



TRADE



UN: INVESTMENT IN AFRICA PROJECTED TO DROP PAGE 4

HEALTH



LACK OF CLEAN WATER RAISES BILHARZIA INFECTION PAGES

POLITICS



TAMWA CALLS ON WOMEN TO VIE FOR POLITICAL POSTS PAGE 6

WEATHER



EAST AFRICA BRACES FOR THIRD LOCUST INVASION PAGE 7



'Wild plants in Covid-19 medication endangered'

CAMBRIDGE, UK

WILD plant species used in herbal treatments of Covid-19 are set to come under heightened harvesting pressure, both as a result of increased demand and because of more people turning to wild harvesting as an alternative source of income during times of high unemployment and economic crisis.

The future availability of plant ingredients to support human health-through medicines, food and well-being products-is dependent on prioritising the conservation and sustainable use of their source species in the long-term.

There are reports worldwide of the use of herbal products to prevent and treat Covid-19 in South America, Africa, Europe, the United States and Asia.

In China, official traditional Chinese medicine formulations used in the COVID-19 response utilise over 125 plant species, a



However, there is a complete lack of attention to the issue of sustainability in wild plant supplies

selection of them wild harvested in China and beyond.

They include Licorice root (Glycyrrhiza spp), a protected species in parts of its range in China, and several species whose international trade is regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The species include ginseng root Panax spp, Chinese Agarwood Aquilaria sinensis, and golden chicken fern Cibotium barometz.

"Humankind's dependence on wild plants for essential health care and well-being has never been more apparent than during the current Covid-19 pandemic," said Anastasiya Timoshyna, TRAFFIC's senior programme coordinator for sustainable trade, and co-chairperson of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) medicinal plants specialist group

"However, there is a complete lack of attention to the issue of sustainability in wild plant supplies," she lamented.

A new report launched on Thursday: The

TURN TO PAGE 2

EAC: Cargo vehicles border post differences now over

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha



President John Magufuli seated at a spot at Ubungu in Dar es Salaam yesterday with Nyangoma James (next to him), who has disability, shortly after presenting her with 5m/- while on his way from Dodoma. The assistance is meant to help the woman buy a Bajaj and make money with which to run her life. Seated (L) is Ubungu district commissioner Kisare Makore. Photo: State House

THE movement of cargo vehicles crisscrossing Tanzania and Uganda at the Mutukula border post has resumed after the two countries reached a consensus on measures to implement in mitigating the Covid-19 threat.

The East African Community headquarters said in a statement here yesterday that the Customs Officer in Charge on the Tanzanian side, William Mkenda, accepted that truck drivers undergo mandatory COVID-19 tests.

This will be in line with EAC guidelines in efforts to tackle trans-border spread of the disease while minimizing disruptions to cross border trade.

Mkenda's remarks were made when briefing a delegation from the EAC Secretariat led by the Deputy Secretary General (Planning and Infrastructure), Steven Mlote, which visited the border post.

The delegation was on an assessment mission to the Mutukula border post to review progress of joint efforts by Tanzania and Uganda to ease congestion of cargo trucks at the border.

The customs officer informed EAC officials that Covid-19 testing requirements for truck drivers were meant to ensure that health risks associated with the coronavirus were reduced.

The EAC delegation also conferred with truck drivers on the spot to assess the challenges encountered when crossing the border. Some of the drivers registered their dissatisfaction with treatment in implementing new measures related to the coronavirus threat.

For his part, Mlote told the truck drivers that ministers and permanent secretaries responsible for Trade, Health and EAC Affairs have held meetings and issued guidelines on how the truck drivers should be facilitated in cross-border operations as partner states enforce measures to

TURN TO PAGE 2

JPM pleased with Interchange project progress, donates 5m/-

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli has expressed satisfaction with the construction progress of the Ubungu Interchange project in Dar es Salaam.

The president made remarks to that effect in Dar es Salaam yesterday when he inspected ongoing work on the project, which is largely financed by the World Bank.

Construction of the interchange is set to cut down wasted time for motorists using Morogoro, Mandela and Sam Nujoma roads.

He said the government is committed to transform the transport sector to stimulate socio-economic development, urging the public to beef up their support for the government's endeavors in achieving intended goals.

The government will spend over 240bn/- to complete the Ubungu Interchange project and the six-lane stretch from Kimara to Kibaha on the Dar es Salaam-Chalinze highway.

During his visit, President Magufuli

TURN TO PAGE 2

Lady collects nomination forms for Z'bar candidacy

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Zanzibar presidential contest yesterday raised new interest when Mwantumu Mussa Sultan became the first female aspirant to join the race for nomination for the Zanzibar presidency poll.

Mwantumu is the first woman to vie for the top post since multiparty democracy was introduced in Zanzibar.

Union Water Minister Prof Makame Mbarawa, Dr Abdulhalim Mohammed Ali and Haji Rashid Pandu also collected the CCM nomination forms, making a total of 13 cadres who collected the

forms. The four were handed the forms by CCM Organization Secretary in the Isles, Galo Nyimbo at the party's head offices in Kisiwandui, Unguja.

Addressing a press conference soon after picking forms, Mwantumu said that her decision is meant to motivate other women to get into politics and contest for various posts, something which she said wasn't easy for a male-dominated society.

"All women should take this responsibility because without collecting nomination forms,

TURN TO PAGE 2

SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Seek medical advice if you
 - Develop symptoms
- AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.



cdc.gov/COVID-19





Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan is accompanied by former President Jakaya Kikwete during talks with Burundi President Evariste Ndayishimiye at Gitega State House in the Burundi capital, Bujumbura, on Thursday. She represented President John Magufuli at Ndayishimiye's swearing-in earlier in the day. Photo: VPO

EAC reports: Cargo vehicles border post differences now over

FROM PAGE 1

fight Covid-19.

The top EAC official emphasized the need to sensitize people against stigmatization of Covid-19.

"Parameters have been set, places where the testing should take place and modalities of how it should be carried out. It has been agreed upon by partner states governments but implementation varies from one country to another," he said.

EAC issued administrative guidelines for uniform implementation of measures to allow free movement of cargo as envisaged under the EAC Common Market Protocol, he reiterated.

"The EAC Secretariat is working to ensure that the region is prepared and ready to deal with epidemics, pandemics, disasters and events of public health interest," he said.

The EAC Mobile Laboratories Project is part of this effort, deploying mobile laboratories for each of the partner states to facilitate rapid detection of highly pathogenic organisms such as Ebola, Marburg and Coronavirus," he elaborated.

To date, mobile laboratories, PPEs (Personal Protection Equipment) and test kits (including COVID-19 kits) have been delivered to all the partner states especially under international cooperation programs to combat the spread of the virus, he added.

'Wild plants in Covid-19 medication endangered'

FROM PAGE 1

Invisible Trade: 'Wild plants and you in the times of COVID-19 and the essential journey towards sustainability' draws attention to the economic, livelihoods and conservation importance of the trade in wild plants resources alongside issues of sustainability of supplies.

Around 26,000 plant species have well-documented medicinal uses globally. Around 3,000 are traded internationally, the majority (60-90 pc) believed to be wild-collected, the report asserts.

But more than one in ten of the 19 per cent of the species whose threat status was been assessed are at risk of extinction in the wild.

The value of the global trade in

medicinal and aromatic plant species has almost tripled in the past two decades (from \$1.3 billion in 1998 to \$3.3 billion in 2018), based on the latest available UN Comtrade data.

The world's top exporters are China, India, Germany, the US and Hong Kong SAR, while reciprocally the US, Hong Kong SAR, Germany and Japan are the top importers. IUCN experts say that these figures are likely to be a significant underestimate, as the customs code used for the analysis does not include all relevant plants.

Many common consumer products—herbal remedies, food, drink, cosmetics, supplements, and even furniture—come from wild harvested plants. The report includes a "wild dozen" list of key wild-harvested plants in trade that are susceptible to harvesting

pressure, and/or whose supply chains are problematic for the social inequality of trading practices.

If managed well, sustainable wild-harvesting and trade in plant ingredients could provide multiple benefits to wild-harvesters and supply chains.

It would similarly aid the holistic management for other species and ecosystems, and contribute to the biodiversity conservation goals, such as those discussed in the preparation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The response to Covid-19 underscores the need for long-term conservation and sustainable use of plant species needed for healthcare and well-being, it affirms.

A combination of full traceability, compliance with existing regulations

(for example for species listed in the CITES appendices), increasing the value to producers, and credible certification schemes are important elements of creating conditions for an all-encompassing "win-win" situation, it says.

The report lists priority actions and recommendations to consumers, businesses, governments, conservation groups and academic stakeholders.

Since 2008, TRAFFIC has partnered with the FairWild Foundation to promote the sustainable use of wild ingredients by applying the FairWild Standard throughout the herbal products supply chain.

FairWild certification is a guarantee of sustainable wild harvesting, as well as fair and equitable share of resources, the report added.

JPM pleased with Dar's Interchange project progress and donates 5m/-

FROM PAGE 1

conducted fundraising where he collected 8.75m/- so as to purchase a tricycle (bajaj) for a woman with disability, Nyangoma James, where he also donated 5m/-.

Representing party leaders, Ubungu CCM youth wing chairman Edwin Mbena commended President Magufuli for his efforts in uplifting the country's development.

"This is a vital project and has brought dignity to residents of Ubungu and other parts of the city as it is going to minimize endemic traffic jams," he remarked.

WHO concerned over impact of Covid-19 on women, girls in Africa

BRAZZAVILLE

HUMANITARIAN crises, including health emergencies affect men and women differently. As Covid-19 continues to spread in Africa, there are concerns over its impact on women and girls, with vulnerabilities feared to worsen as the pandemic overwhelms health systems.

Although overall in the African Region, women account for around 40% of COVID-19 cases, this ranges from 35% in some countries to over 55% in South Africa.

"We are already seeing that the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls is profound. Women are disproportionately affected by lockdowns and this is resulting in a reduced access to health services," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa.

As efforts are focused on curbing the spread of COVID-19, essential services such as access to sexual and reproductive health services have been disrupted. According to preliminary data, in Zimbabwe, the number of caesarean sections performed decreased by 42% between January and April 2020 compared with the same period in 2019. The number of live births in health facilities fell by 21%, while new clients on combined birth control pills dropped by 90%. In Burundi, initial statistics show that births with skilled attendants fell to 4749 in April 2020 from 30 826 in April 2019.

Recent analysis published in the Lancet Global Health suggests that a reduction in maternal health services of between just 9.8-18.5% could lead to as many as 12 200 additional maternal deaths over six months in low- and middle-income countries.

The economic hardship due to

COVID-19 is also greater for women according to a World Bank report. Informal workers, most of whom are women, account for more than 90% of the labour force in sub-Saharan Africa. Informal sector jobs are particularly at risk during the pandemic.

In addition, women face a higher risk of gender-based violence in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. A recent study by UN Women found that reports of violence against women, and particularly domestic violence, have increased in several countries as security, health, and financial worries create tensions and strains accentuated by the cramped and confined living conditions of lockdown.

"We are working with governments and partners to find ways to continue to deliver essential services safely, including the provision of personal protective equipment to health workers, many of whom are nurses and are women," said Dr Moeti.

The burden of caring for the sick is also largely borne by women. Most health workers in Africa are women. Over the past four months, with the Colleges of Nursing in Africa WHO has provided targeted virtual trainings to over 1000 nurses and midwives. In West Africa, this training has been cascaded sub-nationally using virtual platforms - thus allowing as many nurses as possible to be trained in case management for COVID-19 and infection prevention and control.

WHO works to improve the health of women and girls in Africa by developing guidance on the implications of gender, gender-based violence, and access to sexual and reproductive health.

Together with the World Economic Forum, WHO held a virtual press conference today with Dr Moeti, Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director UNAIDS, and Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.



Cassian Galos Nyimbo (L), secretary of the organisation department of CCM's National Executive Committee in Zanzibar, presents a briefcase with Zanzibar presidential race nomination forms to Water minister Prof Makame Mbarawa at the party's Zanzibar head office - at Kisiwandui - yesterday. He minister is one of several CCM members aspiring for the position. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Lady collects nomination forms for Z'bar candidacy

FROM PAGE 1

the 50/50 women representation target in decision making organs will never be realized," she said.

In the 2015 general elections only 200 women were nominated by their parties in Zanzibar to contest in five constituencies, with no one in the presidential poll.

Three women were elected as constituency MPs, which is six percent of the total, seven House of

Representatives (14 percent) and 23 ward councillors (20 percent).

Dr Ali arrived at the CCM head office at around 2:30pm where he was presented with the presidential run nomination forms.

He urged Isle residents to have confidence in him since his main aim is to bring development to the people of Zanzibar.

He promised to continue executing development projects initiated by previous leaders.

Others who have shown interest to contest for the position include former Zanzibar Chief Minister Shamsi Vuai Nahodha, retired Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF) Major Gen Issa Salum Nassor, Mohamed Jaffar Jumanne and Mohamed Hijja Mohamed who collected the forms on Thursday.

Others are Ambassador Ali Abeid Karume, Mbwana Bakari Juma, Defence and National Service Minister Dr Hussein Mwinyi,

Mbwana Yahya Mwinyi and Omari Sheha Mussa who collected the nomination forms on Monday and Wednesday.

CCM opened the doors on June 15 for aspirants to the presidency, parliamentary seats and ward elections to pick nomination forms.

Both the Union and Zanzibar presidential candidates on the CCM ticket will be announced on July 12 at the conclusion of the party nominations congress.



Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development deputy minister Dr Angelina Mabula pictured yesterday checking one of the maps stored at the Arusha regional Lands office. She is on a tour of land use projects in Arusha Region. Photo: Lands ministry

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

COVID-19: Germany impressed by Zanzibar airport's preparedness

THE German ambassador to Tanzania, Regine Hess, has actively participated in special Covid-19 preparedness training for air terminals held at Zanzibar airport in the Isles, lauding the facility for taking precaution measures. The training was specifically on the prevention and detection of Coronavirus infections for airport staff at the Abeid Karume Amani International Airport in Zanzibar. Similar trainings for trainers are set to take place at international airports in the East African Community region to prepare them prior to resume to normal travel after COVID-19 restrictions. The training are convened by the Arusha-based EAC Secretariat, organized and coordinated by the EAC Civil Aviation Safety

and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) and implemented by AMREF Flying Doctors (AFD). "These trainings are facilitated by the German government, through GIZ, in an effort to support states in their response to COVID-19", explained Ambassador Hess. The training held at the Zanzibar Airports Authority Conference Centre is the third in line after Nairobi and Mombasa. "Investments in strengthening surveillance, building robust early-warning systems and coordinating public health responses of international airports will help to detect and respond to COVID-19 and prevent further spread," said Emile Nguza Arao, Executive

Director of CASSOA. "They will enhance the safety for travelers and for airport staff", he added. While past capacity building and awareness measures primarily focused on port health staff, these trainings involve a wide range of staff with close contact to passengers and their luggage, such as airport medical and veterinary services providers, aircraft/airline operators, selected crew members, staff at immigration and customs, cargo and baggage handlers, air navigation services and airport rescue and firefighting providers. The training composes of two-day courses at each of the airports. Topics include among

others "the airport as a "red zone" - recognition of hot zones in the airport and measures to identify and demarcate these areas"; "quarantine and isolation of passengers" and "decontamination of aircraft and airport areas". Each class has 15 participants - taking into account social distancing requirements, so that almost 300 key airport personnel will become trained trainers. Trained staff are expected to spearhead the development and conduct of targeted training sessions for the rest of the airport personnel. The next training will take place at the Juba International Airport from 23-26 June 2020.



Zanzibar ministers without portfolio Juma Ali Khatib (C) and Said Soud (R) and House of Representatives information officer Himidi Choko exchange ideas outside the House at Chukwani in Zanzibar yesterday. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

Sesame farmers in Tunduru stand against crop's low prices

By Guardian Correspondent, Tunduru

SESAME farmers in Tunduru District, Ruvuma Region, have refused to sell their crop owing to the low prices offered by buyers. They have appealed to the government to consider intervening by looking for buyers who are ready to offer good prices. This emerged during the sixth auction at Mlingoti Magharibi AMCOS grounds where two buyers came and offered 1,750/- per kg while a third offered 1,730/- before deductions. Farmers, Mbina Mnanka, Mohammed Salumu and Bakari Selemani told reporters that from their experience, those buyers were only middlemen who aim to make profit on farmers'

backs. They said their appeal to the government is from their trust in the fifth phase government as it does not make sense that in the previous auctions their crop was sold at an average of 2047/26 per kg and just a week later the price dropped by an average of 400/- per kg. "Prices given by these middlemen on the pretext of plummeting prices in the world market due to the Covid-19 pandemic are very disappointing considering the cost they incur in the cultivation of the crop," said Mnanka. They also said probably the middlemen were doing that due to lack of competition from other firms at the auctions, because since the start of the auctions only the same bidders have been

participating. Earlier, a representative from Tunduru Agricultural Marketing Union (TAMCU) Imani Kalembo called on the farmers to be watchful when listening to prices read from letters by the buyers in order to select the highest prices offered. Postponing the auction, TAMCU's vice chairman Mussa Manjaule said the union supports the decision by farmers and said the auction will take place again on June 20 this year. He said even though it is true that prices for the crop were going down but those offered by the buyers at the auction are not friendly and do not provide the impetus for the farmers to continue growing the crop.

Health Insurance Fund should include drug for sickle cell disease in its programmes - minister

By Henry Mwangonde

THE government has directed the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) to include hydroxyurea, a life-saving drug into health insurance programmes so that most Tanzanians living with sickle cell disease could access it at affordable cost. Hydroxycarbamide, also known as hydroxyurea, is a medication used in sickle-cell disease, chronic myelogenous leukemia, cervical cancer, and essential thrombocythemia. In sickle-cell disease it increases fetal hemoglobin and decreases the number of attacks. It is taken by mouth. Ummu Mwalimu, the Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children issued the directives during the official launch of the National treatment guidelines for SCD in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

According to the minister, including the drug produced by Novartis, a global healthcare company based in Switzerland means spending over 30,000/- per month to treat a child with SCD. The drug is still inaccessible to many in low income families. "I am directing NHIF to carry out this exercise with immediate effect, there is no compromise on this. The drug should be immediately put in insurance programmes," said Mwalimu.

The day was also part of the commemoration to mark World Sickle Cell Day which is observed each June 19 to raise awareness about the red blood cell disorder, and to raise funds to fight it.

Dickson Munaku, the Novartis representative in Tanzania said, "The aim of Novartis is that when the drug arrives into the country, it will be accessible to all people."

Here in Tanzania, the medicine, a product of Novartis has been registered by the Tanzania Medicine and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) for the treatment of SCD, yet the medicine is less accessible to patients due to high cost. Neighboring countries, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya have also authorized the medicine.

During the event Novartis announced the expansion of the Africa Sickle Cell Disease programme to East Africa with the signature of two new memoranda of understanding with the Ministries of Health of Uganda and Tanzania.

The programme, first launched in Ghana in November 2019, aims to improve and extend the lives of people with sickle cell disease (SCD) in sub-Saharan Africa, with plans to reach a total of 10 countries by 2022.

In Ghana, the programme is already making progress with more than 2000 patients

being treated with a life-saving medicine, hydroxyurea in 11 treatment centers across the country.

"In this time of worldwide uncertainty, it is even more important to support people living with chronic conditions like sickle cell disease," said Dr. Patrice Matchaba, group head of global health and corporate responsibility at Novartis. "We are excited to join forces with the Ministries of Health of Uganda and Tanzania and local partners to reimagine treatment and care for people with sickle cell disease."

Within the scope of these public-private partnerships, Novartis and its partners have agreed to explore collaboration opportunities aimed at tackling the growing burden of SCD in their countries.

The partners intend to develop and implement a comprehensive approach that includes making diagnosis and treatment available, accessible and affordable for patients and their families; promoting scientific research, training and education; and pursuing robust monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

As a next step, Novartis plans to work with the respective ministries of health to further define the scope of each collaboration and explore opportunities for additional partnerships.

A recent study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, indicates that hydroxyurea is effective and safe in children with SCD in sub-Saharan Africa and reduces the incidence of pain events (vaso-occlusive crises), malaria, blood transfusions, and death.

In addition, Novartis has signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Ghana with the intent to collaborate on promoting education, research, advocacy and capacity building to advance Ghana's national health agenda to improve the health and well-being of people with SCD.

Sickle cell disease is recognized by the World Health Organisation as a public health priority and a neglected health problem in sub-Saharan Africa, which carries approximately 80percent of the global disease burden.

In countries in West, Central and East Africa, the prevalence of the sickle cell gene is between 10 to 30percent, while in some areas it is as high as 45percent.

It is estimated that approximately 1 000 children in Africa are born with SCD every day and more than half die before they reach five years of age. This is due primarily to a lack of early diagnosis through newborn screening, penicillin prophylaxis, parental education, and comprehensive care.

JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA

WIZARA YA ARDHI, NYUMBA NA MAENDELEO YA MAKAZI

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MAOMBI NA. 131 MWAKA 2019

ABDULRAHMAN OMAR KINANA ----- MDAI

DHIDI YA

SUBHASH V. LODHIA ----- MDAIWA

WITO/KUITWA SHAURINI

KWA: SUBHASH V. LODHIA ----- POPOTE ULIPO

ABDULRAHMAN OMAR KINANA, amefungua shauri hili mbele ya Baraza la Ardhi na Nyumba Wilaya ya Arusha. Shauri husika limepangwa kutajwa tarehe 05/08/2020 saa tatu kamili asubuhi. Hivyo basi, unatakiwa kuleta utetezi wako ndani ya siku 21 kuanzia tarehe ya Tangazo hili kutolewa na pia kufika Barazani tarehe iliyopangwa. Vielelezo vyote vya kesi vinapatikana katika Masijala ya wazi ya Baraza la Ardhi na Nyumba Arusha. Endapo hutatekeleza haya, shauri hili litasikilizwa upande mmoja na uamuzi kutolewa dhidi yako. Ofisi za Baraza zipo katika Jengo la Mkuu wa Wilaya Arusha.

AMRI hii imetolewa kwa mkono wangu na Lakiri/Mshauri wa baraza hili leo tarehe 05 mwezi Juni mwaka 2020.

F. Mwachiki
MWENYEKITI

21/08/2020

EAC takes the lead as the most integrated bloc in Africa - report

By Guardian Reporter

THE 2019 edition of the Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII) that was published recently has ranked the East African Community (EAC) as the most integrated bloc among the eight regional economic communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union.

The ARII is a composite index that assesses how countries and regional economic communities are making progress towards their integration agendas based on sixteen indicators, grouped into five dimensions. The ARII also measures the state of regional integration for the continent as a whole.

The eight RECs recognized by the AU are: the EAC, Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Community of the Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and; the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The five dimensions are in respect to free movement of people; infrastructure integration; macroeconomic integration; productive integration, and; trade integration.

Based on these dimensions, the EAC was the highest scoring bloc on the continent, with an index score of 0.537, followed by AMU (0.488); ECCAS (0.442); IGAD (0.438); ECOWAS (0.425); the CEN-SAD (0.377); COMESA (0.367); and lastly SADC at 0.337.

"The EAC Secretariat is highly pleased with this evaluation," said EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberate Mfumukeko. "This is a clear indication that we are truly on course to the Community's intended objective of transforming the region into a single market for all factors of production for enhanced welfare and economic prosperity of the people of East Africa," he added.

Experts agree that regional

integration expands markets and trade, enhances cooperation, mitigates risk, and fosters sociocultural cooperation and regional stability. Regional integration has also been shown to maximize the benefits of globalization while countering its negative effects, and to stimulate development in least-developed countries by improving productive capacity and encouraging investments in those pieces of infrastructure that hold the most economic potential.

The EAC scored 0.664 on the free movement of people indicator; the highest in the continent. This is largely attributed to the fact the EAC citizens are able to move freely within the region, albeit the requirement of valid travel document. In addition, very few EAC Partner States require visa before arrival for non-citizens.

On macroeconomic integration, the EAC scored 0.660, also the highest in the region. The existing macroeconomic convergence criteria under the EAC Monetary Union and underlying conditions are said to have played a critical role.

In respect to infrastructure integration, the EAC region is also leading with an Index of 0.555, mainly on account of the various ongoing infrastructure projects especially in transport and energy to link Partner States for smooth flow of goods and power supply across the region.

On trade integration, though the EAC did not lead, it scored 0.440, performing better than the regional average of 0.382, while ranking least with a score of 0.434 in productive integration; again above the regional average of 0.201.

According to the report, regional integration holds tremendous promise for Africa. ARII's role is therefore to provide the benchmarking and monitoring data that policymakers need to realize that promise.

As the EAC integration process continues with goals reached and targets achieved, the EAC remains optimistic on attaining higher scores on the next ARII edition.



Tanzania's Chief Medical Officer, Prof Mohamed Bakari (L), symbolically receives a consignment of sanitiser worth 25m/- from Kioo Ltd administrative manager Kapil Dave in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Looking on (C) is a health official with the firm, Richard Msumule. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Arusha CPB milling factory gets about 800m/- profit in one year

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE Cereals and other Produce Board (CPB), Arusha branch has earned more than 800m/- profit in one year since it was officially handed the Arusha milling plant.

In addition, CPB purchased more than 6,000 tonnes of maize from farmers, while it is in the process to enter into agreement with farmers to purchase their crops, the step that will ensure a reliable market for them.

This was announced by the Ag. CPB manager for Arusha branch Idd Mkolomasa mid last week when speaking to reporters on the achievements since the factory was returned to the government in June last year.

Mkolomasa said the big profit was earned from trading in maize flour of "Nguvu" brand that has been of great demand by the people.

"In the 'Nguvu' brand of maize flour we earned a profit of more than 500m/- and the warehouses we lend to

other institutions for cereals storage we earned 300m/-," he said.

He said the reasons for the flour to be of high public demand is the way it is prepared - in clean environment that also has nutritious ingredients including proteins and fat that he said are necessary in body building.

"We ensure the maize is clean and passed through special machines to remove the husks before milling and then we clean it to be white clean," he added.

He said "Nguvu" brand maize flour

come in various weights - one, 5, 10, 25 and 50 kgs bags that has been retailed in Arusha and neighbouring regions of Kilimanjaro, Manyara and Tanga and added that they will soon open a selling centre at Same in Kilimanjaro Region, and added that neighbouring Kenya is also their big customer.

The factory employs 16 full time workers and 25 contract workers and works five days a week - day and night, but when they have huge flour orders it also works during the weekend.



