



National Pg 2

Three people killed in road crash



National Pg 4

Marauding elephants trample man to death



National Pg 5

'Same water supply project almost complete'



National Pg 6

Tanzania mercantile exchange products



'Exchanging renewable energy will save forests'

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

WHILE everybody and everything seem to focus on the coronavirus and related infections, regional policy makers have taken a detour, reminding the public of the other threat to global survival, namely climate change.

East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) members in virtual session here have warned that unless the EAC member states turn to cleaner energy, the region will be reduced to desert in the near future.

The EALA Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources, under its chairman Mathias Kasamba (pictured) from Uganda, emphasized that parts of member state territory have suffered massive environmental destruction, raising alarm to the states' future.

They were discussing the committee's report on oversight activity on climate change in the wake of global warming - an

It was observed during the meetings that the way forward is to resort to clean and renewable energy such as solar, wind power and natural gas

international concern taking environmental toll on the East Africa region.

It was observed during the meetings that the way forward is to resort to clean and renewable energy such as solar, wind power and natural gas.

"And, with recent discoveries of natural gas reserves in some of the partner states, there is need to hatch symbiotic relations where one country could sell such source of energy cheaply to another to eradicate the domestic use of charcoal and firewood that are notorious in East Africa," they pointed out.

A recent State of East Africa Report says the region's 107m hectares of forest shrank by more than 15 per cent to 82m hectares in three decades, not including South Sudan.

Rwanda has a better story, having grown its forest cover from 12.9 per cent of total land to 29.6 per cent between 1990 and 2017. Tanzania, which the region's most forested country, lost an estimated 412,000 hectares of forest to deforestation per annum from 1990 to 2015.

Plenary sessions are set to start today, and continue until May 15. Another key report tabled during the session relates to

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Police hold Kishapu MP for weapons, game meat

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga



This resident of mostly posh Msasani suburb in Dar es Salaam had no option but to do a 'hop, step, and jump' yesterday to make it through a hopelessly muddy mud patch of a street near an open-air chicken 'butchery' surrounded by stinking sewage. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

POLICE in Shinyanga Region are holding Kishapu legislator Selemani Nchambi (CCM) for suspicions of illegally holding weapons and government trophies.

Shinyanga Regional Police Commander (RPC) Debora Magiligimba told reporters here yesterday that the MP was arrested on Sunday May 3 at his home in Lubaga area, Shinyanga municipality.

RPC Magiligimba said that the arrest of the lawmaker was made by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) task force led by detective David Msangi and wildlife officer Perfect Mbwambo.

The MP was found with 16 weapons, which he was using to conduct illegal hunting at Negezi in Kishapu District, using a Nissan Hardbody with registration number T 760 DSD, the RPC specified.

"The task force searched the MP's house and found 16 weapons and 35kg of alleged bush meat kept in a freezer. They also found a shotgun with registration number 46092 kept in a car," she elaborated.

In his bedroom, detectives found 15 more weapons identified as Airgun-Tzcar 87342, Tzcar 63729 Rifle, Tzcar 77325, Rifle, Tzcar 87636 Markiv, Tzcar 65673 Rifle, Tzcar 72731 Rifle, Tzcar 87342 Airgun, Tzcar 53933 Rifle, Airgun Cz 455 Rifle, Cz 537-2 Rifle, 978836- Mod 151 Shotgun and Pistol Browning number 061738. The suspect was also found with 536 rounds of ammunition, she further noted.

Preliminary investigations show that ten out of the 16 weapons were illegally owned.

"We have already sent samples of the

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Speaker reads riot act to Chadema absentees

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

NATIONAL Assembly Speaker Job Nduhai has recalled opposition Chadema MPs into the House, saying they should otherwise reimburse the two-week per diem payments - a total of 100m/-.

"They were all paid for two weeks from May 1, each of them pocketed 2.040m/- with exception of few who received 3m/- . Those who will report back after two weeks should also present medical certificates for Covid-19 test or else they will not

be allowed to enter the debating chamber," said Nduhai.

Speaker Nduhai insisted that the House considers them absentees since the party's national chairman, Freeman Mbowe does not have any legal authority to command MPs to boycott ongoing parliamentary sessions.

"Since they left the House claiming to go for self-isolation, we need to see their Covid-19 test results. We do not recognize Mbowe's order to

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Tanzania, Zambia consult on transportation hiccups

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA and Zambia are pushing to resolve a number of challenges which have slowed the flow of goods across the common border, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Col. Wilbert Ibuge made this observation after holding discussions with the Zambian High Commissioner to Tanzania, Benson Keith Chali.

Their discussions were seeking ways to resolve challenges in the transportation of goods from the port of Dar es Salaam to other

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) member states.

He said in this period of the Covid-19 pandemic various challenges have emerged, hence the government is doing its utmost in discussion with border countries to resolve them.

High Commissioner Chali said the Zambian government was already working on the challenges.

Meanwhile, Col Ibuge met and held discussions with the Resident Representative of United Nations Development Programme

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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 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.

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.

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





Colonel Wilbert Ibuge, Permanent Secretary in the Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation ministry, holds talks with the British High Commissioner to Tanzania, Sarah Cooke, in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Reporter

THE government plans to distribute 719,254 mosquito nets to 199,766 households for protection against malaria in Rukwa region.

Mosquito nets distribution is among various campaigns by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children in collaboration with the Office of the President - Regional Administration and Local Government (OPRALG) as part of government efforts to eradicate the disease by 2030.

Health Ministry's representative Peter Gitanya said at a training seminar for the campaign to distribute the mosquito nets in Rukwa region.

Gitanya said the campaign is the

Govt to distribute 719,254 mosquito nets in Rukwa

continuation of three major campaigns in the mobilisation for similar mosquito nets distribution to households in 2009, 2019 and 2015/16, saying the Medical Stores Department (MSD) will be involved in the transportation of the nets from the warehouses to villages and other areas.

"The districts to be involved are with high malaria prevalence," he stressed. Rukwa regional commissioner

Joachim Wangabo has appealed to all those involved in the campaign to closely cooperate to give appropriate education on the use of mosquito nets.

"In order for the campaign to succeed, we must work together to convey the appropriate education to the people, else the whole campaign will be futile, and we have to incorporate various other stakeholders," said RC Wangabo.

He advised the Health Ministry and institutions to see how they can do research on herbs for mosquito repellents in some rural areas so as to enable the people in those to plant the trees for such use.

The campaign will see the distribution of 7,097,565 mosquito nets in 50 councils aiming to attain 100 per cent of those targeted. The campaign will cover all four districts in the region.

Speaker reads riot act to Chadema absentees

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the MPs and I am ordering them back to the debating chamber," he added.

Explaining, Ndugai mentioned those who received 3m/- per-diem as Special Seats MPs Catherine Ruge, Devatha Minja, Joyce Munkya, Rhoda Kunchela, Zainab Bakari and Zubeda Sakuru.

"We are aware that Mbowe and the MPs are not in Dodoma. They have travelled to different destinations countrywide," the Speaker intoned.

"Those who will not reimburse the monies after two weeks their names will be presented to security organs and the office of the Attorney General for legal actions.

"We are serious on this. Let them not repay the funds and see what will happen to them," he declared.

Meanwhile, Speaker Ndugai assured some Chadema MPs who are said to violate Mbowe's directive to quarantine themselves for two weeks that his office will protect them and take care of their interests.

"Rest assured that my office will protect you. Mbowe cannot just act like a secondary school head prefect by issuing orders to MPs. They should respect the set rules and regulations," he emphasized.

Mbowe issued the so-called quarantine order on a two weeks self-isolation for Chadema MPs attending

ongoing Budget meetings.

He said the party arrived to the decision following recorded deaths of MPs due to Covid-19, while at the same time a colleague, Joseph Selasini (Rombo, Chadema) was demanding proof that any MPs had died from the coronavirus.

"MPs from Chadema will not attend the ongoing budget meeting or visit Parliament buildings in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. We have also barred them from travelling to their constituencies until they are tested and confirmed to be negative," Mbowe had intimated.

He urged the National Assembly to suspend ongoing budget sessions for at least 21 days to allow MPs and employees of the Speaker's Office to go for mandatory quarantine.

The House must engage on widespread testing of MPs, workers and service providers "to know exactly who have contracted the disease," Mbowe insisted.

"Testing all the people at the National Assembly will give a clear picture of infection rate and enable authorities to take appropriate measures," he pursued, urging that Parliamentary Steering Committee on Privileges, Ethics and Powers Committee work via video conferencing.

Despite Mbowe's order, more than 10 Chadema MPs moved into the debating chamber on Monday, observers noted.

Police hold Kishapu MP for weapons, game meat

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meat to the Government Chemist Laboratory Authority to find out if it is normal or bush meat," she said.

The suspect will be taken to court to face charges, she affirmed, warning other people to stop engaging in criminal acts which include holding weapons illegally.

'Exchanging renewable energy will save forests'

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a committee report of accounts on a capacity building workshop.

EALA members through their respective committees also discussed on the spot assessment of activities of

the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) along with a report of the Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment on One Network Area (ONA). There was also a report on an accounts committee on Oversight of EAC Institutions in Uganda.

Three people die as two vehicles collide

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THREE people including the Assistant Regional Administrative Secretary for Singida Region have died after the vehicle they were travelling in, Toyota Landcruiser Hardtop, was involved in head-on collision with a commuter bus.

The bus belongs to Happy Nation and the crash took place at Feri area, Magole division in Kilosa District along the main Morogoro-Dodoma road.

Morogoro Regional Police Commander Wilbroad Mutafungwa (pictured) has confirmed the accident which happened at 8.00 pm, saying the bus with Reg. T 483 DRF was travelling from Mwanza to Dar es Salaam and was driven by Isack John, a resident of Dar es Salaam.

He said the Toyota Landcruiser belongs to Singida region health department with Reg. STL 6995 which was travelling in opposite direction.

The RPC mentioned the dead as Guhacha Kitinda (60) resident of Singida, who according to reports was the Assistant Regional Administrative Secretary for Singida region.

Others were Sabinaeva Guhacha, Singida resident and Baptist Beda (37), the driver of the Land Cruiser.

Mutafungwa said in the accident one person Michael Matonya (20) resident of Kibaigwa who was a passenger on motorcycle also involved in the accident was injured and is now admitted at St Joseph hospital at Dumila in Kilosa district nursing injuries.

He said cause of the accident was due to overtaking manoeuvres without taking safe precautions of the incoming Landcruiser.

The bodies of the deceased have been preserved at Morogoro referral hospital's mortuary and the bus driver escaped from the scene and the police were hunting for him.



Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister Umyy Mwalimu (C) receives 618 litres of sanitiser from TBL Plc legal and corporate affairs director, Georgia Mutagahywa (2nd-R), donated by the company for use in hospitals and other health facilities. Others are Tanzania Private Sector Foundation chairperson Angelina Ngalula (L), TBL communication manager Amanda Walter (2nd-L) and TBL sustainability manager Abigail Mutaboyerwa. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

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(UNDP), Christine Musisi.

The discussions dwelt on how to cooperate in building up capacity for production of goods by Tanzania's small and middle level investors in joint venture arrangements with big investors especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We have agreed to discuss cooperation in the sectors of health, water, industrial development and in this we thank UNDP for the work they do. But we have been cooperating in policy matters which has buttressed our overall cooperation especially

Tanzania, Zambia consult on transportation hiccups

during the Covid-19 emergency," said Ambassador Ibuge.

He also at different times conversed with British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke and Resident UN Coordinator Zlatan Milisic on various issues of cooperation especially relating to the

Covid-19 pandemic.

On April 6 an emergency meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers was convened and discussed the Covid-19 pandemic.

The meeting involved SADC ministers from 16 countries in charge

of foreign affairs, finance, industries, trade, tourism, security and transport.

The meeting issued guidelines on transportation of essential goods during the Covid-19 period, being applied to reduce unnecessary trips but enable delivery of essential goods.





CGML vice president Simon Shayo (R) presents to Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister Umyy Mwalimu (2nd-R) a dummy cheque for 1.1bn/- in Dar es Salaam yesterday as the firm's support to efforts to fight Covid-19. Others are GGML senior manager Manasseh Ndoroma (2nd-L) and Tanzania Private Sector Foundation chairperson Angelina Ngalula. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Appeal for more PPE in fight against COVID-19

By Guardian Reporter

Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Umyy Mwalimu,

has called on local industries to produce more medical facilities and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to cater for the country's demand in the fight against Covid-19.

Mwalimu made the call in Dar es Salaam yesterday soon after she received 1.1bn/- cheque from Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) in order to support the government's efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic.

"My plea to investors is to increase production of PPE and other essential medical tools in order to purchase the tools locally, we have one factory in Pugu but the production capacity is still low," she said.

The minister lauded GGML for the donation, saying that the government appreciates the great support provided by the stakeholders.

"We also emphasise stakeholders to ensure that the tools they purchase meet national and international standards. We will continue monitoring the Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) to make sure it strengthens the certification and safety exercises, we have to make sure all medications and tools are safe," she said.

For his part, GGM Vice President Simon Shayo said the donation is part of the company's service commitment to ensure that health servants and Tanzanians remain safe amid spread of the coronavirus.

He said that 500m/- out of the 1.1bn/- will be used to support regional and community interventions in Geita, including the provision of key medical supplies and equipment such as PPE, ventilators and oxygen masks.

According to him, apart from the funds, GGML has also donated 10 water tanks for the Geita Urban Water and Sanitation Authority to supply hand washing facilities for the public in

general.

"These tanks have been placed at busy centres across Geita town. GGML will also provide chlorine to sanitize water, which means liquid soap won't necessarily be needed at the facilities. Additional hand washing facilities will be installed for people with disabilities and children."

He added that; "The company has also been working to raise awareness of the virus in the neighbouring communities. As part of the company's ongoing information, communication and education campaign, GGML has distributed posters containing information about the virus both inside the mine and within communities, with giant billboards placed in Geita town to advise the public on how to prevent the spread of the virus."

Shayo added as part of media awareness campaign to promote public awareness of Covid-19, GGML has formed partnership with Rubondo FM, a local radio station which is owned by Geita district council to ensure that the public is well informed about the disease.

"Under this arrangement, GGML funds the production of the adverts while the radio station makes its contribution in the form of free airtime. The establishment of Rubondo FM was funded by GGML under the company's social responsibility programme," he said.

“My plea to investors is to increase production of PPE and other essential medical tools in order to purchase the tools locally, we have one factory in Pugu but the production capacity is still low

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

Lawmakers against election-time deployment of military personnel

MEMBERS of Parliament yesterday urged the government to stop deploying military personnel during elections, saying the move is against democratic fundamental principles.

The MPs aired their views when debating Ministry Defense and National Service budget estimates for the 2020/21 fiscal year. Minister of State in the Prime Ministers' Office (Policy Coordination and Parliamentary Affairs) Jenista Mhagama tabled the budget estimates on behalf of Minister Hussein Mwinyi whose docket is under the Ministry for Defence and National Service.

They said during elections it has been a common practice to see army and military vehicles moving up and down something they said was a challenge for free and fair elections.

Mtambile MPs, Masood Abdallah Salim (CUF) said the presence of military vehicles during elections scare voters.

"There is no war, why should military vehicles through streets a week or so before and during elections," he queried.

On coronavirus, the lawmaker appealed to the ministry of defence to inform families of soldiers who are on peacekeeping missions abroad on their welfare.

"We know coronavirus has spread worldwide, and we know our soldiers are away on peacekeeping missions, it is better we knew their health status," he said.

The MP also appealed to the Ministry of Defence to at least increase salaries for Suma JKT security guards whom he said receive 190,000 per month, something he said it's too small.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence, Salum Mwinyi Rehani called upon the government to complete payment of compensation to individuals whose land have been taken by the army.

Rehani also suggested for review of training system for youth joining the national service to make sure they are equipped with necessary vocational skills to be able to employ themselves.

"The government should prioritise repairing houses for army officers as most of them live in old quarters", said Rehani.

Nominated Member of Parliament, Shamsi Vuai Nahodha suggested for the government to use military officers in fact-finding about Covid-19. He said there is a need for the country to conduct research on the exact source of the disease which has so far killed thousands of people worldwide. "Developing countries are using army forces in conducting researches on various human diseases. We must find out the source of the disease as big nations may have used it as 'biological weapons', he noted.

Mbogwe constituency MP, Augustino Masele (CCM) said: "As we prepare to become a middle-sized economy we should invest much in our forces to facilitate protection of resources".

Tabling the budget, Mhagama described trafficking in persons as a major challenge facing the country, saying some illegal migrants become criminals, the government said yesterday.

He told the legislature that the government has been taking various initiatives to control the situation.

"Most of the illegal migrants are from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda while the trafficking in people are from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia," said minister Mhagama calling upon Tanzanians and Members of Parliament especially those from border regions to cooperate with security organs by providing information on illegal immigrants.

She was concerned that since Tanzania borders various countries, there is a challenge of livestock movements in search of pasture and water.

Mhagama said livestock keepers from Uganda and Rwanda have been illegally grazing at the Misenyi ranch in Misenyi district, Kagera region.

She however noted that efforts were in place to protect Tanzanians against the deadly coronavirus pandemic by enhancing security at all the borders.

She said the National Service has continued to implement a number of measures to ensure food security whereas it can now feed itself by 50 per cent. She said the force has been producing food for youth in various camps.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF TANZANIA
MUSOMA DISTRICT COUNCIL REGISTRY
AT MUSOMA.
LAND CASE NO. 05 OF 2020
I & M BANK TANZANIA
LTD..... PLAINTIFF
VERSUS
SAMORA M. SAMORA LTD & 2
OTHERS..... DEFENDANT
TO: SAMORA M. SAMORA
NOTICE OF DATE OF HEARING
TAKE NOTICE that the above case has been fixed for
Hearing on 8th day of May, 2020 at 09:00 am before
Hon ES KISANYA, Judge.
YOU ARE required to appear in this Court on the
fixed date without fail.
Given under my Hand and the seal of the Court this
20th day of April 2020.

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MUSOMA DISTRICT COUNCIL REGISTRY
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**Building Rural Incomes
Through Entrepreneurship**
"Increasing Incomes, Improving Livelihoods"

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO
CONDUCT END TERM PROJECT EVALUATION**

Building Rural Incomes Through Entrepreneurship (BRITEN) is a non-profit organization that was set up in 2011 to help accelerate agriculture transformation in Tanzania through agricultural development initiatives that are designed to facilitate market access, enhance agribusiness competitiveness, increase productivity and improve access to inputs and finance for value chain actors.

AGRA in partnership with BRITEN the Consortium Lead for the Ithemba Ludewa Consortium is looking to contract an individual or group of consultants to carry out the final project evaluation

The project goal is: Linking farmers to Output and Input Markets to spur Maize, Beans and soybean Productivity in Ithemba Ludewa Cluster and is aligned to AGRA's overall goal of Catalyzing and Sustaining an Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Tanzania to increase incomes and improve Food Security of at least 2 million smallholder farming households directly and 2.5 million indirectly through targeted: (1) government engagement to strengthen sector leadership, implementation capabilities and resource mobilization; (2) downstream and system level investments to unlock private sector engagement and scaling of proven technologies and; (3) alliance building with partners in the field to ensure value through better activity and resource coordination. The project targeted 100,000 farmers in Iringa, Njombe and Ruvuma Regions.

Required expertise and qualification

The Lead Consultant/firm should have the following qualifications and expertise:

- The Lead consultant should have a minimum of a master's degree in Development studies, International Development, or any other relevant University degree;
- Extensive expertise, knowledge, and experience in the field of international development, food security, agriculture, value chain development and working with smallholder farmers.
- At least 10 years of experience in working with international organizations and donors;
- Extensive experience of programme formulation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Experience in evaluating similar projects
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English. Fluency in spoken Swahili will be an added advantage.

How to apply:

Interested firms should submit a request for TOR from info@britenz.org. The deadline for request for TOR or receipt of questions or requests for clarifications is 1730 hrs local time (Tanzania) on 11/May/2020. No questions nor request for TOR will be responded to after this date.

Complete applications will consist of the following:

- Summary of proposed technical approach, methodology, and timetable
- Past performance summaries (at least three brief descriptions of past or current contracting mechanisms for efforts similar in size, scope and complexity to this tender) and list of references that demonstrate performance in conducting similar evaluations
- At least one previous relevant project report and list of previous similar jobs done
- CV(s) conforming to the qualifications listed above for person(s) to manage and conduct the evaluation
- Detailed budget Proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of cost.

Deadline for submission of applications is 14th of May 2020. Applicants must submit the application by email to jobs@britenz.org with attachment(s) compatible with MS WORD, Excel in a MS Windows environment. Only those pages requiring original manual signatures must be sent in scanned PDF format. Award and contract signing will take place on or before 22/May/2020.

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'Government has established committees to cater for persons with disabilities'

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has established committees in 26 regions, 130 district councils, 5034 villages and 2284 wards in the country to cater for people with disabilities.

At the same time it had created 26 desks at ministerial and 19 others at institutions to help coordinate and oversee matters of people with disabilities in the government offices.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, issues affecting people with disabilities are cross cutting and should be handled by almost all sectors in the government, thus the need to ensure that almost all government offices have specific desks for them.

The PM's Office said this in a written response to a question from Special Seats MP, Sikudhani Chikambo (CCM) who had wanted to know what the government was doing in efforts to ensure that people with disabilities in the country get basic rights just like other members of the society.

"What is the government procedures to identify people with disabilities in the society and what are the mechanisms to help them get basic rights wherever they are?" she asked.

In response, the ministry of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Policy, Parliamentary Affairs, Labour, Employment, Youth and the Disabled said the government through the

national census, identify all the citizens including people with disabilities

"Through census the government is able to know all citizens including those with disabilities irrespective of their age, gender and different forms of disabilities," said the ministry.

It further explained that according to the 2012 national census, there were 44,928,923 people in the country, 2,641,802, equivalent to 5.8 per cent of the total population of people with disabilities.

According to the ministry the government had constantly provided for the needs of those persons with disabilities by implementing various policies, laws and procedures that safeguard their interests.

Such procedures, according to the government include establishment and running of various legal institutions such as the national advisory council for people with disabilities that advice the government on the best ways to oversee matters of people with disabilities.

"What is the government procedures to identify people with disabilities in the society and what are the mechanisms to help them get basic rights wherever they are?"



Babati district commissioner Elizabeth Kitundu washes her hands at the premises of the Manyara Diocese of the Tanzania Methodist Church yesterday as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Jaliwason Jasson

Marauding elephants kill a farmer in Tunduru

By Guardian Correspondent, Tunduru

SHAIBU Issa (46), a farmer and resident of Mtina Ward in Tunduru district, Ruvuma region had died after he was attacked by a herd of elephants.

