positive for COVID-19. The list of NBA players who were known to test positive eventually grew to 10 - not all were identified - and Commissioner Adam Silver said last month that the actual total was even higher.

But the league has been working on countless return-to-play scenarios for several weeks, all with the caveat that testing would be an integral part of any resumption of the season. Teams have been allowed to welcome players back to their training facilities for voluntary sessions since May 8, and more than half of the league's franchises have taken advantage of that opportunity.

The next steps would likely include a loosening of the restrictions for those voluntary workouts - no more than four players are currently allowed inside any facility at a time - and then a plan for when training camps could open. If the league plans to resume play in late July, then camps conceivably could open around the start of that month.

AP

Australia's Taylor urges ICC to make decision on T20 World Cup this week

SYDNEY

FORMER Australia cricket captain Mark Taylor has urged the International Cricket Council (ICC) to make a decision this week on whether the men's Twenty20 (T20) World Cup will go ahead in October.

The ICC board is due to meet on May 28 to discuss a number of issues related to the novel coronavirus outbreak and Taylor said he thought they should also address the World Cup, which is due to be held in Australia from Oct. 18 to Nov. 15.

"It would probably be good (if a decision is made)" Taylor, who is also a Cricket Australia director, told the Nine Network on Sunday. "Because then everyone can start planning and we can stop sitting here and saying 'well ifs, buts or maybes'."

"My feeling is the World T20 won't go ahead in Australia in October as planned.

"Is it going to be viable to have a world tournament in October or November? The answer to that is probably no."

The ICC had previously said a decision on the World Cup would probably not be made until at least August.

The decision has been complicated by suggestions that administrators are also keen to reschedule the money-spinning Indian Premier League (IPL) for later this year after it was indefinitely postponed in April.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has said it would not look to reschedule the tournament until after the dates of the T20 World Cup have been decided.

Taylor, however, felt the financial clout of the BCCI and the scale of salaries that players can earn for their stints in the tournament could sway decision makers.

The IPL is worth about \$530 million to the BCCI and players can potentially earn hundreds of thousands of dollars for about six weeks work.

Meanwhile, in Mumbai, bowlers looking at

resuming test cricket after the novel coronavirus lockdown will require two to three months of preparation to avoid injuring themselves, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has said.

Cricket, like other global sports, has been suspended since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic but some countries are plotting guidelines for the return of the game as governments start easing lockdown restrictions.

England players returned to individual skill-based training this week with the country hoping to begin their delayed summer of cricket with a test series against West Indies in July.

Pakistan are scheduled to tour England to play three tests in August followed by an equal number of Twenty20 Internationals, with the matches taking place behind closed doors as part of measures to combat COVID-19.

"Bowlers are at a particularly high risk of injury on return to play after a period of enforced time-out," the world governing body ICC said in its back-to-cricket guidelines released late on Friday.

The ICC advised teams to use larger squads and exercise caution over bowlers' workloads, saying test cricket would require a minimum of eight to 12 week preparation with the final four-five weeks involving match intensity bowling.

Preparation time of six weeks was recommended for bowlers returning to the shorter 50-over and Twenty20 internationals.

The ICC advised its member boards to consider appointing a medical advisor or bio-safety official to help with planning for a safe return to training and competition.

The Dubai-based ICC this week announced a ban on using saliva to shine a cricket ball to try and achieve the fabled 'reverse swing'.

Players and umpires would need to maintain social distancing and cricketers must avoid unnecessary body contact and not hand over items like cap, towels, sunglasses to umpires or team mates, the ICC said.

Covid-19 situation putting in peril professional football in Tanzania

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

WITH coronavirus infections pace slackening enough to ease a controlled return to professional tournaments rather hesitantly first in the UEFA premier league and rapidly elsewhere, questions abound as to arithmetic of the mode of the tournament. Already there are salary cuts in various clubs outside, an issue which hasn't been strongly mooted here but it looms large, since even in the best of times a number of clubs were facing problems paying their players. One or two such clubs even announced they were 'on sale,' but hampering the take up with strings of conditions.