Muheza district environment officer Cyprian Mselem (2nd-L) presents environmental cleanliness items to a representative of a Mashewa village community conservation and water sources protection group on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

By Guardian Reporter

A new report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, (UNCTAD) forecasts a steep drop by up to 40 per cent in global trade, due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has affected the global economy.

This would bring foreign investment in Africa below \$35 billion.

Released on June 16, the annual World Investment Report (WIR 2020) showed global investment continuing to nosedive below \$1 trillion for the first time since 2005, a recession

Investment in Africa projected to drop, UN report says

much worse than the 2008 financial crisis.

The report projects a less severe decrease in 2021 before initiating a moderate bounce back in 2022, but notes the outlook is "highly uncertain."

Africa, which accounts for less than 3 per cent of the world's trade inflow in 2019, will see the second-largest decrease in foreign investment.

The negative trend will be worsened

by low commodity prices, oil specifically, according to the report.

The report finds regional cooperation in Africa promising to amplify recovery from the crisis. For instance, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is expected to provide coordinated response to regional trade.

Set to go operational in July 2020, the AfCFTA could offer some cushion to the low oil prices in the medium or long run, says the report. Particularly,

intracontinental investment could receive a positive stimulus by 2021 after the second phase of implementation.

However, UNCTAD suggests that the trade agreement, as well as state-backed investments, could be delayed by the current disruptions resulting from efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 disease.

Additionally, foreign investment from developed economies could help the continent recover. Recently,

Africa has been strengthening ties with its major investors including the US, the UK, China and France, as well as building new ones with countries such as Russia.

Investment flows expected from the five economies amount nearly to \$40 billion in the next two years.

While the majority of their investments focus on infrastructure, some others target natural resources and manufacturing businesses. One

of them is a new French initiative, Choose Africa worth \$3 billion, looking to support startups and SMEs in order to boost local manufacturing capacity and drive employment.

WIR 2020 also showed that incentive schemes, if implemented, could attract investment to the continent. In this regard, Rwanda has accorded preferential tax rates to initiatives undertaking energy generation, transmission and distribution.

UN and African Union urge universal birth registration

RABAT

THE African Union and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have recently launched the "No Name Campaign," in an effort to promote birth registration as a human right to accelerate access to justice.

The campaign calls on African Union member states to take steps toward swiftly implementing a universal registration process for children at birth or shortly after. It also emphasizes an urgent need for African countries to reposition civil registration and statistics that play an important role in creating visibility among the countries' respective populations.

The two leading organizations say that concerns around a lack of documentation are mounting amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as emergency situations rely on statistics to implement proper programs and services, and put children at a higher risk of facing injustice.

Specifically, the African Union and UNICEF are requesting that birth registration services be included in COVID-19 recovery packages, the digitization of birth records to improve

accessibility, and for initiatives to register all children without birth certificates.

Each year, approximately 50 million children are not registered with birth certificates worldwide. A vast majority, accounting for 79% of all unregistered births, are in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, the Middle East and North Africa region makes up at least 16% of worldwide unregistered births.

In 2003, Dr. Lee JongWook of the World Health Organization said, "To make people count, we first need to be able to count people." The recent UNICEF report expands on the former director general's quote and explains why birth certificates play an important role in securing justice for children by noting that the determination of a child's age and identity could protect a child's rights should they fall victim to a crime.

The report also mentions the need for such documentation under circumstances where a child might receive humanitarian assistance, refugee status procedures, school enrollment, or protection against child marriage.

National Housing Corporation cuts prices of plots at project in Arusha

By Guardian Reporter, Arusha

THE National Housing Corporation has lowered the selling rate of its land plots by 40 percent at the Safari City Housing Project in Arusha Region.

This was revealed yesterday by Arusha Region NHC manager Ladislaus Bamanyisa when presenting the report on the project's implementation to the Deputy Minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development Dr Angeline Mabula during her inspection visit of NHC projects and other activities in the lands sector in Arusha Region.

Bamanyisa said the decision to lower the selling rate in the project follows to sluggish sales of the land plots for the period of July to December 2019 during which NHC sold only six plots due to what he said was economic hardship.

He said for Arusha Region the new rates endorsed are 21,000/- for each square metre down from 35,000/- for residential plots whereby the rate will be 27,000/- per square metre down from 45,000/- per square metre, for commercial plots.

He said since the launching of the project in June 2016 NHC has sold a total of 589 plots valued at 13,097,198,200/- and collected 7,981,887,540/- or 61 percent of total sales.

However, he said in the Fiscal Year 2019/20 NHC sold 122 plots valued at 2,058,113,600/- and collected 453,952,600/- and added that the remaining plots to be sold are 1,252.

Dr Mabula has called upon the NHC to increase the pace in the completion of the Safari City Project by installing infrastructure to realise NHC aims.

She said the NHC must ensure the project site has robust infrastructures including those for water, roads and power to attract plots buyers,

and added that the lack of such infrastructures contributes to many potential buyers shying away.

She also directed the NHC to advertise Safari City Project via Television and radio programmes to enable the people know of its existence and attract them to buy plots.

She also told the NHC to look into the possibility of selling the plots to public servants and pay for them in installments.

Safari City Project of 587.03 acres with more than 2,141 land plots was initiated by the NHC to assist in the development and supervision of Arusha City Master Plan.

It proposes diverse and flexible layout offering alternatives for different purchasing groups such as mixed use developments, retail and office developments, residential projects (High End & Affordable Housing), Educational Zone, Green Zone and vast area for public utilities.

The perfectly landscaped surroundings will make this city one of the greatest metropolitan lifestyle destinations in the area.



Safari City Project of 587.03 acres with more than 2,141 land plots was initiated by the NHC to assist in the development and supervision of Arusha City Master Plan



Kiteto district executive director Tamim Kambona (2nd-R, gesturing) takes visiting members of the district's CCM political committee around health sector development projects on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

TFS to small-scale farmers: Do not lend farmland we gave you to bigger farmers

By Guardian Reporter, Hai

THE Tanzania Forests Services Agency (TFS) in West Kilimanjaro has expressed disappointment over small-scale farmers' culture of lending to big farmers land which were temporarily offered to them for farming purposes.

The small-scale farmers who have become land middlemen are those

who were given land for farming in Ngarenairobi, Namwai, Matadi and Roslini in Siha District Kilimanjaro Region.

TFS West Kilimanjaro Forest Reserve Manager Masaranga Yahya said the farms are not for sale, but for helping the people to develop themselves economically by cultivating food and cash crops.

"There have been complaints from the residents in the area that they employ much red tape in getting land for farming in the area for the cultivation of beans, potatoes, carrot and maize.

He said: "After they get the farms, they lend them to big farmers. That is a problem which we have started to discover, we suggest they stop doing

that, the farms are for them and no one else," said Yahya.

He added: "When you sell the area you were given for 400,000/- or 500,000/- per field, you will use the money once but your difficulties will remain. "You could farm the land for three years and it will bring you much development, for yourself and your family."



Smoked and sun-dried fish on sale at Dar es Salaam's Mbezi Mwisho commuter bus stand yesterday - but without much care with regard to hygiene. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Lack of clean water raises rate of bilharzia infections in Itilima District by 30 pc

By Guardian Correspondent, Simiyu

THE level of bilharziasis and worms associated infections in Itilima District in Simiyu Region has gone up by 30 percent due to acute shortage of clean water and safe environment in the district.

The infection level is according to results of research conducted by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children.

It was revealed on Thursday in Bariadi by the World Vision Tanzania representative Rose Liwa at the launching of the project to eradicate diseases that were not being accorded priority in Itilima District.

Liwa said World Vision Tanzania, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Office of the President (Regional Administration and Local Government -RALG) under the sponsorship of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will ensure they reach 283,972 people to completely eradicate the diseases.

She added that those targeted are found in 22 wards, 102 villages and 587 locations whereby various activities in dispensing bilharzias and anti-worms drugs will be conducted including drilling of wells and water distribution

in 10 villages and mobilisation in environment cleaning through respective local leaders.

The managing director of World Vision Tanzania Dr Gilbert Kamanga explained that in the way his institution attained great achievements in health, education and, water and environment projects, it is evident that this project will also be successful.

Itilima district Medical Officer Dr Arnold Musiba said the situation regarding the diseases was not good due to many residents in the district adhering to superstitious habits on drugs given to fight worms and bilharzias infections.

He said the unavailability of clean water and unclean environment in the district were the contributing factors to the high infection levels.

The three-year project is expected to cost USD 864,993.00, equivalent to 1.9bn/-.



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Govt offers 750m/- to 70 winners of science and technology contest

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has allocated 750m/- for innovation development of 70 winners of the National Technology, Science and Innovation Competition (MAKISATU) so as to commercialise their innovations.

This was revealed here yesterday by the Minister for Education, Science and Technology Prof Joyce Ndalichako when announcing winners for the 2020 edition.

She said the money will be used to develop their innovations to be commercialised to enhance their

economic wellbeing.

"I appeal to you all winners to develop your innovations to ensure they turn into economic opportunities for you," said Prof Ndalichako.

She said the government has dished out 5m/- to the first winner in all

groups, 3m/- to second winners and 2m/- to the third.

"Groups that participated in the competition included primary, schools, secondary schools, technical colleges, universities, research institutes and the private sector," she said.

She said the contest takes place

every year and provides opportunities to innovators to advertise themselves to stakeholders and users of their innovations.

"During past contests we started with secondary schools and after assessment we found we made a mistake by not raising talents from amongst small

children, hence we started lower, from primary schools level up to university level," she said.

She said there has been an increase of participants - for this year there were 651 participants compared to 2019 when there were only 415 participants.

Govt launches Isotope Hydrology laboratory

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government in collaboration with the Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission (TAEC) has provided 150m/- for purchase of modern laboratory equipment for Isotope Hydrology that is said to be the best in East and Central Africa inaugurated here yesterday.

Speaking during the inauguration of the laboratory, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Water Prof Kitila Mkumbo called upon laboratory research experts to use it with great care for the management and development of water resources in the country.

He said the laboratory is essential for the ministry because it will greatly assist to analyse various things in water as well as knowing challenges in regard to water in researches to be done in the laboratory.

Prof Mkumbo said the Isotope technology enables researchers to know how surface water sinks into the ground and how it is stored in underground rocks and also know the correlation between surface and underground water.

He said they have every reason to care for the laboratory that can conduct

various processes in connection to the issue of underground water and added that its inauguration should act as momentum for the staff in the department to take great care of the equipment.

Speaking about the history of the Isotope Technology in Tanzania, George Lugomela said it was invented by the United Nations Atomic Energy Agency through one expert - Turgut Dincer through Technical Cooperation (TC) Project URT/8/003 in 1979.

Lugomela said according to that history people have to abide by what is instructed on the working of the laboratory that is important to be used where and when necessary.

Elaborating the benefits of Isotope Technology, Chief Hydrologist Emanuel Nahozy said it has great benefits because it provides positive results when needing to know about surface water.

He said Tanzania is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

Atomic technology is issued in various fields including making of nuclear weapons, electricity generation and in health services especially in medical equipment such as x-rays.



Youths being cared for at Watoto Foundation Orphanage in Arusha Region show some of the items good Samaritans extended to them on Thursday to help them in the war on Covid-19. This was shortly after they participated in a debate on the rights of children. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

By Guardian Correspondent, Tabora

Mwanri 'inspires' SMEs to become billionaires

TABORA Regional Commissioner Aggrey Mwanri has called upon small entrepreneurs who received government issued identification cards (IDs) to ensure they expand their capitals to become big businessmen in future.

He issued the appeal yesterday in Nzega District at the function to mobilise entrepreneurs to take the IDs to enable them conduct their

businesses without inconveniences. "We expect you to work hard so that one day you become billionaires like Bill Gates, Ali Dangote, Said Bakhressa and others...you must not be contented in doing small businesses, aim higher within and outside the country," he told them.

He said the IDs provided should be a medium to progress saying: "later,

engage in huge business enterprises that will enable you to pay taxes that will assist in the national development."

Tabora Region Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) Manager Thomas Masese said those targeted by the IDs are supposed to be those whose daily sales do not exceed 11,000/- per day and 4m/-year.

He said these include street food vendors, buns sellers, motorcycles (bodaboda) drivers and tricycles (bajaj) drivers.

He said it is forbidden to issue the IDs to big traders whose businesses are supposed to be taxed.

Nzega District Council Ag executive director Hadija Kabojela said small entrepreneurs who will

not take up the IDs will be required to pay levies.

He said those entrepreneurs who will take the IDs will not be bothered or required to pay levies when conducting business.

Meanwhile RC Mwanri directed that the IDs should be sold near the areas of those targeted, and not in government offices, the step that will

reduce the bother in following them in the offices.

He said if officials continue to stay in their offices waiting for the entrepreneurs, they will not be able to sell them.

He also said it would be better for each local council to have a procedure in assigning the heads of various departments to supervise the issuance of IDs in various wards and to ensure those tasked to do so should do so properly and in time.



Residents of Mwada ward in Babati District, Manyara Region, pictured earlier this week preparing the site earmarked for the construction of a hospital. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Fear of fresh floods loom in EA

By Special Correspondent, Nairobi

WHEN he returned home in May after being displaced by floods, Moses Oduori, a resident of Budalang'i in Busia, western Kenya, hoped that he would not be affected again anytime soon.

But the threat of fresh flooding looms large in the region and others in the Lake Victoria basin after a new round of heavy rains kicked off in the east African nation barely a month after displaced residents returned home.

The rains, a manifestation of climate change effects, according to analysts, came after the end of the long rainy season in Kenya that normally kicks off from March to May, according to the meteorological department.

In the past, the period after the long rains would be followed by dry weather to allow crops to mature before ushering in the harvesting season.

But not anymore as the east African nation's weather remains erratic as climate change effects unfold.

"I have been monitoring how it is raining upstream through a local radio station and it's clear that if it continues in the next few weeks, we will find ourselves in the camps once again," said Oduori, whose family was displaced by the nearby River Nzoia waters.

His fears capture those of hundreds of other residents in western Kenya, the Rift Valley and the Coast, where floods and mudslides occurred in April and May as heavy rains wreaked havoc.

While some residents who had been displaced by floods in western Kenya were lucky to have returned home, others, in particular those uprooted by Lake Victoria backflow that happened after five decades, are yet to.

The lake water is yet to recede over a month since it surged and displaced people and also destroyed sources of livelihoods, including fishing and related business.

"A majority of the businesses at Dunga and the neighboring beaches are yet to resume because the lake water has not receded. Hotels, fishing boats and cold storage facilities are among those that were submerged in May and they are still in water," said Felix Onyango, a resident of Dunga in Kisumu, a lakeside town in western Kenya.

The flooding also disrupted fishing activities in the county and the

neighboring ones like Busia, Homa Bay, Siaya and Migori, where tens of people are still in camps.

"Our hope of activities at the beach resuming fully anytime soon are gone with the new rainy season. This means it will take long to rebuild the sources of our livelihoods," said Onyango.

Stella Aura, the director of the meteorological department, in the latest weather outlook for the period June to August notes that the highlands west of the Rift Valley, Lake Basin region, central and southern Rift Valley as well as the Northwestern region will receive enhanced rainfall during the period.

The water will end up in rivers that drain into Lake Victoria, which Kenya shares with Uganda and Tanzania.

Aura attributes the enhanced rains during the period to "evolution of global sea surface temperature patterns as well as upper air circulation patterns".

"What the enhanced rainfall means is that more crops may be destroyed because of increased diseases and farmers who grow the staple maize, which matures in August, would have problems harvesting and drying the produce leading to more post-harvest losses," said Beatrice Macharia of Growth Point, an agro-consultancy who noted that the effects of climate change are aggressively manifesting in Kenya.

At least 237 people have been killed by floods and over 200,000 displaced in the east African nation since April, according to the devolution ministry.



Our hope of activities at the beach resuming fully anytime soon are gone with the new rainy season. This means it will take long to rebuild the sources of our livelihoods

Tamwa calls on women to vie for political posts

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA Media Women's Association (Tamwa, Zanzibar) has called on women to collect nomination forms and vie for different posts from presidential to councillorship levels in the forthcoming general elections.

Dr Mzuri Issa, Tamwa-Zanzibar director, said in a statement that the Indian Ocean archipelago is part of the United Republic of Tanzania and is expected to conduct election in the next three months.

According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census, Zanzibar has a population of 1,303,569 people, and it is projected that by the end of this year the number will go up to 1,671,598 whereby 50 percent are women.

"The number is not in line with the number of women who are in decision making bodies, the situation that needs to be addressed and the only way to change that is through ballot boxes," Dr Mzuri said in a statement.

Citing examples in Zanzibar, she said in average there are only 200 women

who have been nominated by their parties to contest in five constituencies in 2015, with no one in the presidential post. "That's why we are encouraging women to chip in and use their democratic rights to vie for different positions as their male counterparts," she said, adding that it has been a tendency for women to wait for Special Seats, which in turn fuel conflict among women.

In 2015 general elections, only three women were elected through constituencies as MPs,

which is 6 percent, seven House of Representatives (14 percent) and 23 ward councillors (20 percent).

"TAMWA-Zanzibar advise the public to support women in this year's election so that they can show their ability, hence bring equality in the society," she said.

The association also asked the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) to come up with a system that will help in getting opinions from women who are being affected by gender-based violence (GBV) during elections.

SOS Children's Villages in Z'bar turn abandoned children into fortunate teenagers for 30 years

By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

SOS Children's Village in Zanzibar has transformed 170 orphans and abandoned children into fortunate teenagers since 1991.

This has been possible through the SOS Family Care Programme, which support children to access education and employment opportunities within and outside the country.

SOS Children's Village Zanzibar Director, Asha Salim Ali made the statement when speaking during an event to mark the 2020 International African Child Day, themed 'Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa'.

"We are proud for what we have done for our children, we supported them academically so they can fulfill their life dreams," said Asha.

According to her, one of the children has been employed in the US by the Bill Gates Microsoft Corporation Company while three others are employed in Germany.

She said there are children working in Canada and others employed at public offices such as the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA).

"Some of the children have established their own projects," she said.

The official said the organisation starts preparing children from preparatory classes whereas they have built their own kindergarten schools. She said children attend preparatory classes for three years to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

She said that SOS Children's Villages Zanzibar has constructed a primary school that is operated and supervised by Turkish Maarif Foundation. The school will be opened by the end of this year.

"We are supporting children from lower to upper levels of education, we also provide support to those joining vocational training colleges

and universities depending on their performance," Asha noted.

After they have all the skills, children are assisted to look for jobs at various institutions as well as in the government, she said.

"We want them to be able to stand on their own and establish income generating activities," she stressed.

Asha said that SOS Children's Villages Zanzibar applies a teaching methodology similar to that of Ghana whereas upon completion of secondary education they are allowed to study at SOS Hermann Gmeiner International College in Ghana.

"After completing their studies in Ghana, children can join any university across the world," she said, adding in Ghana children study Cambridge Diploma.

According to her, the organisation plans to introduce a new programme that will empower children on how to remain free from child abuse, understanding child abuse symptoms and how to report those incidences to responsible authorities.

The programme, she said will also involve provision of trainings to the villagers on how to handle children affairs.

"We want parents to be close to their children and understand their challenges," said Asha.

SOS Children's Villages Zanzibar is part of the world's largest non-governmental organisation focused on supporting children without parental care and families at risk. Since 1949, we have been working to ensure that children grow up in a loving family environment and have their rights fulfilled.



We want parents to be close to their children and understand their challenges



Home-made chili sauce on sale outside Dar es Salaam's Magogoni International Fish Market yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

By Ajifwoke Michael

FACEBOOK has launched a programme under which it plans to equip the youth and general public across Sub-Saharan Africa with digital skills needed to navigate the digital world, the company said Monday.

My Digital World is a consolidation of all Facebook's digital literacy programmes including Safe Online with Facebook, Ilizwe Lam, and eZibo and will be offered virtually this year to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, it said.

"We remain committed to equipping young people and the general public across Sub-Saharan Africa with the vital digital skills needed to navigate the digital world, especially during these challenging times of COVID-19," Facebook's Policy Programs Manager

Facebook unveils new digital literacy programme for sub-Saharan Africa

for Economic Impact and Digital Literacy, Phil Oduor said in a press statement.

Over the years, Facebook has trained thousands of people on digital literacy skills. According to the U.S. tech giant, it is preparing to train close to 20,000 participants across Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, and Ethiopia on "safe, responsible, and beneficial usage of the digital platforms" this year.

This comes as the ongoing pandemic disrupts economies, speeding up digital transformation, and sparking debate about a 'new normal' in every aspect

of life and work in the post-COVID era. "Never has it been more important to invest in, and train communities and the next generation of leaders to better understand and utilize the power of digital tools to take full advantage of what the internet has to offer," Oduor adds.

The new training is free and open to youths aged 13 and above, and will also focus on teachers, parents, and guardians, Facebook said.

The sessions commenced on Monday, June 15, 2020, with the program including up to 90 minutes Instructor-led live webinars featuring

presentations, demos, and virtual discussions, digital marketing campaigns highlighting best practices, tips, quizzes and polls on digital literacy topics, with content delivered through Facebook and Instagram, and modules on online safety, privacy, news, and media literacy, and digital citizenship

Facebook is committed to the well-being of individuals and communities visiting its platforms and has invested in initiatives designed to "build awareness on responsible online behaviour, critical thinking, and understanding of social issues," it said.



Locusts swarm from ground vegetation at Lerata village, near Archers Post in Samburu county, some 300 km north of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, on January 22, 2020. Photo: Agencies

JOHANNESBURG

AU launches Covid-19 medical supplies platform

CHAIRPERSON of the African Union (AU) and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has launched an online platform to enable all African governments' access critical supplies to combat the novel coronavirus.

"We have an urgent need for medical supplies, testing equipment and facilities to isolate and quarantine people, laboratories, personal protection equipment and ventilators," Ramaphosa announced at the launch of the Africa Medical Supplies Platform in his capacity as AU chair.

The platform was launched during a virtual meeting for the Extraordinary

China-Africa Solidarity Summit against COVID-19, convened by the China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) co-chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Senegalese President Macky Sall.

Ramaphosa said currently many African countries are having to purchase goods with resources largely obtained from the multilateral agencies and asked China to consider supporting Africa in the provision of diagnostic and therapeutic supplies over a period of six months.

"This support would be managed by AfriExImBank in collaboration with its

counterpart in China. This would allow several African countries to procure goods from China," he said.

Ramaphosa said the AU has established an African COVID-19 Response Fund as a key intervention to mobilize and direct resources towards the continent's response to the challenge.

The AU chair said currently Africa has over 250,000 confirmed infections and more than 6,700 deaths, with South Africa having the largest number of cases.

"Although the number of infections

in Africa is currently lower than elsewhere in the world, there is an expectation that the worst is still to come, with dire social and economic consequences.

"The AU has been in the forefront of mobilizing international support for a comprehensive economic stimulus package for Africa."

Ramaphosa said they have called for debt relief for African countries that are indebted, including a two-year debt standstill and a plan for the restructuring of both private and bilateral debt.

East Africa bracing for third locust swarm amid Covid-19

By Special Correspondent, Nairobi

EAST Africa is bracing for a third outbreak of desert locusts, with billions of the destructive insects about to hatch and threaten food supplies in a region already reeling from damaging rains and the coronavirus pandemic.

Spurred by favourable weather conditions, the migratory pests have descended on East Africa in record numbers since late 2019 and another wave is about to take to the skies despite the concerted use of pesticides.

"Tens of thousands of hectares of cropland and pasture have already been damaged across the Horn and East Africa," the International Rescue Committee said in a report this month, noting even a small swarm could devour the same amount of food in a day as approximately 35,000 people.

In Ethiopia between January and April, locusts destroyed 1.3 million hectares of grazing land and nearly 200,000 hectares of crops, resulting in the loss of 350,000 tons of cereals, IGAD, the East Africa regional organisation, said in a June report.

Somalia, which like Kenya experienced heavy rains and flooding in recent months that left scores dead, had already declared a "national emergency" against the locust scourge in February. So far East African neighbors Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi have been spared the insects, which travel in huge swarms billions of insects strong, and can migrate 150 kilometers (90 miles) in a single day.

The World Bank in May approved a \$500 million (445 million euro) programme to help countries vulnerable to hunger in East Africa fight the pests eating their way across the region.

In Kenya, where swarms blotted out the sky for miles in recent months, locusts have retreated to just three semi-arid counties in the country's far north. Fortunately, too, forecasts of dire hunger did not materialize as the

first swarm to arrive from Yemen in 2019 spared the end-of-year harvest, as the crops were already too mature. The insects, which can eat their body weight in food in a single day, strip the leaves but not seeds.

Namibia also detected an outbreak of red locusts in central regions of the southern African country and had sent pest control teams to the affected areas. The large grasshopper species, which is marked by bright red wings, is common to sub-Saharan Africa and breeds abundantly under drought conditions followed by rain and rapid vegetation growth. The ministry said the locusts were flying in from Botswana and Zambia. Videos shared by the ministry showed thick clouds of insects flying low over crop fields and farmland in the central Otjozondjupa region.

Namibian officials said it was too early to link the infestation to locust swarms wreaking havoc in East Africa since last year in a migration that started in the Middle East, and has been worsened by the coronavirus pandemic.

The summer harvesting season has been completed but the red locusts pose a serious threat to winter crops such as wheat and barley as well as livestock grazing areas, Namibia's Ministry of Agriculture spokeswoman Margaret Kalo said. The latest red locust invasion follows a similar outbreak in February in the Zambezi region, named after Africa's fourth-largest river, which overlaps parts of Namibia, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana.



Tens of thousands of hectares of cropland and pasture have already been damaged across the Horn and East Africa

Now, more than ever before, we must stand with refugees

A REFUGEE, generally speaking, is a displaced person who has been forced to cross national boundaries and who cannot return home safely.

World Refugee Day, international observance observed June 20 each year, is dedicated to raising awareness of the situation of refugees throughout the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the recent anti-racism protests have shown us how desperately we need to fight for a more inclusive and equal world: a world where no one is left behind. It has never been clearer that all of us have a role to play in order to bring about change.

The first modern definition of international refugee status came about under the League of Nations in 1921 from the Commission for Refugees. Following World War II, and in response to the large numbers of people fleeing Eastern Europe.

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

Everyone can make a difference. This is at the heart of UNHCR's World Refugee Day campaign. Under the theme: Every Action Counts this year, we aim to remind the world that everyone, including refugees, can contribute to society and Every Action Counts in the effort to create a more

just, inclusive, and equal world.

