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## CCM fixes dates for forms, nominations

By Guardian Reporter

THE ruling CCM has announced the schedule for picking up forms and vetting of aspirants for the Union and Zanzibar presidential elections beginning next Monday.

The party's National Executive Committee (NEC) Ideology and Publicity Secretary, Humphrey Polepole (pictured), told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the process for the Union presidency will begin with the collection of nomination forms on June 15 to 30.

This will go simultaneously with collection of supporters' signatures in various regions, he said.

"CCM presidential aspirants will collect nomination forms within 15 days. They will also be required to gather signatures from supporters in the same period," he said.

After that process, the National Executive Committee (NEC) secretariat will meet to evaluate the forms for two days (July 6 and 7), and then examine names of aspirants from July 8.

On July 9, the Ethics Committee of the secretariat will convene its sitting to prepare



**This will go simultaneously with collection of supporters' signatures in various regions**

for the central committee sitting.

The central committee will on the same day recommend five names of aspirants that will go to the party's full-NEC meeting.

On July 10, NEC will announce the recommended three names out of the proposed five aspirants. The three names will be put to the CCM National Congress for actual nomination, taking two days of voting to obtain the party's nominee for the Union presidential elections.

In Zanzibar, the presidential nomination process will begin on June 15 whereas candidates will pick nomination forms for two weeks until June 30. Aspirants will also be required to seek signatures from supporters across the regions.

He said the special sitting of the Secretariat for Zanzibar NEC will begin on July 1 to 2 - and on July 3 the Isles' Security and Ethics Committee shall convene.

Thereafter there will be sittings of the special committee of CCM-NEC on July 4 to give recommendations for the Zanzibar presidential election nomination aspirants.

"This meeting will be followed by that of NEC Central Committee on July 9 to recommend three names to contest the position," he said.

From July 10 CCM-NEC will pick one name

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# MPs worried by TRA take-over of tourism sector revenue collection

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma



Chief Sheikh Abubakar Zubeiry bin Ally (L) addresses congregation shortly after Friday prayers at Gaddafi Mosque in Dodoma city yesterday. He commended the government for tabling - in the National Assembly on Thursday - financial year 2020/2021 Budget estimates he said had the interests of low-income earners at heart. Next to him is Dodoma regional sheikh Mustapha Rajabu. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

MEMBERS of Parliament have faulted the government's plan to introduce a mechanism for the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to collect revenues generated from tourism and conservation activities starting July 1.

Previously, the funds were collected by the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA).

Mashimba Ndaki (Maswa West-CCM), the chairman of the Parliamentary Budget Committee, said the decision has come at a time when these authorities are struggling to recover from the adverse impacts of Covid-19.

The specific authorities have been successfully collecting revenues and executing its obligations properly.

"The government has been collecting taxes from these authorities. There are specific reasons for the government opting to directly collect the generated revenues," he said.

He added: "The committee would like to know the main purposes for this decision because there are many government agencies that provide services and their revenues are not collected by TRA."

The committee advised the government to reconsider its decision since the institutions perform their duties properly. The committee sees the decision as a move to grab the institution's revenue sources, it stated.

Such decisions should be implemented after

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## 'Tread carefully when protecting industries'

By Guardian Reporters

PROTECTING local industries is not always crowned with success, a seasoned economist has stated.

The Principal of Mzumbe University Business School in Dar es Salaam, Prof Honest Ngowi made this observation when participating in an online dialogue on the national budget organized by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP).

"You can go ahead and prioritize local factories but if not well prepared they may die and fail to fulfill expected results and thus affect economic growth. This should be taken very carefully. But if we succeed, the factories may bring wonders,"

he asserted.

A cross section of economists interviewed yesterday issued mixed views on the 2020/21 budget proposals with some saying it gives hope of restoring financial health while some called for improvements on key issues raised.

Prof Ngowi commended the budget for eradicating several crop levies, noting that the move provides huge relief to farmers, traders and the public at large.

He underscored the need for the government to ensure that factories established are working and producing quality products to compete in the world market.

REPOA senior researcher Dr Donald Mmari

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## Treasury cuts out sources of sleaze, business impediment

By Guardian Reporter

TO broaden the tax base, reduce the cost of doing business and promote tax compliance, the government intends to implement various policy reforms which include decreasing of tax rates, fees and levies.

Delivering the budget speech on Thursday, Finance and Planning Minister Dr Philip Mpango said that in the next financial year the government will put more emphasis on domestic revenue collection and strengthen revenue administration.

The government plans to spend 34.88trn/- for recurrent and development expenditure in the coming financial year, with 22.10trn/- allocated for recurrent expenditure.

The amount is equivalent to 63.0 percent of the total budget, while 12.78trn/- is slated for

development expenditure.

Dr Mpango said to widen tax base the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) must create a friendly environment with taxpayers and strengthen the office of the Treasury Registrar to collect more dividends and contributions from public institutions to the Consolidated Fund.

The government will also strengthen and capacitate the Tax Revenue Appeals Tribunal (TRAT) and the Tax Revenue Appeals Board (TRAB) to fast-track tax objections and appeals. This will push enforcement of tax laws in order to address tax evasion challenges and minimize revenue leakages, he said.

The minister stated that in 2020/2021, the government will emphasize the use of ICT systems in strengthening domestic revenue

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## SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

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

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

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

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

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

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

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

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

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

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

- Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
- Seek medical advice if you
- Develop symptoms

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



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cdc.gov/COVID-19



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Tanzania's Statistician General, Dr Albina Chuwa (L), attends a video conference for Southern African Development Community (SADC) statisticians general in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo courtesy of Maelozo

## MPs worried by TRA take-over of tourism sector revenue collection

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the recovery of the tourism sector, he said, insisting that the country's tourism sector is among economic sectors which have been severely hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ndaki asked the government to outline plans to empower TANAPA, TAWA and NCAA to enable them implement strategic plans for improvement of the tourism sector.

For the system to work, the government should first allocate budgetary funds for these institutions through the Ministry Natural Resources and Tourism, and the funds should go directly to the agencies.

Jafar Michael (Moshi Urban-CCM) expressed worries that the decision might affect the institutions' operations.

Saada Mkuya (Welezo-CCM) cautioned that taking revenues from these institutions would undermine efforts to develop the sector since it requires a lot of innovation and creativity. This is vital on account of competition at regional and international level.

"The African tourism sector looks alike. We need to be innovative to compete, so these institutions should be funded to have muscles to efficiently

implement their duties," she said.

She said Kenya, the country's main competitor in the sector, has in the 2020/21 budget proposals abolished landing and parking fees for planes with intention of attracting more tourists.

"We must implement similar initiatives to lure more tourists," the MP underlined.

Magdalena Sakaya (Kaliua -CUF) said: "The decision is likely to kill the tourism sector since TRA is going to be in charge of all revenues collected by these institutions."

Delivering government budget estimates on Thursday, Finance and Planning Minister Dr Philip Mpango said the government has proposed a financing plan for TANAPA, NCAA and TAWA which were intensely affected by Covid-19.

He said the financing will include improvement of tourism and conservation infrastructure damaged by heavy rains.

"These institutions will receive subventions from the government budget to cover their operational costs for employees' salaries, other charges as well as development expenditure," he specified.

## 'Tread carefully when protecting industries'

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said that it was still too early to tell whether the measures introduced by the budget were enough.

Tanzania's economy is integrated to the global economy and the fact that the coronavirus was still impacting other countries was a sign that Tanzania too is exposed to these pressures.

"The fact is that the corona virus is still lingering in many countries globally. It is clear that Tanzania will not be left out, for example countries that bring tourists to Tanzania like the United States and Japan are still battling the pandemic," he elaborated.

Other impacts to be seen include the short supply of commodities from countries battling the pandemic. Covid-19 impacts may take long to deal

with in a way that this year's budget cannot cover them all, he stated.

"We need the contribution of the private sector in dealing with the impact of Covid-19, so it is open ended as such disasters come with staggered effects," said Dr Mmari.

He concurred with those who say the government should have supported the private sector as it has been hard hit by the pandemic.

Dr Donath Olomi, Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development (IMED) said the budget to a considerable extent generating hope. The removal of targeted levies was good but some systems ought to be reviewed as well, he said.

He however said there was need to do more especially on heavily investing in the agriculture sector and relooking at

land ownership systems which he said were not friendly to investors.

"For example, we remove these levies year after year. We need to create an ownership system where these levies can be removed for a certain period of time because investors need predictability," he emphasised.

Dr Olomi said the move by the government to offer support to the Covid-19 affected sectors was a solid gesture.

"But the government should have gone far, for example, in supporting Air Tanzania, it should have extended funds to the private sector as it has also been hit by the pandemic, to create a level playing ground," he asserted.

Prof Ngowi said that apart from the budget providing substantial relief in

various areas, creating a conducive business environment, major efforts should also have been directed towards improving social services so as to benefit the majority.

"It is not bad for the budget to focus on implementing mega projects. However social services also need more investments," he declared.

Rishit Shah, tax expert from PwC (T) said that the budget has provided some relief on various taxes such as income tax, the Skills and Development Levy (SDL) as well as tax relief to primary cooperative societies.

Shah was speaking at a virtual budget review event organized by PwC (T).

"Several sectors now have something to smile about as generally this year's budget has touched every area. However there is still a challenge on tax disputes," he added.

## CCM fixes dates for forms, nominations

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from among the aspirants and from July 11 to 12 the CCM National Congress will meet to endorse that name for the Zanzibar presidential candidacy in the coming general elections.

The party's Ideology and Publicity Secretary also warned aspirants for the top position in the state to avoid engaging in bribery acts as they push for the nomination.

The head of department stated that the secretariat was in liaison with the Director of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau

(PCCB) Brig Gen John Mbungu on how the anti-corruption body shall control such acts during the general election process.

CCM aspirants who will be proved to engage in corrupt acts will not be allowed to contest for any position, he declared.

Polepole also called on would-be contestants to evaluate themselves before entering the presidential race.

General elections were last conducted on October 25, 2015 to elect the president, members of Parliament and ward councilors. The president is elected for a five-year term.

## Treasury cuts out sources of sleaze, business impediment

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collection from local government authorities' own sources, he said.

Implementation of the Blueprint for Regulatory Reforms to improve business environment will be furthered by abolishing or reducing rates of 60 fees and levies that were charged by ministerial departments, agencies and regulatory authorities.

"This is a continuous measure to improve the business environment, taking into consideration the process as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic," he stated.

The government proposed a reduction of the import levy charged by the Sugar Board of Tanzania (SBT) on industrial sugar from 2 percent of CIF value, or 2 percent of \$460 (equivalent to \$ 9 or more) per metric ton, which is higher to \$ 7.5 per metric ton on imported sugar.

On Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA), the government abolished training fees of 250,000/- for each participant, explaining that the provision of public education on safety and health is a core obligation of OSHA.

It reduced accident investigation fees from 500,000/- on each expert who conducts investigations to 120,000/-, but placed a ceiling of 1m/- gross amount for such fees.

Various fees charged by the fire and rescue force have been reduced or scrapped. They include the certificate of competence fees from 500,000/- to 200,000/-, inspection fees reduced from 6m/- to 100,000/- and inspection

fees on mining areas with coverage area of between 4,001 to 9,000 square metre from 6m/- to 200,000/-.

The minister noted that establishment of the government e-Payment Gateway System (GePGs), Electronic Fiscal Device Management System (EFDMS), the Tanzania Customs Integrated System (TANCIS), Government Accounting System (MUSE), the Government Assets Management Information System (GAMIS), Government Salary Payment Platform (GSPP), Tanzania National e-Procurement System (TANePS) and the Treasury Single Account (TSA) have contributed in controlling revenue leakages and simplifying access to information on revenue collection.

These electronic systems have also simplified preparation of government financial statements as well as increasing efficiency in the management and control of government assets.

They have helped to improve management and timely payment of salaries to eligible employees, enhanced transparency in procurement processes and attained value for money in procurement of goods, services and works. This has improved liquidity in the Consolidated Fund.

"We take pride in stating that all these systems are home grown and are being managed by government experts, thereby saving the money that would have been spent on external vendors," the minister underlined.



HIGH RISK: Small traders in business right under a transformer and high-tension power lines at Kitunda on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, as found yesterday - and with each passing day, for quite some time now. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) has dragged to court seven former workers of the Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) over misuse of power, embezzlement of funds thus commissioning loss of 8bn/- of the government revenues.

The Bureau is also in an intensive search of an independent lawyer

## PCCB drags 7 former TPA employees to court

of ELA Advocates and Mnengere & Associates Company of Dar es Salaam, Arnold Temba as well as a businessman Chrispin Iranguye.

A statement from acting head of PCCB in Mwanza region Daudi Ndyamukama said that the suspects who have been

already fired from job and they were brought before the Mwanza Resident magistrate court to face the charges.

He also named the charges facing the suspects as organising crime, forgery, submitting false documents as well as money laundering thus commissioning

loss to TPA.

Ndyamukama further said that PCCB is also working with the national prosecutions office to also send to court other eight suspects over misuse of power and funds emblems charges.

He named the suspects as Deogratius,

the former senior accountant, Bellian Lema, former senior accountant, Aike Mapuli, accounting officer, Marystella Minja all from TPA headquarters.

Others are Thomas Akile and Wendelin Tibuhwa, former accountants at the TPA-Mwanza.

Ibrahimu Lusato, assistant accountant at TPA-Mwanza, James Mbedule, tax officer at TPA-Mwanza and Leonard Pendo, an independent advocate at ELA Advocates and Mnengere & Associates Company. Ndyamukama further urged the general public to report corruption incidences and suspects which are being hunted by the Bureau has promise to provide a good offer in return.





Agricultural Seed Agency CEO Dr Sophia Kashenge (R) shows Kasulu district commissioner Simon Anage varieties of seeds developed at the agency. This was at an agricultural exhibition in the district on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Pendo Thomas

# Opposition camp tables alternative budget amounting to 23.65 trillion/-

By Francis Kajubi, Dodoma

THE opposition camp in the national Assembly yesterday tabled alternative budget amounting to 23.65trn/- for the next fiscal year, calling on the government for initiatives to focus on overcoming economic impacts brought by Covid-19.

Presenting the alternative budget in the House, Halima Mdee, shadow minister of Finance and Planning proposed collection of tax revenue that amounts to 15.13trn/- during the financial year, 1.77trn/- of non-tax revenue and 517.90bn/- from local government owned sources.

Mdee asserted that in that perspective the government would aim at collecting total local revenue amounting to 17.42trn/-. The government should also aim at acquiring 935.62bn/- for the budget implementation.

"Concessional loans both from local and foreign sources could stay at 5.29trn/- making the budget stand at a tune of 23.65trn/-" said Mdee.

According to her, the budget should have prioritized Education, Agriculture, Industry, Water, Health and the rest of the budget fund would fall in the category of other economic activities.

The alternative budget allocates 4.73trn/- to education, 3.55trn/- to agriculture, 3.55trn/- to industry, Water 2.36trn/-, health 4.73trn/- and other economic activities would be allocated with 4.73trn/-.

On the other hand, the opposition budget calls upon the government to pay the remaining 73bn/- out of the 2.3trn/- outstanding Value Added Tax refunds (VAT refunds) it owes manufacturers who are members of the Confederation of Tanzania Industries

(CTI) for the four past years.

"We propose that the government should consider opening a special account for VAT. The government should abolish the 15 percent of import duty paid by manufacturers prior to the importation of raw materials as there has been no appetite of the government in paying back the money on time thus holding back operations of manufacturers," Mdee said.

The alternative budget also calls upon the government to recognize the contribution of the private sector in the education sector whereby more than 90,000 teachers are employed in private sectors.

She said the government should identify strategies in its budgetary plans of how to handle matters associated with private schools especially during calamities citing an example of COVID-19 eruption that had led to financial problems in private schools.

"The government should allow private schools implement other sources of income from their operations apart from relying only on fees that if calamities happen, private schools suffer operational funds to fix the situation" said Prof Anna Tibajuka, Muleba MP when contributing to the budget.

**Concessional loans both from local and foreign sources could stay at 5.29trn/- making the budget stand at a tune of 23.65trn/-**

## Govt orders use of electronic payment gateway platform

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has directed all its agencies, parastatals and institutions to use the introduced Electronic Payment Gateway (GePG) platform to boost revenue collections.

Permanent Secretary in the Finance and Planning Ministry, Dotto James gave the order yesterday in Dodoma when addressing delegates at meeting which brought

together officials from state-owned institutions, agencies and ministry. Participating institutions included those operating in central zone regions and connected to GePG.

The PS was concerned that despite government efforts in improving collection of revenues there are still some public institutions which have not improved their payment systems. He urged institutions to ensure proper preparation of invoices.

James noted that it is important that all the government institutions, parastatals and agencies abide by the laws by ensuring electronic preparation of bills as well as adaptation of the electronic payment gateway.

"With the GePG the government will collect more revenues and be able to offer better social services. To ensure proper functioning of the electronic system, institutions are required to

consult the financial information systems management at the ministry of Finance and Planning," he said.

The GePG was introduced to facilitate all government entities (Central, Local and Agencies) to use single payment platform. The GePG was adopted in 2016 as part of government's efforts to improve revenue collections.

The electronic system is said to plug revenue leakages that caused massive loss of government's revenues.

## Registrar of Political Parties appeals to CSOs to work for gender equality

By Guardian Reporter

REGISTRAR of Political Parties Judge Francis Mutungi has underlined the need for civil society organisations to promote mindset change over participation of women, youth and special groups in general elections.

Judge Mutungi made the remarks in Dodoma on Thursday during his meeting with officials from the Tanzania Constitutional Forum (Jukata) under the umbrella of Ushiriki Tanzania.

As an essential institution in the democratic landscape of a country, parliament has an obligation to reflect the diverse needs, interests and experiences evident across all societies. Parliament also has an obligation to ensure that all outputs - legislation, recommendations, debates or motions - actively work to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

The meeting was intended to discuss various issues including formalisation of inclusive policies for people with disabilities.

He insisted that it was important for the community to start considering people with disabilities as capable of leading others, and that they deserve to be elected at different posts at all the levels.

"If we want to promote the establishment of inclusive policies for people with disabilities, we should consult them to know exactly what their challenges are, civil society organizations can do this better," said Judge Mutungi

He added that changing the mindsets of people will enable voters to elect leaders in accordance with leadership capabilities and not otherwise. He said both, women and people with disabilities can be elected depending on their competences.

He urged that civil society organizations must select the best personnel to represent their ideas to government officials as well as to the targeted audience.

According to him, there are a number of women who have excelled in politics and have held various posts within the government. He said the women can be used to inspire their fellows to vie for

various positions in the coming general elections.

Jukita Advisor, Deus Kibamba said their meeting aimed to present the agenda for participation of people with disabilities and special groups in elections.

Kibamba said the forum is reviewing various policy sections in the Constitution to identify challenges that contributes into the special group's failure to contest for different posts in elections.

"The office of the Political Parties Registrar is crucial in promoting democracy and operations of political parties. We wanted to present him with our recommendations on the participation of special groups in elections," he said

He said Ushiriki Tanzania was purposely established to promote participation of special groups in political activities in the country.

"There have been several initiatives taken by the government, but are yet to bear fruits. Ushiriki Tanzania was established to supplement efforts by the office of political parties' registrar. We also aim to ensure clean politics," said Kibamba.

The analysis we conducted have showed that there are still poor participation of women, youth and other special groups in political activities, he added.

Kibamba requested the office of political parties' registrar to coordinate formalization of inclusive policies through responsible ministries.

According to him, some of the challenges that women candidates and others from special groups face includes lack of money to finance election campaigns as well as not given priority in party primaries.

He advised office of the political parties' registrar to work closely with the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) and mainland's National Electoral Commission to put in place conditions for increased gender equality.

Ushiriki Tanzania Chairperson, Israel Ilunde underscored the need for civic education to ensure clean politics as well as fully participation of citizens in elections.



Muheza district environment officer Cyprian Mselem plants a commemorative tree in a Mashewa Primary School farm at an event organised earlier this week by a community conservation and water sources protection group known as UWAMAKIZI. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

By Guardian Reporter

UNDER The same Sun (UTSS) yesterday said a lot needs to be done to ensure total inclusion of people with albinism despite experiencing some changes and improvements in recent years.

The message came as Tanzania yesterday joined the global community in celebrating this year's International Albinism Awareness Day (IAAD).

In a statement, UTSS said it carried out a simple study across the country aiming at assessing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to PWAs in Tanzania where 25 PWA from eleven regions were involved.

"Though there have been some changes and improvements; a lot still has to be done for ensuring total

## Under the Same Sun: Struggle for social inclusion of people with albinism is vital

inclusion of PWA in Tanzania," the statement said.

UTSS said in the statement that it was unfortunate that the day was commemorated in this period of the Covid-19 pandemic

Historically, the IAAD was proclaimed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2014. Thus, from 2015, 13 June this day started to be commemorated all over the world.

This year IAAD theme "Made to shine" highlights the qualities of persons with albinism around the world.

To show that they were made to stand out because they are outstanding in

many ways as proven by an enormous amount of work and success stories highlighted in the news and other media in recent years.

The physical appearance of PWA is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which fosters their marginalization and social exclusion.

This leads to various forms of stigma, discrimination, and even murder and killings - to mention a few. In some communities - including Tanzania where UTSS puts much attention - false beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, put safety, security, and

lives of PWA at constant risk.

The United Nations Human Rights Council, therefore, adopted this resolution calling for the prevention of attacks and discrimination against PWA; and hence, working for their inclusion in the mainstream of society.

Moreover, in response to this call, UTSS and other civil society organizations continuously advocate for considering PWA as a specific group with particular needs that require special attention. The situation of persons with albinism in Tanzania UTSS is in operation in Tanzania for eleven years now.



# PCCB holds three TRA officials over the soliciting and receiving of bribe

By Guardian Correspondent, Babati

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Manyara region is holding three Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) officials for soliciting and receiving 1m/- bribe.

A press statement issued by PCCB head for Manyara region Holle Makungu said those arrested were Eva Joseph Mtandika, Jackline Leonard Manjira and Ephraim John Medard.

Makungu said the trio solicited and received the money from a trader, who decline to mention him so that they would not increase tax assessment for his business.

He said PCCB discovered the businessman was assessed to pay 250,000 tax per year by a TRA officer who did not solicit any money from him and added that he businessman asked to pay the tax in installments and by June this year and had paid his first installment as assessed.

He was later followed by the suspects who told him that he had been under-assessed and that his business called for the use the electronic fiscal devices (EFD) hence he had committed an offence.

Makungu said after that the three TRA officials directed him to go to the Babati TRA office for further steps.

"When he went to the TRA office he was told that he had been under assessed as he was supposed to pay 450,000/- per year as well as 3m/- fine," Makungu said.

The trader told them that he was unable to pay that entire amount in consideration of the business he conducts.

"After saying that one of the TRA officials, Jackline Manjira told him in that they can remove the fine if he gave them 1m/-," said Makungu, PCCB head for Manyara region.

He said thereafter the businessman reported the issue to the PCCB office and a trap was set that saw the arrest of the trio.

Makungu said further investigations showed that after the suspects were given the money, Jackline Manjira and Eva Mtandika wrote in the businessman's tax file that he had been exempted from paying additional tax through EFD machines until year 20121. The three will appear in court soon after investigations were complete.

On May 26 this year PCCB arrested two TRA officials for soliciting and receiving 10m/- bribe from Mbulu businessman.



**When he went to the TRA office he was told that he had been under assessed as he was supposed to pay 450,000/- per year as well as 3m/- fine**



CCM Youth Wing national chairman Kheri James (in gumboots) makes a follow-up on the construction of the wing's Siha District office at Dachkona in Gararagua ward yesterday. Photo: Godfrey Mushi

By Guardian Reporter

THE government has at last facilitated the return of 146 Tanzanians stranded in Saudi Arabia following suspension of air travel because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A statement issued on Wednesday by the Director of Communications Department in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Emmanuel Buhohela, said the Tanzanians returned to the country yesterday by a Saudi Arabian Airways plane Flight No. SV3433.

He said the plane departed Jeddah at 8.30 am and arrived at Julius Nyerere International Airport at 1.20 pm.

## Tanzanians stranded in Saudi Arabia back home - ministry

"Via such arrangement, up to now a total of 671 Tanzanians stranded in various foreign countries have been able to return.

"Among them, 119 returned from Oman, 101 came by planes carrying other foreign passengers, and five came by Ethiopian Airline cargo plane," Buhohela said.