It is in that direction as well that club owners may have to bow to the pressure, that until recently they were in a position to spell out conditions for someone wishing to purchase a sporting outfit. Now they will discover there are fewer takers as such investments need long term expectations, and that is precisely what is lacking at the moment, the ability to say that one shall reasonably be making good amounts of money in a year or two. Even personal health and chances of surviving the coronavirus onslaught are always in balance, as investors tend to be older people with some 'underlying conditions,' to use the standard medical epithet which means susceptible to the virus.

Economists especially in the United States are beginning to see the current pandemic as also preparing another Great Depression, the last one having befallen the Western world in particular in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Less candid observers have been comparing the



KMC FC fullback, Rayman Mgunila (L), blocks Yanga midfielder, Deus Kaseke, in the previous season's Mainland Premier League match, played in Dar es Salaam.

Covid-19 pandemic with the Second World War but this comparison is faulty, as those who aren't on the frontline run few risks, or not in countries with major battle zones. Covid-19 obliterates safety zones in global investment attractiveness, and African football is likely to be solidly affected.

Current reports show that there is still a lot of interest in financing top level football in the city of Dar es Salaam, with Yanga in particular seeming to be riding a sort of spring in their financial expectations. Pundits however point out that there is a regular feature about the club when it comes to registration of players, that it appears to be overly active, and then at a later date, somewhere as the new seasons progresses, it starts taking stock of what it has done. The picture is almost always sobering, and registrations in the last short window didn't help to alter this image, and if anything the club image was confirmed; rivals are calm on the

buoyancy.

So that local professional football can stand on its two feet it is vital that there are both aspects of the balance sheet, first gate entrance fees and then advertising on the pitch and on jerseys of club players. Opening the gates without the stands being filled to capacity shall harm standings of the clubs, and so far the measures taken are still hesitant on one part, and could be ruined if eroding the partial lockdown on public activities lead to a spike in coronavirus infections. Of course there are efforts to limit the circulation of damaging and psychologically taxing situations but there is no lid that can be put over mentally destabilizing events like a neighbor's death, unavoidably.

In that sense the changes of a successful resumption of the Tanzania Premier League hang in the balance, with the burst of optimism heard from the regional administration hierarchy giving an impression that 'it is all over

now.' That is the only condition in which not only match fixtures can be assured of being held from now to end of June for that matter, and planning for the next season. But there is no credible Covid-19 progress report in Africa, other than guarded optimism as to Africa returning to normal, if selective testing of lorry drivers has troubling results, to wit.

Even without difficult economic conditions and start reviewing long term financial commitments to clubs in the continent, or mishaps like this or that club sponsor falling victim in the pandemic, pressures have never ceased on African top professional sides. Teams in Nigeria and DRC - to cite but the two countries - have shown wild swings of ability in the past ten years, and fairly well endowed countries like South Africa or Kenya have never had impressive clubs to talk about. There may be cultural limitations of competing with cricket or rugby, but financing or sponsorship, long term investment is part of the problem, as sponsors attract eagle eyes of power.

These limitations are already checking the pace of growth of African professional football, before one adds uncertainties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. So far the pandemic hasn't visibly disturbed prominent sponsors locally and perhaps also elsewhere, outside quick measures like reduction of salaries and some layoffs. The readiness to invest is still there but there is a cloudy horizon, if conditions worsen and gate collections are removed, as advertisements can't fill the gap in Africa, owing to the limited impact they have in attracting purchasing power, etc.

Trump plays golf for 1st time since the coronavirus pandemic



The motorcade for President Donald Trump arrives at Trump National Golf Club, Saturday, May 23, 2020, in Sterling, Va. (AP Photo)

STERLING, Va.

PRESIDENT Donald Trump played golf Saturday for the first time since he declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency more than two months ago, leading to the shutdown of much of American society. His return to the course was the latest sign that he wants the country back to pre-outbreak times, even as the U.S. death toll from the virus nears 100,000, twice what he once predicted it would be.

Trump also planned Memorial Day visits to Arlington National Cemetery and the Fort McHenry national monument in Baltimore, followed by a trip to Florida's coast on Wednesday to watch to U.S. astronauts blast into orbit.

The golf outing came a day after Trump said houses of worship

are "essential" and he demanded that governors allow them to reopen during the holiday weekend. It also followed guidance from Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus task force coordinator, that it was OK for people to be outdoors this weekend as long as they took appropriate safety precautions.