According to reports from the villagers the deceased met his fate when he tried to chase them away after the group of elephants had invaded his farm at Kazamoyo village in Lukumbule division.

The incident happened on the night of May 6, this year at Kuchaalume along Mto Mtu in the district

Witnesses further said the deceased, with other companions were chasing away the jumbos when suddenly other elephants appeared from behind and started attacking them.

Speaking on the incident the Lukumbule Councillor Milepa Makande said after they discovered what was behind them, they dispersed and stated to flee, unfortunately one elephant caught up with Shaibu and trampled on him after which it threw him into the bushes.

Acting wildlife officer for Tunduru district Limbega Ali confirmed the incident, saying already he had dispatched wildlife wardens to chase away the beasts from the area.

He also cautioned the people living forest area to take extra care because the reserve is home to wildlife.

He explained that on April 27, this year a resident of Angalia in Tunduru district Rajab Aweje lost his life after he was attacked by a herd of elephants.

Ruvuma Regional Police Commander Simon Maigwa also confirmed the tragic incident and said the police were investigating.



Park Jieun (L), director of Republic of Korea's Holt Children's Services, presents foodstuffs and Covid-19 protection items to a member of one of 109 disadvantaged families in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Kondoa sesame farmers wary of 'warehouse receipt' system

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

SESAME farmers in Kondoa district, Dodoma region have appealed to the Cooperative Commission to educate them on the 'warehouse receipt' system in regard to the crop's markets.

Speaking to this paper, the farmers said they were not happy with the system which was first introduced in the area in the 2019 season.

Hadadi Omari, one of the farmers said they were now in the second season of selling the crop through the system but they are yet to understand how it operates.

"We appeal to the government to assist us sesame farmers as the crop is our life line," Omari said.

Another sesame grower Kasim Abdalla said it would be better for the minister who announced the warehouse receipt system to go to Kondoa and discuss with farmers on the system, as it is among the reasons why the farmers do not want apply it when selling their crop.

Salanka Ward Councillor, Rahimu Salumu, said the farmers were frustrated in the previous season as it was their first time to use the system.

"We accepted the challenges that came up and we wanted more knowledge before the coming season to ensure that farmers do not face such similar shortcomings, once again," he said.

Speaking about the issue the deputy minister for Finance and Planning Dr Ashatu Kijaji who is the Kondoa Member of Parliament appealed to the government to look into the issue so that farmers fully understand the system apart from being useful to them.

"Our request in Kondoa we urge the government and the respective ministry to listen to the farmers. We are not opposed to the system but we need to be educated about the its functions. My advice as an MP they should suspend the system for this season and instead they should first educate the farmers," she said.

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

POLICE in Mbeya have now moved at commuter bus stations playing long distances and tricycles to educate the public on the importance of wearing face masks as a means of protection against Covid-19 infections.

Mbeya Regional Police Commander Ulrich Matei said at the weekend that the exercise is a routine one and that the police cannot be left behind to ensure passengers have received

Mbeya police move to bus stops to enforce wearing of face masks

public awareness for protecting themselves against the infections.

He said the police so far had met

with owners and drivers of passenger vehicles for interaction on the importance of wearing face masks.

RPC Matei said due to the current spread of the disease he has directed District Police Commanders (OCDs) to

ensure they give orders their officers road traffic officers in particular to put in place procedures for educating

the passengers on the importance of wearing face masks.

Matei said the police will continue to inspect commuter buses and tricycles for overloading contrary to the laid down traffic regulations in the country.

He also called on passengers and drivers to abide by directives from experts in protecting themselves against Covid-19 infections including wearing of face masks at all times while in passenger vehicles.



Cassava flour prepared specifically for use in making Ramadhan-time porridge, popular among fasting Muslims, on sale alongside raw cassava at Buguruni market in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Pass-Trust embarks on project to construct modern goat abattoir in Kongwa District

By Correspondent Valentine, Dodoma

THE Private Agricultural Sector Support (Pass-Trust) has embarked on a project to construct a modern goat slaughterhouse in Kongwa District, Dodoma region.

The initiatives currently under good pace of construction in cooperation with the Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI-Kongwa), among other things targets to expand direct and indirect employment opportunities among the youth in the district and the region at large.

The project development officer, Eva Idd informed The Guardian that the project will also include setting-up of ten relevant butchers, and a special hub for selling fresh and roasted meat as well as varied drinks.

"The mission is to open a crucial stop-over, whereby people from different areas and destinations will be enjoying best goat meat services and drinks at affordable prices," she expressed.

She said the envisaged abattoir will have a capacity to slaughter at least 100 goats a day, a development which

according to her was a key opportunity to goat keepers in the areas (especially the youth) to fetch lucrative profits.

"Because the project is located alongside the Morogoro Road it is expected to attract a good number of costumers, especially those on their way from Dodoma to Morogoro and Dar es Salaam and vice versa," she sounded optimistic.

Idd detailed that the initiative will involve a number of activities, including meat processing and special packaging, activities which are anticipated to offer direct and indirect opportunities to varied youth in the district.

The project, PASS-TRUST, also runs a special Youth Agribusiness Incubator Centre in the area, whereby in its first year at least 10 youths from different regions have so far benefited.

"We assist them with special loans to venture into goat keeping, under our special technical custodian, and later on find them assured market to sell their cattle. Completion of the project will make it easier for them to market their goats directly and find more customers," she briefed.

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

Same-Mwanga-Korogwe water project to be complete by September this year, House told

THE Same-Mwanga-Korogwe water project is now planned to be completed in September, 2020 as equipment for the project that were stuck at the Dar es Salaam port due to tax issues have been released, ministry of Water told the parliament yesterday.

The government waved away the value added tax (VAT) for the project equipment on 4th November, 2019 and they have now been moved from

the port and have reached the site and implementation of the project has began.

The ministry said this in a written response to a question asked by the Mwanga MP, Prof.Jumanne Maghembe (CCM) who had wanted to know when

the project would officially start after the equipment were held at the port for over ten months.

"Equipment for the project have been at the port since January, 2019 due to tax issues, when shall the project start and when shall the taxes

for equipment for the project be legally waved?" he asked.

The lawmaker told the parliament that residents of Mwanga and the neighbouring areas face serious water shortages, thus the project upon completion would help them greatly.

In response, the ministry said the project is aimed at solving water woes in some 38 villages in Same and Mwanga districts as well as others in Korogwe district council.

The project is funded by the government in collaboration with

Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA), OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), Saudi Fund and Kuwait Fund at the cost of \$300 million.

Upon completion, the project will produce 103.7 million litres per day while the current demand is 78.4 million litres per day. At least 438,931 people in the three districts, 246,793 in Same, 177,085 in Mwanga and 15,053 in Korogwe will benefit from the project.



Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Supply of Toyota Light Vehicle Parts to AUMS (T) Ltd operations at Geita Gold Mine in Tanzania.

African Underground Mining Services, AUMS (T) Ltd invites eligible, qualified and experienced Tanzanian companies to express their interest in the Supply of Toyota Light Vehicle Parts to support its Light Vehicle Fleet at Geita Gold Mine in Tanzania. Fleet numbers and details will be released to the selected companies.

1. Schedule and deadline for submission

The contract- Fixed Price Agreement (FPA) is to be awarded through a competitive tender process. If your company wishes to be considered for pre-qualification please submit an EOI by email to ContractsTanzania@aumsg.com by not later than 16:00HRS Local Time on 14/05/2020 quoting "EOI Supply of Toyota Parts" in the subject line of your email.

Please submit an EOI on your company letterhead with the following mandatory information:

- Company Profile, Shareholders IDs, Directors list, Organogram, Number of employers with a foreign to national ratio indicated
- Valid Tax Compliance, VAT Registration & TIN certificates
- Certificate of Incorporation, Valid Business Permit/Licenses
- Industry Regulatory Compliance Licenses, Manufacturer Authorizations, Exclusive Distributorship Certificates. Along with any other relevant Industry Documentation
- Summary of Court proceedings (pending and completed), Court Judgments and /or insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings if any, against your company and or any of your shareholders, directors and/or senior leadership/management team over the last 3 years
- Occupational, Health, Safety and Environmental Requirements
- Trade references, Sample POs and contracts, completion certificates
- Key Employees CV & Certificates
- Distribution points in Mwanza or Geita or list of satellite offices if applicable
- Compliance to Tanzania's Mining Local Content Requirements as per the Mining Local Content Regulations 2018.

Any response received beyond 16:00HRS Local Time on 14/05/2020 shall not be considered.

2. Assessment criteria

The mandatory information requested at paragraph 1 will be evaluated and scored to shortlist pre-qualified companies.

The pre-qualification of any company submitting an EOI shall be at the sole discretion of AUMS (T) Ltd.

The bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the companies EOI. AUMS (T) Ltd shall not be responsible or liable for any costs incurred regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process.

For more information on African Underground Mining Services and its operations please refer to the following website www.aumsg.com.



Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Supply of PPE Personal Protective Equipment to AUMS (T) Ltd operations at Geita Gold Mine in Tanzania.

African Underground Mining Services, AUMS (T) Ltd invites eligible, qualified and experienced Tanzanian companies to express their interest in the Supply of PPE, Personal Protective Equipment to support its operation at Geita Gold Mine in Tanzania.

1. Schedule and deadline for submission

The contract- Fixed Pricing Agreement (FPA) is to be awarded through a competitive tender process. If your company wishes to be considered for pre-qualification please submit an EOI by email to ContractsTanzania@aumsg.com by not later than 16:00HRS Local Time on 14/05/2020 quoting "EOI Supply PPE" in the subject line of your email.

Please submit an EOI on your company letterhead with the following mandatory information:

- Company Profile, Shareholders IDs, Directors list, Organogram, Number of employers with a foreign to national ratio indicated
- Valid Tax Compliance, VAT Registration & TIN certificates
- Certificate of Incorporation, Valid Business Permit/Licenses
- Industry Regulatory Compliance Licenses, Manufacturer Authorizations, Exclusive Distributorship Certificates. Along with any other relevant Industry Documentation
- Summary of Court proceedings (pending and completed), Court Judgments and /or insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings if any, against your company and or any of your shareholders, directors and/or senior leadership/management team over the last 3 years
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For more information on African Underground Mining Services and its operations please refer to the following website www.aumsg.com.



Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister Umyy Mwalimu (R) gestures in Dar es Salaam yesterday when thanking Shell Exploration and Production Tanzania Limited for its support towards the government's response to the novel Covid-19 pandemic. The company donated medical supplies - specifically personal protective equipment including hand sanitiser, surgical gloves and disposable surgical masks for the country's frontline health workers, worth a combined 70 million/- . Looking on are Shell senior social performance adviser Msomis Mbenna (L) and Tanzania Private Sector Foundation chairperson Angelina Ngalula. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Kitulo National Park returns disappeared wildlife species

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

KITULO National Park authorities have embarked on a drive to return wild animals that had disappeared from the park for several decades due to human activities before the area became a national park.

Speaking to this paper early this week,

Kitulo National Park Conservation Officer Susan Tesha said before the start of the exercise they did some research from elders living around the park who said there were wild animals living in Kitulo area before it became a national park.

"These elders have been a great help in identifying the species of wildlife that

existed in the park before the advent of human activities," she said.

She said until now they have managed to bring back to the park zebras and sable antelopes.

She said in addition the park plans to bring pack other wildlife species including one known as the 'Kuro.'

She said many attractions including

beautiful flowers, various birds species, waterfalls and wildlife will attract more tourists to visit the Park which is easily accessible at all times.

She said up to now there is good cooperation between the park's management and local residents to ensure it is protected for future generations.

'More cash crops set to be added on list of Tanzania mercantile exchange items'

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

MORE cash crops will be added in a list of products to be traded through the Tanzania Mercantile Exchange (TMX), an electronic commodity exchange mechanism that facilitates access to domestic and global markets.

TMX was among other things designed to provide transparency in commodity auctions as well as assist farmers, traders and exporters to obtain fair prices when selling or buying commodities.

Trade and Industry Minister, Innocent Bashungwa said on Tuesday that TMX board of directors plans to ensure several other crops are traded through the electronic mechanism.

The identified crops according to Bashungwa include cotton, maize, cassava, coffee, lentils and peas.

Tabling the ministry's budget estimates in the House, Bashungwa said establishment of TMX has contributed into increased sale of crops in Manyara and Dodoma regions this financial year.

He said a total of 519.89 tonnes have been sold through the system, of which, 431.481 tonnes were sold in Kondoa district, Dodoma region and 88.41 tonnes were sold in Babati district, Manyara region.

The minister added that in the 2019/2020 season, the ministry through the warehouse receipts board in charge of the warehouse receipts system has registered 51 warehouses with the capacity of between 300 and 10,000 cubic meters.

A total of 240,218,696 kilos of crops were stored through warehouse receipts system in Ruvuma, Lindi, Mtwara, Manyara, Mbeya, Shinyanga, Mwanza, Tabora, Songwe, Kilimanjaro, Dodoma and Coast regions, he said.

On cotton, Bashungwa said efforts are also being taken to revive and

promote tobacco farming whereas it has reached consensus with the main buyers after they were accused of violating market competition rules.

According to the Fair Competition Commission (FCC), tobacco buyers are accused of abuse of dominance and acting against the Anti-Competitive Agreements. Raised issues were resolved through settlement proceedings.

He said one of the buyer - JTI Leaf Services Limited has confirmed to purchase tobacco worth \$ 12.6 million in the 2019/2020 financial year and tonnes of tobacco worth \$ 14.1 million in 2020/2021.

He added that the company will purchase more tobacco from farmers in coming harvest seasons whereas tobacco worth \$ 15 million will be procured in 2021/2022 and thousand tonnes worth \$ 15.5 million in 2022/2023.

Minister Bashungwa noted that the ministry in collaboration with Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission (TCDC), TMX, coffee board and stakeholders is working to improve market systems for agricultural crops as well as ensuring better prices.

He said Tanzania continue to take advantage of its geographical position to strategically expand its market scope in boarder regions whereas it has established eight trade centers.

The centres are located at the Holili/Taveta, Sirari/Isebania and Namanga borders between Tanzania and Kenya. Others are at the Kabanga/Kobero-Tanzania and Burundi), Rusumo borders with Rwanda and at the Mtukula border with Uganda.

The Horohoro/Lungalunga between Tanzania and Kenya, the Tanzania-Zambia Tunduma/Nakonde border and the recently opened trade center at the Kasumulo/Songwe border between Tanzania and Malawi.

HALMASHAURI YA JIJI LA DODOMA



TANGAZO LA UUZAJI WA VIWANJA

Mkurugenzi wa Halmashauri ya Jiji la Dodoma anawatangazia Wananchi wote kuwa kutakuwa na zoezi uuzaji wa Viwanja kuanzia TAREHE 25/04/2020 katika eneo la wazi Manispaa ya zamani (karibu na Sabasaba) kuanzia saa 2:00 Asubuhi hadi saa 9:30 Alasiri.

Viwanja vinavyouzwa ni katika maeneo ya:

ENEEO	MATUMIZI NA BEI TSHS KWA (SQM1)
Iyumbu New Town Centre, karibu na UDOM na mradi wa Watumishi Housing	• Apartment 7,500/=
Njedengwa Investment Centre, Karibu na Mradi wa Nyumba 300 wa Kisasa	• Biashara 10,000/=
Njala Industrial Area, Karibu na Kituo cha Malori	• Apartment 13,070/=
Medeli Extension, Karibu na Jengo la Hazina na Benki Kuu	• Biashara 18,876/=
Mtumba (Karibu na Mji wa Serikali na Ikulu)	• Viwanda 5,000/=
Nala, Karibu na Chuo cha IFM	• Hotel 80,000/=
Mahomanyika, KM 2 kutoka unapojengwa Uwanja Mpya wa Ndege	• Taasisi 40,000/=
Mapinduzi, Karibu na Kituo cha SGR	• ZONE II Makazi 6,000/=
Kitelela, Karibu na Unapojengwa Uwanja wa Ndege Mpya	• Makazi na Biashara 7,500/=
Ihumwa, Karibu na Itakapojengwa Bandari Kavu	• Makazi 2,500/=
Chahwa, Karibu na Ikulu	• Makazi 5,000/=
	• Makazi 6,500/=
	• Makazi 5,000
	• Makazi na Biashara 6,000/=
	• Makazi 6,000/=
	• Makazi na Biashara 6,500/=
	• Makazi 3,000/=

NB: Malipo yote yafanyike ndani ya Siku 90 baada ya kupata hati ya madai.

Kwa mawasiliano zaidi piga simu namba 0714 785513.

Tangazo hili limetolewa na:
Mkurugenzi wa Jiji,
DODOMA

215716001



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) EXTERNAL AUDIT

1. INTRODUCTION

Sense International (EA) Tanzania (SITZ) is a registered Non-Governmental Organization working to support people with deafblindness/ complex disabilities and their families to access education, health, livelihood and other social services. SITZ invites tender for external audit of its financial statements of the twelve (12) month period ending in March 2020. SITZ is currently managing five projects and has annual turnover of around TZS 980,000,000. SITZ has only one office which is based in DSM.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT

The objective of the external audit is to express a professional audit opinion on the financial statements of the organization in accordance with the latest applicable International Standards in Auditing (ISAs).

3. SCOPE OF THE AUDIT

The scope of work will include among others, the following:

- The auditors must review and evaluate the organization's internal controls to obtain a sufficient understanding of the design of relevant control policies and procedures and whether those policies and procedures have been placed in operation (Auditors Report on Internal Controls).

- Identify and assess the risk of material misstatements in the financial statements that may be due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for an opinion.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT AUDIT (Report for 100% compliance audit for NLCF project)

The objective of the special assignment audit is to express a professional audit opinion for NLCF project (with turnover around TZS 100,000,000) in accordance with the latest applicable International Auditing Standards (ISAs) as well as the following Special Purpose Frameworks: -

- Review SITZ NLCF project risk management, control and governance arrangements to determine the reliability, accuracy and strength of the system of internal control. Recommendations to be presented for areas of improvement.

- Examine SITZ NLCF project funds used within the project to ensure they have been used by all in-country organizations for the agreed purpose. Where this is not the case, a review is undertaken and recommendations presented.

- Examine in-country organizations financial records to ensure SITZ NLCF funds have been accounted for correctly and accurately. Where this is not the case, a review is undertaken and recommendations presented.

- Ensure a thorough, complete and well documented audit report is produced reflecting the points above, including recommendations on how in-country organization might improve their risk management, control and governance systems/processes.

- The NLCF financial statements of donor funded project, in all material aspects, are in conformity with the applicable Financial Rules and Regulations of Agreement Terms and Conditions of the financing agreement.

5. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- The Auditor will employ adequate staff with appropriate professional qualifications and suitable experience with relevant standards, in particular International Standards on Auditing and with experience in auditing the accounts of entities comparable in size and complexity to the organization. In addition, the audit team as a whole will have:
- Appropriate experience with audits of external aid operations financed by donors. At least one senior member of the fieldwork team either a manager/supervisor should have such experience;

6. LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT

A formal letter of engagement specifying the scope of audit shall be prepared and signed between SITZ and the auditor prior to the beginning of the assignment. The letter of engagement shall also clearly spell out the responsibilities of the two parties.

7. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS (Technical and Financial)

The Technical proposal shall be evaluated as follows:

a) Understanding of Terms of Reference	10%
b) Experience of Consulting firm	20%
c) Methodology and Experience of consultant/firm	40%
d) Key personnel's qualification	20%
e) Lowest financial bidder	10%

Minimum eligible technical score is 75%

The Lowest Financial Proposal (LFP) for eligible proposal will be selected for negotiations.

How To Apply

Qualified and Interested firms should submit their bids to infotz@senseint.or.tz with no longer than May 15th 2020. Firms can also send bids through Sense International (EA), PO BOX 72653, DSM, Tanzania



World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services representative Amina Mubarak (2nd-R) pictured yesterday presenting to Chestina Kidenga (R), a nursing officer with Kisarawe District Hospital in Coast Region, an assortment of items for use the fight against Covid-19. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Kisarawe hospital receives equipment aid to help fighting against COVID-19

By Correspondent James Kandoya

KISARAWA District Hospital has received Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from the World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services (WIPAHS) to enhance fight against Covid-19.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony in Coast region recently the enrolled Nurse at Kisarawe Chestina Kidenga said that the donation will heighten the fight against Covid-19.

She said solidarity among the stakeholders was highly needed to overcome the disease to reduce other impacts in people's health and development.

"I would like to thank WIPAHS for their support. I call on other good Samaritans to volunteer donating to the facility to improve health service delivery," she said.

For her part, the representative of the Islamic organisation, Amina Mubarak said the donation was the continuation of the support from the organisation to support health facilities in the fight against the Covid-19.

She said the organisation had up to date supported the Temeke, Amana, and Kisarawe hospitals and was looking further to support other health facilities in different places.

"Our target is to enhance the war against covid-19, by supporting health facilities by protecting our health workers. It is our hope that we can do better soon," she said.

The nurse mentioned some of the items donated as electric water heaters, brooms, water, disinfectants and other related materials.

WIPAHS is an organisation based in Dar es Salaam. It is a non-governmental

organisation established in early 1985/86.

For the past 23 years, WIPAHS has improved the living conditions of the indigenous community of Tanzania, which has been suffering from poverty, diseases and illiteracy.

WIPAHS' impact can be seen by its vast amount of projects which promote rural development through education, the access of water, economic sustainability and the enhancement of religious learning.

The vision of WIPAHS is to transform individuals into an egalitarian and literate society through supporting and promoting community education to people irrespective of their ethnic, linguistic, provincial or religious background.

The organisation provide humanitarians support across the country including drilling of water boreholes, services to orphanage centres and owning primary and secondary schools that are fully supported.

I would like to thank WIPAHS for their support. I call on other good Samaritans to volunteer donating for the facility to improve health service delivery

Oil, gas companies donate medical supplies, PPE worth over 380m/- to combat Covid-19

By Guardian Reporter

A GROUP of Independent Oil and Gas Companies (IOCs) in partnership with Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) have donated medical supplies worth 383m/- to maximise the country's capacity to respond and manage the suspected cases of Covid-19.

In a joint statement, the companies stated that the donation has been

provided with close assistance of the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF).

The pledges were made to Umy Mwalimu, the Minister of Health, Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children at the National Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) in Dar es Salaam yesterday. According to the statement, Mnazi-Bay Partners contributed 220m/- in total which includes donations from TPDC (20m/-),

Maurel & Prom Tanzania Ltd (100m/-) and Wentworth Gas Ltd (100m/-).

Others are Shell and Block 1/4 Partners which contributed 93m/- and Pan African Energy Tanzania (70m/-).

On March 26, 2020, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children appealed for support from the private sector and government institutions, to strengthen in-country logistics capacity and better

control the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The donations will be made separately by each company and demonstrate a commitment to support the initiatives of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to combat the spread of the Covid-19 within Tanzania," the statement reads in part.

