



National Pg 3 Zanzibar bans wildlife hunting



National Pg 4 Call for vegetable farming



National Pg 6 Tobacco firm constructs hostels



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US sets end of April to lift corona curbs

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has said federal coronavirus guidelines such as social distancing will be extended across the US until at least 30th April.

He had previously suggested that they could be relaxed as early as Easter, which falls in mid-April.

"The highest point of the death rate is likely to hit in two weeks," the president said.

He appeared to be referring to peak infection rates that experts fear could overwhelm hospitals.

White House medical adviser Dr Anthony Fauci had earlier warned that the virus could kill up to 200,000 Americans.

Dr Fauci said that it was "entirely conceivable" that millions of Americans could eventually be infected.

The US now has more than 143,000 confirmed cases.

As of early yesterday, 2,572 deaths had been recorded in the US in relation to Covid-19, by figures collated by Johns Hopkins University.



The US now has more than 143,000 confirmed cases

The US last week became the country with the most reported cases, ahead of Italy and China.

Speaking during the White House coronavirus briefing on Sunday, Trump called social distancing measures "the way you win," adding that the US "will be well on our way to recovery" by June.

Suggesting that the "peak" of death rates in the US was likely to hit in two weeks, Trump said that "nothing would be worse than declaring victory before victory is won - that would be the greatest loss of all."

Analysts suggest that when Trump referred to a peak in the "death rate," he could even have had in mind the total number of recorded infections.

He said the decision to extend social distancing was made after he heard that "2.2 million people could have died if we didn't go through with all of this," highlighting that if the death toll could be restricted to less than 100,000 "we all together have done a very good job."

Trump had previously said that Easter, set for 10th to 13th April, would be a "beautiful time" to be able to open at least some sections of the country. On Sunday he said that lifting restrictions at Easter was "just an aspiration."

"I wish we could have our old life back..."

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Parliament resumes with half of MPs present daily

■ Impromptu PM question and answer sessions cancelled ■ Voting on bills to be held electronically ■ Budget passing in debating chamber, by special transparent procedure

By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma



People queue at the main gate of the Kahama District Hospital during 'visiting hours' yesterday, ready to undergo body temperature tests as part of an initiative meant to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease infections. Photo: Correspondent Ndaliwe Sonda

MEMBERS of the National Assembly began their 19th meeting yesterday amid precautions related to the coronavirus pandemic, with Speaker Job Ndogai limiting the number of MPs attending daily sessions to 150.

Ndogai said they arrived at the decision to reduce the number of MPs from the total of 393 to a maximum of 150 as part of measures to control the spread of Covid-19. The sessions, contrary to other meetings, will be held for four hours in the afternoon except for yesterday.

"We previously used to conduct our daily meetings from 9am to 8pm. The 19th meeting of the National Assembly will end on June 30th 2020. We will be making changes and enhance Covid-19 preventive measures to ensure protection for MPs," he said late yesterday, addressing reporters.

Visitors have been restricted throughout the meeting period with exception of a few potential ones, he said, noting that parliamentary staff will ensure availability of hand sanitizers and other useful gears.

"Normally the National Assembly brings together more than 700 people during its meetings. We don't want to host too many people due to the outbreak of coronavirus," the Speaker declared.

MPs will meet for 92 days where the working days will be 64. Documents related to the on-going meeting will be electronically delivered to

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Covid-19: Layoffs hitting cotton, gold sub-sectors

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

SOME local firms and factories have started retrenching workers while a number of them were suspending production following disruption of business two months after the Covid-19 outbreak started in China and spread around the world.

Firms that have shown to be adversely affected by the economic downturn due to COVID-19 include traders in minerals, cotton ginneries and cotton oil processing firms in Shinyanga region.

Speaking to this paper, senior officials of the firms said that Covid-19 has spurred retrenchments to reduce congestion at

workplaces.

Kahama Oil Mills administrative manager Bryceson Edward said the company was taking precautionary steps against the pandemic by effecting layoffs in its steel production and sanitary departments.

He said in the steel production department 17 workers were axed from 25 employees.

NIDA Textile Mills manager Edson Peter and that of Kahama Cotton Co. Ltd (KCCL) manager Bahati Mayala said they were compelled to suspend production due to the pandemic.

Emmanuel Kidenya, the chairman of the association of gold dealers at the Kahama

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Corona has 19 cases as tracing yields five more

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government has intensified tracking of people who came into contact with three individuals who have tested positive for coronavirus in Dar es Salaam as the number of confirmed cases reached 19, nearly two weeks since the first patient was reported.

Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children Minister Umyu Mwalimu suggested yesterday the likelihood of having an increased number of cases as 14 days incubation period for the disease comes to an end.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says

that people may be infected with the virus for 1 to 14 days before developing symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, tiredness and a dry cough.

The minister said the number of those testing positive rose by five as two more were confirmed in Zanzibar and three in Dar es Salaam.

"We are closing on people who had come into contact with those who have tested positive as we continue to urge the public to remain cautious," she said.

More information on the two cases confirmed in Zanzibar will be issued by the Isles health

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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.



03/31/2020

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

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

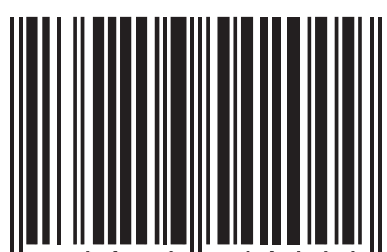
Seek medical advice if you

- 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)



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Parliament resumes with half of MPs present daily

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the lawmakers and journalists. They will be sent early in the morning for MPs to go through them before the afternoon sessions, he specified.

During the session, Ndugai said MPs will keep distance and speak directly from microphones in front of their seats while previously MPs could share microphones.

"We will be monitoring all the people including MPs entering parliament grounds every day. MPs will follow the meetings and contribute to debates via video conference," he said, insisting that where voting is required they will do so electronically using the already distributed tablets.

Those interested to pose additional questions will do so through normal procedures, he stated.

"We have also suspended the usual impromptu question and answer session for the Prime Minister. We will respond to 500 questions from MPs," he elaborated.

When endorsing the 2020/2021 budget which requires open voting, MPs will be allowed to enter the debating chamber in a special arrangement so that they all vote transparently.

Early this month, Speaker Ndugai announced ending receiving visitors to the National Assembly to control the spreading of Covid-19 which is easily spread through air.

Covid-19: Layoffs hitting cotton, gold sub-sectors

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minerals market said business in the gold business sector has slumped as most buyers were the now absent foreigners.

"The truth is we gold dealers have been hard hit as the main gold market is in Dubai and without selling, gold business is as good as dead... as out of 25 gold buying offices, only two operate," he said.

Renatus Maji, an official of the association, said the main gold market is in Dubai and currently there are no flights, hence it is difficult for dealers to get alternative markets for gold.

Last week the Tanzania Employers Association (ATE) called on the government to consider tax exemptions including the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) as most companies struggle making business with the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The association also urged the government to also exempt the Skills

and Development Levy (SDL) and the Workers' Compensation Fund (WCF) levy for at least three months.

However, the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) said it was conducting an assessment to find out how much the disease has affected businesses, employment and operations in the country.

TPSF chairperson Angelina Ngalula urged traders, businesspeople, industrialists and other employers to report to TPSF whenever they see that their activities were being affected by the disease.

Minister of Health Ummu Mwalimu confirmed the first case of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) on Monday, March 16. However, patient zero, a 46-year-old woman has recovered, while the country now has 19 confirmed cases.

As of yesterday, global confirmed cases had surpassed 741,000 with over 35,000 deaths and over 140,000 recoveries, on the basis of an update by the US news stream channel CNN.



A representative of KTM Co. Ltd, a South Korean shipping and marine supplier South Korea, pictured at Mwanza South at the weekend updating Dr Leonard Chamuriho (L), Permanent Secretary (Transportation) in the Works, Transport and Communication ministry, on the ongoing construction a marine vessel. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Corona has 19 cases as tracing yields five more

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minister, she said.

As for the Dar es Salaam cases, the minister said two are male Tanzanians, both aged 49. One of them contracted

the virus by meeting with a foreign national from a heavily infected country, while the other was being traced under the contact tracing

exercise.

The third person is a 21-year old Tanzanian girl who was also on the list of those who were being traced.

The government has ramped up its call for preventive measures such as general hygienic practices including the use of face masks, hand washing and use of sanitizers in public places and increased enforcement of social

distancing, staying at home and working from home measures.

Zanzibar has banned all travel to and from the archipelago, in addition to earlier measures which included closure of all bars and tourist hotels.

Tanzania has adopted a wait-and-see approach to the coronavirus pandemic, as neighbouring countries impose partial or near-total lockdowns

and introduce stimulus measures to cushion their economies.

The central bank had earlier hinted at an economic stimulus package for banks, and BoT governor Prof Florens Luoga met with members of the Tanzania Bankers Association in Dar es Salaam last week to discuss matters related to the impact of the pandemic.



Mbeya Regional Police Commander Ulrich Matei briefs journalists in Mbeya city yesterday on a posh car he said was imported illegally, specifically without the payment of 10m/- in import. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

By Correspondent James Lanka, Moshi

Moshi public health communicators get all ready for fighting coronavirus

AUTHORITIES in Kilimanjaro Region have brought together health workers including clinical officers, nurses, laboratory technicians and other stakeholders for a training which aims to tackle the spreading infectious disease—COVID-19.

The disease has so far been confirmed in various parts of the country: Arusha, Kagera and Dar es Salaam regions as well as Zanzibar.

Speaking at the opening session of the four days training for health workers in the region, Kilimanjaro regional health officer, Jonas Mcharo explained that the training aims to keep Coronavirus at bay and keep the economy afloat.

The trained officials are from Siha, Hai, Rombo, Moshi Rural and Urban, Same and Mwanza districts.

He added that during the training,

participants will learn how to recognize COVID-19 suspected patients, how to handle the patients as well as treatment of the patients.

The training also resolved to adhere to laid down preventive measures including 14-day mandatory quarantine for arrivals from affected countries, hand sanitizing and avoiding large crowds.

Meanwhile, Grumeti reserves is supporting Serengeti district to intensify public awareness campaign to local communities to take preventive measures against the disease.

Grumeti reserve public relation manager David Mwakipesile said that in collaboration with medical experts

they have reached women, youths and elders in 31 villages.

He said the campaign involves the use of flyers and public announcement on how to take preventive measures against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mwakipesile said the company embarked in supporting the public awareness campaign to boost government efforts and ensure people get the right information on the diseases which has recently been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO).

H added that as from now his company had also planned to support adverts and airtime to media publishing or airing news related with covid-19.

Serengeti District Commissioner Nurdin Babu said that security committee is currently conducting operation in Mugumu suburbs and business center including places reserved for tourists and ensure all the residents follow the preventive measures.

"I would like to thank stakeholders including the Grumeti reserve for supporting the awareness campaign which aims to ensure all the people adhere to COVID-19 preventive measures", he said.

He urged residents to take precaution measures as the area continues receiving tourists from across the world, but also most people depend on arriving visitors to make businesses.

US sets end of April to lift corona curbs

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but we're working very hard, that's all I know."

He said that "rapid testing" had been approved to get Covid-19 results within five minutes, and that doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers would get them.

In Germany the number of confirmed cases has jumped to over 57,000 which was an increase of 4,751 in one day.

Australia has tightened its

restrictions, with public gatherings now limited to just two people and playgrounds, outdoor gyms and parks closed from yesterday.

Italy recorded 756 new deaths over 24 hours, bringing the total to 10,779 which was a slight drop in the daily toll.

France reported 292 new deaths, bringing its total to 2,606 as specially modified trains began transporting patients from the worst-hit areas to hospitals in the south.

Mali conduct polls despite coronavirus disease threat

BAMAKO

LONG delayed parliamentary polls opened in Mali yesterday despite concerns about security and the coronavirus pandemic.

Sunday's vote came hours after the violence-hit West African country announced its first coronavirus death and days after main opposition leader Soumaila Cisse was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen.

The vote will see new MPs elected to the 147-seat National Assembly for the first time since 2013, when President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's Rally for Mali party won a substantial majority.

Parliamentary elections were meant to take place again in late 2018 following Keita's re-election, but the poll was postponed several times, largely due to security concerns.

After Sunday's first-round vote, a second round is scheduled for April 19.

Late on Saturday, just hours before polls were scheduled to open on Sunday, the country's first coronavirus death was announced, with the number of infections rising to 18.

Some 200,000 people displaced by the near-daily violence in Mali's centre and north will not be able to

vote, because "no mechanism has been established" for them to do so, a government official said.

There were security fears about the vote even before the African country recorded its first coronavirus infection on Wednesday amid concerns that the impoverished state of some 19 million people - where large swaths of territory lie outside state control - is particularly exposed to a COVID-19 outbreak.

"There's a state of emergency both because of the threat of armed groups and the threat of coronavirus," Al Jazeera's Nicolas Haque, who has reported extensively on Mali, said.

"Still, Keita on Wednesday said these elections need to go ahead, that they were essential for Mali to head towards peace and national dialogue."

The government's election spokesman, Amini Belko Maiga, has admitted that voting conditions were not ideal.

"It's true that we cannot say that everything is perfect, but we're doing the maximum," he said, referring to the threat of coronavirus. He added that hand-washing kits had been distributed in the countryside, while in the capital, Bamako, authorities would make masks and hand sanitisers available.



Police Operations and Training commissioner Liberatus Sabas (C, gesturing) sensitises a contingent of police officers assigned patrol duties across Mtwara Region following recent reports of assaults on police stations, banks and army camps in Mozambique. Photo courtesy of Police HQs

Hunting of wildlife banned in Z'bar's Jozani Forest Reserve

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Zanzibar government has banned wildlife hunting in the national reserve areas as part of the strategy to protect the environment.

Zanzibar Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries Mmanga Mjengo Mjawiiri said when handing out 400m/- to villagers around the Jozani Forest Reserve as compensation for their crops.

Mjawiiri said the government has taken the decision to curb the habit of people going inside the forest reserve to hunt animals, and added that the poachers even

hunt some endangered species including Ader's duiker.

Chairman of the farmers' association around Jozani Forest Reserve Yussuf Mshenga said despite beefing up of patrols people still invaded the reserve for tree cutting for timber and firewood.

He said another activity is beekeeping and during the past two years incidents of fire occurred attributed to honey harvesters.

In 2000 Jozani Forest was included in the list of Tanzania National Parks and is famous for its unique wildlife including colobus monkeys and tree hyrax birds species.

Established in the 1960s the Jozani forest is a conservation area in the core of Zanzibar Island covering an area of 50 square kilometers, it also includes a section of the Jozani Chwaka National Park.

The diversity of woodland landscape includes a tidal water-washed area between the Uzi and Chwaka island bays, teeming with mangrove trees and other marine vegetation.

The woodland itself is sited in an ancient coral bed that creates a shallow depression with coral rag forests and thick bushes covering the higher ground around it. There is also on-site turtle sanctuary initiated by the local community.

TPSF chairman Salum Shamte (67) is no more

By Henry Mwangonde

Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) chairman Salum Shamte (67) died yesterday at the Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI) in Dar es Salaam where he was undergoing treatment.

He was brought to Muhimbili last week from Maweni Prison in Tanga, according to MOI spokesman Patrick Mvungi.

Shamte, a former managing director of Tanga-based sisal firm Katani Limited, and two officials of the firm were charged last October at the Tanga Resident Magistrate's Court with three counts of economic sabotage, including money laundering, which are non-bailable.

Mvungi said Shamte's health deteriorated mid last week, prompting the hospital authorities to transfer him to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

He died this morning at around 6.33am, said Mvungi.

Shamte recently became chairman of the Business Council of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) by virtue of his being chairman of the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation.

TPSF Executive Director Godfrey Simbeye said the foundation has lost one of its founders who worked tirelessly for the private sector during the past 22 years.

"He has died while he was still our chairman. Shamte was a good listener. He gave views and opinions and it was very rare to see him angry," said Simbeye.

He said Shamte dedicated his life to the private sector and since its founding he has been a board member of TPSF, a position in which he was receiving nothing but was doing it for the sake of the private sector.

"Until his death he was fighting for the establishment of the private sector development policy which is still under discussion," he said.

Family spokesman, Retired High Court Judge John Mkwawa said that Shamte had to be rushed

to Muhimbili after his health deteriorated.

Judge (rtd) Mkwawa said that he was taken to Keko Prison as procedures demand before being sent to MOI.

He is expected to be buried today at the Kisutu Cemetery in Dar es Salaam.

Elaborating, Judge (rtd) Mkwawa said that his death was a blow to the sisal industry not only in Tanzania but the whole continent due to the wealth of knowledge he has gained over the period in the sector.

Damian Ruhinda, the owner Ruhinda Sisal Company, a former colleague at the former Tanzania Sisal Authority (TSA) said the industry was completely devastated over Shamte's demise.

"We are certainly confused because he was a very important person in the sisal industry," he said.

The chairman of the Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA), Tanga, Deo Ruhinda said that the sisal industry has received news of his death with profound shock.

Shamte through his company Katani Ltd was a leading advocate for the establishment of the Tanga Trade Fair which is traditionally held between May and June as a tool for showcasing and marketing local products.

Many of his colleagues said Shamte's belief in the industry was so intense that he believed the sisal industry would one day rise back to its heydays.

He was the last executive chairman of the Tanzania Sisal Association (TSA) before privatization and his belief made him and other sisal experts join together to form Katani Limited.

He joined the sisal sector in 1975 at the Tanzania Sisal Marketing Association (TASMA). He also worked at the TASMA London offices where he stayed for 10 years.

Salum Shamte was also a commercial farmer, involved in agri-business for over four decades, part of which was spent working

in the UK marketing agricultural produce.

He retired at the end of 2017 as managing director of Katani Limited, a sisal growing and processing company, producing sisal fibre through a smallholder outgrower scheme. Sisal cordage and woven products are produced for the Tanzanian and export markets.

He has been chairman of the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) - the private sector apex agricultural body from 2006 to 2013. In that period, ACT was actively involved in the preparation of the Kilimo Kwanza policy resolve which has put agricultural transformation at the top of Tanzania's economic agenda.

ACT also runs the Tanzania Agricultural Partnership which brings together private and public sector players to intervene in the agricultural value chains.

It has been instrumental in developing the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania [SAGCOT] which Shamte Chaired from Inception in 2011 to 2017. Shamte has been, between 2010 and 2016, Vice Chairman and Board Member of The Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions [SACAU] a Body that brings together all farmer organizations in SADC.

He was elected TPSF Chairman in 2018 end but was also a Member of the Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC), the Forum chaired by the Head of State bringing together the private and the public sectors in Tanzania to address economic issues.

He sat in various other public and private sector Boards of Directors locally and internationally.

Salum Shamte, years old, has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and a Masters in Business Management. He has received various other training in agribusiness, marketing, corporate governance and management of change. He is married with four sons and five daughters.

Two mineral dealers convicted for running businesses illegally

By Guardian Correspondent,

Arusha

THE Arusha Residents Magistrate Court has sentenced two years imprisonment or pay a 163m/- fine, two mineral dealers for doing businesses without licence and selling Tanzanite outside the minerals trading centres established by the government.

The businessmen Sanare Saireku (43) alias Muller resident of Monduli and Loiko (51) a resident Simanjiro in Manyara region pleaded guilty before Resident Magistrate Martha Mahumbuga.

Muller who is the managing director for Muller Gem Stone and his co-accused were arraigned after failing to offer detailed information about their business to minerals ministry officials who visited their office.

Muller was facing two charges including failure to prove his records about a 45.3 kilogramme of Tanzanite which was found in his office worth about \$751 which is against the Minerals Act of 2018.

Reading the charges for the second accused, magistrate Mahumbuga said the accused was found selling 269.5 kilograms of Tanzanite worth \$20,500 at various places including bars knowing that it was against the law.

Magistrate Mahumbuga found the accused guilty in the first count and sentenced them to six month imprisonment or

pay a 10m/- fine.

The magistrate also sentenced the second accused to 12 month imprisonment or pays a 143m/- fine for operating a business without a licence and conducting business outside the government set official set centres.

The accused paid the fines through a special bank code and were set free.

Last year, Prime Minister Kassim Mjawiiri ordered all mineral-producing regions in the country to set up government-controlled trading centers by the end of June 2019.

The trading centres were expected to give small-scale miners direct access to a formal, regulated markets where they can go and directly trade their gold.



TENDER NOTICE

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) intends to enter into Frame Work Agreements (FAs) for period of 12 months for Construction materials, Households, Stationeries, Agricultural products.

The frame work agreements may result into one or multiple DRC purchase Orders during the period of twelve months (May, 2020 to May, 2021) of the frame work agreement.

Therefore, the Danish Refugee Council in Kibondo requests the suppliers to submit their prices for the above goods.

The bidding documents can be collected at the Danish Refugee Council Office in Kibondo from 31st March, 2020 during the working days and hours: 8:00 Am to 4:30 Pm in the following address: Old IRC Road Area, Kibondo. You can call on: 0623529029 or through email steward.mbonalibaye@drc.ngo to receive the soft copy by email.

The closing date for the submission of the bids is **14th April, 2020 at 4:30 Pm.**

The ITB will be opened in a public session on 16th, April 2020 at 10:00 AM at DRC Kibondo Office, PO Box 177 Kibondo by the DRC Tender Opening Committee.

You can return your bid form through rfq.tza@drc.ngo OR DIRECT TO THE DRC OFFICE otherwise is void

21568401

BARRICK

REQUEST FOR TENDER

NORTH MARA GOLD MINE LIMITED

Requests the Submission of Tenders for the provision of Load and Haul Services at the North Mara Gold Mine

North Mara Gold Mine Limited which is owned ultimately by Barrick Gold Corporation and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, requests the submission of Tenders from interested and qualified parties, to provide load and haul services at the North Mara Gold Mine (the "Services"). The Services will include the loading and hauling of ore and waste material and will also involve the development of strategies to ensure that the Services are provided in the most cost effective and appropriate way.

The contract to supply the Services is intended to be awarded through a competitive tendering process based on the evaluation criteria in the Invitation to Tender. The key dates for Tenderers is as follows:

The key dates for Tenderers is as follows:

Event	Date
Last Submission for Technical and Commercial Clarifications	Friday 3 April 2020 at 12.00 p.m. (Dar es Salaam Time)
Tender Closing Date	Tuesday 7 April 2020 at 9.00 a.m. (Dar es Salaam Time)
Proposed target commencement of the Services	Tuesday 21 April 2020

Interested and qualified parties may obtain copies of the Invitation to Tender by contacting nm.proposal@barrick.com

Please quote reference "North Mara Gold Mine Load and Haul Services Ref: MINE03/2020" in the subject line of your email.

North Mara Gold Mine Limited is not bound to accept the lowest Tender offer received.

North Mara Gold Mine Limited

Tan House
Plot 34/1
Ursino South
New Bagamoyo Road
P.O. Box 1081
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

26 March 2020

21568401

'Hand washing important during travel'

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

Passengers at Bukoba central bus station travelling to other regions have been advised to arrive at the station at 5.00am in the morning to allow time to wash their hands and have their body temperature examined before departure.

The directive was issued by a senior official from the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) for Kagera region Shadrack Mahale after one case of Covid-19 was confirmed in the region.

He however said one Chinese national, travelling from Uganda via Mtukula border post was placed in isolation for having some symptoms of the disease.

Mahale said no bus will be allowed to depart from the bus station without its passengers washing their hands and have their body temperatures examined, and added that late arriving passengers will delay the bus' departure.

"The directive has been well received as we have taken time to educate all those concerned. Transporters have installed vessels for washing hands and we, as authority go around to inspect from time to time," he said.

On his part, Kagera regional medical officer, Nelson Rumbeli said they continue to administer the exercise to ensure the disease does not spread, by ensuring passengers wash their hands and their temperatures tested before they board the buses.

One of the bus drivers, Joseph Mushi said they

strive to follow directives and guidelines from experts including making sure every passenger washes his/her hands.

On Sunday, operators of commuter and upcountry buses in Dodoma were ordered to disinfect their vehicles or risk revocation of their licences.

They were also directed to have hand sanitizers to be used by all passengers before embarking, whether for long distance journeys upcountry or commuting within the capital.

Dodoma District Commissioner Patrobas Katambi said the decision has been made as a measure in the wake of several cases of coronavirus being confirmed in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Kagera regions and Zanzibar.

All commercial spots such as markets, bars and shops must have hand washing facilities during this period as measures against spreading the virus.