Trump pulled away from the White House on a sunny morning wearing a white polo shirt, white cap and dark slacks. Photographs that appeared later on Twitter showed him swinging a golf club and driving alone in a cart on the course at his private Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia.

The White House had no comment on the president's activities at the club, but said he and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had discussed the pandemic's effect on the global economy on Saturday.

The golf trip was the president's first visit to one of his money-making properties since March 8, when he visited his private golf club in West Palm Beach during a weekend at his Florida home. The World Health Organization declared the coronavirus a global pandemic on March 11, and Trump followed with the national emergency declaration two days later.

Trump is an avid golfer who has been overheard telling his White House guests how much he missed playing the game.

On Friday, Birx said it's OK for Americans to play golf, tennis or other sports this weekend "if you stay 6 feet (1.8 meters) apart." She also said the Washington metropolitan area had the highest positivity rate in the country. The capital city's coronavirus death rate is higher than all but four states: New York, New

Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The U.S. leads the world with a reported 1.6 million coronavirus cases and more than 96,000 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Trump has ordered U.S. flags on federal buildings and national monuments to half-staff through Sunday in memory of Americans lost to COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Trump levied frequent criticism of Barack Obama's regular golf outings when he was president.

"Can you believe that with all of the problems and difficulties facing the U.S., President Obama spent the day playing golf. Worse than Carter," Trump tweeted in October 2014 during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, comparing Obama to former President Jimmy Carter.

AP

Premier League says two more positive coronavirus tests

LONDON

TWO people from two clubs have tested positive for the coronavirus after a second batch of testing, the Premier League confirmed on Saturday. It takes the number of positive tests to eight from England's top-flight clubs, whose players returned to limited group training on Tuesday.

"The Premier League can today confirm that on Tuesday 19 May, Thursday 21 May and Friday 22 May, 996 players and club staff were tested for COVID-19. Of these, two have tested positive from two clubs," the statement said.

"Players or club staff who have tested positive will now self-isolate for a period of seven days."

The league said it would not be providing details of the identities of the two new positive tests, but did add that the number of tests available to each club in the second round of testing was increased from 40 to 50.

On Tuesday, the Premier League confirmed six positive tests -- from three clubs -- out of 748 that were administered to players and staff. Per protocol, no player can train without being tested, and testing will be conducted twice a week at each club.

Watford announced that three people, one of whom is defender Adrian Mariappa, came from their club and that all would self-isolate for seven days, in line with league guidelines. Manager Nigel Pearson also confirmed that two other players are self-isolating after coming into close contact with people who tested positive.

Meanwhile, Burnley confirmed in a statement earlier that day that assistant manager Ian Woan tested positive and was recover-

ing at home.

Professional football has been suspended in England since March 13 because of the coronavirus pandemic. The British government has permitted a resumption from June 1, but Premier League clubs are yet to agree upon a restart date.

Venues for games, safety issues and the prospect of relegation being decided by average points per game if a return date cannot be finalised by a 14-6 majority of the 20 clubs are among the reasons for the lack of resolution.

Another round of tests is scheduled to take place on Monday and Tuesday. All 20 clubs will hold a meeting on Wednesday to decide whether they can move to Phase 2 of the restart and allow full-contact training.

Speaking on Friday, chief executive Richard Masters said the league was "as confident as we can be" about games being played next month, but added that there is a long way to go.

"We wouldn't have taken the first step to get back to training if we weren't convinced we had created a very safe environment for our players," he said.

"It is the first step and we have to be sure when we go to contact training we have completed those processes."

Britain's death toll from the coronavirus pandemic is the highest in Europe, with an official figure of 36,675 as of Saturday.

Germany's Bundesliga returned to action last week with matches in empty stadiums and strict safety protocols, while Spain's government on Saturday gave the go-ahead for La Liga to resume from June 8.

(Agencies)

Thousands of replica fans take over Bundesliga stadium

DUSSELDORF, Germany

EVEN when German fans are stuck at home, they can still be seen in the stadium.

Around 13,000 cutouts filled the stands on Saturday as Borussia Monchengladbach hosted Bayer Leverkusen in a Bundesliga game which could help decide Champions League qualification.