The medical supplies will be provided in accordance with national priorities to tackle the pandemic.

First Housing Finance (Tanzania) Limited Audited Financial Statements



Issued pursuant to Regulation 58 of The Banking and Financial Institutions (Mortgage Finance) Regulations, 2015.

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in Thousand shillings)

	Current Year 31 st December 2019	Previous Year 31 st December 2018
A. ASSETS		
1. Cash	1,507	1,218
2. Balances with Bank of Tanzania	-	-
3. Investments in Government Securities	-	-
4. Balances with Other Banks and Financial Institutions	14,892,541	17,667,502
5. Cheques and Items for Clearing	-	-
6. Interbranch Float Items	-	-
7. Bills Negotiated	-	-
8. Customers' Liabilities for Acceptances	-	-
9. Interbank Loans Receivables	-	-
10. Investments in Other Securities	-	-
11. Loans, Advances and Overdrafts (Net of Allowances for Probable Losses)	2,040,750	935,641
12. Other Assets	565,412	576,301
13. Equity Investments	1,622,000	1,000,000
14. Underwriting Accounts	-	-
15. Property, Plant and Equipment	745,176	870,499
16. TOTAL ASSETS	19,867,386	21,051,161
B. LIABILITIES		
17. Deposits from Other Banks and Financial Institutions	-	-
18. Customer Deposits	413,087	358,884
19. Cash Letters of Credit	-	-
20. Special Deposits	-	-
21. Payment Orders/ Transfers Payable	-	-
22. Bankers' Cheques and Drafts Issued	-	-
23. Accrued Taxes and Expenses Payable	784,678	885,452
24. Acceptances Outstanding	-	-
25. Interbranch Float Items	-	-
26. Unearned Income and Other Deferred Taxes & Charges	41,071	-
27. Other Liabilities	156,788	-
28. Borrowings	-	318,691
29. TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,395,624	1,563,027
30. NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES) (16 minus 29)	18,471,762	19,488,134
C. SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS		
31. Paid up Share Capital	21,800,000	21,800,000
32. Fair Value Reserve	95,831	-
33. Retained Earnings	(2,311,866)	(1,434,035)
34. Profit/(Loss) Account	(1,112,203)	(887,188)
35. Other Capital Accounts	-	9,357
36. Minority Interest	-	-
37. TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS	18,471,762	19,488,134
38. Contingent Liabilities	-	-
39. Non Performing Loans & Advances	-	-
40. Allowance for Expected Losses	86,131	104,671
41. Other Non Performing Assets	-	-
D. SELECTED FINANCIAL CONDITION INDICATORS		
(i). Shareholders Funds to Total Assets	92.98%	92.58%
(ii). Non Performing Loans to Total Gross Loans	-	-
(iii). Gross Loans & Advances to Total Deposits	497.12%	260.72%
(iv). Loans & Advances to Total Assets	10.27%	4.44%
(v). Earning Assets to Total Assets	86.59%	9.20%
(vi). Deposits Growth	15.10%	100.00%
(vii). Assets Growth	(5.62)%	0.57%

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

(Amounts in Thousand shillings)

	Current Year 31 st December 2019	Previous Year 31 st December 2018
1. Interest Income	908,437	1,468,021
2. Interest Expense	(60,415)	(15,026)
3. Net Interest Income	848,022	1,452,995
4. Bad Debts Written-Off	-	-
5. Expected Credit Losses - (increase)/ decrease	18,539	(83,939)
6. Non Interest Income :	63,497	46,363
6.1 Foreign Currency Dealings and Translation Gains/ (Loss)	(3,719)	3,366
6.2 Fees and Commissions	7,850	26,031
6.3 Dividend Income	11,807	12,028
6.4 Other Operating Income	47,559	4,938
7. Non Interest Expenses :	(2,036,474)	(2,293,909)
7.1 Salaries and Benefit	(861,881)	(810,701)
7.2 Fees and Commissions	-	-
7.3 Other Operating Expenses	(1,174,593)	(1,483,208)
8. Operating Income/ (Loss)	(1,106,416)	(878,490)
9. Income Tax Provision	(5,787)	(6,698)
10. Net Income/ (Loss) after Income Tax	(1,112,203)	(887,188)
11. Other Comprehensive Income (net of tax)	95,831	-
12. Total Comprehensive Income/ (Loss)	(1,016,372)	(887,188)
13. Number of Employees	11	10
14. Basic Earnings Per Share	(5.10)	(4.07)
15. Number of Branches	1	1
SELECTED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
(i). Return on Average Total Assets	(4.97)%	(4.23)%
(ii). Return on Average Shareholder's Fund	(5.35)%	(4.45)%
(iii). Non Interest Expense to Gross Income	209.53%	151.47%
(iv). Net Interest Income to Average Earning Assets	8.86%	13.98%

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in Thousand shillings)

	Share Capital	Retained Earnings	Fair Value Reserve	General Provision	Total
Current Year (2019)					
Balance as at the beginning of the year	21,800,000	(2,321,223)	-	9,357	19,488,134
Profit / (Loss) for the year	-	(1,112,203)	-	-	(1,112,203)
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-	95,831	-	95,831
Transactions with owners	-	-	-	-	-
Dividends Paid	-	-	-	-	-
Regulatory Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
General Provision	-	9,357	-	(9,357)	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at the end of the year	21,800,000	(3,424,069)	95,831	-	18,471,762
Previous Year (2018)					
Balance as at the beginning of the year	21,800,000	(1,404,970)	-	1,024	20,396,054
Impact of adopting IFRS 9	-	(20,732)	-	-	(20,732)
Profit / (Loss) for the year	-	(887,188)	-	-	(887,188)
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-	-	-	-
Transactions with owners	-	-	-	-	-
Dividends Paid	-	-	-	-	-
Regulatory Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
General Provision	-	(8,333)	-	8,333	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at the end of the year	21,800,000	(2,321,223)	-	9,357	19,488,134

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2019

(Amounts in Thousand shillings)

	Current Year 31 st December 2019	Previous Year 31 st December 2018
I. Cash Flow from Operating Activities:		
Net Income/ (Loss)	(1,106,416)	(878,490)
Adjustments for		
- Amortization/ Depreciation	549,039	404,806
- Expected Credit Losses (decrease)/increase	(18,539)	83,939
- Other Non-cash Items	18,818	-
- Change in Loans and Advances	(1,105,208)	(833,333)
- Change in Deposits	54,203	358,884
- Change in Short Term Negotiable Securities	-	-
- Change in Other Liabilities	(100,774)	350,274
- Change in Short-Term Borrowings	(318,691)	318,691
- Change in Other Assets	(60,771)	(272,550)
- Tax Paid	(4,606)	(7,495)
- Interest Paid	(3,798)	-
- Others (Dividend)	(11,807)	(12,028)
Net Cash Used by Operating Activities	(2,108,460)	(487,302)
II. Cash Flow from Investing Activities		
- Dividend Received	10,627	10,825
- Purchase of Fixed Assets	(68,140)	(111,983)
- Proceeds from Sale of Fixed Assets	-	-
- Purchase of Equity Shares	(485,098)	-
- Proceed from Sale of Non-Dealing Securities	-	-
- Purchase of Intangibles	-	(11,433)
Net Cash Used by Investing Activities	(542,611)	(112,591)
III. Cash Flow from Financing Activities		
- Repayment of Long-Term Debt	-	-
- Proceeds from Issuance of Long Term Debt	-	-
- Proceeds from Issuance of Share Capital	-	-
- Payment of Cash Dividends	-	-
- Net Change in Other Borrowings	-	-
- Others (Repayment of principal portion on lease liability)	(142,239)	-
Net Cash Used by Financing Activities	(142,239)	-
IV. Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash and Cash equivalents	(2,793,310)	(599,893)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the year	17,668,720	18,373,229
Expected Credit Loss on Bank Balances	18,638	(104,616)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the year	14,894,048	17,668,720

Name and Title Signature Date
 Reshma Shah (Manager - Credit) Signed 05th May 2020
 Vineet Patel (Ag. Head of Finance) Signed 05th May 2020
 Derrick Rusheya (Ag. Internal Audit Manager) Signed 05th May 2020

The above extracts are from the Financial Statements of the Financial Institution for the year ended 31st December 2019, which have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The Financial Statements were audited by Ernst & Young - Certified Public Accountants and received an unqualified audit report.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf by:

Name Signature Date
 Sanjay Suchak Chairperson Signed 06th May 2020
 Jackson Lohay Director Signed 06th May 2020

All stakeholders have a part to play in war on COVID-19

ON the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic various stakeholders including businesspeople, civil society organisations, political parties and individuals have been assisting the government in the fight against the pandemic.

They have done so and many continue to do so either through donation of funds, protective gear such as sanitizers, masks, water buckets, protective gear for frontline medical staff or through advice aimed to lessen the pangs of the disease on Tanzanians.

We hail these efforts on the realisation that this war has to be fought by all Tanzanians as the pandemic is neither discriminative nor subservient since it affects their own existence and that of the nation. No one will deny that the lives of Tanzanians, those in lower income bracket in particular have all of a sudden become uncertain, businesses have closed rendering many people lose their daily livelihoods - the business people themselves and those who they employed.

For example, it is reported that thousands of teachers from the country's private schools find themselves without income due to school closures - their employers cannot pay salaries because parents are not paying school fees for their children who remain at home.

Other economic sectors including banking, construction, transport, mining and tourism to name but a few are also experiencing shocks in one way or another. Tourism is the one hardest hit due to lack of foreign visitors.

In the circumstances there have been pleas from various quarters to the

government calling for its intervention in alleviating the hardships experienced by the economic sectors and the wananchi in particular.

The calls include rescheduling of loans given by the banks and other financial institutions to individuals and firms and lowering the rates charged for various basic necessities such as electricity and water. In regard to water, suggestions have been made to suspend bills payment for some months on reason that much water is now used for washing hands and general personal hygiene.

Another plausible suggestion came from the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) appealing to mobile phone service firms and providers of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to lower the rates of their products during this period of Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

They say the situation now students, teachers, businessmen, workers including those in the civil society organizations whose entities were closed are now forced to do their work at home. They add that the situation has increased substantial profits to mobile phone services providers and ICT providers because mobile phones and computers have become the alternative means of communication in the society.

Many of these decisions need some government intervention or push, hence it is high time for it to sit together with stakeholders in the various sectors to see what can be done, all aimed to mitigate the daily lives of the wananchi during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sure milestone in the history of our national infrastructure

A DRY port, sometimes inland port is an inland intermodal terminal directly connected by road or rail to a seaport and operating as a centre for the transshipment of sea cargo to inland destinations.

In addition to their role in cargo transshipment, dry ports may also include facilities for storage and consolidation of goods, maintenance for road or rail cargo carriers and customs clearance services. The location of these facilities at a dry port relieves competition for storage and customs space at the seaport itself.

A dry inland port can speed the flow of cargo between ships and major land transportation networks, creating a more central distribution point. Inland ports can improve the movement of imports and exports, moving the time-consuming sorting and processing of containers inland, away from congested seaports.

Kwala Dry Port in Coast region has started operating after the first consignment of 29 containers arrived at the facility, located 90 kilometers westward from Dar es Salaam.

It is the first time the dry port receives consignments, indicating its official start as it was built to alleviate congestion at the port of Dar es Salaam.

The start of the activities at the dry port followed the completion of the project, with 5.5 hectares of concrete surface added for the containers.

The area is part of 60 hectares that will be built to accommodate a total of 500 containers at one time, said Astashasta Ndiitiye, Deputy Minister for Works, Transport and Communications.

Receiving the freight train at the port at the weekend, he said the start of operations at Kwala Dry Port was an important step in solving the port congestion challenge.

It is an open secret that congestion at the Dar es Salaam port has raised complaints from customers. We commend the government and the Tanzania Ports Authority in ensuring the project is completed.

We are satisfied with the big accomplishment including the construction of the hard concrete

surface in the container stacking area, the drainage system, initial infrastructure for electricity supply, water supply, ICT, fire precautions along with offices and quarters for port officials and other employees.

This should be now a challenge to Kibaha district authorities and Coast region as well to use the dry port as an inducement for enhanced economic activities in the area.

The is no doubt the project is a result of the fifth phase government's intention to solve the problem of goods congestion at Dar es Salaam port. We now appeal to business people inside and outside the country to use available the TPA ports as their operations and security have been beefed up.

According to TPA director general Eng Deusdedit Kakoko the work is implemented in phases in the 60 hectares area, which is part of the 500 hectares taken over by TPA within Kwala Ward.

Kudos to Suma JKT contractors for accomplishing the first phase of the project. The project which began in February 2017 at a total cost of 47bn/- and is now expected to be fully completed this year.

The project's first phase included clearing of 120 hectares of land, leveling it, filling with ballast and construction of 1.3 km of railway from Kwala centre to the port.

The second phase incorporated the raising of the ridge for five sets of rails of 500 metre long and fencing it with a 3.2 km perimeter fence. It also incorporated the construction of power, water, communication and fire equipment infrastructures as well offices as staff quarters, he specified.

We hail the government for timely payment to the contractor. So far 45 per cent has been paid and the entire project will be completed in July. Phase three will include the construction of Kwala Dry port to Vigwaza along Morogoro Road to concrete level.

Come July, the port will be connected with the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) to transport containers to upcountry regions and outside the country. All in all, this is a milestone in the country's industrialisation agenda.

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Winning the battle against coronavirus disease: Global cooperation necessary



By Anne-Marie Trevelyan

AS our prime minister, Boris Johnson, said at the conference today: "The race to discover the vaccine to defeat this virus is not a competition between countries, but the most urgent shared endeavour of our lifetimes. We are in this together and together we will win."

Right now, the fast global spread of coronavirus means no one is safe from this pandemic until we are all safe.

In both our countries, people have made enormous personal sacrifices to slow the spread of this virus.

But only one thing will stop this pandemic in its tracks: A vaccine.

We are all contributing to the war on this disease in different ways. The United Kingdom has stepped up to become the biggest donor to the international fund to develop a coronavirus vaccine, which will save lives and livelihoods around the world, including in our two countries.

Our scientists at the University of Oxford have begun human trials and are partnering with another British success story, AstraZeneca - one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies - to make sure we are ready to manufacture a workable vaccine at

scale.

The global sense of community among nations is remarkable as we work together towards this common goal to find a cure. The only way we will succeed is by bringing together our resources, science and expertise to prevent a second wave of infection.

As such, the U.K. was very proud to have co-hosted today the Coronavirus Global Response International Pledging Conference with Japan, Germany, France, Canada, Norway, Italy, Saudi Arabia and the European Commission.

The more countries, businesses and global organisations pull together to pool their expertise, the faster our scientists will succeed in finding a vaccine, accessible and affordable for all.

This is a pledging event aiming to raise \$8 billion from governments and global organisations for the research and development of vaccines, treatments and tests to help end the coronavirus pandemic and prevent future waves of infection.

The U.K. has pledged significant support to achieve this aim, including the world's largest donation to the Coalition For Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) fund to develop a coronavirus vaccine.

The more countries, businesses and

global organisations pull together to pool their expertise, the faster our scientists will succeed in finding a vaccine, accessible and affordable for all. The international momentum to finding a vaccine is growing.

Now our nations must work together to build on this by making sure when we do find a vaccine, it will reach the people who need it.

Today's pledging event to help find a vaccine is only the beginning.

On June 4 the U.K. will play virtual host to the Global Vaccine Summit focused on raising funds to help Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. We hope that the Nigerian government will be able to play an active role in this summit.

I know that our two governments can work together to get this right. Because the only way for us to defeat this global disease is through global cooperation.

To kick off the international investment push, last week I announced new U.K. funding for Gavi to vaccinate up to 75 million children in the world's poorest countries. We have pledged funding equivalent to £330 million a year for the next five years. Gavi's work is integral to stopping diseases spreading globally and protecting countries like yours and mine from future pandemics.

Gavi has a superb track record in

delivering life-saving vaccinations, and pledges to the Alliance will help support their work in 68 different countries. Once a coronavirus vaccine is developed, Gavi will also play an integral role in ensuring its global distribution.

I know that our two governments can work together to get this right. Because the only way for us to defeat this global disease is through global cooperation.

The U.K. is not only giving its support to the pledging conference today, we are calling on our international partners to do the same. We need everyone to pull together and work together.

Ministerial colleagues, whether in the U.K. or in your own country, are standing together at today's pledging initiative. We are urging other countries to step up and make their contributions to overcome this crisis for our common good.

As our prime minister, Boris Johnson, said at the conference today: "The race to discover the vaccine to defeat this virus is not a competition between countries, but the most urgent shared endeavour of our lifetimes. We are in this together and together we will win."

Anne-Marie Trevelyan is the UK secretary of state for International Development.

Reporting the Covid-19 pandemic's ever-changing facts

By Abby Geluso

In late March, the World Health Organisation discouraged people from wearing face masks in public unless they were showing flu-like symptoms. Less than a week later, the Centres for Disease Control changed that advice.

In January, when Covid-19 had just begun to reach the shores of Europe and the Americas, the most widespread advice was to simply wash your hands for 20 seconds. Three months later, one-third of the world's population is on lockdown.

We are living in a reality seemingly pulled from a dystopian science fiction novel. Now, people are scared and looking for answers. With much still unknown about Covid-19, these answers often aren't readily available. Meanwhile, data and expert advisories change frequently.

I spoke to journalists from Vox, Mother Jones and The New York Times about how they report the ever-changing facts of the pandemic.

Vox reporter Umair Irfan wrote an article about the dozens of vaccines in the works to combat coronavirus - just when the United States surged ahead in most confirmed Covid-19 cases in the world. He and two colleagues gathered and reported information from the National Institutes of Health, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, among other institutions and companies working to find a vaccine.

Irfan has found his relationships with researchers, scientists and medical professionals valuable for verifying and developing a deeper understanding of the information he's reporting in an article. This is especially so when working under a deadline.

"They're just as busy as we are, if not more so," said Irfan, adding: "But for the most part, once you've built a relationship with a source, people will be more responsive. Good for a quick fact check here and there."

Mother Jones data journalist Sinduja Rangarajan also has found it essential to consult work put out by professionals, saying: "I've relied a lot more on the work of scientists, epidemiologists and institutions, and their data, instead of collecting data and doing all the analysis myself. That's something we just don't have time for."

A lot of reporting around Covid-19 includes estimates and projections, from projections of deaths to when economies will reopen. With so many variables influencing numbers, even a seemingly sound prediction might be overturned shortly after it's made.

"Obviously, I try my very best to be as correct as possible. But looking at data sources, I was able to see that the information wasn't up-to-date because it was changing so



quickly," said Rangarajan.

Rangarajan makes note in her stories of the day the data were collected or predictions were made, and the date they're being reported. She doesn't update her stories every day; information is changing so rapidly, it just isn't feasible. It's best to make clear in your stories that the information is always subject to change, she said.

For his part, Irfan tends not to rely too heavily on numbers. "I do update stories as information evolves, but because this is such a fast-moving story, we've learned not to use firm numbers unless they're absolutely necessary to the story," he said.

Rangarajan prioritises transparency in her reporting on the pandemic. "I'm being very upfront with the reader that this is a particular figure I've taken from this particular beat," she said.

For example, an early April story she wrote on states' supplies of hospital beds now includes at the top of the article:

The coronavirus is a rapidly developing news story, so some of the content in this article might be out of date.

"If there's something significant, I let my readers know. But I think the most important thing is that they know what they are looking at. Where did I get that number from? Is it from today? From what source? And just being very, very transparent," said Rangarajan.

Emma Goldberg, a researcher at The New York Times, concurred: "I am making sure to rely on the most informed, up-to-date information for my reporting. But I think it's also important for reporters to be clear about

the limits of our own knowledge of what's to come in this fast-changing situation."

Simple language is effective. "It's much too soon to say why New York has been hit harder - and whether early containment measures by California officials are paying off," Goldberg and a colleague originally included in an article they published on March 30, and later updated on April 14.

The novel coronavirus pandemic is, in all likelihood, a once-in-a-lifetime situation for the world. As journalists, we are working in an unprecedented, prolonged period of constantly changing information. This being the case,

our duty to report facts with transparency remains as critical as ever.

"I'm very aware of the fact that this is one of the stories that we are going to continue to report on for a while, even after everything is under control," said Rangarajan, adding: "Right now, the value we can add is to start to try to make sense of the world around us, and how it's changing and reporting on that. But obviously, nothing is tied to stones."

A dispatch by the International Journalists' Network (IJNet), a project of the Washington-based International Centre for Journalists.

How to tackle the big challenges in these Covid-19 times...

By Guy Ryder

NEW NORMAL? BETTER NORMAL! In these times of Covid-19, the big challenge for most of us is how to protect ourselves and our families from the virus and how to hold on to our jobs. For policy-makers that translates into beating the pandemic without doing irreversible damage to the economy in the process.

With over 3 million cases and some 217,000 victims of the virus to date globally, and the expected loss of the equivalent of 305 million jobs worldwide by mid-year, the stakes have never been higher.

Governments continue to "follow the science" in the search for the best solutions while foregoing the obvious benefits of much greater international cooperation in building the needed global response to the global challenge.

But with the war against Covid-19 still to be won, it has become commonplace that what awaits us after victory is a "new normal" in the way society is organised and the way we will work.

This is hardly reassuring - because nobody seems able to say what the new normal will be, because the message is that it will be dictated by the constraints imposed by the pandemic rather than our choices and preferences, and because we've heard it before.

The mantra which provided the mood music of the crash of 2008-2009 was that once the vaccine to the virus of financial excess had been developed and applied, the global economy would be safer, fairer and more sustainable.

But that didn't happen. The old normal was restored with a vengeance and those on the lower echelons of labour markets found themselves even further behind.

So May 1, the international day of labour, is the right occasion to look more closely at this new normal and start on the task of making it a better normal - not so much for those who already have much, but for those who so obviously have too little.

This pandemic has laid bare in the cruellest way the extraordinary precariousness and injustices of our world of work. It is the decimation of livelihoods



in the informal economy - where six out of ten workers make a living.

It has ignited the warnings from our colleagues in the World Food Programme, of the coming pandemic of hunger. It is the gaping holes in the social protection systems of even the richest countries, which have left millions in situations of deprivation.

It is the failure to guarantee workplace safety that condemns nearly 3 million to die each year because of the work they do. And it is the unchecked dynamic of

growing inequality which means that if, in medical terms, the virus does not discriminate between its victims in its social and economic impact, it discriminates brutally against the poorest and the powerless.

The only thing that should surprise us in all this is that we are surprised. Before the pandemic, the manifest deficits in decent work were mostly played out in individual episodes of quiet desperation.