A refugee is someone who fled his or her home and country owing to "a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion", according to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention. Many refugees are in exile to escape the effects of natural or human-made disasters.

On 4 December 2000, the United Nations General Assembly decided that, from 2000, 20 June would be celebrated as World Refugee Day. In this resolution, the General Assembly noted that 2001 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It is commemorated to honour all refugees, raise awareness and solicit support.

African Refugee Day had been formally celebrated in several countries prior to 2000. The UN noted that the African Union (AU) had agreed to have International Refugee Day coincide with Africa Refugee Day on 20 June.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees is celebrated in January each year, having been instituted in 1914 by Pope Pius X.

Each year on June 20 the United Nations, United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and countless civic groups around the world host World Refugee Day events in order to draw the public's attention to the millions of refugees and Internally displaced persons worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict and persecution.

The annual commemoration is marked by a variety of events in more than 100 countries, involving government officials, humanitarian aid workers, celebrities, civilians and the forcibly displaced themselves.

Climate change impacts women, men differently, and this is vital

CLIMATE change poses serious threats to the lives and livelihoods of small-scale producers, women in particular. Evidence shows that women are more likely to be food insecure than men in every region of the world.

The adverse effects of climate change and the unprecedented natural resource depletion pose serious threats to food security and nutrition, especially for small-scale food producers. Rural women have more limited access to productive resources, services, education and employment opportunities while experiencing excessive workloads and limited decision-making power.

The work burden of fetching water and collecting firewood usually falls on women and girls, who have to travel long distances to fulfill the needs of their families. Firewood and water collection exposes women to the risk of physical and sexual violence.

Former director general of the Food and Agriculture Organisation José Graziano da Silva once remarked that there is no inclusive and sustainable way forward for Africa without women, youth and agriculture.

Indeed, agriculture offers Africa, and Tanzania in particular, an opportunity for economic prosperity, food security, poverty eradication, skills transfer and economic empowerment for women and girls. But all this will come to naught if governments do not do enough to build women's resilience against climate change.

The science has been shown to have the most devastating effect on agriculture. In large parts of Africa, scientists forecast farm output to decline by between 30 and 50 per cent by 2030 due to changing climatic conditions.

Throughout much of the continent, agriculture is threatened by multiple issues, ranging from population increase to urbanisation and industrialisation, to the sub-division of land and degraded resources

Women disproportionately bear much of the brunt given their traditional roles as tillers of the land and their recognition as the backbone of the family unit.

In Tanzania, the state is looking at improving food security and nutrition, as highlighted in a number of current and past economic blueprints, while it has now started to ramp up funding for women in agriculture through ring-fenced facilities.

What this means is that current and future changes in climate now call for greater astuteness in development planning to minimise risk and bolster food production and security, particularly targeting women.

Six years ago, former African Union (AU) Commission chairperson Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma had some interesting insights on what governments should do (or would have done) to help women cope with climate change.

In a letter delivered in January 2014, but set during AU's centenary in 2063, Dr Zuma calls to the spirit of legendary Pan-Africanist Dr Kwame Nkrumah, informing him that by adopting forward looking strategies, Africa had "refused to bear the brunt of climate change."

Dr Dlamini-Zuma made specific reference to the hazards of climate change on women in agriculture, Africa's mainstay.

By 2063, and in Dr Dlamini-Zuma's eyes, women are seen to have managed to address the multi-layered challenges of climate change "through the intelligent application of centuries-old indigenous knowledge, acquired and conserved by African women who have tended crops all seasons."

For that to happen, both the African Union and its representative governments, should, however, take specific steps to build capacity and resilience among women in line with the long-term goals of Agenda 2063 - the AU's development plan for the next half century.

POLITICS IN THE CONSTITUENCIES



Nigeria and the promises of democracy

BY JIDE OFORADIBE

I WAS impressed with the first few paragraphs of Buhari's Democracy Day speech. I thought they were quite good, unifying and inspiring. The speech started this way:

"Fellow Nigerians, the 2020 celebration of Democracy Day marks 21 years of uninterrupted civil administration in our dear country. This day provides us an opportunity to reflect on our journey as a nation, our achievements and struggles..."

"Sustaining our democracy thus far has been a collective struggle, and I congratulate all Nigerians and particularly leaders of our democratic institutions on their resilience and determination to ensure that Nigeria remains a shining example of democracy."

I felt the above was the best part of the speech - not only because it focused on the struggle for democracy which should be the theme on such an occasion - but also because it made Nigerians, not the government, the agency that drives the struggle for democracy.

I was hoping the President would expand on the above and avoid the temptation of narcissism but as they say, politicians will always be politicians. So in the very next sentence, the President turned the occasion into a political party campaign.

According to him: "In my 2019 Democracy Day address, I promised to frontally address the nation's daunting challenges, especially insecurity, economy and corruption. I therefore find it necessary to give an account of my stewardship on this day."

Turning the Democracy Day into an occasion to give account of his stewardship immediately raises a vital question: What are the promises of democracy? In essence, when Nigerians talk about the 'dividends of democracy' what do they mean? This question is vital because quite often when people talk about the 'dividends of democracy', they end up with a checklist of values such as the increasing economic challenges faced by Nigerians and the rising insecurity in the country. These are obviously important issues but are realistically speaking not among the promises of democracy in any country.

In fact, discussions of the relations between democracy and economic development date back to Plato and Aristotle's debates regarding the best form of government that will bring economic gains to society. More than



two millennia after, there seems to be no clear consensus about whether democracy (in and of itself) can deliver more economic growth than other forms of government. In fact, several studies have concluded that while democracy does not seem to be the key to unlocking economic growth, it would also be a mistake to conclude that an autocratic or dictatorial regime would fare any better.

I feel Buhari fell into the error of conceptualising in very narrow economic terms 'dividends of democracy' (as many Nigerians do), and therefore felt the need to tell Nigerians how his government has delivered on those dividends. In essence, since the form of government has little bearing on economic prosperity, Buhari's Democracy Day speech would actually have been more appropriate on May 29, the country's new Inauguration Day - when a new government takes over and unveils its vision for the country or marks the passage of every one year of its rule.

In the same vein, democracy as a form of government never guarantees security to anyone, meaning that using the Democracy Day to focus on the unfortunate state of insecurity in the country is judging democracy by what it has not promised. In fact, contrary to this, those who believe in notions of 'transitional democracies' or 'democratising societies' will argue that in societies like ours, democracy is actually likely to aggravate the structures of conflicts in the short to medium terms because the free speech guarantees of liberal democracy will uncork bottled up feelings from the period of dictatorship.

Essentially, because we have not properly articulated what should be the focal theme of each of our three important Days - Independence Day, Inauguration Day, and Democracy

Day, we end up rehashing basically the same checklist during each occasion. I feel that while we should focus on our journey to nationhood during our Independence Day celebrations, Inauguration Day (May 29) should be an occasion for a new government to unveil its vision for the country and programmes for actualising it, while Democracy Day should be about our struggle for democracy, including how the government of the day has impacted on the institutions that support democracy such as freedom of the press, elections, the doctrine of separation of powers and checks and balances.

While it is in the DNA of politicians to try to seize every opportunity to gain political mileage, structuring a theme for each of these three big Days, will enable people to engage in earnest conversations, using appropriate metrics, about how far we have come in those areas.

Was Buhari right not to create space in the speech for MKO Abiola, in whose memory June 12 was named as the country's Democracy Day? This is like the Devil's Alternative - whichever option he chose would have resulted in criticisms anyway. If he tried to focus on the annulled June 12 elections and lionise Abiola's struggles to reclaim his mandate, it would have been termed opportunistic - even hypocrisy and ethnic baiting. In fact, had he used the occasion to talk about Abiola's mandate, he would have been reminded that he served the Abacha regime that was ruthless towards those agitating for the revalidation of the June 12 mandate. Not mentioning Abiola on that Day also opened him up to criticisms for ignoring the man on whose memory June 12 was immortalised as Democracy Day. I feel, however, that not talking about Abiola during the speech was the less evil.

What should have been the important issues to address during the Democracy Day speech? One, I think the president should have used the occasion to underline that democracy is a journey, not a destination; that democracy has various moods and varieties and that our country's variety is necessarily different in some respects from what one finds elsewhere. He should also have used the speech to underline that despite the challenges, the fact that this 'wave' of democracy has endured for 21 years is a cause for celebration. It would also have been nice if the speech had recognised that to add that most Nigerians have been active participants in the democratic process in one way or the other - from the ordinary Nigerians who queue up for long hours under inclement weather just to cast their votes to the journalist who constantly keeps the government on its toes.

Two, Buhari's speech should also have focused on the gains and challenges in some of the features of our democracy - such as the free speech principle, our democratic institutions like the legislature, the judiciary, the conduct of elections, needed electoral reforms and inappropriate political behaviour driven by environmental variables and what the government has done to ameliorate these challenges.

Three, Democracy Day should equally have been an appropriate occasion to focus on the value of tolerance of opinions which we find abhorrent. This is the whole notion of the marketplace of ideal theory of democracy. Just like in any other market where goods and services compete for customers, the free speech guarantee of liberal democracy creates a marketplace where ideas compete, sometimes aggressively and nosily, with one another. In this marketplace, people can agree to disagree or disagree to agree.

However, despite its noise and imperfections, it gives us the opportunity to 'jaw-jaw' through our problems. Buhari should have used the Democracy Day speech to appeal to various dissatisfied individuals and groups and remind them that despite the imperfections in our democracy, it still gives us the room to talk through our differences and challenges.

Focusing on the above would not have saved the government from being criticised because criticism comes with the territory of being in office and politics. But at least it would have ensured that the critique would be within the ambit of what democracy promised, not what it never promised.

The mystery of why people with Covid-19 lose smell and taste

By Yasmin Tayag

AS the Covid-19 crisis escalated across the globe in March, some people with disease began reporting strange symptoms: the sudden inability to smell or taste.

Near the end of the month, doctors around the world began acknowledging that some Covid-19 patients had these symptoms. By that point, however, most of the reports about the symptoms were anecdotal, shared by doctors on medical message boards.

Public health institutions seemed to hesitate to make formal statements on the symptoms' significance, while more and more people shared stories about the inability to smell a diaper or taste the tang of vinegar. It took until April 27 for the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to say that "new loss of taste or smell" was a potential sign of Covid-19.

Now, formal studies on the unusual symptoms are trickling in. In the journal JAMA Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Italian doctors have detailed their research on the frequency of these symptoms in 204 Covid-19 patients interviewed over the phone.

As the early anecdotes predicted, the symptoms were fairly common in the sample: about 57 per cent reported a reduction in taste, smell - or both. Nearly 40 per cent had a severe reduction in taste, and about 35 per cent had a severe loss of smell.

While a few studies on these symptoms have already been published, the authors note that theirs is the only one that used the validated otolaryngology questionnaire known as the Sino-Nasal Outcome Test 22 - better known as the SNOT-22.

The SNOT-22 helped answer an outstanding question about these symptoms: Is the loss of smell and taste really caused by Covid-19 or is there just something else stuck in the patients' noses?

In the study, only 14.8 per cent of patients who had a severe loss of taste reported a nasal obstruction, and only about 16.7 per cent with a severe loss of smell did the same - which suggested that the symptoms really are related to the coronavirus.

One of the most interesting observations the researchers made is that these symptoms tended to appear before the person was even diagnosed with Covid-19 - a median time of four to seven days before diagnosis.

This means that a general practitioner, keeping an eye out for these symptoms, could play a "pivotal role" in identifying people who might have Covid-19 at an early stage of the disease and asking them to self-isolate.

There's still a lot left to learn about these symp-



toms, including why they are the only symptoms that manifest in some people, and whether they really are the mark of an otherwise asymptomatic carrier.

But at the very least, the new research increases confidence

in the idea that these symptoms are an early sign of Covid-19. As public health experts underscore the importance of early diagnosis and quarantine, we could use all the forewarning we could get.

Yasmin Tayag is Senior editor at OneZero at Medium, covering science.

Transnational cartels dictate what's for breakfast in Kenya

BY MOHAMED DAGHAR

KENYA can boast about being a regional hub for many things, but food sovereignty isn't one of them, as the latest import dependency ratio on its food balance sheets shows. And not all of these imports are legal, or safe to eat.

The trade of substandard foodstuffs is controlled by criminal cartels that run from Kenya with regional links to Uganda, Tanzania and Somalia. While genuine traders follow Kenya's import regulations, criminals are bringing in food products such as sugar, maize, rice, milk powder, vegetables and pulses full of mercury, lead and other insoluble matters unfit for human consumption.

Alice Ojwang, a lecturer on nutrition and dietetics at the Technical University of Kenya, says the country is seeing a surge in reports of infant mortality and diseases such as liver cancer. This is due to increasing levels of micro-toxins like aflatoxin in food.

Besides the problem of Kenya's population eating substandard food, the livelihoods of smallholder farmers are also at risk. They have to grapple with high costs related to food production. For example fertiliser in Kenya is possibly the most expensive in the world. Seeds and production equipment are also costly. These factors have led to local farmers complaining about a lack of government protection from the competition posed by food imports smuggled into the country.

Apart from Kenyans eating substandard food, the livelihoods of smallholder farmers are also at risk.

There are three main value chains and routes used by criminals to smuggle or import food into Kenya. The first is the Somalia-Kenya route where goods, mainly sugar, are smuggled into Kenya from Somalia's port of Kismayo using lorries, vehicles and donkey carts.

One report estimates that 150 000 tonnes of sugar valued at US\$400 million are smuggled into Kenya from Somalia every year, denying the Kenyan government the revenue owed to it. Other reports, including one from a United Nations monitoring group, have pointed out that charcoal from Somalia is smuggled alongside sugar.



Criminal entrepreneurs who smuggle substandard goods threaten the security of Kenya's food sector. File photo

The second value chain works along separate smuggling routes through the Uganda-Kenya and Tanzania-Kenya border crossing points. These points include both land routes (mainly Busia, Malaba, Lwakhakha, Namanga, Taveta and Isebania crossings) and inland waterway routes that comprise over 600 private jetties, landing sites and ports. Kenya imports most of its food from Uganda and Tanzania with the latest trade import valued at over US\$660 million - most of which comprises agricultural-related products.

This inter-country trading is not illegal in itself, as it is protected by the East African Community (EAC) regional integration pillars of a common market and customs union. However food cartels work with criminals by smuggling other contraband and illicit goods for them, says Tom Ogwe, founder of Sub-Saharan Community Intelligence Analysts.

Legitimate food cartels help criminals by smuggling other contraband and illicit goods for them. Ogwe says most of what crosses the borders is not

inspected. He says contraband ethanol to make illicit alcohol, drugs (especially cannabis) and illicit firearms used by armed groups and criminals are key products smuggled by these food cartels for criminals.

The third value chain is through product specific duty-free importation windows periodically announced by the Kenyan government. In 2017 Kenya announced yet another call for importers to ship in bulk quantities of sugar and milk powder under the EAC customs management duty remission scheme. These regulations allowed Kenyan manufacturers to import sugar duty-free from Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa member states.

Criminal entrepreneurs took advantage of this floodgate and gaps in the procedures to import substandard sugar and milk powder. What followed has been an uproar from genuine traders and their associations on one side, and a divided government with ministries shifting blame and responsibility by giving contradictory statements, on the other.

An expert on border security who asked to remain anonymous said it is almost impossible for the value chains of these complex criminal markets to exist without the criminals colluding with government officials. Reports such as the ENACT Organised Crime Index also indicate that these criminals are often helped by corrupt state officials.

Tackling the problem requires more than regional laws and government inquiries, of which there are many. These officials could include: the military patrolling Kenya's borders, especially with Somalia; highway police who ease the movement of goods through checkpoints; customs and revenue departments; and the different bodies in charge of goods inspection and quality assurance.

Many government-backed food sector industries such as sugar and dairy are struggling to stay afloat in Kenya, leaving most of the industry to the private sector. A food security expert for Africa's eastern and southern regions told the ENACT organised crime project that the Kenyan public is hungry and

at risk of consuming unhealthy food that is expensive. Kenyans spend almost 60% of their disposable income on food, compared to South Africans who spend less than 20%.

Despite numerous government interventions to date, the road to Kenya's food self-sufficiency is a long one. The high costs of agricultural inputs, the import cartels, government corruption, state-embedded criminality and unmanned entry points all contribute to the problem. Addressing the issue will take more than passing and implementing regional laws, of which there are already many. The seemingly endless government committees, task forces and inquiries are also having limited effect.

Inspectors and law enforcement agencies need to improve their detection of substandard goods in order to disrupt the criminal cartels. But for this to happen, there needs to be political will by the government to reduce clientelism and corruption within these agencies.

Agencies

Brazil is becoming new epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic – but WHY?

By Mariana Lenharo

on Covid-19 in the country.

BRASIL is now the country with the second-highest number of Covid-19 cases and deaths - only the United States has a more devastating case count.

Over 100 days after the first case was confirmed in Brazil, the curve is still going up, likely far from reaching its peak. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently declared South America the new epicentre of the disease, with Brazil the most affected in the region.

Yet, many Brazilians seem to downplay the gravity of the pandemic. In my hometown of Ourinhos, a small city in the state of São Paulo, people crowded the streets of the downtown shopping district when stores reopened - despite a surge in cases only one week ago.

And this past weekend in the city of São Paulo, the largest in the country and home to over 12 million people, the most popular shopping street was brimming with customers who had to form lines outside the stores waiting for their turn to shop.

This posture of denial also impregnates some of President Jair Bolsonaro's remarks on the novel coronavirus, most notably when he compared the disease with a "little flu" and responded "so what?" when a reporter questioned him about the mounting number of deaths.

The denialist attitude likely contributed to Covid-19's rapid spread in Brazil, but there are other factors. One of them is simply the size of Brazil - a country of continental dimensions with 210 million people.

"It was inevitable that Brazil would become the new epicentre at some point. The epicentre started in Asia and then migrated to Europe, followed by the United States. The large country that was left was Brazil," says epidemiologist Pedro Hallal, PhD, professor at the Federal University of Pelotas and the coordinator of the largest epidemiological study

Political disputes fuelled refusal to observe quarantines

In the weeks after the WHO characterised Covid-19 as a pandemic on March 11, several state and local governments in Brazil implemented a quarantine, including São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro - two of the most populous states in the country.

"Initially, São Paulo and Rio were able to successfully deter the spread of the virus, with good isolation rates," says epidemiologist Paulo Lotufo, professor of medicine at the University of São Paulo.

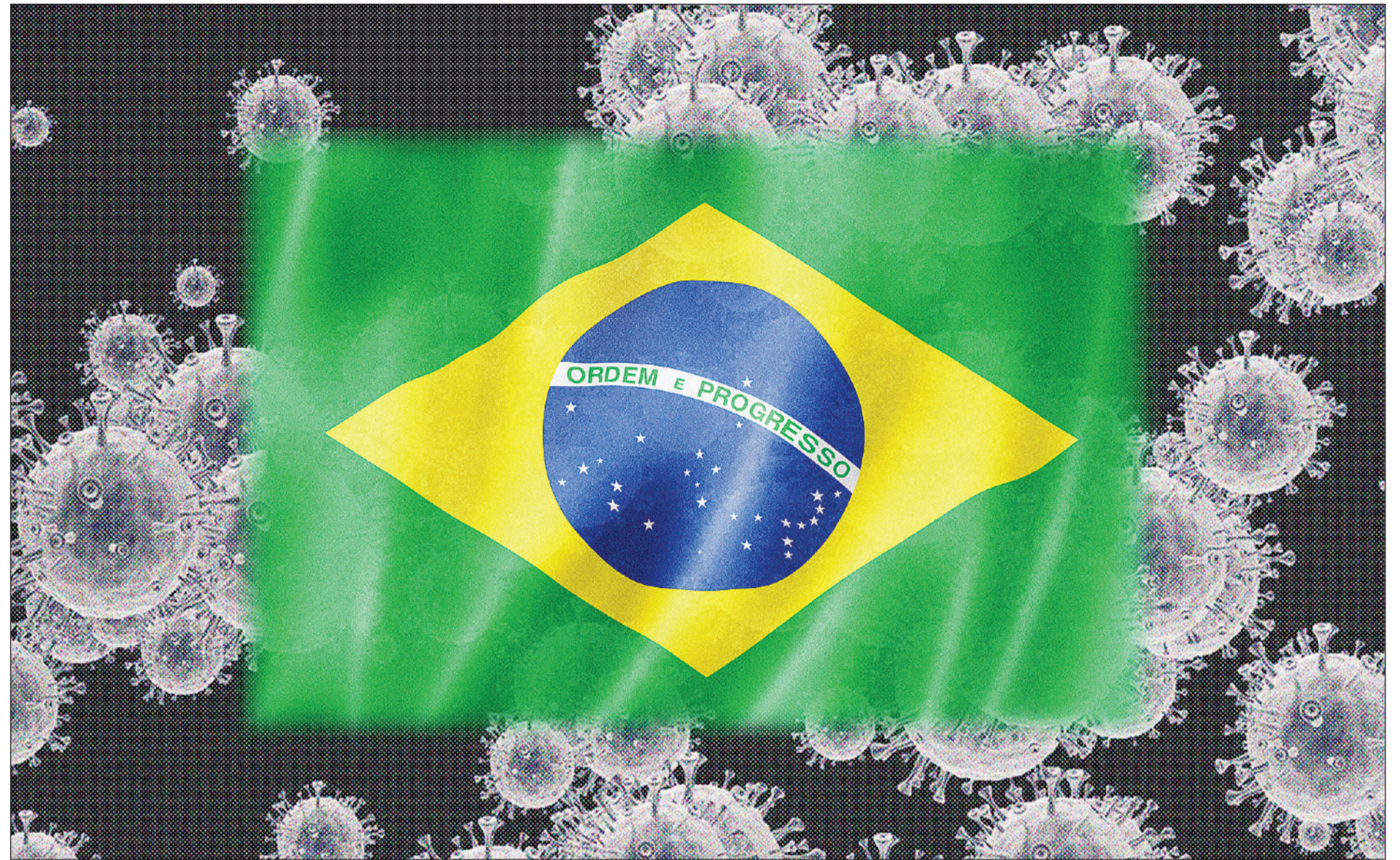
But in a televised statement on March 24, President Bolsonaro criticised the closure of schools and non-essential businesses by state governors and blamed the media for instilling panic and hysteria in the population.

That statement, which emphasized the importance of keeping the economy going and created the narrative that shutting down causes more harm than the virus itself, set the tone for what would come next: uncoordinated measures taken by national and state governments and an increasing polarisation among those who defended social distancing measures and those who didn't.

"This dispute has contaminated the response to the pandemic with politics," says public health physician Lia Giraldo, MD, professor of medicine at the University of Pernambuco and retired researcher at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz).

In the middle of a public health crisis - when coordination between national and state health authorities is essential to come up with emergency protocols, organise the purchase and distribution of medical supplies, and train health professionals at all levels - this relationship was shattered, which harmed the Brazilian response to the virus.

"The pandemic doesn't come to an end quickly, which



generates a lot of anxiety and, after initial compliance with the quarantine, there is an increasing distrust, worsened by a scenario of uncertainty and insecurity," says Giraldo, adding: "We then observe a clear tendency of increasing disrespect for health recommendations in all social segments."

The population's non-compliance is aggravated by the fact that part of it lives in extreme poverty (5 per cent, according to the World Bank), which makes it nearly impossible to abide by the preventive measures.

"With precarious housing, it is difficult to maintain social distancing. It is also difficult to follow hygiene recommendations because of poor access to water and basic sanitation," notes Giraldo.

In São Paulo, where mobile location data are being used to measure the percentage of the population that is staying home - or at least staying put - on a given day, that rate went from around 60 per cent in late March to less than 50 per cent nowadays. As a comparison, on a regular day before the quarantine started, this index stood at around 30 per cent.

Cities reopening despite ascending curve

By June 15, Brazil had almost 900,000 confirmed cases of Covid-19 - and over 44,000 deaths. The numbers are vastly underestimated, according to Hallal, who estimates that the real number of infections might be six or seven times higher than the official statistics say.

Hallal's team recently tested 31,000 Brazilians in 133 cities

and found that 2.6 per cent had antibodies for the new coronavirus, which came to a 50 per cent increase in just two weeks.

"If this was a Formula 1 race, Brazil would be the fastest car on track. It started behind, but it is overtaking all the other countries," says Hallal.

Now, amid political and economic pressures, cities and states are starting to reopen while the number of cases is still going up. "Brazil is doing something unprecedented. It is challenging the virus while nearing the top of the curve," says Hallal.

With the reopening, the curve will likely continue to grow and the country might not reach the peak soon.

"The epidemic curve is still on the rise and we expect a big increase in the number of deaths due to insufficient assistance," says Giraldo, elaborating: "Not

only that, but we also have a social trauma of unimaginable proportions owing to the loss of trust, hope and social cohesion, which aggravates the ongoing political and ethical crisis."

A silver lining: universal health care

Brazil's free Unified Health System (SUS), which serves over 70 per cent of the population, has been the country's silver lining - helping many people with Covid-19 to receive medical care.

So far, ICU beds are still available in all 26 states, although some of them, especially poorer regions, are reaching their limits. For instance, in Manaus (the capital of the state of Amazonas) the public health system nearly collapsed, with 96 per cent of ICU beds occupied in April.

Lotufo says that in cities like São Paulo, where thousands of hospital beds were opened in stadiums and convention centres, the health system has, until now, been able to absorb the high demand.

"If it weren't for the political mess, we could've had one-third of cases and deaths, maybe even fewer," he says.

Giraldo agrees, though: "Brazil is the only country that, with over 200 million inhabitants, has a universal healthcare system that covers the whole territory and would be able to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic if it weren't for the promoted political crisis."

An Elemental dispatch. Mariana Lenharo is a science and health journalist with a special interest in evidence-based medicine and epidemics.

By John McCarthy

What news giants are learning about subscribers during lockdown uptick

NEWSPRINT brands have been attracting record audiences during the Covid-19 pandemic as more and more people find themselves with a new daily news consumption habit.

But while demand for subscriptions at quality titles is through the roof, advertisement-supported businesses haven't been having such a fun a ride. Executives from the Wall Street Journal, Financial Times and Reach have spoken on the ups and downs of lockdown, and about the products they're designing for the future.