Gladbach fans took pictures at home in a shirt or scarf and paid 19 euros (\$207) to be turned into one of the "Pappkameraden" or "cardboard companions." Season-ticket holders have their cutout placed in their usual spot, though some fan groups denounced the idea.

"It's better to play in front of dolls than nothing at all," Leverkusen coach Peter Bosz said before the game.

It was Gladbach's first at home since the Bundesliga restarted without spectators amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The cutouts didn't do Gladbach much good on Saturday. Leverkusen won 3-1 to overtake Gladbach for third in the table, as Gladbach missed good chances to score late on.

"Despite that it still looks really super," Gladbach right back Stefan Lainer said. "It creates a certain atmosphere."

Coach Marco Rose and some of his players were also in the stands in two-dimensional form, along with greats of the club's past. They include Gunter Netzer, who won the West German title with Gladbach in 1970 and 1971 and the

World Cup in 1974. There's even an away end with pictures of supporters from Leverkusen and other clubs. Gladbach said it was a nonprofit initiative with proceeds going to charity.

Gladbach's form this season has echoed its golden age from the 1970s. The club led the table early in the season and is still fighting for a Champions League spot.

Not all of the real-life fans like their cutout counterparts. Some groups oppose continuing the season without spectators and feel the cutouts legitimize that.

"Football without fans is nothing," read a large banner placed at one end of the stadium on Saturday.

"For Borussia, against ghost games," read another.

"The bleak backdrop of empty stadiums is exactly what these games represent and deserve," the Sottocultura group of Gladbach fans said in a statement. "We consider the initiative with the cardboard figures to be counterproductive. We understand the well-meaning, charitable idea behind it, but we consider the signal to be the wrong one."

Gladbach isn't the first club to try replacing fans with doppelgangers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Before the Bundesliga restarted, Belarus was the only country in Europe playing league games. Champion club Dynamo Brest printed off photos sent by supporters abroad and attached them to shop mannequins wearing a motley variety of old shirts.

AP

Economic woes taking toll on Chinese football clubs

BEIJING

ECONOMIC woes are taking a toll on China's professional football clubs, with 11 being disqualified for failing to pay wages and five closing shop on their own terms, including last season's Chinese Super League side Tianjin Tianhai.

Low attendance and gaudy contracts for overseas signings were already weighing heavily on the industry, even before the coronavirus outbreak forced it into total shutdown.

The suspended clubs include four from the second-division and seven from the third-division. The five others have been struggling with financial woes and decided to disband on their own.

Tianjin Tianhai withdrew May 12 amid heavy debts, only three seasons after former World Cup winner Fabio Cannavaro guided it into the Asian Champions League. That came after owner and founder of the Quanjian group, Shu Yuhui, was arrested on corruption charges.

AP

Bayern, Dortmund warm up for quietest ever Bundesliga duel

BERLIN

BAYERN Munich and Borussia Dortmund warmed up for what is sure to be their quietest ever Bundesliga clash by winning their respective games on Saturday.

In stadiums with no spectators due to strict hygiene measures against the coronavirus, Bayern routed Eintracht Frankfurt 5-2 after Dortmund laid down the challenge with a labored 2-0 win at Wolfsburg.

Goals from Leon Goretzka, Thomas Muller and Robert Lewandowski had Bayern in cruise control but Frankfurt defender Martin Hinteregger scored twice in three minutes to set up an exciting finale.

Alphonso Davies steadied Bayern's nerves before Hinteregger's own goal capped a remarkable game for the center back.

"It was one of the nicest own goals I scored," Hinteregger joked.

The win kept Bayern four points ahead of Dortmund ahead of their meeting on Tuesday, a game that will go a long way to deciding the championship - assuming the remaining seven rounds go ahead.

The league resumed last weekend after its pandemic-induced two-month break and players must undergo regular testing for COVID-19 before they are cleared to play.

Like last weekend, players wore face masks on arrival for all games on Saturday, while those who didn't start kept them on and maintained their distance. Balls were disinfected, and officials conducted pregame interviews at a distance with microphones mounted on poles to keep TV reporters at bay.

The German football federation (DFB) sent a letter to the clubs during the week warning them that society and politicians were watching closely after some criticism of goal celebrations that went too far the previous weekend.