The directive has been well received as we have taken time to educate all those concerned. Transporters have installed vessels for washing hands and we, as authority go around to inspect from time to time



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development deputy minister Dr Angeline Mabula (R) and Missenyi district commissioner Col Denis Mwila on an inspection tour of a National Housing Corporation investment building under construction at Mutukula on the Tanzania side of the border with Uganda at the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Munir Shemweta



China Commercial Bank
中國商業銀行

PUBLICATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Issued pursuant to regulations 7 and 8 of the Banking and Financial Institutions (Disclosures) Regulations, 2014

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in million shillings)

	Current Year 12/31/19	Previous Year 12/31/18
A: ASSETS		
1. Cash	365	748
2. Balances with Bank of Tanzania	2,717	6,762
3. Investment in Government securities	1,456	1,475
4. Balances with other banks and financial institutions	802	1,721
5. Cheques and items for clearing	99	-
6. Interbranch float items	-	-
7. Bills negotiated	-	-
8. Customers' liabilities for acceptances	-	-
9. Interbank Loans Receivables	-	-
10. Investment in other securities	1,782	696
11. Loans, Advances and Overdrafts (net of allowances for probable losses)	159	222
12. Other Assets	-	-
13. Equity Investments	-	-
14. Underwriting Accounts	1,291	1,256
15. Property, Plant and Equipment	-	-
16. TOTAL ASSETS	8,572	12,880
B. LIABILITIES		
17. Deposits from other banks and financial institutions	-	-
18. Customers deposits	1,854	3,989
19. Cash letters of credit	-	-
20. Special deposits	-	-
21. Payment orders/transfers payable	-	-
22. Banker's cheques and drafts issued	-	-
23. Accrued taxes and expenses payable	1,008	258
24. Acceptances outstanding	-	-
25. Interbranch float items	-	-
26. Unearned income and other deferred charges	-	33
27. Other liabilities	-	-
28. Borrowings	-	-
29. TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,862	4,280
30. NET ASSETS/LIABILITIES (16 minus 29)	5,710	8,599
C. SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS		
31. Paid up share capital	20,881	20,881
32. Statutory reserves	115	115
33. Retained earnings/(loss)	(15,463)	(14,319)
34. Profit/(Loss) account	-	-
35. Other capital accounts	19	1,922
36. Minority Interest	-	-
37. TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' FUND	5,437	8,599
38. Contingent liabilities	-	-
39. Non Performing Loans and Advances	86	193
40. Allowance for probable losses	(63)	(50)
41. Other Non Performing Assets	-	-
SELECTED FINANCIAL CONDITION INDICATORS		
(i) Total Shareholders' Funds to Total Assets	63%	67%
(ii) Non Performing Loans & Advances to Total Gross Loans	8%	42%
(iii) Gross Loans and Advances to Total Deposits	106%	20%
(iv) Gross Loans and Advances to Total Assets	22%	6%
(v) Earning Assets to Total Assets	38%	87%
(vi) Deposits Growth	-54%	-197%
(vii) Assets Growth	-36%	-61%

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in million shillings)

	Current Year Cumulative 31-Dec-19	Previous Year Cumulative 31-Dec-18
1. Interest Income	351	1,322
2. Interest Expense	(21)	(301)
3. Net Interest Income	330	1,020
4. Bad debts written off	-	-
5. Impairment Losses on Loans and Advances	472	(636)
6. Non Interest Income	577	552
6.1 Foreign Currency Dealings and Translation Gains/(Losses)	21	21
6.2 Fees and Commissions	509	441
6.3 Dividend Income	-	-
6.4 Other Operating Income	47	89
7. Non Interest Expense	(2,632)	(3,682)
7.1 Salaries and benefits	(697)	(936)
7.2 Fees and Commissions	(884)	(1,880)
7.3 Other Operating Expenses	(1,051)	(867)
8. Operating Income/(Loss) Before Tax	(1,253)	(2,745)
9. Income Tax Provision	7	9
10. Net Income/(Loss) after Tax	(1,260)	(2,754)
11. Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
12. Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss)	(1,260)	(2,754)
13. Number of Employees	15	20
14. Basic Earnings Per Share (TZS 0.00)	(1,931)	(4,220)
15. Number of Branches	1	1
Selected Performance Indicators		
(i) Return on Average Total Assets	-12%	-26%
(ii) Return on Average Shareholders' Fund	-18%	-39%
(iii) Non Interest Expense to Gross Income	-284%	-197%
(iv) Net Interest to Average Earning Assets	17%	63%

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in million shillings)

	Share capital	Retained Earnings	General Reserve	Regulatory Reserve	Total
Current Year					
Balance as at the beginning of the year	20,881	(12,400)	110	-	20,979
Profit for the quarter	-	(1,26)	-	-	(1)
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-	-	-	-
Transactions with owners	-	(1,922)	-	-	(1,922)
Dividends Paid	-	-	-	-	-
Regulatory Reserve	-	TZS	-	-	-
General Provision Reserve	-	96	(91)	(5)	(0)
Others	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at the end of the current period	20,881	(1,840)	19	(5)	19,055
Previous Year					
Balance as at the beginning of the year	20,881	(7,304)	-	19	13,596
Profit for the year	-	(2,753)	-	-	(2,753)
Other Comprehensive Income	-	(2,442)	-	-	(2,442)
Transactions with owners	-	-	-	-	-
Dividends Paid	-	-	-	-	-
Regulatory Reserve	-	(96)	110	(14)	-
General Provision Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at the end of the previous period	20,881	(12,396)	110	5	8,599

CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in million shillings)

	Current Year 30-Dec-19	Current Year 31-Dec-18
I. Cash flow from operating activities:		
Net Income (Loss) before Taxation	TZS (1,232)	(2,745)
Adjustment for:		
Impairment charges on Loans and Advances	412	50
Impairment charges on Placements with other banks	-	586
Depreciation and amortisation of intangible assets	-	867
Net change in Loans & Advances	TZS (1,150)	1,221
Cash/loss on sale of Assets	-	(6)
Net change in deposits	TZS (2,135)	(14,718)
Net change in placement with other banks	TZS 1,181	506
Purchase of fixed assets	-	-
Net change in Other Liabilities	TZS 717	(733)
Net change in Other Assets	TZS (848)	132
Foreign exchange gains	-	(23)
Net cash provided (used) by operating activities	(3,056)	(14,862)
II. Cash flow from investing activities:		
Dividends received	TZS (8)	(23)
Purchase of fixed assets	-	-
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets	-	3,610
Purchase of investment in Govt securities	TZS 19	-
Others (specify)	-	-
Net cash provided (used) by investing activities	11	3,586
III. Cash flow from financing activities:		
Repayment of long-term debt	-	-
Proceeds from issuance of long term debt	TZS (1,922)	(2,242)
Proceeds from issuance of share capital	-	-
Payment of cash dividends	-	-
Net change in other borrowings	-	-
Others (specify)	-	-
Net cash provided (used) by financing activities	(1,922)	(2,242)
IV. Cash and cash equivalents:		
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	TZS (4,967)	(13,517)
Net cash and cash equivalent at the beginning of the quarter	TZS 2,659	21,463
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the quarter	2,692	7,946

Signed (Name and Title)	Signature	Date
XIONG ZHENGLIN Chief Executive Officer	SIGNED	30.03.2020
RAYMOND MAOTELE Finance Manager	SIGNED	30.03.2020
VICTORIA EDWARD Head of Internal Audit	SIGNED	30.03.2020
The above extracts are from the Audited Financial Statements of the bank for the year ended 31st December 2019 which have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Tanzania Companies Act, Cap 212 of 2002, the Banking and Financial Institutions Act, 2006, the Public Corporations Act, 1992, the Public Procurement Act, 2011 and Public Finance Act, 2001. The Financial Statements were audited by INNOVEX, Certified Public Accountants (Tanzania), and the bank received a clean report. The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 12th April, 2019 and signed on their behalf by:		
Name	Signature	Date
LIU LIN BOARD MEMBER	SIGNED	30.03.2020
ZHU JIN FENG BOARD MEMBER	SIGNED	30.03.2020

Former PM calls on farmers to invest in vegetable farming

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

FORMER Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda has advised communities to start engaging in vegetable farming to so as to feed their children with essential nutrients for better growth as well as reduce the rates of stunting and malnutrition among children.

Pinda made the appeal yesterday in Dodoma when he received 12 green houses to be used for agricultural activities. The green houses worth 100m/- have been constructed by an Arusha based company, Daymo Trading Company Ltd.

According to estimates, Tanzania has more than 2.7 million children under five who are stunted. Another, 430,000-plus children suffer from acute malnutrition, with 100,000 of them diagnosed as having severely acute malnutrition.

The former Prime Minister was concerned that Tanzania's stunting and malnutrition rates are too high because of poor nutrition.

"Health experts advise people to consume nutritional meals including vegetables, but there have been some people in our society who consider those eating vegetables as poor or living a difficult life, this is not true, it is a total lie because eating vegetables is healthier and commendable by experts", said Pinda.

He noted that for many years that he has been engaged in agricultural activities it had helped many people including students from higher learning institutions from across the country who had been going to the farms for practical learning.

He urged Tanzanians not to hesitate seeking loans from banks and financial institutions insisting to have managed to expand his agricultural activities through bank loans. He said it is difficult to start and expand businesses without loans since most farmers do not have enough capital.

"I am running my business with financial support from banks and financial institutions. You should go for loans to be able to increase production and grow your businesses", he noted calling upon young Tanzanians to grab the many opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Daymo Trading Company Ltd marketing officer, Dativa Koyanga called upon Tanzania to use the green houses to produce quality vegetables that can be sold locally and internationally.

"With the green houses one can make a good profit since it guarantees bumper harvests. With vegetable farming you can improve your welfare and contribute to the country's economy", said Koyanga.

The national prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under five years has decreased from 3.8 percent in 2014 to 3.5 per cent in 2018 but the situation on the ground calls for more concerted efforts for further improvement.

It is estimated that there are 440,000 moderately acute malnourished children and approximately 91,000 children who suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) by 2019 according to the last Tanzania National Nutrition Survey (TNNS).

The Banking and Financial Institutions (Disclosures) Regulations, 2014

MINIMUM DISCLOSURES OF CHARGES AND FEES (Made under Regulation 11)

No.	ITEM/TRANSACTION	CHARGE/FEE	TZS	USD
1. Current Accounts				
(a) Required minimum opening balance				
Personal Current Account	TZS	100,000.00	\$	100.00
Business Account	TZS	200,000.00	\$	200.00
Imperial Business Account	TZS	5,000,000.00	\$	5,000.00
Community Account	TZS	200,000.00	\$	200.00
Call Account	TZS	10,000,000.00	\$	10,000.00
(b) Monthly service fee (break down per customer type)				
Personal Current Account	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
Business Account	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
Imperial Business Account	TZS	25,960.00	\$	25.96
Community Account	Free	Free		
Call Account	Free	Free		
(c) Cheque withdrawal over the counter	TZS	1,947.00		0.75% of withdrawal amount
(d) Fees per ATM Withdrawal				
Personal Savings (5 free withdrawals per month)	TZS	1,300.00	\$	-
Imperial Savings (5 free withdrawals per month)	TZS	1,300.00	\$	-
Student Boom Account	TZS	-	\$	-
Junior Savings Account	TZS	-	\$	-
Senior Savings Account (3 free withdrawals per month)	TZS	1,300.00	\$	-
Personal Current Account	TZS	1,300.00	\$	-
(e) ATM mini statement	TZS	300.00	\$	-
(f) Interim statement (Below 3 months)	TZS	3,894.00	\$	2.60
(g) Periodic scheduled statement	Free	Free		
(h) Cheque book (per leaf)	Free	519.20	\$	0.52
(i) Dishonoured Cheque				
Inward Unpaid Cheque	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
Outward Unpaid Cheque	TZS	38,940.00	\$	38.94
(j) Special clearance				
Personal Accounts	TZS	51,920.00	\$	51.92
Business Accounts	TZS	64,900.00	\$	64.90
(k) Counter cheque (per leaf)	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
(l) Stop payment (per leaf)	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
(m) Standing order				
Internal	Free	Free		
External	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
Unpaid	TZS	6,490.00	\$	6.49
(n) Balance enquiry	Free	Free		
(o) New ATM card issuance	Free	Free		
(p) ATM card renewal or replacement	TZS	12,980.00	\$	-
(q) Overdrawn Account interest charge	10% above the Banks Base Lending Rate			
(r) Unarranged overdraft	10% above the Banks Base Lending Rate			
(s) Interbank transfer	TZS	12,980.00	\$	12.98
(t) Bill payments through ATM	TZS	713.90	\$	-
(u) Deposit fee	Free	Free		
(v) Other (please specify)				
ATM withdrawal limit per transaction	TZS	400,000.00	\$	-
ATM withdrawal daily limit	TZS	1,000,000.00	\$	-

No.	ITEM/TRANSACTION	CHARGE/FEE	TZS	USD
2. Savings Accounts				
(a) Required minimum opening balance				
Personal Savings Account	TZS	50,000.00	\$	50.00
Student Boom	TZS	20		



Salim Hamad Kassim, head of the cosmetics department at the Zanzibar Food and Drugs Authority, shows journalists in Zanzibar yesterday a sample of an allegedly inferior-quality sanitiser apparently produced by a Tanzanian firm. Photo: Correspondent Rahma Suleiman

Armed robbers sentenced to 60 years in prison

By Guardian Correspondent, Chato

TWO Serengeti District residents in Mara region have been sentenced to 60 years in jail and 20 strokes of the cane after they were found guilty of armed robbery.

They were also ordered to pay 2m/- compensation to the robbery victims after their sentences.

In the criminal case No 236 of 2019 it was alleged by the prosecution side that the two - Juma Kanzu and Peter Sahani, both Serengeti residents robbed their victim of a motor cycle at Musasa village in Chato district, Geita region.

The sentence was given by Chato District Magistrate Erick Kagimbo, after hearing evidence tendered by both sides.

Earlier the prosecutor Anosise Erasto, assisted by police prosecutor Semen Nzigo alleged in court that the accused committed the crime on November 22 last year at Musasa village in Chato district after they hired the motorcycle belonging to Maneno Shabani.

It was further alleged that without knowing of their vile intentions they attacked Shabani with a sharp object that made him unconscious after which they ran away with the motorcycle Reg No. MC499BQW.

The two later took the motorcycle to Serengeti district where they were arrested and sent back to where they had committed the crime.

The prosecutors said the crime fell under S 287 (A) of the penal Code Cap 16 of The Laws and asked the court to hand down stiff sentence following rampant incidents of robberies with violence involving motorcycles.

In mitigation the two said they prayed for lenient sentence as they had families to take care of.



They were also ordered to pay 2m/- compensation to the robbery victims after their sentences

By Guardian Correspondent, Katavi

Train firm suspends Katavi-Tabora passenger services owing to floods

THE Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) passenger train services from Mpanda in Katavi region to Tabora has been suspended temporarily after floods swept away the bridge across Ugalla river causing the railway line being submerged in water.

Speaking to this paper, residents of Katavi region said the train service was the only means of travel for people of low income and the only means of communication that remained after

bus transport to Tabora was closed after the Koga b ridge was flooded.

"Travel during this time has been very challenging, after the only means

of cheap travel that remained - rail transport was suspended," they said.

Abubakar Juma, the station master at Ugalla River Station said the suspension

will be in force until the bridge is repaired, adding that already workers were at the bridge site for the job.

The only remaining means of travel

between Katavi region and Tabora is air transport, else one must travel by road to Uvinza in Kigoma region and then by train to Tabora.

In February this year, train services on the central line were seized temporarily due to damages resulted from ongoing rain in the country.

According to TRC the floods affected different parts of the country including Kilosa, Igandu, Dodoma and Makutupora where the central line passes.

The backbone of the central corridor is the central rail line that runs between Dar es Salaam and Kigoma in western Tanzania and to Mwanza in the Northern Tanzania.

Namibia places SA truck drivers under quarantine, records 11th Covid-19 case

WINDHOEK

AT LEAST 26 truck drivers transporting goods from South Africa have been placed under quarantine for 14 days in Namibia, the state owned New Era daily national newspaper reported.

The truckers, some whose vehicles were transporting medical and food supplies, were held for several days in Botswana.

Traffic officers escorted the trucks to a parking area near the Wernhil Park Mall in Namibia's capital Windhoek,

with the drivers being placed under quarantine while the supplies were being delivered.

The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation reported that the country's Covid-19 cases had increased to 11, with the latest three, like the first eight, also being linked to travel.

The public broadcaster said the ninth case was a 35-year-old Namibian female who resides in South Africa and came home on March 20.

On March 24, she was attended to by a private practitioner and advised to go for testing. The result came back

positive on March 27. The woman's condition is said to be stable and arrangements were made for her to be admitted into an isolation facility.

The 10th case is a 33-year-old Namibian female who travelled to Dubai, Ethiopia and Johannesburg, South Africa during March while the 11th is a 69-year-old Namibian male, who travelled to Johannesburg, South Africa and returned home on March 12.

Namibia's Khomas and Erongo regions have gone into a lockdown from March 27 to April 16 to curb the spread of the coronavirus.



Tanga municipal councillors undergo body temperature tests conducted by a health officer (R), as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections, shortly before attending a meeting yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon

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SECURITY SERVICES PROVIDER

Establishment of Long-Term Agreement for Provision of Security Services for UN Agencies in Tanzania

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Tanzania Country Office wishes to procure services of qualified **Security Company** to accomplish the Security Services;

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Links:

- 1) http://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=64547
- 2) <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/106093>

Deadline for submission of proposals: Wednesday 07 May 2020

A highly recommended Pre-bid meeting will take place at 10:30 am on 08 April 2020.

A highly recommended site visit meeting will take place after pre-bid meeting

MODE OF SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS: Through E-tendering

Please note that this procurement process is being conducted through online tendering system of UNDP. Bidders who wish to submit an offer must be registered in the system. If already registered, sign in using your username and password. Use "Forgotten password" link if you do not remember your password. Do not create a new profile. If you have never registered in the system before, you can register by visiting the link below and entering the following login details.

<https://etendering.partneragencies.org>

Username: event.guest
Password: why2change

Proposals must be submitted electronically (through Etendering method), following above instructions and thereafter accessing the Event ID#: 0000005658

Plot 182, Mzingwa Way, Off Msasani Road, Oyster Bay. P. O. Box 9182, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255-22-2195000 - 4 Fax: +255-22-2195011 Website: <http://www.tz.undp.org/> Email: registry.tz@undp.org

Tarura in need of 7bn/- for building of Barega Bridge in Kilosa District

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

FOLLOWING heavy rains that have affected several infrastructures in most parts of the country, Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) has assessed that more than 7bn/- is needed to construct Barega bridge in Kilosa District, Morogoro region.

According to reports the authorities in Morogoro region through Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) needs more than 7b/- for construction of a new bridge at Barega in Kilosa district. The bridge was washed away due to floods during the ongoing rains.

The region's administrative secretary Eng Emanuel Kalobelo said that bridge links several villages including Barega hospital in Barega Ward in the district.

Kalobelo was implementing President John Magufuli directive issued on March 16 that he must supervise repairs for the bridge so that vehicles start passing over it within seven days.

Eng Kalobelo said the new bridge will be constructed when the proposed funds become available, but as on now, completion of repair work will enable the opening up of road communication

within the area.

He said the bridge will only be used by pedestrians and motorcycle drivers, including vehicles of not exceeding more than 3.5 tonnes.

He called upon TARURA experts to conduct regular inspections of bridges.

Morogoro regional TARURA manager Eng Benjamin Maziku said the Barega bridge which was built in 2013 was only a temporary one after the former one was swept away by floods.

He said the bridge has been washed away from time to time when floods occur hence the new one will have four pillars and will be much higher to allow wastes and other debris to freely flow under it.

Some of the wananchi who were around at the bridge site during Kalobelo's inspection hailed the step taken by the government to repair the bridge as they sometimes failed to take their sick relatives to Barega hospital.

During his March 16 visit at the site, one mwananchi told President Magufuli of the hardships they were facing due to absence of the bridge that used to connect them to Barega hospital. The President gave RAS seven days to ensure transport was restored.



Motorbike taxi riders clear a sewage system at Mbalizi in Mbeya Region at the weekend as part of a mandatory weekly environmental cleanliness routine for the township's residents. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Tobacco firm constructs hostels for girls in secondary schools

By Correspondent Allan Ntana, Tabora

ALLIANCE One Tobacco Tanzania Ltd (AOTTL) has handed over building materials worth 24m/- to Tabora regional commissioner Aggrey Mwanri for construction of girls' dormitories in secondary schools.

Speaking at the handing over

ceremony, AOTTL Agronomy director David Mayunga said the donation was aimed for construction of four dormitories for girls in Tabora and Uyui districts in the region.

He said Alliance One Tobacco Tanzania Ltd value child education, that's why they have agreed to support the region so as to improve learning

environment for the girls.

The four secondary schools are Idete and Nsimbo in Uyui district and Ndevelwa and Itonjanda in Tabora municipality.

The donation included iron sheets and bags of cement. The total cost is 24m/-.

"We value children education as

enshrined in our Agricultural Labor Practices (ALP) programme, we believe every child must be given the opportunity to go to school, realize their dreams and excel, for this reason we discourage child labour among tobacco growers", he said.

Mayunga noted that in some areas

children walk long distances to school, as a result many drop outs, truancy and early pregnancies among the school girls. Mwanri hailed AOTTL's support as it will significantly boost their efforts towards abolishing truancy, early pregnancy and childhood marriage.

He called for other stakeholders to help them so as to accomplish their goals.

Tabora and Uyui District Commissioners Komanya Kitwala and Gift Msuya applauded Alliance One Tobacco Tanzania Ltd for their efforts towards the construction of dormitories at secondary schools.



For these Dar es Salaam residents it's a stroll close to a Standard Gauge Railway bridge (to their left) under construction in the city's Gongo la Mboto Mwisho suburb, as captured yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Angola announces first two coronavirus deaths

LUANDA

Angola has recorded its first two deaths from coronavirus, out of the seven confirmed cases in the south-western African country, health minister said Sunday.

"We now have seven confirmed cases and unfortunately two people lost their lives between last night and this morning," Health Minister Silvia Lutucuta told a news conference.

The fatalities were both Angolan citizens—a 59-year-old, who was regu-

larly resident in Portugal, but returned home on March 12 and a 37-year-old who had returned home from Lisbon the following day.

Since first being recorded late last year in China, the Covid-19 coronavirus has spread around the world, and been

declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). Europe had become the worst-affected region, with Italy and Spain particularly hard hit. However, differences in testing mean that the number of cases may be understated for some countries.

Budget processing faces hurdles due to Covid-19

NAIROBI

The budget-making process at both levels of government is facing major disruptions and realignments amid the coronavirus pandemic.

This has forced the national government back to the drawing board.

The National Treasury is preparing a second supplementary budget and reallocate the resources to the health and water ministries, which are at the forefront in the fight against Covid-19.

In what is set to further complicate the money supply challenges between the different levels of government, travel restrictions and social distancing requirements announced by the Health ministry have grounded physical public participation processes, which are required before budgets are approved.

On Sunday, the Council of Governors asked the Controller of Budget and National Treasury to ensure the 47 devolved units receive the allocations for February and March to prevent a shutdown of their operations at a time when health services, which are mostly devolved, are needed the most.

But the biggest disruption will be at the National Treasury, which is faced with agonising decisions and must now go back to the drawing board to prepare a new budget that appreciates revenue shortfalls expected from the partial lockdown.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani had indicated that the government would spend Sh2.7 trillion in the new financial year that starts in July in a budget that had an ambitious economic growth of 6.2 per cent.

This projection has since been halved to 3.4 per cent, and that budget is no longer realistic.

The adjustments must also reflect the funding gap nightmare that Kenya finds itself in as well as where the government will get the resources to

support an economic stimulus package expected to be announced in coming days.

Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichung'wa, who is the chairman of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, said the Covid-19 outbreak forced parliament to go into recess two days ahead of the schedule.

However, he noted that the pandemic is yet to significantly affect parliament's role in the budget process.

Ichung'wa said the Treasury is preparing estimates for the new financial year as well as the second supplementary budget for the current fiscal year, both of which must be realigned to the current economic realities.

"The low hanging fruits are travel, conference and training budgets. These will have to go since we do not expect that anyone will travel even into the first half of the new financial year. Revenues are going to take a hit, and we must now redirect resources to the health and water ministries," adding that the country cannot afford more debts.

When parliament resumes, it will consider the new budgets. But should the outbreak persist, parliament will have to find more creative ways to fulfil the public participation requirement, he noted.

The budget committee had planned to visit 10 counties for public participation in May. "If we are unable to travel, then we have the option of asking the public to submit written memoranda for consideration," he said.

The Kikuyu MP said a spring meeting in the US scheduled for next month has already been cancelled.

He was to accompany officials from the Treasury to discuss various financing options with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

'Women, children experiencing anaemia due to iron deficiency'

By Correspondent James Kandoya

SOME 41 per cent of women and 27 per cent of children suffer from anaemia owing to iron deficiency. The consequences of iron deficiency anaemia include suboptimal mental and motor development in young children, increased risk of maternal mortality, and decreased economic productivity of adults.

Recent research also provides evidence that maternal iron deficiency in pregnancy increases neonatal morbidity and mortality. It is estimated that from 2014 to 2025 the lives of 26, 290 Tanzanian women will be lost due to maternal anaemia related diseases and iron deficiency while 209, 638 children under five will be lost due to vitamin 'A' deficiency.

The Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC) managing director, Dr Germana Leyna, disclosed this at the 6th annual agriculture policy conference (AAPC) held recently in the country's capital - Dodoma.

He warned that if there was no change or improvement in anaemia treatment among adult women then US \$ 1.428 billion would be lost in future economic productivity related to anaemia.

In his presentation, "Linking Agriculture Production Efforts to Consumption Patterns of Fruits and Vegetables to Address Micronutrients Deficiency in Tanzania" Dr Leyna said the country will also lose US \$ 950 million in future economic productivity related to iodine deficiency.

He mentioned some reasons contributing to that as low dietary diversity (affordability and availability) and inadequate micronutrient status of pregnant and lactating women (inadequate stores and intake for the child).

Others are complementary foods with too low nutrient-content, and -density; too early introduction (watery porridges, foods with limited nutrient-content) and poor bioavailability of micronutrients (absorption inhibitors, especially in plant-source based diet).

"Promotion of production and consumption of fruits and vegetables can largely avert many deaths and other sufferings from micronutrient deficiencies" he suggested.

"In order to promote and support the fruit and vegetable consumption from field to table to address micronutrients deficiency in Tanzania, it is important to capitalize on agricultural programmes and projects that are

already underway," he added.