He also said the Ministry is also

coordinating air flights for foreign nationals going back to their countries, adding that up to May 17 this year a total of 1,172 and 44 Tanzanians departed to various foreign countries.

Buhohela said the ministry through Tanzania's embassies abroad continues to coordinate the return of 1,165 other Tanzanians

stranded in various countries of the world.

"The ministry has instructed all Tanzania's embassies abroad to coordinate the gathering details of Tanzanians stranded in their areas to use the available planes that come to Tanzania to take foreign nationals stranded in Tanzania," added Buhohela.



Simanjiro district commissioner Zephania Chaula (L, foreground) pictured yesterday witnessing the beginning of the construction of what is meant to become a government hospital. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadye

## Reps urge ZSSF to invest in gainful sector projects

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

MEMBERS of the Zanzibar House of Representatives have called on the Zanzibar Social Security Fund (ZSSF) to invest in profitable projects to avoid losses that make the Fund lose direction and threat of bankruptcy.

Chake Chake Representative Suleiman Sarhani said the Fund is should embark on strategies in investing in various sectors including office buildings.

He said he fears some of big projects implemented by ZSSF have not realized any tangible benefits and good results for the Fund's development including the construction of Tibirizi Children's Playgrounds in Pemba.

"Hon. Speaker, I ask the Fund's leadership to concentrate in beneficial investments to avoid losses that threaten bankruptcy," he said.

Shauri Moyo Representative Hassan Juma congratulated the Fund's investment in the construction of buildings for commercial purposes.

"I am pleased with commercial buildings projects in Unguja urban areas that will bring profits for the Fund's development and increase its income," he said.

Paje Representative Jaku Hashim Ayoub called on ZSSF to build low cost houses that workers can afford to purchase.

He said houses built by the Fund at Mbweni are expensive as no worker from the middle-income bracket can

afford to buy and live in.

"Hon. Speaker, time has now come for the ZSSF to build low cost houses that can be bought by workers who are the Fund's big contributors for them to benefit," he said.

The Minister for Finance and Planning Amb Mohamed Ramia Abdiwawa said the Fund continues three projects including a commercial building at kisonge costing 12.4bn/- and another one adjacent to Thabit Kombo costing 4.6bn/-.

The minister said ZSSF also continues with the construction of a big hotel at Mkoani in Pemba costing 3.6bn/- that will be able to offer reliable accommodation various people including business people.



**I am pleased with commercial buildings projects in Unguja urban areas that will bring profits for the Fund's development and increase its income**

## COVID-19: Karibu Kili Fair cancelled

By Guardian Reporter

THE annual international exhibition in the tourism sector - 'Karibu Kili Fair' will not take place this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, exhibition organisers yesterday said.

The co-director of Kili Fair Promotion Ltd, Dominick Shoo confirmed that the company's board of directors reached

the decision to suspend the exhibition for this year.

The exhibition was slated to be held June 5 to 7 this year, but was pushed back to September, but the Covid-19 infection pace in various foreign countries has forced its cancellation for this year.

"The threat from the increase of Covid-19 infections in the world has

forced us organisers to cancel the exhibition for this year, despite the fact that we had postponed it for three months," said Shoo.

The exhibition was set to be held at Friedkin Recreation Centre in Arusha city formerly known as TGT grounds.

It was expected to draw about 500 tourist companies from 15 countries and was attract over 8,000 buyers

from within and outside the country, including countries in the East African Community (EAC).

Before cancellation international traders owners of various tourist hotels had confirmed participation.

Other participants that had confirmed participation included international airlines and distributors of tourism goods and equipment.



**The threat from the increase of Covid-19 infections in the world has forced us organizers to cancel the exhibition for this year, despite the fact that we had postponed it for three months**



By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

# Wanted: Facilities for local manufacture of lotion to save PWAs from skin cancer

THE Tanzania Albinism Society (TAS) has called on investors to invest in sunscreen lotion manufacturing plant to ease availability of the product to people with albinism. The lotion is used to protect people with albinism from skin cancer.

According to the society's secretary general, Mussa Kabimba, having the plant in the country will facilitate availability of the important product as well as reduce the price which only few can afford presently.

Kabimba said the construction of a modern plant in Tanzania will help people with albinism from poor families access sunscreen lotion at a very cheap price, help Tanzania

to produce a surplus for export and facilitate the making of a semi-industrialised middle income economy by 2025.

"We need investors who can invest in this area because right now majority of albinism from poor families are dying due to skin cancer and other albinism-related health problems because they cannot afford to buy sunscreen lotion imported from Canada, Sweden, UK and Holland," he

said.

Currently, sunscreen is sold at a retail price of 35,000/- to 75,000/- a price which majority of people with Albinism cannot afford.

"We believe the construction of modern factory will also provide room for Tanzania to sell sunscreen lotion in East African Community Countries, southern and central African countries for people with albinism."

He called on the government to create a conducive environment for investors willing to invest in this area to protect people with albinism from skin cancer," he added.

"Our main goal is to extend health services to people with albinism especially those living in rural areas, reduce death rates among them because right now majority of persons with albinism are dying due to skin cancer and lack of funds to travel to Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Kilimanjaro regions for medical treatment," he noted.

He said TAS which was officially registered in 1980, has so far extended its services in 100 district councils in 24 regions both in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2012 report Tanzania has 16,376 people with albinism.

So far the society has managed to reach out to a total of 13,364 PWAs among those 6,513 are men while the remained 6,851 are women.

Elaborating on achievements he said so far TAS has managed to strengthen a good relationship with local and international stakeholders with different activities related to combat discrimination against people with albinism and other issues as well as expand in all regions.



A section of a road near the junction of Dar es Salaam's Sikukuu and Twiga streets undergoes repair yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

## Covid-19 epidemic may push millions more children into child labour, UN agencies say

By Guardian Reporter

MILLIONS more children risk being pushed into child labour as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, which could lead to the first rise in child labour after 20 years of progress, according to a new brief from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNICEF.

According to Covid-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act, child labour decreased by 94 million since 2000, but that gain is now at risk.

Children already in child labour may be working longer hours or under worsening conditions, the report says. More of them may be forced into the worst forms of labour, which causes significant harm to their health and safety.

"As the pandemic wreaks havoc on family incomes, without support, many could resort to child labour," said ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder. "Social protection is vital in times of crisis, as it provides assistance to those who are most vulnerable. Integrating child labour concerns across broader policies for education, social protection, justice, labour markets, and international human and labour rights makes a critical difference."

According to the brief, Covid-19 could result in a rise in poverty and therefore to an increase in child labour as households use every available means to survive. Some studies show that a one percentage point rise in poverty leads to at least a 0.7 per cent increase in child labour in certain countries.

"In times of crisis, child labour

becomes a coping mechanism for many families," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. "As poverty rises, schools close and the availability of social services decreases, more children are pushed into the workforce. As we re-imagine the world post-Covid-19, we need to make sure that children and their families have the tools they need to weather similar storms in the future. Quality education, social protection services and better economic opportunities can be game



**Social protection is vital in times of crisis, as it provides assistance to those who are most vulnerable. Integrating child labour concerns across broader policies for education, social protection, justice, labour markets, and international human and labour rights makes a critical difference**

changers."

Vulnerable population groups - such as those working in the informal economy and migrant workers - will suffer most from economic downturn, increased informality and unemployment, the general fall in living standards, health shocks and insufficient social protection systems, among other pressures.

Evidence is gradually mounting that child labour is rising as schools close during the pandemic. Temporary school closures are currently affecting more than 1 billion learners in over 130 countries. Even when classes restart, some parents may no longer be able to afford to send their children to school.

As a result, more children could be forced into exploitative and hazardous jobs. Gender inequalities may grow more acute, with girls particularly vulnerable to exploitation in agriculture and domestic work, the brief says.

The brief proposes a number of measures to counter the threat of increased child labour, including more comprehensive social protection, easier access to credit for poor households, the promotion of decent work for adults, measures to get children back into school, including the elimination of school fees, and more resources for labour inspections and law enforcement.

ILO and UNICEF are developing a simulation model to look at the impact of Covid-19 on child labour globally. New global estimates on child labour will be released in 2021.

By Guardian Reporter

## EABC for faster movement of freight in EA economic region

THE East African Business Council (EABC) has called on ministers responsible for transport, health and EAC to convene and find a win-win lasting solution to the barriers hindering the free movement of cargo across EAC borders and the borders between Tanzania and Kenya.

In a statement, EABC Executive Director/CEO Dr Peter Mathuki, said that the 14 days standstill on the movement of goods between the two borders risks business continuity and affects intra-EAC trade.

"The East African Business Council appreciates President John Magufuli and his counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta, for their directives on ensuring free movement of goods across borders between Kenya and Tanzania, which will facilitate increased trade between the two countries," he said, adding:

"There are over 1000 trucks stranded at both sides of the border, this is significantly affecting the intra-EAC trade and movement of essential and perishable goods across borders."

"Furthermore, there is a slowdown in movement of cargo across all EAC borders, this is disrupting regional value chains due to the emerging challenges restricting the movement of truck drivers in a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19," he added.

He added that the EAC Partner States are relying on sourcing final products, intermediate input and raw materials within the region due to the disruption of the global supply chain by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Facilitating the free movement of

cargo across borders is vital towards the economic recovery of the EAC region during and post COVID-19 pandemic. The East African Business Council urges the concerned ministries to embrace dialogue towards an EAC coordinated approach on COVID-19," he added.

He said EABC is ready to offer support towards a public-private dialogue on cross border trade in order to unblock the current trade barriers, which is critical for economic recovery for the EAC region. According to the International Trade Centre, in 2018, Kenya imported products valued approximately USD 175.9 million from Tanzania and exported approximately USD 293.5 million.

### VACANCY

"Looking for **Production Manager** with **5 years' experience** in production related field. Must have experience in **working in a Sign Manufacturing** company or **fabrication company**. **Minimum education background - Bachelor's degree**"

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

President's Office

TANZANIA SOCIAL ACTION FUND



### REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)

**Country:** Tanzania  
**Name of Project:** Productive Social Safety Net Project II (PSSN II)  
**Assignment Title:** Director of Finance and Administration  
**Reference No.:** TZ-TASAF-174854-CS-INDV

- The Government of the united republic of Tanzania has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Productive Social Safety Net II. This project will be jointly financed by the Agency for International Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria, International Fund for Agriculture Development, The government of NORWAY and OPEC. The Tanzania Social Action Fund the implementing agency for this Project intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.
- The consulting services ("the Services") objective is to manage the financial, accounting and administration functions of the Project as specified in the Financing Agreement and the project documents but not limited to the project appraisal document (PAD) and the Operational Manual.
- The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be found at the following website: [www.tasaf.go.tz](http://www.tasaf.go.tz) and can be obtained at the address given below.
- The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) now invites eligible Individual Consultant ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide CVs demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The Individual Consultant must have the following qualifications and skills.
  - Holder of Master's Degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, Human Resources Management, Public Administration, or any other related field from recognized university.
  - Must possess internationally recognized accounting professional qualification such as CPA (T), ACCA, CIMA or other related profession.
  - Must be registered with the National Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA) in the category of Associate Certified Public Accountant (ACPA) or Fellow Certified Public Accountant (FCPA).
  - At least ten (10) years' experience in finance, human resource and administration in Public and / or Private Sectors of which seven (7) years must be at senior managerial position.
  - Must have a working knowledge of computerized Accounting systems.
  - Must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of and experience with donor funded project.
  - High level of communication and interpersonal skills and ability to work with people at all levels. .
  - Ability to supervise, train and coach staff in relevant skills.
  - Self-motivated with integrity and high level of confidentiality
- The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" July 2016 and revised in November 2017 and August 2018 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours from 8.00 to 16.00 Local Time on Mondays to Fridays inclusive except on Public Holidays.
- A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Individual Consultant method set out in the Procurement Regulations.
- Expressions of interest enclosing scanned certified copies of certificates and curriculum vitae must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person, or by mail, or by e-mail by 9th July, 2020.

The Executive Director,  
Tanzania Social Action Fund,  
Board of Trustee of PSSSF Building,  
Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete Road,  
P. O. Box 2719,  
Dodoma, Tanzania  
Tel: +255 26 2963866  
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# Children welfare stakeholders talk of need for boost in awareness on rights of minors

By Getrude Mbogo

AS Tanzania prepares to join other countries to commemorate the International Day of the African Child on June 16, parents and guardians have been urged to remain vigilant, fulfill their parental responsibilities and protect their children against violence.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam yesterday, Jesca Ndana, programme manager (Child Protection and Child Rights Governance) at Save the Children Tanzania said that violence against children remains one of the most serious human rights violations in the country which calls for determined efforts to curb it.

She was speaking during the meeting which brought together children from various parts of Dar es Salaam to among other things, discuss and capacitate them with skills and knowledge on their rights and how to fight violence in school and home areas.

"Covid-19 has also brought some negative impacts to our children as most of the time they spend at home with some of them using the internet, this should be closely monitored to ensure that the digital platforms are properly used. Children may also find falling into hands abusers within or outside their families, parents should continue keeping their closer eyes on their children," she said.

Ndana noted that the Day of the African Child is celebrated annually on 16 June and commemorates the thousands of courageous children in Soweto, South Africa who marched in 1976 to protest apartheid and to demand equal education.

This year's theme is "Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa". For her part, Neema Bwaira, child

protection expert at Save the Children stressed on the need for more education and awareness programmes especially to under-served communities.

Bwaira also noted that violence against children was on the rise because some of the parents have forgotten their roles while spending most of their time in other responsibilities than being close to their children.

"My appeal to parents is to ensure that they closely follow the day to day children activities and make sure that everything goes okay. They should also talk to them openly about sexual and rape incidents to make them comfortable to report whenever the incidents happens," she said

Some children called on authorities to establish gender and violence desks out of the police stations for the children to be confident to report and explain freely once they face violence acts. "We always fear to go to police stations whenever we face challenges, so it is better to establish these special desks in schools or other areas out of police stations," said Melkion Evance, a Standard Seven pupil at New Vibe primary school in Mbezi-Dar es Salaam.

Cecilia Kaduga, a child from SOS Tanzania urged the government to come up with special policies and strategies to ensure that children remain safe from Covid-19 infections and violence once the schools are opened.

*"We always fear to go to police stations whenever we face challenges, so it is better to establish these special desks in schools or other areas out of police stations"*



Monduli district commissioner Iddi Kimanta closes a Covid-19 sensitisation for education officers as well as primary and secondary school teachers yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

By Guardian Reporter

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) has reiterated its unwavering support and commitment to stand in solidarity with, and to combat any form of discrimination against persons with albinism in the region and across the world.

SADC executive secretary Stergomena Tax made the remarks when speaking on the International Albinism Awareness Day, which is commemorated worldwide today.

"We recognise that persons with albinism continue to face various forms of abuse, ranging from stigma and discrimination, low access to health and education services, social and political exclusion, as well as persecution that sometimes includes ritual murders," Tax said in a statement.

She added: "It is for this reason that

## SADC reiterates support to PWAs

SADC condemns and will continue to condemn, in the strongest terms, all forms of violations and abuse against persons with albinism."

She said: "On this day, it is crucial to underscore the need for advocacy interventions to dispel societal myths and misconceptions about albinism and to ensure the protection and upholding of the rights of persons with albinism.

"These will also contribute to amplifying and strengthening the voice of persons with albinism and for relevant stakeholders such as government ministries, and non-state actors to mainstream albinism in their planning and programming."

"In the same breath, I wish to commend member states that have

made efforts to combat persecution of people with albinism," she noted.

SADC also applauds the admirable strength and willpower demonstrated by people with albinism to persevere, despite the various challenges they face, the official said.

"We encourage role models with albinism to share their success stories to reinforce our belief that people with albinism can shine amidst difficult times and to encourage others to stand up for their rights and shine."

The day follows the adoption of Resolution 170 by the 69th United Nations General Assembly on 18 December,

2014, in which the General Assembly encouraged Member States to, among other things, protect and preserve the rights of persons with albinism

to life, dignity and security, as well as their right not to be subject to torture and cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In the same resolution, Member States were called upon to observe International Albinism Awareness Day in order to increase awareness of the human rights situation of persons with albinism and understanding of albinism.

This year's International Albinism Awareness Day is commemorated under the theme: 'Made to Shine', which was chosen to recognise, celebrate and stand in solidarity with persons with albinism around the world, and to ensure that they live free from discrimination and fear, and are empowered to enjoy their fundamental human rights.



Construction of a maternity and child ward building at Bukima village dispensary in Musoma Rural constituency has begun in earnest, as witnessed earlier this week. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Africa free trade zone to be launched on Jan 1 - official

JOHANNESBURG

THE African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) could begin operating on January 1 next year, after the COVID-19 pandemic made its original launch date untenable, the official charged with overseeing the bloc's establishment said on Thursday.

But speaking during a webinar organised by the Africa CEO Forum, AfCFTA Secretary-General Wamkele Mene said the new target date would be subject to the disease's spread on the continent.

"We have made a recommendation that in the next six months the free trade zone could start trading but subject to the pandemic itself," he said.

The trade deal had been due to be implemented from July 1.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) predicts there will be a steady increase in COVID-19 cases in Africa until a vaccine is developed.

Mene, who is essentially an advisor to government leaders on the AfCFTA, said most African nations are either in partial lockdown or have closed their borders, complicating the establishment of the trade bloc.

"It is not credible for us to say that we are trading from July 1 when we know that trucks at borders are lined up 40

to 50 kilometres," he said.

The continental free-trade zone, once implemented, would be the largest new economic bloc since the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1994. It will bring together 1.3 billion people in a \$3.4 trillion economic partnership.

The onset of the pandemic halted negotiations and trading between member countries during April and May and this made the July 1 date impractical, Mene said.

He added that he hoped member countries would conclude negotiations on tariffs over the next six months.

AfCFTA is a free trade area which, as of 2018, includes 28 countries. It was created by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement among 54 of the 55 African Union nations.



**"We have made a recommendation that in the next six months the free trade zone could start trading but subject to the pandemic itself"**

## Burundi's court to decide on interim leader after death of Nkurunziza

NAIROBI

BURUNDI'S constitutional court will decide who takes over as interim leader following the sudden death this week of President Pierre Nkurunziza, the government said in a statement on Thursday.

According to the constitution the speaker of the House is supposed to take over, but there has been uncertainty as to who is in charge.

The government announced on Tuesday that Nkurunziza, 55, had died of a heart attack although it was not clear which day he died.

Nkurunziza had been due to hand over power in August to President-elect Evariste Ndayishimiye, who successfully stood for the ruling party in elections last month.

The cabinet decided at an extraordinary cabinet meeting on Wednesday that the constitutional court should guide the country

and "show modalities of filling the post," the government statement said.

Burundi watchers have been keen to see whether the country's powerful cabal of army generals and security chiefs who propped up Nkurunziza during his 15-year rule remain united over the succession.

Nkurunziza was a former rebel leader whose rule was marked by widespread brutality and repression against his opponents. The economy

is also in tatters after donors, whose aid was a key source of government revenue, shunned it amid the human rights violations.

Authorities have not yet announced a date for Nkurunziza's burial.

Nkurunziza became the president of the small, landlocked East African country in 2005.

He was re-elected in 2010 and in 2015 when he won a controversial third term despite opposition protests and international

condemnation.

Nkurunziza's candidacy had been condemned as unconstitutional by the opposition, sparking months of protests and an attempted coup in May of that year.

His victory also triggered donor sanctions against the country. But the government dismissed international criticism, including by the US, EU and former colonial power Belgium, which described the election as not credible.



# African scientists due to 'resurrect' research sidelined by Covid-19

By John Agaba

AS African nations begin easing the lockdown imposed to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, scientists are uncertain about the fate of their research projects.

A number of scientists in Uganda say they completely lost their research during that country's two-month lockdown, while others were unable to continue their experiments because they couldn't procure essential supplies, including test kits, and also lacked support staff to help carry out their work.

Arthur Tugume, professor of plant pathology and genetics at the Department of Plant Sciences, Microbiology and Biotechnology at Makerere University, said the crisis has delayed biotechnology research in the country and other scientific research on the continent. "Everything is at standstill," Tugume said. "The challenge of obtaining supplies is widespread."

Scientists expect the epidemic's impact on agricultural research will be prolonged and worsen as public funding for research is diverted to dealing with COVID-19.

"To abandon agricultural research is equivalent to signing an economic and population death warrant from which recovery will take several decades," Tugume warned.

Dr. Titus Alicai, a plant virologist who has spent the last eight years developing a genetically modified virus-resistant cassava variety at the National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI) at Namulonge, embodies this disappointment.

Since the lockdown, he's been unable to progress his research, which is at the regulatory stage, as he would have liked because his support staff can't make it to the institute.

"Immediately after Museveni announced the lockdown, many technicians and research assistants and other support staff at the institute who use public transport could no longer come to work," Alicai told the Alliance for Science.

"The casual laborers who come to the institute to help when we are planting field trials or selecting varieties, they too could no longer move," he said.

Alicai's research at NaCRRI is at the stage where scientists at the institution already know that the technology works – the new variety is virus-resistant. Now, they need to start selecting cultivars and assembling desirable varieties for further breeding. But the researcher cannot do all that work by himself, even when assisted by a few other officers who managed to commute to the institute in spite of the lockdown.

"After we have confirmed that the technology works, usually the next phase is to select germplasm and prepare for multiple site trials," Alicai said. "We have to plant multiple site trials because we want to be sure that the variety is high yielding and can be planted in various locations. Also, because we have to assess that the new variety is substantially like any other cassava, except that it is virus-resistant."

"This is a lot of work," he continued. "Usually, we take one or two days to plant a field trial when we have the other support staff. Now we would need more than a week."

Alicai, who has also been burdened by insufficient access to coronavirus test kits that would help staff safely return to work, said the disruption caused by the virus and lockdown "is causing different effects on the timelines of the products we are developing."

Tugume said many scientists in Uganda and Africa were unable to continue their agricultural research because of disruptions in the global supply chain that have exacerbated the challenge of insufficient research supplies and other consumables on the continent.

"Uganda and generally Africa rely more than 95 percent on supplies and consumables from abroad, whose importation is not possible at this time," said Tugume told the Alliance for Science. "Even if importation was possible, no one is available at the suppliers' end and there is going to be less activity to supply the consumables."

The supply chain is generally 'frozen' and cannot at the moment sustain any biotechnology research.

"Even if you wanted to plan a new project, you cannot do it now because of the uncertainty," he continued. "The crisis has delayed biotechnology research in the country just like it has other scientific research on the continent. Some scientists have even lost their research."

As an example, Tugume pointed to researchers in his department who completely lost biological experiments because Uganda's lockdown was not announced in advance and they could not plan for a disruption in their work.

Worse still, Tugume said, funding organizations may redefine their priorities post-COVID-19 and allocate more of their resources to coronavirus-related research, which would stifle other research, including biotechnology.

"A great proportion of research in Uganda, just like studies for higher degrees, is privately funded," Tugume said. "It is possible that if government of Uganda has money for anything called research, COVID-19 research would be priority, and perhaps this may be similar paradigm shift in funding organizations worldwide."

The Ugandan government recently approved US\$8 million for Makerere University for research in all disciplines, which Tugume characterized as "far too small. However, if invested correctly, meaningful strides are possible with these small research investments."

Scientists in Uganda and Africa have been making strides in agricultural research, developing crop varieties that are higher yielding, disease-resistant and drought-tolerant.

For instance, scientists at the National Agricultural Research Laboratories (NARL) at Kawanda are concluding research for a GM banana that's bio-fortified with pro-vitamin A, while other scientists in Africa have developed drought-tolerant maize varieties, including Water Efficient Maize for Africa. Alicai's cassava research was estimated to be ready for farmers in 2021 or 2022.

But COVID-19 and associated lockdowns across the continent are slowing all this research. It is expected governments will not relax measures until the pandemic has eased and cases have started dropping.

Tugume said Uganda and Africa can't afford to "completely abandon" agricultural research – even in these very trying times. "This could be deadly, only silently," he said.

"Our lives in Uganda and elsewhere hinge on a continuous supply of food supported by critical scientific and agricultural research systems," the professor said. "This is why food supply during COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda [and the globe] was left as most essential service, besides medical care."

"Continuous agricultural research ensures healthy and robust cropping systems avoiding crop and animal disease epidemics that can wipe our entire farms of crops and animals," he added.

As the lockdown eases, scientists will be looking to resume their research through the use of social distancing. "Everyone can create his or her physical limits in the laboratories," even when scientific research cannot be done in isolation, Tugume said.