It has taken the calamity of Covid-19 to aggregate them into the collective social cataclysm the world faces today. But we always knew: we simply chose not to care. By and large, policy choices by commission or omission accentuated rather than alleviated the problem.

Fifty-two years ago, in a speech to striking sanitation workers on the eve of his assassination, Martin Luther King, Jr reminded the world that there is dignity in all labour. Today, the virus has similarly highlighted the always essential and sometimes heroic role of the working heroes of this pandemic.

People who are usually invisible, unconsidered, undervalued, even ignored. Health and care workers, cleaners, supermarket cashiers, transport staff - too often numbered among the ranks of the working poor and the insecure.

Today the denial of dignity to these - and to millions of others - stands as a symbol of past policy failures and our future responsibilities.

We trust that the pressing emergency of Covid-19 will be behind us on May Day next year. But we will have before us the task of building a future of work which tackles the injustices that the pandemic has highlighted, together with the permanent and no longer postponable challenges of climate, digital and demographic transition.

This is what defines the better normal that has to be the lasting legacy of the global health emergency of 2020.

• Guy Ryder is International Labour Organisation Director General.

Frontline health workers set up safety shield in global fight against COVID-19

BEIJING

“MY babies are too young to read it now. And they'd barely recognize me in my gear. But if they lose me to COVID I want them to know Mommy tried really hard to do her job,” Cornelia Griggs, a New York pediatric surgeon, wrote in an emotional post to her toddlers in March.

A mother on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic, Griggs is using her sacrifice and courage as a powerful teaching moment for her children. The viral tweet received about 103,000 retweets and 530,000 likes within 24 hours.

According to the latest figure of Johns Hopkins University, coronavirus infections have risen to nearly 2.9 million worldwide along with more than 200,000 deaths.

Griggs, along with thousands of fearless medical workers across the world, has been putting up an arduous and brave fight against COVID-19, trying to turn the tide on the pandemic which knows no borders and recognizes no races.

Many are working long hours, with their own lives upended by the unprecedented health crisis; some have volunteered to help out without any second thoughts; some have even lost their lives on the front lines of the battle against the coronavirus.

GREAT SACRIFICE

Roberto Stella, a general practitioner aged 67, died on March 11, the first of many doctors to succumb to the coronavirus in Italy.

He lived in Busto Arsizio in Lombardy, an Italian region that has been hit particularly hard by the outbreak, and had planned to step down from his job as a doctor and president of the Order of Physicians in Varese, a city just north of Milan, at the end of this year.

Stella was among the first to urge the government to pay attention to the inadequate personal protective equipment for healthcare staff.

He asked his medical staff to be careful and press on with their work when they had run

out of face masks and gloves.

He was a true doctor who worked hard until the end, said Alessandro Colombo, a colleague and friend of Stella.

“His death got the attention of Italian doctors ... It made doctors realize that the coronavirus was something to be taken seriously,” Angelo Testa, president of the National Union of Independent Doctors, told Xinhua.

The coronavirus has claimed more than 26,000 lives in Italy, one of Europe's worst-affected countries. A total of 144 medical workers have died of the coronavirus in Italy to date, according to doctors' associations and unions.

About 17,000 health care workers have been infected, more than two-thirds of whom are women, according to the country's public health institute.

Also in Europe, Serbian doctors observed a minute of silence on April 15 to mourn Miodrag Ladic, a famous surgeon who had died from an infection related to the coronavirus.

Ladic, 65, director of the Emergency Center in the City of Nis, had been on a ventilator because his condition was serious.

The Municipality of East Sarajevo fulfilled his last wish by playing the Serbian military song “March on the Drina” to honor their beloved doctor.

Ladic was “on the front line, until the very end ... until the moment when he found out that he himself had contracted the virus that, for months, had been relentlessly taking people's lives,” said a statement issued by the Clinical Center of Nis.

“A man who was honorable, courageous and proud, side by side, on the front lines, stood by the Serbian army, in all the wars that struck our country and our people. A man, a doctor, a soldier who saved more than 1,000 lives on the battlefield,” the statement added.

The specialist in surgery was a volunteer during the wars in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, and had written a book entitled “The Diary of a War Surgeon.”

So far, Serbia has reported 6,630 cases with 125 deaths,



with the country being in a state of emergency since March 16.

FORGING AHEAD

Across the Mediterranean, Soman Mudariki, who works at Wilkins Hospital in Harare, is among Zimbabwe's frontline medical workers who are risking their lives to care for the sick.

Two weeks after the coronavirus pandemic reached the landlocked country in southern Africa, Mudariki tested four confirmed cases.

He said never before has his family been as worried about his safety at work.

“My son and daughter are not at ease. They keep asking questions and want to understand how dangerous coronavirus re-

National Health Service (NHS) staff members applaud outside the Royal Liverpool University Hospital during the weekly “Clap for Our Carers” campaign in Liverpool, Britain, April 23, 2020. (Xinhua)

ally is,” Mudariki said, adding that his family has remained a strong pillar of support.

After reporting its first case on March 20, Zimbabwe has recorded 31 cases to date. The government has extended the country's lockdown by a further two weeks to May 3.

With the virus not sparing anyone in its path, Mudariki knows the importance of medical workers being properly equipped when tending to patients.

“It is a hot zone that we are working in and it requires a meticulous process, from donning, doffing, to testing patients. The process needs to be thorough to make sure you do not carry the virus to other patients or workmates,” said Mudariki.

Nurses are also exposed to these risks. Among them is Cynthia Shatei, leader of the Zimbabwe Young Nurses' Association.

“We value the sanctity of human life,

but at times we fear for our dear life because the monster (COVID-19) is real. We believe that nursing is a calling, so we had to step in as nurses,” she told the state-run Sunday Mail newspaper.

Shatei said her efforts against the virus were motivated by patriotism, while the disease needs to be confronted head-on for the common good.

Medical staff have made important contributions to curbing the pandemic and they are “the most beautiful angels” and “messengers of light and hope,” said Chinese President Xi Jinping, while inspecting the command center of Huoshenshan Hospital in Wuhan, the once hardest-hit central Chinese city.

At a media briefing on COVID-19 earlier this month, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), called nurses and midwives “the backbone of every health system” and asked

everyone to protect themselves.

UNITED FRONT

As coronavirus infections surged across Ethiopia and the African continent, a 12-member Chinese medical team arrived in Ethiopia's capital of Addis Ababa on Thursday, bringing with it urgent medical supplies, including protective equipment and traditional Chinese medicine.

Noting that Africa is experiencing an upward trend in new cases, Zeng Zhiyong, a team member who specializes in infection control, said that “now is the moment to effectively contain the spread of the virus before its further spread.”

Africa registered a 43-percent jump in reported cases last week, highlighting a warning from the WHO that the continent of 1.3 billion could become the next epicenter of the global pandemic.

The team will share its experiences and give local hospitals advice on coronavirus prevention and control, said Zeng, who is also head of the infection control department at the West China Hospital of Sichuan University.

“The highly trained experts and professionals who have been active in COVID-19 response in China and with frontline experience came here along with support from the Chinese government,” said Ethiopian Minister of Health Lia Tadesse.

Guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China has been more than ready to share its good practices and provide assistance in its capacity to countries hit by the pandemic, Xi said at the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit in March.

China is continuing to provide supplies to 127 countries and four international organizations, and has sent expert teams to 15 countries, Ma Xiaowei, minister in charge of the National Health Commission, said last week.

“It is a precious gesture of brotherhood and togetherness demonstrated by the Chinese government in general and the 12 medical professionals in particular,” said Mahlet Dinku, an Ethiopian medical science student.

According to China's National Health Commission, there are some 1,000 Chinese medical personnel working in Africa, tasked with helping local health organizations contain the coronavirus.

The frontline medical workers have taken on the most arduous missions and they are “the most admirable people in the new era” who deserve the highest commendations, Xi said.

Xinhua

An African medical student's fight against COVID-19 in China

CHANGCHUN

MUSTAPHA Abdul Raheem has experienced two epidemics in the past six years: one was the Ebola in West Africa in 2014, during which he witnessed sufferings and aspired to study medicine; the other was the COVID-19. This time as a medical student in China, he was better prepared, both professionally and mentally.

The 22-year-old Nigerian has a Chinese name -- Shengli, which means victory. His original plan for the winter break was to finish his hospital internship and do some traveling. But the outbreak put a temporary pause to all that.

After taking online lessons on Wednesday afternoon, he helped his teacher to put up posters of the seven-step hand-washing method. As a class monitor of the Changchun University of Chinese Medicine, he has done a lot to fight the coronavirus.

The university has taken timely measures, including taking temperatures for everyone, disinfecting the buildings, and distributing masks. To minimize infection risks, Mustapha volunteered to note down his classmates' needs for necessities, make the purchases and deliver them to their doorsteps.

He also served as an amateur psychological counselor if any of his classmates became anxious.

He paid close attention to the epidemic situation every day. “I'm more interested in the number of cured cases, which brings hope,”

he said.

Quarantined in his dormitory, he encouraged his classmates to watch movies, read and pick up cooking.

In the meantime, he and his classmates have shot some short videos to be circulated on social media platforms. In those videos, he showed viewers how to protect themselves during the epidemic.

“Shengli has made some solid contributions. The students here are very impressed with his deeds,” said Yan Qi, a teacher at the school of international education.

Shengli also shared the videos with his friends and family in Nigeria and introduced China's effective measures in epidemic prevention and control.

“I discussed it with my parents, and they both agreed that China's measures have set quite an example. We have become ever more confident since we knew that China was helping Africa to fight the epidemic,” he said.

“Just as my Chinese name tells, together we will get a victory eventually,” Shengli said.

The university and its affiliated hospital have sent over 60 medics in two batches to aid the coronavirus fight in Wuhan, some of whom he knew about and respected.

Though desperately wanting to become a doctor and fight the virus on the frontline, he said the special quarantine period taught him something of equal importance -- to be a doctor of noble character.

Xinhua



Mustapha (R) receives masks and herbal tea from the school in Changchun University of Chinese Medicine in Changchun, northeast China's Jilin Province, April 30, 2020. Mustapha Abdul Raheem has experienced two epidemics in the past six years: one was the Ebola in West Africa in 2014, during which he witnessed sufferings and aspired to study medicine; the other was the COVID-19. This time as a medical student in China, he was better prepared, both professionally and mentally. (Xinhua/Yan Linyun)

Brewer supports health sector hygiene awareness campaign

By Guardian Reporter

TBL yesterday donated 618 five-litre containers of sanitizers to the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children for use in health facilities in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Mbeya and Arusha regions.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam, TBL managing director Philip Redman said the alcohol-based

sanitizers were produced in partnership with Diversey East and Central Africa Limited.

Redman further said that another consignment of 220 containers was being produced which will be handed over to the government over the next few days. Additionally, "We have received requests for PPE and are also looking into how best we can lend our support in this regard," says Redman.

In addition to producing sanitizers for health facilities, TBL will also produce COVID 19 kits which will be donated to its customers. Each kit will have two 500 ml sanitizers, four cloth masks as well as pamphlets on the proper use of masks.

TBL has a long history of supporting the socio-economic development of Tanzania. It has played an active role in the

agriculture, transportation and manufacturing sectors of the country since 1933.

Hand sanitizer is a liquid, gel, or foam generally used to decrease infectious agents on the hands. In most settings, hand washing with soap and water is generally preferred.

In most healthcare settings alcohol-based hand sanitizers are preferable to hand washing with soap and water. Rea-

sons include it being better tolerated and more effective. Hand washing with soap and water; however, should be carried out if contamination can be seen, or following the use of the toilet. The general use of non-alcohol-based hand sanitizers has no recommendations.

In 2010 the World Health Organization produced a guide for manufacturing hand sani-

tizer, which received renewed interest because of shortages of hand sanitizer in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dozens of liquor and perfume manufacturers switched their manufacturing facilities from their normal product to hand sanitizer.

In order to keep up with the demand, local distilleries started using their alcohol to make hand sanitizer. Distiller-

ies producing hand sanitizer originally existed in a legal grey area in the United States, until the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau declared that distilleries could produce their sanitizer without authorization.

There are cautions against making your own hand sanitizer. Some widely-circulated home recipes are ineffective or even poisonous.

African countries urged to invest heavily in midwifery development

By Guardian Reporter

AFRICAN governments and other stakeholders have been challenged to heavily invest in midwifery development ranging from education to practice with appropriate regulatory frameworks to improve health outcomes for women and infants.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa made remarks when speaking on this year's International Day of the Midwife.

She said: "This is an important time where governments must ensure that the voices, perspectives and leadership of midwives, nurses and women are included and respected."

"I therefore, call on governments, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and partners to invest in midwifery development from education to practice with appropriate regulatory frameworks, support materials and human resources. This is imperative to improve health outcomes for women and infants."

Dr Moeti said this was an excellent opportunity to recognize the vital roles of midwives in assisting women with pregnancy, childbirth and during the postpartum period.

Every year on 5 May, the International Confederation of Midwives leads the world in celebrating the International Day of the Midwife.

This year's commemoration goes by the theme: "Midwives with women: celebrate, demonstrate, mobilize, unite," which emphasizes the importance of mobilizing communities and maintaining provision of essential health services, particularly as countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the regional WHO official, in the African Region, between 2000 and 2017, maternal and newborn deaths have declined by 40-percent in the African Region, thanks largely to the commitment of midwives working with other health professionals.

However, one in two (53percent) of African midwives have reported feeling disrespected by fellow health workers in the course of their work. We must therefore do more to appreciate the valuable contribution of midwives in health-care teams.

She said countries are making strides in improving the skill and working environment for midwives and gave an example of Ghana which has introduced a graduate diploma in midwifery and revised job descriptions to give midwives more autonomy. Lesotho is also interested in providing advanced levels of pre-service training.

According to her, in the African Region, WHO has worked with countries to strengthen regulatory frameworks, and competency-based and standard-



Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa

ized education, training and practice for midwives, including integrated training for nursing and midwifery.

"Faith-based training institutions in Botswana, Cameroon, Lesotho

and Malawi are all using WHO's midwifery curricula. Experts from Sierra Leone, Zambia and WHO collaborating centres on nursing and midwifery are supporting several countries to review their curricula and regulatory

instruments in line with global health agency's guidance," she

She added that countries are also making sure essential health services, like safe deliveries, are not disrupted

during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Malawi, for instance, risk allowances for health workers, including midwives, have been increased, and 2000 more health workers have been recruited including 700 nurse and midwives.



STUCK: Bajaj and bodaboda riders of Mabogini ward in Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region, fight to move to safe ground a Bajaj trapped in mud yesterday. Photo: Godfrey Mushi

TFS acquires state-of-art firefighting equipment

By Guardian Correspondent, Kibaha

TANZANIA Forest Services Agency (TFS) says it plans to purchase a high capacity modern firefighting equipment to address fire incidents in seven zones countrywide.

Speaking at an event to receive the firefighting equipment manufactured by Equator-Suma JKT in Ruwu area in the Coast region, TFS conservancy commissioner Prof Dos Santos Silayo said the equipment is the first of its kind in the country and is special in forest fires fighting.

He said the aim of purchasing the equipment is to protect forests against fires that occur from time to time.

"Among the biggest challenges we are facing is fire incidents that cause extensive loss. In 2019 the loss from fires stood at 5bn/- and that was in one forest area which is Sao Hill Forest, hence possessing a modern firefighting equipment was one of our priorities," said Prof Silayo.

He added: "The forest sector is very important for the development of other sectors and we in TFS have the responsibility to protect our forests against various threats especially fire outbreaks as they are effective in the ecological destruction."

He said the equipment had cost 700m/- and is able to extinguish fire from 100 metres away.

"Unfortunately fire incidents are not selective as trees that were gutted last year were those 1 to 17 years old hence we had a loss of trees that would have been harvested in 20 years to come," he added.

Equator SumaJKT Managing director Robert Mangazeni said the equipment presented can work in any environments including forests, urban centres and airports and added it was the first of its kind in Africa.

3.457bn/- earmarked for construction of two bridges in Mpwapwa District

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

A TOTAL of 3.457bn/- is to be spent for the construction of two bridges joining Mpwapwa Urban District and other areas after they were swept away by

floodwaters early March, this year.

The bridges include the Miembeni bridge being built by Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) expected to cost 457m/- while Tanesco bridge will be built by Tanzania

Roads Agency (TANROADS) for 3bn/-.

Speaking to reporters here early this week the Ag Dodoma region TANROADS manager Salome Kabunda said they had already requested the funds for the construction of the Tanesco

bridge which will also include road construction at tarmac level.

Kabunda said since they do not yet know when the money will be made available; they decided to construct a temporary diversion that will be used while

waiting for funds from the government.

He added: "The diversion is in the last stages of construction but we are waiting for permission from Mpwapwa District Commissioner's Office to cut down trees that prevent big

trucks to pass."

TARURA manager for Mpwapwa district Emmanuel Lukumay said they have already emergency funds for 457m/- to construct the Miembeni bridge and added that he cannot confirm when the work will start as so far only

preparatory works had been accomplished including the requisition of the funds.

TARURA has also called on all residents to protect the environment and stop engaging themselves in human activities in road reserves.

Mitigating risks in industry crisis: Actions oil sector firms need to take

By Special Correspondent

THE compounding effects of the coronavirus disease and oil industry disruptions pose unique and significant challenges, particularly on the African continent where the economies of producing countries are largely dependent on oil revenues.

The budgets of countries like Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Angola have been rendered mostly impractical, with annual budgetary goals now unachievable owing to these unprecedented events.

Nigeria, the continent's most populous country and largest oil producer, is expected to cut its 2020 national budget by \$4.9 billion. That budget was prepared based on the estimation of crude prices at \$57/barrel.

With the Brent price at slightly over \$20 today, the country is most probably headed towards a recession, absent quick and miraculous interventions like the discovery of a COVID-19 vaccine.

As more countries remain locked down and businesses remain shut because of the pandemic, the demand for oil will remain low, leaving prices equally low.

The continuing disruption in the industry distribution chain and the businesses of international oil and gas companies which the African oil market relies heavily on has caused a direct and immediate impact on the local market.

Oil and gas producers and service companies from Port Harcourt, Luanda to Juba and emerging producers like Senegal and Mozambique are now faced with a myriad of financial and legal issues.

Oil projects have either been suspended, like in the case of BP which issued a force majeure notice to delay taking delivery of the LNG facility for the African Tortue Ahmeyim project in Senegal; or simply terminated like the Tullow Deepwater drillship contract in Ghana.

It is now critical for companies operating in the African oil and gas sector to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and industry disruptions on their local operations and contractual obligations. With no

end in sight, companies need to consider and take all necessary actions to mitigate all associated risks.

I have identified below some crucial issues relating to contracts and local operations. One: Contracts - including production sharing, joint venture, service and other financing agreements.

With the pandemic and oil price crash likely to cause some countries and businesses to suffer great financial challenges, there may be a need for oil-producing governments to reconsider their position under oil contracts.

International oil companies and foreign service firms may also be unable to meet their capital spending commitments. Potential production cuts and reduced demand could affect their ability to meet up with repayment obligations under financing instruments.

Consequently, it is possible that parties will seek to terminate or renegotiate existing contracts. Companies should consider their position and begin to prepare for this possibility.

Key considerations when renegotiating the contracts during this period include both parties' capacity to fulfil capex commitments in joint venture or production sharing contracts; crude prices and global demand for crude which will affect future receivables; ability to obtain other financing post covid-19; political and economic stability in host country; any changes in law that affect the stability of the current contract; local content obligations; and the opportunity cost of the deal.

Another set of contracts that may be affected are those with independent contractors and service providers. With the mandatory shutdown of business across sectors, sub-contractors may be unable to deliver on their contracts' commitments and obligations.

It is important to review all contracts and confirm the conditions of these contractors. This will prepare the company to implement necessary measures to cushion any defaults until such a time that specific contractual remedies can be sought.

Two: Tax implications and

reliefs. Despite the negative impact of the pandemic and falling crude prices on company operations and finances, companies in the sector still have huge tax obligations to the government which must be fulfilled. Some countries are currently offering tax reliefs and fiscal packages to companies to mitigate any adverse economic impacts.

It is important that companies determine their eligibility for these reliefs. For example, the government of Equatorial Guinea has granted some tax reliefs which include a reduction in the minimum income tax from 3 per cent to 1.5 per cent. However, this relief does not currently apply to companies in the oil and gas sector.

Other governments have provided some extension for tax payments. It is likely that governments may offer specific reliefs and tax exemptions to oil and gas companies going forward if the industry woes continue.

Three: Force majeure provisions. An issue may arise where a party is unable to fulfil its contractual obligations. In such an instance, the company may find some reprieve in the force majeure provision.

Force majeure relieves a party from liability for non-performance under a contract and it generally refers to the occurrence of an event which is outside the control of the party affected by such event and which prevents that party from performing its obligations under the contract.

It is usually provided in, and interpreted according to, the agreement. Force majeure will never be implied into an agreement. So, the definition of force majeure, the events that constitute the force majeure, the effects of the force majeure on the contract - including suspension of any obligations or eventual right to terminate - and the procedure to report a force majeure event to the other party are very important to consider when trying to determine whether a party may be able to take advantage of this provision and to what extent it can be used. With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on operations, it comes as no surprise that several companies



Oil and gas companies are cutting back expansion because of the coronavirus crisis

in the industry have already declared force majeure.

Tower Resources declared force majeure on its Thali offshore Cameroon licence, for instance, while BP sent a notice of force majeure to Golar LNG seeking to delay the receipt of the Gimi FLNG facility.

Shell, which was lauded for ground-breaking success at Forcados in Nigeria, had also declared force majeure after the closure of its pipelines. However, the force majeure has since been lifted and the Forcados Oil Pipeline system, the second largest in the Niger Delta, has been reopened.

Should the current situation persist, it is likely that more companies will look to suspend their obligations using force majeure clauses.

Oil and gas companies must review their contracts, including PSCs and services contracts, to determine whether they can suspend their obligations under the force majeure clause and which obligations can be suspended while the force majeure event is pending.

It is important to note that while some force majeure clauses permit the suspension of all obligations, others only cover the suspension of

non-monetary obligations.

Four: Employment and employee safety. At this crucial period, companies may face challenges with maintaining their staff on ground and ensuring that adequate levels of health and safety measures are always provided.

Companies must consider the current employment regulations and measures applicable in their countries of operation and ensure strict compliance. It may be illegal to terminate employment contracts at this point as is the case in Senegal. The company could consider the option of furlough (layoffs, or unpaid leave) - but in countries such as Gabon, the approval of the work inspection will be required for this.

It becomes prudent to discuss with labour experts in the country and closely monitor the proclamations of the authorities for any changes in laws or regulations affecting labour.

In countries where there is no lockdown and businesses are still in operation, the company must ensure that adequate Covid-19 policies and health measures are put in place to protect the employees.