According to him, strategies for improving the nutritional status of population should include efforts to increase dietary diversity.

While agricultural production is a necessary component of an adequate food supply, it is not sufficient. A well-functioning food value chain is also necessary to deliver food to the consumer.

Nutrition officer from the World Food Programme (WFP) Jane Shosho said the foundation of a healthy future for every child is the 1,000 days between a mother's pregnancy and her child's second birthday.

She said the right nutrition during this critical period puts a child on track to be stronger, healthier and ready to learn.

The officer noted that investing in between food production and health/nutrition outcomes can lead to win-win for women to provide for the food security, access to clean water and better hygiene to improve health and nutrition of their families.

She said also increase access to and year-round availability of high-nutrient content food and improves nutrition knowledge among rural households to enhance dietary diversity.



DANGER LURKS: A small trader pictured at Dar es Salaam's Ubungu Bus Terminal yesterday hawking used socks, an ages-old and therefore 'common' practice in urban areas in Tanzania. What is of greater consequence, though, relates to the size of the crowds at the spot - considering the harm the congestion could induce particularly these days of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbarali

Mbali District now better placed to face COVID-19

AUTHORITIES in Mbarali district, Mbeya region have expressed satisfaction with preparation of isolation units for confirmed COVID-19 patients although the area has yet reported any cases of the pandemic.

The authorities including members of the district safety and security committee which was led by Mbarali District Commissioner, Reuben Mfune said the isolation unit at Mpunga-Relini is well organized with all the necessary equipment.

The committee was in a tour to inspect implementation progress for construction of a new district hospital.

"We are prepared to tackle the disease in case we have patients who will be tested positive for Coronavirus. We are ready to provide COVID-19 patients will require medical treatment as per issued guidelines", said Mfune noting the move followed directives from health minister, Ummu Mwalimu that each of

the districts should allocate special isolation units for confirmed Coronavirus patients as well as suspected cases of COVID-19. DC Mfune however directed Mbarali District Commissioner, Kivuma Msangi to conduct regular inspections at the isolation unit to ensure the place remains safe. He also insisted of health workers to provide friendly services to patients.

Mbarali district chief medical officer, Dr Godfrey Mwakalila said construction of a new district hospital will also include patient waiting shed. He said the shelter will have modern furniture and wide open windows to avoid infectious diseases that are spread through the air.

Msangi called upon the residents to report to health centers and hospitals when they notice some COVID-19

symptoms and report any suspected Coronavirus patients at their localities. He urged them to avoid unnecessary gatherings and adhere to the preventive measures which include proper regular washing of hands using soap and clean water or sanitizers.

Tanzania now has 14 cases after Ministry of Health in Zanzibar on Saturday announced the confirmation of a third case in the Isles. Other regions with confirmed cases are Dar es Salaam (8), Arusha (2) and Kagera (1). There has been no fatality in the country and patient zero has recovered.

As of yesterday, global confirmed cases surpassed 680,000 with over 31,000 deaths and over 140,000 recoveries, on the basis of an update by the Johns Hopkins University which monitors the disease.



RUAHA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (RUCU)
P.O. Box 774, IRINGA



DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

Applications are invited into the Postgraduate Programmes for the academic year 2020/2021 as detailed below:

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES:

1.1 POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (PGDE)

This is a one academic year programme (12 months). The programme is for applicants with a first non-education degree award and are in need of being engaged as teachers OR wish to take up appointments in areas related to education OR wish to undertake Masters Courses in Education.

(b) The course is organised in three parts:

- (i) Continuous assessment, comprising of course work and end of the course University Examination.
- (ii) Teaching Practice and
- (iii) Research Project.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The applicant must be a holder of a Bachelor's Degree in any specialization from Ruaha Catholic University (RUCU) or the then Ruaha University College (RUCO) or any other recognized University with a minimum of GPA of 2.0 and above.

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- (ii) Masters of Business Administration (Accounting and Finance) - MBA-A/F (18 Months)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should be holders of undergraduate degrees in any of the following: Procurement and Supply chain Management or Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) or Bachelor of Science in Economics and Finance (BEF) or Bachelor of Accounting and Finance with Information Technology (BAFIT) or any other relevant undergraduate programme. The GPA in any of the above awards should be 2.7 and above. Applicants with professional qualifications such as CPA, ACCA, CSP or PSPTB plus one year or more of work experience, provided that they completed form six will be considered on their own Merit.

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- The candidates' personal and professional goals in the education sector.
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- The training of Education experts in different areas of specializations so that they are to contribute towards the reduction of high level human resources in Educational institutions and related government departments.

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

The Applicant should have:

- (i) A first degree in Education with a GPA of 3.0 and above for applicants fresh from a University OR
- (ii) A Bachelor's degree with GPA of 2.7 and above in any other discipline with a postgraduate diploma in education or its equivalent from a recognized institution of higher learning with a teaching experience of two years and above may be considered on their own merit.

3.0 MODE OF APPLICATION

Applicants may download the Application Forms for all programmes from our Website: <http://www.rucu.ac.tz>

Application fees for this academic year 2020/2021 is Tshs. 50,000/= Payable into Ac. No. 01111509190902 Mkombozi Bank, Ac. Name: Ruaha Catholic University.

OR

Applicants may apply on line attaching scanned requested documents as indicated in the application forms by logging in the University website and choosing the link RUCUSIMS

All completed application forms together with requested documents as per the application form, should be sent to the address below by 15th September, 2020

4.0 ADMITTED STUDENTS:

Admitted students will report on 5th October 2020.

You are most welcome.

All enquiries should be addressed to:

**The Director of Postgraduate Studies,
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COVID-19: Misinformation and fake news can be disastrous for Tanzania

THE government has advised the public to simply stay away from publishing, forwarding or creating fake news and misinformation about the novel coronavirus - and that includes being careful of reckless jokes disseminated within their social groups.

In the current Covid-19 pandemic, the world was caught on both fronts. Third World countries will eventually be hard hit. Viral misinformation and fake news pose the biggest risk for the spread of the coronavirus in South Africa. If not attended to, fake news and misinformation will lead to tens of thousands of deaths. A solid strategy regarding the socio-political and economic discourse around the coronavirus - particularly the paucity of the normative framework to deal with fake news and misinformation - is sorely needed.

We have regulations that prohibit deliberately spreading fake news about the virus. The legislative machinery has been slow to react to the spread of misinformation and fake news - even before the coronavirus outbreak, no specific law or regulation existed to prohibit this spread. We had to rely on general laws of defamation, and laws against insults and hate speech to combat misinformation and fake news.

Therefore, the public must be advised to simply stay away from publishing, forwarding or creating fake news and misinformation about the coronavirus, and that includes even being careful of reckless jokes disseminated within their social groups. The government is bestowed with the sole responsibility of disseminating or ordering the dissemination of credible information about the virus. Elsewhere, fake news peddlers have been subjected to very tough punishment.

In the People's Republic of China,

"Whoever fabricates false information on [a] dangerous situation, epidemic situation, disaster situation or alert situation and disseminates such information via information network or any other media, or intentionally disseminates above information while clearly knowing that it is fabricated, thereby seriously disturbing public order, shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not more than three years, criminal detention or public surveillance; if the consequences are serious, he shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not less than three years but not more than seven years."

The Malaysian Anti-Fake News Act 803 of 2018, subsequently repealed five months after its passage on 2 April 2019, provided harsher punishment. It allowed for "a fine not exceeding five hundred thousand ringgit [about \$122,702] or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or to both, and in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine not exceeding three thousand ringgit [\$736] for every day during which the offence continues after conviction".

Further, "the deluge of conflicting information, misinformation and manipulated information on social media should be recognised as a global public-health threat". This is a warning that is shared by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Misinformation and fake news can be disastrous for Tanzania, a country with a healthcare system that over years has been struggling to better itself. In a world of always-on news and 'fake news', fear spreads faster than any pathogen, sparking policy reactions, sharp changes in customer behaviour and deep anxieties among staff.

We have been warned: STOP misinformation and the dissemination of fake news about Covid-19.

Social infrastructure services should promote local community wellbeing

TANZANIAN is implementing sweeping measures to strengthen fiscal management and curb corruption. These measures have started to yield results with monthly tax revenues collection slightly exceeding the target. The World Bank's newly released Tanzania Economic Update notes that these measures are likely to be more effective and sustainable if complementary actions to improve the overall business environment for private sector development are undertaken.

While Tanzania's economic growth is relatively high, it has not yet led to acceleration of job creation. Poverty remains substantial in Tanzania with around 12 million Tanzanians still under the poverty line while the majority of non-poor are only just above the poverty line. At the same time, about 800,000 young Tanzanians enter the job market every year where productive opportunities remain scarce.

We need to increase investments in infrastructure and human capital to further unlock its growth potential while enabling the private sector to create more jobs. This will not only have a stronger impact on poverty reduction but it is also consistent with the new government's priorities and its commitment to the achievement of the country's Vision 2025 goals. The needs are many but the resources are limited and a focused approach in which key development priorities are fully financed will be needed to achieve the desired results.

According to the Update, titled: "The Road Less Traveled: Unleashing Public Private Partnerships in Tanzania with increasing fiscal challenges due to declining aid, low domestic revenue mobilization, high expenditure pressure for clearance of payment arrears and debt service, our country will need to find alternative sources for financing its huge development needs.

We need to improve overall business environment, including through improved access to finance

and electricity, for private sector development. Further development of the private sector will be key to accessing the needed resources including financing and creating more employment opportunities which are critical for poverty reduction.

What is needed now is to embrace these important past lessons and combine them with best practices from the largest emerging economies such as Brazil, Chile, Mexico and India and develop a strong PPP program that addresses the country's infrastructure development challenges and generates jobs.

Noting that Tanzania's own policy documents identify PPP as a key instrument to attract new investment. We must have bold new approach as opposed to "business as usual," and outlines the key factors to be considered by the government in developing a PPP framework that is fit for purpose. These include providing strategic direction and leadership to the PPP programme; ensuring the use of competitive approaches to procure PPPs; providing adequate resources towards identifying and preparing PPPs and promoting transparent approaches in providing Government support to PPPs.

We are calling on the authorities to continue to monitor the country's debt levels in a prudent manner in order to ensure ongoing fiscal and debt sustainability.

Social infrastructure is largely related to various services for community, facilities and public spaces, relationships and networks among local community members. It is therefore obvious that social infrastructure could be viewed as an important factor for creating better opportunities for integration and participation in society, fostering functional capabilities of a community, acknowledging human rights, improving judgements related to overall life satisfaction.

Social infrastructure services contribute and could promote wellbeing of local community.

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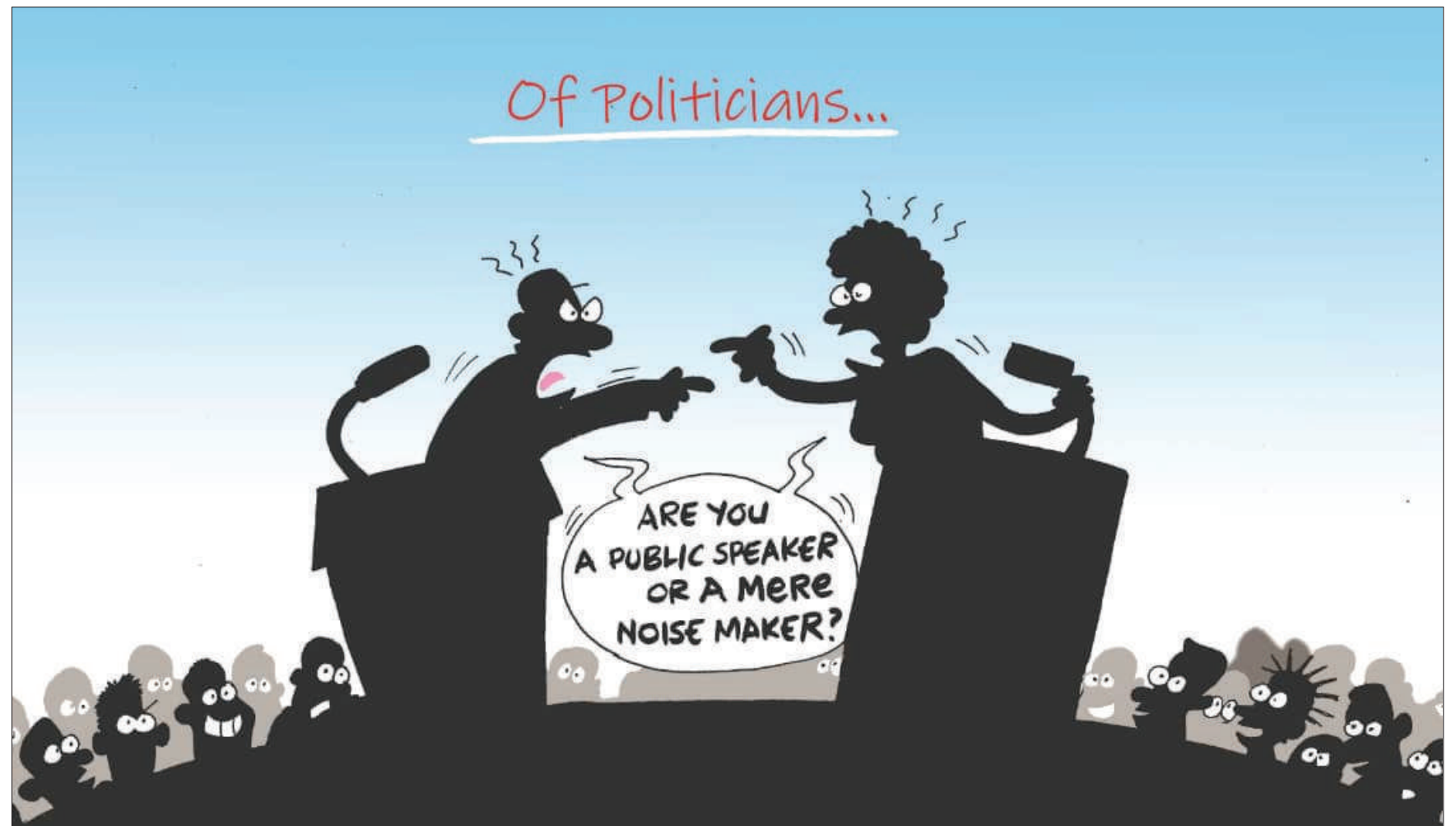
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Heed the lessons of the Roman Republic, Mr President

By Judith February

SOUTH Africa's story today shows many signs of unraveling with some very similar travails to parts of the Roman Republican period.

In Harriet Flower's book Roman Republics, she examines the crisis of the Roman Republic over 84 years between 133-49BC. Flower's preferred articulation of republican politics, however, is to place it in rather more distinct periods, thus accommodating the shifts and changes in the republic itself.

Her aim is to start "a renewed discussion of Roman republican political culture, of its evolving nature, of the kinds of challenges it faced and overcame over time, and of the precise historical circumstances in which it succumbed to a combination of outside pressures and internal violence".

As she lucidly demonstrates, "The republic of Cicero is not the republic of Cato the Censor or of Appius Claudius Caecus."

One could usefully apply the articulation of historical periods to post-apartheid South Africa from Nelson Mandela to Cyril Ramaphosa even if the expanses of time pale in comparison. Indeed, South Africa's story today shows many signs of unravelling with some very similar travails to parts of the Roman republican period. While the Roman Republic was organised very differently from what we might imagine as a modern constitutional arrangement, there may well be some lessons from history for modern-day constitutional democracies and state decline.

The Roman constitution was not something that was clear-cut and "designed for purpose" in the manner of modern-day constitutions; it evolved according to the needs of the day. As decades wore on, the Roman Republic was equally vulnerable to corruption, abuse of power, patronage, the use of state resources for private gain and subsequent decline.

Patronage and its consequences are nothing new. In Cicero's world, amicitia ("friendship", between those in power and others) was a near institution and what started out as part of the fabric of Roman life quickly became sullied by corruption and abuse of the patron-client relationship. The nobility controlled political institutions through their networks of friends and clients. Roman friendships continually evolved as a "web of expectations and obligations", creating an environment ripe for abuse, specifically during the period of Rome's expansion abroad that created many opportunities for such misuse of patronage. It all sounds eerily familiar even in 2020.

The constitutional democracy



Adelson could probably finance an entire presidential campaign on his own, Forbes Magazine says

of Ramaphosa is very different to Mandela's. To say the very least, the sense of optimism and joy are distinctly missing as we trundle along. Thabo Mbeki's rather more technocratic state differed vastly from Jacob Zuma's period defined by State Capture and looting. Yet, for a myriad of reasons, the seed of "crisis" lay in Mandela and Mbeki's presidencies; Zuma laid bare what the ANC had become by 2007 and Ramaphosa now seeks to deal with the full-blown internal crises within his party. That the state has become contaminated by the ANC's ethical failures is obvious.

We do, of course, tend to use the word crisis rather loosely in modern parlance. The effects of the global financial crisis of 2008 still reverberate around the world for instance. South Africa's crisis of unemployment is structural and stubborn. Added to that, our social fabric is in a state of crisis as rape, murder and crime, in general, have spiralled out of control. We have a shortage of skills, that is a crisis.

The early root of "crisis" as meaning "to sieve, discriminate or distinguish" is instructive. It also assumed a rather more legal definition as a "dispute, a lawsuit and judgment about a lawsuit". And still later as a "point of time of deciding anything, the decisive moment or turning point" to "times of difficulty, insecurity and suspense in politics or commerce".

If South Africa has reached what is now commonly called a "crisis" of a political and economic nature, or rather a moment to "sieve" or "distinguish" truth from lies, solutions from obstacles and the rule of law from lawlessness, then the president may be best served to use his State of the Nation Address (SONA) next week to tackle some of the issues South Africans care about.

In simpler modern political speak, it really "is about the economy, stupid!"

Millions remain jobless as the economy stagnates on the back of what is a mixture of government indecision, lethargy and policy confusion. All the while, bubbling underneath the surface of our society is a wave of deep anger and frustration that rears its head more often than we can fathom. As one watches students burn down buildings at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, increased violence against women and children, we know that in South Africa violence begets violence. As we hear the testimony of Frank Chikane and Barbara Hogan at the inquest into Neil Aggett's death, we understand the gaping wounds in this fractured society.

Ramaphosa's crises are all of ours to navigate daily.

Next week, the president comes to town amid the pomp and ceremony and jarring excess that is SONA. It is an important constitutional moment where the president presents his plans to the legislature that, after all, is to exercise oversight over Ramaphosa's executive.

It might be nice to see a toned-down version of this event, but politicians enjoy trappings. Cape Town will, therefore, prepare for the armoured vehicles on Philip Kgosana Drive, the police deployed (and bored) in their thousands as working people flee the CBD before the veritable circus comes to town. One wonders why this excessive deployment of the SANDF and the SAPS is necessary. Only a country deeply uncomfortable with itself would value such a show of force. Given our economic woes, a scaled-down event would have been appropriate. That would probably have meant that members of Parliament needed to ditch the ball gowns for ordinary attire. But that wouldn't be South Africa.

In November last year, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was

challenged by her staff to record a clip of what her government had achieved in its first two years. She was challenged to do so in less than two minutes. Eventually Ardern, truly a leader in a class of her own, finished in two minutes 56 seconds. She rattled off what had been done in simple language and with facts and figures, for instance, "creating 92,000 jobs".

South Africa is not New Zealand and our challenges are structural, historic and complex, yet this video provides a lesson in simplicity and accountability. Both are in short supply in the South African government. Instead of yet another yawn-inducing and lengthy SONA next week, perhaps Ramaphosa can follow Ardern's plain language report-back? It would serve to focus all our minds and also allow the president to finally dispense with the clunky, uninspiring rhetoric of successive years. Ramaphosa, with the power of the Presidency, could try to set the tone in a short, sharp speech. In an ideal world, he would set the stage for the grim news with an honest rendering on the economy and why it is in the state that it is in.

He would then discuss state-owned enterprises and outline what is being done to get each of them on track. Jobs should surely be at the heart of his speech: what has been done and what hard decisions will be taken to grow the economy? The back and forth confusion regarding expropriation without compensation and the proposed folly that is the National Health Insurance fund should be explained carefully. More than that, Ramaphosa will need to address these matters in a way that reignites confidence in his government and indeed in him. He needs to convince us that he will do what he says he will do.

If Thuma mina! was a rallying cry that has somehow fallen flat given the political reality, Ramaphosa needs a more workman-like call which he will be able to live up to over the next year.

It remains to be seen whether SONA can be a platform for decision-making, or will our political and social crises simply be prolonged through indecision, inaction and the ANC's tedious and destructive divisions?

If we are at a "decisive turning point" of a time to sift the proverbial wheat from the chaff then things cannot remain as they are.

The Roman Republic's drawn-out decline, preceded by a series of social and political crises, had a bloody end. The lessons of history should not be lost on us next week and in the year that lies ahead. The historical settings are not entirely analogous and Ramaphosa's wars are figurative ones, yet they are for us at this point in our history as precarious as any.

By Ed Yong

The US could see worst COVID-19 outbreak in industrialised world – 2

SOME shortages are being addressed. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is now moving quickly to approve tests developed by private laboratories. At least one can deliver results in less than an hour, potentially allowing doctors to know if the patient in front of them has COVID-19. The country “is adding capacity on a daily basis”, says Kelly Wroblewski of the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

On March 6, Trump said that “anyone who wants a test can get a test”. That was (and still is) untrue, and his own officials were quick to correct him.

Regardless, anxious people still flooded into hospitals, seeking tests that did not exist. “People wanted to be tested even if they weren’t symptomatic, or if they sat next to someone with a cough,” says Saskia Popescu of George Mason University, who works to prepare hospitals for pandemics.

Others just had colds, but doctors still had to use masks to examine them, burning through their already dwindling supplies. “It really stressed the health-care system,” Popescu says.

Even now, as capacity expands, tests must be used carefully. The first priority, says Marc Lipsitch of Harvard, is to test health-care workers and hospitalised patients, allowing hospitals to quell any ongoing fires. Only later, once the immediate crisis is slowing, should tests be deployed in a more widespread way. “This isn’t just going to be: Let’s get the tests out there!” Inglesby says.

These measures will take time, during which the pandemic will either accelerate beyond the capacity of the health system or slow to containable levels. Its course – and the nation’s fate – now depends on the third need, which is social distancing.

Think of it this way: There are now only two groups of Americans. Group A includes everyone involved in the medical response, whether that’s treating patients, running tests or manufacturing supplies. Group B includes everyone else, and their job is to buy Group A more time.

Group B must now “flatten the curve” by physically isolating themselves from other people to cut off chains of transmission. Given the slow fuse of COVID-19, to forestall the future collapse of the health-care system, these seemingly drastic steps must be taken immediately, before they feel proportionate, and they must continue for several weeks.

Persuading a country to voluntarily stay at home is not easy, and without clear guidelines from the White House, mayors, governors and business owners have been forced to take their own steps.

Some states have banned large gatherings or closed schools and restaurants. At least 21 have now instituted some form of mandatory quarantine, compelling people to stay at home. And yet many citizens continue to crowd into public spaces.

In these moments, when the good of all hinges on the sacrifices of many, clear coordination matters – the fourth urgent need. The importance of social distancing must be impressed upon a public who must also be reassured and informed.

Instead, Trump has repeatedly played down the problem, telling America that “we have it very well under control” when we do not, and that cases were “going to be down to close to zero” when they were rising.

In some cases, as with his claims about ubiquitous testing, his misleading gaffes have deepened the crisis. He has even touted unproven medications.

Away from the White House press room, Trump has appar-

ently been listening to Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci has advised every president since Ronald Reagan on new epidemics, and now sits on the COVID-19 task force that meets with Trump roughly every other day.

“He’s got his own style, let’s leave it at that,” Fauci told me, adding: “but any kind of recommendation that I have made thus far, the substance of it, he has listened to everything.”

But Trump already seems to be wavering. In recent days, he has signalled that he is prepared to backtrack on social-distancing policies in a bid to protect the economy.

Pundits and business leaders have used similar rhetoric, arguing that high-risk people, such as the elderly, could be protected while lower-risk people are allowed to go back to work.

Such thinking is seductive, but flawed. It overestimates our ability to assess a person’s risk, and to somehow wall off the ‘high-risk’ people from the rest of society. It underestimates how badly the virus can hit ‘low-risk’ groups, and how thoroughly hospitals will be overwhelmed if even just younger demographics are falling sick.

A recent analysis from the University of Pennsylvania estimated that even if social-distancing measures can reduce infection rates by 95 per cent, 960,000 Americans will still need intensive care.

There are only about 180,000 ventilators in the US and, more pertinently, only enough respiratory therapists and critical-care staff to safely look after 100,000 ventilated patients.

Abandoning social distancing would be foolish. Abandoning it now, when tests and protective equipment are still scarce, would be catastrophic.

If Trump stays the course, if Americans adhere to social distancing, if testing can be rolled out, and if enough masks can be produced, there is a chance that the country can still avert the worst predictions about COVID-19, and at least temporarily bring the pandemic under control.

No one knows how long that will take, but it won’t be quick. “It could be anywhere from four to six weeks to up to three months,” Fauci said, “but I don’t have great confidence in that range.”

II. The endgame

Even a perfect response won’t end the pandemic. As long as the virus persists somewhere, there’s a chance that one infected traveller will reignite fresh sparks in countries that have already extinguished their fires.

This is already happening in China, Singapore and other Asian countries that briefly seemed to have the virus under control. Under these conditions, there are three possible endgames: one that’s very unlikely, one that’s very dangerous, and one that’s very long.