This implies reducing the number of people in the lab by limiting access to key persons, removing technicians and making research scientists responsible for ensuring the sterility of the environment.

Tugume said scientists might also be facing higher costs to maintain their research, such as buying face masks or even purchasing bicycles for staff who cannot use public transport.

**“Uganda and generally Africa rely more than 95 percent on supplies and consumables from abroad, whose importation is not possible at this time”**



Councillor Jumanne Ngeede (L) for Chamwino in Dodoma Region pictured yesterday addressing a ward-level meeting called to discuss the implementation of the CCM Election Manifesto. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

By Adam Crook

# App uses science, tradition to warn farmers about drought

TO help farmers prepare for the impacts of climate change, Kenyan computer scientist Mtoni Masinde designed the mobile platform IT. Name Information Technology and Indigenous Knowledge, and the platform sends farmers 'drought instructions via an app or SMS message.

Although it uses climate data, Masinde says most African farmers are well-connected with traditional knowledge, which can also be used to formulate the expectations of the platform.

"I grew up with one Kenyan, I have noticed that there is no science to tell the village and most farmers when to plant," Masinde said.

"They look at insects, they look at animal behavior and they make a decision, 'I think it will rain in two weeks' time."

ITIKI employs young people in

farming communities to collect photos and updates about animal behavior and native vegetation, including tree flowering. They summarize their results in the ITIKI app and ITIKI collects this information from local weather stations for data weather forecasts for months.

Farmers can subscribe to just one service a few cents, and receive updates regularly in their native language, helping them make advance decisions about what crops they should plant and whether to sell or save their produce.

Most African countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change and small-scale farmers in particular, who rely on rainfall for their

crops, are, accordingly, facing poverty and food insecurity, UN climate experts.

That could have major economic consequences. Agriculture contributes 15 percent of total GDP in Africa 2017 UN Report, and constitutes up to half of the continent's employment African Development Bank (AfDB).

Masinde, now a professor at the Central University of Technology Free State in South Africa, launched the app in Kenya in 2016, where agriculture is One-third of GDP.

"Investing in climate-friendly solutions, especially targeting small-scale farmers, is driving GDP growth in Africa," said Masinde.

African governments are responding

to drought and severe weather, rather than planning ahead for these events. "We are not prepared, she said. When we woke up and found that people in rural Kenya were starving, there was no rain for people on one side of the country."

More than 15 thousand farmers in Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa are using IT, Masinde said. Masinde said their crop yields have increased by an average of 11% since farmers started using the app.

IT has received 50,000 750,000 grants from the US and South African governments, which will be used to increase operations. By the end of this year, Masinde expects 100,000 farmers to sign up for the platform.



A resident of Dar es Salaam's Goba suburb pictured yesterday drawing water of highly suspicious quality from Mbezi River. She was out to do some laundry and possibly return home with some of the liquid for domestic use - but not for drinking. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

# AfDB announces 100 finalists for #AfricaVsVirus Challenge

ABIDJAN

THE African Development Bank has announced the 100 finalists from the #AfricaVsVirus Challenge ideathon to find solutions to challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa.

Some 25,000 participants from across Africa and beyond joined the online platform to pitch their ideas for innovative solutions to the health and economic challenges caused by the virus. Participants in the 72-hour ideathon curated 750 solutions, from which an expert panel selected the Top 100 Solutions.

"The quality of ideas and the level of engagement from participants during the online challenge showcases that innovation and a passion to find solutions are among Africa's

greatest resources," said Dr Jennifer Blanke, the Bank's Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development.

"We're looking forward to the next phase of the #AfricaVsVirus competition that will aim to boost the viability of the top solutions."

The solutions were focused on specific thematic areas relevant to the African context, such as public health and epidemiology, vulnerable populations, businesses & economy, community, education, entertainment, government support, environment and energy and food security.

More than 4,000 moderators and mentors facilitated and supported the teams during the ideathon, making it one of the largest online brainstorming events ever conducted on the continent

to seek out African solutions to African challenges.

Judges evaluated submissions based on several criteria, including the relevance of solutions, the implementation plan, and the impact and quality of the team. The experts included: Yana Watson, Global Managing Partner Emeritus at Dalberg Global Development Advisors; Ada Osakwe, Creative Food Entrepreneur and Investor at Agrolay Ventures; and Vanessa Mounzar, Director for Gender, Women and Civil Society at the African Development Bank Group.

Through the African Development Bank's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab Platform, the Bank will now act as an enabler to match the most relevant solutions to the initiative's 140+ partners.

The Bank will award the 20 best solutions out of the Top 100 Solutions finalists, further technical assistance. In addition, the 20 winners will be eligible to receive, from a pool of in-kind prizes, worth more than \$1 million in awards, to be announced in September.

The #AfricaVsVirus challenge is part of the Bank's continent-wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bank has launched a \$10 billion Covid Response Facility to help countries strengthen their health and social protection systems as well as build economic resilience to sustain jobs and livelihoods.

The primary objective of the Bank's Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy is to harness the innovation, creativity and energy of Africa's youth to solve Africa's challenges.



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## Budget proposals promising, but life might be a bit harder

FINANCE and Planning minister Dr Philip Mpango on Thursday tabled the nation's fiscal plan and wider economic prospects for the coming financial year, at what is a high moment in the calendar of the country's legislature.

This year has the added element of being a General Election year, so overall there was an aspect of 'au revoir' (see you next time) embedded in the proposed Budget as a campaign platform of sorts, and in view of the forthcoming dissolution of the House.

The budget needs to be fair and reasonable each year, and more so in an election year, as it may definitely affect voting attitudes if it has undue shocks to many.

The minister made a neat balancing act, as he is wont to do each year, by seeking out under-taxed areas and bringing them more into the fold alongside lessening the burden for relatively overtaxed areas.

That is how the proposed Budget reduced fire and rescue inspection fees on mini hydro power stations of less than 10 Megawatts from 6m/- to 0.2m/-. It is an example of a substantial alteration indicating a change of attitude on taxation in relation to that sphere of public activity, compared to others.

Such changes are conducted each year as there is no stationary formula for effective, fair taxation thus it must always be reviewed.

Looking at some of the bigger changes there is a mixture of reduction of privileges of some regulatory and service agencies, whose prerogatives have continually been cited as encumbering the country's business environment.

In some cases as in fire inspection the proposals massively altered the situation, and imposed it where it was

lacking, for instance inspection of gas deposits of up to 20 tonnes - pegged at 2m/-.

Accident investigation fees were also brought down to 120,000/- per expert instead of 500,000/-, and the total on no account should exceed a bill of 1m/- for the same task - as it was earlier open to abuse.

The mass consumer aspect of the proposals was somewhat mitigated, was importing basic necessities like sugar and wheat - where local production is perennially insufficient - was eased in the proposals, while more durable imports of much less direct need, including used clothing, was raised.

The rationale about encouraging local production of fabrics is alright but it only constitutes an aspect where producers want the government to block imports of used clothes by as much as it can. But lower classes making up the majority of users of such imports wish that government is mindful of their poverty.

On the whole, the government is on track with economic prospects and projections, especially having found realistic premises for pegging the total budget at 34 trillion/- - implying that not much effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is embedded in the estimates.

To some people that may appear obvious and realistic, while some will view it as overly optimistic. Developed countries are keeping their fingers crossed, hoping that changes in the weather as the end of the year approaches will not raise the rate of Covid-19 and other infections to pandemic levels again.

Still, with a mostly fair national budget, not even electoral politicking can shake the solidarity registered within it. Is that what we will witness? We hope so - but let's wait and see.

## Albinism a big challenge to public health in Africa

INTERNATIONAL Albinism Awareness Day is celebrated annually on June 13 to celebrate the human rights of persons with albinism worldwide. Around the mid-2000s, reports made public a rising number of violent attacks on and murders of persons with albinism in Tanzania.

Albinism, is the most prevalent type found throughout Africa. Due to the lack of melanin, people with albinism are more susceptible to the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation exposure. This population must deal with issues such as photophobia, decreased visual acuity, extreme sun sensitivity and skin cancer. People with albinism also face social discrimination as a result of their difference in appearance. The World Health Organisation is currently investigating the issues concerning this vulnerable population.

A World Health Organisation (WHO) pilot survey of albinism was drafted in English, French and Portuguese, and distributed to African countries through WHO African Regional Offices in an attempt to gather further information on albinism.

Many reports have accused perpetrators to attribute magical powers to the bodies of persons with albinism and, thus, to be motivated to use them for lucky charms and occult rituals. Until 2015, perpetrators killed more than 70 victims and harmed many more. In response, the Tanzania Albinism Society (TAS) and other NGOs began campaigning for the human rights of persons with albinism. TAS celebrated the first 'Albino Day' on May 4, 2006. It became 'National Albino Day' from 2009 onwards and was eventually called 'National Albinism Day'.

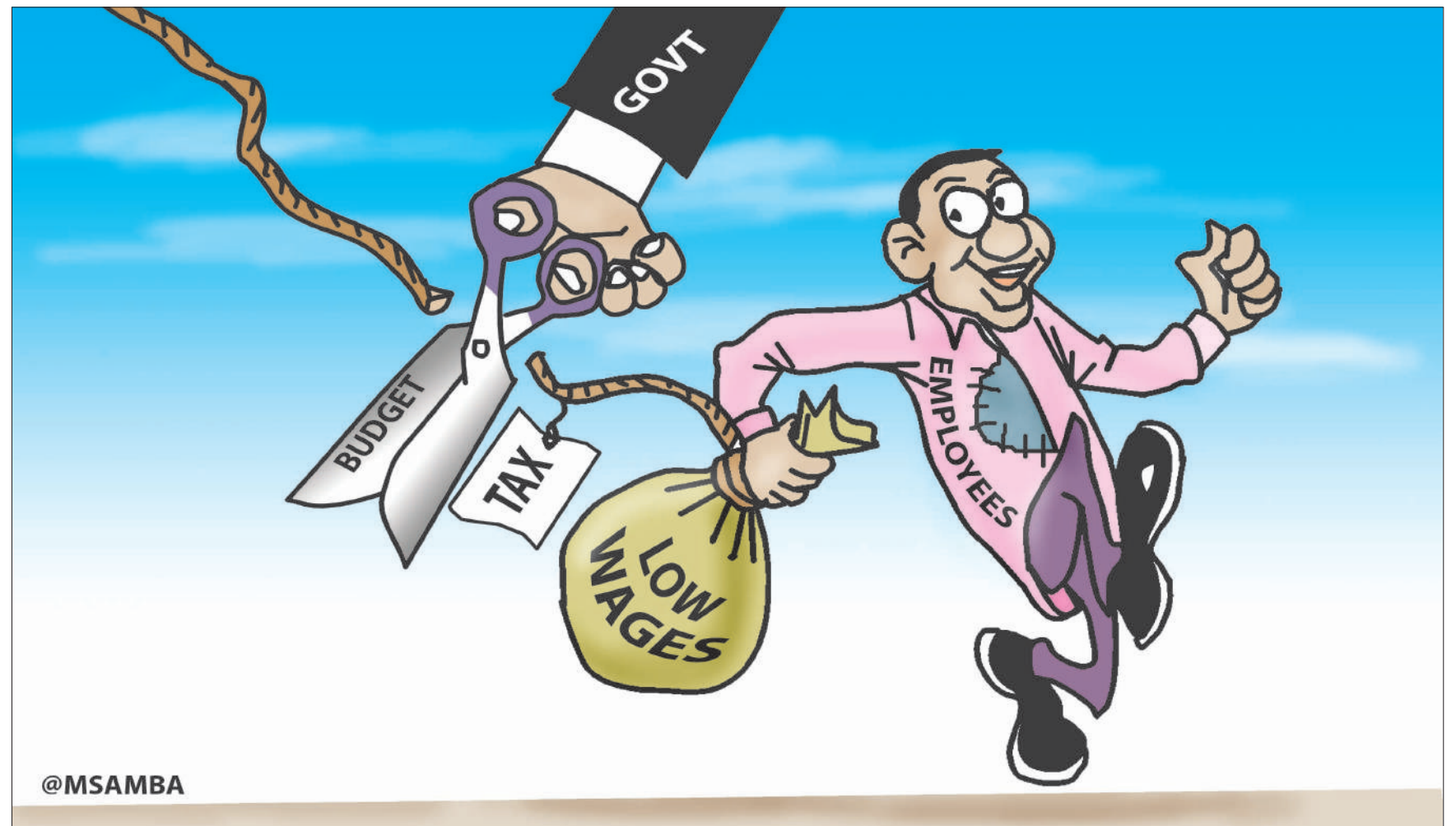
On an international level, the Canadian NGO Under the Same Sun

(UTSS) joined late Ambassador of the Mission of Somalia to the United Nations (UN), Yusuf Mohamed Ismail Bari-Bari, in his effort to pass a resolution promoting and protecting the rights of persons with albinism. Such a resolution came about when the Human Rights Council on June 13, 2013 adopted the first resolution ever on albinism.

Later on, in its resolution of June 26, 2014 the Human Rights Council recommended June 13 to be proclaimed as International Albinism Awareness Day by the United Nations' General Assembly. The UN's General Assembly, then, adopted on December 18, 2014 resolution to proclaim, with effect from 2015, June 13 as International Albinism Awareness Day. The chosen date is reminiscent of the UN's first ever resolution which was passed on June 13 a year before. Today, IAAD is celebrated around the world from Tanzania, to Argentina, to Senegal, to Fiji, France, the United Kingdom and Namibia.

Epidemiologic data on albinism, such as prevalence, were available for South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Nigeria. Prevalences as high as 1 in 1,000 were reported for selected populations in Zimbabwe and other specific ethnic groups in southern Africa. In addition, both the literature review and the survey underscored the medical and social issues facing people with albinism.

The estimated prevalence of albinism suggests the existence of tens of thousands of people living with albinism in Africa. This finding reiterates the need for increased awareness of and public health interventions for albinism in order to better address the medical, psychological and social needs of this vulnerable population.



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BY WOLE OLAOYE

THE Covid-19 saga and the additional dislocation it has caused in the lives of Africans who, at the best of

times have always been at the mercy of myriad ill-winds, made me ruminate over why we are always the ones to hold the short end of the stick as if there's something bewitching our stars.

The rest of the world doesn't think much of us. And, from the way some of us behave, it seems we don't think much of ourselves either. That is why a black-on-black xenophobic attack (as happened in South Africa) is more likely than a mob action against any other race.

We were the first humans to grace the surface of God's earth. We had a glorious past before other races rudely interrupted our giant strides. But what has happened since then? Why are we the most miserable beggars and debtors on the planet today? Even the yellow pint-sized people from China who we used to look at with amusement are now our creditors and, in some cases, landlords.

US and European institutions can't give bribe or participate in underhand dealings on the scale the Chinese routinely do. The Asian champions seem to prefer nations who default in repayment so that they, the lenders, can take over the running of the project as happened in Zambia.

Chinese companies usually import required labour from China. Where they employ Africans, the staff are not allowed to unionise and are treated like garbage with the acquiescence of the local authorities.

## Nigeria is 14th most fragile state in the world

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BASED on information at its disposal, the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) recently alerted Nigeria to a looming security danger. Boko Haram insurgents, according to the UN agency, was planning a complex and coordinated attacks on the nation's critical infrastructure, essentially to weaken government's efforts and distract military attention from the decade-long war in the Northeast. This is a threat that must be taken seriously, especially against the background of the latest report on Fragile States Index (FSI) which ranked Nigeria as the 14th most fragile state in the world. Compiled by the Fund for Peace (FFP), a Washington D.C.-based organisation, the FSI focuses on weak and failing states.

The 2019 report showed that Nigeria was just a point above its unenviable 13th position in 2017, indicating that not much progress had been made in

## Value of lives of Africans should never be at the mercy of ill-winds

From the era of slave trade and colonisation, we have entered a period of voluntary enslavement where our youths, desperate to escape the dysfunctional environment at home, offer themselves as willing slaves in Europe, America, the Middle East and Far East. T

his is ironic because, of all the world's continents, Africa is the richest in terms of resources.

The misrule of African leaders devalues African life, deplete our resources and destroys the feeling of self worth. When we treat our own people as garbage, can we reasonably expect others to treat us better? Abuse of Africans is wrong, whether perpetrated by Chinese, Americans, Arabs, Europeans or even African leaders themselves.

Milton G. Allimadi, publisher of Black Star News says, "Nobody will respect Africans until Africans show that they deserve respect by first getting rid of the misrulers in Africa who continue to abuse Africans, massacre Africans, devalue the lives and essence of Africans..."

When the sociology of our reaction to Covid-19 is eventually analysed, it will be discovered that it is anything but African. We simply cut and pasted protocols and practices established elsewhere. Not that we needed to reinvent the wheel, but we could have tweaked things to reflect our circumstances. The pathology of

Covid-19 shows that age is a serious risk factor. Whereas only 0.2% of those infected in the 10 to 30 years category will die of the disease, victims under the age of 10 are likely to make full recovery.

Scientists estimate 0.32% fatality rate in people aged 60 and under, and 6.4% for people over the age of 60. The older you are, the worse the prognosis.

Average male life expectancy in Nigeria is 55 years while that of South Africa (with only 3% of the population over 65 years) is 60 years. Among all the continents, Africa has the largest concentration of young people. The median age in Europe is 42 while that of Africa is 18.

If age is a factor in Covid-19, and it is, then Africa has less to fear. Rather, we must continue to dread and wage war against malaria, pneumonia, Lassa fever and other Afro-specific diseases routinely depopulating our communities.

Then, look at the lockdown decrees. Logical as they appear, our circumstances dictate that they will mostly be observed in their breach. How do you lock down in a face-me-I-face-you tenement building? The average population in many of the densely populated areas is about eight per room -- and some houses have 12 rooms (96 humans) sharing two bathrooms!

The situation is worse in some IDPs camps where everybody is literally in

the face of everybody else. It is difficult to discountenance the suggestion that relative youth is the armour shielding many of our people against Covid-19.

On this matter of lockdown, I'm on the same page with Prof. Alex Broadbent who counsels that Africa should think outside the box.

"Is there an alternative to lockdown? Yes, lock down areas where this makes sense, and which have the older portion of the population, but don't lock down where it's impossible to do so. Regional quarantine may be more effective in Africa, where conurbations are separated by large distances.

The benefits of separating at-risk populations also deserve fuller consideration. In Africa, and other developing regions, older people in urban areas often move back to rural areas. In rural villages, it may be possible to separate older and younger people more easily than in a crowded township or slum, where lockdown is a nonsense."

African lives do matter. It is time we brought some original thinking to bear on how we run our affairs, how we react to various challenges buffeting us on all sides, how we exorcise corruption and navigate the treacherous economic tides away from loan sharks whose sole aim is to compromise the future of our children, and how we generally show the rest of the world that we value our own lives.

and security woes like Central African Republic, Sudan, Afghanistan and the like. Individual FSI score is usually any number from zero to 10 that depicts the intensity of the pressure exerted by each of 12 social, economic and political indicators on conditions within each of the countries on the index. The lower a country's total score, the more stable it is. Of the 178 countries assessed this year, 164 countries were more stable than Nigeria.

Nigeria has remained firmly rooted in the top 20 of the weakest states in the world. When the assessment started in 2005, the country was ranked 54, and the best so far.

She had degenerated since then, sliding to 17th in 2007, 18th in 2008, 15th in 2009 and 14th between 2010 and 2012. And there is no disputing the fact that Nigeria merits her position. With the Boko Haram devastation of the North-east, wanton kidnapping and armed robbery, the rampage of violent herdsmen in most part the Middle-Belt as well as internecine ethnic strife in

several parts of the country, Nigeria has fallen so badly short of the standards set for the various political indicators. It is very clear that the Nigerian state is losing the dominance of the machinery of violence to non-state actors.

To compound the problem, the prevailing economic downturn worsened by the Coronavirus pandemic has constrained the capacity of both the state and individuals, so much so that basic necessities of life, including food, medicare and shelter have gone far beyond the reach of the majority of Nigerians. The conflicts are widening and agitations are increasing by the day. What we need to debate now is how to apply the wedge and pull her back from the brink.

We urge introspection and ask the federal government to take the lead in instituting appropriate social policies that would engender a regime of justice, a major requirement for peace and security. The government could start with the restructuring process. It will resolve a lot of the pressures.



# Starting to slip up? Your brain is entering quarantine fatigue

By Kate Morgan

**B**EFORE the FedEx (courier) driver made it to the bottom of my driveway, I was bounding out the door to grab the package he'd just left. It wasn't until I had plopped it onto the counter and sliced it open that I realised I hadn't thought to disinfect it or been patient enough to let it sit for 20 minutes, let alone 24 hours - the length of time studies show the coronavirus can survive on cardboard.

That's not the only way I'm slipping. I'm still washing my produce, but I've stopped thoroughly disinfecting all of my groceries.

I'm still washing my hands, of course, but it seems like the current bottle of soap is lasting much longer than the ones before it. And, honestly, I couldn't tell you the last time I disinfected my laptop keyboard or wiped down the backs of my kitchen chairs.

In the grand scheme of things, those lapses are pretty minor, but I'm certainly not alone in cutting corners. As we near the fourth month of social distancing and stay-at-home measures, plenty of people are finding themselves being much less vigilant than they were at the pandemic's outset.

Jackie Gollan, PhD, a clinical psychologist and associate professor at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, calls it "caution fatigue".

She says: "People begin to show low motivation or energy to comply with safety guidelines. We become impatient with warnings, don't believe them to be entirely real or relevant, and start to interpret risk incorrectly."

If you've found yourself playing fast and loose with hand-washing or mask-wearing, despite being a rational person who knows that the virus is still spreading, blame it on your brain's incredible ability to adapt.

"What's really happening, underneath all of it, is that we're becoming desensitised," Gollan says, adding: "Initially, we're fearful and we take action. But the brain is wired to adjust, and it gets tired of being on high alert all the time because that's a taxing thing for the brain to be doing."

Eileen Flanagan, who has experienced serious illness in the past, says that when reports of Covid-19 cases began in the US the threat of the coronavirus triggered crippling anxiety.

"I was so freaked out, I mean, I was crazy," she says. Flanagan lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with two roommates - a health care professional and a FedEx employee.

"They'd leave for work in the morning and I would go through the house and Clorox wipe every doorknob, every handle, every light switch," she says.

Flanagan was laid off from her job at a local hotel and was too afraid to work her other gig - at a farmer's market where, in the early days, not everyone was wearing a mask.

Flanagan says that for three straight weeks, she just repeated her cleaning routines over and over: elaborating: "It was the only thing that calmed my nerves. I was totally motivated by fear - fear of reliving serious illness, fear that got worse every time I heard people talking about



how bad it is, about not being able to breathe."

Gollan says that's true for many people right now, noting that the disinfecting and sanitising procedures started weeks ago were all about taming the terror.

She notes further: "You clean the groceries, and nothing happens - meaning that you don't get sick - and you think, 'Oh, great, that's a working solution'. But it requires a lot of effort to keep that routine going."

The fear, now a constant companion, is meanwhile losing its edge. "The act of washing the groceries was designed to turn off the fear. Now we don't have as much fear, so we don't need it," says Gollan.

She says the grocery-disinfecting, specifically, was always just about making people feel better anyway: the FDA (US Food and Drug Administration) says there's "no evidence... food or food packaging being associated with transmission of the coronavirus".

That tendency to adapt to - and stop appreciating the risks of - an ongoing threat may seem like a neurological design flaw, but it's just your

brain continuing to protect you, albeit from a different kind of harm.

An extended period of stressed-out hypervigilance can wreak havoc, physically and psychologically. Gollan says constant surges of the stress hormone cortisol can cause cardiovascular and gastrointestinal issues, inflammation and depression - "none of which does your immune system any favours".

Gollan elaborates: "In short: Yes, sanitising and following social distancing guidelines are an important part of staying well. But if taking a few shortcuts - the kind that don't put other people's lives in jeopardy - makes you feel a little less keyed-up, then that's healthy too."

Flanagan's panic-driven response has dulled; and not a moment too soon. "I think the fear would have driven me to madness," she says. She's still doing some Clorox wiping at home, but it's a few times a week rather than multiple times a day.

And she's gone back to work. She says: "That's another way I had to let my guard

down a bit. I had to - I needed an income. But I also started to feel, as time went on, that if you're smart about it, you can keep yourself safe." "As fear drops, caution drops," Gollan says, explaining that it's just the way the brain is hardwired. The good news is that it can be hacked. The coronavirus concerns may not be going anywhere anytime soon, so we need to develop sustainable habits that aren't a response to fear.