The Wall Street Journal

Having breached the 3 million subscribers mark, more than 2 million of whom are on a digital plan, WSJ has been showing just how to build a product that's less reliant on newsprint. Suzi Watford, its chief marketing officer, believes that the pandemic has sped up so-called "flight to quality" news sources.

Watford has been monitoring the accelerated growth to WSJ's subscriptions business and is aware that there must be a ceiling to demand. And with the wider Dow Jones Group now boasting 5 million subscribers, it is clearly winning the battle for consumers' wallets - but, this may be at the expense of local and mid-range titles.

These issues aside, Watford seeks more growth and, for that, she needs to create a more dynamic, personalised membership, with a higher ceiling and lower barrier to entry.

She explains: "We have this unique role to play, not just with our core business audience who we were already seeing come to us, but also with younger readers who have perhaps been coming to the Journal for the first time."

She says that we should expect to see some deviations from the "one-size-fits-

all" subscription model, adding: "There is an opportunity to understand more about our customers and how we can create different products and services."

From its dynamic paywall, WSJ can gather data on user activity - from the content that inspires a subscription to the content that keeps readers in the system.

A huge team of data scientists are tasked with ensuring that the wheels don't fall off this machine. Theoretically, the longer it gathers user data, the more it'll be able to tailor its subscriptions.

Reflecting on the pandemic, Watford says: "There's nothing quite like a crisis for a news brand to show how we are really good at working quickly."

Financial Times

David Buttle, the global commercial marketing director at the FT, says that the title has also "seen an acceleration of subscribers". It breached 1 million subscribers before entering year 2020. It is now fast approaching 2 million, with close to half of those being digital-only.

Buttle says consumers are becoming increasingly aware that "quality news isn't free, it has a cost". He says that, as this realisation spreads, "more publishers are pivoting towards this model".

Of course, the FT could see these new entrants as competition, but it actually has a consultancy to help news organisations retain their subscribers.

Over the last decade, consumers have shown a real reluctance to pay for digital news. But during the recent pandemic and what seems like a growing need to combat online misinformation, consumers are coming around to the value of digital news and gradually shifting the scales.

Buttle offers a warning, however:



"There is a limit to the number of titles any one individual is likely to pay for. And that's purely on the basis of how much value you are able to get and how much time in a week you're going to spend reading."

He anticipates a "levelling off" of this growth soon enough, but offers a few strategies to renew and grow interested. Firstly, the FT is among the many publishers forced to move events online. And many will stay online, so the move is paying off.

Buttle sees an opportunity to build out "mini-brands" around select content verticals. Could it offer a reduced entry price to consumers keen to pick and choose select coverage - such as an insight-filled newsletter around a certain sector?

"Moral Money" is one such brand, with 100,000 people having reportedly signed up to this twice-weekly newsletter. Its Covid-19 newsletters have seen similar demand.

A final shoot of positivity for Buttle is that when the firm was "stripped" of its physical assets in lockdown, the machine kept on turning. "We're very lucky to have amazing

people," he concludes.

Reach

As an advertisement-supported business, Reach (parent company of news brands including the Express, Mirror and Daily Star) isn't able to rely on user-generated revenue. And it has been far from business-as-usual for the publisher as many marketers block Covid-19 news from their media buys.

A World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) study said 89 per cent of large multinational companies would defer marketing campaigns last month. Half said they would freeze spend for six months.

It was this trend that led the Washington Post's chief revenue officer, Joy Robins, to pivot its commercial team away from advertising for the time being to instead help businesses on a local and national level show their utility in the wider world during the pandemic. Even the New York Times announced a 55 per cent shortfall in advertising revenue in May.

Terry Hornsby, digital solutions director at Reach, says of its stable of national and local titles: "With our scale and the

volume we have, we are the fifth-biggest platform in the UK." Its income, he says, is largely reliant on programmatic advertising, direct advertising and sponsorships.

Audiences have seen "huge" growth, while consumption habits have shifted towards mobile. And as more people return to its sites, many of the pages have been redesigned and optimised for this higher demand.

Reach is also rushing new products to market, including newsletters, just like the FT. One, called Lemonade, is tailored to help parents in lockdown and is seeded across the Reach group.

The publisher saw a need and moved to fulfil it and now has a database of parents that can be advertised to directly. It has many other examples of these verticals building up engaged audiences.

"We are learning more about people's habits by engagement and the way they're accessing us," says Hornsby, adding: "There's no better time to really be in a news publishing business, but also be at the forefront of being able to build products on that."

Not all the action is online. But, in many respects, Hornsby believes that Reach has refocused on local audiences too. "We've been delivering papers to the doors of people who couldn't get out. We're a trusted brand and have a care in the community vibe," he says.

Revenue difficulties and staff furloughs aside, at the other side of the lockdown will be a company with a greater understanding of its audiences and what they are willing to pay for.

News brands aren't alone in welcoming floods of new subscribers. Earlier this week, a dozen executives from the UK magazine publishing sector explained how their print titles are performing, while sharing the feasibility of their business models after the lockdown.

Day of the African Child celebrated with a call for child-friendly justice

By J. H. Webster Clayeh

WHEN Liberia joined the African continent in commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Day of the African Child, a strong call for access to the "child-friendly justice" system in Africa was highlighted.

There were also concerns about the abuse of children during the lockdown period caused by the novel Coronavirus.

This year's event should have been celebrated in a grand style with a large number of children in attendance but the pandemic has created a new normal - having meetings and events online.

Just 12 persons were in the entire room with several other

participants online phoning via Zoom online meeting.

Speaking at the start of the program, Ambassador Tunde O. Ajisomo, the ECOWAS Special Representative to Liberia, commended the government's efforts in capturing the rights of a child in the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

Despite the government's efforts, Ambassador Ajisomo stressed that a lot has to be done as the problems affecting Liberian children are still enormous and require urgent attention.

According to the ECOWAS Ambassador, the rights of the African child have been neglected by parents or guardians whom,

he said, have abandoned their responsibility to their children.

He also mentioned that the country's justice system has not paid adequate attention and commitment to promoting "child-friendly justice system."

"Permit me to add that to promote access to child-friendly justice, this must be seen in the context of promoting and protecting the rights of the child under applicable extant National, Regional and International Laws," Ambassador Ajisomo said.

The ECOWAS Ambassador also praised Liberia for ratifying the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child in 1992 and the Convention

the rights of the child on the 4th of June, 1993, and domesticated both under the Children Law of Liberia 2012.

"What we need now is timely enforcement of all these rights that would enhance the welfare and the total wellbeing of the children of Liberia and, by extension, the ECOWAS region and Africa," he added.

"For our children that have been abused during the COVID-19 lockdown period, including those that are currently being abused, our hearts and prayers go out to you and your families as we hope that this commemoration would serve as the beginning of a turning point that would change your

lives," he said.

Also speaking, UNICEF Representative to Liberia Laila O. Gad said as the pandemic takes center stage in the world, the older populations are at risk in America and Europe while the youthful population in Liberia and many parts of Africa are facing the impact of the virus.

"As the evidence in Liberia is indicating, it is the children that are the most deeply affected by the indirect impact of COVID-19 which is far greater now than the actual deaths from the virus itself," UNICEF Representative said.

According to her, although Liberia is trying to catch up

with the losses of the Ebola virus outbreak, the impact of the COVID-19 will reverse the gains made.

She added: "UNICEF in Liberia is looking forward to utilizing the momentum created by the day of the African Child to invite partners and stakeholders to work together on prioritizing the child rights agenda in Liberia." Adding up, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gbehzohngar Milton Findley, said the government is doing all in its power to seek the wellbeing of the children in the country.

"Africa must take its responsibility by providing for our children not only the justice system but we must invest in our

children," Minister Finley said, adding that the young population is a precious jewel of the African Continent.

Speaking via the internet, Minister of Gender Child and Social Protection, Williametta Piso Saydee-Tarr said the government will continue to make gains in the restoration of basic social services and improvements in the lives of children

"As Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, my team and I have been working tirelessly with support from our many development partners to tackle the many issues affecting children," Minister Tarr said.

Int'l African Child Day: Dar's homeless children call for more protection

By Guardian Reporter

ON Tuesday, people across Africa marked the International Day of the African Child, which honors thousands of black South African schoolchildren who took to the streets of Soweto on June 16, 1976, to demand better education and the right to be taught in the language of their preference.

The apartheid regime's security forces responded with tear gas and live bullets that killed scores of boys and girls - probably close to 200. It was the start of a relentless struggle which by the end of the decade had seen more than 1000 students and pupils killed in street clashes with the police.

The day observances still honor those who died, but also highlight the struggles that many African children still face today.

The day is in line with the theme of the International African Child Day: 'Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa'.

In Dar es Salaam, a cross-section of children working and/or living on the streets marked the important day with a call to all stakeholders to chip in and address challenges that forces them out of their homes to streets as well as recognizing their rights.

Their call came after realizing that before reaching the street, children experience multiple deprivations and violations of their rights, which leads to them developing strong

"It is not my choice to work and live in streets, but there are many factors. I was mistreated by my step mum. But,



I couldn't tell my father on what was going on at home," says a 16-year-old boy, who cannot be named.

The boy left home when he was 13 and is getting humanitarian assistance from Babawato Organization - a charity organization established to enhance protection for children and young people living and working on the streets of Dar es Salaam.

"Street children are just normal children, but we're negatively branded. We're verbally and physically abused by the community and the police in our everyday lives," he said, adding:

"Most of the time, police are on our necks, they arrest us for various reasons including what police say that we're loitering,

carrying illegal weapons, and being rude to them."

He also suggested the need for children to be given the right to expression so that they can speak up against violence whenever they are intimidated or face a violation.

Another 16-year-old boy said children living and working in streets needs to be protected, but in most cases their rights are not recognized by the community.

The teenager who dropped out of school when he was Standard Six said that the Tanzania's Child Act of 2009, is very clear as it provide for reform and consolidation of laws relating to children, to stipulate rights of the child and to promote, protect and maintain the welfare of a child with a

view to giving effect to international and regional conventions on the rights of the child.

"That's why we're calling for the government and other players to come up with friendly justice system for children living and working in streets," he suggested.

Joyce Magubu, a lawyer at Babawato Organization said that the situation for children living and working in streets is not good.

"There are many children who are being sexually abused, and some are bullied; so children rights are being denied that why the International African Child Day is important for the plight of children in Tanzania and Africa at large," she said.

According Magubu, there are number of factors that push children out of home such as globalization that leads to moral decay.

She described this year's theme as relevant to the current situation "as it reminds us on the challenges facing children so that we come up with solutions."

In her advice, Magubu suggested the need for the government to swiftly increase education on the rights of children to the entire community. People need to be aware of the rights of children at home and school.

On what the organization do to accommodate those children, the official said

"The centre has been working closely with a number of stakeholders including police officers, particularly when a child is being arrested and if the case bailable we bail them as well as providing basic needs

when they are in custody. The idea is to ensure that children get what they entitled to."

Babawato Organization was established in 2006 with the aim towards empowering children, youth and communities in the margin to be able to overcome the challenges of poverty, crime and diseases through visual, performing arts, sports vocational education and income generating activities. So far, the centre serves more than 200 children per day.

The idea was to improve children and young people's access to education, vocational training, care and essential support services

According to her, the organization has been implementing a 'new generation project', which is meant towards helping in the protection of the rights of children on streets including humanitarian assistance so that at the end of the day will be rescued from street life.

The project is under Pact Tanzania and Railway Children Africa (RCA) is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United Kingdom Department for International Development (UKAID).

Through the funding, since 2017 the project had benefited 1,914 including reuniting families.

New report shows African youth nearly doubling incomes via entrepreneurship

VIRGINIA, US

AS young people face challenging economic conditions around the world, an eight-year program involving 70,000 youth provides lessons in self-employment

The Mastercard Foundation and the international nonprofit organization TechnoServe announced that a large-scale program applying a new entrepreneurship training methodology with local institutions resulted in an average 84% income increase among 68,839 East African youth. The Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (STRYDE) program used a combination of training tools, including a unique "personal effectiveness" module, to help participants in Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, and Tanzania create their own economic opportunities.

"The STRYDE program has shown that when young people in rural communities are equipped with the right mindset and entrepreneurship skills, they can take charge of their own futures and build successful farms, businesses, and careers," said Chris Donohue, TechnoServe's regional director for East Africa. "We are proud to have partnered with the Mastercard Foundation on a project that created lasting impact on such a large scale and developed a successful model that can be sustained by local organizations."

The program was developed in response to the critical employment challenge in Africa, home to the world's youngest population. Every year, up to 12 million young people enter the workforce, without finding nearly enough jobs or opportunities to accommodate them. The problem is particularly acute in the rural areas that are home to more than 70% of the youth population.

The Covid-19 crisis is compounding this challenge, with Africa projected to lose the equivalent of 22 million full-



Maria is one of 68,000 young people who has seen an increase in her income since participating in the STRYDE program in East Africa.

time jobs in the second quarter of 2020 alone, while its economy is projected to retract by as much as five percent by the end of the year.

"Now more than ever, we need to support, and where possible partner with, young people to create solutions that enable the attainment of better livelihoods," said Daniel Hailu, Regional Head, Southern and Eastern Africa at the Mastercard Foundation. "The chal-

lenges emanating from the Covid-19 pandemic are many - and particularly hard-hitting on young people. The lessons learned from this program have strong relevance towards addressing the emerging needs of young people and their ability to access dignified and fulfilling work on the continent."

The STRYDE program offers a blueprint for helping young people earn better incomes both during and after

the pandemic. Launched in 2011, STRYDE provided young people with business and vocational training, mentoring, and follow-up activities in the form of job fairs, business plan competitions, financial clinics, and other support.

One of the key training modules was "personal effectiveness", focused on soft skills and entrepreneurial mindsets, which helped participants devel-

op the self-confidence, vision, and persistence that are critical to economic success but not always emphasized in traditional business training.

STRYDE then scaled up this model by helping 122 local institutions - such as vocational schools, community colleges, and even prisons - to integrate the training into their own curricula. Seventy percent of STRYDE graduates were trained by these local partners,

and nearly 80% of the local entities will continue offering the training on their own. At a marginal cost of \$6 per student, it is a cost-effective program for other training organizations to implement as well.

Over eight years, the program achieved the following results:

Trained 68,839 young people; 51% of them women

Youth participating in the program increased their income by an average of 84%

Participants' average assets increased by 101% and savings by 89%

The share of youth not participating in any income-generating activity fell from 34% before the program to 12% after graduation

Besides the benefits to their own livelihoods, each STRYDE graduate created an average of one additional job

"STRYDE has completely changed my life" Jennifer Angee is a young woman whose life was derailed when civil conflict tore through northern Uganda in the early 2000s. "Finding any kind of job back home was not easy, since everyone was trying to get back their lives after the war that ravaged Gulu for many years," she recounted.

After learning how to analyze market opportunities as part of her STRYDE training, Jennifer realized that she could turn her family's farm into a livelihood. She now generates hundreds of dollars of profit per harvest, allowing her to pay her children's school fees, care for her aging parents, and maintain the family's home.

"We are assured of three meals a day from the farm, something that I cannot say about the past," she said. "Hunger and starvation were the order of the day, especially during the war, but today we boast of an abundant harvest. STRYDE has completely changed my life and that of my family. My children are now assured a better future thanks to the knowledge and skills that I acquired during the training."

Joint Statement of High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation: Combating COVID-19 with Solidarity

1. WE, the foreign and other ministers of the Belt and Road cooperation partners*, held a video conference under the theme of "Belt and Road International Cooperation: Combating COVID-19 with Solidarity" on 18 June 2020. We welcome the participation of the Director-General of World Health Organization and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to human health, safety and well-being as well as the socio-economic development of our countries and the world at large. Our first priority is to contain the spread of the virus, save lives and safeguard global public health. We offer our sincere condolences to the families and societies of the victims of the pandemic. We also express our gratitude and support to all frontline health-care workers, medical professionals, scientists and researchers as well as other essential workers around the world who are working under difficult and challenging conditions to deal with the pandemic.

3. The COVID-19 constitutes a global challenge that calls for global response based on unity, solidarity, mutual support and multilateral cooperation. We recognize the central role of the United Nations system in catalyzing and coordinating the comprehensive global response to control and contain the spread of COVID-19 as well as the efforts of Member States therein, and acknowledge in this regard the key leadership role of the World Health Organization.

4. We agree that there is no place for any form of discrimination, stigmatization, racism and xenophobia in our response to the pandemic.

5. Recalling the spirit and principles reflected in the Joint Communiqué of the Leaders' Roundtable of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, we will continue our efforts in promoting international cooperation, including high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. Such equal cooperation will continue to be open, green and clean, based on extensive consultation, joint efforts, shared and mutual benefits, as well as pursuit of high-standard, people-centered and sustainable development.

Towards a Health Silk Road

6. We support mutual efforts in combating the COVID-19, and will cooperate to address, control and overcome the pandemic through the sharing of timely and necessary information, experiences and best practices for diagnosis and treatment of the COVID-19, strengthening and upgrading the capacity of public health system, promoting joint scientific research and international dialogues

among health professionals, and providing assistance to countries in need. We encourage bilateral, regional and international mechanisms to jointly counter the COVID-19, where necessary.

7. We underscore that an equitable access to health products is a global priority. We are committed to enhancing the availability, accessibility and affordability of health products of assured quality, particularly vaccines, medicines and medical supplies, which are fundamental to tackling the pandemic. Along these lines, we welcome and appreciate mutual support and assistance offered among partner countries. We welcome the United Nations' efforts to strengthen global humanitarian response depots, and welcome relevant countries to explore the possibility to set up regional reserve centers or units for rapid deployment of medical supplies or personnel. We believe that COVID-19 vaccines should be recognized as global public goods.

8. We call for investment in building sound and resilient health related infrastructures, including the development of telemedicine. We will provide necessary healthcare support for each other's citizens affected by COVID-19 in our territories including the frontline health workers and those working for Belt and Road and other programmes within available national capabilities in line with respective national laws and regulations.

Boosting Connectivity

9. We believe that promoting global partnership on connectivity based on openness, transparency, and inclusiveness, provides an opportunity for all and will contribute to combating the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigating its impacts and promoting socio-economic recovery. We support comprehensive and multi-modal infrastructure connectivity and sustainable transport system. We encourage countries to enhance their air, land and sea links through interoperable and multi-modal transport. We recognize the importance of cross-border and trans-regional transport and logistic passages, which include land, air and sea routes as well as transport infrastructure projects, in delivering vital medical supplies, equipment, food, critical agricultural products, and other essential goods, securing supply chains and promoting international trade, and meeting the needs of people's livelihood and economic development. We will cooperate to keep those passages open or resume operation as soon as the situation permits.

10. We reiterate our support to build high-quality, reliable, resilient and sustainable infrastructure, ensuring its viability, affordability, accessibility, inclusiveness and broad benefit over its entire life-cycle, and



State Councilor and FM Wang Yi attending the Belt and Road video conference

contributing to sustainable development of partner countries and the industrialization of developing countries.

11. We welcome efforts to resume, in an orderly and step-by-step manner, normal cross-border movement of people while strictly following necessary epidemic prevention and control measures. We support the efforts by countries in need to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including through the establishment of relevant networks, such as the voluntary development of express passenger channels for cross-border flow of business personnel, professionals and technical experts involved in international development cooperation projects, and green passages for cross-border trade in goods at the earliest convenience. We encourage relevant measures which include but are not limited to communication and coordination on mutual recognition of health testing results and quarantine arrangements agreed among relevant ministries in respective countries.

Promoting Economic Recovery

12. We support a universal, rules-based, open, transparent and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system with WTO at its core. We call for stabilizing the regional and the global industrial chains and supply chains, ensuring the continued flow of goods, services and personnel, as well as assisting the industries and economies adversely affected by COVID-19. We also highlight the importance of fair competition and the protection of intellectual property.

13. Our measures to promote economic recovery particularly the orderly resumption of productive activities and re-connection of the global value chain, will draw upon the professional advice of the relevant international organizations including WHO, based on our efforts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the global economic and social disruption caused by

the COVID-19, it is important for countries to enhance cooperation in such areas as digital economy, health care industry and food security, and explore new sources of growth by promoting e-commerce, smart cities and other applications of digital technology, as well as the use of artificial intelligence and big data technology, helping narrow the digital divide while drawing on international good practices.

14. We support dialogues and exchanges in areas of major development strategies, plans and policies, including through the coordination between the Belt and Road Initiative and other national, regional and international development strategies, programmes or initiatives. We encourage and support business friendly policies, particularly for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the vulnerable economic sectors. We also take note of the efforts of certain countries to gradually restore tourism while ensuring sufficient epidemic prevention and control measures. We emphasize the importance of strengthening cooperation in human resource development, education, vocational and professional training to build up the capacity of our peoples to better adapt to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Change Agreement while giving due consideration to the special needs and requirements of the LDCs and LLDCs. We welcome the UN system's continued support to the Belt and Road cooperation.

15. We welcome the G20's initiative on suspension of debt service payments for the world's least developed countries for promoting their economic recoveries and sustainable development.

Deepening Practical Cooperation

16. Building on the progress already made, we will move forward with our cooperation on economic and transport corridors, economic and trade cooperation

zones and other Belt and Road practical cooperation, in accordance with respective national development agenda, to further boost economic growth, social development and the improvement of people's livelihood.

17. We emphasize the importance of economic, social, fiscal, financial and environmental sustainability of projects. We call on all market players in the Belt and Road cooperation to respect corporate social responsibility and follow the principles of the UN Global Compact.

18. We will continue to implement the consensus reached during the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation together with other partners, and promote bilateral, trilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas such as development policy synergy, increased infrastructure investment, economic corridors, economic and trade cooperation zones, industrial parks, finance, trade, innovation and technology, maritime cooperation, business-to-business ties, people-to-people and cultural exchange. We encourage all parties to create an enabling business environment for trade and investment promotion and industrial cooperation.

19. We will advance our cooperation in a people-centered approach. We reiterate that promoting peace, development and human rights, mutually-beneficial cooperation, and honoring the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law are our common responsibilities; achieving strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth and improving people's quality of life are our common goals; creating a prosperous and peaceful world with shared future is our common aspiration.

* The following countries are represented by their foreign or other ministers at the video conference: the Republic of Belarus, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Chile, the People's Republic of China, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Hellenic Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Singapore, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Kingdom of Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation delivered a written statement.

Scourge of racism violates UN charter

GENEVA

I welcome this opportunity to speak to this urgent and necessary debate of the Human Rights Council.

I bring you warm greetings from Secretary-General António Guterres, who shares your abhorrence of racism and is committed to fighting it with every tool we have.

Allow me to quote from the letter he sent last week to all UN staff: "The position of the United Nations on racism is crystal clear: this scourge violates the United Nations Charter and debases our core values."

The Secretary-General has called for dismantling racist structures and confronting the systemic ills of institutions. In the UN, he has launched a one-year process to address these grave staff concerns.

He has also called for massive investments in social cohesion. Diversity, he has stressed, "is a richness, not a threat".

I wish to echo the recent cogent words of UN Under-Secretaries-General who are African or of Afri-

can Descent. In a statement three days ago, they stressed that: "Not enough can ever be said about the deep trauma and inter-generational suffering that has resulted from the racial injustice perpetrated through centuries, particularly against people of African descent. To merely condemn expressions and acts of racism is not enough. We must go beyond and do more."

The Human Rights Council meets as marches for racial justice and equality fill the streets of cities and towns around the world. The most recent trigger for these protests was the killing of George Floyd in an appalling act of police brutality.

But the violence spans history and borders alike, across the globe. Today, people are saying, loudly and movingly, "Enough".

The United Nations has a duty to respond to the anguish that has been felt by so many for so long. This cause is at the heart of our Organization's identity.

Equal rights are enshrined in our founding Charter. Just as we fought



UN Human Rights Council in session. File photo

apartheid years ago, so must we fight the hatred, oppression and humiliation today.

We must also never forget the crimes and the negative impacts, in Africa and beyond, of the transatlan-

tic slave trade, one of history's most appalling manifestations of human barbarity.

Across the world, Afro-descendants continue to be trapped in generational cycles of poverty created

by unfair obstacles to their development.

They receive unequal services, and face unjustifiable housing and employment practises. Racial profiling is widespread. And because of

poverty and structural racism, they are also among the communities hardest-hit by COVID-19.

As we recover from the pandemic, returning to these systems is out of the question. We also need measures that will genuinely re-set law enforcement.

The battle against racism did not end with this or that legislation, and racism was not vanquished by this or that election. The poison of racism still rages, and so the fight must still be waged.

On a personal level, from my high school days in the United Kingdom through my career across the private sector, civil society and now international public service, I have grown thick skin. I have even become numb, to the extent that one has forgotten how to feel the injustice of racial slurs and my human right to live a life of dignity and respect.

When I consider the beauty of my diversity and the amazing diversity of race... When I consider that we are born equal, only to find that the

colour of one's skin sentences us to a life of discrimination and injustice...

I ask myself, I ask all of you, I ask people everywhere: How can we possibly continue to turn the other way? Enough is enough.

The world must rise to end racism in all its obnoxious forms. Let us turn the page of history today by making this a turning point when we agree that all humans have the right to thrive with dignity and freedom from racism and discrimination in all its forms.

I too, like Martin Luther King Jr, have a dream where my granddaughter Maya will grow up in a world where she will not be judged by the colour of her skin but by the strength of her character.

Lasting peace, and sustainable development can only be built on the equality, human rights and dignity of everyone. The United Nations, its leadership and staff, stands with all those who are pursuing the end of the scourge of racism in all its forms. This is today's sacred battle.

Agencies

COMPETITIVENESS

Meet the young women lawyers who went viral with their Do not Rush Challenge video shows

JOHANNESBURG

THESE women in law not only entertained social media users when they took part in the #DontRushChallenge, they also inspired and created a conversation around the potential of women in their chosen careers.

Realising the interest and curiosity of social media users about these accomplished women, W24 decided to reach out and find out who they are and how they built up their careers in the legal fraternity. Also, they give some tips on how to survive (and thrive) in university and the workplace.

Aurelia Nxumalo - Advocate

It was Aurelia - no stranger to social media, with a following that most can only dream about - who came up with the idea to take part in the challenge. The 31-year-old advocate wanted to lift her "spirits in a time of doom and gloom amidst the Covid-19 lockdown".