The first is that every nation manages to simultaneously bring the virus to heel, as with the original SARS in 2003. Given how widespread the coronavirus pandemic is, and how badly many countries are faring, the odds of worldwide synchronous control seem vanishingly small.

The second is that the virus does what past flu pandemics have done: it burns through the world and leaves behind enough immune survivors that it eventually struggles to find



viable hosts.

This “herd immunity” scenario would be quick, and thus tempting. But it would also come at a terrible cost: SARS-CoV-2 is more transmissible and fatal than the flu, and it would likely leave behind many millions of corpses and a trail of devastated health systems.

The United Kingdom initially seemed to consider this herd-immunity strategy, before backtracking when models revealed the dire consequences. The US now seems to be considering it too.

The third scenario is that the world plays a protracted game of whack-a-mole with the virus, stamping out outbreaks here and there until a vaccine can be produced. This is the best option, but also the longest and most complicated.

It depends, for a start, on making a vaccine. If this were a flu pandemic, that would be easier. The world is experienced at making flu vaccines and does so every year.

But there are no existing vaccines for coronaviruses – until now, these viruses seemed to cause diseases that were mild or rare – so researchers must start from scratch.

The first steps have been impressively quick. Monday of last week saw a possible vaccine created by Moderna and the National Institutes of Health go into early clinical testing.

That marks a 63-day gap between scientists sequencing the virus’s genes for the first time and doctors injecting a vaccine candidate into a person’s arm. “It’s overwhelmingly the world record,” Fauci said.

But it’s also the fastest step among many subsequent slow ones. The initial trial will simply tell researchers if the vaccine seems safe, and if it can actually mobilise the immune system. Researchers will then need to check that it actually prevents infection from SARS-CoV-2.

They’ll need to do animal tests and large-scale trials to ensure that the vaccine doesn’t cause severe side-effects. They’ll need to work out what dose is required, how many shots people need, if the vaccine works in elderly people, and if it requires other chemicals to boost its effectiveness.

“Even if it works, they don’t have an easy way to manufacture it at a massive scale,” said

Seth Berkley of Gavi. That’s because Moderna is using a new approach to vaccination.

Existing vaccines work by providing the body with inactivated or fragmented viruses, allowing the immune system to prepare its defences ahead of time.

By contrast, Moderna’s vaccine comprises a sliver of SARS-CoV-2’s genetic material – its RNA. The idea is that the body can use this sliver to build its own viral fragments, which would then form the basis of the immune system’s preparations.

This approach works in animals, but is unproven in humans. By contrast, French scientists are trying to modify the existing measles vaccine using fragments of the new coronavirus.

“The advantage of that is that if we needed hundreds of doses tomorrow, a lot of plants in the world know how to do it,” Berkley said.

However, no matter which strategy is faster, Berkley and others estimate that it will take 12 to 18 months to develop a proven vaccine, and then longer still to make it, ship it, and inject it into people’s arms. It’s likely, then, that the new coronavirus will be a lingering part of American life for at least a year – if not much longer.

If the current round of social-distancing measures works, the pandemic may ebb enough for things to return to a semblance of normalcy. Offices could fill and bars could bustle. Schools could reopen and friends could reunite.

But as the status quo returns, so too

will the virus. This doesn’t mean that society must be on continuous lockdown until 2022. But “we need to be prepared to do multiple periods of social distancing”, says Stephen Kissler of Harvard.

Much about the coming years, including the frequency, duration, and timing of social upheavals, depends on two properties of the virus – both of which are currently unknown.

First: seasonality. Coronaviruses tend to be winter infections that wane or disappear in the summer. That may also be true for SARS-CoV-2, but seasonal variations might not sufficiently slow the virus when it has so many immunologically naive hosts to infect.

“Much of the world is waiting anxiously to see what – if anything – the summer does to transmission in the Northern Hemisphere,” says Maia Majumder of Harvard Medical School and Boston Children’s Hospital.

Second: duration of immunity. When people are infected by the milder human coronaviruses that cause cold-like symptoms, they remain immune for less than a year. By contrast, the few who were infected by the original SARS virus, which was far more severe, stayed immune for much longer.

Assuming that SARS-CoV-2 lies somewhere in the middle, people who recover from their encounters might be protected for a couple of years. To confirm that, scientists will need to develop accurate serological tests, which look for the antibodies that confer immunity.

They’ll also need to confirm that such antibodies actually stop people from catching or spreading the virus. If so, immune citizens can return to work, care for the vulnerable, and anchor the economy during bouts of social distancing.

Scientists can use the periods between those bouts to develop antiviral drugs – although such drugs are rarely panaceas, and come with possible side-effects and the risk of resistance.

Hospitals can stockpile the necessary supplies. Testing kits can be widely distributed to catch the virus’s return as quickly as possible.

There’s no reason that the US should let SARS-CoV-2 catch it unawares again, and thus no reason that social-distancing measures need to be deployed as broadly and heavy-handedly as they now must be.

As Aaron E. Carroll and Ashish Jha recently wrote: “We can keep schools and businesses open as much as possible, closing them quickly when suppression fails, then opening them back up again once the persons infected are identified and isolated. Instead of playing defence, we could play more offence.”

• This is the second part of a syndicated story from The Atlantic, where Ed Yong is a science writer. He is also author of I CONTAIN MULTITUDES, a New York Times bestseller on animal-microbe partnerships. We published the first part in yesterday’s issue, and we will run the third and last one tomorrow. – Editor.



Nigeria must not waste the opportunity called COVID-19 crisis

By **Tope Fasua**

THIS COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant shutdowns and global panic offer us an opportunity to throw away the box in which we have imprisoned our minds for too long as a people; as it pertains to our economics that is. Why have all the indices come up short for us. No light. No water. Stinking environments. No public housing. No health systems. Nothing! Who do we think will invest in them for us and our people?

First the bad news. Expect no less than a global economic depression in the realm of what happened between 1930-39. This time it may even be worse. Why? The world economy has never been more integrated. There hasn't been so much reliance on the allocative power of markets. The fragility of world economies has never been so cheaply exposed. And never has everything come to such a sudden, shocking, screeching halt, almost worldwide. The effect of the shutdowns and lockdowns, the quarantines and curfews, is economic whiplash for many countries, businesses and peoples across the world. The upside is that the world has, since 1939, built considerable communications infrastructure and technology, that may aid a rapid economic recovery, such that the period of global economic downturn does not have to last a decade and result in a world war (some say we are passing through one already) like the last experience. It is also important to know that some countries learnt serious lessons from the Great Depression, while some countries were not even born then. Most of the countries this side of the world aren't really very good in picking up these hard lessons of history by the way. But it is time to learn.

Recession Versus Depression

The above rigmorale pops a question into mind. What is an economic depression? Economists hardly agree on anything. Some say it is a prolonged recession, recession itself being a drop in the level of a country's Gross Domestic Product (value of goods and services produced in a country in a given year) for two consecutive quarters. Others say it is a drop in the GDP of a country by 10 per cent or more over a period of time. It has been predicted by economists at the Bank of America that global GDP will fall by 12 per cent. That is a proper global depression for those who go by the numbers. The symptoms of an economic depression are however unmistakable - high poverty rates, high unemployment rates, high inflation rate or better still, stagflation; high crime rates, lower life expectancy as a result of broken down health systems, high illiteracy and so on. Sounds familiar right? Most sub-Saharan African countries have never known anything but economic depression, irrespective of the figures their governments post, to impress the international community. We will also find that since 1939, no OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) country, in other words the big Kahunas, has ever fallen into depression, even if many have dipped into recession a number of times. In fact, the terminology seems to have dropped off the lexicon of Economics. African countries which have lived in this reality have not alarmed themselves enough with such a terminology, preferring to celebrate their occasional 6-8 per cent GDP growth as 'Africa Rising', even when 80 per cent of their people roil in all of the miseries associated with economic depression (including bad or no housing, little or no electricity, little or no water, sub-human transport systems etc.), in addition to the regular symptoms listed earlier.



Already, with round-the-block queues to buy basic items (and others not so basic) in parts of the world, empty shelves in stores, spiking unemployment (3.3 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week and 550,000 in the U.K.), it looks like a depression is afoot. Some are celebrating the takeover of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Internet of Things etc., and the likelihood that these phenomena will rapidly replace human beings in the workplace. True. But these innovations will also lead to mass unemployment around the world - just as it happened with the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Will African economies, especially that of Nigeria, take advantage of this unique, unprecedented and profoundly destabilising crisis to open a new chapter? Or will we generally hide away, obey toxic instructions, try some copycatting and generally waste a crisis? Has it not been said that nations should never waste a crisis? Are great nations, just as great organisations, not forged in crises? Did Europe and the Americas not emerge as greater regions from World Wars? In fact, did the U.S.A not leverage on the Second World War to shove the United Kingdom aside as the world's dominant nation? This may just be an opportunity that will not present itself to us again. I propose that we grab it with both hands.

How?
Exiting Our Perennial Budgets of Mediocrity

I have always complained about our budgeting. I see that

the fiscal response to this crisis is to slash the N10 trillion by N1.5 trillion because the price of crude oil crashed in the global markets from about \$80 as at June 2018, to around \$26 today. People have supported this decision because it seems the obviously logical thing to do. But I say we should hold on a second. Is that the best we can do? We should recall that we are not our own competition. Our children are not supposed to be competing with themselves along the usual tribal and religious lines. We should be competing with other countries. We should be preparing the children of Nigeria, and provisioning for them in comparison with children of other nations. Even within Africa, we have examples we can benchmark against. Why is Nigeria cutting a \$30 billion budget when South Africa is working on a \$130 billion budget this year? And they have just 60 million people there against our own 200 million! What is there to cut in a budget of \$140 (barely N50,000) per person in a given year? I have asked that we open our minds to this reality; this enveloping mediocrity. Perhaps this is a good time to revisit the issue.

This is not the time for easy economic decisions. In fact, this

is time for government to take the hit, invest in the people and reap back in the future. Looking at this scenario, evidently Nigeria has an advantage. We can issue government bonds at 10 per cent and get domestic subscribers. We can even run up to 14 per cent and issue 5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 year bonds. The only problem is that we still have corruption in the system and we cannot afford for monies so raised to be embezzled or totally mismanaged.

What to do? Rather than slash the 2020 budget, we should reorder the spending in the budget away from non-value-adding items and all those ego-boosting things into the critical sectors mentioned above that improve the human capital of the country and unleash our productivity. The overriding assumption in our budgets is the expected (benchmark) price of crude oil and how much of it we wish to produce daily. I believe we should populate that section a bit more. Other assumptions must come in. Other sectors must feature. This involves deep thinking, a fundamental reimagining of our possibilities as a people, and honest brainstorming. I believe it is very doable. In the current budget are proposals for the purchase of luxury cars for big civil servants and political appointees. The elected officials have already received their own luxury cars. There are provisions for new office complexes for a public service that should be more on the field and less in offices. There are proposals for the purchase of generators. The irony of making such a budget, and within days seeing everything unravel as crude oil crashed more rapidly than ever before, hasn't shocked us. To this kind of mediocre, one-track-minded, anti-people budget that feeds the politically powerful and panders to our usual excesses and penchant for white elephant projects, we must say: NEVER AGAIN! The people of Nigeria need to rise up this time. The political leaders are waiting to hear from us. We must reclaim our power.

A Serious Fiscal Stimulus With An Eye On The Future

Thus far, Nigeria is slow in bringing up a fiscal emergency plan. The only near-tangible we have is from the monetary policy guys through loans to some industries, chiefly pharmaceuticals and manufacturers. The focus is for us to stay alive first since the chemist shelves, as we call them here, will soon be bare. That is okay, but we must think ahead. The N1.5 trillion budget is

regarded in economics as a pro-cyclical policy as it deepens the problem, and doesn't solve it - it intensifies our vicious cycle of poverty, want, lack of infrastructure, or investment in human capital. What we need right now is a COUNTER-CYCLICAL fiscal policy that helps to turn back the hand of the clock by reflation and incentivising the economy for productivity. National budgets anywhere in the world are very critical, even to business. The government is still the biggest spender in any economy too. So if we cannot increase that budget size, we should leave it alone. Or better still we need to pump in at least N10 trillion into this economy this year, and maintain that new fiscal pedestal going forward. Our budgets must begin to benchmark what obtains in other serious economies, on per capita basis and in terms of the provision for human capital development. The monetary stimulus is limited to lending to usually large companies or moratoria on loans. This leaves out the majority of our people, who don't run companies that take bank loans. This is why the Nigerian government should not sit on its hands this time. Those grassroots people are also waiting to hear from government. Direct palliatives and cash bailouts should be arranged for our most-vulnerable.

How Do We Fund Higher Budgets and A Massive Fiscal Stimulus?

We are now challenged as a people. We have no experience in managing these things but we can learn from others. The U.K. is intervening with £330 billion (about 10 per cent of its GDP), 12 per cent of which will be given out directly in cash and transfers to people who could use some extra cash. They don't have much reserves. So they are issuing domestic bonds. The coupon is worthless at nearly 0 per cent, as they just crashed their reference rate to 0.25 per cent. I read somewhere that they know that investors will not rush the bond, so the proposal is that the Bank of England will buy up the government bonds and issue cash to banks (print money in effect).

The U.K. will suffer some inflation as money supply rises. But though the Bank of England warehouses the bonds, the financial instruments could still be traded in the secondary market at discounted rates. This is not the time for easy economic decisions. In fact, this is time for government to take the hit, invest in the people and reap back in the future.

Globalising compassion amidst COVID-19

By **Kailash Satyarthi**

COMPASSION goes beyond just sympathy or empathy, it is a strong feeling for the suffering of others as your own and a deep desire to end it.

Coronavirus has forced us to live a life that most of us have never experienced before with almost one fourth of the world's population on lockdown.

A cloud of uncertainty has descended upon us all, leading to fear. The global economy has gone into a tailspin. No matter what part of the world we live in, no matter what our nationalities, color, religion, culture, socio-economic status, we are all facing the same crisis to varying degrees all at the same time. Our common fear can also become a source of courage, resilience and hope.

The current epidemic is forcing us to acknowledge that we are a world of common problems and solutions. Crises and disasters evoke a sentiment of kindness and giving that manifests in charity and philanthropy to those in despair. Of course, this is much needed, but it tends to only last as long as the crisis and disaster remain in the news. These are acts of sympathy - when you feel the suffering of others or, empathy - when you feel the suffering of others as your own.

Today I saw an ordinary couple and their children cooking. Then the man with his mask on left to distribute the

food to the homeless twice in the day. Millions of healthcare givers are risking their lives round the clock. This gives me hope!

Sustainable solution lies in igniting and globalizing compassion. Compassion goes beyond just sympathy or empathy. It is a strong feeling for the suffering of others as your own, along with a deep desire to take action to end it.

This present crisis is an opportunity to reinvigorate our inner power of compassion and enlarge its circle to every known and unknown being. It is not just the virus that is infectious, compassion too can be contagious!

As we are asked to self-isolate and feel frustrated we must ask, what about those children who have no home to self-isolate in? While we panic about how we can fill our fridges, what about the families with no fridge at all? While we worry about our jobs, what about the people who only eat when they earn money that day?

Decisions made by our leaders, actions taken by us and the discourses that ensue in the next few weeks will be crucial. They are going to shape the future of polity, economy, culture and morality. Development priorities will be recalibrated, individual freedom, privacy and human rights will be redefined. Conventional politics can also be transformed into compassionate politics.

In the last two weeks, policy mak-



ers have already released over three trillion USD in emergency support for the companies and people in the richest countries. That funding is needed and is important, but we also need to see the governments of the world come together and announce a rescue package for the most marginalized children - even if 20% of this support was targeted at the poorest people and families in the world it would save millions and millions of lives. We are seeing debt assistance for some of the richest companies in the world, but what about the debt of the poorest countries who desperately need funds to fight this crisis! Cancelling the debt of the poorest countries would make all of humanity safer.

The truth is and always has been that we are all dependent on each other. The richest businessman is dependent on the poorest cleaner to keep him safe. Coronavirus is a stark reminder that the health of humanity is dependent on how well we can create healthcare systems for all our citizens. Our future, your children's future will be best if we can show compassion to all in these scary and uncertain times. Whether it is marginalized people in your community or around the world, reach out with compassion and take action today, tomorrow and every day.

If we can find compassion in our hearts, from the tragedy of the COVID 19 pandemic we can act to help all of humanity and develop a more just and

safer future for all.

We humans are destined to live together. How we choose to live together, is up to us!

Urban experts say walkability demands may be hard to reverse after restrictions on movement in cities imposed because of coronavirus are lifted.

Cities under lockdown to stop the spread of the coronavirus are making more room on their streets for pedestrians, fulfilling a long-standing demand by residents for more walkability that could be hard to reverse, urban experts said on Monday.

More than 720,000 people across the world have been infected by the coronavirus and about 33,000 have died, according to a Reuters tally.

With lockdowns or restrictions on movement in hundreds of cities, residents are often still allowed to occasionally go outside to run, walk or cycle, as long as they practise social distancing, or keep two metres (6.5 ft) from each other.

While this has led to overcrowding in parks in several cities, authorities in Toronto, New York and Philadelphia have barred traffic from some streets so more people can walk safely.

"Making cities more accessible to pedestrians now is necessary because people want to feel connected, get some exercise, and feel a little better about a very challenging situation,"

said Tony Matthews, a lecturer in urban and environmental planning at Australia's Griffith University.

"Many people may not want to give their streets back to heavy traffic volumes after this, so there will be a lot more advocacy for urban walkability," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Walking not only has physical and emotional benefits, but walkability - which considers safety, comfort and health - is also good for city economies and is key to social connectedness, research has shown.

But while urban planners have long been working to increase walkability, the challenge has always been competing with the dominance of vehicle traffic, Matthews said.

Reduced vehicle traffic in cities now has given authorities a chance to prioritise pedestrians, possibly for the first time in decades.

In Toronto and Vancouver, officials are looking into closing some parts of their streets to vehicles, while New York has closed some of its streets to vehicle traffic to allow more room for pedestrians.

Developing Asian cities, with a few exceptions, are less walkable, with pedestrians often forced to share narrow, crumbling pavements - where they exist - with vendors, motorbikes and stray dogs and cats.

COVID-19 and, oh, the flight out of capital Abuja!

By Azu Ishiekwene

The trip was not planned. As concerns over the spread of Covid-19 grew and the country inched more and more towards the abnormal, I figured travel might be restricted before the end of the week. A call that Tuesday morning confirmed that feeling: I decided to travel out of Abuja immediately.

What I saw at the airport and on the flight on the short trip to Lagos, was a special class on the current public health crisis. I kept thinking...

Of the numerous, dizzying changes that have come upon us in recent times, one that we have had to quickly adapt to is the new social word register. New words have emerged that have fundamentally - and maybe forever - changed the way we work, play and relate to each other. Social protocol may never be the same again even long after Covid-19 has subsided or passed.

Take the word, "social distancing", for example. According to experts on public health, "Social distancing is for healthy persons, to prevent them from coming in contact with infected persons and contracting the disease."

Social distancing stands everything we know about how we live on its head. We live together, work together, play together and pray together. There's no clearer expression of this social norm than in the transport systems and the face-me-I-face-you design of many houses in urban areas. Afro-beat maestro, Fela, captured it aptly in "Suffering and Smiling", where 49 passengers would be sitting in a bus, and 99 standing without complaining.

Also, a welcome is incomplete without a heart-hug. When we're in line, we tend to press each other from behind, breathing hot air on the shoulders of the person in front and pressing hard, bonnet-to-bumper.

Five people would easily squeeze themselves onto a seat meant for three and should anyone dare to complain,

the complainant would be reprimanded that one body does not avoid another. If any space can take one, then it can take two. And if it can take two, it can take three or even four.

Social hugging could be hugely inconveniencing and even repugnant in a few cases, but the motive or value wasn't always bad. In situations where government is almost completely absent, the communal spirit was the only social safety net to depend on.

Ostracism, which is perhaps the social equivalent of "social distancing", was invoked in extreme cases of communicable diseases or to punish "social abomination."

But the public health call for social distancing does not discriminate. On this trip to Lagos, I noticed a clear difference in distancing not just at the ticketing lines, but surprisingly, at the departure lounge, where packing each other like sardines used to be passenger's pastime.

In what looked more like ostracism than social distancing, passengers sat significantly far apart from one another, with only those who appeared to be families huddling closer. And in a few cases where someone was moving too close in defiance of multiple visual daggers drawn at them, the passengers they were moving too close to simply stood up, and moved elsewhere.

When we approached the boarding gate, airline staff who used to have a hard time getting passengers to stand in line for boarding, were actually begging passengers who had left unusually large distances between themselves, to move a bit closer and come forward quickly for boarding.

I don't know how much longer this situation would last but I hope we can take useful lessons about respect for decent personal space and when all is said and done, also separate a healthy social distance from paranoia.

The cabin looked like a huge floating hospital theatre with well over half the passengers wearing face



masks and all sorts of medical gear. Quite a number of the passengers were also wearing hand gloves, apart from face masks. Perhaps if they could find the full personal protective equipment, they would have had no hesitation buying them, even at a premium, and wearing them.

I felt a bit awkward and out of place as I took my seat near the back, beside a young man who, just like me, had virtually no protective wear.

I had toyed with the idea of travelling by road but changed my mind. A friend, who suspected that my decision may have been influenced by safety, said I didn't need to worry about kidnapers or robbers at this time. Didn't I notice that reports of kidnappings had reduced remarkably?

He suggested that kidnapers and other bad people were not only observing "social distancing" since they didn't know if their victims were infected or not, perhaps they could not afford face masks and other protective gear which might have helped them to reduce the risk in the "business". Whatever the case, I didn't want to find out. But sitting here on this flight and looking like fish out of water, I was wondering if flying was the right decision after all.

The cabin crew also had face masks and

gloves, but yet warned passengers not to touch any crew members. Passengers were advised to use the call bell if they needed anything. Don't touch crew members.

But come to think of it, what is the standard advisory about the correct use of face masks?

WHO says on its website, that, "If you are healthy, you only need to wear a face mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection. Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing."

So, why am I surrounded by a sea of mask-wearing passengers and crew. It's either some of them have something to hide behind their masks - or I have something to worry about! Either way, it left me with an eerie feeling.

Just before take-off, I received a message that Vice President Yemi Osinbajo had gone into "self-isolation." That was concerning. Osinbajo had been in meetings with Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari, who had tested positive to the virus. So, there were concerns for the Vice President's health and safety, for which he had to move into separation as a precautionary step.

But what does "self-isolation" mean? Our daily use of the word may permit some latitude, but the news that Osinbajo was in "self-isolation", sent a wrong message from what was intended.

To say he is in "self-isolation", means that he has contacted the virus; which obviously was not the case.

He was in quarantine, which means that though might be well, he had been exposed and therefore needed to be separated from others while he's awaiting test results.

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) might do well to advise the raft of public officers declaring that they are in "self-isolation", to be clearer about what they are saying. As long as they keep confusing "isolation" with "quarantine", they will leave the public confused about what to know and believe.

So, Covid-19 concerns have forced a partial lockdown of the Presidential Villa? We have seen from the last few weeks that lockdown means different things in different places.

In Italy, Spain and a number of European countries, for example, lockdown means lockdown: no movement outdoors except with authorised permit and stay-at-home orders enforced by the military. In the UK, lockdown means highly restricted movement, with few exceptions made for the park and purchase of staples on a ration.

In Nigeria, we are still trying to find out what lockdown means beyond restrictions on social and religious gatherings and closure of schools, international airports and the land borders. When we do, it might well be that even local flights are a dangerous luxury in a country where a national lawmaker would remove his face mask to sneeze when the Senate is in session!

Coronavirus: Wake-up call to ensure water and sanitation for all

By Hassan Aboelnga, Amgad Elmahdi and Olcay Ünver I

TODAY, many people lack access to the most basic weapons to shield themselves from COVID-19: water and soap. UN-water reports that 2.2 billion people around the world do not have safely-managed drinking water, while 4.2 billion go without safe sanitation services and three billion lack basic handwashing facilities. Furthermore, an estimated 896 million people use health care facilities with no water service and 1.5 billion use facilities with no sanitation service. These con-

ditions present a constant source of stress and disease, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised communities where people sometimes need to skip bathing to save water for cooking.

As the virus moves to low-income countries and water scarce regions, we're deeply concerned about the future of sustainable development and the impact it could have among vulnerable populations with no access to basic water services.

With this in the background, we are unfortunately still trying

to solve new problems with old solutions and our past experience turns to be our worst enemy about shifting our mind-set. We are still heavily investing in linear systems, "big pipes in and big pipes out" transfer model, which aimed to protect public health and avoid nuisance impacts using large-scale technological solutions for narrowly defined service problems. We continue to work in silos; our policies are set without aligning objectives with the required resources; we count on public funds that are insufficient

and poorly targeted; and the new sources of finance for water and sanitation constrained by regulatory, institutional and other barriers.

Our ambitious strategies for water and sanitation services are hampered too often when they are not accompanied by proper consideration for how or by whom they will be implemented, and how they will be financed.

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene, collectively known as WASH, are crucial for human health and well-being. When the

world moved from the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015, the governments set the WASH performance bar higher, shifting the target from basic to safely managed services. COVID-19 outbreak has taught us the vital importance of the access to safely managed WASH services by all.

The increased investment needed, shown by the orange bars in the figure, is high, but not unachievable, particularly given the cost of inaction. The action to

be taken has to be a holistic one, incorporating interlinkages between sectors, particularly with food and agriculture, environment and public health, and taking into account co-benefits and trade-offs.