Hertha Berlin players celebrated freely in their 3-0 win at Hoffenheim last week, but made a point of refraining in the 4-0 derby win over Union Berlin on Friday.

The DFB said local health authorities could consider TV images when deciding on imposing quarantine measures on teams in case of a positive result for COVID-19.

Dortmund struggled to impose itself against Wolfsburg but scored with its first real chance



Wolfsburg's Renato Steffen, center left, fights for the ball with Dortmund's Erling Haaland during the German Bundesliga soccer match between VfL Wolfsburg and Borussia Dortmund in Wolfsburg, Germany, Saturday, May 23, 2020. The German Bundesliga is the world's first major soccer league to resume after a two-month suspension because of the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo)

through Guerreiro in the 32nd minute. Julian Brandt cleverly played in Hakimi, who sent Thorgan Hazard through. Hazard cut the ball back for Erling Haaland -- who missed it -- but Guerreiro was there to sweep the ball to the net.

Dortmund defender Mats Hummels went off at the break.

"Mats has problems with his Achilles tendon. We hope that he can play on Tuesday," Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc said.

Renato Steffen hit the crossbar with Wolfsburg's closest chance right after the break, when the home side dominated.

But Wolfsburg was caught on a coun-

terattack led by Jadon Sancho in the 78th, when Hakimi fired in the far corner.

Wolfsburg's Felix Klaus was sent off minutes later with the help of VAR after catching Manuel Akanji's calf from behind. He looked dismayed to be sent off, but left the field without protest.

Zorc confirmed before the game that Mario Gotze will leave once his second spell at the club ends in the summer.

Borussia Monchengladbach was silently cheered on by 13,000 plastic cutout fans in the stands, but couldn't help slumping against Bayer Leverkusen 3-1 at home.

Two goals from Kai Havertz, the second

a penalty confirmed by VAR, and another from Sven Bender lifted Leverkusen above Gladbach into fourth place, Germany's last to qualify for the Champions League - assuming Leipzig beats Mainz on Sunday.

As well as the cutouts of real supporters, Gladbach's stands were adorned with banners protesting against games without spectators.

Also, Werder Bremen held on for a 1-0 win over Freiburg, which had a late equalizer ruled out through VAR after Bremen midfielder Philipp Bargfrede was sent off, and last-place Paderborn drew with Hoffenheim 1-1.

AP

La Liga can resume week of June 8 - Spanish Prime Minister

MADRID

SPAIN'S Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced on Saturday that La Liga can resume from its coronavirus lockdown in the week of June 8.

"The resumption of major professional sporting competitions and in particular La Liga will be allowed from the week of June 8," Sanchez told a press conference.

La Liga president Javier Tebas has said the preferred date for games to resume is Friday, June 12 and Sanchez's announcement means that plan has been given the green light from the government.

"We are very happy with the decision. It is the result of the great work of clubs, players, coaches," wrote Tebas on Twitter.

"But it is very important to follow the health protocol and respect the trajectory of the pandemic. We cannot lower our guard."

More than two months after the COVID-19 pandemic halted the season in Spain, players have begun training in small groups as they aim to be as ready as possible for the planned reboot next month.

Barcelona sit top of the table, two points ahead of Real Madrid.

Clubs have 11 games left to play to finish the season, with the proposed final round to be completed by the end of July.

The Andalusian derby between Real Betis and Sevilla is likely to be the first game back.

A compressed calendar would mean teams playing matches both in midweek and at weekends while fixtures will be held behind closed doors, with only 197 people allowed to attend, according to a protocol prepared by La Liga.

Players will also undergo tests for coronavirus the day before games and will have their temperatures taken before being allowed to enter stadiums.

"When you leave the house the risk is already there," Barcelona captain Lionel Messi told Mundo Deportivo earlier this month.