She suggests taking advantage of another of the brain's systems - one that is just as strong as the threat response: "We're also hardwired to seek reward."

Gollan advises that one can adjust one's mental calculus - to see health as its own prize: "See success in your routines. The reward is that nothing happens to you. I think if you can redefine the meaning of the safety behaviour, it helps people shift their motivation to wanting to do it."

I'm trying not to beat myself up for forgetting to disinfect the mail or the cereal boxes. No one in my house is high risk, and those

kinds of behaviours probably aren't seriously raising my odds of getting sick.

The CDC recently updated its guidelines to say the virus "does not spread easily" through surfaces or objects. And in some ways, I'm still vigilant, trying to protect myself and the people around me by keeping my distance and wearing a mask in public.

While it may have been an inconvenience at first, covering my face now helps me feel comfortable in the post office or grocery store.

Gollan says that is but a reflection of her brain making an important shift. She explains: "It's not a defence mechanism. Not anymore. It's behaviour that brings a rewarding outcome: a sense of mastery and control. A sense of hope."

**An Elemental dispatch.** *Kate Morgan is a freelance journalist who's been published by, among other outlets, The Washington Post and USA Today.*

## African Telecommunications Union, Ericsson sign MoU on ICT in Africa

NAIROBI

**T**HE African Telecommunications Union (ATU) has signed a memorandum of understanding with Ericsson to help fast-track the rollout of technology across the continent.

According to ATU, a specialised agency of the African Union in fostering the growth of telecommunications in Africa, the MoU will support the growth of ICT as a critical infrastructure for the 21st century and help set the foundation for social and economic progress in the continent.

Under the arrangement, the two organisations look towards promoting global and regional coordination and harmonisation of spectrum usage to encourage economies of scale and maximise the affordability for users across Africa.

"Our collaboration with Ericsson is geared towards connecting, innovating and transforming the continent into a knowledge economy," said ATU secretary general John Omo.

In remarks at the signing of the MoU in the Kenyan capital, he noted that it was imperative for economies across the continent to become more competitive, agile, open and innovative in order to leverage on ICT innovations leading to the transformation of African nations into smart economies.

Ericsson Middle East and Africa president Fadi Pharaon lauded their partnership with ATU, saying: "Our collabora-



tion with the African Telecommunications Union will focus on spectrum management strategies."

He added: "Leveraging our global experience working on spectrum management, we aim to share global best practices that will ensure efficient use of scarce resources and allocation of new spectrum. This will yield societal benefits that will enable a more connected and knowledge-based society in Africa."

The move comes at a time when Africa continues to experience an unprecedented growth in mobile broadband, with traffic, subscriptions and ownership of devices growing at exponential rates.

The continent has emerged as one of the strongest adopters of innovation, with a rapid rise in the use of technology and smartphones.

A November 2019 Ericsson Mobility Report

showed that the number of mobile broadband subscriptions in sub-Saharan Africa would increase to about 70 per cent of mobile subscriptions by 2025, with increased 4G coverage and uptake the main engine.

Driving factors behind the shift include a young and growing population and availability of lower priced smart and feature phones.

Developing countries currently face the pros-

pect of robust economic development, given that the number of mobile communications users has grown much bigger than that of those using fixed line telecommunication services.

Radio spectrum is a limited resource largely because the number of services and users that can be accommodated in any given part of the spectrum remains limited even in the digital world.

Accordingly, the harmonised and globally aligned frameworks envisaged in the partnership between ATU and Ericsson is meant to assist African countries in spectrum management activities that will facilitate the realisation of a cost-efficient rollout of ICT.

ATU is a partnership between public and private ICT sector stakeholders involved in the formulation of effective policies and strategies meant to improve information infrastructure and services. It currently has 48 member-states drawn from governments and 43 associate members from within and outside Africa.

The agency also represents the interests of its members at global decision-making conferences and promotes initiatives aimed at integrating regional markets, attracting investment into ICT infrastructure, and building institutional and human capacity.

It envisions an Africa that is empowered as an inclusive information society with strong digital economies for sustainable continent-wide social, economic and environmental development.

Ericsson, meanwhile, enables communications service providers to capture the value of connectivity, its portfolio spanning networks, digital services, managed services and emerging business.

• Agencies



# Target boys to break menstruation taboos

HARARE

**A**N all-male panel assembled to discuss menstrual health on International Menstrual Hygiene Day sparked outrage on social media and a flurry of memes of all-female panels discussing male issues.

But the social media spat should not divert attention from the issues the day tries to raise in order to break menstrual taboos and raise awareness about the importance of menstrual health and hygiene management for women and adolescent girls worldwide.

And if we truly want to do this, then we must include men not just in the conversation but also in the interventions being implemented.

Despite it being a natural biological process, menstruation is characterized by myths, stigma and taboos across the world.

Among both boys and girls, reproductive health knowledge is often acquired too late. For example, menstruation is often discussed only after it has happened, and begins with a feeling of fear.

As in many cultures, I grew up with menstruation taboos. For example, a menstruating woman is not supposed to slaughter a chicken, prepare certain foods, or brew beer for spiritual occasions.

Also, a menstruating woman is not supposed to verbally inform her sexual partner that she is menstruating. Instead, she will do so symbolically for

example, by placing a piece of red cloth on their sleeping mat as there can be no discussion about the matter.

It is not just couples who do not discuss menstruation. Young girls are not able to talk about it openly with their mothers, grandmothers, aunts or fathers - all of whom are potential sources of reliable information.

My work over the past 15 years has included exploring sexual and reproductive health issues among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. A key finding has been that among both boys and girls, reproductive health knowledge is often acquired too late.

For example, menstruation is often discussed only after it has happened, and begins with a feeling of fear. In some of my research, an adolescent described her first experience: "Initially, I thought I had urinated without realizing it but I was shocked to see blood. When I informed my mother, she said I was supposed to use rags as sanitary pads and to wash myself three times a day so that I would not smell bad." The discussion ended there.

Gaps in information are often filled by hearsay. Another girl described how, when she began menstruating, her elder sister advised her to use cotton wool as opposed to sanitary pads "as the latter make one lose virginity". The elder sister said she had also been told this by her friend.

Myths around menstruation are also common among boys.



For example, boys tell each other that unprotected sex with a menstruating girl has no risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. There is also the belief that potential health "effects" of having unprotected sex with a menstruating girl can be prevented by drinking a solution

made from mature soot.

Clearly, efforts to tackle myths around menstruation must target both girls and boys to reduce menstrual-related stigma and ill-treatment, as well as improve sexual and reproductive health.

When I was in my sixth grade, a fellow classmate had her first

period and bled on her school uniform. She tied her jersey around her waist. When the boys realized what had happened, they untied her jersey. She desperately tried to cover the stain with her hands, but the boys kicked away her hands to make sure the stain would remain exposed, jeering in the

process. She missed the following week of school.

More than three decades later, girls continue to miss school during their menstrual period. Studies conducted across the whole world have highlighted full or part-day school absences as a result of menstruation.

Of course a range of mea-

asures are being introduced into schools to reduce girls' absenteeism from school including: provision of sanitary products, access to socially acceptable disposal facilities, access to water for washing near toilets, and space for changing. However, very few seem to be targeting boys.

Targeting boys with menstrual health education will not only improve girls' school attendance but will help address menstrual-related myths and stigma.

A pilot study conducted in Uganda tested a multicomponent school-based menstrual health and hygiene intervention, and evaluated its impact on several issues including, secondary school attendance. The intervention targeted both boys and girls.

Study findings indicated a potential intervention impact on improving menstrual-related school absenteeism. Of note, a drama skit on menstruation was very popular with both boys and girls, and worked well to involve boys in this topic and de-stigmatize menstruation.

It is therefore critical for menstrual health and hygiene interventions to include boys not just for immediate benefits but also for influencing their future thought patterns and behaviors.

Ultimately, men will be able to discuss menstruation with their wives and daughters, thereby significantly breaking taboos and reducing menstrual-related stigma.

**Agencies**

## A glimpse into the procedure saving dozens of patients with severe Covid-19

By Jesse Smith

**T**HE word bypass carries many meanings in medicine. When a person suffers from heart disease, often doctors harvest a vein from the leg and suture (or stitch) it around clogged coronary arteries creating a route around the blockage.

Similarly, when people with advanced diabetes arrive at dialysis centres, they submit themselves to a process by which blood is diverted away from damaged kidneys into a dialysis machine where it can be separated and its waste products removed before being returned to the patient's circulation.

Even in utero the foetal cardiovascular system has valves in place to strategically bypass organs that would otherwise act as an oxygen drain, robbing the developing foetus of crucial oxygen from the mother. Ironically, this system of foetal circulation bypasses the very organ in the womb that will one day be the sole source of oxygen in life: the lungs.

The major cause of mortality in Covid-19 results from the symptoms that arise when the lungs are severely damaged. Deep inside the lungs are millions of delicate air sacs where air is exchanged between the outside environment and the blood stream.

The thin structure of lung air sacs - called alveoli - coupled with the massive surface area of the lungs is what makes gas exchange so efficient. When air comes in, oxygen floods into the blood - while CO2 escapes out.

The thin barrier dividing air from blood, often only one or two cells thick along with a small amount of connective tissue, is known as the interstitium. This thin barrier is one of the primary targets of SARS-CoV-2. As the virus gains access to the interstitium, the immune system is activated.

Swelling is one of the most common responses to immune activity. Swelling is benign and harmless in many cases of immune or allergic response, but when the uber-thin interstitium of the lungs swells, it may actually expand to two or three times its normal width, dramatically decreasing gas exchange.

As the immune response further escalates, fluid from the interstitium leaks out into the alveoli and fills the space where air normal goes. This fluid, laden with viruses and other opportunistic pathogens, is quickly followed by immune cells - and soon the once deli-

cate air-filled alveoli become thick, congested fluid-filled masses.

This is pneumonia. Many Covid-19 patients rapidly progress to a state where gas exchange is so compromised that they go into acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). This is where doctors can employ extracorporeal membrane oxygenation - known simply as ECMO.

### ECMO explained

ECMO follows the principle of bypass by relieving the lungs of the duty of gas exchange. Following similar principles as in kidney dialysis, blood is pulled from the venous circulation - where oxygen concentrations are lowest - and sent through a pump system that shuttles blood into an oxygenator that oxygenates the blood, while removing CO2 waste.

Once blood is fully oxygenated, it is sent through a heat exchanger that brings it back to body temperature and it is returned to the body's circulation. This newly oxygenated blood is then delivered to tissues by the heart.

ECMO was developed in the 1950s as a life-support technique. In modern times it is common to see hospitals with devoted areas for ECMO care of critically ill patients suffering from acute heart or lung failure.

ECMO also plays a critical role in emergency rooms. Patients suffering from cardiac arrest often undergo cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to artificially restore both blood oxygenation - through breaths - and circulation - through chest compressions.

CPR in itself is a crude practice. It relies on techniques that are susceptible to human error. Patient head position, timing and depth of breath delivery, timing and location of chest compressions are all variables that lead to successful or non-successful CPR.

Even chest compressions deep and forceful enough to compress the heart are enough to crack the ribs of a patient. Despite how it is portrayed on TV medical dramas, CPR is a violent procedure with poor rates of success. ECMO can offer a better - albeit a more invasive - option in life support.

Recognizing the value of ECMO in cases of emergency, the University of Minnesota went one step farther and took ECMO out of the hospitals and onto the streets by creating its own mobile EMCO unit - the first of its kind in the US - to respond to medical emergencies that involve cardiac or pulmo-

nary arrest.

### ECMO versus mechanical ventilators

Mechanical ventilators have received a lot of attention since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. These machines, which artificially breathe for critically ill patients, are often the last resort for Covid-19 patients in severe respiratory distress.

Placing patients on ventilators is considered to a serious and often ominous sign that these people are teetering on the edge of survival. Ventilators and ECMO serve the same end function - to maintain the delivery of oxygen-rich blood to tissues - but do so in different ways.

When we breathe, the lungs are working to balance two key aspects of respiration: ventilation - the delivery of air to the lung tissue - and perfusion - the delivery of blood to the lung tissue. When air and blood are brought into close proximity, gas exchange can occur.

Gas exchange itself is a passive process where gases move from areas of high concentration to areas of low concentration. This process - called diffusion - requires no added energy or mechanical force.

Ventilation, on the other hand, is an active process requiring the work of muscles in the body to move the lungs like a bellows. The rhythmic movement of muscles like the diaphragm and

those that surround the rib cage draw air in and out, allowing for constant gas delivery to and from the lungs.

In severe cases of Covid-19, the lungs lose the ability to exchange gases as described above, and can also become so damaged by the virus that they lose the ability to ventilate.

This loss of lung function - the active movement of lungs by the chest wall - requires a ventilator that forces air into the lungs. If enough viable lung tissue exists, ventilation may be sufficient to facilitate the gas exchange needed to sustain life.

This procedure requires that patients be anaesthetised and intubated - the placement of a tube directly into the lower respiratory tract - for the ventilator to function.

ECMO, on the other hand can be performed at the patient's bedside with simple sedation, assuming the patient's lungs are ventilating properly on their own. Patients who have lost the ability to ventilate would need to be placed on a ventilator before they are able to undergo ECMO.

### The downside of ECMO

For all of its value, ECMO comes with its own risks. If nothing else, the procedure is invasive, requiring the placement of tubes into large vessels in the neck or leg. This carries risks of infection at the incision site that may enter the blood stream.



Infections at the site of IV or central lines in the hospital are a common occurrence. There is also an increased risk of blood clotting as a result of the procedure, which often requires that patients be put on a blood thinner while undergoing ECMO.

As we have seen from various reports, Covid-19 patients are already at an increased risk of blood clots, making this precaution ever more important when deciding to use ECMO for severe Covid-19 cases.

Even with ECMO in place, the body is still in the midst of fighting the Covid-19 infection. Because ECMO in no way protects the lungs from the damage of the viral infection, it is purely a life-sustaining procedure and not a treatment for the underlying infection.

Advancing knowledge of human physiology allows healthcare providers to bypass the normal functioning of the body in times of crisis. The strategic overriding of body systems can allow for controlled implementation of life-saving intervention.

While many race to find treatments, or develop vaccines against Covid-19, efficient life-support techniques are needed in hospital ICUs to avoid a rise in mortality from the disease. ECMO offers a simple solution to preserving one of the cornerstones of human life - respiration.

**Jesse Smith is a medical student who writes about science, medicine and business.**



# New research finds 515 animal species are on the brink of extinction

By Liz Kimbrough

THE giant panda, tiny tamaraw buffalo, riverine rabbit and Iberian lynx all have something in common: they join a growing list of animals on the brink of extinction.

A newly published study in the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences lists 515 animal species with fewer than a thousand individuals remaining. Overall, the report is grim: Earth is experiencing its sixth mass extinction; extinction rates are accelerating; and humans are to blame.

Researchers evaluated 29,374 land-based vertebrates using IUCN Red List and Birdlife International data. They identified 75 mammal, 335 bird, 41 reptile and 65 amphibian species "on the brink of extinction."

The majority of these critically endangered animals are concentrated in tropical and subtropical regions, where biodiversity is highest.

More than half of the species on the list have fewer than 250 individuals remaining.

"The ongoing sixth mass extinction may be the most serious environmental threat to the persistence of civilization, because it is irreversible," the authors write.

Previous major extinctions, like the one that wiped out the dinosaurs, were caused by catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions, depletion of oxygen, and asteroid impact. Each of these events wiped out an estimated 70 to 90% of life on Earth at the time.

Our current extinction crisis is caused by humans, driven by activities such as habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation, poaching, illegal trade, overharvesting, the introduction of non-native and domesticated species into the wild, pathogens, pollution, and climate disruption.

Many of the species on the brink of extinction will be extinct soon, according to the authors, and extinction rates will continue to increase sharply.

By 2050, the extinction rate is expected to be 117 times higher than the background extinction rate of two out of every 10,000 species per century seen over the past 2 million years.

"Predictions that one-fifth of all species would be in danger of extinction by midcentury and half or more by the end of the century begin to make sense," the paper says.

Since 1900, 543 species of vertebrates have gone extinct. And those are just the ones we know of. In the past century, we have witnessed the disappearance of the ivory-billed woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*), the Round Island burrowing boa (*Bolyeria multocarinata*), the laughing owl (*Ninox albifacies*), the sea mink (*Neovison macrodon*), and the golden toad (*Incilius periglenes*), to name a few.

The case of the golden toad is emblematic of massive amphibian declines, triggered by chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*), a disease that eats away at an amphibian's skin, ultimately killing it. More than 500 amphibian species have seen chytrid-related declines over the past decades. In many countries the spread of the fungus has been expedited by the amphibian pet trade.

Invertebrates are also declining. Reports of a great insect dying, monarch butterfly declines, and the loss of bees have been widely reported, in many cases linked to the widespread use of pesticides in agriculture.

The extinction of one species can set off a cascade, leading to a domino effect of extinctions to other, interconnected species.

"Extinction breeds extinctions," the authors write. As species disappear, so do their unique ecosystem services such as pollination, nutrient cycling, or population control toward other animals.

"What we do to deal with the current extinction crisis in the next two decades will define the fate of millions of species," study lead author Gerardo



Ceballos, a senior researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico's Institute of Ecology said in a statement.

"We are facing our final opportunity to ensure that the many services nature provides us do not get irretrievably sabotaged."

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) regulates the global trade of some of the world's most endangered and threatened animals. Many animals, including endangered species like pangolins and the tigers, are traded for use as food, ornaments, pets, in traditional medicine, and as a status symbol.

In the U.S., the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has helped protect local wildlife since it was enacted in 1969. The ESA is credited with playing an instrumental role in the recovery of bald eagles, gray whales, grizzly bears and a number of other species.

The ESA is also a wide-ranging international tool that governs and restricts the trade of hundreds of other endangered species abroad such as rhinos, elephants and tigers. Marine mammals and sea turtles have also been given a boost, according to more recent reports.

In 2019, the Trump administration weakened the ESA, tipping the scales to favor industry with fewer regulations.

In early June, Trump signed an executive order waiving the requirements of a suite of environmental regulations including the Clean Water Act and the ESA. The order allows agencies to use the emergency provisions of environmental laws to expedite projects such as highways, pipelines and construction.

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# Covid-19 recovery is a chance to improve African food systems

By Kai Mausch

THE World Food Programme has warned that the COVID-19 pandemic could cause one of the worst food crises since World War II.

The UN body predicts a doubling of the number of people going hungry - more than half of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

While wealthier people stay inside and practise physical distancing, the economically marginalised populations risk going out in search of food. They take decisions between livelihoods and life in the most extreme cases. Such food inequities show the need for system-level action.

So far, the global food system has proven to be resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic. Food is still being produced, processed and distributed. Unfortunately, the system's underlying injustices and inequities continue too. Around 1.58 billion people globally can't afford healthy diets.

These inequities are especially

stark on the African continent. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, the African food system was ailing. Food is perennially in short supply. In 2018, more than 250 million people in sub-Saharan Africa experienced severe food insecurity, incomes for farmers are lower than anywhere globally in real terms, and more than 30% of children are stunted partly due to poverty and poor diets.

Africa's food system is no stranger to crises. Droughts, El Niño events, pests and diseases, terrorism, migration, and political upheaval have all taken a toll. Crises like these shock the system, causing crop and food losses, pushing people into poverty and putting more people at risk of severe food insecurity and malnutrition.

Each crisis tends to be met with a response to mitigate the harm, but the system always seems to return to its earlier undesirable state.

The shock set off by COVID-19 is likely to be different. That's because it is causing simultaneous and synchronised system failures

that will erode economic opportunities now and potentially for years to come. For example, tourism will be hit by limitations on travel and gatherings.

What we see happening as a result of actions to contain COVID-19 is more like a global natural disaster.

It's also an opportunity for a different kind of recovery. With less inertia resulting in a return to the previous state, alternative scenarios become plausible. In this respect it's similar to the oil crisis of the 1970s, which changed societies fundamentally.

Going back to "business as usual" investments in agriculture and food systems could reproduce those systems' inequities. Instead, recovery efforts should be geared towards creating a better future.

Researchers have already done the background work to inform this process.

It is possible to redesign food systems to deliver healthy foods, allow farming families to make a good living, and support thriving

societies while generating sustainable ecosystem services. The COVID-19 recovery is a time to put decades of data about this to work.

Here we outline three ways to improve agriculture in line with the sustainable development goals: to make systems resilient, sustainable and fair. The examples have all been developed and tested by researchers at universities and research centres.

The World Health Organization has identified a double burden of malnutrition: poor nutrition along with overweight or obesity. This is a growing problem worldwide.

There are various ways agriculture can help tackle the problem. Among them are better integration of crops and livestock, climate smart agriculture, conservation agriculture, and using woody perennials in fields and landscapes to ecologically increase productivity of more diverse food items.

The underlying ideas are focusing on more integrated farming systems that use species diversity as a source of resilience and diver-

sified diets while reducing the use of harmful chemicals.

Artificially stabilised starch food markets distort prices and consumer incentives. When governments subsidise inputs for certain crops, their production becomes relatively cheaper and so do consumer prices. So, especially poorer consumers are more likely to choose these starchy food items that do not provide sufficiently balanced nutrients.

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture supporting diverse diets needs to be encouraged instead. Smart subsidies could steer food production into a state that supports healthy food choices and increases biodiversity in landscapes.

Reframe development progress

People living in rural regions should not have to depend on agriculture alone. Complementary opportunities should be part of rural development and human wellbeing. The most vulnerable rural people are the

least likely to progress through agriculture because their farms are small.

There should be a greater variety of ways to meet everyone's aspirations and needs. Activities such as processing harvests and adding value to products will also improve the functioning of food systems - so these activities should be supported and encouraged. Young people who are turning away from agriculture could play a pivotal role in developing complementary businesses in rural spaces.

## Recognise planetary health

Human modification of the natural environment is linked to health problems ranging from stress to infectious disease. With direct effects on diets, pollution, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, agriculture is central in achieving the majority of the sustainable development goals.

The various linkages between the health of natural resources, agriculture or agroforestry,

humans and the environment have to be recognised and purposefully managed to optimise impacts and avoid unintended consequences.

## Way forward

These building blocks provide starting points for a new political discourse about agriculture. It should be guided by the overall goal of a resilient, sustainable and fair food system. Resulting strategies must consider the variety of biophysical, social and economic conditions across African countries.

We believe it is now time to focus on the opportunity this crisis has brought and "build back better". While medicines and humanitarian aid agencies prepare for the worst, scientists too must choose their contributions.

COVID-19 emergency funds could change the trajectory of agriculture. It's time to build scientists into the planning for the future and initiate the development of a comprehensive strategy for Africa's future food solutions.

# Africa loses \$79 billion annually owing to youth unemployment

RABAT, Morocco

AFRICA loses \$79 billion of potential revenue every year because of youth unemployment, said the Secretary Executive of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Vera Songwe.

Approximately 34% of African population is aged 15 to 34, but most of Africa's youth are unemployed, Songwe added during a videoconference discussion about African youth leaders on June 9.

"We are not a continent that can afford to lose \$79 billion a year, so we need to find a way to employ ourselves and to harness the incredible innovation of African youth," she said.

"During this COVID-19 crisis, we are asking the rest of the world to give Af-

rica \$100 billion for recovery. But if we all had jobs, we would have even more resources than what we need," Songwe deplored.

The Cameroonian economist then urged young Africans to be bold and seek solutions to the challenges facing Africa, expressing her pride in the innovation that Africans have shown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The virtual discussion focused on the specific challenges that face young Africans amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts of youth to respond to the health crisis, as well as the themes of education, innovation, employment, health, and civic engagement.

## Unemployment in Morocco

Morocco, like most African states,



also greatly suffers from unemployment. As of the first quarter of 2020, Morocco's unemployment rate stands at 10.5%, increasing from 9.1% during the same period in 2019.

In one year, the number of unemployed people in Morocco increased by 208,000, bringing the total count of unemployed Moroccans to 1,292,000.

The unemployment rate increased the most among young people aged 15 to 24, with a 3.9% increase, followed by 25- to 34-year-olds (2.3%). According to the latest figures, more than one quarter of Moroccans aged 15 to 24 (26.8%) are unemployed.