Although the challenge was initially about makeup, the corporate counsel wanted to join in the fun in an area she's well versed in. "I believe the best way for us was in participating in what we know as legal practitioners," she says. Speaking about the road to success, she quotes James Clear: "You

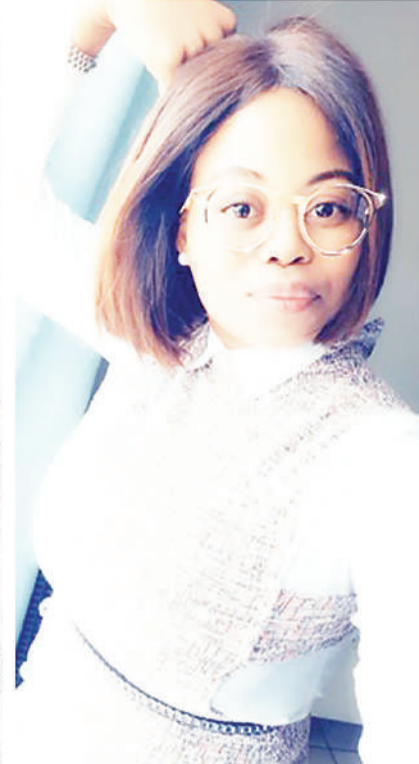
don't have to build everything you want today, just lay a brick."

She has the following tip for university students currently on lockdown: "Create a study schedule (and stick to it), have the discipline to do your part of the work, and embrace that this is an opportunity to be self-taught in preparation for when we are all back to regular life."

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Aurelia Nxumalo, Omphile Boikanyo, Karabo Mathoko and Tello Motshwane.

nity to be self-taught in preparation for when we are all back to regular life."

Omphile Boikanyo - Attorney

Omphile never anticipated the traction that their video would receive, but she's glad they decided to take part. The 27-year-old is goal-oriented and believes that disappointment shouldn't hinder your plan to reach your goals.

For her, though we are living through a pandemic, it's possible to use this time for self-improvement. "Optimize this time by studying ahead. Once universities re-open, you'll be able to hit the ground running as you would have adequately prepared. Preparation prevents poor performance," she says.

Karabo Mathoko - Attorney

Karabo saw the Don't Rush Challenge as a fun social compact to showcase the multiple dimensions of women in the legal fraternity. "It was also exciting that I could shoot everything safely in the comfort of my home with the help of my husband since it's just him and I at home," the 32-year-old

says. She encourages young people to create friendship networks through social media for academic and emotional support while we are still on lockdown. "When you feel overwhelmed, don't veer off course. Remember that your educational journey is not a race, so pace yourself, work hard, always be well-prepared and learn from your mistakes," Karabo says.

Tello Motshwane - Legal consultant and founder of Sister In Law

Tello believes it's essential to be intentional and deliberate in everything you do. "I fell pregnant and had a child in my first year of pursuing my law degree - the one thing I knew for sure was that I wanted a law degree, and I wanted to be an attorney. Knowing exactly what you want will keep you going and will see you through every challenge you face," says the 30-year-old.

"Every generation has a set of challenges - in my time we had swine flu and students a few years ago had the Fees Must Fall challenge. The only

thing which will separate you from the next person is the attitude you adopt when you are faced with a challenge."

Nako Bo Tebele - Attorney-At-Law

27-year-old Nako believes if you are a student, you need to challenge your mind during this time by creating a schedule of reading and testing with quizzes. She advises those who are still studying to use the national lockdown as a very long study break and optimize on it. "Do online study group and reach out to whoever you've always wanted to because almost everyone has time on their hands now to respond. Ask for help, and don't be shy about it."

Tshiamiso Kgomanyane - Legal officer & founder of SHE Legal Co

Tshiamiso says women have massive potential, but "as young women, we tend to downplay our role and whether that's just in law or a larger part of society. It's important to submit ourselves to our potential."

There's no right way of achieving one's goals, the 29-year-old says. "The journey to achieving your goals will often be a struggle and it's so impor-

tant not to expect anything to be easy. That way, you accept that struggle, but more importantly, it keeps you going."

Tshiamiso sees opportunity in the time of coronavirus, saying, "There's so much uncertainty right now, but you will be in a better position in the end if you're prepared. So, get ready and stay prepared to ace your assignments, tests, and exams at the end of this pandemic."

Rethabile Seema - Advocate

Rethabile says the #DontRushChallenge video is a representation of all black women who have an ambition to be in the legal fraternity. "The beauty and nature of tertiary institutions is that one is never spoon-fed - and thus, the existence of COVID-19 and the directive for a national lockdown shouldn't hurt your drive to study and pass," the 32-year-old says.

"We are living in the 4th industrial revolution. Both institutions and students should be taking full advantage of these tools." Rethabile's success tip is simple: Consistent hard work and focus will catapult you to the mountain-top.

CONCERN

Covid-19: Experts worry that the virus is triggering diabetes in otherwise healthy people

PARIS

ONE of the groups most affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic is diabetics - they have some of the highest risks of severe complications when contracting Covid-19.

A French study found that 10% of older Covid-19 patients who have diabetes, die within a week of entering the hospital, and 20% need a ventilator to breathe by

that point. In the Western Cape alone, 52 out of 100 deaths due to the coronavirus were attributed to diabetics, according to the province's health department.

However, researchers from around the world are noticing another worrying trend - that Covid-19 could trigger diabetes in people who have no diagnosed pre-existing conditions. In a letter published in The New England

Journal of Medicine, a group of international researchers highlight a dangerous two-way relationship between Covid-19 and diabetes.

Diabetes puts you at high risk of severe Covid-19 symptoms, and contracting the coronavirus sometimes leads to new-onset diabetes and triggers severe diabetes complications in those who already have the condition.

The reason why the two inter-

act so intensely is that the virus binds with ACE2 receptors, which are found in key metabolic organs and tissues in the human body, such as the kidneys, pancreatic beta cells and small intestine.

"Thus, it is plausible that SARS-CoV-2 may cause pleiotropic alterations of glucose metabolism that could complicate the pathophysiology of pre-existing diabetes or lead to new mechanisms of

disease," say the researchers.

However, not enough research has been done to understand this connection, including how frequent the new-onset diabetes is, if it's type 1 or type 2 diabetes or something new altogether, and what it means for a patient's risk of diabetes in the future. It may also be changing the pathology of those who already have diabetes.

New global registry

To gain more insight, King's College London and Monash University have teamed up to launch the registry CovidDiab. It's a database where doctors and researchers around the world can input their observations regarding diabetes and Covid-19, specifically focusing on cases where coronavirus patients develop the condition.

"Given the very short history of human contact with Covid-19,

this registry will rapidly help us understand how Covid-19-related diabetes develops, its natural history and its best management," explains the registry's website.

"Studying Covid-19-related diabetes may also uncover novel mechanisms of disease." The results of the research could help improve patient care in the fight against the disease and lead to new and better treatment.

BIAS

Best-selling authors reveal payment to show discrepancy between white and black writers

NEW YORK

ACCORDING to US census information from 2019, women make only \$0.81 for every dollar a man makes. However, gender isn't the only root cause behind pay disparity, as authors around the world are trying to show as part of a candid new movement.

A number of writers have taken to social media to share the amount they have been paid for their work, to highlight the disparity between white and black authors. Black fantasy author LL McKinney this week started the #publishingpaidme hashtag, which asks authors to share the advances - an upfront payment for their books - they were paid by their publishers.

The initiative comes as widespread protests highlighting racial injustices are held around the globe in the wake of George Floyd's death in police custody. "Come on, white authors. Use the hashtag and share

what you got for your books," McKinney wrote on Twitter. "Debuts as well. Let's go."

The author added that the movement is meant to highlight "the disparity between what's paid to non-Black authors vs. Black authors. Not PoC [people of colour]. There's a reason for that, especially in the context of this moment."

A number of prominent writers were among those to reply to the thread, including black feminist author Roxane Gay, who revealed she was paid \$12,500 for *An Untamed State*, \$15,000 for *Bad Feminist*, \$100,000 for *Hunger*, \$150,000 for *Year I Learned Everything* and "a significant jump" for her next two books.

"The discrepancy along racial lines is very real. Keep your day job," wrote Gay on Twitter. "I like my publishers quite a lot but this is why all those corporate statements about diversity are nonsense. A little Instagram post doesn't make up for racial disparities in

everything else."

White male novelist Matt Haig, meanwhile, revealed that while the advance on his first book was £5,000 the sums had increased to £600,000 by the time he penned his 10th book.

Advances are payments deducted from future royalties, and therefore based on how well publishers believe a book will sell. White science-fiction author John Scalzidivulged revealed that while he has been paid as little as \$2,000, his most recent deal - for a series of 13 titles - was \$3.4 million, which works out at roughly \$260,000 per book.

In comparison, black sci-fi author NK Jemisin revealed she received \$25,000 apiece for each book in her *Broken Earth* trilogy, each of which won a Hugo Award, a prize for writing in the sci-fi and fantasy genre. Jesmyn Ward, a black American novelist, added that she was paid \$20,000 for her National Book Award-winning fiction *Salvage the Bones*.



Malorie Blackman (L) and Matt Haig are among the authors to reveal their book advance payments.

"Even after *Salvage the Bones* won the NBA, my publishing company did not want to give me 100k for my next novel. My agent and I fought and fought before we wrestled our way to that number," she

tweeted. Malorie Blackman, a black British writer and former Children's Laureate, said she had "never in my life received anything like the sums being posted by some white authors."

However, the author urged

black writers to not stop putting pen to paper. "We might not win at this game but to not play is to definitely lose. If we give up, nothing changes. Our stories are worth telling and need telling."

UNITY

Covid-19: AU hails 'African jewel' as continental medical supplies platform launched

ADDIS ABABA

ON Thursday, African Union (AU) chairperson President Cyril Ramaphosa, AU Commission chairperson Moussa Faki and the director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) Dr John Nkengasong

held a media briefing, giving an update on the platform.

The platform was developed in partnership with Afreximbank. "Out of the ashes of Covid-19 the continent is going to be able to trade together in a much more forthright manner and even more transparently as well," Ramapho-

sa said.

Death toll

The AU chair said the site would be able to resolve issues around supply shortages, security, price competitiveness, procurement and logistical delays, while also simplifying the payment process.

More than 7 200 people have died from the pandemic in Africa, with 267 818 confirmed cases. Around 8 million people have been infected across the globe.

Zimbabwean businessman Strive Masiyiwa, who was appointed as the AU special envoy leading global mobilisation of medical test

kits and protective equipment for the continent this month, gave a brief presentation of how the Africa medical supplies platform would operate.

In a breakthrough trial, dexamethasone appears to be a Covid-19 miracle. Ramaphosa said the Department of Health and

the MAC have recommended that the drug can be considered for use on patients on ventilators and those who are on oxygen supply.

He said the website would "unashamedly" put products manufactured on the continent first, and that the allocation of supplies differed between countries

depending on population size and disease burden in line with a formula developed in agreement with the World Health Organisation.

"This platform is not for profit, it sits with the ACDC [Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention] and with Afreximbank.

ANXIETY

What local experts say about dexamethasone - labelled as Covid-19 treatment

JOHANNESBURG

IN a breakthrough trial, dexamethasone appears to be a Covid-19 miracle. Ramaphosa said the Department of Health and the MAC have recommended that the drug can be considered for use on patients on ventilators and those who are on oxygen supply.

Dexamethasone made headlines this week after it emerged that it was the only drug to have made a significant difference to patient mortality from Covid-19. The drug was part of the Randomised Evaluation of Covid-19 Therapy (RECOVERY) trial, a range of potential treatments tested for Covid-19 patients, Health24 reported.

But can we fully trust this drug hailed as a groundbreaking treatment? We spoke to Associate Professor Sean Wasserman, infectious diseases specialist at Groote Schuur Hospital, University of Cape Town; Dr Jantjie Taljaard, infectious disease specialist at Tygerberg Hospital, Stellenbosch University; and Professor Francois Venter, director of Ezintsha, deputy executive director of Wits RHI, and member of the ministerial advisory committee (MAC).

Why dexamethasone?

Jantjie explains that the theoretical basis for this drug is the fact that it is a potent anti-inflammatory. The main problem in Covid-19 patients who deteriorate after a week or more of infection, is the severe inflammatory reaction that develops in response to the respiratory tract infection - also known as a "cytokine storm". This complication is also well described in other viral respiratory tract infections like SARS and influenza, Jantjie adds.

What is dexamethasone, how does it work and when will it be used?

A cheap and widely available steroid can help save the lives of patients seriously ill with coronavirus, a trial has found. The discovery about dexamethasone is a major breakthrough in the fight against the virus, UK experts say. "The cytokine storm, among other things, results in a condition called ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome), and other systemic complications including an increased tendency for clotting. So it makes sense that if one can avoid or suppress the cytokine storm with a potent anti-inflammatory, one may be able to attenuate the severe complications of Covid-19 and prevent mortality."

Considering side effects for Covid-19 patients

Most drugs produce several side effects, and dexamethasone is no different. According to Wasserman, dexamethasone is a synthetic steroid drug that is widely used for many inflammatory conditions and certain cancers, and has well-established side effects with short term use,



A pharmacist displays a box of Dexamethasone.

such as increased glucose and blood pressure. However, Wasserman says that these side effects are predictable and often not serious.

Venter supports this stance, saying that "the side effects of this course is probably relatively acceptable, as it is so short." However, Wasserman also said that the following should be considered: "Preliminary results from the RECOVERY trial reported the overall effect of dexamethasone on survival, but did not provide details about specific side effects when used for Covid pneumonia."

Should we then use the trial results as definitive guidance?

The BBC reports that the UK government has 200 000 courses of the drug readily available and says the NHS will make the drug available to patients. Similarly, president Cyril Ramaphosa announced in his address to the nation last night that South Africa has "ample supply" of

the drug and that the Department of Health and MAC has recommended that it be considered for use on patients on ventilators and oxygen.

However, the results of the RECOVERY trial have not yet been published in a journal. The website indicates: "Given the public health importance of these results, we are now working to publish the full details as soon as possible." Considering this, we asked experts whether the results should be treated with caution at this stage.

Wasserman said that the trial steering committee correctly decided to release these preliminary results, considering its public health importance: "RECOVERY is a well-designed randomised controlled trial with a publicly available protocol and transparent data collection processes."

"The large sample size and rigorous study design provide a lot of confidence in the preliminary finding that use of dexamethasone substantially improves survival in patients

with Covid pneumonia who require oxygen," Wasserman said, adding that while the full peer-reviewed publication is awaited as it will provide more details about the profile of trial participants and side effects of the drug, it is unlikely to alter the major findings of survival benefit that were announced this week.

'Medical fraternity is cautiously optimistic'

Venter says that although the results have not yet been published, they're likely to be positive: "They are a highly respected team, so we should start thinking hard about what to do if the peer-reviewed article shows the same."

Jantjie also weighs in: "Although there is currently only a press release from the RECOVERY trial principal investigator, it shows very encouraging results. So the medical fraternity is cautiously optimistic and eagerly awaiting the publication of the com-

plete data set and analysis," and adds that a couple of things need to be considered, including weighing particular factors against the magnitude of benefit and making comparisons for different population groups, for example:

"Can the drug be recommended for all age groups, or do patients with obesity and diabetes benefit equally compared to patients with hypertension only? Were enough patients with HIV infection or tuberculosis included in the study to draw conclusions on the benefit versus risk for these populations?"

"With the current information available to me, I do recommend that corticosteroid be given to patients with severe Covid-19 pneumonia, in particular those in need of high flow nasal oxygen or mechanical ventilation. Clinicians should also consider prescribing it for other patients in need of supplemental oxygen therapy who have a high risk of developing severe disease. This recommendation will have to be reviewed when more information becomes available."

Should South Africa start using it for Covid-19 patients?

"If the peer-reviewed article bears out, absolutely," says Venter. "There is not much in ICU that decreases death rates by 30%, sadly - so having this drug is certainly a step forward."

Wasserman also commented that in the context of a public health emergency, and the fact that there is no other proven effective treatment for Covid pneumonia, these results should immediately translate into clinical practice and the drug should become the standard of care for this group of patients, further commenting:

"However, it will be important to carefully monitor the impact and safety of this approach in our population, which has a different socio-economic and disease profile to people in the UK where the RECOVERY trial took place. It is very important to understand that for now, the benefit of dexamethasone only applies to patients who were represented in the RECOVERY trial (i.e. hospitalised patients requiring oxygen) and not people with milder Covid-19."

Although oral dexamethasone is currently not registered in South Africa, Wasserman says that equivalent doses of alternative steroid drugs may potentially be used. Business Insider reported that the regulated price per dexamethasone injection is between R149 and R176 in South Africa and is produced by pharmaceutical giant Aspen. According to its CEO Stephen Saad, who confirmed this to Business Insider SA, there should be sufficient supply to meet local demand.

CHANGE

Angela Ndambuki exits Chamber of Commerce, picked to head IFPI's Sub-Saharan bureau

NAIROBI

THE Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) chief executive Angela Ndambuki has left the trade body before the expiry of her tumultuous term which was to end in September.

She exits just as KNCCI board began search for her replacement in an advert dated June 12. Ms Ndambuki, a lawyer and a former member of girl-band Tatu, was named as CEO in September 2017 to serve for three years.

She now joins the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) as the director for Sub-Saharan

region effective July 1 for a term of two years. IFPI represents record companies globally through promoting value of recorded music, campaigning for the rights of record producers, and expanding the commercial uses of recorded music.

Speaking to Business Daily in an interview on Thursday, Ms Ndambuki said she resigned in April and has been serving a two-month notice. "I gave a two months' notice to leave the chamber on April 30 so that I can go on June 30. At the end of the day, the IFPI offer was one I could not refuse and intellectual property is one thing that is close to my heart," said Ms Ndambuki.

In her new role, Ms Ndambuki is expected to work across the region's 46 IFPI member countries. Ms Ndambuki is a former chief executive of the Performers Rights Society of Kenya, and has a significant experience in board governance, having served as a member on various boards and committees.

She has a Master's degree in Law from



Angela Ndambuki

The University of Edinburgh with a focus in Intellectual Property.

After serving only eight months as the chamber CEO, Ms Ndambuki was pushed out by the board under unclear circumstances in May 2018.

The former Chamber's chairman, Kiprono Kittony, said that the board opted not to extend her contract after proba-

tion, a surprise move that saw Ms Ndambuki challenge her dismissal in court. Although her probation period was six months, she had been in office for eight months.

She sued the board demanding payment for wrongful termination of her contract, a case she later dropped to pick up her job.

TECH SAVVY

Entrepreneur wants African peers embrace innovation to fight unemployment

LAGOS

Africa's problem of youth unemployment has spiralled in recent years. To compound that, the formal sector has increasingly become unable to provide jobs for a growing number of qualified job seekers.

In the face of these, youth have looked to entrepreneurship to better their economic outlook. But most of these young entrepreneurs want to do more: create opportunities for other youths. The continent is full of inspiring stories of youths creating jobs for their peers.

One such story comes from Nigeria's Abdulwaheed Alayande and Trep Labs. The young entrepreneur's idea for the society has grown to employ several young people. The startup provides for an innovation lab where young entrepreneurs work on projects looking to tackle various health problems on the continent.

Their work involves building low-cost hardware products that help health providers in their work. How did this vision start?

According to Alayande, the idea sprung up after he heard of the high mortality rates among pregnant women and babies.

Nigeria recorded very high numbers of these cases in 2019, largely due to high blood pressure. Many deaths were also attributed to improper manual infusions.

Trep Labs built its RealDrip, a device that automates the infusion process.

The device monitors drip flow, dose administration, and that whole treatment process. According to him, no woman or their new-born babies should die from an entirely avoidable incidence.

Abdulwaheed Alayande launched Trep Labs in 2019. In the short time since Alayande has won the Anzisha Prize. The company has secured a partnership with the Institute of Medical Research (NIMR).

SUCCESS

Egypt's Nadia El Din named regional winner of the 2020 Cartier Women's Initiative Award

CAIRO

CARTIER has announced the winners of its 2020 Women's Initiative Awards, with Nadia El Din collecting the regional title for her motherhood support platform, Rahet Bally.

Set up in 2014 to offer mothers financial, physical, emotional and intellectual assistance, Rahet Bally - which translates as 'peace of mind' - has helped an estimated 150,000 women across Egypt to date.

"Mums start crying when they come in because it's the first time anyone is taking care of them," El Din said in April of her organisation. "They can have a shower. They can drink a cup of coffee while it's

still hot. It's a place where they can actually breathe again."

The announcement means El Din will receive \$100,000 in funding, plus a scholarship to the elite Insead Social Entrepreneurship Executive Education Programme.

The two other Middle East finalists were Dr Rasha Rady from Egypt and her medicine tracking organisation Chefaa, and Blooming B's, set up in Saudi Arabia by Rihab Hasanain to tackle childhood obesity.

Established in 2006, the annual Women's Initiative prize was launched by Cartier to support female entrepreneurs, and each year is inundated with applicants. This year, for example, 1,200

women applied.

For the awards, the globe is divided into seven geographical regions, and three businesses per region are shortlisted each year for intensive business training and support.

From those, one woman per sector is announced as the winner and receives the full funding. The remaining 18 companies each receive \$30,000 in funding, plus additional business training.

Having already expressed a goal to "expand outside Cairo to the rest of the Mena region", being named a laureate for 2020 means that El Din and Rahet Bally are now one step closer to making that happen.



Nadia El Din.

PATENT

Danish fashion label promises to credit keffiyeh designs after cultural appropriation backlash

COPENHAGEN

A Danish fashion brand accused of cultural appropriation over its keffiyeh designs has promised to credit the pattern appropriately, after facing public criticism.

The woven geometric keffiyeh, also known as a ghutra or she-magh, refers to the traditional Arabian headdress often worn by Arab men. It's also regarded as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism, and solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

So, when a recent tweet drew attention to the fact that a European brand was producing this pattern in silhouettes like dresses, ruffled skirts, shorts and crop tops, without crediting the culture it was derived from, Arabs took to social media to protest.

The designs are by cult Danish label Cecilie Copenhagen - a brand that launched in 2012 after fashion student Cecilie Jorgensen crafted a top out of her mother's keffiyeh scarves. It was an instant hit, and by age 21, she was running a successful fashion brand centered around this historically-rooted textile.

I actually have one of the brand's tops hanging in my wardrobe. It's navy-blue, with a high neck, long sleeves and distinctive keffiyeh pattern, reminiscent of a traditional Arabian headdress. To me, it seemed like a chic marriage of Middle Eastern culture and mainstream style when I bought it six years ago, and I've remained a follower of the brand ever since.

Its latest designs had even tempted me into making another purchase, as they feature the keffiyeh pattern in trending shades

of lilac and millennial pink, in an array of drop-waist dresses, shorts-and-tee ensembles, and even scrunchies. Now I'm not so sure about it. In a tweet that has since gone viral, Amman-based graphic designer Rund Al Dwaik, suggested the brand was culturally appropriating Arab culture by using the keffiyeh pattern in its designs.

"It is unacceptable that this person has been capitalizing on these designs for the past 9 years," tweeted Al Dwaik, before calling on her followers, bloggers and influencers to spread the word and "spam her pages with comments."

In less than 48 hours, there were around 2,000 retweets and 3,000 likes from across the globe, and Cecilie Copenhagen's Instagram comments were flooded with icons of the Palestinian flag coupled with words like "disgrace" and "cultural theft." But the brand doesn't necessarily make the connection between culture and the keffiyeh pattern. On its website, it describes the print as "our handloom signature pattern" - and therein lies the main problem, claim crit-



A dress by Cecilie Jorgensen for her Danish line Cecilie Copenhagen which uses the traditional Palestinian keffiyeh pattern in designs.

ics. "The keffiyeh holds many cultural, historical and political connotations to Arabs in general - it has been part of our heritage and ancestry for a very long time," Al Dwaik said.

"In Palestine it has become a symbol of resistance, and when a Western designer with no background on Middle Eastern culture decides to build her entire brand around this print, and use it on items that would be considered inappropriate by many in the Middle East, with no mention of the origins of the print whatsoever, then she is very clearly culturally appropriating us and capitalising on that appropriation."

Some comments claim that the silhouettes used by the brand are disrespectful, and even offensive - since a pattern symbolising the resilience of an oppressed Muslim community, is being utilised on bikinis and shorts.

While the usage of the keffiyeh doesn't anger Dubai-based Arab-Mexican fashion designer Safiya Abdallah, she points out that the brand could help improve its narrative. "I think if brands used their voices, platforms and brand identities to bring awareness to people who are oppressed, it would be different. But when they just use the print, don't even acknowledge it and just act like they came up with it on their own, that's when it becomes an is-

sue." So, can one culture "own" a pattern or fabric? That is the question at the very heart of the cultural appropriation debate - and are Cecilie Copenhagen's designs instances of cultural appropriation? "It depends on whether they acknowledge the history of the print and if any Palestinians benefit monetarily from the production of these items," explains Dr Sofia Rehman, who founded the Islam and Feminism Critical Reading Group in Leeds. "If not, then in this case not only it is appropriation but would feed into the cultural arm of settler-colonialist objectives of Israel - another attempt at erasing Palestinian heritage, culture and history."

The brand's website makes no mention of Palestinians or of charitable initiatives pertaining to Arab communities. But Jorgensen is not the only fashion designer to have been inspired by keffiyeh scarves - they've been in and out of fashion for years, with recent versions by Giorgio Armani and Fendi selling online on e-commerce website Unass.

Many homegrown brands in the Gulf use the pattern for dresses, beach cover-ups and bags - like Dubai-based Keenbags, for instance, which is known for its beach totes produced from keffiyeh scarves. It has even become a popular textile for designers dabbling in protective fashion face masks amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

COVID-19

FlyWheel, TribeFit, Cure.fit say goodbye following coronavirus shutdown

DUBAI

IT has been 13 weeks since gyms across the UAE were forced to shut their doors to stem the spread of the coronavirus. Although gyms were permitted to welcome clients back - with strict restrictions in place - at the end of May, it seemed inevitable that some wouldn't reopen.

Facing months with no income from memberships, gyms turned to offering classes online for free, or for a fraction of their regular cost. But with running costs continuing to stay high for many, mounting bills have now proved too much for some.

Dubai Marina's TribeFit is 'closing for now' with options for members

When Dubai gyms reopened at the end of May, TribeFit put a message on Instagram, announcing that it would not be opening straight away. "Following the government's announcement that gyms are allowed to open, we are taking time to ensure the healthy and safety protocols are met. Members safety is our number one priority," the message read.

However, on Saturday, June 13, the TribeFit Members' Facebook page was updated with a letter that had been sent to customers. "Unfortunately, we find ourselves in very difficult times due to the unexpected and extraordinary circumstances posed by Covid-19, the global pandemic," the post reads.