The importance of the protection of workers in the workplace during this period cannot be overempha-

sized. Some countries have swiftly adopted health and safety laws/regulations to deal with the spread of the pandemic.

These laws may be applicable in workplaces. The company needs to consider these provisions and effectively implement them.

Countries such as Equatorial Guinea have issued specific Covid-19 work policies to ensure the safety of workers. Companies are therefore advised to adopt protocols that, at the minimum, comply with the government-prescribed policy.

The world will continue to deal with the adverse economic impact of this pandemic and the declining crude price for years to come. Certainly, many aspects of our lives and how we do business will never remain the same.

Africa will be heavily impacted by this incident and will require radical government responses to push through. African oil and gas players ought to carefully assess the situation and take the necessary steps to alleviate the short-term and long-term effects on their operations.

• A Centurion Law Group dispatch filed from Johannesburg.

How the world's sole superpower became the pandemic's epicentre

BEIJING

IN a heart-wrenching move, the U.S. federal government recently ordered 100,000 new body bags for what it feared the "worst-case" scenario as the coronavirus pandemic continues to ravage through the United States.

The situation in what is now the world's epicenter for the pandemic has already become utterly calamitous, with over 1.2 million infections and more than 70,000 deaths so far. The latest body bag order suggests a possible turn for the worse.

Few across the globe could predict such chaos for the world's sole superpower. The word "botched" is widely used by western media in describing Washington's response to the pandemic.

Negligence in the nascent days of the outbreak by the decision-makers in Washington is considered one of the major causes.

There is now plenty of unambiguous evidence showing that the U.S. administration had been warned repeatedly about the virus since late last year by its own intelligence sources and cabinet officials, U.S. medical scientists working at the Geneva headquarters of the World Health Organization, and the Chinese government.

Unfortunately, it took several

months for the White House to begin imposing rigorous federal measures after the country confirmed its first case in late January. During these long weeks in between, Washington not only pretended these red flags did not exist, but also tried to play down the severity of the pandemic and misinformed the American public that the disease was a "flu," and that everything was under control.

The fear in the White House that social-distancing actions could harm the economy, which in turn might cost the incumbent administration the coming presidential election in November, also played a crucial role in the government's botched approach to the disease, experts said.

The administration has seemingly set up a trap for itself. Since coming into power in 2017, it has been bragging about its successful economic policies and touting the country's solid stock market gains, thus promoting a tricky logic: since it takes the credit for a booming economy, it should naturally be held accountable if the economy goes south.

Facing a tanking, withering economy and skyrocketing jobless claims, the U.S. administration has grown increasingly restless, and is trying hard to push for reopening the economy though many scientists and medical experts have voiced

their concerns over a hasty removal of social-distancing measures.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and key figure in the U.S. administration's coronavirus task force, cautioned last week that local leaders would be taking "a really significant risk" of prematurely loosening social distancing restrictions.

According to some internal documents obtained by the U.S. media outlet NBC News, the White House coronavirus task force members remain worried about insufficient coronavirus testing, and a possible "catastrophic resurgence" of the pathogen.

That brings us to a third and more deep-rooted cause for Washington's failure to limit the virus' spread: its ill-funded public healthcare system. The United States is the world's only developed economy without a universal healthcare system. In 2018, there were 27.9 million Americans without health insurance. And according to a new West Health and Gallup poll, one in seven Americans said they would not seek medical care even if they have key symptoms over concerns of high financial cost.

What's worse is that the current U.S. administration has tried to further undermine the country's public health system.

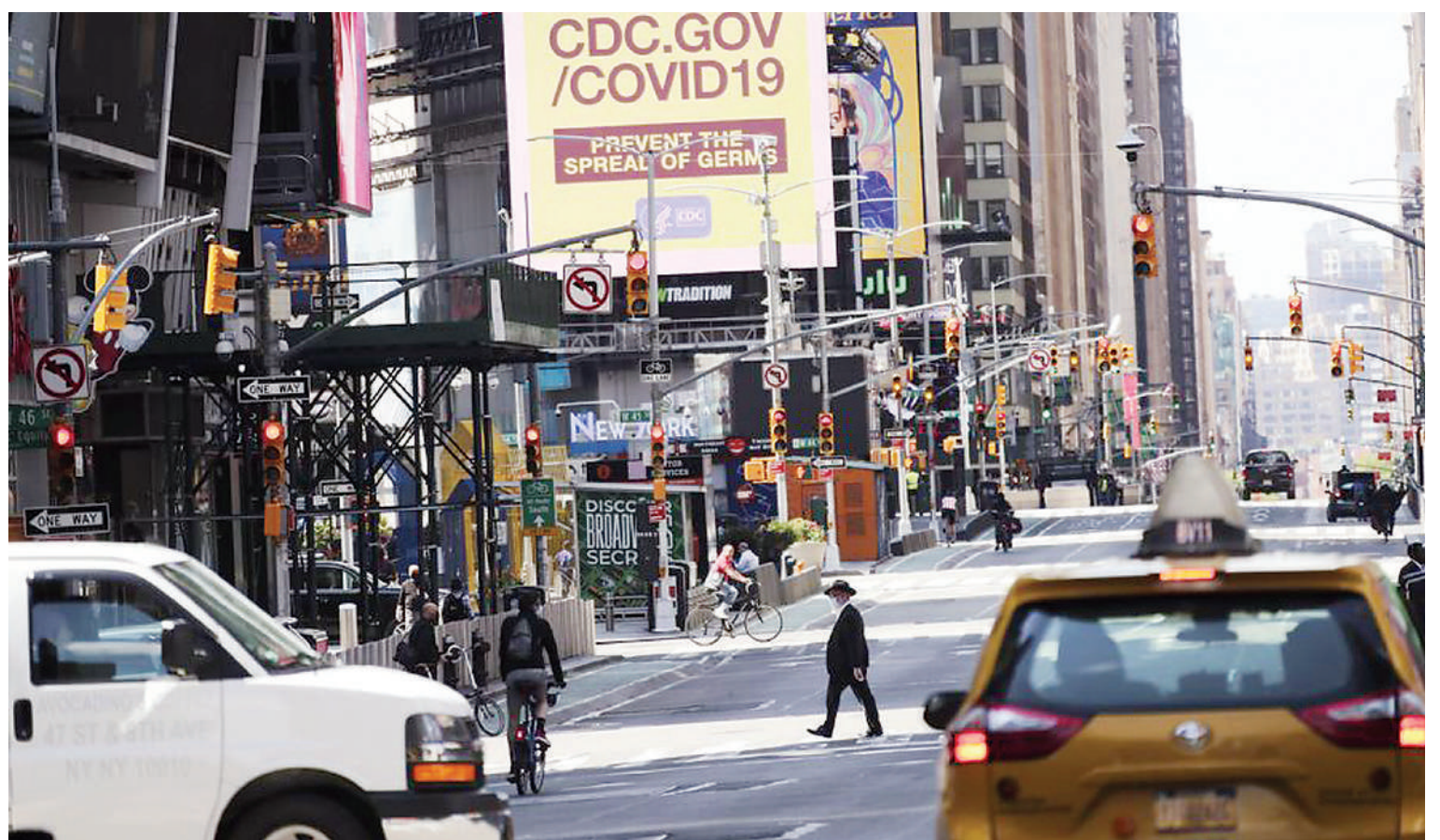


Photo taken on May 4, 2020 shows Times Square in New York, the United States. (Xinhua/Wang Ying)

The White House has proposed in its budget for fiscal year 2021 to cut 850 billion U.S. dollars in Medicare and 920 billion in Medicaid over the next decade in the name of reducing its deficit, according to a report by the Washington Post.

In 2018, it disbanded the National Security Council's pandemic response team.

According to a New York Times report last month, the White House

allowed a contract with a firm maintaining the government's stockpile of emergency, life-saving medical devices to expire last summer, and a new firm did not begin taking form until late January because of a contracting dispute. All of this made the problem of insufficient medical equipment like ventilators even worse.

Taking a closer look at such deficiencies sets the record straight on why the United States has been so hard hit by

the pandemic.

For decision-makers in the White House, they need to understand that their propensity to blame others for their own mistakes cannot make the virus miraculously disappear. They ought to face the facts and join others worldwide in good faith in this arduous fight against the deadly disease. The time has come to summon that courage.

Xinhua



Thursday 7 May 2020

CRDB equips agents against coronavirus with 60m/- kitty

By The Banker Reporter

WITH commitment to protect its employees and customers against the deadly coronavirus pandemic, CRDB Bank Plc is donating thousands of personal protective gear to its network of over 14,000 agents countrywide valued at 60m/-.

The bank's Head of Agency Banking, Ericky Willy said in Dar es Salaam earlier this week, the initiative is part of the bank's strategy to provide safe banking environment for its customers and staff as the global pandemic escalates.

"The bank is committed to providing a safe environment for employees and their families, customers, business partners and the general public to access its services without fear of being exposed to the coronavirus," Willy said noting that the health and wellbeing of the public are of paramount importance.

He hinted that most of CRDB Wakalas had already taken various measures to protect themselves and customers which include putting hand washing points and sanitizers at entrances and counters of their business outlets.

"I commend efforts to protect themselves and our customers, but as a bank we thought it necessary to join hands with them in these challenging times by equipping them with personal protective equipment," Willy noted.

As part of its corporate social responsibility

initiatives, the Dar es Salaam based lender has decided to join hands with the government and other stakeholders in supporting the fight against the deadly virus.

So far, the bank has donated a total of 290m/- to Mainland and Zanzibar governments to back the purchasing of PPEs, refurbishment of isolation wards at Mount Meru Hospital and a coronavirus awareness campaign being undertaken by Medical Association of Tanzania.

CRDB has also joined a #SafeHands campaign encouraging people to properly wash their hands as a measure to contain the coronavirus while also placing hand washing points and sanitizers at all of its branches and ATM machines across the country.

The CRDB Head of Agency Banking reminded customers to use digital channels such as SimBanking, SimAccount, Internet banking and CRDB Wakala outlets to transact during the crisis to avoid gathering in banking halls which easily spreads the virus.

"Recently we launched 'Popote Inatiki' campaign to encourage customers use mobile phones and other gadgets to transact on the bank's digital platforms," he noted adding that CRDB Wakalas are playing a major role in driving a financial inclusion in the country as the Dar es Salaam based lender targets to increase its agents network to more than 20,000 this year.



CRDB Bank's head of agency banking, Ericky Willy (L), presents some of the PPEs donated by the bank to one of its agents, Ephraim Mwinuka, in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo courtesy of CRDB.



Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister Ummy Mwalimu (C) receives medical supplies from Absa Bank Tanzania's human resource director, Patrick Foya (L), being a part of a 20m/- donation by the bank in support of government efforts in the war on Covid-19 in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Right is the ministry's permanent secretary, Prof Mabula Mchembe. Photo courtesy of Absa.

TymeBank and digital peers thrive in online shift prompted by coronavirus

JOHANNESBURG

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

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

"It's quite difficult with what's happening now in the market, because we have an unprecedented health crisis which has led to people's movements being severely restricted. But not

withstanding that, we've seen certain transactions shoot up," he said.

TymeBank was just warming up to the possibility of mass customer acquisition at the Zion City Moria in Limpopo following a partnership with the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) that the bank announced in February. It was also in the middle of rolling out kiosks outside Moria to serve the congregants in other provinces before South Africa went on lockdown.

But while the tragedy of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen fewer people opening bank accounts through branches and kiosks, it has proven to benefit banks that can issue new accounts without needing people to visit branches.

Spike in digital banking transactions Keraan said TymeBank, which saw value-added services like airtime and electricity sales shoot up 50% in April,

will now be aggressively promoting online registration of new bank accounts, something that the bank has had for a while. Motivating the bank is the fact that when people were locked indoors in April, it saw average balances per active customer increase 25% and send money transactions climb 20%.

The other new banks, Discovery Bank and African Bank's MyWorld also have the same capability, and so do the big four incumbent banks, which Avior Capital Markets analyst, Harry Botha, says will set winning banks apart in this period of physical distancing.

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

He said TymeBank was probably gaining so many customers because of its low fees, but most banks most likely observed a similar shift away from cash. Discovery Bank, which is now exactly a year old, also said it had recorded "an uptick" in digital accounts opened lately. The bank, which last reported that it had 78 000 clients and 180 000 accounts in mid-February 2020, will be releasing its own updated numbers soon, it said.

Meanwhile, African Bank, which launched its transactional account, MyWorld, in May 2020, said it had 214 000 account holders at the end of January 2020. But the true test for MyWorld and TymeBank is yet to come in the current low-interest rate environment, as they are forced to review interest rates that have been a selling point in some of their savings accounts.

Jack Ma's online bank set to issue \$282 billion in new loans to SMEs

BEIJING

WITH China's economy in free fall and millions of small businesses running low on cash, the online lending platform backed by billionaire Jack Ma entered crisis mode.

It was mid-February, near the peak of China's coronavirus outbreak, and Mybank had to decide whether to reduce its exposure or keep doling out loans. After a two-day marathon of calls and emails from self-isolation, the firm's executives agreed with 25 partner banks on a potentially risky strategy: cut interest rates and turn on the credit taps like never before.

Mybank is now on track to issue a record 2 trillion yuan or \$282 billion of new loans to small- and medium-sized companies this year, up nearly 18 per cent from 2019. "In face of the virus outbreak, we have not lowered our business targets," said Jin Xiaolong, the firm's president.

While the lending surge aligns with Chinese government efforts to revive the world's second-largest economy from its pandemic-induced slump, it comes with plenty of risk for Mybank and its biggest shareholder, Mr Ma's Ant Financial.

This year's crisis marks the first major stress test of Mybank's loan algorithms, which crunch real-time payments and other data to evaluate borrowers that often lack collateral and credit histories. If the push to boost lending causes defaults to jump, it could mean less profit for Mybank and by extension Ant, which has plans for an eventual initial public offering.

"The model is yet to be tested in a full credit cycle," said Wang Haimei, an analyst at Shanghai-based research firm WDZJ, which specialises in online lending. Mybank is a major part of Ant's so-called open banking strategy, which also includes a consumer lending platform and a technology group that sells cloud computing and other infrastructure to lenders. Ant is on track to generate 65 per cent of its revenue from these services by 2021, up from about 35 per cent in 2017, according to a source.

Before the coronavirus brought swaths of China's economy to a halt in the first quarter, Mybank said its 3,000-variable risk management system kept defaults at a mere 1.3 per cent of total loans. While Mr Jin declined to provide an updated figure on delinquencies, he said a recent uptick has been within his "expected range."

"Some small businesses are running into operational difficulties and the loan repayment rate has not been as high as before," Mr Jin said, adding that credit quality during February and March was "predominantly healthy". Mybank finances some of its loans with its own capital, but other lenders also use the platform to reach smaller borrowers they historically shunned.

"With SMEs desperate for financing as they come out of the pandemic and try to resume normal production, profitability shouldn't be our top priority," Mr Jin said. "We also found that more and more banks are asking us about leveraging Ant's risk management technologies and partnering with our platform, so we can support more SMEs in need together."

The Chinese banking system's non-performing loan ratio nudged up by 0.06 percentage point to 2.04 per cent in March from three months ago, according to official figures, even as lenders deferred payments on or rolled over a combined 1.5tn yuan in loans. China Merchants Bank, one of the country's biggest lenders to small businesses, saw its overdue micro-finance loans nearly double from the end of last year to 6.2bn yuan in the first quarter.



External national debt stock reduced owing to repayment, foreign currency fluctuations

By The Banker Reporter

THE country's external debt stock reduced in February this year thanks to regular repayment by Treasury and fluctuations of currency in which the debt was acquired.

Bank of Tanzania said in its March 2020 monthly economic review that public and private sector debt amounted to US\$22.36 billion as of end February 2020.

"The debt stock represented a decrease of US\$126.2 million and an increase of US\$786 million from the preceding month and corresponding month in 2019, respectively," the report said.

The central bank report noted that the decrease in the debt stock in February 2020 was on account

of debt repayment and exchange rate movements of the currencies in which the debt is denominated. The government remained the largest borrower accounting for 78.1 percent of external debt stock.

The BoT monthly report further said the structure of external public debt stock in terms of creditors profile remained the same as in the previous month and corresponding month of 2019.

"Debt owed to multilateral institutions accounted for the largest share of the debt at 46.0 percent, followed by debt from commercial sources.

The structure of external public debt stock in terms of creditors profile remained the same as in the previous month and corresponding month of 2019," the report added.

The report named transport and telecommunication activities as major beneficiaries of disbursed debt, accounting for 26.5 percent of the debt, followed by social welfare and education; and energy and mining.

"External loans disbursed in February 2020 amounted to US\$19.3 million, of which the central government

received US\$17.8 million. Disbursements during the year ending February 2020 amounted to US\$2,295.8 million, of which US\$1,950.6 million was received by the government and the balance by private sector," the central bank stated.

The debt service in February 2020 amounted to US\$116.2 million, of which US\$96.5 million was principal repayment and the balance was interest payment. "During the year ending February 2020, debt service payments amounted to US\$1,984.7 million, of which US\$1,662.3 million was principal repayment," the report stated.



Bank of Tanzania Governor, Prof Florens Luoga.

CBN stops banks from sacking workers due to Covid-19 crisis

ABUJA

IN a bid to stop people from losing their jobs during this pandemic period, the Central Bank of Nigeria and the banks in the country have agreed to shelve the planned sack of workers in the banking sector.

This was contained in a statement from the apex bank signed by Isaac Okorafor, director, corporate communications. He said the CBN, Bankers' Committee both decided to suspend lay-offs in banks. Following the backlash that greeted the video, the CBN on Sunday stated that, "in order to help minimize and mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and livelihoods, no bank in Nigeria shall retrench or lay-off any staff of any cadre (including full-time and part-time).

"To give effect to the above measure, the express approval of the Central Bank of Nigeria shall be required in the event that it becomes absolutely nec-

essary to lay-off any such staff. "The Central Bank of Nigeria solicits the support of all in our collective effort to weather through the economic challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic."

Meanwhile, Legit.ng had reported the federal government has sought the bank account statements of some former public office holders from 10 foreign and local banks on the controversial Process & Industrial Developments (P&ID) Ltd gas deal.

Among those affected by the request are former president Goodluck Jonathan and his wife, Patience; former ministers of petroleum resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke and Rilwanu Lukman, who died on July 21, 2014. Legit.ng gathered that the banks, which the details are required from are Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, and New York branches of Deutsche Bank AG and United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc.

According to the report,



Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Godwin Emefiele.

the attorney-general of the federation and minister of justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN), said the federal government is requesting that "all documents concerning any transactions, to, from, or for the benefit" of Jonathan and his wife between 2009 and the present day.

Malami said that the information contained in the document would help an ongoing investigation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to know individuals in the P&ID ltd gas deal. The newspaper said that

although Malami didn't mention Jonathan as a subject of the EFCC probe, the former president's name appears alongside the examiners in Nigeria's proposed subpoenas.

Recent international media reports suggested the Nigerian government had subpoenaed bank records for Jonathan and his wife, Dame Patience, in the United States of America. It was also gathered that Jonathan encouraged US authorities to cooperate fully with the Nigerian government on its demands.



Equity Bank Kenya managing director Gerald Warui

Contactless payments surge to 40pc in Kenya

NAIROBI

A MASTERCARD survey shows fear of contracting Covid-19 from 'infected' currency notes has fuelled contactless transactions with 80 percent of payments below Sh2,500.

The first quarter study that covered Kenya and other 18 Middle East and African countries found the transactions (where human contact is limited) had grown by 40 percent revealing a major shift on small payments that are usually dominated by cash payment.

"Social distancing does not just concern people, it includes publicly shared devices like point of sale terminals and checkout counters. At a time of heightened sensitivity to personal contact, consumers are adopting contactless as part of their new 'no-contact' behaviour," said Mastercard East Africa Business head Adam Jones.

The growth, he added, follows increase of contactless payment limits to Sh3,500 from Sh2,500 and last month's enhancement of the card verification method (CVM). The survey found six in 10 respondents preferred contactless means of settling payments while up to

80 percent said contactless payments methods were much cleaner, hence safer.

"We are in a sustained period where consumers are more concerned of their health and are making purchases via contactless methods. Nearly two in three respondents (64 percent) confirmed that the pandemic has led them to use less cash and 81 percent said they will continue to use contactless post-pandemic," it added. DTB Kenya head of Products and Marketing Farouk Khimji said their debit and credit cards were Mastercard enabled for tap-and-go transactions.

"Equity Group customers have the right and convenient payment options to suit their lifestyle as they continue to navigate during the current challenges brought about by Covid-19. All our 21,000 Point of Sale machines at merchant locations in Kenya accept contactless payments," said Equity Bank Kenya managing director Gerald Warui. The survey credited deployment of contactless pay portals at retail and drugstore outlets for the new contactless payments growth with significant spikes noted in February and March.



The company is eyeing opportunities in industries such as financial services, food and health.

Capitalworks fund planning to buy virus-hit South African firms

JOHANNESBURG

CAPITALWORKS Investment Partners plans to invest R5 billion of newly raised cash in mid-sized South African companies hit by a shrinking local economy and the coronavirus pandemic.

The firm raised 25% more than planned for its Private Equity Fund III from Morgan Stanley's Alternative Investments Partners (AIP) unit, institutional investors and wealthy families, Capitalworks founder Chad Smart said.

The Johannesburg-based company is seeking businesses with enterprise values from R250 million to R4 billion rand in industries such as financial services, food, and health. "There are high-quality businesses that are unduly punished by the virus that would usually use a crisis to gain market share," he said in an interview.

'Unusual situation'

"With the coronavirus, a number of them don't have turnover coming in, it's an unusual situation. The liquidity and growth-capital need means that you can find the best companies to invest in." Africa's most-industrialised economy was in a recession even before measures to contain the coronavirus brought businesses to an abrupt halt. That has also opened opportunities in industries like tourism, which has been especially hard hit by travel curbs, and alternative health care as people look for ways to protect their immune systems, Smart said.

"The investment will have a knock-on effect of another R5 billion to R10 billion on top of the money raised" as debt is typically used to leverage deal sizes, he said.

New York-based Morgan Stanley's AIP unit focuses on investments in sectors and markets like small- and medium-sized businesses in South Africa, which, while relatively undercapitalised, offer "compelling potential for returns," said Vikram Raju, the head of the bank's AIP's emerging market and impact division. Prior investments by Capitalworks include Rhodes Food Group, mining company Rosond and Minet Group, a pan-African insurance brokerage.

It's a two-horse race as banking industry posts impressive results

By The Banker Reporter

THE banking industry released its full year results for 2019 recently with a combined profit of over 400bn/- of which only two major banks, CRDB Bank Plc and NMB Bank Plc accounting for over 50 percent of the amount.