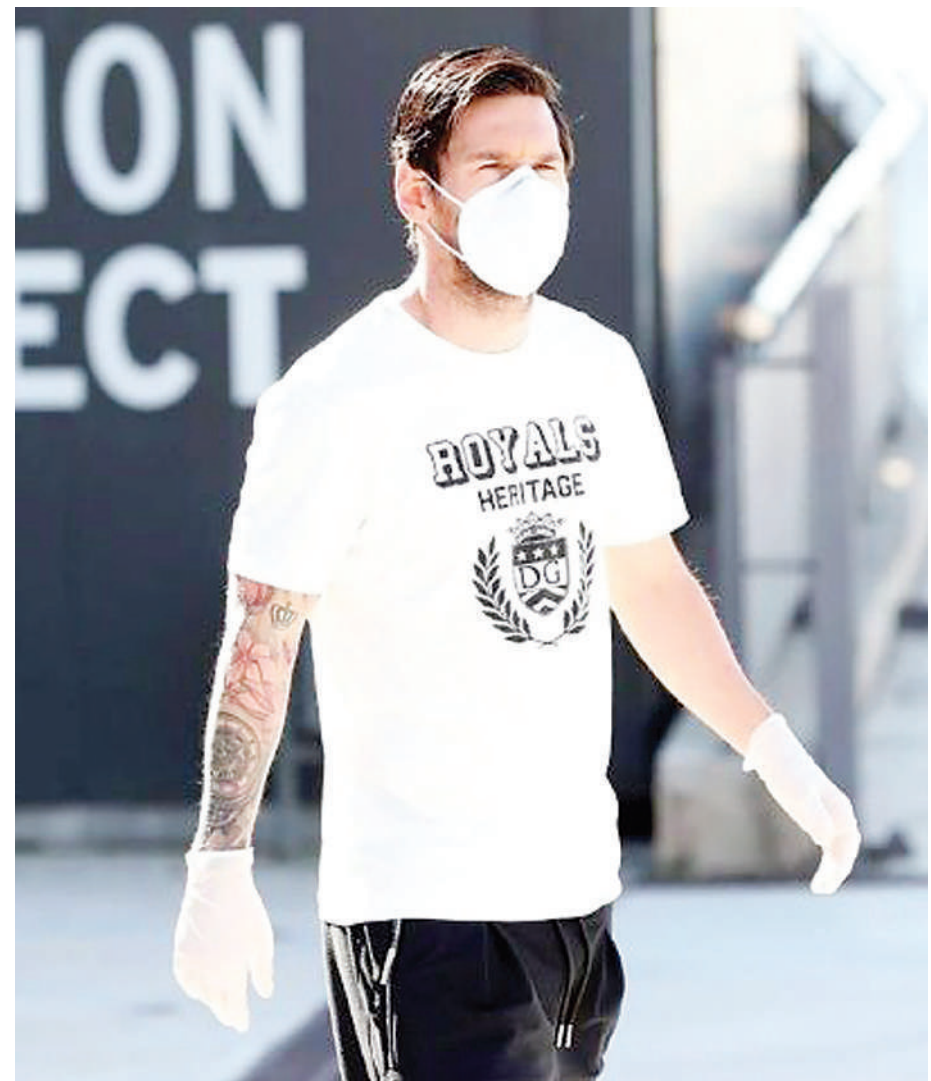
"So I think you can't think about it too much because otherwise you'll not want to go out anywhere."

La Liga's staggered training programme meant players began working individually at training grounds on May 4 and were able to expand into groups of up to 10 players this week.

The top flight was first suspended on March 12, the same day Real Madrid went into quarantine following the positive test of one of the club's basketball players.

But Tebas has been adamant the league must restart, having estimated that a cancellation of the season would cost clubs around one billion euros (\$1.09 billion).

France's Ligue 1 has been cut short, with Paris Saint-Germain declared champions, while the Bundesliga in Germany became the first major European league to resume behind closed doors last weekend.



Lionel Messi and Barcelona have been given permission to restart La Liga next month (AFP Photo)