The figures, issued by Morocco's High Commission for Planning in March, do not account for the increase in unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In late April, a report revealed that approximately 726,000 employees in Morocco's formal sector have lost their jobs, either temporarily or definitively, due to the COVID-19 crisis. The figure represents 20% of the country's manpower in the formal sector.

As for the informal sector, more than 4.3 million workers have declared losing their job because of the nationwide lockdown and applied for financial aid.



# The DRC is riveted by a political thriller

BY PETER FABRICIUS

THE corruption case against Vital Kamerhe, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) President Félix Tshisekedi's chief of staff, has been unfolding with all the ingredients of a thriller. It includes millions of disappearing dollars, the fall from grace of a powerful politician, the murder of a judge, death threats and strong-arming by the United States.

And it's become a great spectacle in the country, especially as the proceedings are live on national television. Never before has a figure so high in government and so close to the president been charged for corruption in a country notorious for indulging kleptocracy. And so the case has prompted intense speculation.

Kamerhe was arrested on 8 April along with two accomplices, including Lebanese businessman Samih Jammal. They're accused of embezzling over US\$50 million intended to fund a US\$500 million project to provide housing and other services to mark Tshisekedi's first 100 days in office. Kamerhe was thrown into Makala Prison where the harsh conditions have apparently badly harmed his health and the risk of catching COVID-19 is high.

The first judge in his case, Raphaël Yanyi, died on 27 May, supposedly of a heart attack. However forensic pathologists concluded that the cause of death was not natural and that he had 'probably been poisoned.' The whodunit rumours about who killed the judge have added a sensational flavour to the more sober political speculation about why Tshisekedi ordered or allowed the arrest of his supposed ally in the first place.

Kamerhe and his Union for the Congolese Nation political party had formed the Cap pour le Changement (CACH) coalition with Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) for the 2018 elections. Tshisekedi was then officially - though almost certainly not factually - elected

president.

Never before has a figure so close to the president been charged for corruption in DRC.

So the unlikelihood of the president now going after Kamerhe prompted, among many others, the theory that Tshisekedi acted under pressure from the Trump administration to clean out government graft. That pressure was certainly there. In February Peter Pham, then still US Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, visited Kinshasa and told Tshisekedi bluntly that the US was disappointed in his efforts to fight corruption.

And it was shortly after Tshisekedi visited Washington DC in March to meet Pham and other officials that Kamerhe was arrested. Several military officers that Pham had called out were also removed. But were other factors at play? And does Kamerhe's prosecution reflect a temporary nod to Washington or mark a long overdue turning point in DRC's dismal history of grand corruption?

Fred Bauma, Senior Researcher at the Congo Research Group which recently published a report revealing large-scale corruption on all sides, doesn't discount US pressure as a factor. But he says many Congolese believe Kamerhe is corrupt, so the president was also under public pressure to see him prosecuted. Fighting corruption was one of Tshisekedi's key election promises.

Bauma explains how Kamerhe centralised government in the presidency, cutting out line-function ministers meant to be in charge of the various portfolios. It was clear that in doing so Kamerhe was circumventing many of the official checks and controls, thus reinforcing suspicion that he was siphoning off public money. 'He had become a public liability to Tshisekedi,' he says.

But an even larger motive for Tshisekedi to turn against his erstwhile ally was probably that he perceived him as a growing political threat and a likely rival in the next elections. For



The trial of Tshisekedi's powerful chief of staff has plunged the country into even greater uncertainty. File photo

Thierry Vircoulon of the French Institute of International Affairs, it's just another case of a leader going after his political adversary under the guise of fighting corruption.

One theory is that Tshisekedi acted under pressure from the US to clean out government graft.

Bauma recalls that the CACH coalition decided before the 2018 poll that Kamerhe should be its candidate in the next elections in 2023. Although Tshisekedi's commitment to that scenario has seemingly faded, Kamerhe still saw himself very much as his boss's equal.

He had become too powerful for the comfort of not only Tshisekedi but other officials and party leaders, including former president Joseph Kabila. Kabila remains powerful in the DRC and would also have been happy to see the back of Kamerhe - perhaps because of his own ambition to win the next election.

Many believe that after the last elections, Kabila's quid pro quo for anointing Tshisekedi as his successor - rather than his own party's candidate (who failed dismally at the polls) - was that he, rather than Kamerhe, should be the supported candidate next time around.

In any case Kabila calls many of the shots, as his Common Front for Congo (FCC) party controls Parliament and his allies are in powerful positions in many state institutions. And analysts believe that part of the deal with Kabila was that Tshisekedi wouldn't 'dig up the past' - i.e. would leave

Kabila and his lieutenants untouched.

This explains why Tshisekedi might think twice before going after Albert Yuma Mulimbi, the powerful head of the state mining company Gécamines, as the next big fish in his anti-corruption campaign. There's been speculation that the US is demanding Mulimbi's head too.

Tshisekedi is politically weak and may feel he has to clutch at whatever straws are within his reach.

Bauma acknowledges that Mulimbi is also dogged by strong suspicions of corruption. But he believes that because he is so close to Kabila, Tshisekedi would prosecute him at some peril to his position. If Tshisekedi accumulates more power, relative to Kabila, that may change. Bauma believes he is slowly doing that but it's too soon to challenge his predecessor now.

Other analysts believe to the contrary, that Tshisekedi may have to move closer to Kabila as his CACH coalition could implode under the impact of Kamerhe's prosecution - especially if he's found guilty and jailed.

However they also note that there are strong anti-FCC sentiments within Tshisekedi's party which would resist such a move. Especially as they believe the FCC orchestrated the recent eviction of Jean-Marc Kabund, the interim UDPS president, from his position as National Assembly first vice president.

This analyst notes too that moving closer to Kabila would

diminish Tshisekedi's power - and that of his party. It would also reverse the initial trajectory of Tshisekedi's presidency, strongly backed by the US, which was to weaken Kabila and make the slogan 'DRC's first democratic transfer of power' less rhetorical and more real.

But there's only so much the US or any other external power can do. The domestic reality is that Tshisekedi is politically weak and may feel he has to clutch at whatever straws are within his reach.

So the country's political future looks even hazier than usual. If Tshisekedi does clean out corruption it will be a heroic achievement. But while the drama plays out on the political stage, the long-suffering Congolese people confront a new Ebola outbreak, COVID-19, chronic violence in the east and a faltering neglected economy.

Agencies

# A vaccine will be necessary to help New Zealand's economy

By Keren Landman

IN late April, New Zealand's public health officials announced that the spread of Covid-19 had ceased within its borders. The world cheered, and headlines trumpeted the strength and compassion of the country's political leadership and its science-first policies as an important cause of its success.

John Crump, MD, a global health epidemiologist at the University of Otago in Auckland, says these factors certainly helped New Zealand crush its epidemic curve.

But he notes that then factors don't exist in a vacuum: New Zealand also has innate characteristics that both enabled and incentivized the approach its leaders took to eliminating Covid-19 - and it's impossible to fully understand the success of its approach without acknowledging them.

## Geography and fast action

Because New Zealand is a geographically isolated and sparsely populated island country, infectious diseases that plague other parts of the world are often delayed in breaching its borders and spreading widely once they do.

Working against the country, meanwhile, is its relatively low capacity to care for a massive wave of severely ill people: a 2018 analysis suggested that the nation had 25 per cent of the per capita number of intensive care beds with ventilator capacity as the US.

For these reasons, New Zealand's approach to most pathogens of pandemic potential is "stamping them out" rather than containing them, says Crump, adding that the country's approach to Covid-19 was no different.

The country identified its first case in late February, more than a month after the US, South Korea and Italy identified theirs. Crump says that the delay "bought New Zealand time to learn from what was happening elsewhere" and to integrate other countries' successes and challenges into its own plan.

So in late March, when the country shut down non-essential businesses, banned most domestic travel and closed its borders, its tactics received broad public support from a public that had seen other countries suffer from different strategies.

It helped that New Zealanders have a particularly high level of trust for Prime Minister Jacinda Arden, who earned high praise for her unifying and compassionate style following a 2019 mass shooting in a Christchurch mosque.

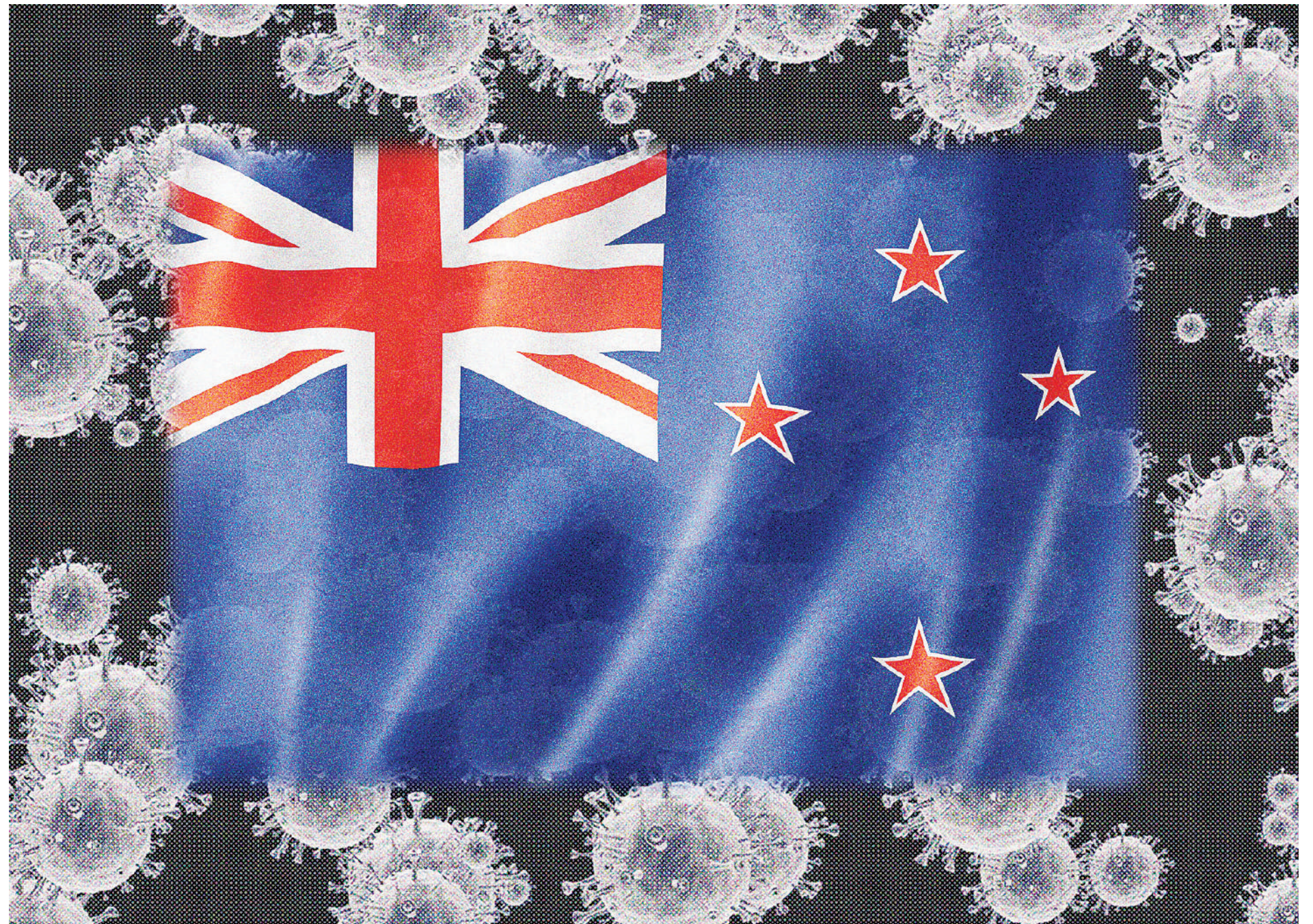
Taking an elimination approach to imported infectious diseases has translated into a relatively early return to life as usual: Businesses and schools in New Zealand have already begun reopening with social distancing measures in place, and gatherings with fewer than 100 people are permitted.

"Going hard and early has paid off," the prime minister told reporters on June 2.

## Isolation has its risks and benefits

But maintaining life as usual - and the absence of the transmission it hinges on - depends on strict border controls. Although New Zealanders might soon be able to see movies in a theater, the country's borders will remain closed to non-nationals for the foreseeable future.

That's a big problem in a country where tourism is a critical part of the economy; New Zealand's gross domestic product has already taken an enormous



hit as a consequence of the pandemic.

New Zealand's leaders are considering eventually reopening its borders to travelers from Australia, which has made great strides towards ending Covid-19 transmission through policies including strict border controls.

Crump says that while creat-

ing a "travel bubble" with its neighbour might mitigate some of the country's economic losses, "the only way to return to normality is to have a vaccine become available that would protect the New Zealand population and allow the borders to be fully reopened".

The success of the country's approach is highly dependent on the future availability of a vaccine, while its capacity to invest in vaccine development is somewhat limited. It is as

yet unclear when a vaccine will be available or - when it becomes available - when it would be produced in a large enough quantity to be available to all New Zealanders.

Crump says these are critical questions because the timing and distribution of a Covid-19 vaccine will determine how the world judges New Zealand's response in retrospect.

"If there is a vaccine soon then, presumably, it will be judged as one of the best responses,"

he notes, adding: "And if there's not, what's Plan B for a country that has eliminated the disease but is dependent on closed borders to keep it out?"

*A piece originally published in Elemental, a new Medium publication about health and wellness. Keren Landman, MD, is an infectious disease doctor, an epidemiologist and a journalist.*



## COVID-19

## Jobs gone and investments wasted: Africa's deserted safaris leave mounting toll

MPUMALANGA

WHEN Khimbini Hlongwane spent most of his small safari tour company's savings on the deposit for a new minibus in February, it seemed like a safe bet.

His revenues had doubled in the previous year. And bookings by American, British, and Brazilian tourists hoping to catch a glimpse of elephants, giraffes and lions at South Africa's famous Kruger National Park were up.

Now, with borders closed and airlines grounded due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa's multi-billion-dollar safari industry is unravelling and he can no longer afford the payments on the new 21-seater, which sits collecting dust in the parking lot.

"It hasn't moved since the day we bought it," said Hlongwane, who has been forced to stop paying the salaries of his five employees. "We could've been using that money to survive right now." From Kenya's Masai Mara to the Okavango Delta in Botswana,

rural communities that depend on safaris for income are seeing their livelihoods and dreams shattered. Hundreds of thousands of people rely on the sector, not to mention their dependents.

A slump in tourist dollars has hit conservation projects hard. And even as countries around the world loosen lockdowns, game parks, lodges and travel agencies face a grim future. The safari industry generates some \$12.4 billion in annual revenues for South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia - Africa's top wildlife tourist destinations - according to an estimate by Safari-Bookings.

But a survey of over 300 tour operators conducted by the online safari travel platform this month showed that almost 93% reported a drop in bookings of at least 75% due to the pandemic. Cancellations have also spiked, the majority of them said.

"How long can we carry on?" Leon Plutsick's Distinctly Africa lodge on the Manyeleti private game



Tourists are seen at a Safari watching a herd of buffaloes at a game reserve adjacent to the world-renowned Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga province, South Africa, April 11, 2019.

reserve bordering the Kruger National Park had been full in March. Today, his employees are sitting at home and baboons have ransacked his unstaffed kitchen.

"We're getting to a point where we have to ask ourselves how long do we carry on?" he said. "A lot of us are living on reserves just to survive." Plutsick is not alone. A survey of close to 500 businesses in the Kruger Lowveld district - South Africa's safari heartland - conducted by the local tourism agency last month, found 90% believed they would not survive even if international borders opened immediately. Over two-thirds of them have laid off employees.

The lack of tourist dollars is forcing wildlife projects across Africa to make cuts, and beyond the human cost, con-

servationists worry that growing desperation in rural communities hit by COVID-19 could fuel a wave of poaching.

Three popular game parks in South Africa recently dehorned dozens of rhinos as a preventative measure, hoping that it would make them less attractive targets for poachers.

In Mabarrhule, a community on the edge of Kruger National Park, roughly half of residents were already jobless before the pandemic. Freelance workers like Siphon Nkosi - a tour guide and father of four who typically makes around 550 rand (\$33) per tour - have found themselves without a safety net.

"We'd saved some money. But it's running out, so we'll start starving," said Nkosi, standing outside a half-completed community hall that was

being built using tourist donations.

**'A bigger hole?'**

The Madilika Craft Centre sits so close to the boundary of the Kruger National Park that lions can sometimes be heard roaring in the distance. A layer of dust now coats the pink walls of the women's cooperative, which shut when the private game lodges where it sold its traditional Xitsonga beaded jewellery closed down in March.

Now, with her income gone, co-founder Jane Mashele is hoping the sweet potatoes and spinach in her garden will be enough to feed her four orphaned grandchildren. "We started the centre because we were tired of sitting at home with no jobs," she said. "This is terrible."

In South Africa, which has recorded

the most COVID-19 cases of any African nation, Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane warned parliament last month that up to 600,000 jobs were at risk if the sector remained shut until September. Governments' relief initiatives - like South Africa's offer of 50,000 rand (\$3,000) one-time grants to small tourism businesses - will do little to staunch the losses, some operators said.

In the face of looming financial calamity, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa - the industry's lobby group - is pushing for international tourism to resume as early as September. With the pandemic's peak on most of the continent still predicted to be months away, that appears unlikely.

South Africa's government has instead said regional and international tourism are only expected to resume next year. Kenya, Namibia and Rwanda also remain closed to international visitors, while in Zambia tourists are permitted but face a two-week quarantine upon arrival. Tanzania has dropped quarantine requirements and is welcoming foreign guests.

One East African tour operator said even if restrictions were eased, international travellers could be discouraged by the possibility of quarantines when they return home. In the meantime, South Africa, for one, hopes domestic visitors can drive the first phase of a recovery. South African national parks are now opening for self-driving safaris.

But overnight visits and travel across provincial borders remain banned under current restrictions. Even when permitted, some operators worry that local visitors will not be enough to save their businesses. "To open for two or four or six people, is it actually worth it?" asked lodge owner Plutsick. "I'll just be digging myself a bigger hole."

## BACKLASH

## CrossFit clubs in SA to ditch US brand after George Floyd comments

CAPE TOWN

CROSSFIT gyms in South Africa have threatened to cut ties with the US brand amid its founder's controversial views on the Black Lives Matter protests and the death of George Floyd. Greg Glassman was forced to step down this week.

According to a Buzzfeed report, Glassman downplayed the protests demanding justice for Floyd - a black man who died after a white police officer knelt on his neck for over 8 minutes - in a virtual meeting with affiliated gym owners.

"We're not mourning for George Floyd - I don't think me or any of my staff are," Glassman reportedly said during a meeting. Then, he tweeted "It's FLOYD-19" on Saturday in response to a post classifying racism and discrimination as a public health issue. The controversial tweet was called out by Twitter users for being tone-deaf, racist, and insensitive.

Your failed model quarantined us and now

you're going to model a solution to racism? George Floyd's brutal murder sparked riots nationally. Quarantine alone is "accompanied in every age and under all political regimes by an undercurrent of suspicion, distrust, and riots." Thanks! - Greg Glassman (@CrossFitCEO) June 7, 2020

In the US, gyms, and brands like Reebok, cancelled partnerships and affiliations with CrossFit in light of Glassman's response. In South Africa too, gyms affiliated with CrossFit want to cut their ties with the brand.

"The statements that (Glassman) made are completely wrong and disrespectful and cannot be ignored. As a result we will not be renewing our CrossFit affiliation," CrossFit Wanderers said in a statement.

"We don't want to be associated with a brand that has that kind of thought process," said Devon Daniels, owner and head coach at CrossFit Fetish in Durban. "Until we get a better plan or focus from them, we will not be renewing our affiliation with them."



Cape CrossFit CEO Chris Oman with a client

Black River CrossFit in Cape Town also said it won't be renewing its CrossFit affiliation "until we once again feel like we are aligned as partners." "Unfortunately it has taken one person to ruin what is actually a good methodology and life altering journey for most," says Fitness Technologies and CrossFit Platinum in Johannesburg.

CrossFit has been in South Africa for over a decade and now has 144 affiliates countrywide. The gym programme focuses on high intensity interval-training through strength and conditioning training and has become so popular that it even hosts its own World Games.

"We are in a very sensitive time where we are still processing and analysing what we believe to be the right way forward. In short we have had conversations with members to ensure they know our stance as an all-inclusive community, and we have had a huge support for how we've chosen to act so far," Chris Oman, CEO of Cape CrossFit, told Business Insider. The Cape Town-based Cape CrossFit represents gyms at Gardens, Newlands and Century City and was among the affiliates stating on its Facebook page that it "strongly disagreed with the comment" and "can't just move on."

## COMPETITIVENESS

## Meet the woman behind Okra, Africa's first API fintech super-connector

LAGOS

RAISING \$1m for your startup in Africa is starting to become more common. As of May 21, 54 startups have raised at least \$1m in 2020. Raising \$1m as an African woman is still frustratingly rare. Fara Ashiru Jituboh has done just that, raising a \$1m pre-seed round for Okra, where she is co-founder, CEO and CTO. Okra is a Nigeria-based 'super-connector' which allows the secure exchange of real-time financial information between customers, applications, and banks.

The idea for Okra came from the entrepreneur's best source of inspiration; solving her own problems. Jituboh was born in Nigeria, but grew up in the United States. She spent a year in Nigeria as a teenager, but really never expected to settle in Nigeria permanently. During a visit she kept thinking, "I can do something really big and really impactful [here]. There's so much more opportunity to do, to solve so many problems," said Jituboh. She moved back to Nigeria where she started a studio to build technology for other companies such as AXA Mansard, Sanofi Phar-

maceuticals, and Airtel.

In 2019, Jituboh temporarily moved back to the U.S. to have her son and stayed for about a year. During that time, she started using applications like Mint on her phone to manage her funds. Then she moved back to Nigeria and realized that none of these applications worked because they didn't connect to Nigerian banks. "My financial literacy could never grow here," she said. Jituboh started trying to connect her own bank accounts. That was the start of Okra.

Many of us have frustrations in our daily life that we dream about solving, but few of us actually end up building a company around it. This is especially true when we run into problems in highly regulated or technical spaces such as banking. But as a highly skilled software engineer, Jituboh is used to rolling up her sleeves and building. According to Andreatra Muforo, a partner at TLcom which invested in Okra, Fara is an expert in over 20 programming languages.

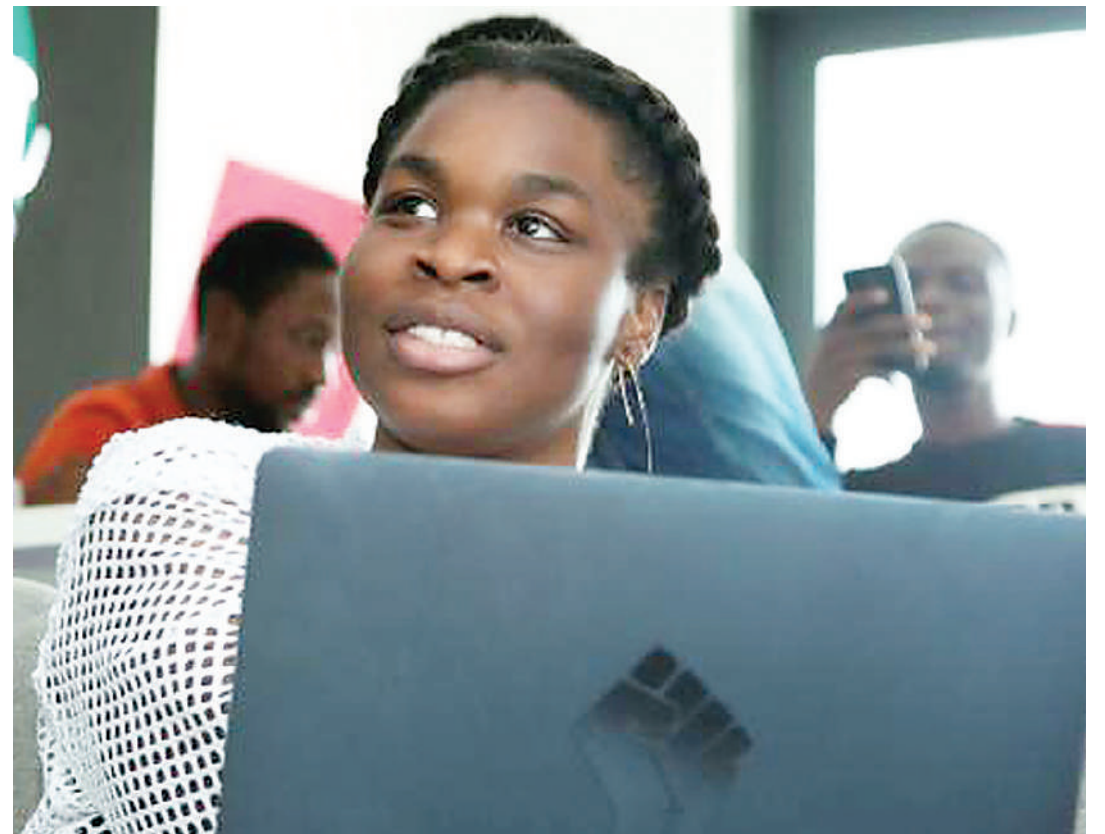
Even though Okra now has money to hire top talent, Jituboh will continue to hold both the CEO and CTO roles. She believes that in a business

this technical having the vision for the product and technology and the vision for the company so tightly aligned is a benefit. That's not to say it's easy. "If I'm not coding, I feel guilty like I'm not doing my work. But if I'm coding, I can feel like there are some high-level things I should be dealing with. You need to find balance," said Jituboh.

**Promote**

Okra's raise is not just an outlier because it's run by a woman or because it was incredibly fast (less than 6 months after launch!) or because it was oversubscribed despite the world being in the middle of a pandemic. For their investor, TLcom, Okra is an outlier in their portfolio. TLcom has never invested in Fintech.

They also typically participate in larger rounds, such as Andela's \$100M Series D. According to Jituboh, they invest in infrastructure and while banking portals do not come to mind as readily as cellphone towers when one thinks of infrastructure, they are an equally important part of the foundation needed for a vibrant digital economy. TLcom took the whole round and Ido Sum, a partner, will join Okra's board.



Fara Ashiru Jituboh, Okra co-founder, CEO and CTO.

## ADVICE

NAIROBI

ON a normal day, Sonia Birdi would have a class full of hot yoga lovers sweating in a heated room with temperatures of over 30 degrees Celsius.

For fitness enthusiasts, this type of yoga is the go-to exercise to relieve stress, ease de-

## Yoga in times of coronavirus

pression, nourish the skin, and improve flexibility. At her yoga studio in Nairobi's Two Rivers banking mall, she is now streaming the sessions live through Zoom to people's homes with

a few clients coming in. Most yoga trainers have gone online as some clients opt to stay home amid coronavirus fears.

Sonia's online sessions, she says, has attracted hundreds

of followers who practice yoga at the comfort of their homes. "I have some clients who visit the studio, but we ensure social distancing, have masks on and ensure everyone has sanitised,"

she says.

Sonia takes the trainees through meditation, then 26 different poses and two breathing exercises. "Hot yoga when practiced in a heated room burns

more calories than usual. It is more suitable for people who want to lose weight and those with health complications such as depression. It also helps one to warm up tight muscles and

this helps one to stretch more than one usually does," she says.

"It has an added advantage of giving the heart, lungs, and muscles a more intense workout," she adds. For beginners, Sonia advises that one needs to hydrate well by drinking a lot of water before engaging in the exercise.



## AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION

# 'It's time for Switch brands made for people who are Black Like Me'

JOHANNESBURG

TO paraphrase Beyoncé's words, the beauty entrepreneurs listed below, chopped wood to build their own tables when a seat at the table wasn't readily available for them.

The entertainment business is still very sexist. It's still very male-dominated, and as a woman, I did not see enough female role models given the opportunity to do what I knew I had to do. To run my label and management company, to direct my films and produce my tours - that meant ownership!

"Owning my masters, owning my art, owning my future, writing my own story." "Not enough women had a seat at the table, so I had to go and chop down that wood and build my own table... then I had to invite the best there was to have a seat. That meant hiring women, men, outsiders, underdogs, people that were overlooked and waiting to be seen."

These are words from Beyoncé's Class of 2020 commencement speech, that kicked off another week of continuing to amplify black stories and elevate black business, content, and talent. In this speech, the 24-time Grammy Award winner also highlights a largely known, but lesser acknowledged fact (by respective gatekeepers) about how many have been overlooked due to gender bias and racial disparities.

## Black-owned beauty shop faces double the punch

A black-owned beauty shop in East Oakland is cleaning up, after looters ransacked the store on the sidelines of protests against the killing of an unarmed black man by a white police officer last week. Libby Hogan has more.

The former kind of exclusion is one we briefly unpacked in a 2019 W24 article questioning why the beauty industry is still so male-dominated. The article praised the appointment of Revlon's first-ever woman CEO and president, Debra Perelman, in the brand's 86-year history.

"But despite these triumphs, women are grossly under-represented in the beauty industry's top leadership - a multi-billion dollar industry made primarily for women - yet, we are the consumers that feed this industry on a daily basis," I wrote in this article. "Case in point, two of the largest beauty companies in the world, Estée Lauder Companies and L'Oréal, are run by men."

After putting a few women-run beauty companies in the spotlight, I then concluded that "it's clear from the [listed] beauty bigwigs, that profit and success are inevitable when women are in top leadership in an industry created for our enjoyment and benefit. Besides business acumen, instinctive knowledge of what your consumer wants is a key player of this ever-booming industry. It's therefore strange how so many beauty brands are still predominantly led by men." But there's another elephant in the room, and it's white.

The cosmetics industry, much like her fashion counterpart, is still predominantly white and still upholds Eurocentric ideals of beauty. From colourism to hair politics to brands only realising in 2017 that they need to offer more than two brown shades of foundation, there's evidently been a desperate vacancy that only black women can fill... and that vacancy is ownership.

In all my time of collecting magazines, up until it became a no-brainer that beauty editors ought to be black in a majority black country, I used to skip the beauty sections without missing a beat because those pages neither had any products made for me nor women who looked like me (and I'm light-skinned - imagine how much longer dark-skinned



Linda Gieskes-Mwamba in her shop

women have been failed). The black hair section at your local Clicks or DisChem was no bigger than a spice rack in your kitchen. And only a handful of cosmetics companies have finally formulated sunscreen that doesn't leave grey residue on dark skin. Not to mention our beloved nail salon letting us down amid Schoombee Gate.

The work of the likes of Beauty Revolution and Beauty on TApp is therefore not in vain, as these platforms have introduced South African women to an array of brands owned by black women and women of colour. And they remind us that there are always black alternatives to what we're loyal to, although we shouldn't consider them only as mere alternatives but rather go-to cosmetic fixes from here on out.

So in the same way we megaphone local art, fashion and talent, we will also continue to shoutout black-owned beauty brands who give meaning to the phrase, 'for us, by us':

### Connie Mashaba - Black Like Me

Connie is the director of hair care brand Black Like Me, which she and husband Herman Mashaba launched in 1985.

Looking back, naming a company 'Black Like Me' pre-1994 was a bold statement to make. Reputable entrepreneurship publications have hailed Black Like Me a model of solid African entrepreneurship in its over 30 years of existence and consistent innovation.

Her strategy for success, according to Entrepreneur Magazine, is based on three principles: "Give people what they want; do not take customer service for granted; and do not be static - when you stagnate, you die."

Ego Iwegbu with partners, Azania M-saka & Linda Jangulo

Ego is the CEO and founder of Miss Salon London and MSLONDON Cosmetics - a chain of boutique nail bars in Johannesburg and Pretoria - which she runs with TV and radio personality Azania and Linda, who has a background in business.

### Linda Gieskes-Mwamba - Suki Suki Naturals

Originally from the Democratic of Congo, Linda Gieskes-Mwamba is working to ensure that Suki Suki Naturals becomes a leading global luxury beauty brand. Read her story covered by W24 in 2019, below.

### Mabel Ledwaba - Havilla Beauty

Mabel's beauty company, which started from offering nail and lash services, now features products with a particular focus on developing full quality coverage and waterproof makeup. This passionate entrepreneur started her business on just R80 000, and today, the business is worth R2.5 million, boasting a presence in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia in addition to South Africa.

### Shonisani Masutha - Shonisani Braid

Speaking to DRUM about her hair extensions range, "the actress revealed that when she was approached by hair company, Afrotex SA, to become a brand ambassador for their hair, she wanted to be more than just the face of the hair."

W24's Futhi Masilela praised the brand for its lightweight feel once planted as braids, in contrast to how a new set of braids can often feel weighty on your head.

### Sonto Poee - Nativechild

Sonto's entry into the hair and beauty industry was more than just about financial prosperity, but more importantly, it was born out of a global cosmetic crisis

we're all familiar with as black women - not being adequately catered for by cosmetics brands.

### Mbali Sebapu - Hermosa Flor

Speaking to True Love, Mbali reveals she quit her job at the SA Navy in 2019 to build her beauty brand, Hermosa Flor. She expresses that her target market includes all women.

### Rabia Ghoor - Switch Beauty

Switch is the brainchild of Indian South African, Rabia Ghoor, who reveals on the brand's website that her idea slowly came to life in a "4 square meter area in [her] bedroom." "I wanted to create an affordable product the South African girl / boy felt proud to purchase and use," the brand's charismatic founder says.

It's also worth a special mention that in the wake of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, Switch Beauty has pledged R50 000 in the form of cash grants to black-owned businesses and R100 000 in product to up-and-coming MUAs. A Facebook post announcing this pledge also shares the demographic stats of 50% black, 40% Indian, and 10% white members.

## MARKETING

## Arsenal stars promoting Made-in-Rwanda outfits

KIGALI

RENNOWNED Arsenal Football Club players, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Hector Bellerin and Reiss Nelson, have showcased Made-in-Rwanda outfits - thanks to a Made-in-Rwanda fashion challenge organised by 'Visit Rwanda.'

The first team players had been challenged by local fashion designers to create their own looks from a range of clothing and accessories produced by established local designers, which the players accepted and dressed up in Made-in Rwanda fashion accessories availed by the Visit Rwanda team.

The challenge aims to keep the Visit Rwanda campaign between Rwanda and Arsenal alive as tourism was globally put on hold for the meantime as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. According to Visit Rwanda, the initiative is also organised "to celebrate the young creatives who are putting Made-in-Rwanda fashion on the map."

Commenting on what he thinks of the Made-in-Rwanda outfits he donned, Arsenal's forward player Reiss Nelson replied: "I think the colours are very neutral and the shirt is a smart, classic look. You can get away with wearing it at different places."

Local design companies that dressed-up these players among others include, Haute Baso, House of Tayo, Inzuzi Designs, K'tsobe, Moshions, Rwanda Clothing and Uzi

Collections. Speaking to The New Times, Joselyne Umutohiwase, who owns Rwanda Clothing, noted that the challenge was a good gesture.

"We are grateful that Arsenal willingly played a role in promoting our local creative industry by dressing-up our products. It is a sign that our vision of going beyond meeting the local market needs and exporting our accessories worldwide is indeed becoming a reality," she said.

In 2018, Rwanda became Arsenal's first-ever tourism partner under the three-year partnership deal dubbed, "Visit Rwanda" that aims to brand Rwanda as both a tourism and investment destination among others.



Arsenal stars Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Hector Bellerin and Reiss Nelson (right) donning Made in Rwanda outfits during the challenge.

## IMPACT

## Makeup sales drop in corona times

NAIROBI

For years, beauty companies have enjoyed good times earning billions of shillings from the sale of skin care, perfumes, and makeup products as people looked for near-perfect looks, but not anymore. Staying at home has caused many people to change their makeup, hair-care, and skin-care routines

Yves Rocher, a French makeup brand that opened four stores in Nai-

robi a few years ago says Covid-19 has hit the beauty business hard. "But this is the reality of the business and our response is what is important," says Maryanne Mungai, the Yves Rocher's brand manager.

Like other brands, Yves Rocher has recorded a decline in the sale of products associated with 'going out' such as makeup and fragrances. But demand for skincare treatments has not gone down. "Our loyal customers are still

investing in skin self-care routines. Social distancing doesn't stop acne or wrinkle formation, unfortunately," says Maryanne, adding that the pandemic has come with a lot of stress and anxiety, which harms the skin.

"We're seeing customers buy more products and treatments that support self-care and relaxation," she adds. To cater to clients, Yves which was not aggressive online and relied on physical visits is now organising

deliveries with orders made on Facebook messenger and WhatsApp. About 15 percent of their sales now originate online.

With all of their products coming from France, they say the ban on flights has not hugely affected their product delivery. "Fortunately, we have sufficient stock in our warehouse, as our European partners gave us advanced notice before flights were cancelled," Maryanne says.

## PESSIMISM

## Dodgy sanitiser may cause big problems for stores, as fears over side-effects grow

JOHANNESBURG

THE sanitiser sprayed on your hands by stores could lead to a "surge in lawsuits" if people develop health issues, underwriting firm SHA warns. The vast, sudden increase in demand for sanitiser has meant retailers are using new suppliers and new products without doing proper background checks.

Bonginkosi Ntuli, a claims specialist at SHA, says retailers could potentially "face a surge of class actions and personal injury claims for negligence regarding the use of harmful products." That's because it's possible to be allergic to the ingredients in hand sanitiser, say experts. And using too much sanitiser, or the wrong kind, can ruin your skin.

For some people the reaction is immediate, and often presents as a form of eczema: itchy, cracked, burning and inflamed skin. For other people, the allergy will only present itself after hand sanitiser has been used for some time.

"Companies need to ask: 'Where is all this product coming from? What steps have you taken to ensure it is safe? Where are the certificates?'" says Jonathan Kaiser of SHA. "Some due diligence definitely needs to be done." Companies should "definitely expect an increase in claims," he says.

Questions are being asked about the ingredients of some of the hand sanitiser aimed for mass use. A Johannesburg-based manufacturer of medical-grade hand sanitiser, who spoke on condition of anonymity, previously told Business Insider South Africa that "a lot of these guys are inexperienced in manufacturing hand sanitiser. They arrived three months ago and now they're experts". Some products, the manufacturer says, have no barcodes or contact numbers listed on the packaging, which means you're out of luck if something goes wrong.

In an effort to cut corners, retailers might be using sanitiser with poor quality ingredients - or stuff that is toxic for you, like methanol, which is much cheaper, but much more harmful than ethanol. In fact, a 2018 academic study found that repeated use of methanol-based hand sanitiser caused methanol to be absorbed through the skin, leading to chronic toxicity. This could lead to hallucinations or even death in extreme cases.

Stores are in a tricky spot, says Kaiser. By law, they're required to have hand sanitiser available, with the only requirement that it be 70% alcohol-based. So what can they do? Put up a sign, says Kaiser.







## WORLD

## Virus: Beijing halts resumption of classes as 2 more cases confirmed

BEIJING/WUHAN/SHANGHAI

BEIJING yesterday suspended the resumption of classes for lower grades in primary schools after three newly confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported in the capital city in the past two days.

According to the Beijing Municipal Education Commission, the decision was made in line with the changing situation of the city's epidemic prevention and control.

Around 520,000 students in the first, second and third grades in Beijing's primary schools were scheduled to return to campus on Monday, the commission said on last week.

Two new cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Beijing, a day after the capital on Thursday saw its first case in 56 days, the municipal government said yesterday.

The two cases are both employees of China Meat Food Research Center in Fengtai district, said Zhang Jie, deputy head of the district, at a press conference.

Two close contacts of the case from Thursday tested negative in nucleic acid and antibody testing, local health authorities said on Friday.

Thursday's case was reported in Beijing's Xicheng district. The district's health commission said two family

members of the patient, one of whom is the patient's son who is a fourth-grader at Yumin Primary School, were isolated for medical observation and had shown no signs of discomfort.

The patient was identified as a 52-year-old man, who visited a hospital Wednesday afternoon after experiencing an intermittent fever.

He later tested positive for COVID-19. According to the patient's statement, he experienced symptoms of fever and fatigue but did not have a cough, sore throat, or chest discomfort. The patient claimed that in the past two weeks he had not left the city and had no contact with people from outside of Beijing.

In response to the one of its students having been exposed to the virus, 33 students and 15 staff members, including teachers, at the primary school were asked to quarantine themselves at home, according to a statement from the school yesterday.

In addition, the school immediately launched an emergency response plan, including providing psychological counseling for students and shifting to online teaching, according to the statement. It remains open for other students.

Students in two classes on the same floor as the affected student were transferred to backup classrooms. Meanwhile,



People visit Qianmen Street in Beijing June 3, 2020. (Xinhua)

public areas, including classrooms and bathrooms where the student had been to, were thoroughly sterilized, according to the statement.

Coronavirus risks remain in the capital, and epidemic prevention measures will stay in place for a long time, the Beijing anti-virus leading group determined in a meeting on Thursday afternoon.

The origin of Tang's confirmed case should be traced rapidly and followed up with a strict epidemiological investigation, the leading group said, adding that the tracing time should be long enough to determine the full scope of close contacts, as high accuracy is required for public safety.

Entertainment venues, such as movie theaters and KTVs, will remain closed, and the epidemic prevention and control work in places of public gathering will be strengthened, the leading group said.

6 out of 7 new cases on mainland imported Earlier on Friday, Chinese health authorities said it received reports of seven newly confirmed COVID-19 cases on the Chinese mainland Thursday, of which six were imported from overseas.

The other case was a case of local transmission reported in Beijing, the National Health Commission said in its daily report.

Out of the six imported cases, five were reported in Shanghai and one in Fujian province, the com-

mission said.

The cases in Shanghai involve five Pakistanis, who departed from Pakistan on June 2 and arrived at Shanghai Pudong International Airport on the same day. They showed symptoms during the isolated observation period and were later confirmed as COVID-19 patients.

The five of them have been sent to a designated hospital for medical treatment. Fifty-five close contacts on the flight have been put under concentrated quarantine.

Meanwhile, no deaths related to the disease or new suspected cases were reported Thursday, according to the commission.

On Thursday, four people were discharged from hospitals after recovery. As of Thursday, the overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 83,064, including 65 patients who were still being treated, with no one in severe condition.

Altogether, 78,365 people had been discharged after recovery and 4,634 people had died of the disease, the commission said.

By Thursday, the Chinese mainland had reported a total of 1,803 imported cases. Out of those cases, 1,740 had been discharged from hospitals after recovery, and 63 remained hospitalized, with no one in severe condition.

Xinhua

## Emotional testimony on police brutality heard

WASHINGTON

THE brother of George Floyd, an African American whose death in police custody on May 25 sparked worldwide protests, called on US Congress members on Wednesday to ensure that his big brother did not die in vain.

Also at the House of Representatives hearing on "policing practices and law enforcement accountability" on Wednesday, a Republican witness whose brother Dave Patrick Underwood, a federal law enforcement officer, was slain during unrest last month, made an urgent plea that her brother's death also not be in vain.

The hearing, held a day after Floyd's burial in his hometown of Houston, was an emotional and soul-searching

session that sought to address racial injustice and police brutality. But it also reflected the divisions between those supporting sweeping police reforms and those defending assertive police practices.

"I'm here today to ask you to make it stop. Stop the pain. Stop us from being tired," Philonise Floyd, 42, told the House Judiciary Committee, after committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler said the United States "demands and deserves meaningful change".

About 15 minutes after Philonise Floyd (pictured) spoke, Angela Underwood Jacobs, who sat at another witness table, also made an emotionally charged statement.

Jacobs was one of several witnesses called by Republicans to attend the Democratic-led hearing. Her brother,



a Federal Protective Service officer, was shot and killed on May 29 while on duty in Oakland, California, amid the anti-racism protests.

After extending her condolences to Floyd's brother, Jacobs said: "Police brutality of any kind must not be condoned. However, it is blatantly wrong to create an excuse out of discrimination and disparity to loot and burn our communities, to kill our officers of the law."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday called for the removal of 11 statues of Confederate figures such as Jefferson Davis from the US Capitol. The protesters decrying racism have targeted Confederate statues in many cities.

These statues "pay homage to hate, not heritage", Pelosi said in a letter to a bipartisan committee with jurisdiction over the controversial topic.

And late on Wednesday, footage from NBS affiliate WWBT showed a statue of Confederate president Davis lying in the street in Richmond, Virginia, after it was torn down from its pedestal.

'Embarrassment' for nation

On Monday, Democrats introduced

legislation that would ban choke holds, prohibit racial profiling, allow victims of misconduct to sue police for damages and eliminate the "qualified immunity" for both police and correctional officers.

Democratic Congresswoman Karen Bass, who led the drafting of the Justice in Policing Act of 2020, said George Floyd's death was not just a tragedy for the US, but an embarrassment for the nation. "While we hold up human rights in the world, we have to hold them up in our country," she said.

Also on Wednesday, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz called a special legislative session to address curbing police abuses and pandemic-related economic pain in the state where George Floyd, 46, was killed.

Agencies

## Nigerian volunteers to secure Beijing, his second hometown amid COVID-19

ALI Albade from Niger is considered "sweet and nice" by his Beijing neighbours. After spending 11 years in the Chinese capital, he has turned from an "muggle" of mandarin to a high-level speaker of Chinese, becoming a genuine part of the Beijing community.

In March, the community's neighbourhood committee started recruiting foreign volunteers to facilitate the communication between foreign residents and the community during the COVID-19 epidemic. As a trilingual resident speaking Chinese, English and French, Albade signed up immediately. On the afternoon of every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, he would take temperatures, explain policies, distribute materials and spread anti-epidemic tips.

He also translated the community's notices into English and sent them to a chat group of foreigners living there, so as to keep the latter updated of the latest epidemic prevention and control information.

"Beijing is my home, I just did what I should do." That's what Albade always said responding to compliments he received when he was on duty at the entrance of his community during the epidemic.

"I'm quite familiar with the community and I'm glad to help the new comers from overseas," said Albade.

It's been six years since he moved to the community after graduating from the Beijing Language and Culture University. The community, located in an area where multiple universities are situated, is home to over 30 foreign residents from 28 countries and regions.

He taught a family of four that had just arrived from the U.S. how to use online food delivery and grocery apps. Besides, he also left his own number on these apps for the family, in case they had problems communicating with couriers.

Albade said the chat group answers everything. "I received a lot of help from my Chinese friends when I just arrived in Beijing, and now I want to help others," he added.

Xueyuannu neighborhood, where Albade's community is located, issued an epidemic response plan tailored for foreign residents, requiring all communities in the area to help each other and mobilizing foreign residents to offer volunteer services so as to forge a strong power against the virus from both Chinese and foreign communities. Now, Albade's community has 7 foreign volunteers who joined the service inspired by him.

As China's epidemic prevention and control situation continues to improve, Albade has returned to his work. However, he is still volunteering three times a week. "I must give thumbs up to the Chinese people. It is because of the timely preventive measures that China has managed to contain the virus. I think China is worth learning from for other countries," Albade said.

People's Daily



Ali Albade takes body temperature for a resident at the entrance of his community, March 10. (File photo)

## President Xi hails strengthened ties in pandemic fight

BEIJING

CHINA and the Philippines should make innovative efforts to gradually resume the exchange of necessary personnel on the basis of implementing disease control measures, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

Xi (pictured) made the remark in a phone conversation with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. Xi also spoke by phone with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

The Chinese and Philippine people have helped each other in disease prevention and control since the outbreak of COVID-19, Xi said, adding that the mutual support demonstrates the brotherly

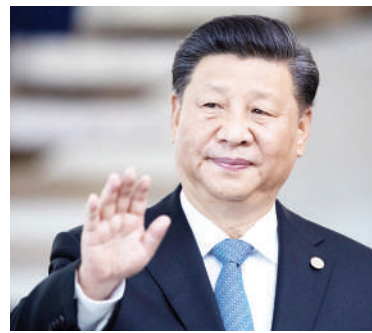
friendship between the two countries.

Xi said he was glad to see that Duterte had led the Philippine people in taking effective anti-virus measures and achieving positive outcomes.

The Philippine people will definitely defeat the disease soon and restore production and normal daily life, Xi said.

China will continue to offer firm support to the Philippine people, Xi said, adding that, upholding the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, it has provided capital, experience and confidence for the global pandemic fight.

China would like to make joint efforts with the Philippines to



promote the unity of the international community and support the World Health Organization in playing its leading role.

Duterte said under the strong leadership of Xi, China has not only controlled the disease domestically but also offered a generous hand to its partners including the Philippines.

He spoke highly of Xi's announcement that after China develops vaccines and puts them into medical use, it will offer them to the whole world as global public goods.

The Philippines is dedicated to deepening its friendship with China, and will not allow anyone to take advantage of the country to conduct anti-China activities, he added.