At a time when the world has acknowledged a grave need to significantly accelerate progress in achieving SDGs and climate-related targets, the COVID-19 outbreak should be a wake-up call for all of us that the economic and social costs of failure will likely be catastrophic.



Covid-19 can be humanity's 'finest hour'

By Paul Vorster

WE have the power to not let this pandemic define our worst selves, but rather define our best as a species. We have an opportunity in the shadow of the threat to transcend egocentricity and start to behave in a more socio-centric manner - to care for those that cannot care for themselves and to demonstrate courage.

Humanity faces a threat second to none. At the time of writing, there were 424,802 infections and 18,962 deaths due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the respiratory disease known as Covid-19. With more than 197 territories affected, it is a global threat.

Economies are being badly damaged as stock markets fall and countries effectively shut their borders. The effect is not just illness, but possible economic collapse and, in a worst-case scenario, social collapse.

People are panicking and buying out essential goods from supermarkets. In a more horrific turn of events, my local supermarket had incidents of older people, who are at most risk of

death in the pandemic, being shunted aside as younger and stronger citizens with more buying power stockpiled goods.

There are stories of people ignoring the risk of the virus and being irresponsible; a new social media sensation has people exposing themselves to the virus for excitement. Do they not realise their health may affect the health of others?

Constant myths and fake news have caused panic and discrimination against citizens from countries where the outbreak is at its worst. Some people discriminate against those of Asian descent as if they are not victims but usurpers. The same has happened to Europeans.

There is something we can do. We have the power to not let this pandemic define our worst selves, but rather for it to define our very best as a species. We have an opportunity in the shadow of the threat to transcend beyond our egocentricity and start to behave in a more socio-centric manner: To care for those that cannot care for themselves and to demonstrate courage.

History has lessons for us. A little more than 2,000 years ago the Greeks were a disparate group of clans and city-states, each with their own culture and traditions. They hated one another. Greeks from various city-states viewed other Greeks as sub-human and they were often at war with each other.

But then the Greeks faced a larger threat, in the form of the well-coordinated and integrated Persian army. The Persians invaded Greece and capitalised on the lack of coordination between the local adversaries to wipe out the Greek way of life, one clan and city-state at a time. The Greeks did not just face defeat, but the annihilation of their people and diverse culture.

How did the Greeks respond? They chose to unite against this enemy, forming the first democratic republic where every Greek citizen was a Greek for the first time in the region's long history. Some Greek city-states sacrificed their own existence to slow down the Persians and give the newly formed republic the time it needed to put differences aside and unite against a common enemy.

Could Sudanese traditional medicine really be a cure for coronavirus disease somewhere?

By Rogia al-Shafee

ALHAJJA Buthayna Mohamed Rajab is an elderly woman living in one of the old neighborhoods of Omdurman City. As a young girl she used to cure her siblings suffering from colds, fever, respiratory system inflammations, soar throats, tonsillitis and even malaria and typhoid with a concoction of sunut tree fruit powder, sesame oil and a little black cumin powder and salt.

As she grew up she applied the same prescription to her sons and daughters and then to their children.

Hajja Buthayna remembers that one of her sons had used to refuse this treatment since when he was a child.

But one day this boy, who matured and became a college student, had a malaria attack and with it he contracted a sharp pneumonia that kept him in bed for about a month. He used to stay awake all night out of fever and coughing. The medicines he took did not do him any good.

Sesame plant

One night when he was battling with coughing, headache and fever, the mother stealthily approached his bed her concoction in hand. Without any prior notice she rubbed some of her medicine on his head, his neck and his chest. He got up in panic and refused what she was doing. She left him but she noticed that he then fell asleep and did not get up until after sunrise.

The first thing he did when he got up was to ask about the medicine she applied on him which he said gave him great relief.

His mother then repeatedly rubbed his entire body with the concoction. In three days he became very well and returned to college.

This blend of sunut tree (the acacia vachellia nilotica) fruit powder with sesame oil had been part of the Sudanese traditional medicine for a long time. The sunut tree fruit is known in Sudan as 'garadh'. In some cases the garadh is burned and its smoke is inhaled to drive away the ailments of the respiratory system.

Scientific research has confirmed the medical value of garadh, black cumin and sesame oil.

And with the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the social media is flooded with advice to return to the sesame and garadh prescription and the inhalation of garadh smoke against this plague, that originally grips the respiratory system.

Coronavirus was first diagnosed among persons carrying symptoms of pneumonia in district of Wuhan in China in December 2019. Those symptoms are fever, dry cough, short breath and respiratory distress; nearly the same symptoms of pneumonia.

The media debate about a possible local cure for this deadly disease is justified and understood if we consider the poor situation of the country's health system.

Sesame seeds and oil

One of those messages aired on the media

was an audio recording by Sudanese Microbiologist Dr. Jalaaluddin Hussein who advised a frequent rubbing of all parts of the body (the neck, the chest and the back in particular) with a blend of sesame and garadh powder for three to four days. Dr. Hussein, who lives and works in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, says this treatment can cure the disease and can also guard against it.

Popular medication with what mother nature gives is universal. The use of sesame oil is also known in China, the World's major sesame producer, as a treatment for the respiratory system problems. Sudan ranks third in sesame production, after Tanzania that ranks the second.

Last February a medical team from the University of Hubei in Wuhan District, where coronavirus has originated, and Fudan University in Shanghai conducted what they called a theoretical study on the viability of traditional medicine used in the treatment of pneumonia in the treatment of coronavirus: They used sesame oil as nasal drops to treat coronavirus that so far infected no less than half a billion persons and killed thousands around the World.

Garadh

Result of the study was made public in a lengthy report. Sudanow hereunder publishes excerpts from it:

"Based on our previous studies on colloid and interface science, we think there are some theoretical reasons to support the sesame oil method for preventing viral infection by considering the physical-chemical properties of sesame oil, such as low surface tension, high-boiling point, high viscosity, immiscible with water and antivirus activity."

The team suggested "examining some possible mechanisms to inactivate the COVID-19 in the victims' bodies by adding sesame oil to their nostrils and mouth, applying sesame oil to the surface of frequently contacted objects, spraying sesame oil into the air and using a napkin containing sesame oil to cover the nose and mouth before the wearing of a mask."

They, however, stressed that "this sesame oil method should not be used until it has been verified and approved by future experimental and clinical study."

Towards the end of their experiment the Chinese researchers called for more attention to traditional medicine. Their argument here is that as long as some of the medical drugs were based on the findings of traditional medicine, why don't researchers work on it to save humanity, given the fact that these products are cheap and available in nature around us.

This can also protect humanity from the greed of drug companies who seem at war against traditional medicine; in some cases sending killing threats to those who try to propagate it.

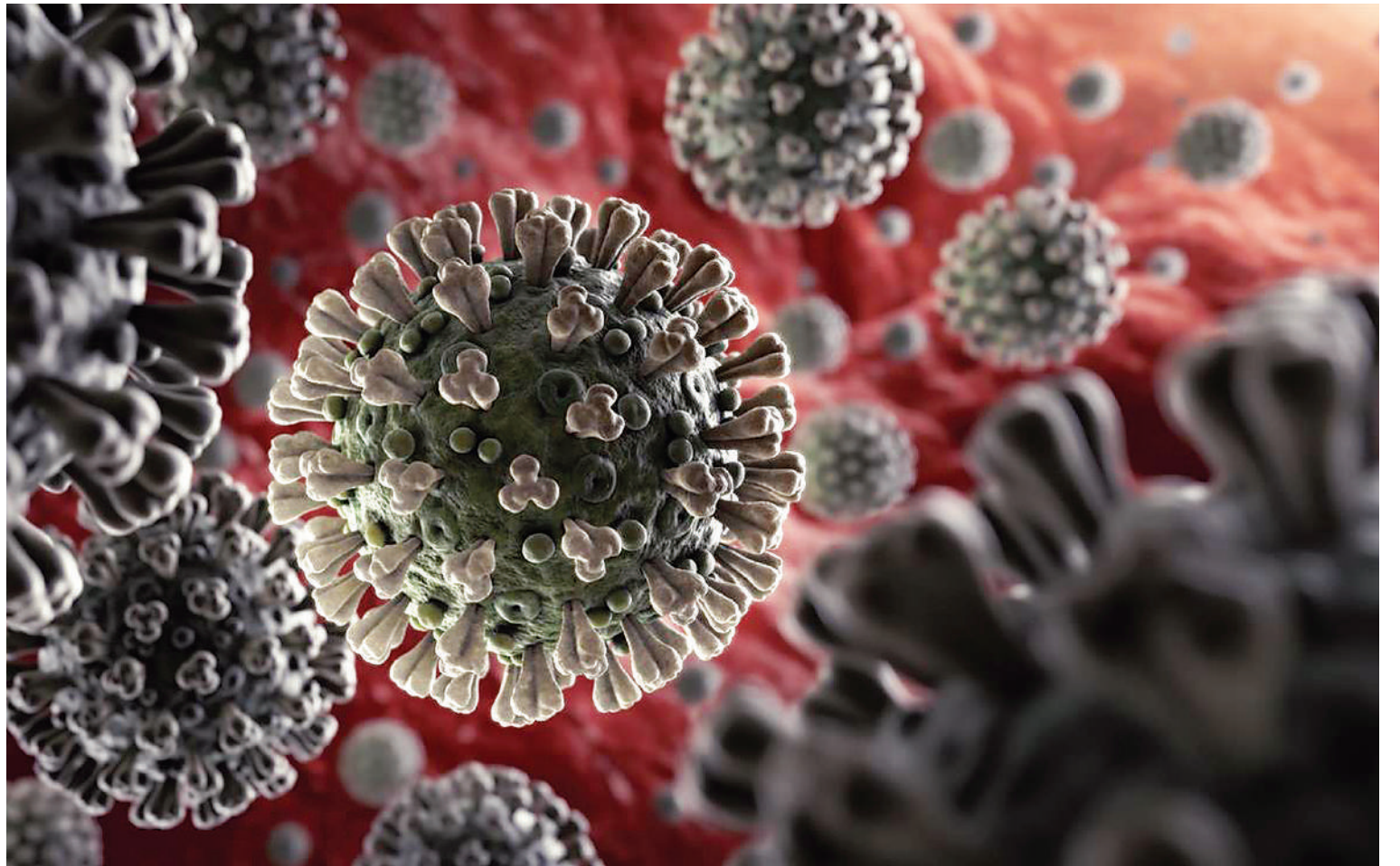
Medical and Aromatic Herbs Specialist, Dr. Ehsan Mohamed Alhadi has confirmed Hajja Buthayna's successful experiment with the mixture of sesame oil and garadh.

Dr. Ehsan

She said: The garadh contains astringents, hydrocarbonates, rovonoids, phenol, gum, fibers, calcium, phosphorus, protein and ashes. It also contains a group of minerals and unsaturated fats.

By those definitions garadh has a lot of health benefits: It maintains the health of the respiratory system and the mouth. It is also useful in the treatment of tuberculosis, soar throat, tonsillitis, coughing, chest inflammation, mouth ulcers, colds and headache.

Adds Dr. Ehsan: The garadh was studied by several scientific groups. It was found to contain tannin that



kills microbes, in addition to tannic acid which was in use in the tanning of hides for a long time.

"If garadh was useful in tanning hides, it is sure to tan out viruses, bacteria, fungus and many microbes," said Dr. Ehsan.

"The mix of garadh and sesame oil was proved as an effective cure for many types of bacteria, fungus, many microbes and, "why not coronavirus," said Dr. Ehsan.

Similarly, various studies have confirmed the health benefits of sesame oil. In addition to its other unusual characteristics, sesame oil is available in big quantities because of the high oil yield in sesame seeds of 48-60 percent.

Sesame oil is palatable, its specifics are stable and durable (long shelf life), because of its content of antioxidants. It is also easy to mill out, process and purify.

"Humanity has nothing to lose if it tries garadh as incense and a gargle or as a liniment for the treatment of coronavirus in the absence of a confirmed cure for this disease," Dr. Ehsan said.

South Sudan officially known as the Republic of South Sudan, is a landlocked country in East-Central Africa. The country gained its independence from the Republic of the Sudan in 2011, making it the newest country with widespread recognition. Its capital and largest city is Juba.

South Sudan is bordered by Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya

to the southeast, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the southwest and the Central African Republic to the west. It includes the vast swamp region of the Sudd, formed by the White Nile and known locally as the Bahr al Jabal, meaning "Mountain Sea".

Sudan was occupied by Egypt under the Muhammad Ali dynasty and was governed as an Anglo-Egyptian condominium until Sudanese independence in 1956. Following the First Sudanese Civil War, the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region was formed in 1972 and lasted until 1983.

A second Sudanese civil war soon broke out, ending in 2005 with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Later that year, southern autonomy was restored when an Autonomous Government of Southern Sudan was formed. South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011, following 98.83 per cent support for independence in a January 2011 referendum.

South Sudan has a population of 12 million, mostly of the Nilotic peoples. Christianity is the majority religion. In September 2017 the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict said that half of South Sudan's inhabitants are under 18 years old.

It is a member of the United Nations, the African Union, the East African Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

In July 2012, South Sudan signed the Geneva Conventions. South Sudan has suffered ethnic violence and has been in a civil war since 2013. As of 2018, South Sudan ranks third lowest in the latest UN World Happiness Report, and has the highest score on the American Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index (formerly the Failed States Index).

The Nilotic people of South Sudan—the Acholi, Anyuak, Bari, Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Kaligi (Arabic Feroqhe), and others—first entered South Sudan sometime before the 10th century coinciding with the fall of medieval nubia.

During the period from the 15th to the 19th centuries, tribal migrations, largely from the area of Bahr el Ghazal, brought the Anyuak, Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk to their modern locations of both Bahr El Ghazal and Upper Nile Regions, while the Acholi and Bari settled in Equatoria. The Azande, Mundu, Avukaya and Baka, who entered South Sudan in the 16th century, established the region's largest state of Equatoria Region.

The Dinka are the largest, Nuer the second largest, the Azande the third-largest and the Bari are the fourth-largest ethnic group in the country. They are found in the Maridi, Yambio, and Tombura districts in the tropical rainforest belt of Western Equatoria, the Adio of Azande client in Yei, Central Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal.

In the 18th century, the Avungara sib rose to power over the rest of Azande society and this domination continued into the 20th century. Geographical barriers, including the swamplands along the White Nile and the British preference for sending Christian missionaries to the southern regions, including its Closed District Ordinance of 1922 of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan), helped to prevent the spread of Islam to the southerners, thus enabling them to retain their social and cultural heritage, as well as their political and religious institutions. The major reasons include the long history of British policy preference toward developing the Arab north and its ignoring the Black south.

After Sudan's first independent elections in 1958, the continued ignoring of the south by Khartoum (lack of schools, roads, bridges) led to uprisings, revolt, and the longest civil war on the continent.

As of 2012, peoples include Acholi, Anyuak, Azande, Baka, Balanda Bviri, Bari, Boya, Didinga, Dinka, Jiye, Kaligi, Kuku, Lotuka, Mundari, Murie, Nilotic, Nuer, Shilluk, Toposa and Zande.

Slavery had been an institution of Sudanese life throughout history. The slave trade in the south intensified in the 19th century, and continued after the British had suppressed slavery in much of sub-Saharan Africa.

Annual Sudanese slave raids into non-Muslim territories resulted in the capture of countless thousands of southern Sudanese, and the destruction of the region's stability and economy.

The Azande have had good relations with the neighbours, namely the Moru, Mundu, Pöjulu, Avukaya, Baka and the

small groups in Bahr el Ghazal, due to the expansionist policy of their king Gbudwe, in the 18th century.

In the 19th century, the Azande fought the French, the Belgians and the Mahdists to maintain their independence. Egypt, under the rule of Khedive Ismail Pasha, first attempted to control the region in the 1870s, establishing the province of Equatoria in the southern portion. Egypt's first governor was Samuel Baker, commissioned in 1869, followed by Charles George Gordon in 1874 and by Emin Pasha in 1878.

The Mahdist Revolt of the 1880s destabilized the nascent province, and Equatoria ceased to exist as an Egyptian outpost in 1889. Important settlements in Equatoria included Lado, Gondokoro, Dufle and Wadelai.

European colonial maneuverings in the region came to a head in 1898, when the Fashoda Incident occurred at present-day Kodok; Britain and France almost went to war over the region.

In 1947, British hopes to join South Sudan with Uganda, as well as leaving Western Equatoria as part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were dashed by the Rajaf Conference to unify North and South Sudan.

South Sudan has an estimated population of 8 million,[41] but, given the lack of a census in several decades, this estimate may be severely distorted. The economy is predominantly rural and relies chiefly on subsistence farming. Around 2005, the economy began a transition from this rural dominance, and urban areas within South Sudan have seen extensive development.

The region has been negatively affected by two civil wars since Sudanese independence: from 1955 to 1972, the Sudanese government fought the Anyanya rebel army (Anyanya is a term in the Madi language which means "snake venom") during the First Sudanese Civil War, followed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) in the Second Sudanese Civil War for over 20 years. As a result, the country suffered serious neglect, a lack of infrastructural development, and major destruction and displacement. More than 2.5 million people have been killed and millions more have become refugees both within and outside the country.

Independence (2011)

Between 9 and 15 January 2011, a referendum was held to determine whether South Sudan should become an independent country and separate from Sudan. 98.83 per cent of the population voted for independence. South Sudan formally became independent from Sudan on 9 July, although certain disputes still remained, including the division of oil revenues, as 75 per cent of all the former Sudan's oil reserves are in South Sudan. The region of Abyei still remains disputed and a separate referendum will be held in Abyei on whether they want to join Sudan or South Sudan. The South Kordofan conflict broke out in June 2011 between the Army of Sudan and the SPLA over the Nuba Mountains.

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD =00 77 00=

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

WORD FIT

CROSSWORD

CLUES: ACROSS

- Bad taste (9)
- Chemical element of atomic No.2 (6)
- Chief city of UK (6)
- and others, abbreviation (3)
- Tiny amount (7)
- Abandon (8)
- Mass lobby (4)
- Sharp mountain ridge (5)
- Articles of faith (5)
- Small peg of wood (3)
- The whole (3)
- Breaking point (5)
- Liege (4)
- Fall suddenly (6)
- Vulgar (5)
- Large expanse of salt water (3)
- Cause to appear as if by magic (7)

CLUES: DOWN

- Accessible (10)
- Pedigree (7)
- Topic (5)
- Hairy manlike creature said to live in the highest part of the Himalayas (4)
- The area on the outer surface of a ship's hull (5)
- Used for climbing up and down (6)
- One (4)
- Wealthy (7)
- Battle (8)
- Adorn, decorate (9)
- Accuse (6)
- Grieve (5)
- Map out (4)

Comments: 0789 43 73 09



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Epanko graphite developer reviews funding structure for 138.7bn/- debt

By Smart Money Reporter

AUSTRALIAN based EcoGraf Limited has revised its funding structure with the aim of simplifying and fast-tracking the US\$60 million (over 138.7bn/-) debt needed to develop Epanko Graphite Project in Morogoro region.

In its interim result for the six month period for the year ending December 2019, EcoGraf which was formerly known as Kibaran Resources Limited said positive progress has been made with German based, KfW IPEX Bank for the loan.

"The company signed a letter of intent with GR Engineering for Epanko early works program and EPC construction contract, and achieved positive progress with KfW IPEX-Bank and a second financial institution on Epanko debt financing," the report said.

It further added that the debt financing for the project continues to be negotiated after the company completed a revised funding structure. The company however reduced its loss amount for the period with US\$1,644,000 compared to \$1,882,000 made in 2018.

"No dividends were declared or paid during the six months ended 31 December 2019. Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December 2019 totalled \$788,000 (30 June 2019: \$1,462,000)," the interim report added.

During the half year period, EcoGraf continued development of a proposed battery graphite purification plant which it plans to build in Kwinana, Western Australia with final investment decision due in second half of this



year.

"Debt and equity funding processes continued with prospective lenders, and EcoGraf also commenced off-take discussions with major battery

and industrial groups in Asia and Europe. EcoGraf signed a letter of intent with GR Engineering for construction, operation and maintenance arrangements of its proposed Kwinana facility,"

EcoGraf Limited's managing director, Andrew Spinks.

the report added.

The Australian Stock Exchange listed company further noted that to complement the battery graphite operations, it is also developing the TanzGraphite natural flake graphite business, commencing with the Epanko Graphite Project.

"This will supply additional feedstock for the spherical graphite processing facilities and provide customers with a long term supply of high quality graphite products for industrial applications such as refractories, re-carburisers and lubricants," the report stated.

A participant agreement was signed with the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre, a Perth-based, government-backed hub aiming to position Australia as a global leader in industry focused research into the rapidly transforming battery value chain, the report noted.

The FBICRC will support EcoGraf as it develops its technology, which will provide important material for the centre's research programs. Independent testwork conducted by EcoGraf during the period confirmed the efficiency and environmental advantages of its proprietary purification process," the interim report said adding that a feedstock benchmarking program is in progress and results are expected shortly.

The directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis based on the following pertinent considerations: i. the consolidated entity has a history of successfully raising working capital as and when required, regardless of market cycles; ii. the consolidated entity has executed a mandate letter with an investment bank to act as lead manager for an equity capital raising expected to be completed during March 2020; and iii. an undrawn funding facility of \$300,000 has been arranged with directors to provide the consolidated entity with additional working capital, if required, the report stressed.

How the UK plans to protect businesses from the Covid-19 fallout

LONDON

THE UK government is loosening its bankruptcy rules to allow struggling businesses to continue trading if they cannot pay their debts because of the impact of the coronavirus.

In another sign of how the pandemic is forcing governments to upend policy, business secretary Alok Sharma said the changes would allow British companies being reorganised to access supplies and raw materials, and not be placed into administration by creditors. There will also be a clause that temporarily removes the threat of personal liability for

company directors during the pandemic.

"These measures will give those firms extra time and space to weather the storm and be ready when the crisis ends, whilst ensuring creditors get the best return possible in the circumstances," said Mr Sharma, who hosted the government's daily coronavirus briefing because Prime Minister Boris Johnson is in quarantine.

KPMG and Deloitte, together with other accounting firms with sizable business restructuring divisions, have been pushing the government to introduce softer legislation. Ministers were already looking at allowing beleaguered companies to access government-backed loans through commercial banks.

With economies around the globe set to contract and unemployment set to surge, governments are having to rewrite their economic playbooks. For Mr Johnson's administration, it means ripping up a chunk of the manifesto that helped it win December's election by a landslide, pumping vast sums into the economy and compensating citizens who face a massive shortfall in income.

The weakening of Britain's public finances prompted Fitch Ratings to lower its credit ranking late on Friday and warn that another downgrade is more likely than an upgrade. For businesses, the coronavirus's effect on the top and bottom line has been crippling.

"Cash flow remains an urgent concern for many businesses, so it's vital that government support packages reach businesses and people on the ground as soon as possible," Suren Thiru, head of economics at the British Chamber of Commerce, said. And in another indication of how companies are having to tweak their business models, Britain's major internet service providers and phone operators - from BT Group to Gigaclear - signed up to a package that appears to put customer welfare over profit.

Among the measures: free calls, cheap data boosts and bill support. The companies will also arrange alternative means of communication, such as routers for people whose broadband can't otherwise be fixed.



Britain's business secretary Alok Sharma: The government is loosening its bankruptcy rules to allow struggling businesses to continue trading.



International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

IMF approves changes to enable debt service relief for poorest countries

WASHINGTON

THE International Monetary Fund's executive board approved changes to provide up to two years of debt service relief to its poorest and most vulnerable members as they respond to the coronavirus outbreak.

In a meeting on Friday, the IMF said it expanded the qualification criteria for its Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) to reflect the circumstances created by the pandemic. As a result, all member countries with per capita income below the World Bank's operational threshold for concessional support will now be eligible for debt service relief for up to two years.

The IMF launched a fund-raising exercise that would enable the Trust to provide about \$1 billion for the current pandemic, the Washington-based lender said on Friday. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva urged the fund's richer mem-

ber countries to help shore up the trust, which had only \$200 million available for the world's poorest nations. The UK responded with a pledge of \$183m while donors from Japan, China and other countries are also contributing.

"We are calling on donor countries to replenish the Trust's resources to help boost our ability to provide additional debt service relief to our poorest member countries," she said. Ms Georgieva said she was particularly concerned about emerging markets and developing countries which had seen \$83bn in capital outflows and projected they would need upwards of \$2.5 trillion in financial resources to recover from virus-related disruptions.

IMF member countries had urged the fund to focus its efforts on steps that could be taken quickly, including a doubling of emergency financing up to \$100bn and creation of a new short-term liquidity facility, she said.

Asked whether the global economy needs more

than the \$5tn in new rescue spending pledged by G20 countries on Thursday, Ms Georgieva said: "Our advice is go big." "This is a very big crisis and it's not going to be sorted out without a very massive deployment of resources," she said, noting that low interest rates made it easier for countries to provide significant fiscal support.

The G20's \$5tn pledge is equal to what was spent in 2009 during the global financial crisis, although economists say this crisis could be far worse. Ms Georgieva on Friday said the pandemic has already plunged the world into recession and it will be worse than during the last crisis, which caused a 0.7 per cent drop in global output in 2009.

She welcomed a \$2.2tn aid package approved by the US Congress on Friday to cushion the blow to consumers and businesses - more than double what it pledged in 2009. "The size matters. What matters perhaps even more is well-targeted measures," she said, citing the need to focus stimulus

efforts on health systems, income for workers who have lost jobs and keeping companies out of bankruptcy.

The bill includes a \$38.5bn contribution to double the IMF's crisis lending fund to \$500bn. The expansion of the New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB) credit line was agreed by member countries in 2019. On Friday, the IMF also welcomed a move by the US Congress to expedite approval to boost the fund's resources.