NMB Bank which remains the most profitable in the market recorded a 52 percent increase in net profit from 97.7bn/- made in 2018 to 148.6bn/- last year thanks to growth in operating income, reduced impairment charges and cost control measures taken by management under acting Managing Director Ruth Zaipuna.

In a recent statement, Zaipuna said operating income increased by 5 percent while impairment charges were reduced by 27 percent as cost control measures also diminished over the period. Zaipuna said during the year under review, NMB's total assets grew by 15 percent from 5.68trn/- in 2018 to 6.548trn/- last year while loans and advances increased to by 12 percent to 3.619trn/-.

"The bank's asset growth was funded by a 629bn/- increase in customer deposits as well as the NMB retail bond, which raised 83.3bn/- in liquidity. Overall customer deposits rose by 15 percent from 4.28trn/- to 4.871trn/- over the same period of time," she noted.

The market's leading bank had approximately 22 percent market share in both loans and customer deposits and retained its reign as having the largest balance sheet in the banking industry while also retaining a pole position as the most profitable bank in the market.

With NMB aside, one cannot escape staring at numbers of another banking conglomerate in the banking industry, CRDB Bank Plc which also posted impressive profit growth in 2019. The largest, home-grown retailer posted a staggering 120.1bn/- net profit for the year ending December 2019 being an 87 percent growth compared to 64bn/- made in 2018.

The CRDB Group which comprises of CRDB Burundi and CRDB Insurance Broker as subsidiaries announced recently that micro-



Nsekela

finance subsidiary had been dissolved as it seeks to consolidate its retail business.

The group's Managing Director, Abdulmajid Nsekela, attributed the impressive performance to sustained reforms targeted at revitalizing the business by creating new efficiencies and synergies to power growth. "All our key performance indicators are in the green.



Zaipuna

This is because we are taking our propositions seriously and we are working to elevate our customer experience by providing services efficiently and reliably," Nsekela said.

Key drivers of the growth according to Nsekela included customer deposits which grew by 11 percent to 5.2trn/- thanks to strong growth by the retail segment sup-

ported by a wide distribution network backed CRDB Wakalas (agents).

The banking group's assets also appreciated by 9 percent to 6.6trn/- signalling a robust balance sheet, which further cements its market leadership position as the preferred financial services provider in the country.

As the domestic banking industry's gurus keep their focus on further growth this year, investments are being concentrated in digitization which apart from ensuring wider coverage of the market, also plays a key role in financial inclusion.

"Our focus is to invest heavily in digital technology as a bank of choice for the future," the enterprising CRDB Managing Director noted as he unveiled 'Jiwezeshu' digital loan scheme targeting petty traders popularly known as 'machingas' end last year. In fact the 2019 results of CRDB indicate that over 80 percent of transactions were carried out outside its physical bank branches thus symbolising movement towards

digitization.

But as Nsekela and his management are plotting to dominate the banking industry through digitization, Zaipuna and NMB are also well focused on what experts argue will be the future of the financial system globally.

"We are committed to growing Tanzania's transportation sector and working with partners such as EYWA and Mastercard to introduce a digital solution that will not only promote a cashless society but will also benefit commuters and passengers plus the economy in general," Zaipuna said in Dar es Salaam earlier this week while announcing a partnership with Mastercard and EYWA.

"Formalization of these payments is a key component of NMB's drive to enhance financial inclusion among the commuters and the transport sector as a whole," she underlined. Last year, NMB teamed up with Mastercard to offer another digital payment tool dubbed Mastercard QR to motorcycle taxi riders also known as 'boda-boda.'

Bitcoin is seen staging a comeback reminiscent of 2017 bubble frenzy

NEW YORK

IT'S been left for dead more than once, written off as nothing but a bubble and denounced as rat poison by one of the world's most famous investors. Yet Bitcoin is once again staging a comeback reminiscent of the token's glory days, with evangelists pegging their hopes on a technical event as the new catalyst.

True believers say the gains are driven by Bitcoin's upcoming halving, when the rewards miners receive for processing transactions will be cut in half as soon as May 12. The internet is glutted with second-by-second countdown clocks and the mania is even spurring a hike in hiring by crypto firms worldwide. Bitcoin has rallied to near \$9 000 in anticipation from around \$6 000 just a month ago, adding more than \$1.3 billion in value.

"Narratives in the world of blockchain act like the Force in Star Wars – they mysteriously move and shape the market," said George McDonough, co-founder of crypto and blockchain investment firm KRI. "You couldn't be blamed for getting a little excited about what's to come."

Bitcoin halvings, which slow down the rate at which new tokens are created, happen once every four years or so. Its third such event is set to occur next week. Skeptics argue crypto prices are notoriously volatile and often difficult to pin explanations to, positing that any appreciation should be priced in ahead of time. But crypto fans cite historical precedent.

Bitcoin's undergone two prior halvings – or halvings, as they're sometimes called – which saw its price appreciate in the aftermath. The world's largest token rose from around \$12 to over \$1 000 in the year following its 2012 cut in rewards, and advanced about 1 000% in the wake of the 2016 halving, though that reduction happened at a time when the coin was gaining greater mainstream recognition.

The frenzy around digital currencies took it to near \$20 000 the following year before it crashed, with the coin still trading about 50% below 2017's all-time highs. But Bitcoin has historically bottomed 459 days prior to the halving, risen leading into the event and exploded to the upside



Supply of world's largest cryptocurrency, Bitcoin is forecast to be pinched off in 2020.

afterward, according to research from Pantera Capital. Post-halving rallies have averaged 446 days – should history repeat itself, Bitcoin could peak around August 2021.

Wallet growth has also spiked, rising 2% in April, the largest monthly increase since at least November. To Nicholas Colas at DataTrek Research, there's two possible explanations: bored, locked-down gamblers and sports betters are finding their way into cryptocurrencies amid the coronavirus shutdown, while many are also getting excited about Bitcoin's halving, he wrote in a recent note.

Price predictions To be sure, many crypto fans also point to unprecedented monetary and fiscal stimulus unleashed by central banks around the world as a catalyst for prices to advance. Whatever the reason, the recent bull-run hype has ushered in the return of sky-high price targets. Global Macro Investor's Raoul Pal projects Bitcoin could reach \$1 million in the next three- to five years. Though the halving isn't the key driver behind his prediction, it could be a potential accelerator.

"It is already the best performing asset in all recorded history," Pal wrote in a recent presentation. "It was born out of the financial crisis for exactly what is about to come in this crisis. This is literally what Bitcoin was invented for."

Jefferies analyst Christopher Wood in his weekly "Greed & Fear" newsletter recommended investors – including institutions – buy Bitcoin ahead of the halving, citing the token's prior price surges around the event. "To invest in Bitcoin it is necessary to believe the system has integrity in the sense that the supply is truly limited," he wrote. The digital token should be

a source of diversification "precisely because of its truly decentralised nature," he said.

Venture capitalist Tim Draper predicts Bitcoin could hit \$250 000 by 2022 or the first quarter of 2023. "Bitcoin adoption will spread because Bitcoin is simply a better currency than any of the political currencies that are tied to governments and political whims," he said, citing fiscal and monetary stimulus as possible accelerators for adoption.

To Antoni Trenchev, co-founder and managing director of crypto-lender Nexo, Bitcoin could reach \$50 000 by the end of the year, implying a 470% surge from current levels. Though the halving may already be priced in, it will lead to huge appreciation over time, he said. "Critics can disparage Bitcoin as much as they like, but it's by far the best performing asset of the past decade," he said. "We're bullish about its future."

Trenchev is seeing "huge" demand for his firm's products ahead of the coin's halving. "We're not hiring because of the halving per se. We're hiring because the halving has been lifting Bitcoin and will continue to do so," he said.

Hiring hike A number of crypto exchanges have also embarked on hiring sprees. Kraken and Binance Holdings are expanding their workforces, as are OkEx and Coinbase. David Janczewski, the chief executive officer and founder of Cardiff, Wales-based Coincover, said any market event that impacts adoption is a positive for his business.

"That's part of what we see – when the last spike happened, we know that an awful lot of people moved into the market because they felt they ought to get in on the action," said Janczewski, whose firm offers insurance against crypto thefts and scams.

Global smartphone market suffers worst contraction in history

BEIJING

GLOBAL shipments of smartphones fell at the fastest rate on record in the first quarter, illustrating the devastating impact of Covid-19 on consumption and production in the critical segment of the technology industry.

Shipments totalled about 275 million in the first three months of the year, according to market trackers Strategy Analytics and IDC, which estimate the decline from the same period in 2019 at 17% and 11%, respectively.

Their numbers vary slightly because they estimate results from a range of manufacturers. Both firms attribute the shortfall largely to the novel coronavirus outbreak, which hurt the supply chain – with factories across Asia having to close temporarily to constrain the spread – as well as demand due to widespread lockdowns that included retail stores.

"What started as primarily a supply-side problem initially limited to China has grown into a global economic crisis with the demand-side impact starting to show by the end of the quarter," said Nabila Popal, research director at IDC.

Bellwether supplier Murata Manufacturing had said in mid-April that most of its customers were maintaining order volumes and road maps through to the rest of the year, but on Thursday it revised that outlook with a forecast of a 10% slump in demand for the current fiscal year. "The outlook is extremely hard to foresee now," chairman Tsuneo Murata said.

iPhone unchanged IDC's analysis found Apple iPhones mostly unchanged at close to 37 million shipments, showing greater resilience than top smartphone vendor Samsung Electronics, whose output fell from just under 72 million to about 58 million shipments in the quarter. Huawei Technologies, with the added pressure of US sanctions and scrutiny, dropped by roughly 10 million units in the quarter, landing near 49 million.

Xiaomi achieved a record 10% market share, according to both market research groups, and managed to increase its shipments, by IDC's estimation.

"Xiaomi is dominating the huge India market at the moment and this is giving the company a big boost in smartphone shipments," said Linda Sui of Strategy Analytics.

Looking forward, IDC expects consumer demand to remain suppressed for the rest of the year, with the global economic downturn preventing any year-on-year growth until at least the fourth quarter.



What started as primarily a supply-side problem initially limited to China has grown into a global economic crisis with the demand-side impact starting to show by the end of the quarter

BANKING & FINANCE

Nigeria faces a debilitating 8% GDP slump, say economists

LAGOS

THE task facing Nigeria's economic managers will get even more daunting after a poll of economists suggested that Africa's largest economy would shrink by at least 8 percent in 2020 as a result of a contraction inflicted by coronavirus.

The initial forecast by the IMF was for a GDP slump of just under 4 percent, but emerging trends,

say the economists, mean Nigeria's economic recession will be worse than first thought.

Receipts from oil, mainstay of Africa's most populous nation, has virtually evaporated with close to 80 million barrels of Nigerian oil floating aboard ships in international waters without buyers. Even non-oil exports including agricultural products are piling up in farms and warehouses across the country as

faltering demand and new health regulations slow down shipment from the Lagos ports.

On Tuesday, Bloomberg reported that health protocols just introduced by Nigerian authorities to curb the spread of the COVID-19 disease have delayed cocoa exports, leaving at least 30,000 tons stranded at the Lagos port and in warehouses in Nigeria.

Under new rules introduced by Nigeria's shipping regulators, crews

of vessels entering the country's waters are required to observe a mandatory 14-day quarantine period before they can discharge their goods or take up fresh cargo, according to Muftau Abolarinwa, president, Cocoa Association of Nigeria, which groups farmers, traders and processors.

Nigeria has received approval for a \$3.4bn lifeline from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but economists say the

credit support is far short of what the country requires to get out of the fiscal bind that it has found itself.

"The sum of \$3.4bn sounds like a large amount of money but it is roughly 1-2 percent of Nigeria's GDP. It is not enough to solve our fiscal challenge," said Mustapha Chike-Obi, former CEO of AMCON.

The Wall Street journal calls Nigeria's oil-induced fiscal crisis existential, but so far senior government officials including some ministers are resisting the vital reform measures Nigeria badly needs to rebuild.

WORLD

Chinese envoy urges US to end blame game, focus on virus fight

WASHINGTON

CHINESE Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai on Tuesday called on US politicians to end the blame-China game and focus on tackling the COVID-19 pandemic which has killed over 70,000 Americans.

"Blaming China will not end this pandemic. On the contrary, the mindset risks decoupling China and the United States and hurting our efforts to fight the disease, our coordination to reignite the global economy, our ability to conquer other challenges and our prospects of a better future."

The United States would not emerge as a winner from this scenario," Cui said in an opinion piece published Tuesday night by The Washington Post.

"It is time to end the blame game. It is time to focus on the disease and re-

build trust between our two countries. As President Abraham Lincoln called for 'the better angels' in his inauguration speech, I hope that the wisdom of preceding generations will guide us to choose the right side of history and work for our shared future together," he said.

Behind the mindset of "always blame China" is "a kind of dirty politics, championed by a few people who shift the spotlight for political gain," Cui said.

"In their manipulation, China has to be wrong" regardless of the facts that China has since January fought a tough battle against the disease, spared no expense to save lives and made remarkable progress, Cui said.

"There is no denying that the first known case of COVID-19 was reported in Wuhan. But this means only that Wuhan was the first victim of the virus.



Chinese Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai

To ask a victim for compensation is simply ridiculous," Cui said, adding, "If that made sense, then who was to compensate for the fatalities of the H1N1 flu and HIV/AIDS? Who was to pay for the huge losses caused by the 2008 financial crisis?"

Refuting some US politicians' unfounded accusations about China's response to the pandemic, the ambassador said China has taken strict measures and made huge sacrifices to keep the virus in check, which not only saved lives at home but also bought precious time for the world.

Besides, China has done its best to share information about the virus, Cui said.

On Dec 27, a doctor in Hubei province reported three suspicious cases. In the following four days, local and central governments conducted investigations on the ground, he said.

Within a week, China began briefing the WHO, the United States and other countries about the outbreak, he said, adding on Jan 12, China released the whole genome sequence of the coronavirus, which has proved critical for diagnosis

and treatment of the disease globally.

Also, China shared information with the United States at the earliest possible time and have been supporting its fight against the disease, Cui said.

He said the two countries' centers for disease control and prevention and government agencies have been in close communication since Jan 4, the day after China briefed the WHO. In their phone calls, Chinese President Xi Jinping gave detailed accounts of China's measures to US President Donald Trump.

Cui added that by April 29, China had provided, according to China's customs figures, over 4 billion masks to the United States, or roughly 14 for every American on average.

Xinhua

Ousted US scientist says Washington downplays coronavirus threat

WASHINGTON

A former U.S. federal scientist in charge of developing drugs and vaccines filed a whistleblower complaint Tuesday, saying he was ousted for raising concerns over the coronavirus to the White House, which he said downplayed the threat.

Rick Bright (pictured), former director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) -- a division of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) -- said through his lawyers in the complaint that he voiced concerns over the virus in

January but faced resistance from HHS head Alex Azar and other senior administration officials.

"Dr. Bright acted with urgency to begin to address this pandemic but encountered resistance from HHS leadership, including Secretary Azar, who appeared intent on downplaying this catastrophic threat," read the 89-page complaint filed with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, an independent U.S. government agency that can investigate and prosecute abuses against federal employees.

HHS spokesperson Caitlin Oakley said in a statement that Bright has been reassigned to a post at



the National Institutes of Health to work on diagnostic testing for COVID-19, but that he has not shown up.

"We are deeply disappointed that he has not shown up to work on behalf of the American people and lead on this critical endeavor." The whistleblower complaint said

the HHS's "involuntary" transfer of Bright's job "violated the Whistleblower Protection Act."

An expert in vaccines and therapeutics who was appointed head of BARDA in 2016, Bright issued a statement last month saying he would file the whistleblower complaint, adding that he was removed from the post because he resisted Washington's efforts to push hydroxychloroquine -- a drug for treating malaria -- and the related chloroquine as cures for COVID-19.

"In our filing we will make clear that Dr. Bright was sidelined for one reason only -- because he re-

sisted efforts to provide unfettered access to potentially dangerous drugs, including chloroquine, a drug promoted by the administration as a panacea, but which is untested and possibly deadly when used improperly," read the statement by the deposed official's lawyers.

Through Tuesday's complaint, Bright wanted himself to be reinstated while requesting a thorough investigation into his ouster. He will testify before a U.S. House of Representatives panel on May 14, a spokeswoman for Bright said Tuesday.

Xinhua

ICC prosecutor deplors non-execution of arrest warrants for Libyan fugitives

CAPE TOWN

THE chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, on Tuesday deplored the non-execution of arrest warrants for Libyan fugitives wanted by the court.

In her briefing to the Security Council, Bensouda called out Egypt and Gen. Khalifa Haftar, commander-in-chief of the east-based Libyan National Army (LNA), for their failure to surrender the fugitives.

The arrest warrants for Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled and Mahmoud al-Werfalli are yet to be executed, said Bensouda. Egypt, where Al-Tuhamy is believed to reside, has not arrested and surrendered him to the ICC. Gen. Haftar's LNA has neither facilitated the arrest and surrender of al-Werfalli nor ensured his genuine investigation

and prosecution in Libya. Al-Werfalli is reported to be under the command of Gen. Haftar, she said.

Al-Tuhamy was the former head of the Libyan Internal Security Agency during the final years of the government of Muammar Gaddafi.

"While my office continues to meet its obligations under the Rome Statute by advancing its investigations despite resource constraints and a challenging operational environment, the course of justice cannot make further progress without the arrest and surrender of ICC suspects.

This is a responsibility that neither rests on my office nor the court, but other actors in the Rome Statute system, namely states," said Bensouda. "It is my sincere hope that this state of impunity will not remain the status quo and that the victims of Rome Statute crimes



committed in Libya will have justice."

Justice for such crimes is crucial to the rule of law and stability in Libya. Where appropriate, accountability for such crimes must extend to those in positions of authority, she noted. "I take this opportunity to once again stress that military commanders may be held responsible for crimes committed by forces under their effective command and

control.

Military commanders have a responsibility both to prevent or repress the commission of crimes by their forces, and to submit any such crimes for investigation and prosecution."

Bensouda said the arrest warrant for a third Libyan fugitive -- Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the second son of late Muammar Gaddafi -- remains enforceable. On March 9, the ICC Appeals Chamber unanimously ruled that Saif Gaddafi's case is admissible before the court.

Accordingly, Libya continues to be under an obligation to arrest and surrender Gaddafi to the ICC, she said. In its judgment, the Appeals Chamber found that the ICC is barred from trying someone who has already been tried in a national jurisdiction with respect to the same conduct only if the proceed-

ings in the other court are final, she said.

The Libyan domestic proceedings against Saif Gaddafi are not final. Given that he was convicted in absentia, if Gaddafi surrenders himself or is arrested, Libyan law provides that he must be retried. If sentenced to death for a second time, review by the Libyan Court of Cassation would be mandatory. Furthermore, the Libyan amnesty law does not apply to his case, she said.

In the course of the admissibility proceedings, Saif Gaddafi stated that he was released from detention on or about April 12, 2016. He has made no effort to surrender himself. Gaddafi is a wilful fugitive, actively evading justice both in Libya and before the International Criminal Court, said Bensouda.

Xinhua

UN chief asks for inclusion of people with disabilities in COVID-19 response

UNITED NATIONS

UNITED Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday asked for the inclusion of people with disabilities in COVID-19 response.

"I urge governments to place people with disabilities at the center of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and to consult and engage people with disabilities," said Guterres (pictured) in a video message for the launch of a new policy brief.

Even in normal circumstances, people with disabilities are less likely to access education, health care and income opportunities or participate in the community, he said.

People with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, and they experience higher rates of violence, neglect and abuse, he added, noting that the coronavirus pandemic has been intensifying these inequalities and producing new threats. People with disabilities are among the hardest-hit by COVID-19, Guterres said, adding that they face a lack of accessible public health information, significant barriers to implementing basic hygiene measures, and inaccessible health facilities.

The share of COVID-19 related deaths in care homes -- where older people with disabilities are over-represented -- ranges from 19 percent to an astonishing 72 percent, he noted. "We cannot let this continue."

We must guarantee the equal rights of people with disabilities to access health care and life-saving procedures during the pandemic," the UN chief said.

People with disabilities who faced exclusion in employment before this crisis, are now more likely to lose their jobs and will experience greater difficulties in returning to work, he said.

Guterres mentioned that only 28 percent of people with significant disabilities have access to benefits, and only 1 percent in low-income countries. People with disabilities, in particular, women and girls, face a greater risk of domestic violence, which has surged during the pandemic, he said.

The policy brief asked for accessibility of information as well as goods and services to people with disabilities; accessibility of health services, testing and life-saving procedures; expansion of both mainstream and targeted social protection programs for people with disabilities and their families.

Governments, donors, UN agencies and other actors need to establish accountability mechanisms to monitor investments and ensure disability inclusion in COVID-19 response, the brief said.

"Looking to the future, we have a unique opportunity to design and implement more inclusive and accessible societies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals," said Guterres. "When we secure the rights of people with disabilities, we are investing in our common future."

Xinhua

Russian embassy in US gets in touch with 8 more Russian schoolchildren

WASHINGTON

THE Russian embassy in Washington has lately got in touch with eight more Russian schoolchildren, their return home aboard the next flight from the US east coast, Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov said Monday.

"As for the Russian schoolchildren studying here through some educational programs, in the last few days the embassy got in touch with eight of them (the rest we evacuated earlier)," the embassy press service quoted Antonov's answers to media questions.

"It was too far and uncomfortable for them to travel to Los Angeles. We will work on their return on the next flight from the east coast. Our employees are maintaining constant contact with their parents," he added.

On Monday, around 400 people left the US from Los Angeles for Moscow aboard a special Aeroflot flight. Antonov said April 3 that more than 2,000 Russians in the US told diplomats they would like to return to Russia.

Earlier, spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry Maria Zakharova noted that the diplomatic agency will draw conclusions from the inadequate help of the US authorities in looking for the Russian schoolchildren.

She emphasized that previously high school teenagers travelled from Russia to the US through various educational and introductory programs, while now they cannot return home due to the pandemic.

However, American officials are distancing themselves from resolving this problem, turning a blind eye to the appeals of the Russian embassy, Zakharova lamented. According to her, around 80 Russian schoolchildren have been staying in the US since autumn.

BRI serves as anti-pandemic cooperation platform

IN addition to helping boost economies abroad, the BRI has been also serving as a cooperation platform for countries along the route to fight against the virus, and employ high-tech methods for public health.

As of April 3, China Communications Construction Co Ltd (CCCC) had donated 2.8 million yuan (\$395,300) worth of medical materials to countries including Italy, Kenya and Malaysia. The company has also put forward its efforts in publicizing anti-virus knowledge.

The SHEC released a handbook on epidemic prevention in different languages including English, Serbian, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese and Bengali, to help its local employees enhance understanding of the coronavirus.