While speaking with Lukashenko, Xi said the mutual assistance between China and Belarus in containing the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the profound friendship between them as well as the high-level development and special nature of their bilateral ties.

China firmly supports Belarus in epidemic control, and will continue to share anti-epidemic experience and treatment measures without any reservations, Xi said, adding the country stands ready to work with the international community in strengthening cooperation and jointly building the health community with a shared future for mankind.

Xi commended the high-level development of the comprehensive strategic partnership of mutual trust and win-win cooperation between the two countries, and said both countries support each other in their respective core interests and major concerns and they are genuine all-weather partners.

Xinhua

WASHINGTON / PHILADELPHIA / DALLAS

## Biden: Military would oust Trump if he loses but hangs on

DEMOCRATIC presidential candidate Joe Biden said he worries President Donald Trump will try to "steal" the November election but he is confident soldiers would escort Trump from the White House if he loses and does not recognize the result.

"It's my greatest concern, my single greatest concern: This president is going to try to steal this election," Biden said in an interview broadcast late on Wednesday on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show."

Biden made the comment as he and Trump headed to must-win election battlegrounds on Thursday, slowly resuming campaign

activities in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Biden did not specify how he thought Trump, a Republican, might cheat. But the former vice president cited Trump's opposition to mail-in voting and said Democrats would have lawyers present at voting locations across the country to look out for Republican efforts to suppress the vote.

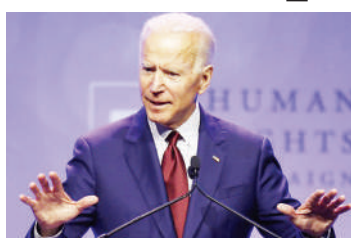
Tim Murtaugh, communications director for Trump's reelection campaign, responded to Biden's comments. "This is just another brainless conspiracy theory from Joe Biden as he continues to try to undermine confi-

dence in our elections," he said.

"President Trump has been clear that he will accept the results of the 2020 election," he added.

Trump has repeatedly attacked voting by mail, proclaiming without evidence that the expected increase in mail-in voting would lead to widespread fraud in the Nov 3 contest.

Biden said recent comments by former senior military officials criticizing Trump's response to nationwide protests over police brutality made him confident the US military would intervene if Trump refused to accept the election results.



"I'm absolutely convinced they will escort him from the White House with great dispatch," Biden said.

Biden has often said publicly he worries Trump would try to cheat. But his rhetoric has escalated recently as most national polls show the former vice president leading the president, while Trump has stepped up criticism

of voting by mail. During the 2016 presidential election campaign, Trump refused to say during a final debate with Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton that he would concede if Clinton won.

Election experts and officials expect a surge in mail-in voting this November due to concerns over the coronavirus pandemic, and warn the process could be marred by chaos of the type already seen in primary elections held in states during the viral outbreak.

Large number of mail ballots not delivered in time to be cast or counted could lead to legal challenges over election results.

Counting mail ballots also take more time because a voter's identity must first be validated, raising the prospect that the election outcome won't be known well past Election Day, experts say.

A growing number of former senior military leaders have criticized the president over his handling of the civil unrest following the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a black man whose death in custody of the Minneapolis police set off protests for police reform and racial justice. Former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis accused the president earlier this month of trying to divide America

and roundly denounced a militarization of the US response to civil unrest.

The current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army General Mark Milley, on Thursday said he made a mistake by joining Trump as he walked to a church for a photo opportunity last week after authorities dispersed protesters with tear gas and rubber bullets near the White House.

On Thursday, Trump hosted a campaign-style roundtable at a church in Dallas focused on aiding minority communities amid ongoing national protests over racism and police brutality. Biden unveiled an economic reopening proposal in Pennsylvania.

Agencies



## Top US general says joining Trump church walk a 'mistake'

WASHINGTON

THE top US military officer on Thursday said he should not have joined President Donald Trump as he walked from the White House to a nearby church for a photo opportunity after authorities cleared the way of protesters using tear gas and rubber bullets.

"I should not have been there," Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Mark Milley said of his appearance at the politically charged event on June 1.

"My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics," he said in a prerecorded video commencement address to the National Defense University.

Milley's remarks followed a rare outpouring of condemnation from retired US generals and even former defense secretary Jim Mattis for taking part in the event, given that the US military is meant to be apolitical and is sworn to

defend the US Constitution, which protects the right to peaceful protest.

Milley and Defense Secretary Mark Esper had joined Trump to pay a surprise visit to the historic Saint John's Church, during which the president held up a Bible for photographers.

Minutes before the visit, law enforcement used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse mostly peaceful protesters occupying the square between the White House and the church in a demonstration against the police killing of George Floyd, drawing condemnation from Democrats and some Republicans.

The National Guard supported law enforcement at the site.

"As a commissioned uniformed officer, it was a mistake that I have learned from, and I sincerely hope we all can learn from it," Milley said. He stopped short of apologizing outright.

Esper on Thursday ordered a review of the National Guard's response to the unrest, the Pentagon said.



"The report will address a range of issues, including training, equipping, organizing, manning, deployment, and employment of National Guard forces," it said in a statement. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy will conduct the review, it said.

As authorities were clearing the square, Trump delivered a speech at

the White House condemning "acts of domestic terror" and saying the United States was in the grips of professional anarchists, violent mobs, arsonists, looters, criminals and others.

He promised the mobilization of thousands of US troops and told state governors that same day he was putting Milley "in charge" of the protest response. Milley later seemed to reinforce Trump's comments by appearing in downtown Washington that evening in camouflage fatigues.

The protests following Floyd's killing in Minneapolis have been largely peaceful. Floyd, who was black, died after a white police officer knelt on his neck for almost nine minutes on May 25.

Milley has not appeared in public to answer questions since the walk with Trump. His decision to deliver his remarks in a prerecorded message, as opposed to a news conference, precluded the possibility of taking questions, including about any split with the Repub-

lican president.

Esper told a Pentagon news conference more than a week ago that he regretted using the word "battlespace" to describe protest sites around the United States and said he was unaware that the church visit was going to be a "photo op."

He also publicly stated he did not support the use of the Insurrection Act, which would allow Trump to mobilize active duty troops to crack down on protesters. Reuters has reported that Trump came closer to deploying active duty troops than thought and yelled at Esper after that news conference.

In his address on Thursday, Milley stressed the need for members of the military to stay out of politics.

"We who wear the cloth of our nation come from the people of our nation and we must hold dear the principle of an apolitical military that is so deeply rooted in the very essence of our republic," he said. **Agencies**

Western coalition must be brought to account for campaign in Iraq, says Zakharova

MOSCOW

KEEPING quiet about crimes committed by the Western coalition in Iraq is impermissible and those responsible must be brought to justice, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a news briefing on Thursday.

She pointed to a recent statement by Britain's director of the Service Prosecution Authority, who said that all inquiries and prosecution of British military personnel for crimes they may have committed over the years of the military campaign in Iraq would be wrapped up "within weeks".

Zakharova (pictured) said it was utterly unclear why the investigation of specific incidents and facts was to be terminated.

"It is important to prevent crimes committed by the Western coalition in Iraq from being brushed under the carpet and to bring those responsible to justice," Zakharova said.

"Currently a campaign is gaining momentum for investigating the causes of the coronavirus pandemic and some countries are accused and specific names mentioned.

Naturally all this is being done on a solid political basis. Why shouldn't then the same be done in relation to the events in Iraq that happened over so many years?"

There is so much evidence. So many people, including civilians of a sovereign state, lost their lives. Isn't it the right moment to bring some representatives of the Western coalition to justice?" she asked. Zakharova remarked that "the statement by such a senior British official is clear evidence London is determined to conceal numerous instances of disgraceful conduct by British troops in Iraq."

There are 3,500 such incidents. "These are the most shameful pages that have been written down forever in the history of Her Majesty's Armed Forces," Zakharova said, adding that London's policy "requires condemnation by the world human rights community."



## SW China's Chengdu boosts consumption, employment with flexible city management measures

AS noon approached on May 30, Kuixinglou Street, a popular food street in Chengdu, capital of Southwest China's Sichuan Province, gradually got busy.

People who came to look for a nice meal and tourists with luggage strolled along the street stopped from time to time in front of restaurants and shops to check their daily specials.

The street, which was hit hard by the COVID-19 epidemic, has been brought back to life by shouts of shop owners as well as laughter and cheerful talks.

"Would you prefer to eat in or outside the dining hall?" He Xu, owner of a restaurant, greeted customers at the door with a menu in his hand.

The restaurant set six simple tables near the sidewalk, which was newly allowed by the local government in a bid to help business owners quickly restore business, said He, who wore a face mask and an apron, standing at the door of the restaurant to invite passersby to eat in the place.

According to requirements for epidemic prevention and control, diners must keep a

safe distance from each other, and the occupancy rate of the restaurant shall not exceed 50 percent, He noted.

"We reopened on March 9, and our daily turnover only stood between 2,000 (about \$281) and 3,000 yuan (about \$423) during the first several days, which was less than one ninth of our previous daily business volume before the epidemic. Now the figure has finally reached two thirds of what we had before," He said.

A malatang (similar to hot pot) restaurant located a few steps away from He's restaurant is doing well, too. It just added 15 more tables to its outdoor dining area.

"We called 15 of our staff members back to help, which is a win-win result, as they also get to earn income again," said the owner of the restaurant.

In an effort to boost economy, Chengdu started to allow shop owners, street vendors, and shopping malls to set up temporary roadside stalls, booths, and business areas to enhance sales on the premise that firefighting access and blind sidewalks are not occupied and no one's interests and



Citizens stroll around and buy snacks at roadside food stalls on a street in Suining, Sichuan Province, May 31. So far, Suining has set up 110 temporary roadside business areas, put on records temporary operation spots of more than 4,800 shops, and granted permission to vendors for running mobile roadside stalls and booths on 146 streets, creating jobs for more than 7,000 people in the city. (Photo by Liu Changsong/People's Daily Online)

rights are violated.

Following the principle of flexible management under prudent and tolerant supervision, Chengdu makes education and persuasion the main measure to deal with minor infractions.

These policies and measures have led to significantly positive effects on stimulating consumption and have been widely welcomed.

Since epidemic prevention and control measures to contain COVID-19 became normalized, city management bureau of Wuhou district set up 20 shared roadside stalls between subway entrance and business district in Cuijin subdistrict, and offered the stalls to residents who need them.

Under a timeshare model, each stall operator can use their respective spot at a differ-

ent time of the day.

The bureau has created a detailed mechanism for the use of these roadside stalls. The mechanism, which specifies access and exit rules for stall operators, gives preference to impoverished households in granting access to the stalls and would punish those who disobey relevant rules and regulations.

Stall operators are required to carry with them their own trash can and clean up their respective spot after the end of business every day. Besides, all operators are not allowed to use loudspeaker or any other tools that could disturb residents living nearby.

Ran Yifu, a post-70s vendor from Ziyang, Sichuan province, shares a stall with Li Jian, a post-80s man from Jintang county of Chengdu.

Ran sells breakfast at the stall from 7:00 am to 11:00 am, and Li uses the spot to sell snacks after 11:00 am every day.

When time draws near 11:00 am, Ran packs up the plastic mat on the ground and cleans up the space before handing it over to Li.

"I sell more than 100 Gong-

pobing (a traditional pastry) and dozens of steamed dumplings every day, which means several hundred yuan of income for me," Ran said.

Li used to work as a security guard in Chengdu Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone. He lost his job because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

"Living costs for my family of five are quite a lot of money every month, so I applied for the access to the stall immediately after I heard of the opportunity. I use the stall to sell roast squid," explained Li, while laying the ground mat he brought and preparing tableware, getting ready to receive customers.

"I have just started the business a week ago. I make over 300 yuan (\$42) every day. Since I started to have stable income, I've been able to sleep tight at night," Li said.

Chengdu had set up 2,230 temporary roadside stalls, booths, and business areas, allowed 17,147 temporary operation spots of shop owners and shopping malls, and permitted 20,130 mobile stalls and booths run by street vendors as of May 28. **People's Daily**

## ILO, Unicef: Pandemic could halt progress in reducing child labour

By Bloomberg

THE coronavirus pandemic is threatening to reverse two decades of progress in reducing child labor and could push millions more children into work, the International Labour Organization and Unicef warned.

"In times of crisis, child labor becomes a coping mechanism for many families," Unicef Executive Director Henrietta Fore said. "As poverty rises, schools close and the availability of social services decreases, more children are pushed into the workforce."

Some 94 million fewer children have been engaged in child labor since 2000, but the pandemic may upend that progress as parents losing jobs can push their children into often hazardous and exploitative work, according to a joint report released Friday.

"With poverty comes child labor as households use every available means to survive," the



report showed. "Compared to adults, children are more likely to accept work for less pay and in vulnerable conditions. Busi-

nesses may deliberately recruit children to cut costs and boost earnings.

Lockdowns in major econo-

mies like the US and Europe to contain the virus mean remittances from migrant workers have plunged, leading to a loss of income for households in some developing countries. The report also noted growing evidence that school closures during the pandemic have led to increased child labor.

"Even when classes restart, some parents may no longer be able to afford to send their children to school," the report said. "Children of legal working age may drop out of school and enter the labor market with limited education and skills. Children below the minimum legal age may seek employment in informal and domestic jobs."

The report put forward a raft of policy suggestions, including more comprehensive social protection, easier access to credit for poor households, the promotion of decent work for adults, and measures to get children back into school. **Agencies**

## UN: Missiles used to attack Saudi Arabia 'of Iranian origin'

CRUISE missiles used in several attacks on oil facilities and an international airport in Saudi Arabia last year were of "Iranian origin," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council in a report seen by Reuters on Thursday.

Guterres (pictured) also said several items in US seizures of weapons and related materiel in November 2019 and February 2020 were "of Iranian origin."

Some have design characteristics similar to those also produced by a commercial entity in Iran, or bear Farsi markings, Guterres said, and some were delivered to the country between February 2016 and April 2018.

He said that "these items may have been transferred in a manner inconsistent" with a 2015 Security Council resolution that enshrines Tehran's deal with world powers to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons.

Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for



comment on the UN report.

Washington is pushing the 15-member council to extend an arms embargo on Iran that is due to expire in October under the nuclear deal. Council vetoes Russia and China have already signaled their opposition to the move.

Guterres reports twice a year to the Security Council on the implementation of an arms embargo on Iran and other restrictions that remained in place after the deal.

The UN chief said the United Nations examined debris of weapons used in attacks on a Saudi oil facility in Abqaiq in May, on the Abha international airport in

June and August and on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities in Khurais and Abqaiq in September.

"The Secretariat assesses that the cruise missiles and/or parts thereof used in the four attacks are of Iranian origin," Guterres wrote. Guterres also said that drones used in the May and September attacks were "of Iranian origin."

He also said the United Nations had observed that some items in the two US seizures "were identical or similar" to those found in the debris of the cruise missiles and the drones used in the 2019 attacks on Saudi Arabia.

Guterres said that in a May 22 letter, Iran's UN envoy said "it has not been the policy of Iran to export weapons in violation of relevant arms embargoes of the Security Council" and that it will "continue to actively cooperate with the United Nations in this regard."

The Security Council is due to discuss Guterres' report later this month. **Agencies**

## China to develop strong public health system to safeguard people's health

CHINESE President Xi Jinping called for efforts to develop a strong public health system to safeguard people's health on June 2.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks when presiding over a symposium attended by experts and scholars.

From the strategic height of overall national development, Xi summarized experiences gained and lessons learned in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, and expounded on the strategic role of health care.

Xi offered systematic discourse on a range of major issues, including reforming the system for disease prevention and control, improving early-stage monitoring and warning for epidemics, comprehensively enhancing the capacity for prevention, control and treatment, building a strong and solid protection network against infectious diseases, and advancing targeted legislative work in the public health sector.

Xi's profound and insightful speech with rich connotations has a significant and far-reaching influence on the whole

Party and the society's efforts to enhance the awareness of worst-case scenarios and potential dangers, to promote high-quality development of health care in the new era, to forestall major risks in the health sector, and to protect people's lives and health.

Protecting people's lives and health is an important task underlying the Party's governance. The Party and country have always attached great importance to the development of the health cause and the improvement of people's wellbeing.

Since the 18th CPC National

Congress, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has put forward explicit guidelines for the Party's health work in the new era, solidified the institutional guarantee for improving people's health, followed the policy of putting prevention first, and developed steadily the public health service system.

Thanks to these efforts, China prevented and successfully responded to sudden outbreaks such as the H1N1 flu, H7N9 flu and Ebola hemorrhagic fever, and significantly reduced the incidence rate of major infectious

diseases.

As President Xi pointed out, good health is a prerequisite for promoting well-rounded development of the people, a precondition for economic and social development, a key mark of a prosperous nation and a strong country, and the common pursuit of the people. The development of health care always assumes a fundamental position, and has been integrated with the country's overall strategy, playing an important role in the historical course of achieving the two centenary goals.

When joining deliberation

with deputies from north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at the third session of the 13th National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, Xi reviewed the great fight against COVID-19 and made a profound point that people's lives and health should be considered as the top priority. "We are willing to protect people's lives and health at all costs," Xi said.

The COVID-19 epidemic is a major public health emergency that has spread the fastest, caused the most extensive infections and been the hardest

to contain since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. Facing the epidemic, the CPC Central Committee has taken the overall situation into account, made resolute decisions, and always put people's lives and health first.

Thanks to the concerted and all-out efforts made by the Party, the armed forces, and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, China has made major strategic achievements in the battle against the epidemic with the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures. **People's Daily**



The  
**Guardian**

# SPORT



Gary Woodland observes a moment of silence not the 13th tee during the first round of the Charles Schwab Challenge golf tournament at the Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas, Thursday, June 11, 2020. Players at the 8:46 a.m. tee time paused to pay their respects to the memory of George Floyd for a moment of silence, prayer and reflection. (AP Photo)

## Tour recognises racial injustice with moment of silence

FORT WORTH, Texas

COLONIAL already was quiet with no spectators around for the return of the PGA Tour on Thursday. And then at 8:46 a.m., it came to a standstill.

Commissioner Jay Monahan stood on the first tee for the 8:46 a.m. starting time that was listed on the tee sheet without any player names. The tour left that time open as a tribute to George Floyd, whose killing by a white police officer in Minneapolis sparked worldwide outrage and protest over social and racial injustice.

The time reflects how long - 8 minutes, 46 seconds - authorities say the officer held his knee to the back of Floyd's neck. The handcuffed black man died after pleading for air.

"As the PGA Tour commits to amplifying voices and efforts to end systemic issues of racial and social injustices, we have reserved the 8:46 tee time to pause for a moment of silence, prayer and reflection," Monahan said.

That was followed by three short blasts of the horn as players stopped - on the golf course, on the putting green and on the driving range. Most players removed caps and bowed their heads. Carts also stopped - the traffic provided about the only noise at the Charles Schwab Challenge.

The civil unrest has shared the conversation with the COVID-19 pandemic that has kept golf shut down for the last 90 days. Harold Varner III, one of four PGA Tour players of black heritage, was the strongest voice. Tiger Woods joined in with a tweet, and other players have not shied away from the topic.

Rory McIlroy comes from Northern Ireland, which has a political history steeped in hatred and intolerance, and he was hopeful this would spark real progress in America, which he now calls home.

He also pointed to Woods, not only as prolific a winner the PGA Tour has ever seen, but a player with a multiracial heritage.

"My hero growing up was Tiger Woods," McIlroy said. "Tiger doesn't look the same as me, has a different upbringing to the one that I have had, but he was my hero growing up. And it didn't matter what color his skin was, what his beliefs were. Tiger was my hero, and he's been a lot of kids' hero over the years that have grown up playing golf. We've been lucky to have him in our game. I think that there should be more people like him in golf."

He referenced a video conversation between Varner and Monahan, saying what struck him was the need for everyone in golf to get involved.

"As long as we continue to give people from different backgrounds opportunities to be in

golf, that can only be a good thing," McIlroy said Wednesday.

Monahan has talked about various programs the tour has developed, dating to the creation of The First Tee in 1997, and more recent policies and mission statements the last five years on inclusion and diversity.

Still lacking are the number of players of color, at least Americans. And as he mentioned in his conversation with Varner, most of it starts with getting minorities involved, perhaps using The First Tee as a greater platform. Currently, it is about using golf to teach life skills to a diverse group through 144 chapters and 5,000 schools involved in the curriculum.

"There's an opportunity for us, as kids start to matriculate, for us to make certain that they're getting access to the game of golf to play it, and access to the industry of golf," he said.

Tom Lehman, who was raised in Minnesota, said the focus should be on how little regard was shown for his life.

"I think everybody needs to feel deeply what happened and to hurt deeply because of what happened to George Floyd," Lehman said. "I think everybody needs to understand that when you have an absolute disregard for the suffering or pain of somebody else or the death that you cause for that, you are a part of the problem and you need to get your (expletive) together."

"I would say that's probably the thing I took away from it is, 'Let's just understand that we're all human beings and need to care about each other,'" he said. "If you can't do that, then I feel sorry for you."

The moment of silence at 8:46 a.m. is scheduled for all four rounds. Varner played Thursday afternoon and missed it.

"When I got to the gym it was on TV," he said. "I just couldn't hear but I could see that they were just - man, I don't really know what they were thinking on the golf course. But it was just crazy what they did. I thought it was pretty cool."

AP

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*I think everybody needs to feel deeply what happened and to hurt deeply because of what happened to George Floyd," Lehman said. "I think everybody needs to understand that when you have an absolute disregard for the suffering or pain of somebody else or the death that you cause*

## With a swing and silence, PGA Tour gets back to business

FORT WORTH, Texas

THE start was even more quiet than usual for a Thursday morning on the PGA Tour, only the silence never left over the next 12 hours as golf was back to business at the Charles Schwab Challenge.

Sung Kang made a hole-in-one on the 13th hole and didn't realize it until he was 50 yards from the green.

"I'm like, 'Wow, it's in the hole.' It wasn't really crazy. Nobody was really out there, only a few people out there just clapping a little bit," Kang said. "I still appreciated it, though."

Phil Mickelson made a birdie and instinctively pinched the brim of his cap to acknowledge a crowd that wasn't there.

Ryan Palmer, a Colonial member who raised money for COVID-19 relief efforts during the shutdown, was chosen to hit the first official shot on the PGA Tour in three months. Those gathered around the first tee could barely hear him announced. The starter was wearing a mask, and his voice competed with the hum of a generator behind the ninth green.

Quiet as it was, Colonial came to a standstill at 8:46 a.m. when everyone on the course honored a moment of silence for the death of George Floyd and the outrage it has sparked worldwide on racial injustice.

It was a most unusual round of golf. But it was golf.

"I think just being out here is successful, to be honest with you, getting started," Palmer said. "I don't see anything holding us back moving forward. I think today was the biggest day, just getting this first day off. People are going to watch golf back home and be interested to watch it tomorrow, and that's a great thing."

Justin Rose and Harold Varner shared the lead at 7-under 63, with Justin Thomas among those a stroke back. Tom Lehman, a 61-year-old former champion at Colonial, got in on the act with a 65.

Conditions were ripe for good scores with no cheers.

"It kind of feels like a competitive practice round," said Rose, who won at Colonial two years ago.

"But obviously, I think we all know what's on the line. We all know what we're playing for. We all know the competition this week especially, the field is incredible. Obviously, we miss the fans. They definitely provide a ton



Dustin Johnson tees off at the 11th hole during the first round of the Charles Schwab Challenge golf tournament at the Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas, Thursday, June 11, 2020. (AP Photo)

of energy and atmosphere."

Golf is the second major sport in the U.S., behind motor sports, to resume a schedule shut down by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the safety measures are coronavirus tests for every player, caddy and essential personnel. Of the 487 tests at Colonial, the results were all negative.

"We're all taking risks playing golf, obviously," Palmer said. "Being back out here, everybody leaves the club, they're going out to dinner and doing things, so everybody is taking that risk to be here. Everybody is pretty confident that we're going to all be safe. I think everything has been done the right way."

The top three players in the world - Rory McIlroy (68), Jon Rahm (69) and Brooks Koepka (68) - played in the same group, and they had the largest following late in the afternoon. There were 14 people outside the ropes behind the 10th green - six involved in the broadcast (radio and TV), four writers, two photographers, one coach and one trainer.

The telecast began with an apology. Right when Golf Channel came on the air, Rahm chipped in for birdie on the par-3 eighth and someone - it could have been inside or outside the ropes - was heard to say, "Pretty (expletive)

good, there."