"The US decision to speed up approval of its substantial new contributions to the IMF is a powerful message to the international community and helps solidify the IMF's \$1tn lending capacity," Ms Georgieva said. "It comes at a crucial time as the whole world fights COVID-19 and demand for IMF resources is high."

Ms Georgieva said she is "confident" that following the US decision, other NAB contributors will also expedite their commitments, so the IMF "can

continue to play its essential role as a lender of last resort at this time of crisis."

Emerging markets will likely need more than \$2.5tn in resources, although some of this will come from their internal reserves, and some from domestic borrowing markets, she said. "I do believe this number is on the lower end, because we are yet to see the full unfolding of this crisis in many emerging markets and developing countries," Ms Georgieva said. "It is hitting countries one after another, and it's like a domino falling until your turn comes."

The IMF could approve additional emergency financing and creation of a short-term liquidity facility when it meets for its now virtual spring meetings in April, said a source familiar with the process. Mrs Georgieva said it would take longer and more consultation with members to move forward on her proposal to allow countries to draw on their Special Drawing Rights, the currency of the IMF, as was done during the 2009 global financial crisis.

Record high Tanzanian chickpea exports to India amid restrictions



Tanzanian chickpeas at a local market.

By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

CHICKPEA exports to the global market increased by a record 113 percent last year although the main market, India had imposed restrictions against pulses.

Tanzania Pulse Network's National Coordinator, Zirack Andrew said chickpeas were the only specie of pulses to have performed well among four major pulses cultivated in the country. The three other pulses that made a poor show include kidney beans, pigeon peas and green grams.

Andrew said according to an export analysis report on pulse compiled by TPN, it shows that 87,178 metric tons of chickpeas were exported compared to 44,895 MT exported in 2018. Despite the restrictions, India took the lion's share of chickpea exports.

The TPN report said according to International Trade Centre (ITC) and Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) data, it indicates that the surge in chickpea exports is surprising because the three other types experienced a decline.

"Perhaps the main reason for this is that Tanzania specializes in production of Desi rather than Kabuli chickpeas. Turkey and other countries reported an overproduction of Kabuli chickpeas in 2019," the report stated.

Elaborating on kidney beans exports, Andrew said exports went against the overall trend with 1,202MT exported last year which was well below the previous year's 2,845MT, an equivalent of nearly 58 percent decline. Again India was the top destination for the country's kidney beans beating off Pakistan which was the main destination in 2018.

Explaining on green gram's performance, the TPN National Coordinator noted that according to the ITC and TRA data for last year, there was a steep decline in the commodity's exports from 44,895MT in 2018 to 18,362MT, a 60 percent slump. "The decline can be attributed to India's imposition of restrictions into its market since June 2018," Andrew added. Unlike kidney bean exports, which found other markets, green gram exports did not.

"If India maintains its restrictions, it is certain that green gram exports will decrease and production will consequently be discouraged among local farmers," he warned saying New Delhi remains the largest market for local pulses. Highlighting on pigeon peas, he said the country exported 83,649MT last year, representing a mere 3 percent decline from the 85,865MT exported in 2018.

Chinese electric car firm backed by Warren Buffett expands operations

BEIJING

BYD, the Chinese electric vehicle maker backed by Warren Buffett, will start offering a full suite of EV components to rivals and aspiring car makers to diversify its revenue sources amid sputtering demand for new vehicles.

Among the parts that the Shenzhen-based company makes and now sells are electric car batteries, powertrains and lights, founder Wang Chuanfu said in an online press conference on Sunday. BYD, China's biggest maker of vehicles powered by alternative energy for the past six years, will use the brand name FinDreams for the parts business.

Electric car sales have been slumping in China since July, when the country reduced purchase subsidies, and the decline has been exacerbated by the coronavirus outbreak. BYD, which is financially more stable than most local EV competitors, is betting the new business will help it return to growth more quickly even as the market contracts.

"BYD will open its technology and products to the whole world," Mr Wang said. "FinDreams units will help change the role participants in [the] Chinese auto industry play in



BYD's founder Wang Chuanfu.

the global new energy arena."

BYD, founded as a mobile phone battery maker, has been growing by expanding into new businesses over the past two decades. The company started car manufacturing in 2003 and rolled out its first vehicles powered by lithium-iron-phosphate batteries in 2006. It has since added electric buses, utility vehicles, energy storage equipment, monorails and insulated gate bipolar transistors to its offering.

To help fight the spread of the coronavirus, the company expanded into face masks and reached a daily production capacity

of 10 million units last week, according to Mr Wang. The versatility of its manufacturing operations has helped BYD become self-reliant on electric car parts. Until recently it focused on making components only for itself, but the company is now looking to take advantage of a potential recovery and future growth in the market.

The annual value of batteries used in electric cars, electric buses and related energy storage is set to balloon by about 10 times to a potential \$500 billion (Dh1.84bn) by 2050, according to research firm Sanford C Bern-

stein.

To demonstrate its competitiveness, BYD on Sunday unveiled test results of its so-called "blade battery", touting it as a cost-competitive, safer and more compact offering. Almost all carmakers are in talks with BYD over collaboration on the product, according to He Long, the head of BYD's car battery business.

Last year, BYD signed an agreement with Toyota Motor on EV battery supply and joint product development, with the companies setting up a jointly-owned venture this month. BYD also works with Daimler on making

Afreximbank inaugurates \$3bn facility to help African nations deal with virus fallout

CAPE TOWN

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) announced a US\$3 billion facility to help African countries deal with the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Afreximbank will use the Pandemic Trade Impact Mitigation Facility (PATIMFA) to disburse financing to its 51 member central banks and other financial institutions, it announced on Wednesday. These funds will also be used for emergency imports of key medical supplies and hospital equipment into these countries.

The facility - available through direct funding, lines of credit, guarantees, cross-currency swaps and other, similar instruments - will help financial institutions to meet trade debt payments that fall due and to avert trade payment defaults.

It will also be available to support and stabilise the foreign exchange resources of central banks of member countries, enabling them to support critical imports under emergency conditions, according to Afreximbank.

"The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it considerable suffering and major economic disruptions," Benedict Oramah, president of Afreximbank, said. "A rapid and impactful financial response is required to avert a major crisis in Africa," he said, adding that the continent is exposed on many fronts, including "significant declines in tourism earnings, migrant remittances, commodity prices and disruption of manufacturing supply chains."

The Afreximbank initiative follows the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's calls to support nations that are struggling to deal with the impact of the global pandemic. Covid-19 has infected more than 435,000 people worldwide and fatalities have crossed 19,000, according to Johns Hopkins University, which is tracking global data on the outbreak. More than 111,000 people have also recovered so far.

The IMF and World Bank have pledged \$50bn and \$14bn, respectively to help some of the poorest nations to deal with the virus breakout. They have also called on other multilateral banks to financially support the countries in need across the globe.

Africa has so far not been hit very hard with the virus outbreak but the number of confirmed cases has risen over the past few days. South Africa, which has more than 709 confirmed cases of Covid-19, is enforcing a 21-day lockdown in an effort to contain the virus spread.



Benedict Oramah, president of Afreximbank.

Zimbabwe again legalises use of foreign currencies ahead of COVID-19 lockdown

HARARE

ZIMBABWE legalised the use of foreign currencies in domestic transactions on Sunday, less than a year after abandoning dollarisation, as the country readies for a 21-day lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus, starting at midnight.

The southern African nation has recorded one death from its seven official cases of coronavirus, leading to charges by the opposition and government critics that authorities are under-stating figures. The government denies this.

The central bank on Thursday said it would allow Zimbabweans to use foreign currencies as part of measures to deal with the effects of the coronavirus epidemic. On Sunday, the government published new exchange control regulations making it legal for Zimbabweans to use electronic and cash foreign currencies when buying local goods.

"Any person may pay for goods and services chargeable in Zimbabwe dollars in foreign currency ... at the ruling rate on the date of payment," a government notice said. Economic analysts say the move will further weaken the Zimbabwe dollar, which has lost more than half its value since it was brought back last June, ending a decade of dollarisation that helped stabilise the economy. In the capital Harare, residents packed shops to buy the little they could to stock up for the three-week lockdown.

But in a country where unemployment is above 90% and most people survive by selling goods on the street, residents say they would have to choose between staying at home without anything to eat or risk their health fending for their families on the streets.

There is no shortage of toilet paper, says industry agency as production ramps up

JOHANNESBURG

THERE is no shortage of toilet paper, according to the Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa, who say they will continue working during the 21-day lockdown period which started on Friday.

The message followed a period of panic buying after the announcement of a national lockdown, with consumers attempting to buy various kinds of essentials in bulk. Toilet paper was a key item bought in large quantities.

In countries abroad, toilet paper shortages triggered by panic buying sparked a number of online memes. But PAMSA says South Africans need not panic. "Any perceived shortage of toilet paper in the shops is more a consumer behavioural issue than it is a production issue," the association said in a statement, warning that there is "no scarcity of toilet paper."

Government last week announced new regulations to prevent price gouging during the coronavirus pandemic, and toilet paper was among the goods that retailers are not allowed to sell by more than the increases in the cost to produce them.

"There is availability of product further up the supply chain. The challenge is getting it to the consumer amid tissue manufacturers also trying to limit Covid-19 exposure for their own workers," said Jane Molony, PAMSA executive director.

Tanzanian Gold reports doubling of resources in Buckreef Gold Project



Tanzanian Gold Corporation's Executive Chairman, James Sinclair.

By Smart Money Reporter

A new report by Tanzanian Gold Corporation's independent technical advisor, Virimai Projects has indicated that mineral resource for the Geita Buckreef Gold Project has increased 40.9 million tonnes graded at 173 grams per ton or an equivalent of 2,270,700 ounces.

In a recent statement, TGC's Executive Chairman, James Sinclair said the new results indicate that at the same cut-off grade, the last report indicated a measured plus indicated resource at a cut-off grade of 0.50 grams per ton amounting to 21.99 million tonnes grading at 1.54 g/t of gold that contained 1,085,465 ounces of gold.

"Although the doubling of the gold resources categorized in accordance with the requirements of 43-101 is most satisfying, the interim results we have released today are pointing us in the direction of further increases," stated Sinclair.

"We have already started the Phase III deep drilling campaign that the company expects could move the exploration targets into the NI 43-101 categories," he added while pointing out that the estimated mineral resource

in the measured plus indicated categories for the Buckreef Shear Zone incorporates the results from the 2019 drilling campaign which was the largest in the company's history.

It should be noted that the potential quantity and grade of these exploration targets is conceptual in nature, that there has been insufficient exploration to define a mineral resource and that it is uncertain if further exploration will result in the target being delineated as a mineral resource, the statement added.

Sinclair's statement further noted that the exploration targets include five isolated drill holes and assume projections of mineralized structures to deep levels as well as an extension of the Northeast Zone.

The exploration targets assume that the extension of the Northeast Zone along strike will be confirmed by additional drilling. The Phase III drilling program is currently underway to further test the continuity of these mineralized structures.

Current information from drill holes show high grade intersections including drill-hole BMRC298 with an intercept average 2.45g/t from 650 to 681m down the hole and drill-hole BMRC309 with an intercept average 3.4g/t from 617 to 630m down the hole as reported in February.

"This technical report will provide greater details in respect of the company's disclosure herein, and investors are encouraged to review the report, when available under the company's profile," the

statement noted.

The sample chain of custody is managed by the Buckreef technical team under the supervision of Anthony Minde. Gold analyses reported in this release were performed by standard fire assay using a 50-gram charge with atomic absorption finish and a gravimetric finish for assays greater than 10 grams per tonne.

Tonnage range, grade range and ounces range were performed by Nesch Mintech Laboratory in Mwanza. Sampling and analytical procedures are subject to a comprehensive quality assurance and quality control program, the statement stated.

"The QA/QC program includes duplication to the samples, blanks and analytical standards. Intervals of core to be analyzed are split in half with a mechanized core cutter, with one half sent to the laboratory for geochemical analysis and the remaining half kept in storage for future reference and uses. The laboratory is ISO 9001 and 17025 accredited and employs a laboratory information management system for sample tracking, quality control and reporting," the TGC Executive Chairman stressed.

The company's qualified person, Peter Zizhou who has a Master of Science (Exploration Geology) degree from the University of Zimbabwe (2000) and is a registered professional natural scientist, approved the report. The Buckreef Gold Project is a joint venture between State Mining Corporation and TGC.

Retail landlords in SA face rental troubles over Covid-19 lockdown

JOHANNESBURG

THE Covid-19 lockdown is forcing more retailers into a position where they may not be able to pay their property rentals, which is set to add to the pressures being experienced by retail landlords and South Africa's struggling listed property sector.

Edcon announced last week that it can only pay workers' salaries due to the impact of Covid-19 on sales, and now peer clothing giant The Foschini Group (TFG) plans to stop rental payments as a result of the lockdown.

News agency Bloomberg reported at the weekend that TFG, which has had to close all of its stores in South Africa as part of the 21-day lockdown, has sent a letter to its landlords about the stop in rental payments. Moneyweb understands that other retailers, big and small, are also contemplating putting a stop to rental payments as business has ground to a halt.

Only essential services such as grocery stores, medical facilities, pharmacies, fuel stations and banks are allowed to operate during the lockdown, which is aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Non-essential retailers hard-hit

Clothing groups, DIY stores and general merchandise retailers such as Edcon, TFG, Mr Price, Pepkor (including JD Group), Truworths, and Massmart chains such as Builders Warehouse are set to be hard-hit during this period, with Easter holiday trade being affected.

Edcon alone has some 750 Edgars and Jet stores countrywide, covering around a million square metres in retail space. Better-performing TFG, which has around 29 retail brands including Foschini, American Swiss and Sportsene, has more than 2,500 stores in South Africa covering around 750,000 square metres of retail space. Covid-19 presents an "unprecedented challenge" to Edcon's "already constrained cash flow" the group's CEO Grant Pattison said in a statement.

Following President Cyril Ramaphosa's first announcement around Covid-19 and the country's state of disaster measures on March 15, the group said that its turnover had declined 45% in comparison to the same period last year. This resulted its sales for March being R400 million below forecast, while during the 21-day lockdown the group is projecting lost turnover of around R800 million.

Salaries more important

Speaking to Moneyweb, Pattison reiterated that this meant that the group only had enough liquidity to pay salaries, which it sees as a priority amid Covid-19 uncertainty.

"Edcon is unable to honour any other accounts payable during this period and that includes rentals to landlords. We are not alone, and many other businesses are also being badly affected especially under the lockdown," he said.

Pattison added that the group will be working closely with government and other stakeholders to better understand what sort of assistance will be offered to business to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown.

Questioned by Moneyweb about re-

tailers deciding not to pay rent, Neil Gopal, CEO of commercial property advocacy body the South African Property Owners Association (Sapoa), warned that non-payment of rentals could cause the collapse of malls and severely impact retail property firms.

'Unlawful'

"We have seen correspondence from national retailers, stating that they will not be paying any rent (and even other lease charges) during the lockdown period. In our view, this position is completely incorrect, and unlawful," he says.

"Every class of tenant [is] approaching landlords for rental remission, rental holidays and now also refusing to pay rental ... "In our view, a total rent remission will probably not be applicable, as the tenant will still be using the premises during this time, and their business assets will still be situated in the premises," he adds.

Gopal says while Sapoa is sensitive to the issues retailers may face, it is important to note that landlords face the same pressures. "Landlords are encumbered with debt, still have to pay rates and taxes, and have operational expenses regardless of whether the mall is operating or not." He points out that Ramaphosa and various government departments have also announced various measures to alleviate the economic effects of the lockdown on businesses.

What about insurance?

"Tenants and other businesses should be encouraged to make use of the measures, and to do so in a responsible measure.

Also, most lease agreements require tenants to obtain, and keep in place, their own insurance for their businesses, which normally includes business interruption insurance. "Tenants ought to be encouraged to claim against their insurance first," he adds.

As a measure to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the retail property industry, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) on March 24 gazetted the Covid-19 Block Exemption for the Retail Property Sector in line with the Disaster Management Act.

This effectively loosens rules around certain aspects of the Competition Act to allow retail landlords to work together in responding to Covid-19 issues faced by the sector.

According to the DTIC, which will be the main driver of the block exemption scheme, the new rules will apply only to agreements or "concerted practices" in respect of: Payment holidays and/or rental discounts for tenants; Limitations on the eviction of tenants; and The suspension or adjustment to lease agreement clauses that restrict the designated retail tenants from undertaking reasonable measures required to protect viability during the national disaster.

"To qualify for exemption, such agreements must extend to all South African retail tenants in the designated retail lines, including small and independent retailers. The designated retail tenants covered by this block exemption are identifiable by the designated trading lines, namely: clothing, footwear and home textile retailers; personal care services such as hairdressers, health and beauty salons; and restaurants," the DTI notes.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

India's unprecedented virus lockdown will have consequence for already struggling economy

MUMBAI

PRASHANT Gupta owns a grocery shop in Mumbai, one of the few stores that are allowed to stay open during a three-week nationwide lockdown in India as it tries to stem the spread of the deadly coronavirus. But Mr Gupta fears he cannot continue to operate for much longer in the absence of supplies.

"I may have to close by Monday," he says, pulling down the tea towel which he uses as makeshift mask to cover his mouth and nose. "I'm not getting any deliveries from my suppliers." Even if he manages to get hold of some supplies such as pulses, he may not be able to buy them for his customers as "the prices have shot up," he adds.

Many of his normally fully-stocked shelves are empty, as people panic bought, with the lockdown coming into effect just hours after it was announced. The country's prime minister Narendra Modi assured the nation that access to essential supplies would not stop, but many do not want to take the risk of being without food and medicines.

Pharmacies, along with stores such as Mr Gupta's, are among those that are permitted to remain open. Offices across Mumbai, India's

bustling, fast-paced financial capital, have closed, forcing employees to work from home - only permitted to step out to buy essential supplies.

Roads that are normally heaving with traffic are almost empty. Daily labourers - largely migrants - are left without work. Some stranded in the city have resorted to walking hundreds of kilometres to try and get back to their families in villages as trains, considered the lifeline of Mumbai, and the country, have been suspended.

Mumbai, the country's financial capital, is not alone in this predicament. Economic activity in the rest of Asia's third-largest economy has also come to a halt as more than 1.3 billion people face an unprecedented lockdown.

With the outbreak hammering international trade and pushing the global economy into recession this year, Moody's Investors Services on Friday cut in half its growth forecast for India for this year. Moody's now expect Indian economy to expand 2.5 per cent, down from an earlier estimate of 5.3 per cent.

The pandemic has come at an extremely challenging time for India. Even before the outbreak, the country's GDP growth had slowed to a seven-year low of 4.7 per cent in the quarter to the end of December.



Indian paramilitary soldiers walk near a closed market during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown in Srinagar as a preventive measure against the Covid-19 in Srinagar.

"Our initial estimates suggest that about 75 per cent of the economy is shut down [during the three-week lockdown], resulting in a direct output loss of 4.5 per cent," says Sonal Varma, managing director and chief economist at Japanese investment bank Nomura.

"Additionally, there will be indirect effects

... a high risk that the livelihoods of the predominantly unorganised workforce will be hit and a sharp increase in corporate and banking sector stress, which are likely to further weigh on growth."

The biggest worry for economists is the impact of the lockdown on smaller businesses.

Traders, retailers and small industries and shop owners in India, who account for the bulk of economic activity in India, will have no income at least for three weeks, a substantial dent to their finances.

"Clearly, for the first time in living memory, many industries and small businesses will be running on zero revenues for close to a month," says Sunil Tirumala, the head of research and equity strategy at Emkay Global Financial Services, based in Mumbai. "Even the opening-up after the lockdown is likely to be measured, lest a 'second wave' hits."

Small businesses in particular have been hit in recent years by the impact of demonetisation, when the Indian government banned the two highest value bank notes overnight in 2016, followed by the introduction of a new goods and services tax the following year. But some experts say that the coronavirus impact is an even greater test and many businesses will not be able to survive.

"The share of the unorganised sector [in India's economy] is high, and this segment was still emerging from the back-to-back shocks of demonetisation and GST [goods and services tax]," says Mr Tirumala. "The shutdown could push them to the brink."

WORLD

With PM Johnson ill, coronavirus strikes at heart of British politics

LONDON

HOURS after Prime Minister Boris Johnson revealed on Friday he had the coronavirus, his health minister said he did too, and England's chief medical officer announced he also had symptoms.

It isn't a huge surprise.

There can be no way to know if they infected each other or caught the illness from another person, or different people. But the three men had met a handful of times in person over the previous 10 days, according to Johnson's official diary, to formulate Britain's response to the outbreak.

On Tuesday of last week, when most ministers video-conferenced into a cabinet meeting, Health Secretary Matt Hancock and chief medical officer Chris Whitty sat in the room with Johnson.

Whitty had also stood alongside the prime minister at three of the 11 news conferences on the coronavirus since March 16.

Now the question on the lips of many at Downing Street and beyond is: how many other people did the UK prime minister come into contact with before testing positive?

Asked about whether those who became ill believed they had done so from meeting Johnson, a government source noted that scientists say it takes around five days from transmission to developing symptoms so people who became ill at the same time "almost certainly" did not give it to one another.

Johnson is the first world leader to announce he is sick with COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus. But other administrations have faced similar questions.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and U.S. President Donald Trump say they have tested negative for coronavirus, while Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau went into self-isolation earlier this month after his wife tested positive.

Michel Barnier, the European Union's chief Brexit negotiator, has tested positive, as have several members of the U.S. Congress.

For politicians, who can meet hundreds of people every day, the coronavirus crisis requires a balance between being seen to lead their people while also keeping a safe distance.

Johnson's spokesman, asked repeatedly about the prime minister's contacts with other people, told reporters on Friday the prime minister had not been in close proximity with anyone "from the moment he had symptoms".

According to Johnson's statement, that would mean Thursday of last week. And according to his public agenda, Johnson had scaled back in-person meetings, in accordance with the UK's wider lockdown rules, from Monday March 23.

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Yet scientists say the virus' incubation period is estimated at between one and 14 days, and there have been anecdotal accounts of people spreading the disease without having symptoms.

And despite the scaling back, Johnson still met Whitty in person or via videolink at least eight times in the last two weeks and Hancock around nine, according to his diary, to plot Britain's response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Meetings were also held with other staff, according to two sources close to



Prime Minister Boris Johnson

the prime minister. One Downing Street source said that 75 of the 200 staff who usually work at Number 10 – an approximately 100-room town house – are still working there in separate rather than overlapping shifts to reduce the risk of infection.

Johnson also had regular in-person news conferences with journalists at Downing Street until March 24, when he switched to ones where the journalists attended by video link. Some journalists who attended the in-person conferences have said via social media or have told colleagues that they are now self-isolating.

"Here in Number 10 we have been observing the advice ... we have wherever possible been using video conferencing, you'll have seen the prime minister ensuring he is a safe distance from colleagues when he is taking part in press conferences," Johnson's spokesman said on Friday.

The prime minister also ventured beyond Downing Street last week. On Wednesday, a day before his positive test, Johnson answered questions at a weekly session in parliament's House of Commons chamber.

In the live video, Johnson is seen speaking with several lawmakers. Minister for Scotland Alister Jack, who sat next to Johnson before the session, said on Saturday he had developed a temperature and a cough and was now working from home in isolation.

Asked whether Jack believed suggestions he may have become ill in parliament that day, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland declined to comment, saying it had nothing to add to Saturday's statement.

DISTANCING

At first, Britain's response to the spread of the virus was not as stringent as in other countries.

It was only at the beginning of the week from March 16 that the UK position began changing – and Johnson's rhythm too.

In addition to more video-conferences, audiences with Queen Elizabeth – usually held weekly – have been held by telephone for the last two weeks, according to Johnson's spokesman.

Schools across the UK were closed from March 20, and the prime minister announced three days later that all shops – except for the most essential ones – would be closed.

On Friday, just five hours after Johnson said he had tested positive for coronavirus, Whitty wrote on Twitter that "after experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19 last night ... I will be self-isolating at home for the next seven days". He said he would continue to advise the government.

The same day, Hancock said he had also tested positive and was self-isolating at home with mild symptoms. He has since been active on Twitter, but has not commented on his condition.

The health ministry said on Sunday it could offer no update on the conditions of Hancock or Whitty.

Apart from Hancock and Whitty, the other person who has spent the most time working on the British government's response is the government's chief scientific adviser, Patrick Vallance.

Whitty, Johnson and Vallance were seen so often at news conferences together in the second and third weeks of March that they were called the "three amigos" in reference to a 1986 comedy with Steve Martin.

After Johnson made his announcement, Vallance tweeted that he had no symptoms. Vallance could not be reached for comment.

Agencies

Nigerian president orders lockdown of Abuja, Lagos over COVID-19 spread

ABUJA

NIGERIAN President Muhammadu Buhari has ordered the halting of all movements and activities in the capital Abuja and commercial hub Lagos over the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

The lockdown for an initial period of two weeks, which takes effect from yesterday, will also affect the southwestern state of Ogun, the nation's industrial hub, and neighboring state to Lagos, the president said in his latest broadcast to Nigerians over the coronavirus pandemic.

Ogun State was included in the restriction list due to its close proxim-

ity to Lagos and the high traffic between the two states, the president explained.

"All citizens in these areas are to stay in their homes. Travel to or from other states should be postponed. All businesses and offices within these locations should be fully closed during this period," he further declared.

Buhari said the period will be used to contain, identify, trace and isolate all individuals that have come into contact with confirmed cases, as well as ensure the treatment of confirmed cases while restricting further spread to other states.