FHEC worked with local schools and neighboring communities in Yaoundé, Cameroon to do anti-epidemic education; it also provided water carts with Ethiopian civil organizations to help disinfect streets.

CTCE provided timely support - including protective masks, disinfectant and hand sanitizer - to those countries where their BRI projects located, such as Mongolia. CRCC4 helped local employees and their families in Togo with basic knowledge about the virus.

Many enterprises have provided the recipient countries with high-tech support.

The CCCC invited medical experts from Wuhan to provide online guidance for employees overseas. Workers can

also consult doctors at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Beijing via online platform.

China Electronic Technology Group Corp helped upgrade medical facilities in Sri Lanka, sending more than 2,000 sets of equipment to the country's hospitals, People's Daily reported.

All this is "driven by genuine concern and practical assistance" and "provides a win-win situation for China and the recipient countries," said Mboya.

In Bangladesh, many Chinese companies have distributed food, medical equipment and other emergency supplies in different areas of the country. Hassan added, "I am always optimistic about the future of the BRI. Even during the ongoing global crisis, the initiative

has raised my hope as many Chinese companies have provided timely support for the BRI nations."

"We have been accustomed to witnessing silliness of some Western politicians and media who smear China. But we have been taken aback when we see them stooping to ridiculous lows to make China's humanitarian assistance a propaganda tool during this hard time of humanity," he said, blasting the Western media, and pointing out that China's assistance through the BRI is purely out of humanitarian consideration, instead of the country's own benefits.

Lan Qingxin, an assistant dean of Institute of International Economy, University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, told the Global Times

said that "The BRI is an important channel for building a community of common health for mankind."

"Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the China-proposed BRI has contributed enormously to enhancing mutual trust and building people-to-people bond between China and countries along the route. It will definitely remain as China's key focus strategy in the future," Lan said.

According to a statement sent by the China State Construction Engineering Corp, the company on Tuesday donated a batch of much-needed medical supplies to Egypt, including 10 ventilators, 500,000 surgical masks, 50,000 protective masks, 2,000 sets of protective suits, 2,000 face shields and 6,000 pairs of disposable gloves.

The company's donation and its efforts to walk a fine line between epidemic prevention and resumption of production have received praises from the Egyptian government.

Egyptian Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities Essam al-Gazar, said Tuesday that the company has cooperated well with the Egyptian government and various local partners and has adopted a fully closed project management model, which has ensured not only the health and safety of employees, but also its project's construction progress. The minister also noted that the company's effective measures are worth promoting in Egypt's engineering construction field.

Global Times



Employees work on a production line in Tsingtao Brewery (Zhangjiakou) Co., Ltd. in Xuanhua economic development zone, north China's Hebei province, April 18, 2020. Photo People's Daily Online

China's economy in orderly restoration

THE novel coronavirus outbreak will result in temporary economic setback, but it will not change China's positive economic fundamentals and the long-term trend, the country's top economic regulator said on Monday.

China's GDP fell by 6.8 percent in the January-March quarter, with major macroeconomic indicators contracting. "We have the confidence, conditions and capabilities to accelerate the push for a return to the pre-crisis economic level and achieve the annual growth goal for economic and social development," said Yan Pengcheng, director of the Department of National Economy at the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), explaining the country will rely on its strong domestic market, hedge against risks with macro policies, straighten economic circulation and give play to the roles of market entities.

Economic operation amid COVID-19 isn't comparable to that under normal orders. Yan believes that the performance of the Q1 economy shall be evaluated under the greater background to which the pandemic has brought huge impacts.

Objectively speaking, China has adopted higher-than-standard containment measures in a prompt and decisive manner since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, which not only curbed the spread of the virus in a very short period of time, but also secured the basic life for 1.4 billion people and maintained social order. "We have to make sacrifice to contain the disease, as life is priceless. The short-term economic pressure is worth it and something we must bear because the lives and health of the people are more important," Yan explained.

China's economy is recovering in an orderly manner. Since March, economic indicators of the country have started picking up, and the country's domestic demand was also bouncing back.

The decrease of investment and consumption in the first quarter reduced by 8.4 and 1.5 percentage points respectively than that in the first two months. Both the purchasing managers index (PMI) and non-manufacturing PMI of the country rose above the 50-point mark indicating economic expansion. In the first half of April, the country's power generation capacity expanded by 1.2 percent from a

year ago, indicating positive growth.

To stabilize the economic fundamentals and safeguard the bottom line of livelihood, China will issue a package of macro policies that cover the following five major aspects.

Regarding the difficulties obstructing production resumption, China will accelerate the eradication of improper regulations and unreasonable rules. It will support micro- and small-enterprises, as well as individual businesses to restore operation, so as to drive the work resumption of upper- and lower-stream industries, and enterprises of different sizes.

The country will also adopt more constructive fiscal policies and more flexible monetary policies to mitigate the impacts from the pandemic, in case the short-term influence turns into a lasting trend. China will improve its deficit ratio, issue special bonds and largely expand the issuance of local government special bonds.

The country will stabilize traditionally major consumption, such as automobiles and home appliances. Besides, it will appropriately enhance public consumption, foster new growth points, drive online consumption and spur in-store performance.

To expand effective investment, the country will focus on the areas of weakness, especially those exposed amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

While accelerating the implementation of existing policies to aid enterprises, the country will further study and issue relevant supportive measures, doing all it can to stabilize enterprises, especially small- and medium-sized ones. It will make all-out efforts to help foreign trade enterprises resume production, keep international logistics channel unimpeded, and help enterprises secure orders, markets and shares.

Besides, the country will lay huge attention on major workforce groups such as college graduates, migrant workers, and laborers from impoverished regions to enhance employment stability. Meanwhile, it will offer basic living allowance, relief and support, as well as temporary shelters for those in dire poverty.

People's Daily

Russian, Italian military disinfect two more care homes in Italy's Brescia

BERGAMO SPECIALISTS of the Russian Armed Forces have disinfecting two more care homes in the Italian town of Brescia (the province of Lombardy), the Russian Defense Ministry informed on Monday.

"Russian and Italian servicemen have disinfecting two medical facilities in the eastern part of the capital of the province of Brescia," the ministry noted, adding that the management and the employees of the care homes met Russian and Italian military experts "with words of grati-

tude and applause."

On March 21, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte agreed during a phone call that Russia would send aid required by Italy to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Between the evening of March 22 and the morning of March 25, Russia sent 15 jets, transporting around 100 Russian military virologists and defense ministry specialists in epidemiology, eight nursing brigades, and equipment for diagnostics and disinfection.

The Russian specialists are work-

ing in Bergamo, Lombardy, one of the most affected cities.

In late December 2019, Chinese officials notified the World Health Organization (WHO) about the outbreak of a previously unknown pneumonia in the city of Wuhan, in central China. Since then, cases of the novel coronavirus - named COVID-19 by the WHO - have been reported in every corner of the globe, including Russia.

According to the latest statistics, over 3,400,000 people have been infected worldwide and more than 240,000 deaths have been reported.

Crisis brings China and EU closer together, say experts



Some 130 tonnes of protective gear is unloaded from an Austrian Airline airplane that arrived from China at Vienna Airport in Schwechat, Lower Austria. The cargo is bound for Italy.

By Cao Desheng

AS yesterday marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the European Union, experts said the COVID-19 crisis might become a catalyst for them to enhance their cooperation and shape their future relationship.

Cui Hongjian, director of the Department for European Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, said despite any differences that might remain between them, the EU and China should respect and trust each other amid the global pandemic while working together to prevail over the contagion and offset COVID-19's impact on the world economy.

Since the start of the outbreak, the pandemic has brought China and Europe closer together, which has been demonstrated by the mutual support and aid between China and the EU and its members.

President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang have been in contact with European leaders including European Council President Charles Michel, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron on the outbreak as well as bilateral and in-

ternational issues.

A report titled "COVID-19 in Europe-China Relations" released on April 29 by the European Think Tank Network on China said the COVID-19 crisis was the first time that China has figured so prominently in an issue of immediate critical importance to European people and governments.

"The way that relations with China evolve over the course of the crisis will likely have a lasting effect on the Europe-China relationship," said the report.

China and the EU both support and uphold multilateralism in addressing global challenges, and through various dialogue mechanisms. They are stepping up cooperation on diagnostics, treatment, pharmaceutical and vaccine development, as well as regular exchanges of information and expertise.

This year was supposed to be a defining year for China-Europe relations as critical decisions are expected to be made on questions such as 5G licensing rules in Europe and a bilateral investment agreement between China and the EU.

Among the important political events involving China and European countries was the Summit between China and Central and Eastern European Countries, which was planned to be held in China in the first half of

2020, but had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Germany had also proposed to hold a summit of China and EU countries in the second half of the year, and China also planned to host the 22nd China-EU Summit.

In a recent online strategic dialogue with Shada Islam, of the European think tank Friends of Europe, Zhang Ming, head of the Chinese Mission to the EU, said COVID-19 is affecting the schedule of events between China and the EU, but "it does not paralyze our communication, nor undermine our shared commitment to the comprehensive strategic partnership."

"The two sides have been in close contact to prepare for the high-level exchanges for this year. We aim to deliver positive results and bring our relations forward," he said. "On the bright side, the pandemic shows once again that China and the EU should be partners, not rivals."

Zhang said China-EU talks on an investment treaty are proceeding well, and both sides are strongly committed to pushing forward negotiations on the agreement.

"During the crisis, there has been growing talk of de-globalization, decoupling and protectionism. The continuation of the investment treaty talks demonstrates that China and EU are strong advocates for openness and cooperation," he said.

UK draws up '3-stage plan' for easing Covid-19 lockdown

LONDON

THE United Kingdom has drawn up a three-stage plan to ease the coronavirus lockdown that was first imposed at the end of March, The Times newspaper said.

The government must review the lockdown by Thursday but Prime Minister Boris Johnson has made clear that he is worried about triggering a second deadly spike in cases. Johnson is expected to set out a plan for exiting the lockdown on Sunday.

The first phase will involve small shops reopening alongside outdoor workplaces and the second will involve large shopping centres reopening, with more people encouraged to go into work, The Times said. Pubs, restaurants, hotels and leisure centres will be among the last to open, the newspaper said.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, Health Minister Matt Hancock denied that the government had left many elderly people in care homes vulnerable to the novel coronavirus by prioritizing hospitals.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Tuesday Britain is continuing to see evidence that the virus peak was flattening as 288 more COVID-19 deaths were reported in Britain, bringing the total coronavirus-related death toll in the country to 28,734.

Earlier Tuesday, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published its latest coronavirus-registered death figures, showing the total death toll has passed 32,000, making Britain the worst-hit country in Europe followed by Italy, whose toll stands at 29,315.

Also on Tuesday, British leading epidemiologist Neil Ferguson resigned from the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) after media reported he broke social distancing rules.

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday asked for the inclusion of people with disabilities in COVID-19 response.

People with disabilities are among the hardest-hit by COVID-19, Guterres said in a video message for the launch of a new policy brief, adding that they face a lack of accessible public health information, significant barriers to implementing basic hygiene measures, and inaccessible health facilities.

The share of COVID-19 related deaths in care homes - where older people with disabilities are over-represented - ranges from 19 percent to an astonishing 72 percent, he noted.

"We cannot let this continue. We must guarantee the equal rights of people with disabilities to access health care and life-saving procedures during the pandemic," the UN chief said.

Guterres noted that only 28 percent of people with significant disabilities have access to benefits, and only 1 percent in low-income countries.

Agencies

NAIROBI

African countries start to relax curbs

WITH the Africa-CDC confirming 47,118 coronavirus cases, 1,843 deaths and 15,587 recoveries on the African continent on Tuesday, a number of countries have started easing restrictions slightly even as most of them announced lockdown extensions as the continent continues to battle the virus.

In South Africa, the government started a measured and phased plan to reopen the country from Friday. According to the plan, the authorities will gradually loosen some restric-

tions by allowing some industries to reopen while people can now walk their dogs and go jogging. However, social-distancing and wearing masks in public and at workplaces will still be mandatory.

On Monday, Nigeria started enforcing a directive announced by President Muhammadu Buhari that allowed the country to begin easing a month-long lockdown in the capital Abuja and Lagos, its largest city.

While issuing the directive, Buhari said the lockdown or-

ders announced on March 30 have come at a heavy economic cost leaving ordinary Nigerians hard to survive without enough money.

According to David Oselu, a financial consultant with Hector Consultancy based in Nairobi, the pressure to ease the restrictions introduced by African governments in the wake of the pandemic have been mounting for a while.

"More than 80 percent of Africans work in the informal economy, and during a lockdown the

impact can become unbearable. With so many people out of employment, businesses closing down for the unforeseeable future and lack of structured mechanisms to ensure that African governments are able to bail out the most vulnerable, the restrictions were bound to be eased," Oselu said.

"Even though most African economies cannot afford the full impact of a sustained lockdown while awaiting the development of a vaccine, it is important to note that economic relief would

be the best way to help ease the pressure on workers and families struggling with the impact of lockdowns," Oselu added.

Earliest to ease controls

Among the earliest African countries to ease lockdown restrictions was Ghana which lifted the lockdown in Accra and Kumasi, its two biggest cities on April 20.

According to Nana Akufo-Addo, Ghana's president, the decision was based on the country's ability to undertake contact

tracing of infected people, the enhancement of the capacity to test and the expansion in the numbers of treatment and isolation centers.

Rwanda partially lifted a lockdown against COVID-19 on Monday. Businesses have reopened and travel between provinces is permitted again.

On Friday, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe's president, extended a nationwide lockdown to fight the new coronavirus by two weeks, but added that big businesses will reopen under supervision while informal markets will remain shut.

Agencies

We cannot let this continue. We must guarantee the equal rights of people with disabilities to access health care and life-saving procedures during the pandemic

'China likely to emerge from virus-triggered downturn as strongest growing country in the world'

THE ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted economic growth in an unprecedented way not only in China but around the world. Despite the global downturn, it now seems to be a great opportunity to continue investment in the world's second-largest economy, which is likely to become the strongest growing country in the world after the epidemic, top global investors said.

Stephen A. Schwarzman, a Wall Street influencer and chairman and CEO of Blackstone, the

world's top alternative asset management firm, said that China will come out of this downturn as probably the strongest growing country in the world. His comments were made during an online dialogue with Neil Shen Nanpeng, managing director of Sequoia Capital China, late on Thursday.

Schwarzman said the recently released Chinese GDP slump in the first quarter should be seen as the bottom point, "a great opportunity for future growth in China."

China's GDP contracted 6.8 percent in the first three months of the year, its first decline since 1992 when the nation started publishing quarterly GDP data.

Retail sales plummeted 19 percent to 7.86 trillion yuan (\$1.11 trillion) in the first quarter, while industrial added-value was down 8.4 percent, and fixed-asset investment dived 16.1 percent to 8.41 trillion yuan, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

"China has some natural advantages for its own economy and it

continues to internalize them," said Schwarzman.

He also shared his opinion on recent discussions about global companies that are considering moving their supply chains out of China in the wake of the coronavirus crisis, pointing out that possible moves are not directed at China.

It is a lesson learned from the pandemic: Supply chains should be diversified rather than overly concentrated in one country, he said, adding that intensely com-

petitive countries like China are still in an advantageous position.

"There is no question that this pandemic will have economic impacts that last beyond the initial period of controlling the virus. But I think by 2021, we will be through the vast majority of this, countries will be back at work with different levels of recovery, and we will eventually see economic growth rates similar to before the pandemic," Schwarzman told the Global Times in an earlier interview.

Shen said the epidemic period has accelerated the transformation process in China that digital technologies have upgraded the manufacturing and services sectors. "It is time to double down on China on many sectors, and the most important ones are around technology and innovation," Shen said during the dialogue.

The healthcare industry including vaccines and drugs is expected to enjoy higher growth, according to Shen.

The Sequoia Capital China, as

a venture capital firm, is widely viewed as a bellwether for Chinese investment in the high-tech sector.

The Chinese arm of Silicon Valley venture capitalist Sequoia Capital has reportedly invested in more than 500 firms in China, including tech giants JD.com and Alibaba Group Holding, as well as some of China's fastest-growing firms such as Didi Chuxing, Meituan Dianping and Beijing Bytedance Technology.

Global Times

The Guardian

SPORT



Michelle and Barack Obama

Obamas, Lady Gaga, LeBron James join forces for US virtual graduations

LOS ANGELES

FORMER U.S. President Barack Obama, Lady Gaga, LeBron James and K-Pop band BTS are among dozens of celebrities and world leaders who will salute the class of 2020 in virtual U.S. graduation ceremonies replacing the traditional end of high school and college.

Obama, with his wife Michelle, will headline two separate graduation events announced on Tuesday.

In a one-hour multimedia event called "Graduate Together," to be broadcast on May 16 across multiple TV networks, Obama will deliver a message to high school seniors and reflect on the coronavirus pandemic.

In a separate YouTube event called "Dear Class of 2020," to be hosted by Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative and streamed on June 6, the former president will join with the likes of Pakistani Nobel Peace prize winner Malala Yousafzai, BTS and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in celebrating graduates across the United States.

Others taking part in the two events include U.S. women's soccer player Megan Rapinoe, the Jonas Brothers, musician Bad Bunny, Alicia Keys

and Alphabet and Google Chief Executive Sundar Pichai.

Schools and colleges shut down across the United States in mid-March because of the coronavirus epidemic, robbing students of milestone events and speeches in May and June marking the end of their formal education.

President Donald Trump said last month that he plans to deliver the commencement address in person for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, on May 23.

The White House on Tuesday did not immediately respond to a request for information on plans by other administration officials, but Vice President Mike Pence last month attended a U.S. Air Force Academy graduation ceremony in Colorado Springs where cadets sat eight feet (2.4 meters) apart.

Other virtual events on offer include a podcast called "Commencement: Speeches for the Class of 2020" on May 15 in which Hillary Clinton, Jimmy Fallon, John Legend and Eli Manning will be among some two dozen personalities offering words of wisdom to graduates.

REUTERS

Lithuanian capital holds 'Mask Fashion Week' amid coronavirus pandemic

VILNIUS

LITHUANIA'S capital Vilnius is holding a special kind of fashion week suited to this time of coronavirus - no catwalks, just billboards and no fancy costumes on display, just face-masks.

Twenty-one billboards dotted around the UNESCO World Heritage city feature photographs of men, women and children wearing masks as part of a so-called "Mask

Fashion Week".

All Lithuanians are required to wear masks outside as a preventative measure against the spread of COVID-19, the highly infectious respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

The designs were selected by members of local Facebook group 'Mask Your Fashion', launched by designer Julija Janus to share novel designs for masks and tips on how to make them at home.



Morogoro District Commissioner, Regina Chonjo (L), gestures when addressing government leaders in Morogoro District municipality on the need for the latter to see to it the community abandons unethical practices. Looking on is Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) Chairman for Morogoro District, Filiki Juma. Regina held the meeting shortly after overseeing the launch of hand sanitizers the municipal is to present to the community in an event, which took place Sabasaba Health Center in Morogoro town recently. PHOTO: MICHAEL SIKAPUNDWA

Governing bodies must balance calendar, says Boris Becker



Boris Becker

LONDON

TENNIS governing bodies should use the time during the lengthy coronavirus shutdown to align their interests and fix the imbalance in the calendar, six-times Grand Slam winner Boris Becker told Reuters on Tuesday.

Roger Federer called for a merger between the men's and women's tours on social media recently, with the men's ATP Tour Chairman Andrea Gaudenzi, and his women's WTA Tour counterpart Steve Simon, both welcoming the suggestion.

Becker backed the idea and said the ongoing pause is an opportunity for the sport's stakeholders to work together.

"In my perfect world I would like to see much more combined events," Becker said in an interview.

"Men and women events over 10 days would be the ideal scenario

moving forward. In my take we have too many tennis tournaments week in week out.

"Sometimes we have two or three in the same week in different countries which I don't think is right. And obviously the smaller tournaments will have a hard time to survive in the current crisis. And who knows where they are going to be put back next year. "So I would really hope the governing bodies and big tournaments, the Masters Series on both sides, that they really come together and find a formula which is good for the game."

The tennis season was suspended in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the hiatus will continue at least until mid-July as countries have shut borders and gone into lockdown to contain the spread of the virus.

The pandemic has led to the cancellation of Wimbledon and the postponement of the French Open to September, while the status of the

U.S. Open, scheduled to take place as usual in late August, is still unclear.

TENNIS WIPEOUT

Many have voiced doubts if professional tennis can return in 2020 with the sport needing players to jet around the world to participate in tournaments.

"I think a lot depends on the decision regarding the U.S. Open and the French Open," said Becker, who was named as an ambassador for GG Poker and King's Resort last month.

"I think if that's positive then we will have a tournament or two before the Open in America. I think it was good of the Open to say 'listen, let's wait and see and not make a rushed decision'.

"If it is positive then I think we will have tennis for the rest of the year. If we don't have the Open, the French Open, I don't think we will have tennis for the rest of the year."

The possibility of a total tennis

wipeout for the rest of the season has led some to speculate whether the shutdown would be more detrimental to younger players or the game's dominant talents.

Becker believes the younger generation would be harder hit, having lost out on a year's experience.

"If the year is lost, I don't think it's bad for Federer or Serena (Williams) because they haven't really abused their bodies for another year, in a way they have gained a year," the German said of the duo, who will both turn 39 this year. "I think it is good for Andy Murray because it gives him more time to come back and get physically ready for 2021."

"I think it benefits more (Novak) Djokovic, (Rafa) Nadal, Federer because they know how good they are, they know what to do, and I don't think we are going to see a change of form from them."

REUTERS

Court overturns Quincy Jones' win in Michael Jackson lawsuit

LOS ANGELES

A CALIFORNIA appeals court on Tuesday overturned most of a 2017 jury verdict awarding Quincy Jones \$94 million in royalties and fees from the Michael Jackson estate over the use of Jones-produced Jackson hits in the concert film "This Is It" and two Cirque du Soleil shows.

The state's 2nd District Court of Appeal ruled that the jury misinterpreted a contract that was the judge's job to interpret anyway. It took away \$69 million that jurors had said MJJ Productions owed Jones for his work on "Billie Jean," "Thriller," and more of Jackson's biggest hits.

The appeals court found that the jury wrongly granted Jones money from licensing fees, wrongly went beyond the 10% royalty rate Jones was owed for record sales, and incorrectly granted Jones money for remixes of Jackson's master recordings.

The court kept intact \$25 million of the award, which Jones said he was owed for the use of his masters in "This Is It" and other fees.

The court also rejected a counter-appeal from the 87-year-old Jones arguing that the trial court should have allowed him to make a claim of financial elder abuse.

"While we disagree with portions of the Court's decision and are evaluating our options going forward, we are pleased that the Court affirmed the jury's determination that MJJP failed to pay Quincy Jones more than \$2.5M that it owed him," Jones' attorney J. Michael Hennigan said in a statement.