"We have tried all avenues to remain afloat in our existing premises, including restructuring and seeking relief from suppliers and most importantly, our existing landlord.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts we have not been able to secure critical support to enable us to ride out this crisis. It is very disappointing for us and indeed everyone, as we have been forced to make the painful decision to close our existing club."

Moving forward, the gym, which was located in Dubai Marina's Silverene Tower, has partnered with GymNation, so TribeFit's existing members can now use their facilities at gyms across the UAE. TribeFit management say in the post that they plan to open a gym in Jumeirah Village Triangle by mid-October, "where the rent is much more affordable and in line with mar-

ket conditions prevailing in this time of Covid-19".

Flywheel permanently closed

After eight years, Flywheel announced last month that it is closing its doors in Dubai permanently. The company announced the news in an Instagram post, saying: "As the first boutique indoor cycling studio in Dubai, it is with a very heavy and sad heart that we have to say goodbye to Flywheel in Dubai.

"Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic, the ensuing lockdown, Flywheel US's closure, and the limited support for SMEs, has left us with no choice but to permanently close our doors." Flywheel US announced in August last year that it was closing a quarter of its cycling studios as it focused on in-home fitness.

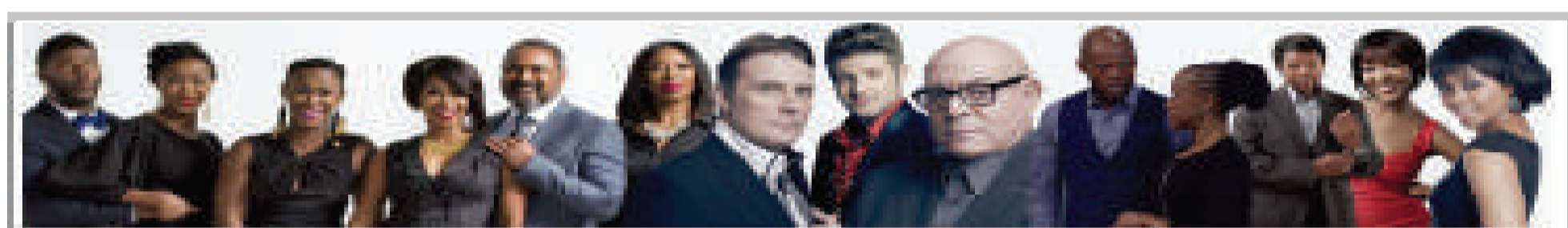
The brainchild of New York fitness entrepreneur Ruth Zukerman, and a huge hit in the US, Flywheel hit the UAE in late 2012 and steadily garnered fans at two Dubai locations ever since. It was widely credited with spearheading the boutique cycling craze in the UAE, a sector that now includes the likes of Crank in Alserkal Avenue, Cadence Theory and Motion cycling, both in Downtown Dubai.

However, earlier this year the company closed its Gold and Diamond Park location and moved its bikes into The Warehouse Gym, signalling that the boutique fitness movement had hit a few road bumps. Flywheel Dubai clients can contact the company for a refund for any outstanding credits.

Cure.fit closes its doors But Flywheel isn't the only gym that's found it too costly to weather the coronavirus storm. Earlier this month, India's largest fitness chain, Cure.fit, which had only recently opened in Dubai, closed its doors.

"Given the current pandemic and restrictions across the globe, our business is going through significant changes," a spokesman said.

"This comes at a time when the lockdown has affected our business and we see this continuing for extended periods. Even after reopening the centres, social distancing norms would persist and we feel this will continue to have an adverse impact on the overall business."



ISIDINGO

MONDAY - FRIDAY
STARTING 7:30 PM

ITV PGM SCHEDULE	19:00	21:15	13:45	21:00
SATURDAY 20 June	19:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	21:45 Kipindi Maalum: Utalii	Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	06:00 Al Jazeera
5:30 HABARI	20:00 Habari	22:15 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe	21:15 Capchat live
6:00 Kumekucha	21:05 Dakika 45	23:00 Habari	17:00 Igizo: Mtego	22:15 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny
6:40 Habari	21:45 Kipindi Maalum: Utawala bora na utumishi	23:30 The Base	18:00 Shamsam za Pwani	00:00 Al Jazeera
7:00 Habari	22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost	00:30 Al Jazeera	18:15 Jungu Kuu	Mon 22 June
8:00 Al Jazeera	23:00 Habari	2:00 DWTV	19:00 Shika Bamba	06:00 Al Jazeera
9:00 Watoto wetu	23:30 The Base	THURSDAY 25 June	20:00 Habari	07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
10:00 Shika Bamba 5	00:30 Al Jazeera	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	21:00 Art and lifestyle	09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
10:30 Mjue Zaidi rpt	02:00 DWTV	6:00 HABARI	21:30 ITV TOP 10	13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny
11:15 The Base rpt	TUESDAY 23 June	6:40 Kumekucha	22:15 Hawavumi lakini wamo	14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
11:45 The Great Queen Seonduk	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	7:30 HABARI	22:40 Igizingo rpt	16:00 Series rpt: Grapes of vine
12:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt	6:00 HABARI	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	01:30 DWTV	16:30 Tanzania Yetu rpt
13:15 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	6:40 Kumekucha	8:55 Habari za saa	SUNDAY 28 June	17:00 EcoAfrica rpt
15:30 Igizo rpt: Mapito	7:30 HABARI	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	17:30 Meza huru
16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	9:30 Isidingo	6:00 HABARI	19:00 The Décor rpt
16:20 Igizo: Mtego	8:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto	6:40 Kumekucha	19:30 Shamba lulu
17:00 Shamsam za Pwani	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	10:30 Shamba lulu rpt	7:00 Habari	20:00 Series: Grapes of vine
18:00 Jiji Letu	9:30 Isidingo	10:55 Habari za saa	8:00 Al Jazeera	20:45 The Monday Agenda
18:15 Mapishi	09:55 Habari za saa	11:00 The Base rpt	09:00 Watoto Wetu	21:30 Capital Prime News
18:30 Korean drama: Hwarang	10:00 Watoto wetu	11:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Isidingo	22:00 Kipima Joto
19:00 Jungu Kuu	10:30 Jungu Kuu rpt	12:00 Al Jazeera	11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt	00:00 Al Jazeera
19:30 Shika Bamba	10:55 Habari za saa	12:30 Habari	12:00 Bongo Movie rpt: Apple	Tues 23 June
20:00 Habari	11:00 The Base rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Tamasha la Michezo	06:00 Al Jazeera
21:00 Art and lifestyle	11:55 Habari za saa	13:00 Kipindi maalum: Equip Tanzania rpt	15:00 Mwangaza	07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
21:30 Hawavumi lakini wamo	12:00 Al Jazeera	13:30 Tanzania yetu rpt	16:00 The Great queen Seonduk	09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
22:15 Kesho leo rpt	12:30 Afa ya jamii rpt	13:55 Habari za saa	16:45 ITV Top 10	13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny
22:45 Isidingo rpt	12:55 Habari za saa	14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	17:00 Kipindi cha kikristo	14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
01:30 DWTV	13:00 Kipindi maalum: TMDA na Jamii	15:00 Meza huru	18:00 Jiji Letu	16:00 Series rpt: Grapes of vine
SUNDAY 21 June	13:30 Shika Bamba rpt	16:30 Watoto Wetu	18:15 Mapishi	16:30 Capchat rpt
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	13:55 Habari za saa	17:00 The Base	18:30 Matukio ya wiki	17:30 Meza huru
6:00 HABARI	14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	18:00 Jiji Letu	19:30 Igizo: Mtego	19:00 Innovation
6:40 Kumekucha	14:55 Habari za saa	18:15 Mapishi	20:00 Habari	19:30 Jagina rpt
7:00 Habari	15:00 Meza Huru	18:30 Jagina	21:05 Mizengwe	20:00 Series: Grapes of vine
8:00 Al Jazeera	16:30 Watoto wetu	19:00 Usafiri wako	21:20 Mjue Zaidi	20:45 Telenovela: (Destino) Destiny
09:00 Watoto Wetu	17:00 The Base	20:00 Habari	22:05 Bongo Movie: Kiboko Kabisa	21:30 Capital Prime
10:00 Isidingo	18:00 Jiji Letu	21:00 Malumbano ya hoja	00:05 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	22:00 Turning the spotlight rpt
11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt	18:10 Yu wapi	23:00 Habari	CAPITAL	23:00 EcoAfrica
12:00 Bongo Movie rpt: Apolo	18:15 Mapishi rpt	23:30 The Base	Sat 20 June	23:30 Al Jazeera
14:00 Tamasha la Michezo	18:30 Uchumi na biashara	00:30 DWTV	08:00 CNN International	Wed 24 June
15:00 Mwangaza	19:00 Jarida la wanawake	FRIDAY 26 June	09:00 Drive It rpt	06:00 Al Jazeera
16:00 The Great queen Seonduk	19:30 Isidingo	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	09:30 Turning the Spotlight rpt	07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)
16:45 ITV Top 10	20:00 Haban	6:00 HABARI	10:00 Culinary delight rpt	09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)
17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo	21:00 Kipindi maalum: Equip Tanzania	6:40 Kumekucha	10:30 Innovation rpt	13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny
18:00 Jiji Letu	21:15 Tanzania Yetu	7:30 HABARI	11:00 Out n' about rpt	14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)
18:15 Mapishi	21:45 Ripoti Maalum	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	11:30 Sports Gazette rpt	16:00 Series rpt: Grapes of vine
18:30 Matukio ya wiki	22:30 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost	09:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	12:00 Usafiri wako rpt	16:30 Culinary delight rpt
19:30 Igizo: Mtego	23:00 Habari	9:30 Isidingo	12:30 EcoAfrica rpt	17:00 Innovation rpt
20:00 Habari	23:30 The Base	10:00 Watoto wetu	13:00 Business edition rpt	17:30 Meza Huru
21:05 Mizengwe	00:30 DWTV	10:30 Usafiri wako rpt	13:30 Korean Drama rpt: Kimchi Family	19:00 Sports Gazette
21:20 Mjue Zaidi	WEDNESDAY 24 June	11:00 The Base	14:00 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny	19:30 Chetu ni chetu
22:05 ITV Top 10	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	12:00 Al Jazeera	17:15 Tanzania Yetu rpt	20:00 Series: Grapes of vine
22:50 Bongo Movie: Aple	6:00 HABARI	12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco	17:45 Bundesliga kick off	20:45 Telenovela: (Destino) Destiny
00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	6:40 Kumekucha	13:00 Jagina rpt	18:15 Capchat rpt	21:30 Capital Prime News
MONDAY 22 June	7:30 HABARI	13:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt	19:15 Mizengwe	22:00 Dakika 45:
5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	19:30 The Décor	23:15 Al Jazeera
6:00 HABARI	8:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	Thurs 25 June	
6:40 Kumekucha	9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	16:30 Watoto Wetu	06:00 Al Jazeera	
7:30 HABARI	9:30 Isidingo	17:00 The Base	07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)	
8:00 Kumekucha Michezo	09:55 Habari za saa	17:30 Ibada ya kiislamu	09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)	
8:55 Habari za saa	10:00 Watoto wetu	18:00 Jiji Letu	13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny	
9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo	10:30 Uchumi na biashara	18:15 Mizengwe rpt	14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)	
9:30 Isidingo	10:55 Habari za saa	18:30 Shamba lulu	16:00 Series rpt: Grapes of vine	
09:55 Habari za saa	11:00 The Base rpt	19:00 Kipindi Maalum: TMDA na jamii	16:30 Business edition rpt	
10:00 Watoto wetu	11:55 Habari za saa	19:30 Isidingo	17:00 In good shape	
10:55 Habari za saa	12:00 Al Jazeera	20:00 Habari	17:30 Meza huru	
11:00 ITV Top 10 rpt	12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt	21:05 Kipima Joto	19:00 Turning the spotlight	
11:55 Habari za saa	12:55 Habari za saa	23:00 Habari	19:30 Tanzania yetu	
12:00 Al Jazeera News	13:00 Dakika 45	23:30 The Base	20:00 Series: Grapes of vine	
12:30 Mtego rpt	13:45 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Utawala bora na utumishi	00:30 DWTV	20:45 Telenovela: (Destino) Destiny	
12:55 Habari za saa	13:55 Habari za saa	SATURDAY 27 June	21:30 Capital Prime News	
13:00 Mjue Zaidi	14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi	22:00 Capchat rpt	
13:45 Art and Lifestyle rpt	14:55 Habari za saa	6:00 HABARI	23:00 Al Jazeera	
13:55 Habari za saa	15:00 Meza huru	6:40 Kumekucha	Frid 26 June	
14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost	16:30 Watoto Wetu	7:00 Habari	06:00 Al Jazeera	
14:55 Habari za saa	17:00 The Base	8:00 Al Jazeera	06:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio)	
15:00 Meza huru	18:00 Jiji Letu	9:00 Watoto wetu	07:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio)	
16:30 Watoto Wetu	18:15 Korean drama rpt: The great queen Seonduk	10:00 Shika Bamba 5	13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Destino) Destiny	
17:00 The Base	19:00 Ijue Sheria	10:30 Mjue Zaidi rpt	14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio)	
18:00 Jiji Letu	19:30 Isidingo	11:15 Chetu ni chetu rpt	16:00 Series rpt: Grapes of vine	
18:10 Aibu yako rpt	20:00 Haban	12:15 The Great Queen Seonduk	16:30 The Monday Agenda rpt	
18:15 Mapishi	21:00 Kipindi Maalum: Equip Tanzania	13:00 Korean drama rpt: Hwarang	17:30 Meza huru	
18:45 Kesho leo				

WORLD

Johnson, Macron hold first face-to-face talks since coronavirus pandemic started

LONDON

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron held talks Thursday at 10 Downing Street, the first meeting between heads of state in Britain since the coronavirus pandemic started.

The two spent around 45 minutes in private talks, and instead Downing Street issued a statement about the meeting.

On Brexit negotiations, Johnson welcomed the agreement to intensify talks in July and underlined that Britain does not believe it makes sense for the nego-

tiations to be prolonged into the fall, according to the statement.

Britain has formally ruled out the possibility of an extended post-Brexit transition period. Johnson on Monday held video talks with European Union (EU) chiefs, with both sides calling for a new momentum in the search for an agreement before the end of this year when the Brexit transition period ends.

Meanwhile, Johnson and Macron welcomed the ongoing cooperation between Britain and France on small boats and illegal migration, said the statement.

Hundreds of refugees have been making the perilous journey in small boats across the English Channel, one of the world's busiest waterways, from mainland Europe.

The two leaders also discussed cooperation on the fight against coronavirus.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (L) meets with French President Emmanuel Macron at 10 Downing Street in London, Britain, on Thursday. Boris Johnson and Emmanuel Macron held talks at 10 Downing Street, the first meeting between heads of state in Britain since the COVID-19 pandemic started. (Xinhua)

"They agreed that the partnership between our countries will be crucial in overcoming the coronavirus pandemic and ensuring the global recovery is green and sustainable," added the statement.

Macron's visit to London came on the 80th anniversary of a famous speech made by French Resistance leader Charles de Gaulle in a BBC radio broadcast directed at people in Nazi-occupied France.

During their meeting, Johnson and Macron reflected on the sacrifice made by the British and French people in the World War II and on the enduring strength of the Britain-France relationship.

"They highlighted the modern day successes of this friendship including the political and defense cooperation enshrined in the Lancaster House Agreement ten years ago," the state-

ment said.

At Downing Street, Johnson guided Macron around a display of artefacts documenting General de Gaulle's time in London and his partnership with Britain's wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Earlier, Macron and Britain's Prince Charles laid wreaths at a statue in London of General de Gaulle. A statue of Churchill in London, boarded up after being vandalised during Black Lives Matter demonstrations, was uncovered ahead of the French leaders' visit to the British capital. **Xinhua**

Russia, Finland have no territorial claims to each other - Russian diplomat

MOSCOW



RUSSIA and Finland have no disputed territories and have never raised the issue of border transfer after World War II, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday commenting on reports about alleged talks between the two countries on ceding part of the former Soviet Union's territory to Finland.

"The territorial issue is not on the agenda of the Russian-Finnish relations. Such topics as the revision of the borderline after World War II have never been discussed in dialogue with the Finnish partners," she said.

"The existing border between Russia and Finland was fixed by the effective international law acts, first of all, by the Peace Treaty with Finland that was signed in Paris on February 10, 1947."

According to Zakharova, this is the two countries' common position reiterated at the top level. "The absence of disputes is proved by the fact that in 2017 the Russian and Finnish governments signed a protocol on the Russian-Finnish state borderline," she added.

According to Finland's *Ilta-Sanomat* newspaper, Jukka Sepinen, a former Finnish diplomat, wrote in his new book that in the late 1980s-early 1990s Moscow was allegedly ready to discuss possible transfer of Karelia to Finland but the ten Finnish President Mauno Koivisto refused to discuss this matter.

China's exports see recovery

A China-Europe freight train fully loaded with 41 carriages of clothes, footwear, hats, mechanical equipment, plastic granulate, and anti-epidemic medical supplies recently departed from Xinzhu Station of Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi province, for Hamburg, Germany.

With the help of multimodal transport, the Chinese commodities have eventually entered a vast market in Europe.

China has made all-out efforts to recover its exports amid the continuous efforts to prevent and control the COVID-19 disease, by introducing a series of preferential policies and encouraging its enterprises to explore new markets.

Thanks to these measures, China's trade in goods has begun to recover. In April, the value of exported goods totaled 1.41 trillion yuan (\$199.1 billion), up by 8.2 percent on a yearly basis, while that in May rose 1.4 percent year on year to 1.46 trillion yuan, according to the General Administration of Customs (GAC). These figures stand as a contrast to the drop in the data in the first quarter of the year.

The rebound demonstrates that the fundamentals of China's foreign trade remain unchanged.

Qingdao Sanshuo Health Industry Development Co., Ltd., a sporting goods company in east China's Shandong province, has fully recovered production.

The company has attracted many new European customers since April, and seen its orders signed till July, according to Yang Liyun, director of the international department of the company.

In the medium and long term, the fundamentals sustaining the sound development of China's foreign trade remain unchanged.

Since the beginning of this year, all local governments and relevant departments rolled out measures to facilitate resumption of production and work, in a bid to secure foreign trade.

A total of 297,000 enterprises across the country had import or export activities in March, an increase of 53.4 percent compared to February, says the GAC.

The recovery in exports also signaled the improvement in the competitiveness of the companies.

"We have almost worked overtime every day since resumption of work," said Pan Yanjun, president of Dinggang Science and Technology Co., Ltd. in east China's Zhejiang province.

Pan thinks the success of securing orders can be largely attributed to the company's efforts in innovation, research and development. Through the continuous efforts in developing intelligent applications, the company aims to expand its presence in the market.

In recent years, China's foreign trade companies have worked faster to bring in talents, upgrade technology and develop new products, gaining an edge over their international competitors.

Amid the ongoing efforts of epidemic prevention, foreign trade companies accelerated their pace of upgrading and improvement to better ward off risks in the market.

According to GAC statistics, export of electro-mechanical products in the first five months of the year registered 3.64 trillion yuan, among which the export of automatic data processing equipment and its components increased 1.8 percent year on year to 508.61 billion yuan.

People's Daily

African leaders, experts hail Xi's remarks at Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19

BEIJING

AFRICAN leaders and experts spoke highly of Chinese President Xi Jinping's remarks at the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19 on Wednesday, hailing achievements of China-Africa cooperation in fighting the pandemic.

In his remarks, Xi called on China and Africa to defeat the novel coronavirus with solidarity and cooperation. He said the two sides should work together to build a China-Africa community of health for all and take their comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership to a greater height.

Leaders of African countries, including members of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government and rotating chairs of major African sub-regional organizations, and the

chairperson of the AU Commission, attended the summit held via video link.

AU chairperson and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said: "This Extraordinary China-Africa Solidarity Summit against COVID-19 demonstrates the depth and resilience of solidarity between China and Africa."

He said humanity is facing a grave and uncertain crisis as it confronts a virus which by its nature knows no geographic boundaries and recognises no national sovereignty.

"Sino-Africa solidarity and better multilateral cooperation is key to winning the battle against this pandemic. Through this and other platforms, let us continue to strengthen the bonds of solidarity that exist among us and take collective action to secure the future of humanity," Ramaphosa (pic-



tured) said.

He expressed the gratitude of the African people to President Xi, the Chinese government and people for their generous donation of personal protective equipment and other medical assistance provided for Africa.

Calling the summit "an excellent initiative," Senegalese President Macky Sall said that leaders attending the meeting have reaffirmed their aspiration to consolidate the friendship between Africa and China and to build a community

with a shared future for mankind.

Sall also voiced support for the role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in coordinating the global response to the epidemic.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari commended the Chinese government, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the WHO for their respective actions and measures to help developing countries in Africa to tackle the pandemic.

Buhari acknowledged that China's support had tremendously strengthened Nigeria's effort in combating COVID-19, adding that President Xi's strong support has further demonstrated the spirit of solidarity and enhanced the bond of partnership that already exist among the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) members.

Boubacar Abdou, technical advisor to the president of the Eco-

nomie, Social and Cultural Council in Niger, said that China has played a decisive role in the fight against COVID-19 worldwide and particularly in Africa, by reaching out to others.

"It must be recognized that in the fight against the pandemic, China has been an important partner for Africa in general and West Africa in particular. After successfully stemming the spread of the disease on their own territory, the Chinese quickly flew to the aid of other countries by first sending doctors, then medical supplies, to really deal with the pandemic," said Abdou.

"The Chinese aid has enabled African countries, which are not well-equipped for the pandemic, to benefit from the expertise of Chinese doctors and have prevention equipment," Abdou said. **Xinhua**

US Supreme Court thwarts Trump plan to end 'Dreamers' immigrant programme

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday dealt President Donald Trump a major setback on his hardline immigration policies, blocking his bid to end a program that protects from deportation hundreds of thousands of immigrants - often called "Dreamers" - who entered the United States illegally as children.

The 5-4 ruling, with conservative Chief Justice John Roberts joining the court's four liberals, upheld lower court decisions that found that Trump's 2017 move to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, created in 2012 by his Democratic predecessor Barack Obama, was unlawful.

The administration's actions, the justices ruled, were "arbitrary and capricious" under a federal law

called the Administrative Procedure Act.

The ruling means that the roughly 649,000 immigrants, mostly young Hispanic adults born in Mexico and other Latin American countries, currently enrolled in DACA will remain protected from deportation and eligible to obtain renewable two-year work permits.

The ruling does not prevent Trump from trying again to end the program. But his administration may find it difficult to rescind DACA - and win any ensuing legal battle - before the Nov. 3 election in which Trump is seeking a second term in office.

"We do not decide whether DACA or its rescission are sound policies. We address only whether the agency complied with the procedural requirement that it provide a reasoned



explanation for its action," Roberts wrote, referring to Trump's Department of Homeland Security.

The ruling marked the second time this week that Roberts ruled against Trump in a major case following Monday's decision finding that gay and transgender workers are protected under federal employment law.

"These horrible & politically charged decisions coming out of the

Supreme Court are shotgun blasts into the face of people that are proud to call themselves Republicans or Conservatives," Trump wrote on Twitter after the DACA ruling.

The Republican president said he wanted "a legal solution on DACA, not a political one" and that "now we have to start this process all over again." Trump did not specify what action he envisioned.

DACA recipients and their supporters in Congress including House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and in the business community welcomed the ruling and called for enactment of permanent protections.

"I felt tears of relief running down my face," said Wendy Larios, a 19-year-old college student and DACA enrollee who is studying nursing and psychology in Bakersfield,

California.

Trump's administration had argued that Obama exceeded his constitutional powers when he created DACA by executive action, bypassing Congress.

States including California and New York, DACA enrollees and civil rights groups sued to block Trump's plan to end the program. Lower courts in California, New York and the District of Columbia ruled against Trump and left DACA in place.

The court's four other conservatives including two Trump appointees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, dissented.

"Today's decision must be recognized for what it is: an effort to avoid a politically controversial but legally correct decision," Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in dissent.

Chinese companies advance safe operation of overseas projects amid pandemic

TAKING strict containment measures, Chinese companies have both advanced progress of overseas projects and secured the health of their overseas employees amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is very considerate of you and I'm sure we could defeat the epidemic guided by your successful experience," said Salim, an Algerian engineer working for a project in Algeria undertaken by the Third Construction Co., Ltd. of China Construction Third Engineering Bureau.

He praised the Chinese company's practice when talking to Li Fei, deputy head of the company's pandemic containment team over the phone, right after learning that the company allowed

its employees to work from home during the pandemic for the sake of their safety.

The pandemic containment team was established immediately after Algeria reported the first pneumonia case on February 25, Li introduced. The company required all of its employees, both Chinese and foreigners, to report their health conditions on a daily basis, and distributed masks to them. Besides, the company also requested its employees to disinfect offices, cafeterias and vehicles.

"We didn't dismiss anyone amid the pandemic. We did our best to ensure the safety of all our foreign employees and help solve their problems," said Li.

Since some of them don't have fixed

residence or source of income during the pandemic, our company provided them with free accommodation and meals, Li introduced.

Besides, the company also offered them with new jobs to work as patrols in a bid to support them with stable income.

Since Africa was hit by the pandemic, Chinese engineering projects in Africa have become a front for China-Africa joint efforts to fight the disease, where China's anti-pandemic experience was promoted by Chinese constructors.

The Caculo Cabaca hydropower project in Dondo, Angola undertaken by China Gezhouba Group Co., Ltd. (CGGC) is the largest hydropower station constructed by a Chinese enterprise in

Africa. Once completed, it is expected to offer more than 40 percent of the country's electricity supply and greatly promote local economic and social development.

"Over 200 Chinese employees and about 200 foreigners work on the construction site," said Peng Zhan, director of the project's quality and security inspection department, adding that it wasn't really easy to prevent the spread of the virus while ensuring the progress of the project.

Drawing on the experience of Chinese communities in combating the virus, the company divided the construction areas and lodging houses into 7 independent units. Each unit is equipped with a specially-assigned employee who

records and reports the health conditions of the employees in the unit and monitors the disinfection and prevention work.

The anti-epidemic measures have achieved remarkable results, with no suspected or confirmed cases found within the project, Peng noted.