Gwiji by David Chikoko

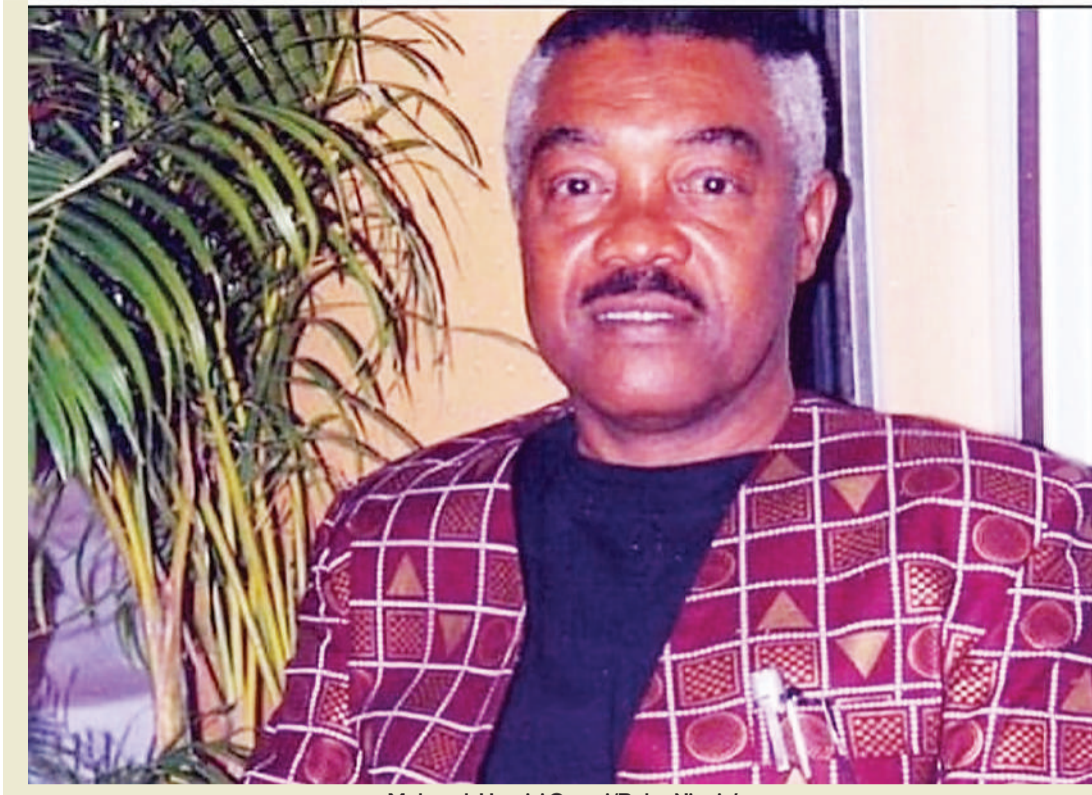


AFP

SPORT

Bayern, Dortmund warm up for quietest ever Bundesliga duel

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Mabrouk Hamisi Omari 'Babu Njenje'

Veteran Dar musician passes on

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

MUSIC industry in Tanzania has again been dealt huge blow, as veteran musician, Mabrouk Hamisi Omari, popularly known as 'Babu Njenje', passed away in Dar es Salaam yesterday morning.

Omari had been working for prominent music band, Kilimanjaro Revolution.

Veteran musician, John Kitime, who had worked with Babu Njenje at the band stated the latter passed away at his home at Mindu Street, Upanga in the city after he had suffered stroke for a long time.

"He had for long time stopped taking the stage because of the disease, today (yesterday morning) he has passed away and mourners are currently at his house," Kitime noted.

Babu Njenje won much fame in domestic music scene in the late 1990s and early 2000s for successfully promoting music style known as 'Mduara'.

He was set to be laid to rest at Kisutu Cemetery in the city yesterday evening.

Babu Njenje was the lead vocalist at Kilimanjaro Revolution and he was famed for expertly singing a song titled 'Njenje', which later on had the band nicknamed 'Wana Njenje'.

He was coincidentally nicknamed 'Babu Njenje' thanks to his ability to perform the song well.

Babu Njenje as well composed several other songs, which equally won him and the band fame.

They are among others 'Kinyau-nyau', 'Ndembele', 'Kachiri'. He is survived by a wife and two children.

Angola's Girabola gets boost with date for return to training

LUANDA

ANGOLA's prospects of getting their 2020/21 Girabola campaign under way on time in August have improved after the country's government allowed a return to all training for team sports from June 24.

The previous Girabola season was cut short with five rounds still to play as the coronavirus pandemic brought it to an early finish, with no championship awarded and no relegation.

But it looks as though the new campaign may be able to get under way as scheduled in its traditional August start after a relaxation of lockdown regulations by government, making Angola one of the first in the region to have some clarity on their next campaign.