"Well, we were hoping for better audio with no fans," CBS anchor Jim Nantz said.

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan gave the opening group a thumbs-up after the players hit their drives, and he returned to the tee box alone at 8:46 a.m.

That starting time was listed on the tee sheet without any players. The tour is keeping that empty all four rounds for a moment of silence. It's a tribute to Floyd, who was handcuffed while a white police officer pressed his knee to the back of the black man's neck for 8 minutes, 46 seconds. Floyd died after pleading for air.

Varner is one of four players of black heritage with full PGA Tour status, and he delivered the strongest words last week in a social media post. He also sat down with Monahan for a 10-minute video on what golf can do.

And then he found himself atop the leaderboard with a round so clean he putted for birdie on every hole.

"If I'm thinking about winning a golf tournament right now, I've probably lost it," Varner said. "Yeah, I know what's going on, but when I'm on the golf course, I'm trying to play well. The reason I have a platform is because I'm really good at golf. I just

need to focus on that."

For so long, the only sounds came from the click of contact with the golf ball, the squeak of brakes on carts belonging to broadcast crews, course workers and rules official. And then came a strange noise - cheering.

A house behind the 16th tee set up a grandstand, while another home erected at two-story hospitality tent with views of a small section of the 15th fairway. They chanted names of players and let out a few roars. Behind the second tee, a few fans watched from behind a chain fence along a public road.

Jordan Spieth, who opened with a 65, was reminded of what to expect before he did a shot.

"I was pulling in when Mickelson was on 4 tee, and when I didn't see anybody there - and it was a tournament round day, it wasn't a practice round day - I'm like, 'This is certainly weird,'" Spieth said. "I'm just really happy to be playing golf and being able to be competitive again and to be able to finish our season."

It was only one round. Fans will be kept away from the first five tournaments as the tour takes a conservative return to golf, hopeful of no setbacks in the sport from a spike in the new coronavirus.

## Is this the end of the road for Roger Federer?

LONDON

ROGER Federer is talking optimistically about returning to his "highest level" after knee surgery, but does tennis have to start adjusting to a future without the Swiss star?

The 20-time Grand Slam winner announced on Wednesday that he would be sidelined until 2021 after his second operation in a matter of months.

Federer remains upbeat, tweeting: "I plan to take the necessary time to be 100 percent ready to play at my highest level."

In some ways 2020 is a good season to miss after the coronavirus ravaged the tennis schedule.

Writing Federer off in the past has proved dangerous.

He returned from a six-month injury lay-off to claim the Australian Open in 2017, winning his eighth Wimbledon crown later that year.

But he will be 40 in 2021 and is now heading into uncharted territory.

Despite his groaning trophy cabinet, there are two factors that will motivate Federer to keep going - the risk of losing his grip on the men's Grand Slam title record and a missing Olympics singles gold medal.

Rafael Nadal has 19 majors, just one shy of Federer's mark and Djokovic has 17.

Spain's Nadal will be fancied to draw level with Federer at the French Open, rescheduled for September, while few would bet against Djokovic winning in New York weeks earlier.

In April, Federer said he was "devastated" when Wimbledon was cancelled for the first time since World War II.

Last year he fell agonisingly short at the All England Club, failing to convert two championship points on his own serve against Djokovic.

The Wimbledon grass probably



Roger Federer

remains his best chance of adding to his Grand Slam collection - he has not won the US Open since 2008 and his only title at Roland Garros came in 2009. Even though Federer has slipped from the very pinnacle of the game, he is still a major threat to Nadal and Djokovic.

- 'Golden' ambitions -

Last year, the world number four had a 53-10 win-loss record and he reached the semi-finals at the Australian Open in January in his only tournament this year.

Federer, who is still six ATP titles short of Jimmy Connors' all-time record of 109, has one glaring omission from his CV - the Olympic title.

The Swiss won doubles gold in

Beijing in 2008 with compatriot Stan Wawrinka but lost in the singles final to Andy Murray in London four years later.

The postponed Tokyo Games will almost certainly be Federer's last opportunity to complete a career "golden" Grand Slam - he will turn 40 on the day of the closing ceremony next year.

Tennis will feel the loss of the elegant Federer keenly when he walks off the court for the last time.

Djokovic and Nadal have been the dominant forces in recent years but the Swiss remains the biggest draw and last month topped Forbes' list of the world's highest-earning athletes.

His last appearance on court was

in front of nearly 52,000 fans - touted by organisers as a world record for tennis - at a charity match against Nadal in Cape Town in February.

Federer is nearly always the crowd favourite wherever he plays and has proved a perfect ambassador for the sport since he won his first Grand Slam title in 2003. He certainly expects to be back and competitive next year.

"I will be missing my fans and the tour dearly but I will look forward to seeing everyone back on tour at the start of the 2021 season," he tweeted.

The avalanche of support from his adoring fans showed they would miss him too, but they will have to get used to a time when he is gone for good.

AFP



## La Liga resumes after three months away as Sevilla defeat Betis

MADRID

SEVILLA beat local rivals Real Betis 2-0 as La Liga returned after three months away on Thursday, becoming the second of Europe's five major leagues to resume following the coronavirus pandemic.

After the Bundesliga in Germany restarted on May 16, La Liga opened its doors again to players but not supporters at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan, where the usually vibrant Sevilla derby was played in front of empty stands.

The game was the first in Spain's top flight since March 10 but 93 days later another professional fixture has been completed without incident, offering further encouragement to the Premier League in England and Serie A in Italy. Both are set to return next week.

Lucas Ocampos gave Sevilla the lead from a 56th-minute penalty and Fernando Reges then added the second goal for the home side, who are third in the table.

This was the first leg of a 39-day sprint to the finish in La Liga, that will see teams playing every three days for five and a half weeks and undergoing stern examinations of their fitness.

Both coaches made use of their new allocation of five substitutes and there was a drinks break in each half but the contest lost its fluency late on, in part because Betis never looked like staging a comeback.

Victory strengthens Sevilla's hold on third place as they move four points above Getafe and Real Sociedad below them. Betis sit 12th and face the possibility of being dragged into a relegation battle.

This was as far from a typical Seville derby as could be imagined, a pale shadow of the division's most heated fixture and a clear demonstration of what has been sacrificed to keep the season going.

- Virtual supporters -

"I always believed we would play again," said La Liga president

Javier Tebas, who had also indicated on Thursday that "10 or 15 per cent" of fans could attend stadiums before the season finishes on July 19.

For now though, stands remain empty, the voices of the players and coaches audible and the atmosphere strange. On television, fans at home had the option to add virtual supporters taken from the computer game FIFA, as well as chanting, which ebbed and flowed according to the action.

When the excellent Ocampos and Fernando scored, there was cheering, and when substitutes came and went, there was applause.

Earlier, the players had arrived wearing masks and gloves and their temperatures were taken before entering the stadium. Outside, around 200 supporters had come to greet the team buses but they dispersed shortly after, with 600 police and security personnel in attendance to prevent mass gatherings.

"No fans allowed but we're here and we can't wait," shouted a 60-year-old supporter in a Sevilla shirt.

There was a minute of silence held before kick-off in memory of the victims of the pandemic, with the players standing at a distance from each other around the centre circle. In the 20th minute, there was applause to pay tribute to those working on the front line.

In the stands, the substitutes, still wearing masks, sat spread out in the rows behind their coaches and Sevilla's were among the few celebrating when the goals flew in shortly after half-time.

They were comfortable winners as Ocampos scored a penalty after Marc Bartra was adjudged to have pushed Luuk de Jong and, six minutes later, a delightful Ocampos flick at the near post allowed Fernando to head in a second.

AFP

## Gascoigne in China: 'I miss him so much', says ex-coach

SHANGHAI

ENGLAND maverick Paul Gascoigne was playing a friendly match against Chinese media when he abruptly sat down, conjured a toothbrush from his sock and began cleaning his teeth.

It was classic Gazza - the brilliant, joke-loving but troubled midfielder memorably labelled "daft as a brush" by his former England manager Bobby Robson.

Gong Lei recalls this and other stories with great fondness during an interview with AFP reflecting on Gascoigne's brief time as a player-coach in China in 2003.

Gascoigne, who recently turned 53, was the first foreign football star to play in China and scored two goals in four games for second-tier Gansu Tianma in the fading days of his career.

Gong was head coach and the two became good friends. To Gong's regret, they are no longer in touch.

Gascoigne, the former Newcastle United, Tottenham Hotspur, Lazio and England star, referenced Gong in his book "Gazza: My Story."

"The manager of the club was 38, so not far off my own age, and he spoke some English. I liked him."

The feeling was mutual.

"He was like a knight on the football field but a gentleman in life," says Gong, now 54, a former player and coach who is now a pundit on Chinese television.

"He was brave on the field, not afraid of injury, motivated and had great technique. When he was hurt, he didn't care. He just has a big heart."

In his book, Gascoigne described how while in China he was so desperate to go fishing that he used biscuits as bait and caught a carp in a hotel ornamental pool.

But for all the madcap stories, Gong says that Gascoigne suffered

crippling homesickness in Gansu, a province in northwestern China that even now is among the most underdeveloped in the country.

The team was based in Lanzhou, a city better known for its noodles than its football.

"He would cry on my shoulder because he felt that I was a good friend, his confidant, the person who gave him the chance to play football again. He would thank me -- but I said there was no need," said Gong.

"I told him that he just needed to get on the field and play happily, and that he was making such a great contribution to our team, and the fans appreciate your skills."

- 'Homesick and lonely' -

By his own admission, Gascoigne, who says his contract was worth about 400,000 pounds for a year (about \$640,000 at the time), began to drink to numb the homesickness and boredom of being alone in his hotel.

A severe knee injury and heavy drinking had taken its toll on the career of Gascoigne, one of the most gifted midfielders England has produced, and China was to be a lucrative last hurrah.

Gansu tried their best to keep him busy with training and taking him to restaurants and tourist spots.

"He was homesick sometimes because he had children and a family, and money problems," says Gong.

"When he was homesick and lonely he would drink to ease his worries."

With the drinking came the sugary food -- Gong says that Gascoigne's room was full of chocolate.

On anti-depressants, anxious and unable to sleep, Gascoigne left China and never returned.

He fell out with Gansu, saying he was owed money. Gong says that the outbreak of the SARS virus was a major reason why Gascoigne left.

AFP

# From furlough to free-to-air: Premier League becomes a political football

LONDON

THE green light for the Premier League's return owes much to a political will for the national game to lift spirits in the country hardest hit by coronavirus in Europe.

Suspected and confirmed deaths from coronavirus in Britain passed 50,000 according to analysis from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) this week.

Restrictions on personal freedoms remain in place, while plans to reopen schools to all pupils in England have been shelved until September.

Yet, on Wednesday, Premier League stars will return to live action with the government revelling in its role to ensure 33 of the remaining 92 games of the season will be shown on free-to-air platforms.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson told parliament last month that the return of live sport to television "could provide a much-needed boost to national morale".

On the day June 17 was set as the date for the Premier League's return, Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Sport, said football had a "special place in our national life."

- Furlough fury -

However, the Premier League has not enjoyed such political backing throughout the course of the pandemic.

In the early weeks of April as clubs scrambled to respond to a sudden drop in revenue, Liverpool and Tottenham were among the top-flight teams that signalled their intent to use the government's furlough scheme for non-playing staff.

The scheme, designed to protect jobs once lockdowns are lifted, has seen the government cover the cost of 80 percent of wages up to a maximum of 2,500 (\$3,100) a month per employee.

Yet, the sight of last season's two Champions League finalists using tax payers' money without cutting the wages of players provoked a furious reaction.

Conservative MP Julian Knight accused the Premier League of a "moral vacuum."

At a daily news briefing at the height of the crisis, even Health Secretary Matt Hancock told Premier League players to "take a pay cut and play their part".

Both clubs bowed to the public pressure and quickly reversed their decision to use the scheme.



Lights at Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium pay tribute to Britain's National Health Service (NHS) (AFP Photo)

"When the furlough scheme and the discussions around player salaries and taking pay cuts arose, my feeling was that was opportunistic on the part of government and actually very cynical," Professor Simon Chadwick, Director of Eurasian Sport at Emlyon business school told AFP.

"Within weeks the government had flipped again and suddenly this is important for national well-being, social cohesion and national identity, providing a diversion from the pandemic."

"This was the government using football to achieve its own ends, rather than of football itself, or fans and the population."

- Mass audiences -

Attention from politicians was certainly not welcomed by players, particularly as they set up a fund to generate funds for Britain's National Health Service (NHS).

Hancock was accused of "deflecting" underfunding of the NHS by Crystal Palace winger Andros Townsend, while Newcastle's Danny Rose said players' health was being put at risk to boost the national mood.

However, the pressure from government for free-to-air matches could yet have long-lasting benefits for the English top-flight.

For the first time since the inception of the Premier League in 1992, the BBC will show four live games before the end of the

season.

Amazon and a Sky freeview channel will also bring more live games to a wider audience.

Cricket and golf are among the sports to have suffered consequences of disappearing behind a paywall in the UK.

"It is important that as many people as possible can access our games," said Premier League chief executive Richard Masters.

By being beamed back to the masses on its return, the Premier League could ensure absence makes the heart grow fonder and increase its already massive following.

AFP

## Bayern missing Mueller, Lewandowski for potential title-clincher

BERLIN

BAYERN Munich could secure an eighth straight Bundesliga title this weekend, but host Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday without suspended duo Thomas Mueller and Robert Lewandowski.

Bayern will be confirmed champions with a win on Saturday if second-placed Borussia Dortmund lose at relegation-threatened Fortuna Duesseldorf earlier in the day.

That scenario would give Hansi Flick's side an unassailable 10-point lead with three games remaining.

But Bayern are without Lewandowski, the league's top scorer this season with 30 goals, and Mueller, who is one short of the Bundesliga record of 21 assists in a single campaign.

"It's annoying, but we can't do anything about it," said Bayern coach Flick.

Thiago Alcantara is likely to replace Mueller, while winger Serge Gnabry could take Lewandowski's place up front if he is fit after a back injury.

Bayern proved they can score goals without Lewandowski by thumping Hoffenheim 6-0 in late February when the Polish striker was injured.

They had a scare in Wednesday's German Cup semi-final win over Eintracht Frankfurt, when Danny da Costa equalised for the visitors before Lewandowski sealed a 2-1 win with his 45th goal this season.

Mueller admitted Bayern were "tired", "worn out" and scrapped their way to victory in the first of three games in six days.

But they are still in the running to repeat their 2013 treble having beaten Chelsea 3-0 away in their Champions League last-16 first leg before the competition was suspended in mid-March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Fourth-placed Gladbach pulled off a shock 2-1 victory at Borussia Park when the sides met last December.

But Marco Rose's side have been erratic of late, crushing Union Berlin 4-1 at home at the end of May before stumbling to defeat at Freiburg last weekend.

Rose hopes to include Swiss forward Breel Embolo, with the 23-year-old fit after an ankle knock.

- Bremen's basement battle -

At the foot of the table, fallen giants Werder Bremen face a crucial game at Paderborn in a battle of the bottom two.

Florian Kohfeldt's Bremen are six points from safety in 17th and three off the relegation play-off place following back-to-back home defeats.

Bremen, who were in the Champions League a decade ago, have spent more seasons in the top flight than any other club, but are running out of time.

"We know how much is riding on this game," said American forward Josh Sargent. "This club has such a long history, and no one wants to let the team or the city down."

One to watch: Emre Can

The Germany international scored the winner in last weekend's tense 1-0 win over Hertha Berlin despite playing as part of a back three.



Bayern Munich will be without Thomas Mueller (R) and Robert Lewandowski, who have contributed to 60 of Bayern's 90 league goals this season (AFP Photo)

been a reliable figure for Dortmund since joining from Juventus in January.

He has shown his versatility by adding steel to a sometimes vulnerable side while still providing an attacking threat, having also marked his debut in February with a stunning long-range strike against Bayer Leverkusen.

**Key stats**  
39: Successive seasons in the Bundesliga

for Werder Bremen.

90: Bundesliga goals scored by Bayern this season. The club record is 101.

12: Number of times Bayern have won the league and cup double.

Fixtures (all times 1330 GMT unless stated)

**Today**  
Wolfsburg v Freiburg, Fortuna Duessel-

dorf v Borussia Dortmund, Hertha Berlin v Eintracht Frankfurt, Cologne v Union Berlin, Paderborn v Werder Bremen, Bayern Munich v Borussia Moenchengladbach (1630)

**Tomorrow**  
Mainz v Augsburg, Schalke v Bayer Leverkusen (1600)

AFP

### Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

From furlough to free-to-air: Premier League becomes a political football

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Morogoro Regional Hospital's doctor, Judith Lyamuya (2nd L), supervises blood donation by head of Sydo karate center, Mashaka Mfaume (seated) in the region last weekend. Looking on (R) is the region's Safe Blood and Red Cross coordinator, Hashim Ally, and the center's members, who as well took part in blood donation. : Michael SIKAPUNDWA

## Paralympic athletes set for training next month

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA Paralympic Committee (TPC) has said the country's Paralympic athletes are to start training sessions next month to prepare for next year's Tokyo Paralympics.

Tuma Dandi, TPC secretary general, yesterday said the athletes will start training next month in small groups whilst following all health precautionary measures to avoid coronavirus.

Dandi said the athletes are in the risk group and must follow all precautionary measures.

"We will resume training next month, but we will follow all precautionary measures set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other stakeholders to avoid coronavirus, you know the Paralympic athletes are classified as people that are in a high risk category," he said.

Domestic Paralympic weight lifters and Paralympic swimmers were some of the athletes who were to attend qualifying events for the Tokyo Paralympics, but the events were cancelled by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) due to coronavirus outbreak, which is causing havoc in the universe.

Dandi said TPC is waiting for communication from IPC on new dates for the qualifiers for next year's Tokyo Paralympics.

"For now we will start training so that our athletes are to stay fit and in great shape for future events, we don't know when the qualifiers will be held but, as athletes, we must be ready all the time," he said.

The TPC official also disclosed that there have been speculations that IPC will give relief funds to National Paralympic Committees to cushion them on the effects of coronavirus spread.

He disclosed there is though no official communication from IPC on the matter.

## US Open protocols won't work for Halep, says coach Cahill

MUMBAI

THE COVID-19 protocols proposed by the U.S. Open organizers are incredibly difficult and would probably not work for world number two Simona Halep, her coach Darren Cahill said.

The hardcourt major is scheduled to begin on Aug. 31 and men's world number one Novak Djokovic has already said that it would be impossible to play under the protocols, which would restrict players to their hotels with only one support staff.

"The restrictions are tough. They're incredibly difficult, and every player will have their own opinion as to whether that will work for them. I'm pretty sure that won't work for Simona," Cahill told Reuters in a telephone interview from Australia.

"If you're in a baseball team or a football team... at least you have your team mates to travel with, to socialize with and to eat with and to train with. Tennis is a little bit different because it's an individual sport."

Cahill said organizers were considering flying players to New York from around the world on charter flights and keeping them in an isolation bubble with regular testing for COVID-19.

"From Simona's point of view, you got to fly over from Romania, you need to spend four weeks in this one hotel in New York, and you can only bring one person," said the Australian.

"Normally you have a physio, a hitting partner, trainer and maybe a coach or two. You've got to basically stay in this bubble with only one person for three or four weeks, and you have to be professional and compete at the highest level."

"So now there are going to be a lot of players that have an issue with that for sure. Married players, particularly those with young children, would also have problems," Cahill, 54, added.

A highly respected coach who guided Lleyton Hewitt to the top of the game and also worked with Andre Agassi, Cahill has his fingers crossed that the COVID-19 situation will improve sufficiently to make such protocols unnecessary.

"We all want to get back to work so hoping the tennis tour starts out really soon," he said. "I know the U.S. Open officials are trying their hardest to make it happen."



A section of Yanga players feature in the squad's training at Tanganyika Law School's venue in Dar es Salaam recently to prepare for the remainder of the Vodacom Premier League. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

## Yanga face Mwadui FC test in VPL

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

THE 2019/20 Vodacom Premier League gets back to action today after having been suspended for almost three months due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Third-placed Yanga take on Mwadui FC in today's only clash at the Kambarage Stadium in Shinyanga.

It will be the first match after the league had been given green light to resume.

The domestic top flight and the remaining sporting activities had been put in an indefinite suspension with the aim of containing the COVID-19.

President John Magufuli recently issued permission for the resumption of sporting events, starting with soccer competitions, from June 1.

The domestic top flight outfits and others, which participate in the First Division League (FDL) and Second Division League (SDL), were given green light to attend training with strict adherence to health precautions put forward by the government.

Most of soccer enthusiasts in the country are eagerly waiting for today's clash, given they had been looking forward to having the top flight get back to action.

A section of the supporters will be watching the match on television, whereas others, particularly those based in Shinyanga, are to attend the clash at the stadium.

Yanga assistant coach, Charles Boniface Mkwasa, stated his team is in great shape and ready for the clash, much as the players had several challenges when travelling to Shinyanga.

Yanga's bus had developed mechanical fault and the players were forced to spend several hours on the road so the bus could be repaired.

"We have already identified our squad's weaknesses and have worked on them. We are, thus, ready for the match," Mkwasa stated.

The good news in Yanga is the presence of forward, David Molinga, and head coach, Luc Eymael, in the squad.

Molinga had, on Wednesday, refused to travel with the rest of the side after what had been termed as a fallout with members of the squad's technical panel.

Eymael had jetted into Dar es Salaam the same day after he had gone to his home country, Belgium, shortly after the suspension of the sporting events.

Molinga had chosen to opt out of the trip, claiming he had not been included in the list of players for the trip.

Yanga need to notch victory in the clash in an effort to bolster their pursuit of the top flight trophy.

The league leaders, Simba, are strong favourites for silverware. Yanga have notched 51 points to hold the third spot. If they will emerge victorious in the game, they will collect 54 points to stay level with Azam FC, who are currently placed second, on points.

Azam FC will entertain Mbaao FC at the Azam Complex in Dar es Salaam tomorrow.

Relegation-threatened

Mwadui FC also need victory to boost their chances of staying in the domestic top flight next season.

Mwadui FC secretary general, Ramadhani Kilao, disclosed they have already finished preparation for the clash and are waiting for the action.

"Football is played for 90 minutes, anything can happen... we do not fear Yanga," he disclosed.

"Any team which has prepared well can humble opponents who will commit mistakes on the pitch."

He noted they are currently seeking to see to it the stadium is in good shape and fans, who will turn up for the match, adhere to health precautions set by Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children to contain the COVID-19.

Mwadui FC holds the 12th spot in the Vodacom Premier League log with 34 points from 28 games.

They have won eight games, registered draw in 10 and also lost 10 games in the 20-team league.

## Moro karate center wins plaudits for involvement in blood donation

By Correspondent Michael Sikapundwa, Morogoro

MOROGORO's karate center has won praise from the regional hospital for participating in blood donation exercise held in the region recently.

Over 50 members of the center, which is known as Sydo, participated in the exercise, organized by the hospital's Safe Blood Department and took place at Msamvu Bus terminal.

About 70 blood units were donated by the Sydo center's members.

Morogoro Regional Hospital's Medical Incharge, Judith Lyamuya, thanked the center's members for the gesture and requested the region's residents to donate blood to the hospital.

She said for over a year Sydo karate center has been working with the hospital in blood donation, a situation that has helped to rescue lives of women that were in labour.

The women's number, Judith disclosed, reached 30 per day. She said about 350 blood units are at the hospital per day.

"We promise to ask Regional Administrative Secretary, Emmanuel Kalobelo, to register this center as part of special groups that cooperate with the hospital in such activities like rescuing injured people and other services aiming at saving lives," she disclosed.

Regional coordinator for Safe Blood and Red Cross, Hashim Ally, said Sydo karate center plays a great role in blood donation. Last year, Ally disclosed, the center was among groups which donated 800 blood units.

He said, as of May this year, had received 4500 blood units.

"Blood donating groups in schools those from Kigurunyembe Secondary School, Mwembesongo Secondary School, Mzumbwe Secondary School, Morogoro Secondary School and VETA," he disclosed.

Sydo karate center's secretary, Emmanuel Chwale, said the sport values discipline and love for each other and that is why the center's members are willing to feature in blood donation and peace keeping in the region.

"Community has to bear in mind that our karate center is not a bunch of robbers but a group of people with wisdom who an individual can't easily recognize them in daily conversation, we always talk little but act tough in case of settling disputes," he said.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