For the 475 local employees working for the Mekelle water supply project, another CGGC project in Ethiopia, preventative materials were extremely scarce commodities. To cope with the situation, the material buyer at the project department Yuan Xianchao contacted his colleagues back in China and purchased 100,000 masks and other supplies for the local employees.

"We are at ease with you here," said

an Ethiopian employee after receiving masks and disinfectant from his Chinese employer.

"As the local testing and medical resources are limited, we have strictly followed the practices at home to prevent the virus and ensure safety," said Li Fengbiao, manager of the Mekelle water supply project.

According to him, temperature taking, hand washing, disinfection and registration have been developed into a routine at the construction site.

Besides, it also locked down the lodging houses of the employees, asked them to work in shifts and separated the construction areas. "The locals trusted China's experience and were willing to cooperate," Li said. **People's Daily**

Adhering to the Path of Solidarity, Cooperation and Win-win Results

--Remarks by H.E. Wang Yi State Councillor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China At the High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation
2020/06/19

Dear Colleagues,
Friends,
Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization,
Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme,

Welcome to the High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation.

COVID-19, with its wide-ranging impacts, is posing a challenge to mankind rarely seen before. To defeat the virus and tide over this crisis, the world must come together in solidarity, partnership and cooperation.

For this reason, China initiated this High-level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation. We hope that at such a trying time, a message of unity and cooperation from Belt and Road partners will bolster our confidence in promoting Belt and Road cooperation and in defeating the virus.

Since President Xi proposed this initiative in 2013, thanks to the active participation and strong support of all parties, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has kept growing in both depth and substance.

It has evolved into the largest platform for international cooperation playing an ever more important role in promoting development and prosperity around the world. Marked by last year's successful Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, it has embarked on a new phase of high quality cooperation.

Over the past year and more, despite headwinds like COVID-19 and a sluggish global economy, Belt and Road cooperation has pressed ahead against all odds, making new, encouraging progress.

First, our family of partners has continued to expand. Over the past year, 29 new government-to-government cooperation documents were signed, bringing the total number of such documents to 200.

Second, trade and economic exchanges have continued to expand. In 2019, trade in goods between China and BRI partners topped US\$1.3 trillion, up by 6 percent year on year. Chinese investment in Belt and Road countries increased by US\$15 billion. In the first quarter of this year, trade between China and BRI partners rose by 3.2 percent, and direct investment by China up by 11.7 percent on a yearly basis.

Third, connectivity-building has continued to make headway.

- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is moving forward steadily.

- The Chinese and Russian sections of two new bridges, the Heihe highway bridge and Tongjiang railway bridge, have been joined.

- The E763 highway in Serbia and phase 1 of the Nairobi-Malaba railway entered into operation.

- The construction of the Jakarta-Bandung high speed railway is in full swing.

- A large number of new connectivity projects have been successfully launched.

- Even with the impact of COVID-19, the Man Mai No. 1 Tunnel of the China-Laos railway was holed through.

- The Hungarian section of the Budapest-Belgrade railway has seen important progress.

- Projects from the China-Bangla-



State Councillor & Foreign Minister Wang Yi

desh Padma Bridge to the dual-fuel power plant in Cambodia are well underway.

All these have served to bolster the economic growth and social stability of countries concerned.

In the face of COVID-19, BRI partners have extended a helping hand to each other. Many of your countries lent valuable support to China. China, on its part, provided assistance to 122 BRI partners to support their response to the virus.

China sent medical teams to 25 countries and shared its experience in containment, diagnostics and therapeutics with all countries without reservation. Between January and May, the China-Europe Railway Express saw a 28 percent increase in freight train services, and 32 percent in freight volume. To date, it has transported 12,524 tons of medical supplies, serving as a key "cargo lifeline" and "bond of solidarity".

These facts have shown that, far from holding back Belt and Road cooperation, COVID-19 has only highlighted its strong resilience and vitality. Coming through this testing time, BRI cooperation will enjoy a stronger foundation, greater driving forces and brighter prospects.

Colleagues,

COVID-19 is changing the world in profound ways. As President Xi pointed out in his message, humanity is in fact a community with a shared future. Be it in taming the virus or in achieving economic recovery, we cannot succeed without solidarity, cooperation and multilateralism. In this process, we, as BRI partners, have the responsibility and indeed the obligation to set an example.

First, let us step up public health cooperation to make greater contributions to the global fight against COVID-19.

As part of the efforts to follow through on the health cooperation commitment set out in the Joint Communiqué of last year's Belt and Road Forum, we need to share experience in COVID-19 response, and make concerted efforts for the assistance and provision of containment supplies and the research and production of therapeutics and vaccines.

All this will help push forward the development of a "Silk Road of health". We should continue to support WHO in playing a leading role in coordinating the global response to COVID-19, explore the establishment of regional response liaison mechanisms for public health emergencies, and convene when appropriate a high-level meeting on global public health security.

We also need to take good care of

foreign nationals like our own, and provide timely medical services to and protect the safety of those working for the Belt and Road and other cooperation projects.

Second, let us strengthen connectivity to provide a solid underpinning for the economic recovery of our countries. We need to accelerate the building of a global partnership on connectivity and keep industrial and supply chains secure, open and stable. We need to step up policy coordination and maintain the right balance between proper COVID-19 containment and sound socio-economic development.

We need to get key Belt and Road infrastructure projects restarted as early as possible, and work for greater progress in the China-Europe Railway Express, the Maritime Silk Road, the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, Silk Road in the Air and other international transportation links. Major Belt and Road projects should be vigorously taken forward such as economic corridors and economic and trade cooperation zones, and investment should be increased in critical infrastructure projects.

These efforts will help countries preserve jobs and protect people's well-being, and contribute to the economic stability and growth of Belt and Road partners and the wider world.

Third, let us carry out cooperation in innovation to inject fresh impetus into sustainable global growth. Innovation spurs productivity.

We need to harness new industries and business models engendered in the course of COVID-19 response, strengthen cooperation in 5G, big data, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing, and push forward the building of the digital Silk Road. We also need to work with UN development agencies to advance global sustainable development and build a "green Silk Road". This way, our economies will not just recover, but realize transformation and upgrading, and our countries will enjoy high-quality development.

Fourth, let us uphold multilateralism, and advocate openness and inclusiveness. The essence of Belt and Road cooperation is the principle of consultation and cooperation for shared benefits and the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and transparency.

It also represents the defining trend of our times. Belt and Road cooperation can and should become a prime example of safeguarding globalization and free trade and advancing reform to update global governance. We must firmly reject unilateralism and protectionism,

and stay committed to an open world economy. We must defend the multilateral trading system, and enhance trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, in an effort to foster a more open, inclusive and balanced economic globalization that benefits all. We need to advance trilateral and multilateral cooperation to synergize the Belt and Road Initiative and other bilateral and multilateral cooperation programs for win-win results.

Colleagues,

To beat the virus and energize economic recovery is a pressing task facing all our countries. With this in mind, China will strengthen communication and coordination with Belt and Road partners on a priority basis and provide support in the following five key areas.

First, under the US\$2 billion international assistance program announced by President Xi Jinping, we will support the affected Belt and Road partners, developing countries in particular, in fighting COVID-19 and resuming economic and social development.

Second, in the development and application of vaccines, we will give positive consideration to the needs of Belt and Road partners, and support technical exchanges and cooperation through such platforms as the Alliance of International Science Organizations in the Belt and Road Region.

Third, we are ready to start technical communication and coordination with Belt and Road partners as soon as possible to discuss the establishment of fast-track lanes for cross-border flows of people and goods.

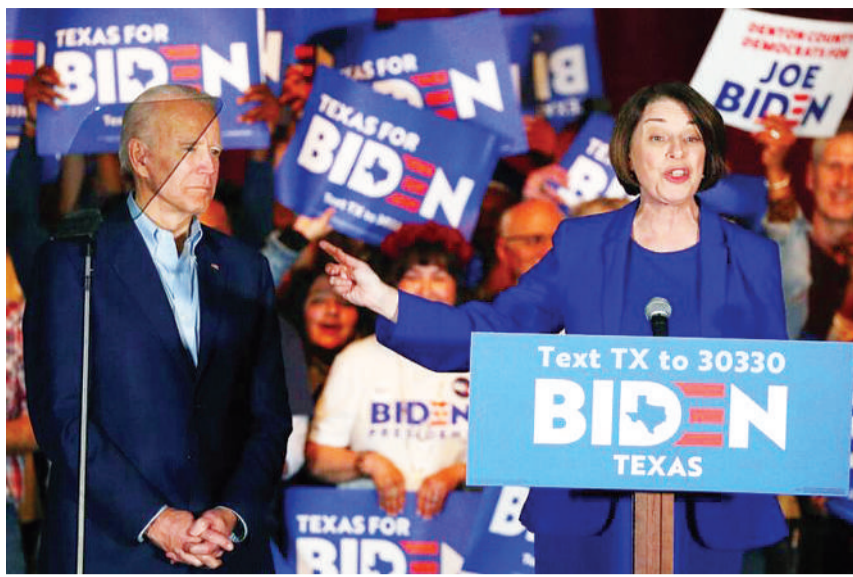
Fourth, we are ready to hold a transportation ministers' video conference with Belt and Road partners, as part of our efforts to maintain the smooth functioning and security of international industrial and supply chains and logistics systems.

Fifth, we stand ready to step up cooperation with Belt and Road partners in innovation, join hands to promote Silk Road e-commerce, and advance cooperation in smart cities and green development.

Colleagues,

Just as the rainbow comes after the rain, by adhering to the people-centered approach, working together to build a community with a shared future for mankind, and pursuing win-win cooperation, we will make the Belt and Road a model of cooperation, health, recovery and growth. Together, we will bring about a brighter future for the world.

Thank you.



US Senator Amy Klobuchar (right), D-Minn., endorses Democratic presidential candidate and former Vice-President Joe Biden at a campaign rally in Dallas. (File photo)

VP race: Klobuchar drops out to make room for women of colour

US Senator Amy Klobuchar effectively pulled herself out of contention to be Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate on Thursday, saying she felt that the historic moment required picking a woman of color.

"This is a moment to put a woman of color on that ticket, and there are so many incredible qualified women," she said in an interview on MSNBC. "If you want to heal this nation right now - my party, yes, but our nation - this is sure a hell of a way to do it."

Biden, who will take on Republican President Donald Trump in the Nov 3 election, is under pressure to pick a black woman as his understudy as racial tensions flare over instances of police brutality, including the videotaped death last month of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, after a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for several minutes.

Klobuchar's record as the top prosecutor for the Minnesota county that includes Minneapolis, where Floyd died, came under scrutiny. Some Democrats took issue with her record

on police misconduct and other prosecutions.

Klobuchar, who competed against Biden for the party's presidential nomination before endorsing him, said she spoke with Biden on Wednesday night.

Biden late on Thursday praised Klobuchar's "grit and determination" on Twitter and said that "with your help, we're going to beat Donald Trump."

Biden has already promised to pick a woman as his running mate, and several black candidates are on his short list, including Senator Kamala Harris and Representative Val Demings.

He has also considered candidates of other backgrounds, including Senator Elizabeth Warren, who is white.

Some African-American leaders and activists have said that a black woman on the ticket would help demonstrate to black voters, a crucial component of the Democratic base, that Biden is committed to addressing issues such as criminal justice reform and police misconduct.

Agencies

'Can't play Trump like a fiddle': Kremlin puts Bolton's Putin-baiting crusade to rest

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin does not think his US counterpart Donald Trump could be manipulated, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists yesterday, commenting on remarks made by Trump's ex-National Security Advisor John Bolton ahead of publication of his book.

"Putin cannot play Trump like a fiddle," Peskov said, commenting on Bolton's relevant remark. "What Putin thinks of Trump, he himself said repeatedly in numerous interviews."

Answering a question whether Putin considers Trump easy to manipulate, Peskov said that he does not.

Earlier, the US Ministry of Justice, which also acts as the Prosecutor General's Office, filed a lawsuit against Bolton over the upcoming publication of his memoirs. The US authorities accuse Bolton of violation of non-disclosure obligations towards state secrets, which Bolton took upon himself when he became a presidential aide.

Bolton's book was initially supposed to be published in March, but its publication was postponed first until May and later until June 23. On January 23, the White House National Security Council sent a note to the ex-aide's lawyer, Charles Cooper, notifying him that the book contains state secrets and therefore cannot be published in its current form.

The critics say the White House seeks to prevent undermining of the incumbent president's ratings ahead of the upcoming elections, since Trump plans running for re-election.

Trump appointed Bolton his National Security Advisor in March 2018, and dismissed him 18 months later.

Agencies



Former US National Security Advisor John Bolton

White paper on battle against COVID-19 an authentic record of China's arduous efforts

"THIS is a war that humanity has to fight and win. Facing this unknown, unexpected, and devastating disease, China launched a resolute battle to prevent and control its spread."

The State Council Information Office of China on June 7 published a white paper on the country's battle against COVID-19. The white paper, titled "Fighting COVID-19: China in Action," consists of four parts: "China's Fight against the Epidemic: A Test of Fire," "Well-Coordinated Prevention, Control and Treatment," "Assembling a Powerful Force to Beat the Virus," and "Building a Global Community of Health for All."

The white paper keeps a record

of the country's efforts in its own fight against the virus, shares the country's experience with the rest of the world, and clarifies the country's ideas on the global battle.

The document is an important and authentic record of China's arduous efforts to fight the disease, presenting the country's strength, spirit and efficiency in an objective manner and manifesting the magnificent and melting spirit of the Chinese people. It has struck a chord across the country and triggered wide attention from the international society.

The Covid-19 global pandemic, the most extensive one to afflict

humanity in a century, is a serious crisis for the entire world and a daunting challenge. Facing the sudden onslaught of a previously unknown virus, the Chinese people united as one, and adopted the most extensive, stringent, and thorough containment measures under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core. They achieved a major strategic success in the nationwide control efforts at huge cost and sacrifices.

The daunting challenge fully proved that the leadership of the CPC, the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the

governance system of China are of strong vitality and advantages, and are able to tackle any challenge and obstacle and make major contribution to the progress of human civilization.

"Nothing matters more than people and life. We will stop at nothing to protect our people's life and health."

What Chinese President Xi Jinping noted is a core philosophy that guided China's battle against COVID-19, and a fundamental reason for the country to have contained the virus in a short period of time. He has emphasized at the very beginning of the epidemic that people's lives and health must come first.

China mobilized the best doctors using the most advanced equipment, and critical supplies were pooled to save lives at all costs. It has ensured that all those in need have been tested, quarantined, hospitalized or treated, from an infant to a centenarian, and the cost was all shouldered by the country.

The country adhered to cross-region joint prevention and control and society-wide efforts to contain the virus. Relying on the people, it built tremendous power against the virus.

After weathering the epidemic, the Chinese people have keenly realized that the CPC leadership is the most reliable shelter against

storms. Their trust in and support for the Party have increased, along with their confidence in China's political system.

Coronavirus is raging all over the world, and lives are being lost every day. Which route shall we take? Shall we uphold science and rationality, or shall we manufacture political disputes? Strengthen unity and cooperation, or seek isolation? Promote multilateral coordination, or pursue unilateralism? Every country has a choice to make.

China has been carrying out exchanges and cooperation with the international community from the outset. It has strengthened high-level communication, shared in-

formation, and cooperated in scientific research with international organizations and other countries, and done all it can to provide assistance, contributing ingenuity and strength to the global fight against the coronavirus.

Solidarity and cooperation are the most powerful weapons available to the international community in the war against the pandemic.

What we do today determines how we will fare in the future. China believes that all countries should make the choice that is right for the interests of all humanity and the wellbeing of our future generations.

People's Daily

The
Guardian

SPORT



Yuriko Koike

Call to cancel Tokyo Olympics enters race for Tokyo governor

TOKYO

THE contentious issue of the billions being spent on the postponed Tokyo Olympics has entered the debate in the race for governor of Japan's capital.

Incumbent Yuriko Koike is a strong favorite to be reelected – and a strong supporter of the Olympics – in a field of more than a dozen candidates. The campaign officially opened Thursday.

Taro Yamamoto is a popular actor, turned politician who has entered the fray. He said in a debate this week that the Olympics should be called off and the billions redirected to help people struggling with the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

"The Olympics should be canceled," Yamamoto told Koike. "There is no guarantee to hold the games safely in Tokyo, and we don't have a vaccine yet" for COVID-19.

Yamamoto and others have warned about bringing in 11,000 Olympic athletes from 200 nations and territories, 4,400 Paralympians, and thousands more staff, technical officials, broadcasters and journalists. Add to this fans – if they are allowed – who have bought more than 4 million tickets, up to 80,000 volunteers, and questions about the need for quarantines.

"Tokyo will turn into a Petri dish by having so many people coming from around the world," Yamamoto said. "We should notify the International Olympic Committee that Tokyo cannot hold the event safely."

Another candidate, well-respected lawyer Kenji Utsunomiya, also supports calling off the Olympics based on the judgment of infectious disease experts. Two other candidates have proposed a 2- to 4-year postponement.

Koike, the International Olympic Committee, and local organizers say they are trying to scale

back, downsize, and simplify the Tokyo Games, which have already been pushed back by 12 months. They've revealed no specifics so far, with hints about cutting back the opening and closing ceremonies, or the torch relay.

More questions than answers remain. Officials have said the events and athlete quotas will not be touched, and there is no talk of cancellation, with the Olympics set to open on July 23, 2021.

Soaring bills are an issue. Estimates in Japan say the one-year postponement will cost \$2 billion to \$6 billion. Koike has declined to give an official estimate, as have the IOC and the local organizing committee. They say it's too early to know, but Japan is slated to pay most of the costs.

"We must gain the understanding of the residents of Tokyo and citizens," Koike said, referring to costs and the budget, in a separate interview with The Associated Press.

Overall, Tokyo says it's spending \$12.6 billion to organize the Olympics, although a government audit last year said it was twice that much. All but \$5.6 billion is public money.

Tokyo estimated the Olympics could cost \$7.3 billion when the city was awarded the games in 2013.

"While many children and athletes are earnestly looking forward to the Olympics, we must keep the coronavirus under control, and the question is if a vaccine will be ready by then. It's a race against time," Koike said.

Koike, like the IOC, is betting the Olympics can be framed as a victory celebration over the pandemic, and the public will forget the tax bill.

"There are many issues to be resolved," Koike said. "But when we have a major global goal and share it, and when it becomes a proof of victory in our fight against the coronavirus, what a meaningful event it will be."

AP

Birdies galore at Hilton Head, and Spieth needed them badly

By DOUG FERGUSON

THE RBC Heritage began two months later than usual with a little rain, a little sunshine and a lot of birdies, most of them from Jordan Spieth to turn a rough start into a furious finish.

Ian Poulter holed a 30-foot birdie putt and followed with a 5-iron to 4 feet for a birdie that closed out his round of 7-under 64, giving him a share of the lead Thursday with Mark Hubbard at Hilton Head.

"I've always loved coming here to play golf," said Poulter, and he has plenty of company this year.

The RBC Heritage, typically a week after the Masters in April, is the second tournament since the PGA Tour returned after 90 days from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The top three players in the world are at Hilton Head - Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm and Justin Thomas - and none broke par on a day in which 66 players in the 151-man field shot in the 60s. A year ago, only 38 players in the 132-man field opened with rounds in the 60s.

Spieth wouldn't have guessed he would be one of them after a tee shot what was 5 yards right of the 12th fairway hit a tree and didn't stop rolling until it was out-of-bounds. He made triple bogey and was 3 over through three holes.

"All of a sudden, I'm 3 over through three, and

you start to see guys going 2 under through two, 2 under through three early," Spieth said. "It's not a great feeling."

Determined to at least try to get under par for his round, Spieth had a career-best six straight birdies on his back nine and finished with seven birdies over his last eight holes for a 66.

Poulter and Hubbard, who started birdie-eagle, were a shot ahead of a group that included Webb Simpson, Ryan Palmer and Viktor Hovland, Colonial winner Daniel Berger, Brooks Koepka, Ernie Els and that incredible bulk, Bryson DeChambeau, were in the large group at 67.

DeChambeau, who added some 40 pounds of mass to increase his swing speed, was hammering shots over the range during practice earlier in the week. He had to tone it down on the tight, tree-lined Harbour Town Golf Links.

"I couldn't unleash the Kraken today," DeChambeau said, a student of physics and Scandinavian folklore. "It was just too tight out there. The wind was swirling all day, and I couldn't feel comfortable to give it a good whack, but I was still able to manage keeping it mostly in the fairway."

Dustin Johnson was poised to make a move until hit into the water on the par-3 14th and compounding the error with a three-putt triple bogey. He still managed a 68.

AP

Simba SC cherishes hosting Mwadui FC in VPL

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

VODACOM Premier League leaders, Simba SC, have said they are looking for a win in this afternoon's league game against Mwadui FC at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Simba SC manager, Patrick Rweyemamu, said they are prepared for the game which he said will serve as vengeance on Mwadui FC that beat the former 1-0 in the league's first phase clash played in Shinyanga 10 months ago.

In an interview held yesterday morning, the manager said all of his players are ready for this afternoon game as their desire is to turn the tables on their opponents.

Rweyemamu said his side, the favourites to win this season's Premier League silverware and, in the process, win the top flight trophy three times in a row, cannot afford to lose twice to Mwadui FC.

He therefore described today's encounter as important to Simba.

"We cannot afford to lose twice. This is an important game and we are prepared well. Of course, we respect our opponents, but today we are looking for three points," he said.

He said the onus is on Simba's head coach to select players that will play in today's game.

"The desire for retribution is there, you know Mwadui FC was the first side to beat us in the 2019/20 Premier League season, now it's our time," he disclosed.

"The good thing is that all of our players are ready for the encounter, the players missing are Jonas Mkude, who is injured, and Sharaf Eldin Shiboub who is in his home country, Sudan, due to the Coronavirus crisis," he said.

The last time the two teams met in



Simba's winger, Louis Miquissone (L), dribbles past fullback, Shomari Kapombe, during training at Bunju in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

a Premier League clash, Simba lost 1-0 through midfielder Gerald Mathias goal. The midfielder headed home a pass from Venance Ludovic.

After the goal, Simba tried all they could to equalize but failed as Mwadui FC keeper Mahmoud Amir, who was at his best, frustrated the visitors' efforts to score.

The two teams come into today's match with different fortunes from their last weekend's games. Hosts Simba were held to 1-1 draw by Ruvu Shooting while Mwadui FC lost 1-0 to Yanga.

If the two teams' performance in

their last week's respective games is anything to go by, then spectators should expect a very good and entertaining match.

Although both Simba and Mwadui FC did not collect the much needed three points, they performed well against Ruvu Shooting and Yanga respectively.

Ruvu Shooting had to thank keeper Mohammed Makaka, who was at his best, given he served many goal attempts by Simba's Meddie Kagere and John Bocco, while Yanga defender Lamine Moro did all he could to stop Mwadui FC from equalizing.

Mwadui FC head coach, Khalid Adam, said he is confident that his side will do well in today's game against Simba SC.

He said he has prepared all his players well ahead of the encounter which he said will not be easy.

"It will not be an easy encounter, but all of my charges are well prepared for the assignment," he stated.

"We lost our game against Yanga, but tomorrow's (today's) game will be an entirely different affair from the Yanga one. It is going to be an entertaining game and we need to be at our best," he said.

South African choir adapts to COVID-19 by making new music

MOUTSE VALLEY, South Africa

THE dusty streets of rural South Africa are a far cry from the bright lights of "America's Got Talent," but that's where the members of the Ndllovu Youth Choir find themselves coping with the coronavirus pandemic.

With an electrifying mix of vocals and dance moves, the group made the finals of the U.S. television show last year. Sold-out performances across the U.S. and Europe followed, as well as a recording contract.

But COVID-19 halted their international tour and landed them back where they began, Moutse Valley in South Africa's Limpopo province, one of the country's poorest regions.

"We were supposed to go to Germany for a performance, but it got canceled. We are used to touring the world, doing shows everywhere, and during this corona time it's been very difficult and frustrating," said Sandile Majola, 26, a member of the chorus and its manager.

The virus has created new risks for singing together, but this "cultural catastrophe," as one British arts group called COVID-19, is not stopping the young singers.

Ndllovu is the Zulu word for elephant, and like the pachyderm the choir members are showing determination to move forward.

The group was formed in 2008 to help orphans and children of HIV patients, said Hugo Tempelman, a Dutch doctor who 30 years ago started a medical clinic that has become a wide-ranging community development project, the Ndllovu Care Group.

The project had more than 600 child-headed households in the orphan and vulnerable children program, he said.

"We tried to assist those kids with food programs and tried to give them a more resilient way of surviving, through life skills," Tempelman said.

He saw a bigger need for the children's development.

"When I saw the kids go home, I still didn't see a smile. And I thought that if we want to provide hope, we must give them something that they can be proud of," he said.

He came up with the idea of a youth choir.

"Of course, you start a choir, because Africa sings," he said. "Africa sings everywhere. They sing at a funeral, they sing at a birth. They



In this photograph taken Thursday May 21, 2020, members of the Ndllovu Youth Choir rehearse a song in their recording studio in the Moutse Valley, 160 kms (100 miles) north east of Johannesburg, South Africa. Finalists of the 2019 edition of the U.S. television show America's Got Talent, the coronavirus crisis put the choir's dreams on hold, as their tour got cancelled, and they returned to rural South Africa. (AP Photo)

sing their moods."

In 2016 the choir became more professional with the help of donors. Two years later their rendition of the Ed Sheeran song "Shape of You" won them an audition on "America's Got Talent" and their captivating performances skyrocketed them to fame.

The 38 young singers are used to overcoming adversity and, with Tempelman's help, they are coming up with a new plan.

Pulling down his face mask, choir manager Majola described how all the singers, ranging in age from 13 to 26, have been tested for COVID-19 and have been cleared to sing together.

A recording and filming studio has been constructed at the community theater and they have begun rehearsing new material for an online show.

"We are getting together for the first time since lockdown started," said Majola with excitement.

The group's performances of "Africa" and "Higher Ground" have had millions of viewers on YouTube and now the group hopes to highlight new material.

"I still receive emails from people all over the world," Majola said. "I just got one this morning of someone saying he was depressed and couldn't get out of bed, until he saw our performance

and it gave him hope."

Choir director Ralf Schmitt said the group is rehearsing new material for their first album with Simon Cowell's label, a division of Sony Music. Livestream performances are also planned.

"We are all excited. We'll be recording with some international artists from around the globe," Schmitt said.

The album is scheduled for release at the end of the year, but the choir intends to release a song, "We Will Rise," to mark the birthday of Nelson Mandela on July 18.