Others, such as South Africa, Zambia and Botswana, are still pondering how to finish their 2019/20 seasons.

Angolans will be able to practice individual sports in open spaces from May 26, with government waiting a further month before allowing team activities.

The issue of whether spectators would be allowed to attend football matches will be decided based on the conditions at the time.

Angola has so far confirmed 61 cases of coronavirus in the country, with four deaths. That has reportedly come from around 10,000 tests conducted.

The fact that the country is contemplating a return to play in the new season will be music to the ears of football-starved fans from around the region, who will be hoping their own leagues can do the same.

To help in this regard, supporters should follow the advice of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to combat the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, 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.



Morogoro's karate trainer, Mashaka Mfaume, demonstrates karate skills shortly after an interview with The Guardian at Mawenzi street in the region last weekend. Mfaume who works at Saydo Karate center which is based in the region, said the center is expected to construct a college. PHOTO: MICHAEL SIKAPUNDWA

Morogoro karate center set to construct college worth over 100m/-

By Correspondent Michael Sikapundwa, Morogoro

MOROGORO's karate center, known as Saydo Karate, has set out to raise 128m/- to finance construction of a college which will, among others, impart life skills to karate students.

Briefing The Guardian newspaper in Morogoro recently, the region's karate instructor, Mashaka Mfaume, who works at Saydo Karate, said the college construction gears towards making karate a stimulant for other economic activities.

"Saydo Karate management targets to boost the region's sportmen's income and life standard since most of them are facing financial constraints," Mfaume said.

The students set to attend studies at the college, he said, will apart from taking part in

karate training, go for carpentry and electrical engineering courses.

"A good number of the sportsmen can not afford daily diet and transport fees during competitions, the situation prevents them from taking part in competitions held outside the region," he said.

He pointed out the preliminary budget for construction of the college has already been set.

He disclosed the center hopes to raise the targetted amount of cash given it has 200 active members in Morogoro that work in public and private sectors, as well entrepreneurs.

"Apart from the 200 active members who will be ambassadors in fundraising, there are over 1500 members outside the region, who are promoting our center since they had trained at the facility," he disclosed.

Mfaume noted the idea of construction of the college is associated with Morogoro Municipal Council (MMC)'s initiative that targets to support the region's youths.

He disclosed early this year the center had received 4m/- to support the region's youths in development projects.

"We once again congratulate MMC because the amount of cash was channelled to launching five acres for maize production, and provision of soft loans to members," he stated.

He pointed out about 500,000/- was deposited in the center's bank account, the amount encourages the group to invest in the college in a bid to do away with depending on aid.

He said while the center's members were waiting for the government's permission for the restart of sporting activities,

the youths were given chance to serve as security officials and peace keepers at Msamvu modern bus terminal.

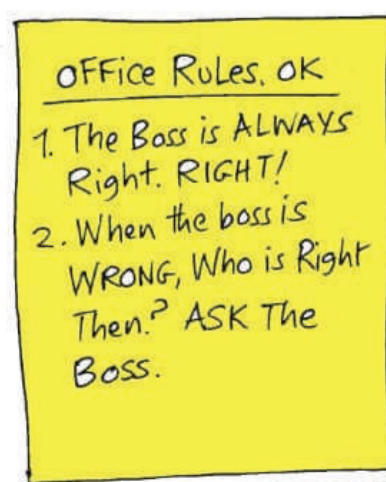
"MMC's reports reveal the bus terminal has been peaceful since the karate players were assigned to serve as security officials there," he disclosed.

"The region's residents have been peacefully going on with their activities at the place, they also uphold cleanliness."

Laurent Mduma, one of the center's members, said construction of the college is a must since apart from promoting participation in fitness exercises, the students will greatly improve in decision making.

"Since I started participating in sports, my blood pressure has become normal, and symptoms of non communicable diseases are no longer in my body," he stated.

Flexibles by David Chikoko



When we met and discussed the issues, one of them was the need for the clubs' players and officials to be subjected to Coronavirus test before getting into the venues.

TONIGHT @ 9:30

EATV Sports MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Copa Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELECT
17:55 Kurasu
18:00 eNewz
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

5Sports
The week's local and international sporting events as well as in-depth analysis of the biggest sporting highlights of the week are covered on 5sports.

eastafrika 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