"This order does not apply to hospitals and all related medical establishments as well as organizations in healthcare-related manufacturing and distribution," he said.

Commercial establishments, such as food processing, distribution, retail companies, petroleum distribution, retail entities, power generation, transmission and dis-

tribution companies, and private security companies are also exempted.

"Although these establishments are exempted, access will be restricted and monitored," Buhari said, adding that "workers in telecommunication companies, broadcasters, print and electronic media staff who can prove they are unable to work from home are also exempted."

However, the president said all seaports in Lagos shall remain operational in accordance with the guidelines he earlier issued. Vehicles and drivers conveying essential cargoes from these ports to

other parts of the country will be screened thoroughly before departure by the ports health authority.

"Movements of all passenger aircraft, both commercial and private jets, are hereby suspended. Special permits will be issued on a needs basis. We are fully aware that such measures will cause much hardship and inconvenience to many citizens," he said.

Over 100 cases of the novel coronavirus have been recorded across 12 states in Nigeria so far, with the country's center for disease control reporting a total of 111 confirmed cases.

Xinhua

Heroic city, heroic people

THE people of Wuhan have demonstrated the strength and spirit of China with their concrete actions, winning applause from the whole party and people from all ethnic groups across the country, said Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee.

Xi (pictured) made the remarks during an inspection tour to the city at the center of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

On behalf of the Party and the people, Xi extended gratefulness to the people in Wuhan, requiring Party organizations at all levels, members and officials to remain true to their original aspiration, keep the mission firmly in mind, shoulder responsibilities and stand the test.

He urged them to implement the CPC Central Committee's decisions with a stricter working style and more concrete measures, calling for firm, solid and meticulous prevention and control efforts to defend Hubei and Wuhan.

During the inspection tour, Xi visited medics, military personnel, community residents and workers, police officers, officials and volunteers who have been fighting the novel coronavirus.

The CPC Central Committee with comrade Xi Jinping as the core has always put people's lives and health in the first place, and spared no efforts to support epidemic prevention and control in Hubei.

It has adopted the most comprehensive, strict and thorough measures to curb the spread of the virus, in an attempt to reduce infections and save lives as many as possible.

To contain the spread of the virus by locking down the city with over 10 million people is an arduous task, and also a very difficult decision to make.

Bearing in mind the general interests of the country and fearing no risk with strong resilience, the people in Wuhan have made huge contribution to the battle against the epidemic by compliance and devotion.

They demonstrated their strength and noble characters to both the country and the world. The table could not have been turned without their sacrifice, devotion, perseverance and efforts.

Wuhan is a heroic city, and its people are heroic people who have never been crushed by any difficulty or challenge in history.

They will be remembered in history for the final victory against the disease. Their concerted efforts in the valiant fight demonstrate the Chinese people's love for their family and nation, which enables them to stick together through thick and thin, as well as their spirit of self-sacrifice, sense of responsibility, selflessness and devotion.

These virtues manifest the spirit of the Chinese nation, and support the country to fight the epidemic and prevail over it.

Wuhan and other cities in Hubei province are key to winning the battle against the epidemic, and the whole Party, armed forces and people of all ethnic groups in China are standing together with the people there.

The CPC Central Committee has sent a steering group to Wuhan to guide epidemic control. The People's Liberation Army, Party and state departments, as well as provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have also offered huge assistance at the first opportunity in this all-out and people's war against the epidemic.

In Hubei, Party organizations at all levels, Party members and officials rushed to the front line; medical workers in the province and those assisting them from across the country went in harm's way and became "warriors in white"; military personnel answered the call rapidly and fought bravely against the disease; community workers, police officers, grassroots cadres, officials, and volunteers feared no difficulty and stayed on the frontline; plain citizens actively rose to the occasion and contributed to the battle in their own way.

Numerous touching stories have been told, demonstrating the Chinese power that enables the people to get over difficulties with concerted efforts.

Wuhan's victory would lead to the victory of Hubei and the whole country. Thanks to all the arduous efforts, Hubei and Wuhan have gained a sound momentum in epidemic control and achieved early results.

However, it's still not a time for break as the tasks still remain tough. As long as the whole country continues to stay sober-minded and keeps fighting on, it will definitely safeguard Wuhan and Hubei, as well as secure the final victory over the disease.

People's Daily



Britain names MI5 chief: The spy who investigated Novichok attack

LONDON

BRITAIN yesterday named Ken McCallum, a career spy who led the response to the attempted murder of Russian former double agent Sergei Skripal, as the new head of its MI5 domestic intelligence agency.

McCallum, who has worked in MI5 for 25 years, rose through the ranks working across the agency's main fronts from Northern Ireland to countering Islamist militants and ensuring the safety of the 2012 London Olympics.

Then, after former Russian double agent Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found poisoned with a Soviet-developed nerve agent known as "Novichok" in 2018, McCallum led the agency's response to the attempted murder, MI5 said.

"Our people - with our partners - strive to keep the country safe, and they always want to go the extra mile," McCallum said in a statement.

"Having devoted my working life to that team effort, it is a huge privilege now to be asked to lead it," he added.

Britain blamed Russia for the attack in which a British citizen died. Russia denied any role, though Western powers expelled dozens of Russian spies working under diplomatic cover.

Skripal, a former officer in Russian military intelligence (GRU), betrayed dozens of Russian agents to British intelligence.

Andrew Parker, who retires at the end of April, has led MI5 since 2013. He stayed on longer than is usual to ensure a stable transition during Britain's exit from the European Union which took place on Jan 31.



SPIES IN SPOTLIGHT

During Parker's watch, MI5 had to contend with a spate of deadly militant attacks in the United Kingdom

including the 2017 Manchester suicide bombing which killed 22 people, and attacks on Westminster and London Bridge the same year.

The Manchester suicide bomber,

Salman Abedi, was known to the authorities but not under active investigation when he blew himself up in the foyer of the Manchester Arena after an Ariana Grande concert. A later inquiry said both MI5 and counter-terrorism police had missed chances to prevent the attack.

MI5, established in 1909 to counter German espionage ahead of World War One, is tasked with protecting British national security. Its main job is currently countering international terrorism though it is also a counter-intelligence agency.

It employs about 4,000 people.

MI5 said one of McCallum's top priorities was enabling the agency to seize the fast-moving opportunities provided by technology, including machine learning.

"Ken McCallum's expertise and lead-

ership will be crucial to ensuring that the Security Service remains agile and creative in the face of new and emerging threats to our security," said Mark Sedwill, the Cabinet Secretary.

He helped deepen MI5's partnerships with the MI6 foreign spy service and the GCHQ eavesdropping agency and has worked on secondment with the business ministry on digital issues as well as a non-executive director of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

In 2017, he was appointed deputy director general of MI5 with responsibility for all of MI5's operational and investigative work.

McCallum grew up in Glasgow and has a degree in Mathematics from Glasgow University. He enjoys mountain hiking.

Agencies



Employees work in the Japanese-invested Suzhou JDI Electronics Inc. in Suzhou New District, east China's Jiangsu province. Photo by People's Daily

Third CIE introduces 'cloud signing', ready to embrace another success

THE previous two sessions of the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in 2018 and 2019 both ended up as top-tier events for the business world. And this year, the trade fair is also expected to make a splash.

The registration of the third CIIE is currently in full swing, and the event has introduced "cloud signing" to address the growing need of the exhibitors amid the ongoing novel coronavirus epidemic. Multiple world-renowned enterprises have confirmed participation, and are now working on relevant plans.

So far, more than 1,000 exhibitors worldwide have signed up for the third CIIE, with more than half of the exhibition space designated - a process faster than the event's two predecessors.

Global enterprises stay upbeat about the trend for China's mid- and long-term economic growth, and are actively making deployment in the country for more opportunities, despite the near-term impacts from the epidemic on China's economic operation.

A needle for insulin injection named "Nanopass Jr." received wide attention at the second CIIE last year for its 0.18-millimeter outer diameter. The product produced by Japan's Terumo Group was hailed as the tiniest futuristic tech displayed at the event. At present, the Japanese company is in full preparation for the exhibition this year.

Shibazaki Takanori, Senior Executive Officer of Terumo (China) Holdings Co., Ltd. said the company appreciates the CIIE for offering them an opportunity to bring their products to China, and this year, Terumo's remarkable technologies will be once again presented to the Chinese consumers with the utmost sincerity.

Shibazaki told People's Daily that China demonstrated admirable execution in the fight against the novel coronavirus, and his company has donated 8.43 million yuan of medical equipment to the country.

Though the epidemic poses challenges for the business exhibition sector of the event, it is also in some sense bringing opportunities, said Zhou Lingyan, deputy general manager of the CIIE department of the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai).

Enterprises in the health sector are grabbing the chance to expand their

market in China, and many in the tech equipment, automobile, consumer goods, food & farm produce and clothing industries are also trying to offset the impacts from the epidemic and further their business by participating in the grand event.

President and CEO of L'Oreal China Fabrice Megarbane said he was impressed by the resolution, efficiency and decisiveness showcased by the Chinese government, the unity and courage of the Chinese people, and the dedication and collaboration of the medical staff and military.

The policies rolled out by relevant Chinese departments to relieve enterprises' burdens and ensure their operation beefed up the confidence of L'Oreal to invest in China, Megarbane noted.

China is a vast country with 1.4 billion people and the world's second largest economy that yielded nearly 100 trillion yuan of GDP last year. The country, home to the world's largest group of middle-income earners, is also the world's largest manufacturer and trader of goods. Its utilization of foreign capital and the volume of outbound investment rank among the largest in the world. The vast sea of Chinese economy is creating ceaseless opportunities for global enterprises.

China's consumption demand is continuously upgrading as the country's economy grows rapidly, which makes the Chinese market both a stimulator and destination for innovation of global enterprises, said Rene Co, vice president of Communications at P&G Greater China, adding the company will stay optimistic, as it always has, about the long-term development of the Chinese economy and market opportunities.

The company believes that the epidemic will soon come to an end under the guidance of the government, and the market will once again be activated, he said.

Managing Director and Head of Eurazeo China Eddie Chen said that the Chinese market is extremely tempting for foreign investment, and its economic resilience shall not be underestimated. He told People's Daily that the third CIIE will once again offer the world a window on China, and Eurazeo is currently selecting quality companies from Europe to enter the Chinese market.

People's Daily

China urges US to stop interfering in Venezuela's affairs

BEIJING

CHINA urged the United States to abide by the UN Charter and basic norms governing international relations and stop interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said here yesterday.

Hua (pictured) made the remarks when responding to media reports that the US Department of Justice on March 26 indicted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his aides on narco-terrorism charges, and that the US State Department offered a reward of up to 15 million US



dollars for information leading to the

arrest or conviction of Maduro.

Stressing that Venezuela is a sovereign and independent country, Hua said China had always opposed any external force infringing on Venezuela's sovereignty and interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs under any pretext, and firmly opposed illegal unilateral sanctions.

China calls on all parties to give priority to the well-being of the Venezuelan people, meet each other halfway, and do more to safeguard the stability in Venezuela and the region and promote the peaceful settlement of the Venezuelan issue, she added.

Xinhua



UK's Prince Charles out of self-isolation after contracting coronavirus

LONDON

BRITAIN'S Prince Charles is now out of self-isolation following his diagnosis of COVID-19, the Clarence House said yesterday.

"Having consulted with his doctor, the Prince of Wales is now out of self-isolation," said a spokesman of Clarence House, the official residence of Charles and his wife Duchess of Cornwall Camilla.

The 71-year-old Prince of Wales "is in good health" and now following the current standard government and medical restrictions that apply nationwide, said the spokesman.

The prince was in isolation for a total of seven days after announcing last week that he tested positive for the novel coronavirus and displayed mild symptoms. Camilla, 72, has tested negative but remains in isolation. The couple are staying at their home in Balmoral, Scotland.

According to government guidelines, anyone with coronavirus symptoms should self-isolate for seven days, while everyone living in their household should self-isolate for two weeks.

Buckingham Palace previously said the Queen Elizabeth II last saw Charles on March 12, and was "in good health".

A total of 19,522 COVID-19 cases had been confirmed in Britain as of Sunday morning, according to the Department of Health and Social Care.

Xinhua

Israeli researchers develop chemotherapy treatment without side effects

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI researchers have developed a chemotherapy drug to treat cancer that do not cause serious side effects, the Weizmann Institute of Science (WIS) in central Israel reported on Sunday.

In a study, published in the journal Toxicology and Applied Pharmacology, the WIS scientists developed a drug that acts like an invisible ink.

These are "sleepers" molecules that circulate undetected in the bloodstream until a natural chemical process in the body activates them.

Such covert drugs might remain viable in the bloodstream for longer than usual, and they could maintain a measured level of activity that would minimize side effects, while keep levels high enough to be effective in treating the disease.

Agencies

The US weighs the grim math of death vs the economy

SAN FRANCISCO/WASHINGTON

HOLLSTADT Consulting CEO Molly Jungbauer has had to let go 30 of the 150 employees at her St. Paul, Minnesota firm to weather the drop in revenue from travel industry clients because of the coronavirus.

She's worried about her daughter, who lives in New York and has the disease. But she also worries that shutting the economy with open-ended stay-at-home orders could have an "irreversible" impact.

So she was relieved to hear Minnesota Governor Tim Walz's plan last week: clamp down on commerce and social activity now but then reopen the state for business by May 4. "It is nice to know that we have somewhat of an end date," she said.

Coronavirus shut-downs could lop 25% or more from U.S. output, some economists forecast, throwing tens of millions of Americans out of work. The U.S. government and the Fed are mounting what could be a \$6 trillion economic rescue.

And elected U.S. politicians entrusted with public welfare are making calculations centered around the question: How many possibly preventable deaths are acceptable, as weighed against millions of jobs lost and trillions of dollars of economic output foregone?

Declaring the cure can't be worse than the disease, President Donald Trump has said that by April 12, he wanted churches all over the country to be "packed" with Easter celebrants. On Sunday, Trump backed away from that goal by extending social distancing guidelines to April 30.

More testing is critical, Trump advisor Stephen Moore told Reuters.

"Once you have testing you can open up the economy," he said. South Korea has tested a much bigger portion of its citizens than the United States has, allowing it to reduce infections and without stopping its economy. The U.S. has ramped up its capacity in recent weeks, though some states are making bigger inroads than others.

Also key, Moore said, is understanding if new cases are rising as fast in the Midwest as on the coasts, and if more people can, like the hundreds of thousands of workers at FedEx still on the job, practice social distancing and still work.

"You kind of have to look at the businesses that are running," Moore said.

BUCKLE UP, MINNESOTA

U.S. state and local officials are doing their own calculus.

"We will not put a dollar figure on human lives," New York Governor



People gather at the entrance for the New York State Department of Labor offices, which closed to the public due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, U.S., March 20, 2020. REUTERS

Andrew Cuomo said. Almost half of the 130,000 U.S. cases to date have appeared in New York, where some hospitals are overwhelmed with critically-ill patients. Other governors in states with fewer cases are forging ahead with plans to try to limit both deaths and economic damage.

On Wednesday, Walz - who is self-quarantining after possible exposure - told Minnesotans that models project an eventual 2.4 million infections statewide. If allowed to spread unchecked now, he said, as many as 74,000 Minnesotans could die because too few hospital beds and ventilators means patients won't get the medical care they need.

Economically, he said, the state can't afford to stay shut for a year or more until a vaccine is developed, an approach an influential Imperial College study here recommends.

So Walz is imposing a strict "stay-at-home" order for two weeks and a more relaxed version for a few weeks after that, to give hospitals the time to prepare. Epidemiologists refer to this as "flattening the curve."

"I don't believe it's prudent to try to shelter in place until a vaccine is there," Walz said. "I'm asking you to buckle it up for a few more weeks here." Even that will be painful: state officials estimate 28% of Minnesotans will be temporarily jobless for the next two weeks, with about 40% of those without any form of paid leave.

Once businesses and schools reopen, Walz hopes to use testing and targeted quarantines to keep new cases in check. But he acknowledged there will be more deaths. "It's agonizing and I find it nearly unacceptable," he said. "My job is to reduce it down."

Coronavirus is about ten times deadlier than the flu, killing one of

every hundred that get it, according to Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert. Given Walz's estimate of 2.4 million Minnesota residents infected, that means 24,000 dead.

So far there have been 503 cases and nine deaths in the state.

FALSE TRADEOFF

For a growing chorus of economists, the notion of weighing deaths against the economy is fundamentally flawed.

"One can do those types of quite gruesome calculations" said MIT economist Emil Verner. But evidence suggests "that in some sense, that's a false tradeoff," he said.

Verner last week co-authored a paper about the response to the 1918 flu epidemic and found that cities that restricted public gatherings sooner and longer had fewer deaths - and ultimately emerged from the pandemic with stronger economic growth.

"Saving lives and saving the economy are not in conflict right now," former Fed Chair Janet Yellen and more than 30 other current and former policymakers and economists wrote in a joint statement published earlier this week.

Paul Winfree, director of economic policy studies at the conservative Heritage Foundation, agrees that easing restrictions too early could be damaging. But, he said, allowing the downturn to deepen into a depression would ultimately negatively impact health.

"The White House is starting to weigh the long and short term health consequences of coronavirus and mitigation... (and) they are hearing from the business community that there needs to be some level of certainty," he said.

Inner Mongolia launches tree-planting campaign to tame desertification

AS temperature rises, more and more places are joining China's afforestation efforts.

This year, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is tasked with planting 12.97 million mu, or 864,700 hectares of forests and one million hectares of grass, according to a recent teleconference on forestry and grassland work in the region.

Wang Tianli is the deputy director of the agricultural and animal husbandry bureau of Qingshan district, Baotou in the autonomous region, who has been contacting landscaping companies and helping them restart work as coronavirus cas-

es plummet these days.

Wang was previously assigned to assist local epidemic prevention and control, and returned to his own work on Feb. 21, since when he has been kept busy as the district plans to carry out ecological restoration for 400 hectares of land this year on the southern slope of the Qingshan Mountains.

According to him, the bureau is also planning to tend 6.65 million saplings and 4,507 hectares of forests it had planted.

Inner Mongolia occupies an important position in China's ecological system, thus facing arduous tasks of ecological construction. Last year, the auto-



Desertification control staff clear sand off the tracks on the Linhai-Ceke railway in Alashan League, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Jan. 15, 2020. Tang Zhe/People's Daily

nomous region planted 908,700 hectares of forests and 2.14 million hectares of grass, which went beyond its annual targets.

This year, Inner Mongolia will carry out a survey on the current status of grassland ecology, and piloting the national programs of ecological restoration of degraded grasslands and policy-based grassland insurance.

It will also take efforts to make the countryside greener and more beautiful, plant trees, flowers and grass on suitable land, and create more farmland shelter forests in rural areas.

By doing so, the region aims to afforest 66,700 hectares of land, cover over 30 percent of its vil-

lages with vegetation, and construct 1,000 green and beautiful demonstration villages, as well as more than 300 national forest villages.

Thanks to China's constant afforestation efforts, the country's forest area and forest stock have both registered growth for more than 30 consecutive years, making it the fastest-growing country in terms of forest resources.

In 2019, a total of 7.07 million hectares of forests were newly created; 7.6 million hectares of forests were taken care of; and 670,000 hectares of stock forests were planted.

This year, the country plans to plant another 6.73 million

hectares of forests and create 8 million hectares of forest tending area.

China has entered the best season of land greening. To coordinate virus control and work related to forest and grassland, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration recently issued a notice, requiring subordinate departments to strengthen scientific guidance, information services and communication, organize sapling growing companies to resume work and production and guarantee sufficient supply of saplings, and promote national afforestation work in an orderly manner.

People's Daily



Alicia Keys

Eilish, Carey, more sing from home to raise funds for virus

NEW YORK

BILLIE Eilish, Mariah Carey, Alicia Keys and Dave Grohl opened their doors – literally – as the musicians performed from their homes for an hour-long benefit concert to raise money for those affected by the coronavirus crisis.

Keys kicked off the Sunday's event – which also honored health professionals and first responders – singing her song "Underdog" from a piano in her home. She thanked those "risking their lives to keep us safe." Carey, one of the last performers, sang "Always Be My Baby" from her home studio in New York, then told the audience she was going to put on gloves.

Elton John sang and also hosted the special that aired on Fox and iHeartMedia radio stations; he said he hoped "this entertainment will feed and fuel your soul."

The homebound setting wasn't a stretch for the home-schooled Eilish, who typically performs live alongside her brother-producer Finneas, who is either on guitar or piano. On Sunday, he strummed along as Eilish sang her No. 1 hit "Bad Guy" from their couch.

The concert special came on the one-year anniversary of Eilish's Grammy-winning debut album "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" – which Finneas and Eilish produced and recorded from their home in Los Angeles.

Eilish told viewers she was happy she and her brother could provide "some sort of comfort during the crazy, crazy time."

The artists were filmed with cell phones, cameras and audio equipment in their homes. The event took place during the time slot that was to belong to the iHeartRadio Music Awards, which became part of a wave of public-event postponements and cancellations because of the pandemic.

Other performers included Tim McGraw, H.E.R. and Sam Smith, who sang "How Do You Sleep" in a cappella form. Dave Grohl sang "My Hero" from his studio in Hawaii. Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong strummed his guitar to "Boulevard of Broken

Dreams," while Camila Cabello sang "My Oh My" from Miami with a guitar assist from beau Shawn Mendes.

The five members of the Backstreet Boys performed from separate locations to sing their classic hit, "I Want It That Way." And Demi Lovato sang her emotional song "Skyscraper" while playing piano.

Lady Gaga, Lizzo, Melissa McCarthy, Ryan Seacrest, Ken Jeong and others made special appearances, thanking first responders and telling viewers to practice safe habits like hand-washing and staying home.

"I see a lot of inspiring stories of kindness around the world that are helping to calm everyone's nerves during this scary time. My heart goes out to people who have lost loved ones and also to people that are losing their jobs," said Gaga, who postponed the April 10 release of her album "Chromatica," saying it's not the right time amid a global fight with the coronavirus. "I just wanted to check in and make sure that you're finding the time to be kind to yourself and doing whatever you can to maintain your mental health."

Like Gaga, other artists have changed release dates on projects because of the virus, and artists have had to cancel or postpone live shows because of social-distancing mandates.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Viewers watching Sunday's concert special were asked to support two of the charitable organizations aiding victims and first responders during the pandemic: Feeding America and First Responders Children's Foundation.

Some police officers and health care professionals spoke in between performances, with one ICU nurse in tears as she told viewers about her emotional day treating victims carrying the virus.

AP

SportPesa backs government efforts to curb Coronavirus pandemic

By Guardian Reporter

IN an effort to back government's effort to curb the Coronavirus spread in Tanzania, SportPesa have presented equipment and medicines to Kinondoni District in Dar es Salaam.

SportPesa Director of Administration and Compliance, Tarimba Abbas, handed over equipment and medicines to Kinondoni District Commissioner Daniel Chongolo yesterday.

Abbas disclosed the gaming firm has joined forces with the government to step up efforts to educate the society on preventing the Coronavirus spread.

Abbas pointed out: "We support the government in the fight against the disease's spread in the country."

"SportPesa felt it better to hand over equipment that include buckets for storing clean water and soaps to local government offices which serve the society every day. We have started doing so in Kinondoni District.

"We are presenting this equipment the District Commissioner and we believe they will be presented to the targeted people in over 130 offices."



SportPesa Director of Administration and Compliance, Tarimba Abbas (L), presents buckets for storing clean water and soaps to Kinondoni District Commissioner Daniel Chongolo in Dar es Salaam yesterday. The betting firm has backed efforts by government to curb Coronavirus spread in Tanzania. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SPORTPESA

Covid-19 indefinite pause and Premier League guesswork think tanks

By Correspondent Michael Eneza

ALL sorts of ideas are being floated on what to do with various sporting contests that have been suspended before the season came to a close, and those scheduled for mid year, especially this year's now postponed Tokyo Olympic Games. In the latter case there was an especially valiant effort by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and their Japanese organizing counterparts to ensure that the games remained on track. At the end of the third week of March this effort petered out, as the Covid-19 pandemic was blowing full steam, showing no signs of abating.

What the IOC and the Japanese organizers did was to postpone the games for one year, so that the same environment will be available for those participating and the numerous businesses involved. The difference evidently will be that the pandemic will be out of the way by that time, as many countries are in different phases of looking out for peak figures of its spread amid efforts to combat it, and then the time it enters into a downward slide. Only China seems to have already reached that phase durably, while South Korea was not quite affirmative, and Japan never had a major outbreak but mildly so far, the situation could still change much later.

The point is that forward planning for tournaments that have been cut short or were expected for the mid-year and beyond is virtually an impossible undertaking as no modeling or habitual knowledge of virus outbreaks appears to work for this particular pandemic. There



Kigoma Sisters' player (2nd R) dribbles past Marsh Queens' players when the two clubs met in a recent Mainland Women Premier League clash, which took place at Karume Stadium in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TFF

in the past decade a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that was a massive disturbance in a breadth of temperate or developed countries and scarcely heard of in Africa. Then there was the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) which was similarly contained, regionally.

Covid-19 had begun to resemble ancient plagues killing hundreds of thousands of people within a particular area, at times a country but more so a city. Bubonic plague was especially common, but environmentally specific plagues like cholera have been prevalent in forgotten high density areas earlier in India and later more so in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Earlier it appeared that Covid-19 would take the path of SARS or even MERS and remain limited geographically but it is seemingly not so.

Increasingly rising figures of

infections in Africa, which have reached 3,000 in the space of one week – an increase of more than two thousand cases – makes Africa look like a later starter than a safe zone.

This kind of tendency of the pandemic makes the sports calendar pundits get even more bewildered, as it isn't possible to project what to do about the country's soccer Premier League this season or year without first knowing when the pandemic stops. This is the big unknown, in which case the discussion is interfering of the current league into next year's fixtures, etc.

What comes up in the debate is that analysts aren't yet settling into a force majeure mindset and then looking at the future, but wish to carry the baggage of this year's unfinished contests into another season, if need be. It is a question of what is the best thing to do in case of and this is where analysts get stuck, not wishing

to take current league standings as final for the year and thus drawing the necessary conclusions for next year's tournaments. They want to get a formula for a 'fair' finalization of this season's remaining matches, even if corona lasts up to July.

This energetic pursuit of a formula for completion of this season's matches and starting another season on equal terms for all teams more or less wishes to scream to the pandemic to get away, so that the season can be properly concluded.

That is somewhat unrealistic, in which case it is more serene to start figuring out how to start next season without being able to properly conclude this year's schedule as the time to do so, between the end of March and even up to the end of May, looks somewhat implausible, even with just two cases rising per week, as at the moment.

It is important for sports analysts to unwind and let the pressure drop in the pursuit of fairness for the simple reason that even if there are no conditions for the league to be continued and finished in appropriate schedule, the damage isn't much.

It is a matter of taking the standings at the time of the stoppage as the final moment of the league, which would be right in a physical sense in the fact of being unable to play one more match. Saying such an approach will be unfair comes to saying that the teams still aspiring for a better finish at the end of the season were denied their chance – but is it the format which denied them that chance, or their performance? There is no one to blame if a team will not overturn its fortunes in the last matches.

Tokyo's infection spike after Olympic delay sparks questions

TOKYO

BEFORE the Olympics were postponed, Japan looked like it had coronavirus infections contained, even as they spread in neighboring countries. Now that the games have been pushed to next year, Tokyo's cases are spiking, and the city's governor is requesting that people stay home, even hinting at a possible lockdown.

The sudden rise in the number of virus cases in Tokyo and the government's strong actions immediately after the Olympic postponement have raised questions in parliament and among citizens about whether Japan understated the extent of the outbreak and delayed enforcement of social distancing measures while clinging to hopes that the games would start on July 24 as scheduled.

With the Olympics now off, many are voicing suspicion that the numbers are rising because Japan suddenly has no reason to hide them.

"In order to make an impression that the city was taking control of the coronavirus, Tokyo avoided making strict requests and made the number of patients look smaller," former Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said in a tweet. "The coronavirus has spread while they waited. (For Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike) it was Olympics first, not Tokyo's residents."

Experts have found a rise of untraceable cases mushrooming in Tokyo, Osaka and other urban areas – signs of an explosive increase in infections.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Saturday that Japan is now on the brink of a huge jump in cases as it becomes increasingly difficult to trace and keep clusters under control.

"Once infections overshoot, our strategy ... will instantly fall apart," Abe warned. "Under the current situation, we are just barely holding up." He said a state of emergency is not needed just yet, but that Japan could at any time face a situation as bad as in the United States or Europe.

There was less of a sense of urgency displayed recently when many people visited parks for cherry blossom viewing, and Abe was only hinting at an Olympic postponement. But in a phone call with International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach last Tuesday, Abe agreed to postpone the games until around the summer of 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

A day later, Koike asked Tokyo residents to stay home weekends until



In this March 25, 2020, file, photo, officials light a lantern from the Olympic Flame at the end of a flame display ceremony in Iwaki, northern Japan. Before the Olympics were postponed, Japan looked like it had coronavirus infections contained, even as they spread in neighboring countries. Now that the games have been pushed to next year, Tokyo's cases are spiking, and the city's governor is requesting that people stay home, even hinting at a possible lockdown. (AP Photo)

mid-April, saying confirmed cases of the coronavirus had shot up to 41 in a day from 16 earlier in the week. On Saturday, Tokyo reported 63 new cases, another single-day record. Koike said that infections in Tokyo were on the brink of an explosive increase, and that stronger measures, including a lockdown, could be needed if the spread of the virus doesn't slow.

"Is this just a coincidence?" Maiko Tajima, an opposition lawmaker from the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, said during a parliamentary session last Wednesday, citing Tokyo's sudden spike.

Health Minister Katsunobu Kato said there is "absolutely no relationship" between the Olympic postponement and the number of confirmed cases. Abe cited experts as saying a big reason for the recent rise is the growing number of cases that can't be linked and a jump in infections from abroad. The prime minister told people to "be prepared for a long battle."

A day after Koike's warning, Abe convened a new task force under a recently enacted special law that would allow him to declare a state of emergency in specific areas, including Tokyo.

Japan's strategy has been to focus on clusters and trace infection routes rather than testing everyone. A guideline issued Saturday still says that

tests will be conducted per clinical doctors' advice. Experts set a high bar for testing eligibility, allowing them only for those linked to clusters or those with symptoms, because they fear massive testing will fill up beds that are needed for patients in severe need, and cause a collapse of medical systems.

From Feb. 18 to March 27, Japan tested about 50,000 people, a daily average of 1,270 – fewer than the national daily capacity of several thousand. There was only a slight increase in the number of tests in the past week.

In Tokyo, fewer than 2% of those who sought advice on a government hotline had been tested, according to health ministry figures. South Korea, by contrast, had tested about 250,000 people by mid-March.

Abe denied allegations that Japan had manipulated the numbers by limiting tests, or combined COVID-19 deaths with other pneumonia fatalities.

"I'm aware that some people suspect Japan is hiding the numbers, but I believe that's not true," he said. "If there is a cover-up, it will show up in the number of deaths." He said doctors told him that pneumonia patients with COVID-19 can be detected by CAT-scan or X-rays.

Many Japanese experts say testing is not for everyone and should be conducted selectively in an attempt

to save hospital beds for those who really need them. "Tests are primarily for people who are suspected of having the virus, and should be based on clinical judgment by doctors," said Shigeru Omi, a former World Health Organization public health expert who is on the government-commissioned panel.

Aki-Hiro Sato, a professor of information sciences at Yokohama City University, said in a recent report that Japan is now likely facing a second or third wave of the virus coming from Europe and the United States.

Tokyo has about 430 cases, but Sato estimated an additional 1,000 might have been infected in Tokyo by late March if infections are accelerating at a pace similar to what's happening in other countries. Including asymptomatic or light infections, about 10,000 people might be infected, he said.

As of Sunday, Japan had 2,578 confirmed cases, including 712 from a cruise ship, with 64 deaths, according to the health ministry. About 1,000 have recovered.

Under the current law, COVID-19 is designated as an infectious disease and whoever tests positive is routinely hospitalized, but a new government guideline would allow a triage of patients, which would include self-quarantine at home. AP

Dortmund want €130m for United target Sancho

BERLIN

BORUSSIA Dortmund will not sell Manchester United target Jadon Sancho "below value" amid the financial impacts of the coronavirus crisis, BVB chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke has told Bild.

Sources have told ESPN that United are leading the race for England winger Sancho, 20, but could still face competition from Premier League rivals Liverpool and Chelsea. Dortmund are holding out for a transfer fee in the €130 million region and hope a bidding war will unfold.

As Dortmund brace for Sancho's departure after three hugely impressive years at the Westfalenstadion, the Bundesliga side have no plans to cut any deals as economic pressure mounts on football clubs due to the worldwide pandemic.

"I can clearly say that despite the existential crisis [for football] even the richest clubs don't have to believe they can go bargain hunting at

Dortmund," Watzke said. "We must not sell anyone below value."

And Dortmund have not given up all hope that Sancho will remain at the club for one more season, with Watzke adding: "We've said it before corona already that we favour the idea Jadon stays here. But, at the end of the day, you also must respect what the player wants."

Dortmund have relied on refining young talents and selling them to European top clubs in recent years in their effort to avoid the financial gap to the continent's super clubs from growing wider.

The German club could be affected more than others by a collapsing transfer market. However, Watzke has said he believes that football's biggest talents will still command large sums.

"I believe that the transfer market will significantly drop. In spite of that there will still be a few big transfers," he added.

(Agencies)

Kane: Restart by June or aim for new season

LONDON

TOTTENHAM striker Harry Kane has said the Premier League season should be scrapped if clubs cannot play matches by June.

The coronavirus has decimated the world of sport, with football leagues across the world suspended amid the worldwide pandemic.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has delivered the stark warning that this season could be "lost" if football does not resume by the end of June.

And Kane has said there will come a time when the Premier League may have to think about re-summing for the next season.

"I know the Premier League will do everything it can to finish the season," Kane said, while also suggesting he could leave Tottenham in the future.

"There needs to be a point where enough is enough. Probably the limit for me is the end of June."

"Playing into July or August and pushing next season back, I don't see too much benefit in that."

"Obviously I don't know too much about behind the scenes and financially. If the season's not completed by the end of June we need to look at the options and just look forward to next season."

If the Premier League season cannot be finished, Manchester City's Ilkay Gundogan has said the title should still be awarded to Liverpool, with the league leaders 25 points clear of the reigning champions.

"For me, that would be OK, yes," Gundogan said, after being asked whether Liverpool should be handed their first top-flight title for 30 years should the season not be completed.

"You have to be fair as a sports person," he added, while conceding that it was a difficult decision for football authorities given the impact that the cancellation of the season would have at both ends of the table.

With many countries either in a state of lockdown or having imposed social distancing measures, the prospect of football in full stadiums would appear an unlikely scenario in the weeks and months ahead. Ceferin admits that when football does resume, it may have to be done behind closed doors, simply to get fixtures played as quickly as possible.

"It's difficult to imagine all the games behind closed doors, but right now we don't even know if we will resume, with or without fans," Ceferin said.

"If there are no other alternatives, it would still be better to conclude the leagues. I can say that I'm not thinking about staging the European cup finals behind closed doors."

Meanwhile, Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho and his coaching staff will put players through their paces from home starting Monday as the club holds live video training sessions amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Spurs players are in self-isolation with Britain in lockdown and the Premier League suspended until at least April 30. The players so far have been work-



Harry Kane

ing through their own individual training programmes designed by the coaching and sports science teams, and England midfielder Harry Winks said they were still adjusting to the new routine.

"It's a bit strange for all of us, but I've got my head around it," Winks told the club's website. "We've all been given a schedule, but it's flexible, we can do it in our own time."

"So, for instance, I might have a lie in one day, but then I'll work later. The important thing is to get it done."

Meanwhile, Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan says it would only be "fair" for rivals Liverpool to be awarded the Premier League trophy if the season cannot be completed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Gundogan told German broadcaster ZDF that Liverpool deserved to be crowned champions given their massive 25-point lead over second-placed City, the current holders, which has left them

just two wins away from the title.

"For me, that would be OK, yes," Gundogan said, after being asked whether Liverpool should be handed their first top-flight title for 30 years should the season not be completed.

"You have to be fair as a sports person," he added, while conceding that it was a difficult decision for football authorities given the impact that the cancellation of the season would have at both ends of the table.

"There are different opinions. For clubs who have had a very good season, it obviously wouldn't be nice if it was cancelled now," he said.

"On the other hand, for clubs who aren't doing as well and are maybe in the relegation places, an abandonment would obviously suit them."

The Premier League season has been suspended until April 30, but it is looking increasingly likely that the date may have to be pushed back further.

Germany international Gundogan also said he would be open to taking a pay cut should English clubs follow the likes of Juventus and Borussia Dortmund in asking their players to accept reduced wages so non-playing staff can be paid.

"Of course I think it's OK, that goes without saying, [but] there's been no discussion in England yet," Gundogan said. "Perhaps that's because the English clubs are a bit financially stronger than the clubs in Germany at the moment."

"I don't know who has the final say in that decision. On the other hand, if a player says, 'no, I don't want that, I worked hard for it, I get my salary,' then it can go in the opposite direction."

"For me personally, it would be OK, but, to be honest, you have to be tolerant, and if there are players who are against that, then that's also an acceptable situation."

(Agencies)

Juventus shares surge after players' take pay cut

MILAN

SHARES in Italian football giants Juventus surged Monday after the club's decision to cut their players' salaries in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Serie A champions announced on Saturday that they had cut their players' and coach Maurizio Sarri's salaries from March until June after all Italian sport was suspended.

The club's shares rose by 7.94 percent on the Milan Stock Exchange early Monday in a market that has taken a major hit from the coronavirus crisis.

Juventus' highly-paid stars include five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo and Wales midfielder Aaron Ramsey, who joined

from Arsenal on a free transfer last year.

"The economic and financial effects of the understanding reached are positive for about 90 million euros (\$100.5 million) for the 2019/2020 financial year," the club had said in a statement.

Juventus, who led second-placed Lazio by a point in Serie A before the suspension on March 9, added that should the season be finished later in the year, the players could be paid extra in those months.

Over 10,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Italy, more than in any other nation.

Players at other big European clubs have also agreed to take pay cuts, including Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund in Germany.

AFP

Xavi wants Barca job, targets Sancho, Gnabry

BARCELONA

BARCELONA legend Xavi Hernandez has said he is still eager to manage Barcelona but only if there isn't a "toxic" atmosphere around the dressing room and named Serge Gnabry and Jadon Sancho as potential signings he would be keen on.

Xavi manages Qatar Stars League club Al Sadd and previously rejected an offer to move to Barcelona as the offer from his old club came "too soon" for him but said "it will continue to be a dream of mine in the future to manage Barca."

Xavi confirmed on Sunday in an interview with La Vanguardia he still wants to manage the Catalan club but it appears that recent reports of friction between players and the club's leadership have caught his attention.

"I would like to work together with people in whom I have confidence, with whom there is loyalty and who are very valid people. There can't be anyone toxic around the dressing

room," he said.

Referring back to his previous decision not to take on the role, Xavi said he knows what he can bring to the table after working with Al Sadd.

"I am clear that I want to return to Barcelona, I am very excited. Now that I have seen myself coaching I think I can bring things to the players. But I made it clear to them that I saw myself in a project that started from zero and in which the decision-making was mine."

Alongside Gnabry and Sancho, Xavi listed Jordi Alba, Gerard Pique, Sergio Busquets, Luis Suarez, Frenkie De Jong, Arthur Melo and Lionel Messi as players he would love to coach in his dream team.

Xavi played with Barcelona from 1998 to 2015 and made more than 700 appearances for the club.

He won eight La Liga titles in that time before moving to Al Sadd in 2015 where he played until May, 2019.

(Agencies)

How South American football is helping battle the coronavirus

By Tim Vickery, ESPN South America correspondent

THE South American confederation has found a new reason to celebrate the best goal scored the last time the World Cup was staged on the continent. One of the great moments of Brazil 2014 was the strike by Colombia's James Rodriguez against Uruguay, taking the ball down on his chest and unleashing a magnificent volley hit on the swivel that clipped the underside of the crossbar on its unstoppable path into the goal.

Rodriguez received the ball between the lines of the opposing team -- and it has been calculated that his distance from Uruguay centre-back Diego Godin was two metres. As CONMEBOL put it, "two metres can change history." Two metres, of course, is now being advanced as the safe distance between people to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

If the great goal is now being pressed into service in the battle against COVID-19, so is the stadium in which it happened. The crossbar that was clipped, the pitch where Rodriguez stood, the stands where the goal was celebrated -- all belonged to Rio's world famous Maracana Stadium, which over the next few days will be turned into a field hospital, increasing the number of beds available in Brazil in an attempt to ease the strain on a health system that could soon enter into collapse.

This is not uncommon. Clubs all around South America are placing their facilities at the disposition of the authorities. In Brazil, it is the giant city of Sao Paulo that is taking the brunt of coronavirus casualties. The municipal Pacaembu Stadium near the centre of town has undergone a similar transformation. Built in 1940, and until recently the home of Corinthians, Pacaembu is full of history.

The Maracana has more, though, despite being 10 years younger. It has played host to two World Cup finals. It was the favourite stage of the greats: Pele loved playing there, Garrincha and Zico gave weekly masterclasses, and the stadium has enjoyed a magical few months, by far the best since it was comprehensively (and controversially and expensively) rebuilt for the 2014 World Cup.

In July, the Brazil team returned to the stadium for the first time in six years to win the final of the Copa America -- a century on from their first triumph. Then, after the pause for the Copa, club football returned with local giants Flamengo un-



James Rodriguez

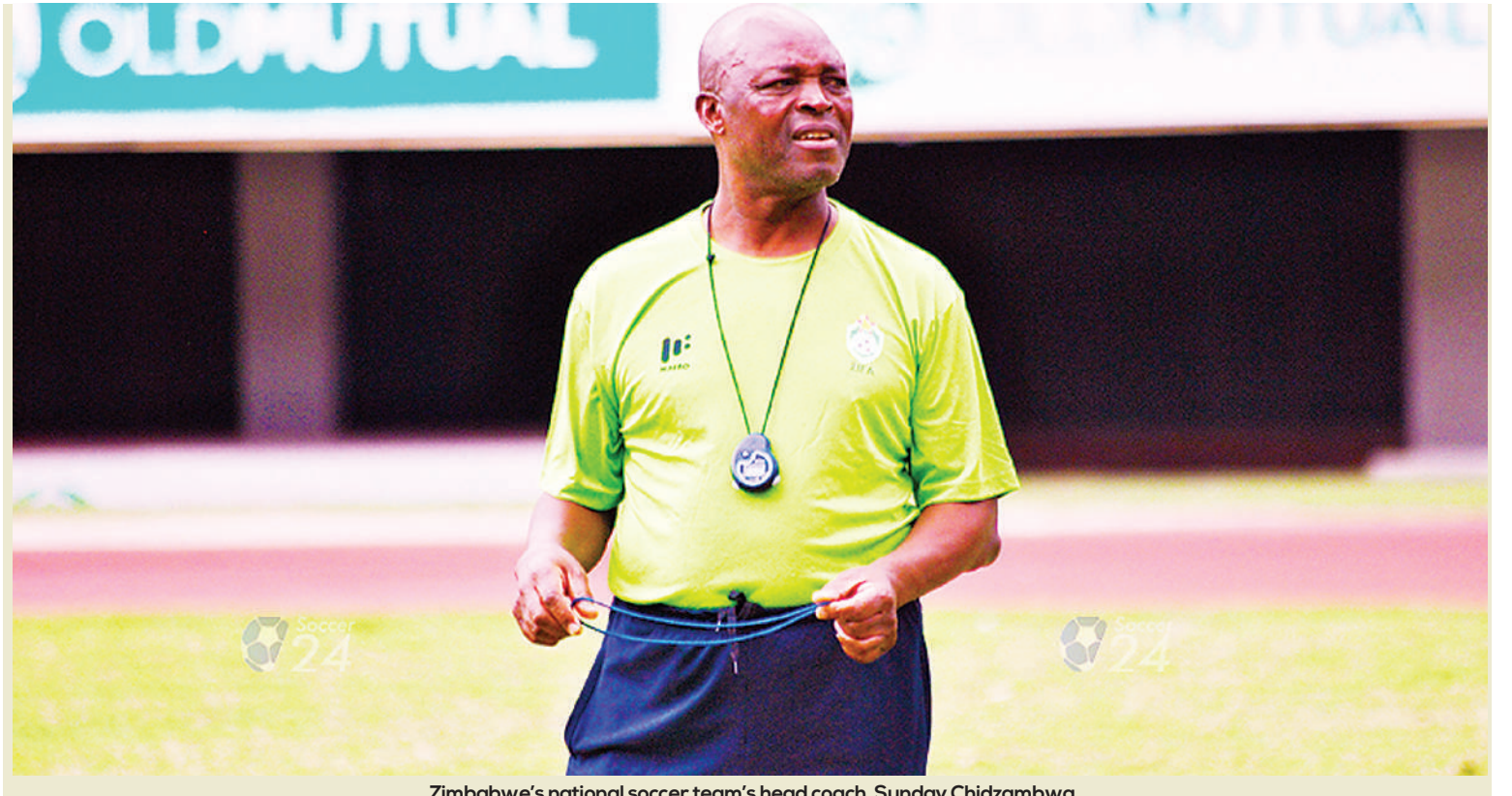
Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Kane: Restart by June or aim for new season

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Zimbabwe's national soccer team's head coach Sunday Chidzambwa.

Teams divided on PSL 2020 as PCB mulls tournament's fate

KARACHI

TWO weeks ago, the fifth edition of the PSL was suspended due to the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic, with two semi-finals and the final still to be played.

The fate of the tournament is still uncertain, with viewpoints divided over whether it is to be rescheduled or aborted, with the winner decided on the basis of league-stage standings.

The PCB, ESPNcricinfo understands, is having internal discussions on the matter and exploring all options before chalking out a list of workable recommendations.

If the pandemic settles down in few months' time and the world takes a step towards normalcy, the PCB has an obligation to find a window for the PSL and November is understood to be a slot it is considering. But the board faces a challenge to regather all the stakeholders in one place for three days, including 16 overseas players.

Before suspending the tournament, the PCB had attempted to shorten it by scrapping its four-match play-off stage and turning it into a two-day affair with a semi-final double-header followed by the final.

Apart from the PSL, the final leg of Pakistan's home series against Bangladesh, scheduled for early April, and the domestic one-day cup also stand indefinitely postponed, and the national team's upcoming tour of the UK also faces a blurry future.

According to the PSL's playing conditions, it is understood that the team placed at the top of the league standings can be declared the winner if the tournament doesn't find a window to hold its knockout matches.

Multan Sultans topped the table at the end of the league stage, with 14 points from 10 games, and their bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed believes this should give them the title.

"The PSL 5 has to have a proper closure and that can be done by taking into [account] the top team on the points table at the end of the league stage and declaring them winners," he told PTI.

"If the PCB doesn't close the PSL 5 and tries to organise the remaining four or five matches including the final later this year or before the PSL 6 it will dent the hype and spoil the momentum of the next edition."

Agencies

Chidzambwa urges Zimbabweans to play their part in Coronavirus fight

JOHANNESBURG

COSAFA Zone's most successful coach, Sunday Chidzambwa of Zimbabwe, is encouraging the football community throughout Southern African, but particularly all supporters, to heed the advice and instruction of authorities as the battle to contain the coronavirus continues.

Chidzambwa was speaking as Zimbabwe enters a 21-day lockdown from Monday, aimed at curbing the spread of the deadly virus in the country.

"The best thing for fans as we go forward is to listen to what the authorities have to say," Chidzambwa said.

"If they say stay at home, then we must heed that advice. Already it is clear we have to avoid gatherings altogether," he said.

Chidzambwa was an international star for his country before coaching Zimbabwe to the COSAFA Cup title and going undefeated through 21 games in the competition.

His record is unmatched in the annual southern African championship and unlikely to be ever broken.

His last coaching assignment was with Zimbabwe at the Africa Cup of Nations finals in Egypt last July.

"Unfortunately, because of the virus, the new season has yet to get underway in Zimbabwe. It was supposed to start after the CHAN tournament but now we have to wait and see."

Not that the Harare-based Chidzambwa will stray far from the game: "I'm at home isolating myself, watching football and when I'm tired of the TV, then I read football manuals."

"I cannot stay away from the game," he laughs.

The lockdown in Zimbabwe will curtail movement within the country, shut most shops and banks, and suspend flights in and out of the country, but is also following the lead of a number of nations, such as South Africa, who deem the measures necessary to fight the virus.

Chidzambwa is adhering to the guidelines laid out by the World Health Organization in the bid to combat the coronavirus outbreak, which include:

Wash your hands frequently: Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

Maintain social distancing: Maintain at least 1 metre (three 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.



Upanga Darts Club (UDC) players pictured after one of the club's matches in a recent Dar es Salaam regional championship, which was hosted by KT Chinese Club. PHOTO: COURTESY OF UDC

Darts Association plans 2020 Zonal competition

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

SPORTING events may be clamped down at the moment, but darts players in Tanzania hope to open the curtains in May, with the Zonal Singles finals scheduled for next month should the Covid-19 spread curfew be lifted.

Tanzania Darts Association (TADA) is also in hiatus whilst organizing the anticipated Zonal Singles finals, scheduled for May 8 bringing together both male and female players from various regions in the country.

"The Zonal finals will be held in Dodoma, in case the current 30 days freeze on sports activities and other gatherings will be melted down after four weeks,"

"We believe we shall be the first to brighten up events in the post Coronavirus infections period," Victor Kimambo, the TADA Secretary General, said.

He however pointed out that TADA officials are waiting for the government directives on this.

According to the official, TADA will cater for food, accommodation and return transport for all 62 players from all zones that will participate in the event in Dodoma in May.

Five zones will be participating in the Zonal finals, including Northern (12 players) and Southern Highlands (five players).

Central Zone (nine players), Coastal Zone (14 players) and Lake Zone (11 players) are the other areas which will field

players in the tournament.

Kimambo said there will also be 11 officials accompanying those teams.

The zonal tournament will serve as an opportunity for the national darts governing body to select players who will form national darts team set to represent the country in various regional events.

The tournaments include the forthcoming East African Darts Championship to be held here possibly next June.

According to the TADA official, darts players can always practice in isolation without mixing with others.

Kimambo stated: "In darts one can have his or her own board and practice at home in isolation, and even during playing it is possible to arrange that participants keep safe distance from each other."

Flexibles by David Chikoko



EATV TUESDAY

TONIGHT @ 9:00

NIRVANA

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 MPYA
12:30 Msosi Kitaani (r)
13:00 Wanawake Live (r)
13:30 Kali Za Wana
14:00 DK 10 za Maangamizi
14:30 Bball Kings Highlights (r)
15:00 Funguka
15:30 SSPORTS (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)

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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

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