"It's an inspirational song about how we can work together to overcome this coronavirus," Schmitt said.

AP

UEFA relaxes financial fair play rules amid coronavirus crisis

LAUSANNE

UEFA has opted to temporarily soften its financial fair play (FFP) rules to help clubs impacted by the economic fall-out of the coronavirus crisis, European football's governing body announced on Thursday.

FFP rules mean that, over a three-year period, clubs competing in European competition are not permitted to lose more than 30 million euros (\$33.7m).

However, given the damage done to the footballing economy by the interruption to the sport caused by the pandemic, UEFA has agreed to a loosening of the rules which, it says, "aim at addressing the actual problem which is revenue shortfall due to COVID-19 and not financial mismanagement".

It means that clubs will be given longer than usual to show they have met payments owed on transfers and salaries, while "the assessment of financial year 2020 is postponed for one season, and will be assessed together with the financial year 2021".

These measures do not impact on decisions already taken before the crisis, so for example French club Marseille are still set to be punished after they were referred in March to the adjudicatory chamber of UEFA's Club Financial Control Body for not complying with an agreement to balance their books.

Manchester City have been banned from Europe for two years and handed a 30 million-euro fine for serious breaches of FFP regulations between 2012 and 2016.

The English club have appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in

Switzerland, which will announce its judgement on the case in July.

The FFP rules were brought in to combat growing debt in European football.

Assessments began in 2011 when European clubs reported overall losses of 1.7 billion euros. In contrast, according to UEFA's most recent annual "benchmarking" report, the 700 top-tier clubs across the continent made a combined profit of 140 million euros in 2018.

- 'Harmonised' transfer window -
Meanwhile, UEFA has said it wants a harmonised European transfer window this summer closing on October 5, ahead of next season's Champions League and Europa League group stages.

Following its latest executive committee meeting held via videoconference, UEFA said clubs would have until October 6 to register players for the group stage of next season's European club competitions.

On Wednesday it was announced that the 2020-21 Champions League would start on October 20, with the Europa League group stage starting two days later.

The summer transfer window in Europe usually closes at the start of September, although individual countries do not all follow the same dates.

Football is still adapting after the current season was interrupted in mid-March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

FIFA has already permitted countries to open their transfer windows up to four weeks before the delayed season has been completed, although any new signings would not be eligible until next season. AFP

Juventus supremacy under threat as Serie A returns

MILAN

JUVENTUS'S Serie A supremacy faces a stiff test with the champions just one point ahead of Lazio as the Italian league kicks off again this weekend following a three-month shutdown.

A return had looked unthinkable back in April as Italy counted their daily coronavirus deaths in the hundreds for nearly 35,000 victims in the country.

But the situation has improved with strict health protocols in place and all matches being played behind closed doors.

Four postponed games will take place first this weekend involving teams at the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Atalanta host Sassuolo in Bergamo on Sunday, and Inter Milan are at home against Sampdoria.

On Saturday, Torino host Parma and Cagliari travel to Hellas Verona.

Next week all teams will have 12 games left to play with Juventus at Bologna on Monday, and Lazio travelling to Atalanta on Wednesday.

Maurizio Sarri's Juventus fell in the Italian Cup final to Napoli on penalties midweek, having also lost the Italian SuperCup to Lazio in December.

"Ronaldo, (Paulo) Dybala and our great soloists lack that little bit of brilliance, but I consider it quite normal in this period," said Sarri.

"I didn't say anything to the players, we were all very angry and disappointed and I think it's better to be silent right now."

Sarri's woes have been compounded with Brazilian defender Alex Sandro tearing a knee ligament against Napoli and Sami Khedira picking up a potentially serious tendon problem.

Argentine forward Gonzalo Higuain and captain Giorgio Chiellini are also not yet at full fitness.

- Ronaldo effect -

Juventus will be counting on their top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo to react after suffering two defeats in a final for the first time in his career, and missing a penalty in the Italian Cup semi-final.



Lazio, powered by Serie A top scorer **Ciro Immobile**, are on a 21-match unbeaten run (AFP Photo)

Lazio's **Ciro Immobile** has scored 27 goals this season, six more than Ronaldo, as the in-form Romans target their third Scudetto and first in two decades.

Simone Inzaghi's side have already beaten Juventus twice this season, in the Italian SuperCup final and 3-1 in the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

The top two teams will meet in Turin on July 20.

Inter Milan are third, nine points behind Juventus. Inter lost to Lazio (2-1) and Juventus (2-0) just before the suspension.

"If I have to find a positive part of this crisis, it's that I've had time to focus and try to find different areas in which the team can improve," said coach Antonio Conte.

Atalanta occupy the final Champions League berth, three points ahead of Roma, with Napoli sixth a further six

points back.

- Maths madness -

While the championship resumes the question remains of what happens in the case of another suspension.

Plan B provides for play-offs, the format of which remains to be defined.

A final decision could open the way to use a complicated algorithm devised by the federation to establish the final ranking.

Who would qualify for the Champions League or the Europa League? Who would go to Serie B?

Very simple: PF = PT + (MPC x NPC) + (MPT x NPT)!

This formula means that the total points will be calculated taking into account those obtained at the time of the interruption, plus a simulation based on the average points taken

at home and away multiplied by the number of matches still to play.

Got it?

It was even considered at one point to take into account the number of goals scored home and away, for an even more intimidating formula: PF = PT + 0.90 x [(MPC x NPC) + (MPT x NPT)] + 0.10 x (Iag x r).

"This is madness. We are at the 'Normale' of Pisa," said FIGC president Gabriele Gravina, referring to the prestigious Tuscan university, which has given Italy three Nobel Prize winners and two Presidents.

But one sticking point was cleared up Thursday with the Italian government agreeing to ease quarantine restrictions in the case of a positive test with only the infected person isolated.

The squad and staff will be closely monitored and a quick test performed on the whole team on match day, boosting hopes that the championship will be concluded.

Fixtures (all times GMT):

Today
Torino v Parma (1730), Verona v Cagliari (1945)

Tomorrow
Atalanta v Sassuolo (1730), Inter Milan v Sampdoria (1945)

Monday
Lecce v AC Milan (1730), Fiorentina v Brescia (1730), Bologna v Juventus (1945)

Tuesday
SPAL v Cagliari (1730), Verona v Napoli (1730), Torino v Udinese (1845), Genoa v Parma (1945)

Wednesday
Inter Milan v Sassuolo (1730), Atalanta v Lazio (1945), Rome v Sampdoria (1945)

'Extraordinary' Benzema goal should silence critics - Zidane

MADRID

ZINEDINE Zidane said Karim Benzema "shuts people up a bit" when he scores goals like his stunning volley against Valencia on Thursday.

Benzema brilliantly lifted the ball over defender Hugo Gillamon with his right foot and then shot with his left into the top corner as Madrid beat Valencia 3-0 at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium.

Marco Asensio had earlier made it two after Benzema gave Madrid the lead, his brace taking his tally for the season to 21 goals in 38 games.

"His performance was magnificent, like the whole team, but his goal was extraordinary," said Zidane.

"We know that he is comfortable with his left foot but wow, to lift the ball in that way and to swing like that with his left foot, without the ball touching the ground, truly it's a very complicated piece of skill."

"It's beautiful to see it and I'm

happy for him.

"Often we see Karim as the number nine of Madrid and he must score goals, but he doesn't only do that. So when he does score, I'm happy because he shuts people up a bit, and the work, he always does that no matter what."

Benzema is a controversial figure in France after his alleged involvement in a blackmail plot against former teammate Mathieu Valbuena. He has not played for the national team since 2015.

But the 32-year-old has been in sensational form for Real Madrid this season and his latest goal was his 243rd for the club, putting him fifth on Madrid's all-time list.

"We know all these matches are finals so this was very important for us and for me personally as well," said Benzema.

"It was a beautiful goal, I think I can say it was beautiful, it went in and that was great. Sometimes I do that in practice and today I did it in the match."

AFP

Football returns to South America, under protest

RIO DE JANEIRO

AFTER a three-month hiatus for the coronavirus pandemic, football returned to South America Thursday in Brazil, with a Rio de Janeiro state tournament match, though some clubs and fans insist it is too soon.

Copa Libertadores holders Flamengo beat minnows Bangu 3-0 in Rio's iconic Maracana stadium, in a match with no fans played just metres (yards) from a field hospital set up to treat COVID-19 patients.

Rio Mayor Marcelo Crivella, who authorized the tournament to resume, had said President Jair Bolsonaro, a fierce critic of coronavirus quarantine measures, would attend the match. But in the event the far-right leader did not make the trip.

The Rio championship is the first professional football competition to resume in South America, where the new coronavirus is still spreading rampantly.

With nearly 48,000 people killed by the virus so far, Brazil has the second-highest death

toll in the world, after the United States, and the number of cases continues rising steeply.

Top Brazilian clubs, including Botafogo and Fluminense, have come out against the restart, arguing it is too soon.

Supporters of those two clubs, as well as Flamengo, Bangu and others, protested outside the stadium before the match, saying the authorities were putting lives at risk.

Players had their temperatures checked on arrival at the stadium, while reporters and photographers covering the match had to pass through a disinfection tunnel.

The match opened with a minute of silence for victims of COVID-19, including Flamengo's own massage therapist, Jorginho, who died last month.

Brazil's national championship was due to begin in May but has been indefinitely suspended.

The first national league to restart in South America will be Paraguay's on July 17.

AFP

BERLIN

STRUGGLING Bundesliga giants Werder Bremen have just two matches to avoid relegation, but can take a significant step towards survival at Mainz on Saturday.

Bayern Munich were confirmed Bundesliga champions for the eighth straight season in midweek, but the fight to stay up is still raging.

Bremen are second-bottom and in danger of losing their status as the club with the most years spent in Germany's top flight.

They sit one point behind Fortuna Duesseldorf, who occupy the relegation play-off spot, but six behind 15th-placed Mainz after their surprise win at Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday.

Four-time champions Bremen have been in the Bundesliga every season bar one since its introduction in 1963. They were relegated in 1980, but came straight back up.

Bremen visit Mainz in one of nine games at 1330 GMT on Saturday and host Cologne on the final day of the season on June 27.

"We have two 'finals', which we must win to stay up," said midfielder Maximilian Eggstein.

Werder's American midfielder Josh Sargent said: "No one wants to let the team or the city down."

Bottom side Paderborn have already been relegated. Duesseldorf host Augsburg on Saturday and visit Union Berlin on the final day, while Mainz can secure safety by beating Bremen before their last match at Champions League-chasing Bayer Leverkusen.

Mainz coach Achim Beierlorzer has billed the game as a "relegation final".

- Leipzig closing on Champions League spot -
Meanwhile, second-placed Borussia Dortmund are looking to bounce back from Wednesday's shock defeat by Mainz at RB Leipzig, who are third but yet to secure a Champions League spot.

Leipzig striker Timo Werner, who has scored 32 goals in all competitions this season, has confirmed he is moving to Chelsea from July 1, but can play in Leipzig's last two Bundesliga games of the campaign.

Werner scored in Leipzig's 2-2 draw with Duesseldorf on Wednesday, but they threw away a two-goal lead and still need another win to secure Champions League qualification.

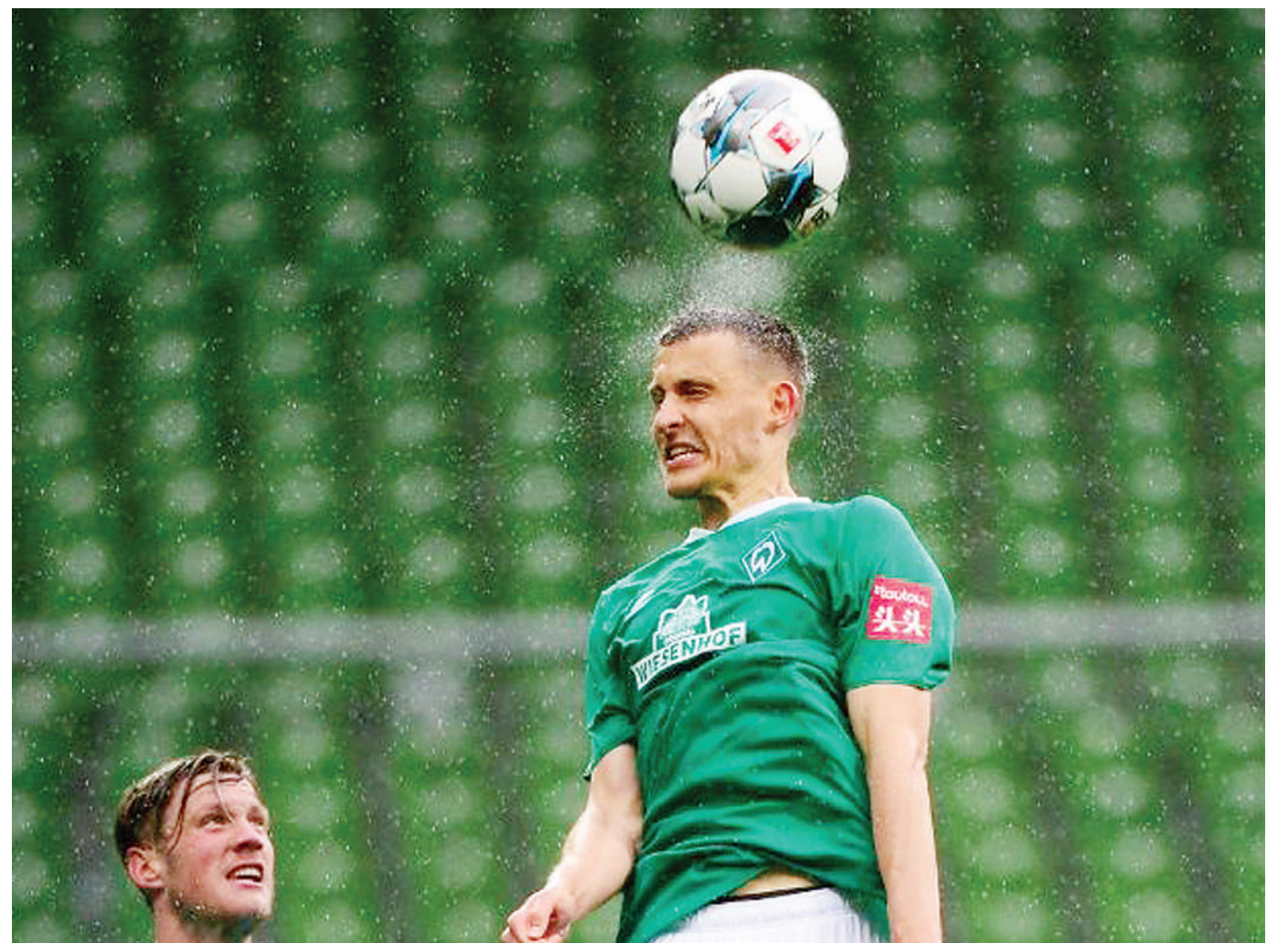
"Now we have to deliver on Saturday," said coach Julian Nagelsmann, whose side would also leapfrog Dortmund into second with victory.

"Coming second in the league doesn't mean anything. It's about getting into the Champions League and we've got enough to do there."

There will be no coronation for Bayern after Saturday's final home game of the season against Freiburg. The league said they must wait to receive the Bundesliga trophy until after their final match, next weekend at Wolfsburg, due to coronavirus restrictions. Bayern are without the suspended Alphonso Davies, who was sent off in midweek, and Lucas Hernandez is expected to take over at left-back as the Bavarians chase a 15th straight win all competitions.

One to watch: Claudio Pizarro
The Bremen striker is 42 in October, four years younger than coach Florian Kohfeldt, but has shaken off a thigh injury and could play a role at Mainz.

As he did in Tuesday's 1-0 home loss to Bayern, Pizarro could come off the bench and add to his 488



Bremen midfielder Maximilian Eggstein says they must treat their last two league games as 'finals' as they fight relegation. (AFP Photo)

Bundesliga appearances, with 197 goals. "I am proud that they call me a legend," said Pizarro, who won the Bundesliga six times with former club Bayern and the German Cup on six occasions, five with Bayern and once, in 2008/09, with Bremen.

Pizarro also has the distinction of scoring in 21 consecutive calendar years during spells in Europe with Bremen, Chelsea, Bayern and Cologne, but is yet to find the net in 2020.

Key stats

14: Matches without a Bundesliga win for Schalke. David Wagner's side host Wolfsburg looking for a first league victory since January.

31: League goals Robert Lewandowski has scored for Bayern Munich this term -- his best-ever season. He is set to be crowned the league's top-scorer for the fifth time.

93: Goals scored by Timo Werner in

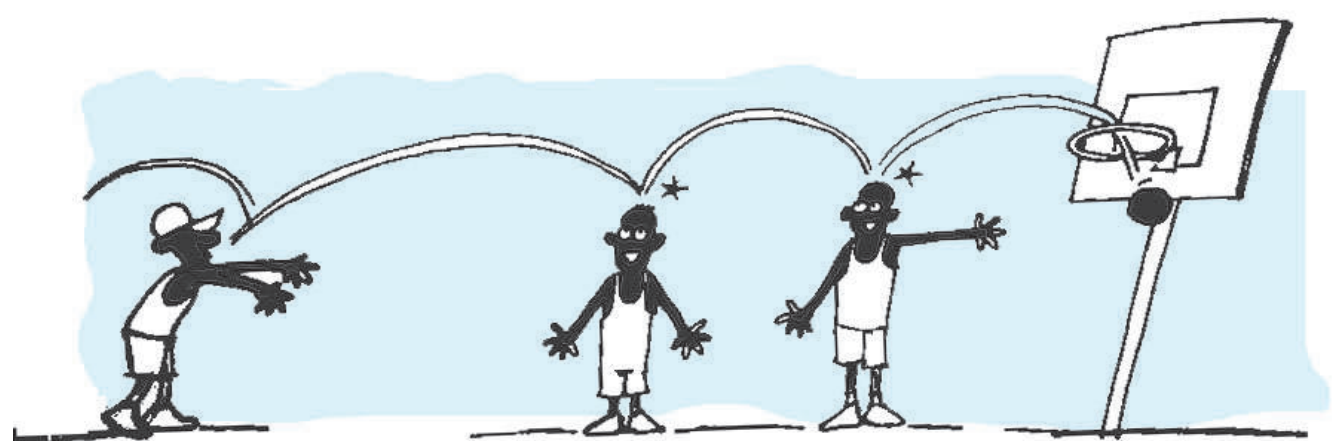
157 games for RB Leipzig over the last four years.

Fixtures (all times 1330 GMT)

Bayern Munich v Freiburg, RB Leipzig v Borussia Dortmund, Hoffenheim v Union Berlin, Fortuna Duesseldorf v Augsburg, Hertha Berlin v Bayer Leverkusen, Mainz v Werder Bremen, Schalke v Wolfsburg, Cologne v Eintracht Frankfurt, Paderborn v Borussia Moenchengladbach

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Simba SC eyes revenge against Mwadui FC in busy VPL Saturday

SPORT

Juventus supremacy under threat as Serie A returns

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Nonga stages no show at Lipuli FC

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

IRINGA's Lipuli FC is set to play against Polisi Tanzania in a Vodacom Premier League clash at Ushirika Stadium in Moshi, Kilimanjaro today, with the former missing their prolific forward, Paul Nonga.

Nonga, who is as well the side's skipper, has chosen to opt out of the squad as he claims he has not been paid his salary.

The forward pointed out some contractual issues have not been settled, insisting they are the ones which have created misunderstanding between him and the outfit.

"Some terms in the contract have not been fulfilled," Nonga stated.

He disclosed the club owes him three months salaries and some of the registration fee.

He said he has a family he is taking care of and, therefore, he can not perform his duty diligently if his needs are not fulfilled.

"I have told them to at least pay me half of the salaries so I can join the camp, this is a profession, people should respect each other's profession," he added.

He said his contract with the squad ends on July 1 this year, noting he will extend his stay at the outfit up to the completion of the season should the management pay him some of his payment.

Lipuli FC information officer Clement Sanga stated his club owes Nonga.

"Our club is in dire straights. Nonga and his team mates Novatus Lufunga and Seif Karihe felt it was best they stay away," Sanga said.

"They have not only travelled with the squad but also opted out of the camp altogether."

He said the club knows it owes the players and will see to it the players are paid.

"We know the matter is being dealt with because it has been provided for in their contracts but we are struggling financially...we will fulfil it," he stated.



Paul Nonga

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

THE top prize might already have gone to Simba SC, but there is plenty going on elsewhere in the Vodacom Premier League. There are eight games today, with teams fighting for position at both ends of the table.

With just nine rounds remaining, the relegation battle will probably go down



Ruvu Shooting defender, Omari Kindamba (L), challenges Simba striker, John Bocco, when the teams locked horns in a Vodacom Premier League match, which took place at National Stadium in Dar es Salaam early this week. Ruvu Shooting held Simba to 1-1 draw. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

to the wire considering that there are as many as eight clubs fighting for survival.

The clash between two struggling sides, Mbeya City FC and Alliance FC, will be the highlight of the relegation scrap.

Both teams are stuck deep in the relegation zone and the victor will surely receive a big boost for the remainder of the season.

One point separates the two sides with Mbeya City FC positioned 17th with 30 points and Alliance FC occupies the 18th place with

29 points.

Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC) FC will be looking to maintain their upward surge when they host Ruvu Shooting at Uhuru Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

The last match between them ended 1-0 in favour of Ruvu Shooting, with central defender Santos Mazengo as the scorer.

The Kinondoni Municipal side managed to beat Alliance FC 2-1 in the former's previous league action in March, while Ruvu Shooting

held league leaders, Simba, to a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

In Tanga, Mtwara Sugar who are surprisingly caught in the relegation scrap will take on hosts Coastal Union. The sugar cane millers have not registered victory their last seven away games.

The great discomfort could continue against a Coastal Union side that has lost only two home games this season.

In the fight for top four spots, there is an interesting battle between hosts Namungo FC and Kagera Sugar. Kagera Sugar were not able to keep up their early season form and have fallen away from the top six, but that has created an intense pressure for head coach Mecky Mexime to bring back the team into top five contention amidst talks of his exit at the end of the season.

Simba, nicknamed 'Msimbazi Reds', are wounded beasts after Sunday's frustrating one-all draw with Ruvu Shooting. Their pride has been hurt.

Soccer followers can surely count on them to come back with vigour, and

the club's head coach Sven Vandebroek has already made it clear that he and his boys will not be satisfied now with just the winners' medal. They are going for records.

Against Mwadui FC today, Simba will also be targeting to avenge the 1-0 loss they suffered the first round's game against the former at Kambage Stadium in Shinyanga.

Mwadui FC will have to be at their best to contain the expected onslaught from Simba.

Fixtures:

Coastal Union v Mtwara Sugar (Mkwakwani Stadium), Namungo FC v Kagera Sugar (Majaliwa Stadium), Ndanda FC v Biashara United (Nangwanda Stadium), Mbeya City FC v Alliance FC (Sokoine Stadium), JKT Tanzania v Singida United (Jamhuri Stadium), Simba v Mwadui FC (National Stadium), KMC FC v Ruvu Shooting (Uhuru Stadium), Polisi Tanzania v Lipuli FC (Ushirika Stadium).

National Athletics Championships pushed back

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THIS year's National Athletics Championships, which was slated for August, has been pushed back to September. Athletics Tanzania (AT) disclosed yesterday.

Tullo Chambo, AT information officer, said the decision to postpone the championships was reached after a meeting between AT and athletics stakeholders, who included National Sports Council (NSC) and Tanzania Olympic Committee (TOC).

The National Championships was slated for August 15-16 at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam but now it will be held from September 5-6 at the same facility.

He said the meeting observed that it will be difficult for the hosts to ac-

commodate all athletes at that particular time as many places are already booked for other activities.

Chambo said AT is apologizing to all stakeholders, including regional athletics committees, for the inconveniences that the postponement may have caused to them.

"The postponement of the August 15-16 National Championships to September 5-6 has come about because there will be no accommodation for athletes and their leaders at that particular period, we regret any inconveniences this may cause," he said.

He moreover said AT is urging regions to step up preparations for the September National Championships.

This year's National Championships received a boost from TOC which promised to help AT financially so as the event is being held suc-

cessfully.

The committee through secretary general Filbert Bayi recently said the aim is to see to it that regions are sending qualified athletes to the showdown.

The National Championships, he maintained, is a platform where talents can be exposed and drafted into the national team.

"We will help AT to successfully host the National Championships, we are doing this because we know that the National Championships is a platform where upcoming athletes are identified," he said.

"It is the event which help coaches identify athletes for the national team, we are asking regional athletics committees to select good athletes who will come here (Dar es Salaam) to compete, not participate," he said.

Sputanza now denies affiliation to FIFPro

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA Soccer Players Union (Sputanza) has said it is not affiliated to International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPro) and can not benefit from the FIFA Fund for Football Players (FFP).

The FFP is aimed at cushioning the players from the economic effects of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Sputanza's Chairman, Mussa Kisoki, said beneficiaries of FFP are only associations which are affiliated to FIFPro, which is an umbrella body for all football players' unions around the globe.

He said FIFPro wrote Sputanza questioning the status of Tanzania's leagues, if the leagues are professional or amateur, and his association copied the letter to National Sports Council (NSC) for answers.

Kisoki said currently Sputanza are waiting for response from the government through NSC the latter are responsible for issuing answers on the status of the local leagues.

He acknowledged that local football leagues are run professionally as players are paid monthly salaries.

The players also receive signing on fees, training allowances and other privileges, but it is the duty of the government to inform FIFPro on the status of the local leagues.

"Currently we are not a member of FIFPro. We wrote the government through NSC so as they can provide FIFPro with the status of our leagues, they want to know if our leagues are run either professionally or amateur, once the government comes up with the answers we will present them to FIFPro," Kisoki stated.

"All indications are there that our leagues are professional, but there is a need for the government to inform them (FIFPro) in writing," he said.

Efforts to talk to NSC officials on the matter yesterday proved futile as they could not be reached on their mobile phones.

The development has come after FIFA had announced that it has set aside US dollars 16 million for players affected by their clubs' failure to pay them full dues because of the pandemic.

The world football governing body said more than 400 players have applied for financial assistance under the FFP, claiming unpaid wages from their clubs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which halted football activities across the world.



Morogoro's Waluguru Original music band's fans dance during the band's recent show, which took place in the region. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT SABATO KASIKA

Flexibles by David Chikoko