Jones, who was already a music business giant when he produced the classic Jackson albums "Off the Wall," "Thriller" and "Bad," had sought \$30 million from the estate when he first filed the lawsuit in 2013.

"Quincy Jones was the last person we thought would try to take advantage of Michael Jackson by filing a lawsuit three years after he died asking for tens of



This combination photo shows Quincy Jones at the world premiere of "Black Godfather" in Los Angeles on June 3, 2019, left, and Michael Jackson at a press conference in London on March 5, 2009. (AP Photo)

millions of dollars he wasn't entitled to," Jackson attorney Howard Weitzman said in a statement. "We knew the verdict was wrong when we heard it, and the court of appeal has completely vindicated us."

On the stand during the trial, Jones was asked by Weitzman whether he realized he was essentially suing Jackson himself.

Jones angrily disagreed. "I'm not suing Michael," he said. "I'm suing you all."

The trial centered on the definitions of

terms in the two contracts Jackson and Jones signed in 1978 and 1985.

Under the deals, for example, Jones is entitled to a share of net receipts from a "videoshow" of the songs. The Jackson attorneys argued that the term was meant to apply to music videos and not feature films like "This Is It."

The film was created from rehearsal footage for a comeback tour that Jackson was working toward when he died in 2009

at age 50.

"So many people have tried to take advantage of Michael and mischaracterize him since his death," Jackson estate co-executor John Branca said in a statement Tuesday. "It's gratifying that in this case the court in an overwhelmingly favorable and just decision, recognizes that Michael Jackson was both an enormous talent and an extremely fair business executive."

AP

FIFA expects to get evidence in May of Russian doping cases

ZURICH

FIFA expects to get evidence from Moscow laboratory data this month that could expose doping by soccer players in Russia.

FIFA said on Tuesday it was among sports governing bodies which received updates last week in a World Anti-Doping Agency video conference call about fresh evidence in the long-running Russian scandal.

WADA is sharing data - of samples tested up to 2015, and tampering that continued into 2019 - retrieved from the Moscow testing lab at the heart of a state-backed doping program.

The anti-doping watchdog said last week its investigations of 298 athletes under suspicion were being handed over to 27 international federations and one events organizer.

"FIFA participated in WADA's explanatory webinar on April 30 and was informed that they will receive the full case packages by the end of May," soccer's world body said.

It is unclear how many soccer cases are among the 298. FIFA and WADA agreed ahead of the 2018 World Cup in Russia that the host nation's 23-player roster was not implicated in the years-old scandal.

"FIFA works closely with WADA to conclude the investigation as soon as possible," FIFA said, noting it would prepare potential disciplinary cases "as soon as we receive the full case packages."

WADA investigators retrieved evidence from the Moscow lab database last year as a key step to resolving a scandal that tainted several Olympic Games, including the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi.

They found data had been manipulated, potentially opening up a fresh wave of disciplinary cases in multiple sports.

Russian authorities deny any state involvement, and have blamed WADA's whistleblower witness, former lab director Grigory Rodchenkov, for running a doping program.

AP

PFA chief suggests shorter matches to lighten load on players

LONDON

THE head of the English Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) has raised the possibility of playing shorter matches to lighten the load on players if the season can restart.

English clubs remain committed to completing the campaign despite severe concerns over player welfare.

Players could be tested up to three times a week and be forced to stay quarantined in hotels away from their families for a number of weeks to help limit the risk of them becoming infected with coronavirus.

With 92 matches in the Premier League season still to be played, players could have little preparatory time to work on their fitness in group training before being rushed back into playing twice a week.

FIFA have proposed increasing the number of substitutes allowed per side from three to five to also lessen the risk of fatigue and injuries for players on their return.

"Safety has to be paramount," PFA chief executive Gordon Taylor told the BBC.

"We don't know the future. What we do know is what propositions have been put, what ideas have been put, the possibility of having more substitutes, games possibly not being the full 45 minutes each way.

"There's talks of neutral stadiums.

There's been lots of things being put forward.

"Try and wait and see what the proposals are, and then have the courtesy to let the managers and coaches and players also assimilate all those and come to a considered view."

The Premier League's "Project Restart" has been met with some resistance over plans for all remaining games to take place at up to 10 neutral venues.

The remaining matches would need to be played behind closed doors, but there are fears fans could congregate around stadiums.

Some top-flight clubs have argued that under those circumstances there should be no relegation as the sporting integrity of the competition is compromised.

However, chairman of the English Football League (EFL) Rick Parry said denying promotion to three Championship clubs would end up in legal battles.

"The lawyers are going to get wealthy if that happens," Parry told the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee on Tuesday.

"There would be a degree of outrage from a number of clubs in our Championship, and it would be a breach of the tripartite agreement.

"The safe answer is that it would get very messy. Our expectation is there would be three clubs promoted from the Championship."

AFP

Give me means to perform or I'll leave, Villas Boas tells OM bosses

PARIS

OLYMPIQUE de Marseille coach Andre Villas Boas has said he will not stay at the club if he is not given the means to make them competitive in the Champions League.

Marseille claimed a Champions League spot for the first time in seven years when they finished second in Ligue 1 as the season was ended with 10 games left amid the COVID-19 crisis.

But that is not enough for the Portuguese, whose contract expires at the end of the 2020-21 season.

"I don't want to just make up the numbers in the Champions League. It's just here to make up the numbers, it's obviously no (to stay at the club)," he told French radio RMC.

Villas Boas said he wanted to stay but that important structural conditions had to be met.

"The most important is whether the people who are with me, (sports director) Andoni (Zubizarreta) and (scouting director) Albert (Valentin) still have power or no.

"We must have, and we want to have, the power to execute decisions.

"I feel good in Marseille. When my agent calls me with Premier League proposals, I don't want to go back. I am happy here. But if the conditions for us to do a proper job are not met, it's not worth it."

Keeping hold of key players is another crucial factor, he added.

"I want to know where we're going, what we can do, how much we can invest," he said.

"We don't have a big squad. We must think about the players whose contracts expire in 2021," he added, referring to goalkeeper Steve Mandanda, midfielders Florian Thauvin and Maxime Lopez, defender Jordan Amavi and forward Valere Germain.

Marseille fell foul of UEFA's financial fair-play rules last year and in March the club was at risk of sanctions after failing to comply with a settlement.

REUTERS



Liverpool's title will be clinched in silence, but neutral venues are the only way

By Mark Ogden, Senior Writer, ESPN FC

LIVERPOOL should have been preparing for a Premier League title party this weekend. Had the 2019-20 season played out as normal, without the unforeseen crisis of the coronavirus pandemic, the penultimate game of the campaign against Chelsea would have coincided with the club's first league trophy in 30 years being held aloft by captain Jordan Henderson and his teammates at Anfield. Though it would likely have been cemented long before, given their 25-point lead over Manchester City when the games were paused in mid-March.

Instead, Liverpool's title - they need six points from their final nine games to be confirmed as champions - will be clinched in silence. If the 2019-20 season is able to resume at all, it will have to be played behind closed doors, without supporters. Due to guidance from the UK government, law enforcement and emergency services - police, fire and ambulance - the Premier League will only be allowed to return if games are played at neutral grounds, and it is almost certain that Anfield will not stage a football game again this season. There may be no crowds at any football game until 2021 at the earliest.

As for the trophy, it is more likely to be delivered to Anfield by courier on a wet Tuesday in July than hoisted by Henderson to joyous scenes in front of passionate supporters.

But football has to make big sacrifices if it is to return anytime soon. It is now the only way. If it sounds like football in a laboratory, that is because it has to be like that if this season is to be concluded on the pitch rather than by committee via video conference or in the courtroom.

The prospect of Liverpool lifting the trophy at an empty Anfield after facing Chelsea behind closed doors was as good as ruled out last week by the mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson, who raised fears of fans simply turning up to celebrate outside the stadium. Less than a year ago, 750,000 Liverpool fans lined the streets of the city to welcome the team home from winning the Champions League in Madrid.

"Even if it was behind closed doors, there would be many thousands of people who would turn up outside Anfield," Anderson said. "There's not many people who would respect what we were saying and stay away from the ground, a lot of people would come to celebrate, so I think it's a non-starter. It would be really difficult for the police to keep people apart and maintain social distancing if they were going to celebrate outside Anfield. It would be farcical."

Brazilian league players rally against the premature resumption of football

By Tim Vickery, South America correspondent

ON March 12, the fiercest of Brazilian rivals Internacional and Gremio played out the last major game in front of a crowd in the Copa Libertadores before the coronavirus enforced shutdown.

This week, the Porto Alegre rivals will become the first big Brazilian clubs to resume training - Inter on Tuesday, and Gremio due to start the following day. There is still no firm idea of when football will resume. One thing is for sure, the only firm idea at the moment is that the subject will be controversial.

The coronavirus death toll in Brazil has risen to nearly 7,500, with specialists expecting the peak to occur over the next two months. Meanwhile, neighboring countries that have suffered less are being much more cautious. In Argentina, for example, December is currently seen as the most likely month for a footballing restart, while Brazil's president Jair Bolsonaro makes no secret of his wish for the game to return sooner rather than later. His new health minister Nelson Teich has been debating the idea with the football authorities, some of whom are also keen on a swift resumption. Bolsonaro argues that there is little risk, since the players are young, healthy athletes.

But what about the players? Brazil has little history of footballing militancy, but under the umbrella of the National Federation of Professional Athletes (FENAPAF), the athletes' union, a group of high-profile players issued a video statement. Sixteen players from 12 leading clubs read out a statement, each one speaking a line. The names include Diego and Everton Ribeiro of Flamengo, Corinthians goalkeeper Cassio and Palmeiras' Felipe Melo. Almost all of the big clubs from the main centres of Rio, Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte are represented, though there is no one from Porto Alegre.

Diego kicks off, declaring that "this is a time for unity." The players stress that they love football and are anxious to return, but, as veteran Atletico Mineiro keeper Victor states, "we need to think of the health of everyone." Indeed, the fact that president Bolsonaro sees the risk to the players as "infinitely small" is neither here nor there. The problem is those with whom they - and others involved in the spectacle - come into contact with. Everton Ribeiro emphasizes the need for "safe working conditions," before Felipe Melo - a player who has often voiced his support for Bolsonaro - closes the statement with the declaration that "together we'll win this game."

The use of Felipe Melo to close the video is clear evidence of a conciliatory tone. There is no general desire for conflict with Brazil's president, who continues to enjoy plenty of support from Brazil's football community. And there is another area in which the video is trading on eggshells.

All of these players are high-profile, their text recognizes that the vast majority of Brazil's footballers earn



Anfield

Anderson's comments were criticised by Liverpool and the club's supporters' groups, but with so many concerns related to safety, the health of participants and crowd control in times of strict social distancing, football has to accept the alien concept of no fans, empty stadiums and games being played where they wouldn't usually be played, simply to get this season done.

Yet the concept of neutral venues is proving to be the biggest challenge to overcome when the 20 Premier League clubs vote on the proposal. The vote, now likely to be early next week, needs a 14-6 majority to be passed. There is sizeable resistance within the Premier League to the requirement that the season be played out in this way.

Sources have told ESPN that a number of clubs believe that the idea is unworkable because it takes away home advantage. Brighton chief executive Paul Barber went on record at the weekend to voice his club's concerns that the proposal had "potential to have a material effect on the

integrity of the competition."

Whether there would actually be any advantage from playing at home, without fans, is a valid question. Home supporters tend to be the biggest factor in driving a team on, but that will be taken out of the equation, whether games are played at home or at neutral venues. But sources have told ESPN that there are several factors behind the insistence of the government that games be played at neutral grounds.

Facilities which enable social distancing within the stadium are key from a health perspective. The size and space of areas like changing rooms, corridors and tunnels - with newer grounds far more spacious than older ones - are key to allowing players, staff, officials and TV crews to move around without issue. Stadiums will also be selected on the basis of the rate of COVID-19 infections in the local area. Ten stadiums have been shortlisted, including Wembley, but sources have told ESPN that Anfield is almost certain to be left off the list because its location in a residential

area of Liverpool makes it hugely difficult for police to impose an exclusion zone designed to keep fans away.

Wembley, the Emirates Stadium, Old Trafford, the Etihad, Brighton's Amex Stadium and Southampton's St Mary's are all blessed with ultra-modern facilities, huge, spacious perimeters or both. But it is the prospect of supporters turning up at games, as thousands of flare-wielding Paris Saint-Germain fans did prior to their Champions League clash with Borussia Dortmund in March, that is the biggest fear of the authorities.

By staging games at neutral venues, hundreds of miles from home, it is hoped that celebrating supporters - whether it is Liverpool fans toasting the title or those whose teams have just escaped relegation - will be kept away.

It is not ideal and it is certainly not what football is about. But if the 2019-20 season ends by becoming some kind of ghost season at empty, neutral venues, it is surely a better way than resolving everything with mathematicians and lawyers.



Brazil's Serie A has been shut down for nearly two months, but government pressure hints it could return soon. Is that the right call? (Agencies)

little, and that many have a professional calendar that lasts three of four months a year. The economic pressures on these players are far greater than those on the far better-paid stars of the elite clubs. In fact, the longer the shutdown goes on, the more likely it becomes that some clubs will no longer be viable as professional.

But the need for caution has been highlighted this week. Among those losing their lives to the coronavirus was Jorginho, the massage specialist with Flamengo since 1980 and part of Brazil's back-up staff for their 2002 World Cup triumph.

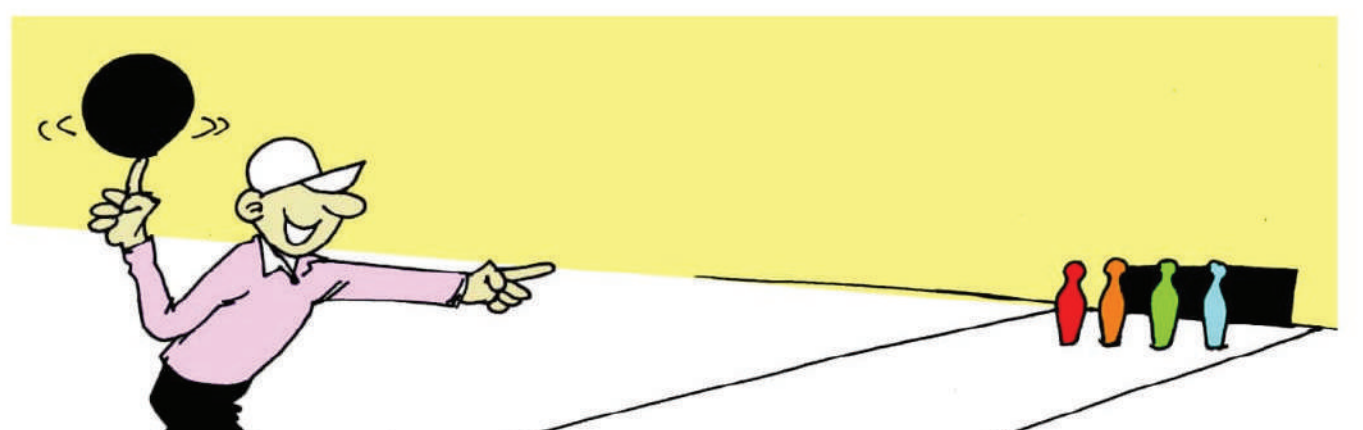
The news came as a jolt to the hopes for a quick restart in Rio de Janeiro - a restart that was already being strongly opposed by Botafogo, one of Flamengo's main rivals. Botafogo director Carlos

Augusto Montenegro made it very clear that his team would not be returning to action anytime soon and were more than happy to pay the penalty. "Any points that are taken away from us will be a life saved," he added.

The Rio football federation had just authorized a return to training, but it was halted by the local government - in Brazil, it is the local governments who are enforcing social distancing while Bolsonaro's central government questions its consequences.

For the moment, then, there are lots of forces pulling in different directions. But the show cannot go on without the players - and this week, Brazil's footballers have shown they are worried about the possibility of a premature resumption of play.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Liverpool's title will be clinched in silence, but neutral venues are the only way

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Australia Cricketers' Association chief executive Alistair Nicholson. GETTY IMAGES

Sangakkara to serve second term as MCC president

LONDON

KUMAR Sangakkara will be invited to serve a second term as MCC president, in light of the current postponement of the club's activities.

Sangakkara, the first overseas president of MCC, took office on October 1 last year, and recently participated in a successful club tour of Pakistan, his first return to the country since the terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka team bus in March 2009.

Presidents of MCC have traditionally only served 12-month terms, although during the First and Second World Wars, Lord Hawke (1914-18) and Stanley Christopherson (1939-45) both served for longer periods.

The proposal will be voted on at the club's AGM on June 24, where the club will also consider raising funds through a new life membership scheme, in order to keep the redevelopment of the Compton and Edrich Stands on course during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a letter to its membership, Guy Lavender, the secretary and chief executive, insisted that MCC - which is currently debt-free - was "not in crisis, or dire financial jeopardy", but warned that "proactive and early decision-making is required" to respond to Sangakkara to serve second term as MCC president

the implications of the virus. Lord's had been due to host two Tests this summer, against West Indies and Pakistan, in addition to a number of other high-profile contests including the final of the inaugural season of the Hundred, which has now been postponed until 2021.

However, with all cricket postponed until July 1 at the earliest, and given the current focus on playing behind closed doors in bio-secure environments, it seems unlikely that Lord's, with its central-London location and no on-site accommodation, will be able to host any major matches this year.

With its losses expected to run into tens of millions of pounds, MCC is determined to avoid a situation that impacts on the £50 million redevelopment work that got underway last year, and when completed will increase capacity at Lord's by 2500 seats to 31,000.

The life-membership scheme has previously been adopted in 1926 and 1996 to fund the redevelopments of Lord's Grandstand, and is expected to cost between £7,000 and £80,000, depending on age of the applicant.

MCC also confirmed that they will not be refunding annual subscription fees to its existing membership, which comprises 18,000 full members and 5,000 associates, who pay up to £600 for full access to Lord's facilities, having waited in most cases for close to three decades for the privilege.

In his letter, Lavender confirmed that the committee had taken the decision reluctantly, adding: "subscriptions are the bedrock of the Club's finances, critical to



A darts player puts his skills to show during a recent National Club Championship, which took place in Arusha.

Darts Association postpones Zonal tourney indefinitely

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

TANZANIA Darts Association (TADA), which had previously planned to stage a Zonal Singles Tournament this month, seems to have developed cold feet, shelving the event to future dates.

Sporting events may, on the one hand, be clamped down at the moment, but last weekend, President John Magufuli had hinted of raising curtains to some events such as Vodacom Premier League.

Darts players in the country, on the other hand, had promised to float their Singles competition this month, but organizers have just reported postpone-

ment.

The TADA currently also in hiatus had anticipated running the Zonal Singles tournament finals on May 8, 2020 for both men and women from various regions in the country.

"The Zonal Darts Finals were supposed to be held in Dodoma, but that was in case the 30 days freeze on sports activities and other gatherings were to be lifted it was intended that we could be the first to brighten up events in the post Corona infections period, but we are pushing the date further" Victor Kimambo, the TADA Secretary General, said.

He though stopped short of revealing when exactly will the games be scheduled.

The TADA officials were apparently waiting for the government directives on whether they should be resuming public activities, such as sports, or not.

The TADA would have catered for food, accommodation and return transport for all the 62 players from all zones that were to participate in the event at Dodoma, in the course of this week.

Five zones were expected to take part in the Zonal Singles finals. They include Northern (12 players), Southern Highlands (five players) and Central (nine players).

Coastal (14 players) and Lake Zone (11 players) were as well the areas that were set to send players to the competition.

The participating sides were set to be accompanied by 11 officials.

The Zonal Singles tournament was also set to serve as a threshold sieve towards building a national darts team which will represent the country in such events as the forthcoming East African Darts Championship to be held here possibly next June.

According to the TADA officials, darts players can always practice in isolation without mixing with others.

"With darts one can have own board and practice at home in isolation, and even during playing it is possible to arrange that participants keep safe distance from each other," Kimambo stated.

Players' association casts doubt on Cricket Australia's financial warnings

SYDNEY

CRICKET Australia's financial warnings have been questioned by the players' association which has said the game's position remains positive with the sport not yet feeling the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic suffered by the winter codes.

The Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA), led by chairman Shane Watson, met on Monday and will now write to CA chairman Earl Eddings to express their view on the game's situation.

Last month CA chief executive Kevin Roberts said money could run short by August if significant cost-cutting didn't take place which led to 200 staff being stood down on 20% pay, although that move itself only contributed A\$3 million of A\$ 20 million in savings. The players expressed their support for those who had been impacted by the cuts.

The biggest concern stemmed from the possibility of India not being able to undertake their tour later this year which could cost CA A\$300 million if it doesn't take place. However, there have been questions raised about how open CA have been with their financial figures.

Until now only a very small amount of cricket has been effected with the one-day series between Australia and New Zealand called off after one match and the Sheffield Shield curtailed by one round and the final.

There are also positive signs as to the chances of hosting international cricket in Australia later this year

"Cricket is yet to suffer a significant negative revenue event associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The financial position of cricket is therefore very positive relative to Australia's winter sports," ACA chief executive Alistair Nicholson wrote in an email to members seen by ESPNcricinfo.

"The players express their support for staff at CA who have been stood down on 20% of their wages and wish them a speedy return to full-time work.

"Cricket is able to express an optimistic and confident posture about its capacity to weather the pandemic, and has the opportunity to put in place effective plans for cricket to be played this summer. With this, cricket's financial position will likely remain positive."

The impact of Cricket Australia's cost cutting has been seen around the states in recent days as they brace for a 25% reduction in their grants.

The CA contracts for men and women were announced on April 30 although it's understood players were not told the actual figure they would earn, instead the percentage once the board's financial position is clearer.

The ACA reiterated that the players stand by the revenue share model which sees their payment pool rise and fall with CA's income and added they had offered an option for further flexibility "should adverse events occur in the future."

"The ACA will continue to work with CA and share these positive findings when the Australian Cricket Council is convened shortly," Nicholson concluded.

"United and coordinated, cricket is well-placed to make the most of the opportunities which will emerge as the COVID-19 pandemic eases and more normal life resumes."

Flexibles by David Chikoko



EATV THURSDAY

MORNING @ 11:00

DADAZ.

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
12:00 MPYA
12:30 Bongo Hits
13:00 Msosi Kilaani (r)
13:30 Kati Za Wana
14:00 Ujenzi (r)
14:30 DK10 Za Maangamizi
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Wagonga Ulimbo (r)
16:00 Ubongo Kids (r)
16:30 #HSHTAG
17:00 SSELECT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:30 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 Kiblashara Zaidi

DADAZ A show that explores social and political issues from a feminine perspective.

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM